

Craving/Carving a Sacred Space:
A Study of Religion on Stone Mountain

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To Elizabeth

*Drwy gicio a brathu
mae cariad yn magu*

Acknowledgments

In the fall of 2009, when the possibility emerged that the community college at which I was employed as an instructor might be restructured in such a way that I could lose my position, I started looking into doctoral programs in religion. Professor Robert McCauley at Emory University, with whom I had studied a few years earlier, encouraged me to explore my options, including programs in the United Kingdom, and I am appreciative of the support he provided then and over the following years. In the time since starting my program at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, I have also received encouragement in various ways from my colleagues at Georgia State University's Perimeter College -- Mark Banas, Marla Calico, Maryann Errico, Jason Flato, Lora Mirza, Andrea Morgan, Eric Morton, Marilyn Otroszko, and Larry Peck -- for which I am also thankful.

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Abstract

Drawing upon the tools of spatial analysis, this study examines varieties of sacred space crafted at Stone Mountain Park near Atlanta, Georgia. The focus on spatial aspects of religious practices at Stone Mountain grounds three overarching methodological objectives of the thesis. The first is to further develop and extend spatial analysis within the academic study of religion. The second objective is to illustrate the need to expand the parameters of the contested term *religion* and its correlate *sacred space* to reflect the variety of social practices that fall outside the domains of traditionally conceived religious or sacred structures and locations. The third objective is to explore connecting threads between spatial analysis of religious practices and religious identity formation. Taken together, these three objectives provide an interpretative framework for five case studies examining the spatial history of the location, the emplacement of the Lost Cause mythology at the site, differences between a decades old Easter sunrise service and a more recent *Via Crucis* pilgrimage on Good Friday, the emergence of contemporary New Age spiritual practices on the monadnock, and the cultivation of a corporate religion during an extended Christmas holiday season marketed at the park. The project concludes with an exploration of areas of convergence between spatial analysis in religious studies and consideration of the relevance of place to religious identity formation.

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Chapter One
Introduction: Focusing on Sacred Space

I teach religious studies at a two-year associate degree-granting institution, a community college,¹ originally created in the late 1950s by the DeKalb County Board of Education which was committed to an open admissions mission. Located in the greater metropolitan Atlanta region in Georgia in the United States, DeKalb College, later DeKalb Community College, provided both academic and vocational programs to the citizens of DeKalb County. In 1986, DeKalb Community College, less its vocational program, became a unit of the University System of Georgia as, once again, DeKalb College. The institution became Georgia Perimeter College in 1997 with campus locations in Clarkston, Decatur, and Dunwoody in DeKalb County. Later, it developed a presence at the Gwinnett University Center in Lawrenceville in Gwinnett County and at Georgia State University's Alpharetta Center in Fulton County. In 2007, a new campus was opened near Covington in Newton County. In January 2016 Georgia Perimeter College was consolidated with Georgia State University and became Perimeter College, one of eleven colleges in what is now, with an enrollment of over 50,000

¹ "We define the community college as any not-for-profit institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree" (Arthur M. Cohen, Florence B. Brawer, and Carrie B. Kisker, *The American Community College*, Sixth ed. [San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2014], 5).

students, the largest school in the University System of Georgia.²

Throughout its relatively brief and changing history, the mission of Perimeter College remains similar to that of other community colleges in the United States: to provide "open access" to collegiate education for local students who may need additional assistance in adjusting to the early stages of tertiary education. One of the goals of my teaching has been to help students who may not initially understand the need to study religion in an academic setting to see the relevance of a greater appreciation for the varieties of religious institutions and practices in their local communities. Having this knowledge, I explain, may help them interact with others more readily and most likely will be of benefit to them in their chosen professions.

"Don't focus on what is written in the tradition's texts, what the doctrines claim, or what the leaders say. Look at what the people do. Don't look to the sky -- look at religion on the ground." This is one of the points I develop in the World Religions course I have been teaching for fifteen years. I approach the course knowing that for most of my students, it will be the only time they are asked to seriously engage in the academic study of religion. With that being the case, one of my central academic objectives is to help them move beyond historical facts associated with the religions we study and think about religion as a cultural system.

² Paul S. Hudson, "Georgia Perimeter College," in *New Georgia Encyclopedia* (2016).

A key assignment I use is an extensive site visits project involving two visits to local sites to observe religious services and reports of their observations using a highly structured template with dozens of questions. Students move from basic observational data, through a required interview, to personal reflections on the experience, to analysis using comparative categories, and engagement with questions of religious pluralism in a large urban environment. It is a demanding endeavor but students have consistently reported it to be the highlight of the course. A capstone comparative essay at the end of the term, using their own data, indicates that students have absorbed some of the tools of religious studies and are able to apply them to the results of their efforts. The site project enables students to practice what I have preached.

When I chose to begin a doctoral program, I wanted to find a research site which was local and which would illustrate aspects of what I was asking my own students to undertake in their site visits. Having moved to Atlanta in 1997, I was almost immediately struck by the various ways in which one of the region's main tourist destinations illustrated what I meant by religion on the ground. Located nine miles from Perimeter College's Clarkston campus and fifteen miles from my home, Stone Mountain Park was not a dedicated religious site nor affiliated with any religious tradition. Both a state park and a theme park, it is dominated by a massive monadnock, inscribed with an equally massive memorial to the leaders of the Confederacy of the southern United States. However, the activities I noticed

in the late 1990s such as the annual Easter sunrise services and various ritualized celebrations of the Confederacy suggested religious actions and behaviors associated with the use of the natural landscape and the memorial carving. Moreover, ideas of place and location associated with the site suggested an approach to the study which would help to reveal aspects of the site otherwise easily missed. The more I looked into the history of the park and its current uses, the more convinced I was that it was the ideal research site for my project.

As I complete work on this thesis some eight years later, I have found that my initial intuition was even more accurate than I had realized. As a teacher, I have been able to bring material from the case studies into lectures and discussions on topics ranging from mysticism to New Age spirituality to Hispanic Catholic rituals to copyrighted angelic beings and more. The ability to draw on my research in my teaching and to illustrate the importance of looking beyond conventions when thinking about religion has confirmed both my efforts to connect my students to religious studies and help them to see religion where they live well after they have finished the course.

The spatial approach to religion which serves as the foundation for this thesis emerged from reflection on the location of Stone Mountain Park, its proximity to Atlanta, and the particular history of the appropriation of place for cultural and, I argue, religious purposes. As a popular site for a wide range of events and activities, the location itself invites increased examination. With this examination

comes the ability to see how the spaces of Stone Mountain both create and preserve historical memories and facilitate identity formation.

Over the first weekend of November in 2016, approximately 20,000 people attended Stone Mountain Park for an annual gathering of Native Americans from many tribes throughout the United States. The Indian Festival & Pow-Wow is located in the Antebellum Plantation, where several dance competitions provided audiences with brief glimpses into some of the ritual practices of the indigenous peoples of the Americas.³ In addition, the event leaders provide visitors with stories of the autonomy and independence of the many Native American tribal organizations and their valuable contributions to American society throughout the history of the country.

The use of the space of the ersatz plantation, assembled from buildings gathered from different times and places throughout the southern United States, provides a revealing intersection of two groups which have made Stone Mountain Park possible. The first, the original inhabitants, were displaced by European colonists promised access to an expanding frontier which encompassed the

³ The process of changing the name of the Antebellum Plantation site at Stone Mountain Park to the Historic Square started in 2016 -- over fifty years after the site initially had been assembled. Since most of my research took place while the designation Antebellum Plantation was still in use, and in order to avoid reader confusion with regard to this area of the park, all references to the site in this thesis will use the phrase "Antebellum Plantation." Similarly, the Indian Festival & Pow-Wow was renamed the Native American Festival & Pow-Wow starting in 2017. References to it, too, will retain the older phrase "Indian Festival & Pow-Wow" since that was the name being used during the course of the research for the thesis.

mountain in the early part of the eighteenth century. The second, the enslaved Africans who would provide the slave labor necessary to create the economy of the South in that same period, were also used to justify the war between the Union and the Confederacy. The Civil War memorial carved on the side of Stone Mountain emerged as members of the former Confederacy sought to make sense of their defeat in the early part of the twentieth century.

These two root historical narratives of Native American conquest and resurgence and African American oppression and liberation were intrinsic in the formation of white Southern identity in the nineteenth century and they remain major cultural markers for much of the South even one hundred fifty years after the end of the Civil War. Indeed, one may be tempted to view the region of the southern United States strictly in these historical terms.

However, there is another stream of influence in the construction and maintenance of social identity which merits consideration. In his discussion of the centrality of narrative in experience, Stephen Crites acknowledges that even though "I have argued that experience is moulded, root and branch, by narrative forms. . . . At the same time [o]ne needs more clarity than stories can give us. . . . The kind of pure spatial articulation we find in painting and sculpture, with all movement suspended, gratifies this deep need."⁴ The ability of material objects to constrict and shape narratives into discrete moments of experience

⁴ Stephen Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 39, no. 3 (September 1971): 308.

contributes to images of the self and personal identity. Whether it is a human creation such as a sculpture or part of the natural environment, these objects can be mechanisms for overcoming temporality. There is, to appropriate the title of Crites's essay, a spatial quality of experience which deserves careful attention.

Crites's acknowledgement of the manner in which spatial aspects of our lives may become part of the defining narratives with which we apply order to our experiences is affirmed by Martyn Smith in his effort to move beyond the parameters of traditional narrative. "Just as different characters can be used for shorthand for abstract ideas, so settings can similarly acquire significance. . . . The land around Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, can represent a crucible for a nation convulsed in civil war. . . . As a narrative grows in importance, the setting is able to detach and take on an extraordinary imaginative power."⁵ The connections among place, individual and community, and meaning-making are helpfully revealed when examined with an awareness of the importance of the spatial components of those relationships. A historical account alone will not suffice because it misses important dimensions of self- and social-understanding which are revealed through spatial analyses.

The claim that a location can assume a meaning-making function will be explored at length in the following pages. It is neither a novel claim nor without precedent in work related to examining how individuals interact with places

⁵ Martyn Smith, *Religion, Culture, and Sacred Space* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 29.

with religious significance. For example, in his comparative examination of spiritual tourism at Glastonbury and Sedona, Arian Ivakhiv develops a hermeneutic-phenomenological hypothesis which he argues is the most helpful in understanding the manner in which particularly striking landscapes appear to demand engagement from those who are present at the sites.

[I]t is the actual embodied experience of visitors to a given landscape which allows the sense of awe, mystery, magic, or sacredness to unfold for a person, and which, when shared with others over time, anchors alternative interpretations of the land within the landscape. . . . Over time, this experiential and interpretative data collects and is sedimented within the interpretative communities for whom the place is held to be sacred.⁶

Similarly, as shall be demonstrated, it is the landscape, in the case of Stone Mountain, which draws in some people as it affords opportunities for both personal and social reflection.

This study examines several examples of the imaginative power the space associated with Stone Mountain holds for those who seek it out for their own particular stories and considers how the site sustains their respective self-understandings. The spatial dynamics explored in the case studies serve both to illustrate the relevance of a spatial approach to religion and suggest future avenues of research into religion and space.

This focus on spatial aspects of religious practices at Stone Mountain grounds three over-arching methodological

⁶ Adrian J. Ivakhiv, *Claiming Sacred Ground: Pilgrims and Politics at Glastonbury and Sedona* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 212.

objectives of this thesis. The first is to further develop and extend spatial analysis within the academic study of religion. The second objective is to illustrate the need to expand the parameters of the contested term *religion* and its correlate *sacred space* to reflect the variety of social practices which fall outside the domain of traditionally conceived, ecclesiastical structures. The third objective, which emerged in the process of executing the fieldwork discussed in the thesis, is to explore connecting threads between spatial analysis of religious practices and religious identity formation. Taken together, these three objectives provide an interpretative framework for the case studies which constitute the bulk of the thesis.

While it has been recognized for several decades in other disciplines, the use of spatial methods within religious studies is relatively recent. If a spatial turn in the humanities can be linked to a particular moment, the strongest candidate may be the 1991 publication of the English translation of French Marxist and sociologist Henri Lefebvre's *La production de l'espace* which was originally published in French in 1974.⁷ At the risk of oversimplifying the work, Lefebvre's project in *The Production of Space* carefully deconstructed the hidden assumptions regarding space as an abstraction merely instrumental to human reason. Instead, Lefebvre proposed a triad of categories involving differing approaches to and use of space which resulted in the creation and replication of space across human

⁷ Andy Merrifield, "Henri Lefebvre: A Socialist in Space," in *Thinking Space*, ed. Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, *Critical Geographies* (London: Routledge, 2000), 168-69.

experience. Whereas space had long been viewed either as a Newtonian absolute or as part of a space-time framework as developed by Einstein, Lefebvre's work facilitated a reexamination of space as an invaluable component of a fuller understanding of culture.⁸

While the concept of space had long been associated with religion as a container or vessel for experiences and practices associated with revelations of a divine transcendence or immanence, the category itself had not received much attention independent of the sacred space construct to which scholars such as Mircea Eliade had dedicated their efforts.⁹ Subsequent writings by Jonathan Z. Smith worked to liberate sacred space from Eliade's interest in the category as a mechanism for *sui generis* religious experience and instead develop the social and cultural components of what spaces might be constructed as sacred.¹⁰

The effort to apply Lefebvre's insights specifically to religion emerged in the 2000s most particularly in the work of Kim Knott. Building on earlier work examining a range of religious traditions in the United Kingdom, Knott's *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis* drew upon aspects of Lefebvre's categories, in addition to other approaches, to develop a set of spatial analysis tools which may be used

⁸ David Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom*, Wellek Library Lectures in Critical Theory (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 134-35.

⁹ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbooks/The Cloister Library, 1959).

¹⁰ Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

to interrogate religious and related practices and places.¹¹ In addition, Knott expands the subject of study to include non-religious locations which may otherwise be overlooked in the study of contemporary religious practices. This expansion to secular sites will prove particularly important to this study.

This thesis will further illustrate and document the relevance of spatial method in religious studies in several case studies at an ostensibly non-religious site. To that end, the project will provide additional evidence of the relevance of spatial studies both in terms of the examination of the dynamic interplay between spheres of the material, mental, and social and in the production and maintenance of religious space at Stone Mountain.

A closely related objective to the further application of spatial studies in religious studies involves providing evidence from the case studies justifying the utilization of spatial analysis with a non-religious site in particular and other non-religious sites in general. Debates regarding the nature of the subject of religious studies have a long history and there currently is no consensus on the matter.¹² However, the extension of the domain of the religious to include sites and practices which might have been missed with more restrictive approaches has been justified from a

¹¹ Kim Knott, *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis* (London and Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishing, 2005).

¹² Mark C. Taylor, ed., *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (University of Chicago Press, 1998); Ivan Strenski, *Thinking About Religion: An Historical Introduction to Theories of Religion* (Malden, MA ; Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2006); Michael Stausberg, ed., *Contemporary Theories of Religion: A Critical Companion* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2009).

number of disciplinary perspectives over the past thirty years

Developments in critical studies such as feminism, postcolonialism, postmodernism, poststructuralism and efforts to draw upon scientific perspectives such as those of evolutionary theory and the cognitive sciences have pushed the boundaries of religious studies. So, too, efforts drawing upon French social theorists such as Lefebvre and innovations in human geography have resulted in the application of spatial methods to religious studies. These intellectual developments have had the effect of opening avenues of inquiry focusing on religious aspects of the body, location, place, and the material basis for human experience in general. By extension, candidates for study extend well beyond conventional religious structures such as temples, churches, masjids, gurdwaras, monasteries, et cetera. Similarly, practices and traditions which fall outside of conventional categories are revealing investigative opportunities into what can helpfully be studied as religious. As the case studies will demonstrate, practices and traditions at a public park with a major war memorial and an extensive entertainment complex can reveal new facets of religion when explored using spatial methods.

The third objective of this work seeks to examine opportunities for spatial methods to illuminate religious or spiritual aspects of identity formation in relatively secularized locales such as a state park. Concepts such as place identity from environmental psychology,¹³ sense of

¹³ Harold M. Proshansky, Abbe K. Fabian, and Robert Kaminoff, "Place-Identity: Physical World Socialization of the Self,"

place from neuroscience,¹⁴ and place attachment from anthropology¹⁵ resonate with classic work in the sociology of religion on identity formation which centers on the "sacralization of identity"¹⁶ and more recent work in affective theory.¹⁷ The overlap between research in religious identity and various efforts to understand and explain individual and communal attraction to place lies in the ways in which religious, spiritual, and transcendent sensibilities are activated and reinforced through material engagement with locations which have gained significance as attractors for these same sensibilities. One of the founding theorists of humanistic geography, Yi-Fu Tuan, makes the point more precisely:

To rise above culture, religion must reach beyond these efforts at place-making to happenings that are "not of

Journal of Environmental Psychology 3, no. 1 (March-December 1983): 57-83.

¹⁴ Charis Lengen and Thomas Kistemann, "Sense of Place and Place Identity: Review of Neuroscientific Evidence," *Health & Place* 18, no. 5 (2012): 1162-71; Jodie M. Plumert and John P. Spencer, eds., *The Emerging Spatial Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁵ Setha M. Low, "Symbolic Ties That Bind: Place Attachment in the Plaza," in *Place Attachment*, vol. 12, edited by Irwin Altman and Setha M. Low, *Human Behavior and Environment: Advances in Theory and Research* (New York: Plenum Press, 1992), 165-85; Setha M. Low, *Spatializing Culture: The Ethnography of Space and Place* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017).

¹⁶ Hans Mol, *Identity and the Sacred: A Sketch for a New Social-Scientific Theory of Religion* (New York: Free Press, 1976); Hans Mol, "Introduction," in *Identity and Religion: International, Cross-Cultural Approaches*, edited by Hans Mol (London: Sage, 1978), 1-18; Hans Mol, "The Identity Model of Religion: How It Compares with Nine Other Theories of Religion and How It Might Apply to Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 6, no. 1-2 (March-June 1979): 11-38.

¹⁷ Donovan O. Schaefer, *Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2015); Jenna Supp-Montgomerie, "Affect and the Study of Religion," *Religion Compass* 9, no. 10 (October 2015): 335-45.

this world." Experiences that are "not of this world," though very rare, do exist and are an effect of the mind's extraordinary ability to respond to, or conjure up, the aesthetic sublime and ethical sublime.¹⁸

This third objective has emerged over the course of the research and fieldwork conducted for this project and will be more fully examined in the final chapter.

These three objectives serve as the methodological foundation for the case studies presented in this thesis. At the same time, the data and insights emerging from the case studies inform and refine the objectives, especially in the case of spatial analysis and religious identity. While the project was driven by the method questions sketched above it has developed its own set of questions and explanations in the process. However, the first task is to provide an overview of Stone Mountain and explain its relevance to the methodological concerns of this project.

To those unfamiliar with the location, Stone Mountain initially may appear an unconventional choice for an extended study of religious practices. The site is notorious as a symbol of institutionalized racism in a region of the New South claiming to be too busy to hate.¹⁹ Indeed, as will be explained shortly, Stone Mountain has retained its significance for some as a sign of white supremacist aspirations. However, upon closer examination, it is clear Stone Mountain is much more than its war memorial. A fundamental claim of this project is that sites

¹⁸ Tuan and Strawn, *Religion*, 34.

¹⁹ Andy Ambrose, "Atlanta," in *New Georgia Encyclopedia* (2016).

such as Stone Mountain, places that lack traditional religious affiliations and that may be characterized as secular locations, are prime candidates for spatial analysis when discerning non-traditional religious practices.

Located in a frontier region of the British colonial territories, Stone Mountain's acquisition by colonists came later than other engagements with indigenous populations of the period. As the last of the original thirteen American colonies to be established, what would become Georgia had been in various stages of planning for years before its official founding in 1732. Originally, the colony was envisioned as both a buffer between English South Carolina and French and Spanish strongholds and as an opportunity to provide relief to religious pilgrims and the impoverished of London and other rapidly industrializing cities in England.

The importance of religious ideals to the founders of the colony of Georgia are illustrated in a sermon delivered by John Burton, one of the original Trustees of the colony. In *The Duty and Reward of Propagating Principles of Religion and Virtue Exemplified in the History of Abraham*,²⁰ Burton provided an extended theological argument for Christian stewardship and the care of all members of one's family and, by extension, members of the colony. Since the Georgia charter had already been approved by the Privy council earlier in 1732, Burton's sermon was not instrumental in the creation of the colony. The text merits attention for the effort to draw upon Abraham as an exemplar of spiritual and

²⁰ John Burton, *The Duty and Reward of Propagating Principles of Religion and Virtue Exemplified in the History of Abraham*, Newberry Library, Chicago (London: J. March, 1733).

political leadership for the colonists. Just as a father is to instruct the members of his household in the "way of the Lord," so is it the duty of the leader of the people to provide proper instruction in religious matters. "May the Householders in all Colonies, as they in some Circumstances resemble the Condition of the Patriarch, being Pilgrims and Sojourners in a foreign Country, like him also become Fathers of their Families in a moral Sense, by their Care to propagate Principles of Religion and Virtue!"²¹ Abraham's role as patriarch, pilgrim, and sojourner in Canaan provides a model, Burton exhorted his audience, for the manner in which the colony of Georgia should be administered. An idealized kinship system, rooted in the burgeoning monotheism of the patriarch of the Hebrews, provides a justification for appropriation of the region and the benevolent oversight of the conquered peoples -- both indigenous and transported from across the Atlantic.

While the idealism of this theological justification for the colony would soon give way to other, more mundane matters, it nonetheless anticipated the importance of spatial dynamics associated with the region which remain relevant almost three centuries later. Although early Georgia may have been on the margins of the original colonies, the contemporary migrations of large numbers of people in and around Georgia, and especially its major urban region, have made it a major player in the New South. These changes help to set the stage for this study of a particular

²¹ Burton, *The Duty and Reward of Propagating Principles of Religion and Virtue Exemplified in the History of Abraham*, 8.

location which reflects the dynamics of the area and illustrates various efforts to construct and consecrate a space of enduring significance for various peoples.

The metropolitan area of Atlanta, Georgia includes over five million residents and represents the ninth largest region in the United States. In the period since 1970, the region has added over four million residents -- a population increase of more than 300% in a 45 year period. With no natural borders to limit growth, the Atlanta metropolitan area continues to expand and currently encompasses over 8,000 square miles.²²

Given the rapid population changes of this part of the United States over the past three decades, Atlanta provides an ideal location for empirical work on changing religious practices and beliefs in a rapidly shifting contextual space. While there have been some studies of religious pluralism in large urban areas,²³ this project explores a specific location, Stone Mountain, a heretofore unexamined site of religious practices in the Atlanta region.

²² Georgia State University, "Doubling of Nonwhite Population Leads Demographic Changes Over Past 45 Years in Atlanta Region." <http://news.gsu.edu/2017/04/24/nonwhite-population-demographic-changes/>; Lakshmi Pandey and David Sjoquist, "The Changing Face of Atlanta," Center for State and Local Finance-Georgia State University. <http://cslf.gsu.edu/changing-face-atlanta/>.

²³ Nancy Eiesland, *A Particular Place: Urban Restructuring and Religious Ecology in a Southern Exurb* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2000); John Michael Giggie and Diane H. Winston, eds., *Faith in the Market: Religion and the Rise of Urban Commercial Culture* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002); Lowell Livezey, ed., *Public Religion and Urban Transformation: Faith in the City* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Robert A. Orsi, ed., *Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

Stone Mountain is located about fifteen miles east of downtown Atlanta. It is a massive exposed quartz monzonite monadnock first formed 300-350 million years ago and has figured prominently in the history of the region. Certainly, the sheer size of Stone Mountain helps to explain its appeal. After millions of years of erosion of the surrounding landscape, the monadnock rises to 1683 feet above sea level and 760 feet above ground level. It is 8,300 feet long at its base and about 3,500 feet wide. With a circumference of 3.8 miles, Stone Mountain encloses an area of 560 acres. From the top of the mountain, one may view the surrounding area up to 30 miles away.²⁴ With no other significant formations in the immediate vicinity, the overwhelming presence of Stone Mountain has served as a natural canvas, an open space onto which numerous groups have projected their various religious realities (see Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 in Appendix 4).

Before European colonization, the mountain appears to have been a sacred site and meeting place for indigenous groups. It was used as a meeting place for the Creek Confederation and the Cherokees as they responded to colonization.²⁵ Later, in the shifting decades after the South's loss of the Civil War and partially in response to the trial and lynching of Jewish businessman Leo Frank in 1915 -- which itself was a reflection of long-term regional

²⁴ David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone: The History of Stone Mountain* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 1.

²⁵ Joel Martin, "Indians, Contact, and Colonialism in the Deep South: Themes for a Postcolonial History of American Religion," in *Retelling US Religious History*, edited by Thomas Tweed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 149-80.

resentment of Northern involvement in the area²⁶ -- Stone Mountain became the locus of an effort to memorialize the Lost Cause on the very side of the mountain and to revitalize the dormant Ku Klux Klan. Indeed, Martin Luther King, Jr. alluded to this heritage when he mentioned Stone Mountain in his 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech.²⁷

The use of Stone Mountain for diverse religious practices is still evident. Among these practices are annual Easter sunrise services, Christmas celebrations, Native American festivals, new age spirituality practices, and temporary Kirks constructed for the annual observance of Scottish and Celtic culture. Another aspect of the pluralism at Stone Mountain involves a type of corporate religion as evidenced in a laser light show celebrating American values along with references to the virtues of the Lost Cause of the Confederacy during the Civil War. This light show is displayed on the side of the mountain, superimposed over the world's largest bas-relief carving, a representation of Confederate generals Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson President along with Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederates States of America. More recently, Stone Mountain has been leased by the state of Georgia to a private entertainment company that runs the various tourist attractions at the park. Many of the

²⁶ Nancy MacLean, "The Leo Frank Case Reconsidered: Gender and Sexual Politics in the Making of Reactionary Populism," *Journal of American History* 78, no. 3 (December 1991): 920.

²⁷ David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone*; Grace Elizabeth Hale, "Granite Stopped Time: The Stone Mountain Memorial and the Representation of White Southern Identity," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 82 (Spring 1998): 22-44; Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

attractions are designed to evoke nostalgic images of domestic life centered on the traditional American nuclear family (see Figure 1.4 in Appendix 4). Given the changes impacting this social unit over the past few decades, the family-friendly attractions can be seen as yet another response to rapidly-changing social circumstances.

Before continuing, it should be noted that the park is the most visited attraction in the state of Georgia and is not insignificant among the major tourist attractions in the southeastern United States. Annually, Stone Mountain Park receives about four million visitors.²⁸ In 2015, the latest year for which industry figures are available, the four resort parks that comprise Walt Disney World in Florida received just over fifty million visitors. Universal Studios Florida's two locations received about eighteen million visitors.²⁹ The Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee and North Carolina received over eleven million visitors in 2016.³⁰ (However, at over 500,000 acres or about 815 square miles, compared to Stone Mountain Park's 3200 acres, it is not a site-specific tourist destination.) SeaWorld and Busch Gardens, both also located in Florida, received almost five million and just over four million visitors respectively in 2015.³¹ Stone Mountain Park,

²⁸ Bruce E. Stewart, "Stone Mountain," in *New Georgia Encyclopedia* (2016).

²⁹ Judith Rubin, ed., *TEA/AECOM 2015 Theme Index and Museum Index: The Global Attractions Attendance Report* (NP: Themed Entertainment Association, 2016), 12.

³⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior, "National Park Service Visitor Use Statistics," in *NPS Stats* (2016). <https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/Reports/Park>.

³¹ Rubin, *TEA/AECOM 2015 Theme Index and Museum Index: The Global Attractions Attendance Report*, 13.

therefore, as the most visited attraction in the state of Georgia and a significant destination in the region, poses an exceptional opportunity to examine shifting religious practices in the spaces of a large exurban facility located near a sprawling and dynamic metropolitan region in the southeastern United States.

This project explores the intersections between religious expression and changing cultural experiences as they occur within the microcosm of the constructed sacred space of Stone Mountain. The location is simultaneously an ancient spiritual site, a place for informal and commercial recreation, a memorial to the confederacy, and a nature sanctuary. What is distinctive about Stone Mountain is the ways in which multiple -- sometimes conflicting -- religious groups are using the same location as a focal point for differing spatial systems of meaning. As the region continues to expand and absorb new residents, Stone Mountain symbolizes stability and continuity amidst ongoing social and cultural changes.

Stone Mountain is a research site with a history of extra-institutional, non-traditional religious practices sharing one common feature -- the location itself. It is clear the attracting factor for these diverse individuals and groups is Stone Mountain. What is less apparent are the mechanisms at work in drawing individuals to Stone Mountain. While the site is used for multiple religious purposes, there are no dedicated religious shrines at the location. Instead, it appears the natural features of the monadnock are more than adequate to reinforce the religious impulses

of those seeking sacred space. In examining the various religious practices associated with Stone Mountain, I argue the monadnock can be understood as a relatively constant space upon which multiple groups can extend their religious systems. Stone Mountain lacks an intrinsic sacred status -- it is sacred because of what people do there. Jonathan Z. Smith claims a "sacred space is a place of clarification (a focusing lens) where men and gods are held to be transparent to one another."³² Stone Mountain provides such a place of clarification for those seeking to exercise their religious practices.

From this theoretical understanding -- the centrality of space in helping to comprehend religious practices and to a lesser extent social identity formation -- Stone Mountain provides the opportunity for several case studies which serve to contribute to contemporary conversations about religion and space. The data presented in the case studies has been developed from research conducted in archives at research libraries and historical archives and observations of various gatherings at Stone Mountain over the course of the past five years. In addition, interviews have been conducted in order to gain insights from several individuals who have made use of the location for religious and spiritual practices. Finally, social media has proven a rich source of information as individuals have used it to connect around common ideas and practices related to the park. The specific contribution to the discussion of the

³² Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 54.

cultivation of sacred space proffered by this study is to explore it within a distinctive local territory of lived American religion. The goal is to draw greater attention to how groups appropriate Stone Mountain as a natural facade upon which they may project their religious ideals and valorize their sacred practices.

Examining how sacred space is crafted entails investigation of religion as an analytical category in the study of social movements. As was noted earlier, while it remains contested and the continuing use of the term has been challenged, religion and its cognates are used by many adherents to describe their respective systems. Moreover, the effort to eliminate the term ignores the dynamic nature of language and its inherent plasticity. Therefore, setting aside on-going debates about the propriety of using *religion* as a term of art, this study examines the spatial dynamics associated with religious practices at Stone Mountain Park in an effort to better understand the origins and emplacements of sacred space at the monadnock.

Moreover, and as was explained at the outset, this effort draws upon a range of scholarship that examine religious practices from perspectives that eschew traditional textual narratives, whether historical or doctrinal, and instead make use of the material bases of the practices. Since the natural environment of Stone Mountain is vital to understanding the location, understanding how the environment interacts with religious practices is essential to a full appreciation of those practices.

In the second chapter of this project, I locate the spatial turn in the humanities as it applies specifically to religious studies. This effort requires engagement with works by philosophers and religionists who provide a context for the spatial method adopted in this study. In general, descriptive approaches to place and space are set aside in favor of an approach which is more focused on the social interactions and exercises of authority and power that occur as place/space is constructed, justified, and contested. The particularities of place/space are viewed through a variety of interpretive lenses that reveal the underlying structural systems that help explain how place/space functions to orient individual and social roles and behaviors. Using Stone Mountain -- a natural space appropriated in a dramatic fashion for a mythic narrative of defeat and reconciliation -- as a test site for the application of spatial methods suggests the feasibility of similar approaches at other secular sites.

Chapter Three explains the research methods utilized in the project. Before applying the spatial method of analysis to Stone Mountain, data was accumulated which would be used in that analysis. Research methods adopted for the project include historical work at several archival sites, interviews of individuals associated with religious and spiritual practices undertaken at Stone Mountain, and both direct observation and participant observation at many of the events taking place at the site throughout the year. An important adjunct to the planned research methods emerged in the course of my work which merits some discussion. Both

the Internet and social media sites have proved invaluable both as sources of information and as gathering spaces for individuals to discuss and exchange ideas related to the subject of this project. While many of these resources are short-lived and transitory in their virtual spaces, archival tools have emerged on the Internet which allows solid research to be undertaken on these relatively new sources of information. In sum, several sources of data relevant to Stone Mountain were gathered and analyzed using the spatial method adopted for this project.

Chapter Four provides a spatial survey of religion at Stone Mountain and serves as the first case study in the project. Specifically, the chapter engages spatial dynamics relevant to the mountain's history. While there are already a few historical accounts of Stone Mountain, this chapter explores that history of the region primarily from a spatial perspective. It is noted that aspects of a spatial approach to Stone Mountain are already available in the work of Brian Campbell.³³ However, while Campbell's study of Stone Mountain helpfully illuminates the connections between religion and ecology at the park, including the power dynamics of various groups contesting the cultural legacies of Stone Mountain, this particular chapter surveys Stone Mountain from a diachronic perspective and, in the process, anticipate themes which will resurface in the subsequent case studies. Thus, this project extends the spatial analysis of Stone Mountain both in depth and breadth.

³³ Brian G. Campbell, "Place," in *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology*, edited by Whitney A. Bauman, Richard Bohannon, II, and Kevin J. O'Brien (New York: Routledge, 2011), 203-21.

The second case study of the project is presented in Chapter Five. In 1970, just over a century after the conclusion of the Civil War, the memorial to the Lost Cause carved into the side of Stone Mountain was dedicated in a ceremony led by Vice President Agnew. The event marked the conclusion of a decades-long effort to carve an image to honor the romanticized memories of the Confederacy while celebrating the aspirations of the New South. Drawing upon historical studies and archival resources, this chapter surveys the various challenges involved in the creation of the memorial, its realization, and the on-going efforts to fold the memorial into the narrative of a large southern urban region which is too busy to hate.

The challenges involved in decoupling Stone Mountain from the Lost Cause were made clear after a white supremacist murdered nine members of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina in June of 2015. The massacre of members of a Bible study at the oldest AME church in the Southern United States elicited demands throughout the country, and especially in the South, for the removal of state and local government symbols of the Confederacy. Calls for the destruction of the memorial carving at Stone Mountain were made but more frequent were the requests for removal of the Confederate flags located at the park. Soon thereafter, rallies to defend the flags took place at the park, including events organized by white supremacists. Research at these events revealed the deep connections between the Lost Cause and Christian identity claimed by many attending the rallies. Chapter Five closes

with an examination of events in 2015 and 2016 which reflect the contemporary relevance of the Lost Cause myth at Stone Mountain.

Chapter Six examines the emplacement of Good Friday and Easter rituals at Stone Mountain. The chapter surveys the use of Stone Mountain by two different Christian groups and one Christian individual on Good Friday and Easter Sunday over several years. One event is in its seventh decade while the second is entering its second. The individual has only been active since 2011 but provides an interesting illustration of the more individualized and innovative nature of some contemporary appropriations of Stone Mountain. The traditional Protestants who celebrate the Easter sunrise, the Hispanic Roman Catholics who enact the *Via Crucis* on Good Friday, and the eager young Evangelical who emulates Christ carrying a cross to his death represent a small part of the diversity within the Christian tradition while sharing the same sacred space provided by Stone Mountain.

For decades, the Easter sunrise service at Stone Mountain has provided the clearest indicator of the projection of sacred space onto the mountain. Several generations of visitors have made the trip to the site to participate in the melding together of nature and theology that is represented in the celebration of the dawn. Well before the site was entrusted to the care of a private entertainment company with strong Christian values, the sunrise service reflected the dominant Protestant perspective of many who lived around the site. The

emergence of the Good Friday *Via Crucis* service in the first decade of the twenty-first century similarly reflected the growing presence of Hispanic Roman Catholic adherents who had been moving into the region in increasing numbers in the closing decades of the previous century. Stone Mountain once again provided another emplacement of the sacred reflecting the changing and contested nature of such space. The two appropriations of the space overlap at the summit of the mountain on Good Friday as the different crosses come into range of each other.

At that time, the mountain is doubly-emplaced with constructions of the sacred. Similarly, on Easter morning, as the crosswalkers take their positions at the rear perimeter of the service, differing crosses represent the stability of tradition and the dynamism of potential change and a call for renewal. In these various efforts to sacralize the monadnock we see the enduring appeal of the Stone Mountain as a focal point for religious tradition and innovation.

In Chapter Seven, the project turns to an examination of a set of New Age spiritual practices, starting with one individual's 1975 account of his spiritual visions at Stone Mountain. Since his work, others have continued the practice of describing Stone Mountain as one of several etheric or spiritual cities within a network of New Age sacred sites. This framing is especially instructive as a use of spatial imagination in emergent spiritual practices associated with Stone Mountain. As I demonstrate in this chapter, the use of the mountain as a focusing lens for

astral projection into the interior of the mountain or as a portal to other dimensions provides an exceptional opportunity for the application of spatial analysis to contemporary non-traditional and extra-institutional religious practices at Stone Mountain.

At the same time, the examples of New Age spiritualities discussed in this chapter provides an opportunity to incorporate additional tools into this spatial study of religion. Specifically, the term New Age poses particular challenges which may be met using a spatial model of religion sensitive to the complexities inherent in understanding religious movements which fall beyond the borders of traditional concepts utilized in comparative religious studies. The examples of New Age spirituality explored in this chapter serve to facilitate a more substantial description of religion and sacred space at Stone Mountain.

The fifth and final case study provided in Chapter Eight examines the development and evolution of the Stone Mountain Park Christmas celebration since Herschend Family Entertainment (HFE) took over management of the entertainment venues in the late 1990s. By developing its own corporate religion, HFE has successfully negotiated the requirements of constitutional and state principles regarding the separation of church and state while avoiding censure from the more conservative representatives of the Southern Christian establishment in the region. When comparing their work at Stone Mountain -- a facility they manage but do not own -- with their Christmas events at the

parks they do own, it is clear that HFE has deliberately cultivated a secularized Christmas entertainment venue at Stone Mountain. At the same time, at a location isolated from the main holiday attractions, they have provided a sacred space for reflection on the Christian myth of the incarnation of the messiah for those who value that narrative as an integral part of their Christmas celebration. The judicious use of space by the entertainment corporation indicates the relevance of critical spatial analysis.

Simultaneously, it is just as important to have an understanding of corporate religion and similar concepts which help to reveal the subtle dimensions of religious and popular spiritual concepts and practices often deployed outside of traditional religious institutions and their structures. HFE's success at Stone Mountain is in large part due to the cooperation of the visitors who attend Stone Mountain Park Christmas events informed by their own training in American Christmas beliefs and practices. Without their tacit knowledge and acceptance of these ideas and activities, it is doubtful HFE would realize the degree of success it has experienced.

Finally, an indication of the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the corporation and its consumers is found in the training of the next generation which is apparent throughout the Christmas celebrations at the park. Parents gently guide their children through the intricacies of the various myths and narratives associated with the American Christmas experience. This process, supported by

HFE with the many child-friendly activities available to visitors, helps train a new generation of potential consumers of this corporate religion. These will be the visitors to future celebrations who will look fondly back upon their Christmas memories as they lead their own children through the familiar and beloved rituals and stories.

The project concludes in Chapter Nine with thoughts about the role of spatial analysis in religious studies and the relevance of both place and religion to identity formation. While drawing upon conclusions generated from the previous case studies, the chapter sketches the relevance of spatial analysis of religious actions to gain greater insights into religious identity formation with brief descriptions and discussions of three additional events. Two of the three events -- the AtlantaFest Christian Music Festival and the Stone Mountain Scottish Festival and Highland Games -- are conducted within a large fenced-in meadow and wooded area northwest of the monument and just west of the Antebellum Plantation. The area is serviced by a large parking lot and is used for multiple events throughout the year at the park which require separate admission. The Indian Festival & Pow-Wow, as was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, takes place in the enclosed Antebellum Plantation complex which includes space for ritual dancing, demonstrations, and various vendors. As is the case with the other two festivals, the Indian Festival & Pow-Wow requires separate admission. The three events may be usefully described using spatial

analysis. In addition, they each provide examples of the importance of religious identity formation at Stone Mountain. The mountain is not only a screen upon which the self and the sacred are projected, it is also a mirror which serves to confirm and reinforce identity.

The insights derived from a spatial analysis of religion at Stone Mountain demonstrate the importance of a careful consideration of place/space within which religious actions take place. As was noted earlier in this chapter, the thesis serves to illustrate the role of spatial analysis in religious studies, exemplify the relevance of extending candidates for analysis beyond traditional parameters of religion and sacred space, and point to potential intersections between spatial analysis and religious identity. Taken as a whole, the case studies demonstrate the applicability of spatial analysis at Stone Mountain while pointing toward the fruitfulness of similar analysis at other non-traditional, extra-institutional sites harboring religious activities of various and differing kinds. The tools of spatial analysis, as this study will demonstrate, can provide scholars with new opportunities for the study of religion which would otherwise might be neglected.

Chapter Two Spatial Analyses of Religion

The examination of events and practices associated with religious or spiritual activities at a state park located in a large metropolitan region in the southeastern United States involves some choices. Particular narratives are emphasized while others are neglected. Certain historical figures and themes are identified and explored. Institutional contests for authority and respect are located and described. There is an abundance of data and a need to find ways to screen that information in the effort to identify patterns which will help make sense of the phenomena under consideration. Fortunately, there are several methodological tools available to facilitate the process of explaining religious beliefs and practices at a particular place.

In the case of Stone Mountain, the fact that the site is a natural landmark in the region suggests the viability of a spatial approach to the project using tools available from landscape analysis.¹ Since it is located in an area within easy reach of Atlanta's mass transit and highway systems, the site is also subject to analytical tools

¹ Belden C. Lane, *Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality*, Expanded ed. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); J. E. Malpas, ed., *The Place of Landscape: Concepts, Contexts, Studies* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011); D. W. Meinig, ed., *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

derived from urban spatial analysis.² The emplacement of a large war memorial into the side of the monadnock enables analysis drawing from work focusing on monuments in the construction of sacred space (see Figure 2.1 in Appendix 4).³ The use of the park for a range of recreational purposes, including its utilization for daily exercise by members of diverse communities, suggests the relevance of tools drawn from literature attentive to the quotidian aspects of constituting place amidst space.⁴

In addition to the preceding analytical spatial approaches, there are particular tools available for exploring the religious or sacred or spiritual activities which take place at Stone Mountain. Work in the geography of religion is relevant since it helps to orient the reader to the local religious landscape.⁵ There is also important work in philosophy which helps to highlight significant

² Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*; Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996).

³ Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995); Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson, eds., *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003); Louis P. Nelson, ed., *American Sanctuary: Understanding Sacred Spaces* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

⁵ Lily Kong, "Geography and Religion: Trends and Prospects," *Progress in Human Geography* 14, no. 3 (1990): 355-71; Lily Kong, "Global Shifts, Theoretical Shifts: Changing Geographies of Religion," *Progress in Human Geography* 34, no. 6 (2010): 755-76; David E. Sopher, *Geography of Religions*, Foundations of Cultural Geography Series (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967); Roger W. Stump, *The Geography of Religion: Faith, Place, and Space* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008).

questions about religious ideas and doctrines when framed from a spatial perspective.⁶ Elements of these geographical and philosophical approaches to place and space also will be used in this project.

However, the literature referenced so far serves as background for the central approach undertaken in this thesis. What is crucial for this study are frameworks and methods for engaging questions of space and place developed by scholars in religious studies who understand religion as a critical -- albeit contested -- category that can be studied in ways distinctive from theological frameworks or, indeed, approaches in other social scientific and humanistic disciplines. The strength of this approach is that it provides a set of tools which can be drawn upon in order to illuminate instances of religious practices which may escape attention using other lines of inquiry.

In focusing intensively on particular bodies, objects, groups or places, we begin to see the difficulty and erroneousness of distinguishing 'religion' from other social fields in order to investigate it without meaningful reference to its context. Such an act of scholarly reconnection inevitably requires a multidisciplinary and polymethodic process that brings a researcher into engagement with others within and beyond the study of religions who approach the study of that body, object, group or place and what goes on within it from sociological, geographical, cultural, historical, anthropological and economic perspectives using a variety of fieldwork and textual methods.⁷

⁶ Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1997); Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 22-27; J. E. Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁷ Kim Knott, "From Locality to Location and Back Again: A Spatial Journey in the Study of Religion," *Religion* 39, no. 2 (June 2009): 159.

This study will draw primarily upon the contributions of Tweed and Knott in developing a framework for engaging in spatial analysis of religion at Stone Mountain. The work of both scholars provides a wide range of descriptive and interpretative tools for better understanding the roles of space and place in religious activities at Stone Mountain.

As Knott has argued, a "methodology for the study of religion based on these spatial elements or terms requires a series of interpretive analyses, thinking first about the location of 'religion' in a given place or object from the perspective of the body, then in relation to its spatial dimensions, and so on."⁸ Religion on the ground is emplaced and located and a spatial approach to religion makes use of this information in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of the beliefs and practices under study. Moreover, by making use of a spatial approach to religion, we may gain insights into how religion is produced and reproduced within various cultural spaces. "Never inert preexisting containers," Tweed maintains, "devotional spaces are both *generated* and *generative*."⁹ Understanding the mechanisms by which religious beliefs and practices may be transmitted is a valuable asset in the study of religion at Stone Mountain.

Before moving into a more careful presentation of the proposed spatial analysis framework, there is a need to attend to the challenges presented by the use of the term

⁸ Knott, "From Locality to Location and Back Again: A Spatial Journey in the Study of Religion," 156.

⁹ Thomas A. Tweed, "Space," *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief* 7, no. 1 (2011): 121.

religion in contemporary religious studies. Tweed and Knott share reservations about the projection of religion onto beliefs, actions, and institutions which gain the interest of scholars of the subject. In this matter, they reflect a perennial concern voiced by many of their peers in the academic study of religion.¹⁰

In this chapter, I will discuss issues associated with the term "religion" within religious studies, specifically criticisms of the potential biases associated with an uncritical use of the term. I then turn to a materialist approach to beliefs and practices associated with what may be considered religious in order to underscore the importance of careful consideration of the mundane and secular contexts for these beliefs and practices. I then continue to make links between a materialist approach and a spatial methodology as the latter quite often can highlight areas of practice not usually covered by more particular conceptualizations of religion. In justifying a spatial methodology, I sketch the trajectory of thinking about space from early modern philosophers to the work of Lefebvre in particular. I then argue that Lefebvre's neglect of religion in his study of space was due to a parochial perspective on institutional religion which can easily be set aside in the effort to look at religious beliefs and practices in a broader context. Setting the stage for a spatial approach to religion, I provide an exposition of the work of Thomas Tweed and Kim Knott on the topic. Finally, I

¹⁰ Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, edited by Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 269-84.

draw upon Tweed and Knott to bring together several concepts which are assembled into a schema of spatial analysis of religion which will be utilized in the case studies in this thesis.

Arguments against the use of the term religion in the study of social movements which reflect commitments to non-natural agencies or energies and their associated doctrines and practices have been a staple in, for lack of a better phrase, religious studies for several years.¹¹ The claim is that the term religion is equivalent to more generally uncontested concepts such as culture and society and there is no need to resort to the former when either of the latter will suffice.¹² The worry is that the use of religion results in the attribution of fundamental needs for ideas and practices associated with the objects of the term. In so doing, the term is used to create and invest with authority unwarranted ideologies which could easily be avoided by utilizing the tools of cultural anthropology, sociology, and related disciplines.

Setting aside the semantic worries which characterize much of this literature, there are instructive lessons to be derived from the calls for reform. First, the academic study of religion is properly understood not as a distinct

¹¹ Russell T. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions, or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

¹² Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, 245.

discipline but instead as a constellation of disciplines centering on various social and cultural phenomena sharing one or more attributes generally linked to religion traditionally understood. William Alston's classic attempt to capture common features has served as a model for similar efforts to delineate what constitutes religion.

- (1) Belief in supernatural beings (gods).
- (2) A distinction between sacred and profane objects.
- (3) Ritual acts focused on sacred objects.
- (4) A moral code believed to be sanctioned by the gods.
- (5) Characteristically religious feelings (awe, sense of mystery, sense of guilt, adoration), which tend to be aroused in the presence of sacred objects and during the practice of ritual, and which are connected in idea with the gods.
- (6) Prayer and other forms of communication with gods.
- (7) A worldview, or a general picture of the world, as a whole and the place of the individual therein. This picture contains some specification of an over-all purpose or point of the world and an indication of how the individual fits into it.
- (8) A more or less total organization of one's life based on the world view.
- (9) A social group bound together by the above.¹³

As mentioned earlier, each of these characteristics can be studied using widely available tools in disciplines such as sociology and anthropology. The idea that they merit a unique approach tied to religious studies as a discipline is traceable to the now widely abandoned claim that religion is a *sui generis* phenomenon.

A related insight associated with the movement away from a distinct conceptualization of religion is the realization that the term is historically dependent upon its close association with Christian theology and religious institutions. In the United States, the academic study of

¹³ William Alston, "Religion," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 7, edited by Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 141-42.

religion emerged in the 1960s at state institutions of higher education when the study of religion as an object of critical inquiry was affirmed in a U.S. Supreme Court decision.¹⁴ Programs in and departments of religion were created or restructured at state colleges and universities during a unique period of disciplinary expansion in higher education.¹⁵ However, many of the faculty in religious studies had received their training in divinity schools which were the primary engine driving advanced studies in religion up to that time.¹⁶ Equivocations between Christian theology and religion were readily made and continued for decades.

Therefore, much of the criticism of the use of the term religion is leveled not against adherents and practitioners but rather against scholars and academics who use the term in an uncritical and ahistorical manner, quite often unconsciously incorporating Christian, particular Protestant Christian, theological assumptions. However, now that the justification for a deflationary approach to the term religion has been argued extensively within the field, the need for more nuanced theoretical tools is clear.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Abington School District v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963).

¹⁵ Donald Wiebe, *The Politics of Religious Studies: The Continuing Conflict with Theology in the Academy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 106-12.

¹⁶ José Ignacio Cabezón and Sheila Greeve Davaney, eds., *Identity and the Politics of Scholarship in the Study of Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 11.

¹⁷ E. Thomas Lawson and Robert N. McCauley, *Rethinking Religion: Connecting Cognition and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Pascal Boyer and Brian Bergstrom, "Evolutionary Perspectives on Religion," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 37 (2008): 111-30.

One avenue of inquiry which addresses these methodological issues, which are quite often too dependent upon theological inheritances and strictly textual methodologies, is the examination of religious practices from a strictly materialist perspective. Manuel Vásquez's project in his *More Than Belief* identifies and defends a "materialist shift" in the academic study of religion. Vásquez cites several scholars who share a commitment to exploring the many ways in which religious beliefs and practices are "lived by human beings, not by angels."¹⁸ This approach to religion is not necessarily committed to the denial of the supernatural but it is primarily interested in the material conditions that enable humans to posit and experience what is claimed as supernatural.

Vásquez's treatment of space in the first chapter of the section on emplacement in his book recognizes the significance of the concept as a "core epistemological category" which is "tightly entwined with time, mobility, organic evolution, ecological inter-connectedness, and the contested construction of individual and collective identities."¹⁹ These social variables are intimately related to space and human nature and action. Vásquez approvingly cites Soja who in his *Postmodern Geographies* states "social being [is] actively emplaced in space and time in an explicitly historical and geographical contextualization."²⁰ Drawing from this initial epistemological grounding of

¹⁸ Manuel A. Vásquez, *More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5.

¹⁹ Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 292.

²⁰ Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (New York: Verso, 1989), 11.

space, Vásquez rehearses the contributions to religion and space developed in the works of Durkheim, Eliade, Tuan, Jonathan Z. Smith, Foucault, de Certeau, Lefebvre, and Tweed.

The placement of Tweed at the end of the chapter signals the importance of Tweed's approach to religion and space to Vásquez's effort to explain his materialist theory of religion. Vásquez's interests in religion and migration find common cause with the centrality of diasporic religion in Tweed's work. Using Tweed's account of Cuban exiles in Miami, Vásquez points out how Tweed draws upon Smith's concepts of locative and translocative to help explain the connections Cuban exiles made between their new homes in Miami and their native homeland. In addition, Vásquez notes, Tweed resonates with Lefebvre in his development of the supralocative or absolute space which links the religious practices of the Cuban exiles at their shrine in Miami to the sacred space of a highly nostalgic vision of their homeland.²¹ According to Vásquez, Tweed's multi-scalar explanation of the Cuban exiles serves as the basis for his development of Tweed's own theory of religion with its emphasis on metaphors of organic flows of religious concepts and practices which move across time and space.²² Tweed's approach, Vásquez argues, reflects the complementarity of space and time as explanatory categories describing the movement of religion across various cultural landscapes.

²¹ Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 286.

²² Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 288.

"With Tweed we have a fully reflexive, non-reductive materialist spatial theory of religion."²³

In the second chapter of the section on emplacement, Vásquez starts with a succinct rehearsal of the significance of Tweed's theory of religion.

I concluded chapter 10 with a discussion of Tweed's hydrodynamics of religion as an example of a promising emerging synthesis of (1) the long-standing concern for sacred space in religious studies; (2) the analysis of practice, power, and resistance in the process of place-making in critical geography; and (3) the growing literature on mobility from globalization, transnationalism, and diasporic studies. Tweed fruitfully combines the spatial metaphors of crossing and dwelling with aquatic tropes, including flow and confluences, to emplace religion in non-essential ways.²⁴

Building upon Tweed's work, Vásquez develops his amendments to Tweed's hydrodynamic theory of religion. Specifically, Vásquez first focuses on issues of power and resistance in the context of globalization. Drawing upon his own extensive ethnographic research, Vásquez argues that Tweed's focus on mobility must be balanced against the power dynamics inherent in the "mobility regime" of global neo-liberal capitalism and the entrenched authority systems utilized by hegemonic national security states.²⁵ Vásquez proceeds to turn to network theories to develop adjuncts to Tweed's hydrodynamic metaphors. "[T]he relational tropes of networks, webs, and pathways . . . may help us link embodiment, emplacement, and practice in the study of religion, since religious ideas, emotions, practices, and identities are produced by net-like neural infrastructures

²³ Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 289.

²⁴ Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 291-92.

²⁵ Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 294-95.

of cognition, ecological webs, and power-laden networks of social relations."²⁶ The addition of network analysis enables a more robust theoretical perspective which can engage some of the power dynamics obscured by the emphasis on mobility in Tweed's theoretical model. "Networks can help us to account for mobile religion's flexibility, mobility, connectivity, and innovation, without ignoring how it is often implicated in the hard realities of exclusion, exploitation, and subjugation, which are also part and parcel of globalization."²⁷

The second corrective Vásquez offers involves the inter-connections of body and nature and the importance of a critical ecological reorientation to a more complete understanding of religious concepts and practices. The conflation of ecology with landscape is helpfully criticized for its anthropocentric presumptions about the natural world. Here, Vásquez's materialist methodology is clearly evident as he pushes against the assumption that materiality is centered on human agency alone. After drawing upon Roy Rappaport's emphasis on cybernetics, systems theory, and ecology in his effort to describe the significance of religious ritual and its roles in human meaning-making,²⁸ Vásquez turns to psychologist James Gibson's discussion of

²⁶ Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 307.

²⁷ Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 311.

²⁸ Roy A. Rappaport, *Pigs for the Ancestors: Ritual in the Ecology of a New Guinea People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

the ecology of perception and the concept of affordances.²⁹ "Roughly, the affordances of things are what they furnish, for good or ill, that is, what they *afford* the observer . . . [affordances] are *ecological*, in the sense that they are properties of the environment *relative to* an animal."³⁰ An overly anthropocentric perspective on space is redressed via the recognition of the contributions the constituent elements of the environment, independent of human observation and experience, present for our perceptions of ourselves and our locations.

Gibson argues for a tight interdependence between awareness of self and awareness of environment. Movement and thought both are involved in the human experience as it emerges from engagement with environment.

The two kinds of existence should not be confused. One's nose, hands, feet, heart, and stomach are co-perceived; and so are one's pains and itches and the aftereffects of stimulation (after images and feelings of vertigo); and so are one's ideas, insights, fantasies, dreams, and memories of childhood. But they should not be thought of as constituting a different realm of existence or a different kind of reality than the ecological, nor are they "mental" as against "physical."³¹

Thus, the opportunities for attributing sacred space emerge not only from the social networks and cultural contexts of human agency but also are driven by the affordances presented by the environment. "Structured and structuring praxis generated by incorporated cultural and religious

²⁹ Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 315; James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1979); James J. Gibson, "Notes on Affordances," in *Reasons for Realism: Selected Essays of James J. Gibson*, edited by Edward S. Reed and Rebecca Jones (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1982), 401-18.

³⁰ Gibson, "Notes on Affordances," 403-4.

³¹ Gibson, "Notes on Affordances," 418.

wisdom goes hand-in-hand with the environment as we make places our home or as we sacralize them."³² A sacred space is not only a screen upon which cultural constructs are projected. It also, by virtue of its ecological features, impresses itself upon our experience of the place. "The scholar of religion who takes ecology seriously . . . takes into account the multiple, intra-active forms of materiality that makes possible those experiences, practices, artifacts, and institutions practitioners and scholars call religious."³³ This perspective helps to explain, for example, the reports of spirituality precipitated by the act of ascending Stone Mountain. Independent of tradition or institutional justification, the affordances emerging from the ascent are sufficient for generating the possibility of constructing a sacred walk up the monadnock.

The materialist approach described by Vásquez provides an important framing device for the study of religion undertaken in this thesis. It grounds a methodology which looks to the mundane and secular manifestations of ideas and practices linked to popular views of the sacred as they are exercised within the context of an American suburban state park. This approach is clear about the primacy of culture and society over any separate conceptualization of religion. At the same time, it recognizes the value of religious studies as an institutional and intellectual conveyance for drawing upon different disciplines in an effort to gain

³² Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 318.

³³ Vásquez, *More Than Belief*, 319.

insights into social movements popularly characterized as religious.

In this project, an interdisciplinary approach to the study of religion at a particular location is utilized. However, the various methods share a common grounding within the parameters of a materialist perspective on religion. At the same time, they represent different disciplinary constellations. What is accomplished by the use of these approaches is a critical engagement of the subject of the study from a variety of perspectives while demonstrating the construction of and contestation for sacred space in one location in the southeastern United States in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

The spatial dynamics involved in the construction of space set apart for meaning-making actions provides an illustration of some the complexities associated with the use of religion when describing these phenomena. The beliefs and practices referenced by "religion/religions/religious" remain open to examination and explanation from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.³⁴ A spatial method helps to circumscribe the set of phenomena associated with religion/s and in so doing helps to illuminate the terrain within which religious actions emerge.

'Religion' is not a native term; it is a term created by scholars for their intellectual purposes and therefore is theirs to define. It is a second-order, generic concept that plays the same role in establishing a disciplinary horizon that a concept such as 'language' plays in linguistics or 'culture' plays

³⁴ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

in anthropology. There can be no disciplined study of religion without such a horizon.³⁵

A spatial approach does not eliminate the problems associated with efforts to define religion. It does, however, provide opportunities to engage the demanding work of better understanding the connections between culture and religion.

While most recent work in spatial analysis has focused on urban contexts, there is precedent for the appropriation of the approach for other types of places. For example, Henri Lefebvre's earliest work on the production of space explored rural locations as he developed his critical framework. A more pressing challenge is presented by the relative absence of spatial analyses of religious practices in the literature.

This can be traced to disciplinary focus in many cases. Many key theorists instrumental in the development of spatial analysis ignore religion while others confuse theology with religion and dismiss both in the process. For example, Lefebvre's "Notes Written One Sunday in the French Countryside" from his *Critique of Everyday Life* presents his recollections of his adolescent journey from the Roman Catholic tradition toward his version of a humanistic Marxism. "The Church" according to Lefebvre "is nothing more and nothing less than the unlimited ability to absorb and accumulate the inhuman."³⁶ The Roman Catholic Church is

³⁵ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion*, 281-82.

³⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, trans. John Moore, with a preface by Michel Trebitsch (London; New York: Verso, 1991), 237.

equivalent to religion in Lefebvre's writing and serves to exemplify the need to eliminate alienation in his critical spatial theory. For Lefebvre, the Church is "nothing more than man's alienation, the self torn asunder, a magic spell."³⁷ In Lefebvre's thinking, the doctrines and hierarchy of the Roman Catholic tradition are to be overcome and eventually eliminated just as the alienating fetishes of capitalism are to be revealed for what they are and removed.

However, in reducing all religious activity to a particular version of Christianity, Lefebvre neglects the social relations which religious practices may reveal. This is one of the benefits of applying a spatial analysis of religion. It can help to illuminate dynamics embedded in particular places which reflect both long-standing and evolving features in local social landscapes and which may have been neglected by other applications of spatial analysis to the region.

Lefebvre's contributions to understanding space as a social construction marks a shift in thinking about space in the early twentieth century. Up until the late eighteenth century, most philosophers considered space to be a characteristic of the world. Some writers, following Newton, viewed space as an absolute which existed independently of the mind. Others, following Leibniz, understood space in a relational sense -- it is the relation between objects which constitutes what we call space. The relationships among these early modern philosophers on this topic is much more complicated than this comparison suggests

³⁷ Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, 237.

but the basic point holds: "Since the time of Newton and Leibniz, philosophers' struggles to comprehend these concepts have often appeared to take the form of a dispute between *absolute* conceptions of space, time and motion, and *relational* conceptions."³⁸ In both perspectives, space is thought to have an objective, physical reality. Space was considered a part of the mind-independent world that exists apart from our knowledge of it.

For Kant, however, space is a subjective quality of cognition; it is a structure our minds impose onto our representations of the world. Space is not a property of things in themselves and it is not a property of things as they exist independently of our knowledge of them. Instead, Kant links our ability to make spatial determinations to an innate ability which is ultimately linked to our rational capabilities. Again, space is not "out there" but rather a cognitive mechanism by which we order our external perceptions. We perceive the appearances of spatiality, but not the actual realities of space since they are not accessible to us, according to Kant.

It is therefore certain beyond the reach of doubt, and merely possible or probable, that space and time, as the necessary conditions of all (outer and inner) experience, are merely subjective conditions of all our intuition, and that in relation to these conditions all objects are therefore mere appearances, and do not exist for themselves as things given to us in this way. Hence, so far as their form is concerned, much can be said *a priori* about these objects, but nothing can ever

³⁸ Nick Huggett and Carl Hoefer, "Absolute and Relational Theories of Space and Motion," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, reprint, 2006 (Metaphysics Research Lab: Stanford University, 2018); see also, Nick Huggett, ed., *Space from Zeno to Einstein: Classic Readings with a Contemporary Commentary* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999).

be said about the thing in itself which may underlie these appearances.³⁹

Later, Heidegger will take issue with all three approaches to space and through his extensive focus on the nature of human existence [*Dasein*] develop an alternative course that eschews both the objective and subjective orientations in the three previous approaches characterized by Newton, Leibniz, and Kant. Instead, Heidegger infers from our actual actions as humans -- walking, reaching, etc. -- an approach to space that encompasses three distinct categories. World-space reflects our common sense idea of absolute space as a container within which we and objects are located.⁴⁰ Regions, the second type of space identified by Heidegger, reflect the subjective perspectives of our environments as they are manifest in the contexts of our actions. The final type of space involves the manner in which *Dasein* spatially exists in the world as exhibited through de-severance and directionality. The former refers to the process of an agent reaching for an object and the latter is determined by the orientation taken when that action takes place. However, and this is crucial for Heidegger, de-severance and directionality are not subjective features of the agent's experience. Instead, they characterize the manner in which the spatial features of *Dasein* operate in the world.⁴¹

³⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, edited and with an introduction by Marcus Weigelt, based on the translation by Max Müller (London: Penguin, 2007), 79.

⁴⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 79.

⁴¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 145.

Lefebvre's relationship to Heidegger is complicated and there is no direct lineage between their two approaches to space. However, it is accurate to state that Lefebvre's emphasis on space is in part indebted to Heidegger's critique of space as neither objective nor subjective. In addition, Lefebvre's focus on everyday life owes much to Heidegger's development of "everydayness" in relation to the way of being of *Dasein*.⁴² However, it owes even more to Marx's understanding of alienation. Lefebvre's joining together of Heidegger's "everydayness" with Marx's concept of alienation is crucial to an appreciation of the ideas associated with the production of space as developed by Lefebvre through his most important works on this topic: *Critique of Everyday Life*, *The Production of Space*, and *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time, and Everyday Life*.

Marx, rejecting Hegel's idealism in the final work in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*,⁴³ argues that Hegel incorrectly characterizes alienation as the inability to recognize that "[o]bjects that appear to exist outside of consciousness are in the last resort only a phenomenal expression of consciousness."⁴⁴ Emancipation from alienation for Hegel entails consciousness returning to itself via the recognition that there are no objects outside of consciousness. This is an epistemological issue with

⁴² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 422.

⁴³ Karl Marx, "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole," in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. and ed. by Martin Milligan (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2007), 142-70.

⁴⁴ Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge Studies in the History and Theory of Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 97.

Hegel. Knowledge must emerge from emancipated consciousness rather than empirical investigation. Marx, as a materialist, simply finds this unacceptable. However, Marx engages Hegel also on epistemological grounds and argues that Hegel's negation of the autonomous existence of objects reduces the human to an inner-self with no room for social intercourse. Hegel, according to Marx, has merely reintroduced classical individualism through a rather circuitous route. Hegel's idea of alienation is an illusion according to Marx.

Marx, on the other hand, "sees alienation as residing in a concrete relationship between man and his products."⁴⁵ Marx's assumption is that objects in the world are real; this is the materialist orientation in Marx's system. Human consciousness and human effort are distinct from the material bases of existence. Thus, for Marx, alienation is a product of material conditions, not of an unreflective consciousness. "For Hegel alienation is a state of consciousness; for Marx, alienation is related to real, existing objects subject to elimination only in the real sphere of object-related activity."⁴⁶ Object-related activity, for Marx, is production; and, production is most closely identified with labor.

Traditional political economy, according to Marx, fails to grasp the essential connections within the movement of private property, namely, the connection between alienation

⁴⁵ Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, 98.

⁴⁶ Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, 98.

and the money system. Competition and exchange are made to appear as fortuitous facts, when in actuality they are expressions of a necessary and inevitable course of development. The political economist "assumes as a fact, in historical form, what has to be explained."⁴⁷ The goal of Marx's analysis is to demonstrate, by means of "actual economic fact," how private property is a necessary consequence of estranged labor.

Marx identifies two initial aspects of estranging practical human activity, labor: (1) the objectification of the product of labor; and, (2) the alienation of the act of production within the labor process. The objectification of labor and the alienation of the act of production within labor are identified by Marx as causes of alienation. Whereas labor is alienation of the thing, producing activity is alienation of the self. This is the classic conception of alienation that provides the basis for Lefebvre's refinement of the term in his development of the social production of space.

Lefebvre's writings carry forward Marx's emphasis on alienation but move beyond the latter's focus on the production which occurs only at the places encapsulated by economic activities. Marx's classic discussion of the working day in the first volume of *Capital* meticulously details the effort to reduce working hours of laborers while the owners of capital continued to push for more hours from

⁴⁷ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, second ed., edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), 71.

which surplus value could be derived.⁴⁸ The idea that it is only the economic activities of humans with which Marx is concerned is mistaken, according to Lefebvre. "[W]orkers do not only have a life in the workplace," writes Lefebvre, "they have a social life, family life, political life; they have experiences outside the domain of labour."⁴⁹ The implications of Marx's concept of alienation for activities carried on outside of the workplace are developed by Lefebvre in his effort to apply Marx to other spheres of activity. Lefebvre develops Heidegger's "everydayness" into a critique of everyday life and the opportunities for production and resistance which may be achieved in various spheres of spatial practices in late capitalism, including the religious sphere.

Space for Lefebvre was not a neutral container or environment for human activity but a subjective construct produced by humans in the interest of contending social and cultural forces. Social and cultural groups define themselves and assert their existence by inscribing their vision of reality ritually on particular spaces, such as buildings or territories, as tangible expressions of their collective identities and sense of home. This appropriation of space often brings them into competition and conflict with other groups, making space a primary dimension of an ongoing lived political dynamic of production, appropriation, and redefinition. Scholars influenced by Lefebvre approach the study of religious space as an analysis of competing discourses, conflicting territorial claims, and contests over the meanings of place. Lefebvre's theories were reinforced by geographer Edward W. Soja [1989], who insisted that 'there is no unspatialized social reality' and 'there

⁴⁸ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, introd. by Ernest Mandel, trans. Ben Fowkes, reprint, 1867, Penguin Classics (London; New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1990), 340-416.

⁴⁹ Henri Lefebvre, "Toward a Leftist Cultural Politics: Remarks Occasioned by the Centenary of Marx's Death," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grosberg (London: Macmillan, 1988), 78.

are no aspatial social processes,' and by philosopher and social scientist Michel de Certeau, who defined space as 'practiced place' in his influential *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984).⁵⁰

In sum, Lefebvre rejects the tendency to isolate the sphere of labor and production from the sphere of leisure and consumption. It is these two spheres, not the sphere of labor and production alone, which are utilized as economic, cultural, and political systems are legitimized and reproduced.⁵¹

Lefebvre's understanding of the power dynamics which can be revealed in socially constructed spaces, combined with his critical appreciation of the value of the mundane and routine practices which constitute our daily routines, provides a platform for the more specific work in spatial analysis of religious practices which I develop via a hybridization of the work of Tweed and Knott.

Before turning to Tweed and Knott, however, the work of an earlier scholar in religious studies who was especially attentive to the importance of space bears mentioning as a way to frame what follows in this chapter. Jonathan Z. Smith's work on ritual and place helped to set the stage for other efforts to engage the spatial aspects of religious practices. Rejecting Mircea Eliade's foundational claim that sacred space is retroactively recognized as such via

⁵⁰ Bret Carroll, "Religion in Space: Spatial Approaches to American Religious Studies," in *Religion: Oxford Research Encyclopedias* (Retrieved 6 Nov. 2015, from <http://religion.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-13>, 2015).

⁵¹ Jason Edwards, "The Materialism of Historical Materialism," in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, ed. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 289.

ritual actions,⁵² as was mentioned in the previous chapter, Smith argues that sacred space is *created* via ritual action. "Ritual is not an expression of or a response to 'the Sacred'; rather, something or someone is made sacred by ritual" ⁵³ Setting aside Eliade's emphasis on the sacred and the profane as markers for the presence or absence of sacred space, Smith develops the pairing of locative and utopian approaches to reflect tendencies toward particular places or toward idealized no places. In the context of this thesis, Smith's emphasis on place in the study of religion helped set the stage for others to follow similar trajectories.

So, for example, Smith's inversion of Eliade's claims about the origins of the sacred resonate with Thomas Tweed's efforts to characterize religion as a dynamic process which circulates through time and space, making homes, and crossing boundaries.⁵⁴ While Smith's approach is heavily indebted to textual analysis, Tweed draws upon ethnographic work with highly mobile communities and examines the variables which contribute to their understanding of sacred spaces. Like Smith, Tweed notes the importance of ritual in these locations which become set apart as sacred. Knott's work, introduced in the previous chapter, shares much with that of Smith and Tweed but departs from their concentration on sacred spaces -- both textual and physical. Instead,

⁵² Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 20-24.

⁵³ Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual*, 105.

⁵⁴ Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 54.

Knott develops a spatial approach which is keyed to the appropriation of ostensibly secular spaces for religious purposes. Knott's work evolved with an interest in how secular and primarily urban spaces are utilized in everyday activities which can broadly be characterized as religious.

Nevertheless, Knott's method overlaps in significant ways with that of both Smith and Tweed. All three scholars focus on the material circumstances of what is characterized as religious and provide analytical tools which may be drawn upon by others pursuing similar projects. This study will make some reference to Smith's important insights on the matter but will draw primarily upon the contributions of Tweed and Knott in developing a framework for engaging in spatial analysis of religion at Stone Mountain. As will be explained below, this schema borrows from the work of both scholars to provide a wide range of descriptive and interpretative tools for better understanding the roles of space and place in religious activities at Stone Mountain.

Tweed's *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* provides a notable example of the materialist turn in the study of religion and incorporates many elements of spatial analysis in the effort. In his book, Tweed develops an account of religion that focuses on movement and place with a significant emphasis upon the need to examine the connections between biology and culture. Working with an acute sense of his own position as a theorist, Tweed offers the following definition of religion: "Religions are confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and

confront suffering, by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries."⁵⁵ Tweed's definition emerges only after an extended discussion of his location as a scholar of religion and the challenges involved in establishing disciplinary tools such as the term religion.

Scholars, I have argued, have role specific obligations not only to consider root metaphors -- and their implications -- but also to enter the debates about how to define the field's constitutive terms. We are stuck with the category *religion*, since it fixes the disciplinary horizon, and our use of it can be either more or less lucid, more or less self-conscious. So we are obliged to be as clear as possible about the kind of definition we are offering the orienting tropes that inform it. Whether we imagine theory as our primary professional work or not, we are called to categorical fussiness. All of us.⁵⁶

So, his effort to define religion -- a term to which he argues we are committed -- emerges as the product of his inductive study of practices and beliefs we have come to associate with the term. After establishing the background to his theory and then specifying its contents, Tweed devotes the remainder of the book to carefully unpacking the tropes that together constitute the definition. It is his work with the phrase "make homes" that merits attention.

In the chapter titled "Dwelling," Tweed develops a "kinetics of homemaking" which entails the "confluence of organic-cultural flows that allows devotees to map, build, and inhabit worlds."⁵⁷ In exploring these ideas, Tweed draws upon temporal and spatial orientations, pointing out their connections to both biological and cultural frameworks. The

⁵⁵ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 54.

⁵⁶ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 53.

⁵⁷ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 82.

author works carefully in this chapter to help the reader to understand how temporal and spatial perspectives are utilized in order to make a place -- a dwelling -- in the world.

Referring to research in cognitive science, Tweed explains that our thinking about our spatial orientation takes place in two regions of the brain that reflect two distinct ways of representing those locations.

Cognitive scientists have distinguished *autocentric* (self-centered) and *allocentric* (object-centered) spatial representations or reference frames. Autocentric frames of reference involve the parietal neocortex, draw on cognitive processes involved in action and attention, and orient humans in the immediate environment. . . . In contrast, allocentric reference frames involve the hippocampus and adjacent cortical and subcortical structures, concern large distances and long-term spatial memory, and aid humans in orienting and navigating space beyond the body and the immediate environment.⁵⁸

Tweed then points to the research indicating there are cultural variations in the use of spatial language. This underscores the idea that "spatial orientation, like temporal orientation, is a cultural as well as a biological process."⁵⁹ As is the case with many other aspects of cognition, biology may set the parameters but cultural variables can drive representations along a range of possibilities within those constraints. This is a key issue in a materialist methodology. The parameters determined by biology do not undermine the relative plasticity of behaviors that can emerge within various cultural contexts.

Having established the basic science that lies behind spatial representations, Tweed then draws upon his earlier

⁵⁸ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 93.

⁵⁹ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 95.

work with tropes and analogical reasoning to illustrate the role religion plays in appropriating spatial language. Metaphors "mediate representations of space", they propel "users between cognitive and emotional domains", and they are an "important source of cultural creativity and religious innovation" even as they "shape spatial representation."⁶⁰ So, for example, the Biblical metaphor of exile is appropriated by Cuban Americans to capture aspects of their own displacement and their hope for restoration. But even more than this, the metaphor is used with other tropes in constructing their narrative identity.

Yet even if that [exilic] metaphor was important, it was only one cultural trajectory in the crisscrossing flow of biocultural processes that created and re-created religious homemaking. Turning to allocentric and autocentric frames of reference produced at the intersection of neural pathways and migratory routes, Cuban Americans understood themselves as *far* from relatives and *north* of the island. For them, the exilic metaphor co-mingled with biblical narratives and familial memory in accounts about leaving and returning. That metaphor also intertwined with another trope, the symbol of Our Lady of Charity, which was anchored materially in the shrine's diminutive statue. It was a nationalist symbol that triggered powerful emotions -- including sadness -- in translocative and transtemporal rituals associated with institutions like the (uprooted) family and the (diasporic) church.⁶¹

In the remainder of the chapter, having explained his approach to religion as both watch and compass, Tweed then applies the tools of analysis to the ever-widening spheres of human existence that start with the body and then expand to encompass the home, then the homeland, and finally the cosmos. Within each realm of existence, temporal and spatial reasoning are utilized to establish boundaries that

⁶⁰ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 96.

⁶¹ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 97.

can help identify and secure dwellings or provide opportunities for various crossings from one location to another.

At the end of *Crossing and Dwelling*, Tweed acknowledges a few areas that stand in need of additional attention. Among these blind spots is the challenge raised by the hyphen between "organic" and "cultural" in the phrase "religions are confluences of organic-cultural flows." While he acknowledges the possibility that the nature of the connections between the two may simply elude us, Tweed also points to the idea that we may still learn more about the "interplay of organic and cultural processes in religion."⁶²

Maybe that's as far as our sightings can go. We may just have to get used to those blind spots and adjust our vision accordingly, but I would not dismiss the possibility that we might come to see and say more about the interplay of organic and cultural processes in religion -- and not just about temporal and spatial representation. How do the dynamics there on the hyphen of nature-culture affect the kinetics of dwelling and crossing? There has been research that bears on . . . questions at the hyphen, but my theory does not go much farther than gesturing toward those answers, even if it does reserve a place for more questions and answers about the transfluence of nature-culture.⁶³

It is this openness to "questions at the hyphen" that I find so instructive about Tweed's project. It offers an example of a sustained effort to draw upon aspects of scientific knowledge of the human condition while taking care to respect the cultural systems which exert significant influences upon the dwelling spaces constructed via religious practices. In addition, Tweed's acknowledgement of the "questions at the hyphen" indicates his respect for

⁶² Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 174.

⁶³ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 173-74.

the challenges involved in understanding the connections between the organic and the cultural.

A reservation I have with Tweed's discussion of the connections between the organic and the cultural involves his use of the term religion. While Tweed accepts that we must continue to use the term, and is clear about rejecting what he calls a strong version of the claim that religion is *sui generis*,⁶⁴ he still holds on to a nonreductive account of religion.

At the same time, religions cannot be reduced to economic forces, social relations, or political interests, although the mutual intercausality of religion, economy, society, and politics means that religious traditions, as confluences of organic-cultural flows, always emerge from -- to again use aquatic images -- the swirl of transfluvial currents. The transfluence of religious and nonreligious streams propels religious flows.⁶⁵

Tweed rejects what he views is a key premise in the work of Pascal Boyer⁶⁶ and others engaged in cognitive approaches to religion when he writes:

It is a premise that has been lucidly articulated by a contemporary cognitive theorist, Pascal Boyer: "The explanation for religious beliefs and behaviors is to be found in the way all human minds work" [Boyer 2001, 2]. As a corrective to theories that obscure those individual micro-processes, this perspective is helpful, but I think we need to find other ways to emphasize that religions involve both biological and cultural processes.

It is impossible to disentangle the threads that embed persons in culture. . . . The best we can say is that mind and culture co-evolved⁶⁷

Tweed pushes the pendulum too far in the other direction. In the time since Sperber's *Rethinking*

⁶⁴ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 60.

⁶⁵ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 60.

⁶⁶ Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

⁶⁷ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 65.

*Symbolism*⁶⁸ initiated what might be called the cognitive turn in the study of religion, scholars have invested a good amount of effort in trying to understand cognition as it can be applied to cultural phenomena. The region where the spheres of biology and culture overlap is heavily contested. It may very well prove impossible to disentangle the various factors that link our minds to culture. But it is still too soon to make such a claim. Tweed's work is rich with potential for those wishing to explore the hyphen between biology and culture and there is much work left to be done. It may be best to set aside final pronouncements on our ability to understand the connections between mind and culture until we have had more time to consider the many possibilities available to us.

Still, for those interested in materialist accounts of religion, Tweed's project provides much from which we may benefit. Of special interest from my own perspective is Tweed's recognition of and sensitivity to the ambiguities that turn on the connection -- the 'hyphen' -- that floats between the organic or biological realm and the cultural realm. The nature of this connection, the mechanisms utilized for the transmission of information from one realm to another, strikes me as a major challenge to a materialist accounting of religion. This is one reason I explore the use of spatial categories, using Tweed's work as one model, to look at some of the ways that Stone Mountain is used spatially by practitioners of religion. I look at the ways

⁶⁸ Dan Sperber, *Rethinking Symbolism*, trans. Alice L. Morton, Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

the fixed space of the mountain is negotiated and seek out similarities among the various practitioners.

In addition to Tweed, I also draw upon other efforts to explore the use of space in connection to religious beliefs and practices. As was noted in the previous chapter, the work of Lefebvre has been influential in the thinking of Knott⁶⁹ who has developed an approach that can helpfully be used to supplement Tweed's understanding of space. For example, Knott observes that Tweed's understanding of religion assumes a context that is amenable to religious expression in the first place and thus misses other important locations. "Tweed's theory was not developed in order to explore the location of religion in the fabric of the secular. Its focal point is that which is ostensibly religious, not the context where religion might or might not be at work."⁷⁰ While Tweed thinks Knott's criticism may be due to her preference for the term sacred rather than religion,⁷¹ Knott's observation nevertheless points to the challenges involved in attempting to make sense of religious beliefs and practices in secular spaces. Since my project examines such a secular space, I draw extensively upon Knott's work to assist me in that effort.

⁶⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*; Knott, "From Locality to Location and Back Again: A Spatial Journey in the Study of Religion."

⁷⁰ Kim Knott, "Spatial Theory and Spatial Methodology, Their Relationship and Application: A Transatlantic Engagement," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 77, no. 2 (June 2009): 419.

⁷¹ Thomas A. Tweed, "Crabs, Crustaceans, Crabinesss, and Outrage: A Response," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 77, no. 2 (June 2009): 450.

Key to appreciating Knott's project is her use of Lefebvre's analysis of space as a synthesis of three kinds of space: physical, mental, and social. Lefebvre's project places space within the realm of human perception and therefore avoids the implication that one type of space -- physical space -- is superior as a purportedly neutral instance of space. Lefebvre's view of space is amenable to a materialist methodology since space is embedded within culture and is itself a social product.⁷² He argues social space is experienced via a triad of *representations of space* or 'conceived space' (the dominant realm of technical professionals who manipulate space for capitalism), *spaces of representation* or 'lived space' (the realm of culture that may be drawn upon to challenge the dominant realm), and *spatial practice* or 'perceived space' (the realm of everyday social life often ignored by the dominant realm).⁷³ This "trialectic" allows Lefebvre to avoid reductionism and establishes space in the interplay between the physical, the mental, and the social.

Building upon Lefebvre's three aspects of space, Knott proceeds to develop their relevance to the study of religion. As mentioned above, Lefebvre is largely silent on religious matters so Knott has to extrapolate from his project in order to make applications of Lefebvre's spatial method to religion. When explaining the connection between religion and *spatial practice* Knott states *spatial practice* is constructed as religious by practitioners and their

⁷² Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 404.

⁷³ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 36-40.

observers. So, for example, when we consider ritual practice it is "ritual, as sacred-making behavior, [which] brings about 'sacred' space."⁷⁴ Knott's discussion of *representations of space* points as an example to the manner in which medieval religious architecture was used to communicate authority through the manipulation of space. Later, as capitalism increases in influence, neo-Gothic buildings are used to indicate the success of the dominant members of society in a manner echoing earlier religious authority. Even as an increasingly secular and modern social order emerges, older religious spaces retain their significance and receive protection under calls for conservation and architectural conservatism.⁷⁵ *Spaces of representation* may erupt with religious significance as cultural forces are drawn upon in order to subvert dominant social norms via the creation of oppositional spaces. For example, in an era of globalization and cultural diversification, immigrant communities have successfully invoked spaces of opportunity to challenge dominant orders of power and authority. Citing the work of Christine Chivallon,⁷⁶ Knott explains how African-Caribbeans in Britain have drawn upon the dominant Christian tradition in order to create a "mental space . . . which liberates the speakers from the crushing discourse of racial difference and racism, and offers the possibility of transcendence and connection

⁷⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 43.

⁷⁵ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 47-48.

⁷⁶ Christine Chivallon, "Religion as Space for the Expression of Caribbean Identity in the United Kingdom," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19, no. 4 (2001): 461-83.

with others, both black and white.”⁷⁷ All three aspects of Lefebvre’s understanding of social space demonstrate the potential to provide insights into religious ideas and practices.

Knott’s effort to apply Lefebvre’s critical theory of social space to religion provides a set of basic categories with which to map the multiplicity of religious practices at Stone Mountain. Conjoined with Tweed’s four chronotopes -- the body, the home, the homeland, and the cosmos -- an explanatory structure emerges that provides the possibility of increased analytic capacity for exploring religion at Stone Mountain. The perspectives of the two scholars complement each other in the development of a set of spatial tools which engage a number of the variables present at Stone Mountain. For example, Knott’s focus on locations which fall outside of traditional sites of religious practices illuminates the activities taking place at a state park on the outskirts of a large metropolitan region. Tweed’s emphasis on movement and, especially, migration of groups in and out of areas which reflect shifting religious identities, helps to reveal contested spaces at Stone Mountain and rapidly changing social dynamics in the region. Drawing upon Knott and Tweed, the following system of spatial perspectives serve as a heuristic for exploring and understanding the variety of religious practices at the monadnock.

The schema will be drawn upon in a selective manner in each case study. Only those components which are helpful

⁷⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 53.

for the purposes of the case under consideration will be utilized. For example, in the examination of New Age spiritual practices in Chapter Seven the category of home is not relevant to the events and practices observed at the site. So, depending upon the particulars of each case study, the relevant components of the schema will be drawn upon in the analysis of the material. In addition, the discussion of the components of the schema will be presented within a narrative framework. This allows the research information to be woven into the components of the schema both to illuminate the events under observation and to demonstrate the relevance of the components of the spatial analysis.

Schema of Spatial Analysis
of Religion at Stone Mountain

1. Body: A basic fact of being human is our embodied existence. In fact, it is so fundamental it is often neglected or, when highlighted, dismissed. Tweed and Knott both recognize the fundamental embodiment of agency both as a locus of experience and as an object through which representation of space and the sacred may be achieved. A spatial analysis of religious practices must take account of body and the various ways bodies are both impacted by and act upon the environment.

2. Home: The construction, decoration, and inhabitation of domestic space is quite often heavily permeated with religious beliefs and practices. It is important to note how concepts and practices related to a

place of residence or a dwelling place domicile may be at work in a location and whether religious aspects of the domestic space have been extended to the site.

3. Homeland: Religious beliefs and practices extend beyond the immediate domestic sphere to encompass larger spaces of shared identities. In this category, ideas of local, regional, national, and global networks and relationships can come into play when values associated with this perspectives are linked to the location.

4. Cosmos: The expansion of identity and meaning-making moves ever beyond the immediate and earthbound to encompass the universe and our shared destinies. This category is perhaps most readily associated with traditional concepts of religion due to the metaphysical and spiritual associations quite often at work in reflection on the universal.

5. The dimensions of space -- physical, social, and mental: These fields represent the substantial framework of the location along with the network of social interactions and various projects which emerge from such interactions. The term "dimensions" is key here as the focus in this set of categories is on those aspects of space which readily lend themselves to expression as artifacts, relationships, and ideas.⁷⁸

5A. Physical Dimension of Space: The basic features of the site are examined for their manifestation of religious beliefs and practices.

⁷⁸ Kim Knott, "Spatial Methods," in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, edited by Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 497; Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 411.

5B. Social Dimension of Space: The religious interactions people express at the location and how they are constrained or facilitated by the site is the focus of this particular dimension.

5C. Mental Dimension of Space: Religious themes, concepts, ideas, and beliefs, inasmuch as they are linked to a site are the subject of this category.

6. The properties of space -- configuration, extension, simultaneity, and power: These features are discerned in an analysis of the way in which the space is organized and the changes which have taken place over time. In addition, the current connections to other locations both in terms of proximity and shared features provides another opportunity for analysis. Gaining insights into these properties quite often reveals the power dynamics that occur when access to particular places must be negotiated among various groups.⁷⁹

6A. Configuration: This category refers to the fact that the dimensions of space -- physical, social, and mental -- are manifested together at particular sites and their interrelated organization or configuration, can provide additional insights into the various dynamics at work.

6B. Extension: Temporal features of a site are explored in this category. While there is a historical component to a spatial methodology, it is history manifest within the context of a particular site over time.

Following de Certeau on this point, Knott notes that often

⁷⁹ On this particular set of categories, see Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 20-29, and Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 22-23, to which Knott specifically refers.

this category capture specifically religious legacies associated with a site.⁸⁰

6C. Simultaneity: In addition to the diachronic features of a site reflected in the property of extension, simultaneity references the contemporary interactions which often occur among similar sites or at a particular site at which differing types of practices share the same space.

6D. Power: Sites, even those based on natural landscapes, are appropriated, developed, bought and sold, consumed, etc. How a site is subject to these various and sometimes conflicting actions and forces is the subject of this final property of space.

7. The aspects of space: These categories are most directly connected to Lefebvre's work and provides Knott with the tools needed to subject religious practices to spatial analysis. In these categories, the focus is on how people make use of a space throughout in their day-to-day interactions. It also involves analysis of how the space has been conditioned and maintained by those empowered with control over the site. Finally, there is a recognition of how the space is imagined and re-imagined by those who are outside of the scope of authority structures entrusted with control of the site. Together, these three categories may reveal ways "religion is practiced, constituted and lived in . . . ostensibly secular places, and for how it might be studied and interpreted."⁸¹ .

⁸⁰ Knott, "Spatial Methods," 497; de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 201.

⁸¹ Knott, "Spatial Methods," 497.

7A. Perceived Space: This category relates to the mundane and frequent use of space as those making use of the site conduct their daily activities.

[Perceived space] structures all aspects of daily life and urban living, from minute, repeated gestures to rehearsed journeys from home to work and to play. It is experienced through practical perception, through commonsense, and is taken for granted. Such practice embraces the activities of production and reproduction, and generates spatial competence and performance.⁸²

7B. Conceived Space: In this category, space is ordered and maintained by those agents granted the authority to do so by various institutional entities.

[Conceived space] comprises those dominant, theoretical, often technical, representations of lived space that are conceived and constructed by planners, architects, engineers, and scientists of all kinds. It is the space of capital, its objective examples being factories, monuments, towers and office blocks. Always embedded in such representations are ideology, knowledge, and power. This conceived space is at one remove from that which is lived, but is nevertheless public, influential, authoritarian, and invasive in its mastery over the body and everyday spaces.⁸³

7C. Lived Space: Periodically, those usually excluded from the machinations of conceived space will engage in activities which disrupt or subvert the dominant order.

What makes this *lived* space different to *perceived* space. . . is the intervention of culture, not as ideology (as in *conceived* space), but through the imagination as tradition and symbol. . . . [L]ived spaces, imbued with distinctively local knowledge, often run counter to spaces generated by formal, technical knowledge.⁸⁴

8. The dynamics of space -- production and reproduction: These final categories are intended to represent the ability of particular places to evoke

⁸² Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 39.

⁸³ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 36.

⁸⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 37.

"practices, ideas, and sensual responses which are additional to those evoked by other similar places, places in general, or by smaller parts of this place."⁸⁵ This idea is central to Lefebvre's arguments in *The Production of Space* which emphasize the dynamic nature of space.

8A. Production: Collectively, the categories covered in the aspects of space result in the creation of space in its various relational senses.

8B. Reproduction: Over time, the space reconstituted as it adapts to changing circumstances and social forces.

In the following case studies, the schema of spatial analysis will be applied to Stone Mountain in order to reveal religious aspects of the site. A summary of the schema and related key terms and concepts follows.

Summary of Schema

| Categories | Related Terms and Concepts |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Body | agency, embodiment |
| 2. Home | residence, domestic, homemaking |
| 3. Homeland | local, national, regional, global |
| 4. Cosmos | universal |
| 5A. Dimensions of Space - Physical | material characteristics of space |
| 5B. Dimensions of Space - Social | interpersonal characteristics of space |
| 5C. Dimensions of Space - Mental | discourse about concepts, themes, ideas, beliefs |
| 6A. Properties of Space - Configuration | inter-relations among physical, social, and mental dimensions of space |
| 6B. Properties of Space - Extension | history, legacy |

⁸⁵ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 129.

| | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 6C. Properties of Space - Simultaneity | similar spaces, sharing of spaces |
| 6D. Properties of Space - Power | exercise of authority |
| 7A. Aspects of Space - Perceived Space | quotidian, mundane, normal |
| 7B. Aspects of Space - Conceived Space | planning, organizing, building, bureaucracy, institution |
| 7C. Aspects of Space - Lived Space | subversive, disruptive, inversion |
| 8A. Dynamics of Space - Production | creation |
| 8B. Dynamics of Space - Reproduction | replication |

Drawing upon this analytic framework in the case studies which follow I indicate the multiplicity of religious practices that take place in the sacred spaces crafted at Stone Mountain. The components of the schema sketched above will be deployed in a selective manner in order to foster a dynamic approach to the material. It is crucial to the spatial methodology to avoid a static presentation of historical data but instead to attempt to impart to the reader a sense of the importance of space and place in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of religious actions at the site. The location -- natural and secular -- provides a unique screen upon which the aspirations of those seeking sacred space may be projected. The schema will help to bring those various efforts into greater relief.

Returning to the benefits to be derived from the spatial analysis of religion and the related challenges

presented by attempts to define religion sketched at the beginning of this chapter, the idea of religion as a way of projecting a world presents a promising interpretative approach. It reflects both the material basis for religious phenomena and the constructed nature of the experiences and practices associated with those phenomena. The process of projecting a world is not a revelation from above; it is an artifact of human activities. Moreover, the tools of spatial analysis provide opportunities for exploring the social forces at work in various efforts to project meaning onto local landscapes. As the following case studies will demonstrate, worlds have been projected onto the side of Stone Mountain, into its massive interior and the sky above it, along the side of its walk-up trail, and in various efforts to imagine its significance in the past, present, and future. This study will demonstrate the viability of spatial analysis of religion/s at a particular location and in so doing, the potential of similar efforts at other locations where worlds are being projected. In this sense, the case studies in this thesis may be considered both examples of the application of spatial analysis to a particular location, Stone Mountain, and preliminary justifications for continuing spatial analysis at other sites.

Chapter Three Research Resources and Methodologies

The location of Stone Mountain in a popular state park with a long and controversial history affords the researcher several sources of information to draw upon in developing a spatial analysis of religion at the monadnock. As was explained in the previous chapter, the following case studies make extensive use of the work of Kim Knott¹ and Thomas Tweed² to frame my perspective on sacred space. Attention is paid to the material conditions of place and location, the myths and histories embedded in the environment, and the fully articulated and muted expressions of power displayed in the memorial and built environments. All are considered from the perspectives of traditional and innovative expressions of religious and spiritual practices.

The original research question which served to initiate the focus of this study emerged from my informal observations of unconventional or non-traditional religious or spiritual practices at a state park in a large metropolitan region. In my early reflections on the veneration of memorial carving, the patriotic celebrations, and the Easter sunrise service, the common denominator was the location at which these different activities took place. The status of Stone Mountain as a location, a place, a space, providing opportunities for the expression of beliefs and practices specifically and more broadly associated with religion or spirituality drew my attention. This very

¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*.

² Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*.

simple realization facilitated my exploration of a spatial theoretical perspective and ultimately resulted in the schema developed in the previous chapter.

When thinking about different research methods to use in my study of the site, I was almost immediately drawn to the case study approach. In addition to the examples mentioned in the previous paragraph, I shortly discovered other examples of religious practices at Stone Mountain. Given the existence of several potential cases, it seemed the collective case study, as Robert Stake describes it, was the best fit for what I was observing.

[A] researcher may jointly study a number of cases in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition. I call this collective case study. It is instrumental study extended to several cases. Individual cases in the collection may or may not be known in advance to manifest some common characteristic. They may be similar or dissimilar, redundancy and variety each important. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases.³

With this particular approach, the use of several cases in the application of the schema can be developed to examine similarities and differences among the categories and reveal previously obscured religious practices and dynamics at the site. Depending on the outcome, the project may serve to justify the application of spatial methodology to other sites.

The use of the collective case study lends itself to several forms of data accumulation involving their own

³ Robert E. Stake, "Case Studies," in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, second ed., edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003), 138.

methodological concerns. John Creswell explains that the “data collection in case study research is typically extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials.”⁴ Specifically, according to Robert Yin, there are six sources of information typically used in case studies: “documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observations, and physical artifacts.”⁵ The information gathered for each case study was then analyzed using the schema.

In each case study, I draw upon qualitative inquiry to help generate the data grounding the project. Specifically, I employed the following approaches.

1. I made use of historical resources held at several libraries and archives.
2. I engaged in observation, both direct observation and participant observation, at events held throughout the year at Stone Mountain.
3. I conducted interviews with individuals engaged in religious or spiritual practices at the site.
4. I mined a wide range of sources available via social media and other sites located on the Internet.

These various streams of data served to provide a more accurate mapping of religious practices at Stone Mountain.

⁴ John W. Creswell, “Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry,” in *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, Second ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 75.

⁵ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2014), 105–6.

The first three approaches were anticipated in the early stages of planning for the project and all have yielded invaluable insights which have informed the case studies to follow in this project. However, it was only after I became fully engaged in the research that the fourth source of information emerged as an important body of data. The wealth of information available from the Internet became clear as I started exploring archival sources such as the Internet Archive (www.archive.org) and social media sites such as Myspace (www.myspace.com) and Facebook (www.facebook.com). The Internet, at least in its more popular form known as the World Wide Web,⁶ is well into its third decade of existence and has proven to be an enormous source of research material which continues to evolve in a dynamic process reflecting shifting approaches to cultural practices broadly relating to religion.⁷ The data retrieved from online sources has provided important additional perspectives on religious practices at Stone Mountain to supplement other approaches.

All of the resources utilized for this project have helped to make it clear that spatial analysis demands

⁶ James Gillies and Robert Cailliau, *How the Web Was Born: The Story of the World Wide Web* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁷ Heidi Campbell, ed., *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Pauline Hope Cheong, et al., *Digital Religion, Social Media and Culture: Perspectives, Practices and Futures* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012); Daniel Domínguez, et al., "Virtual Ethnography," *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research [Online]* 8, no. 3 (30 September 2007); Adolfo Estalella and Elisenda Ardèvol, "Field Ethics: Towards Situated Ethics for Ethnographic Research on the Internet," *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research [Online]* 8, no. 3 (30 September 2007).

extensive engagement with the history of the site under consideration, a thorough examination of its contemporary uses both by observations of those practices and through engagement with its practitioners, and, increasingly, an examination of the virtual landscape onto which the site is mapped by those for whom it provides significant, sometimes conflicting, meanings. In this chapter, I will review each source, highlighting the ways the data gathered connected to the approaches and insights presented in my case studies, and also suggesting fruitful interconnections among the different types of sources.

The archives I utilized included the DeKalb History Center Library and Collections at the DeKalb History Center in Decatur, Georgia; the Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta Historical Center; the Stuart A. Rose Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library in Rose Library at the Robert W. Woodruff Library at Emory University in Atlanta; Georgia State University Library's Special Collections and Archives in Atlanta; the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Georgia in Athens; and the Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois. In addition, other libraries such as the University of Alabama's University Libraries Division of Special Collections in the Gorgas Library have digitized historical documents available via the Internet which I have made use of in this project (see "Archives and Libraries Consulted" in Appendix 2).

When making use of archival resources, there is a need to locate them within their various contexts and to avoid

attributing to them, as recorded texts, special status within the much larger and diverse material culture.

[One should] treat written texts as special cases of artifacts, subject to similar interpretative procedures. In both texts and artifacts the problem is one of situating material culture within varying contexts while at the same time entering into a dialectic relationship between those contexts and the context of the analyst.⁸

Properly contextualized, the archival material allow access to some aspects of the historical events behind current representations of Stone Mountain. Using these resources, I explored the history and ideology of the "Lost Cause" and traced its legacy to contemporary efforts to represent, reject, and reclaim this perspective at Stone Mountain.⁹ In addition to the ideology of the "Lost Cause," I examined the history of contestations over ownership and use by various groups seeking to capture or retain an exclusive ability to project their ideals on to the monadnock. Finally, I engaged in a process of discovery as I encountered items with which I was unfamiliar until my research at the libraries and archives.

An example of the use of the memorial in conjunction with the Christmas season, the focus of the case study in

⁸ Ian Hodder, "The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture," in *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, second ed., edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003), 394.

⁹ Edward A. Pollard, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates* (New York: E. B. Treat & Co., 1866); Lloyd A. Hunter, "The Immortal Confederacy: Another Look at Lost Cause Religion," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*, edited by Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 185-218; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*, second ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009).

Chapter Eight, was discovered in the photograph archives at Georgia State University (see Figure 3.1 in Appendix 4). The image is from 1970 and is significant because it portrays the nearly complete memorial surrounded by large pine branches and lights with the illuminated text "PEACE ON EARTH" positioned over the heads of the Confederate leaders.¹⁰ Due to the nature of the artifact, it was assumed the display was a unique event. However, based upon my reading of a Facebook group dedicated to Stone Mountain, I was made aware of the existence of a recently published work highlighting the contributions of Roy Faulkner, the self-taught craftsman responsible for completing the memorial carving (see Figure 3.2 in Appendix 4). In *The Man Who Carved Stone Mountain*, another photograph of the Christmas wreath surrounding the memorial appears dated to 1967.¹¹ Subsequent use of the Facebook group revealed that the Christmas wreath was an annual event from 1967 for several years following. This was confirmed during the course of my interview of Wesley Freeman during one of the Confederate flag rallies which are the subject of Chapter Five.¹² Mr. Freeman, who stated he is the final surviving member of the construction crew which completed the work on the carving in 1972, also stated the Christmas message was placed on the

¹⁰ "Christmas Decorations Around the Stone Mountain Memorial," AJCP308-044a, Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photographic Archive (Atlanta: Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University, 1970).

¹¹ Donna F. Barron and Kay Jones, *The Man Who Carved Stone Mountain* (N.p.: Xulon Press, 2015), 42; Tyler Estep, "Roy Faulkner, the Man Who Carved Stone Mountain, Dead at 84," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 23 September 2016.

¹² Wesley Freeman, Personal interview (Stone Mountain Park, 2017).

scaffolding annually until work stopped after the death of one of his co-workers, Nelson Wilborn, in 1971.¹³

My discovery of the wreath was significant because it demonstrates the cooperation of the Georgia state park authorities in the use of the memorial for what is both a religious and secular holiday. In Chapter Eight, I will develop the case for seeing the Christmas wreath as an nascent example of the corporate religion which will emerge in the park in the first decade of this century. This tension between church/state realms of authority, driven by constitutional considerations in the United States, and corporate interests in the commodification of popular religious sentiment continues and will be explored at greater length in Chapter Eight.

In addition, and reflecting the polyvalent nature of a spatial approach to religion, the wreath can be viewed as suggesting the ability of *lived space* (schema item 7C) to subvert the intention of the designers and creators of the Confederate memorial carving. By any account, the display

¹³ During my interview with Mr. Freeman, he indicated the surviving family of Roy Faulkner, who died in 2016, did not accept his claim to have worked on the project under Faulkner's leadership during the final two years of completion of the carving. Indeed, in David Freeman's account of the carving (during the interview, Wesley Freeman made no mention of a relationship to the author of *Carved in Stone*), there is no mention of a "Wesley Freeman" among the workers David Freeman lists. In addition, *Carved in Stone* reports the death of Mr. Wilburn took place during the process of disassembling the construction scaffolding and associated equipment after the completion of work on the carving (Freeman, *Carved in Stone*, 179) and was not the immediate cause of termination of work on the carving as Wesley Freeman reported. I mention this because it indicates the need to be aware of possible errors in memory or recollection when collecting information from individuals, especially when referencing events dating back almost half a century.

of the three Confederate leaders mounted on their horses is not a statement of reconciliation. The placement of "Peace on Earth" above their images draws upon popular religious sentiments to undermine the messages associated with the carving. Intentional or not, the symbolism of the "Peace on Earth" display points to alternative readings of the memorial carving.

Another major development in my research emerged early on with my discovery of a self-published work documenting the spiritual adventures of a local shop owner in Atlanta. Located at the Emory University archives, *Holy Stone Mountain*¹⁴ records C. E. Cantrell's recollection of encounters with spiritual forces operating within the structure of the monadnock while engaged in meditative practices over the course of two decades. This work, the subject of Chapter Seven, has been instrumental in the emergence of a modest tradition of New Age spiritual practices associated with Stone Mountain over the past few decades and discovering it at the Emory archives marked a benchmark in this entire project. The Christmas wreath photograph and *Holy Stone Mountain*, along with other resources secured with the assistance of librarians and archivists at local repositories, provided an important stream of data which informs the following case studies.

Another important data source involves information derived from my observations, both direct observation and participant observation, at many of the events occurring at

¹⁴ C. E. Cantrell, "Holy Stone Mountain," Stone Mountain Collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library (Emory University, 1975).

Stone Mountain throughout the year.¹⁵ Living about fifteen miles away from Stone Mountain Park afforded me several opportunities to make the thirty-minute drive to the location to engage in my observations. The challenge was not in gaining access to the site but rather with finding the time to do so. My teaching load throughout the period of time I engaged in research for and writing up this thesis was four courses in the fall and five in the spring with an additional two during the summer generally expected of faculty. In addition to teaching, I had service and professional development expectations I had to meet. I also had responsibilities to my family which further restricted my research time. Nevertheless, I was able to make over sixty visits to the site (see "Site Visit Dates and Context" in Appendix 2).

My personal observations, structured and informed by the framing tools adopted for the project, provided additional insights helpful to the study of sacred space at Stone Mountain. The numerous hours spent attending different events and activities, organized by various independent groups, the corporation running the park, and the governmental bodies charged with oversight of Stone Mountain, generated a significant amount of data used to supplement the information derived from theoretical reflection, archival research, interviews, and social media.

¹⁵ Michael V. Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, "Rethinking Observation: From Method to Context," in *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, second ed., edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003), 107-54.

It is also important to discuss my social location in the context of my observations. As a middle-class, white male well into my fifties, I was never questioned about my activities by any park personnel when I was observing events and I readily blended in among the diverse crowds at the site. However, two different observational contexts -- one involving direct observation and the other an example of participant observation -- merit discussion as they relate to my identity while undertaking my research.

The first research event, the Good Friday *Via Crucis* ritual, which is the subject of Chapter Six, is a Spanish-speaking celebration which drew from the Hispanic Roman Catholic population in the area. During my direct observation opportunities, I was not able to simply become one of the crowd due to both language and ethnic differences. My attempts at securing answers to questions were generally unsuccessful and I suspect it was not clear to many in attendance what my intentions were as I took notes and photographs of the event.

It was only due to the decision to locate and use a Spanish language interpreter for the 2013 *Via Crucis* event that I was able to gain greater insight into the event. In addition, since the interpreter with whom I was working, Ms. Lorena Morales, was a young woman, I had my spouse, Elizabeth Bounds, join us in order to mitigate any potential problems regarding perceptions of my interactions with Ms. Morales. The use of an interpreter proved invaluable as Ms. Morales, my wife, and I were able to walk along with the participants and, through Ms. Morales, ask questions and

receive answers which helped to inform the work in Chapter Six.

The other experience, an example of participant observation, in which I was aware of my social location was the five Confederate battle flag rallies I attended. In this context, my race and age helped me assimilate more readily into the groups I was observing. Most of the individuals attending these events appeared not to take note of my presence and seemed to assume I was there for the same reasons they were. Their reactions were friendly and welcoming and was due, no doubt, to my sharing the same race as the participants and my being a male. I was keenly aware of how my white privilege was at work within this particular context.

It was only after I introduced myself and briefly explained the reason for my presence that those attending the rallies started to view me as an outsider. When this took place, my involvement in participant observation shifted to direct observation. They would answer my questions but with a minor suspicion of my true intentions. Had I not attempted to ask questions and seek permission for interviews, I do not think there would have been any reason to consider me anything other than another supporter of the Confederate battle flag and I would have continued the experience engaged in participant observation.

In addition to the use of participant and direct observation, it was during these observational opportunities that I was able to secure consent from several individuals who agreed to interviews (see the "Interviews" section of

Appendix 2). The process of identifying candidates for interviews emerged from observations made while at the site and tracking activities at various events. For example, during the 2013 Easter Sunrise Service at the top of Stone Mountain, I noticed three figures slowly carrying crosses up the mountainside (see Figure 6.7 in Appendix 4). One figure wore a crown of thorns and had red dye over his face and body to simulate blood. The three soon gathered the attention of many who were waiting for the service to start. I was able to make my way to the trio and introduced myself to the individual with the crown of thorns who was portraying Jesus. As a result of that interaction, I met with Jason Johnson, the young man performing the role of Jesus, later that week at a local Waffle House and conducted a long interview with him.¹⁶ I discuss the "cross walker" in Chapter Six and develop a case for his appropriation of the space at which the traditional service was conducted as a disruption of authority claimed by the established religious groups for their perspective on the sacred status of Stone Mountain during the religious service.

In another example, as a result of a conversation I had with someone at Stone Mountain, I discovered that a local Roman Catholic Church was coordinating *Via Crucis* pilgrimages up the mountain on Good Friday. I have observed six of the pilgrimages which are conducted in Spanish. In 2013, as I noted above, I located a young woman through an academic contact who agreed to translate the service and her

¹⁶ Jason Johnson, Personal interview (Stone Mountain, GA, 2013).

interactions with participants. During the follow-up interview with Ms. Morales, she helpfully explained the importance of the concept of the focus on local community for the participants.¹⁷ The pilgrimage, she said, was a very common event for many of the participants' families who were primarily from Mexico. It served to renew the bonds of the community, just as the Latin root of the English "religion" suggests, and the annual event at Stone Mountain worked in a similar manner (see Figure 3.3 in Appendix 4). Subsequent observations have revealed an evolution of the annual event which most recently incorporated a costumed passion play into the procession. As I note in Chapter Six, the assimilation of the predominantly Mexican Roman Catholic community into the constructed sacred space at Stone Mountain reflects the on-going dynamism endemic to the region.

The opportunities I have had over the past few years to walk around the various exhibits and activities at Stone Mountain Park have provided me with important sets of data which I use in the following case studies to explain and illustrate the significance of sacred space at the site. The photos I have taken, a select number of which are included in Appendix 4), have helped me to map these events and inform the narratives which follow. The many observation experiences have grounded me in the ethos of Stone Mountain while providing a foundation upon which the other sources of information rest.

¹⁷ Laura Lorena Morales, Personal interview (Stone Mountain Park, 2013).

Before moving on to my discussion of interviews, I want to mention the role of photographs and, to a lesser extent, videos taken during my observation. I have acquired 2910 digital photographs taken over the course of my visits to Stone Mountain Park since starting my research in 2010. After I purchased a digital camcorder in early 2016, I collected 119 short videos of my observations. The information represented in these images are invaluable adjuncts to the notes I took in my fieldwork journal while on site. While a typical journal entry would record the basic site information, the weather, the number of attendees, and other information I thought relevant at the time, the images I collected quite often would provide additional insights available only later. For example, it was while reviewing photos of the crucifixion scene at the top of Stone Mountain during the *Via Crucis* that I noticed the top of the Easter cross already in place for Sunday's service just behind the three crosses in use for the crucifixion. I was not aware of the other cross in the distance until later. The discovery of the crosses in that photo precipitated my efforts in subsequent years to secure a more clear image of the scene which is included as Figure 6.6 in Appendix 4. I suspect I will continue mining data in the images I have collected as I work at revising case studies for possible publication in the future.

A third type of inquiry entails interviews with those involved with or responsible for efforts to appropriate

Stone Mountain as a sacred space.¹⁸ Since the location is owned by the State of Georgia and leased to the privately-held Herschend Family Entertainment (HFE), access to interview or survey general patrons was limited. Among those I was able to interview for the project were members of local churches involved in the annual Easter Sunday Sunrise services, members of the local Roman Catholic church undertaking cross-bearing pilgrimages to the top of Stone Mountain on Good Friday, leaders of small groups using Stone Mountain for celebrations of New Age spirituality, and the creative staff responsible for commercial venues such as the presentations provided on the side of the monadnock during the popular laser light shows (see the "Interviews" section of Appendix 2).

In addition, emerging from my visits to the site have been a number of interviews I have solicited and conducted in person, via telephone, through e-mail exchanges, and using Skype with individuals who have been listed in the "Interviews" section of Appendix 2. The interviews have proven important adjuncts to my observations, often contributing information not immediately available on those occasions. Some of these exchanges have been formal while others have emerged from my casual interactions with individuals attending the events I have observed.

For example, after speaking with one of the main speakers at the *Via Crucis* pilgrimage organized by the

¹⁸ Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey, "The Interview: From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text," in *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, second ed., edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003), 61-106.

Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Stone Mountain, I learned that a priest well-known for his ministry to Hispanic Catholics at other parishes had been assigned to Stone Mountain to work with the parish on their own ministry to Spanish-speaking members of the church. While the speaker did not wish to have her/his name listed in this thesis, he/she stated that the priest, who has since moved on to another parish assignment, helped to develop the *Via Crucis* service at Stone Mountain as an outreach tool to members of the parish and others who had felt excluded from the English-speaking events during the Easter season.¹⁹ The reluctance of the individuals I spoke with to consent to formal interviews reflected legitimate concerns about my presence at an event central to their religious community. Apprehension and even suspicion of my motivations were common in my efforts to speak with many attendees which is to be expected and illustrates the importance of other modes of data gathering.²⁰

Fortunately, not all those making use of the park were unwilling to commit to formal interviews. For example, an interview with one individual helped to deepen my understanding of the significance of Stone Mountain for African Americans in the area. A call for persons of all faiths to "A Day of Declaration & Prayer" at Stone Mountain appeared on social media (see Figure 3.4 in Appendix 4).

¹⁹ Anonymous-*Via Crucis* Ceremony, Personal interview (Stone Mountain Park, Stone Mountain, Georgia, 2013).

²⁰ I suspect some of the resistance I encountered was due to my request that individuals sign the permission form I had developed in consultation with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David Research Ethics Committee.

Unable to attend the event, I contacted the person listed on the announcement. Lisa Holliday agreed to meet with me at the park and explained that she had started a ministry to at-risk youth in the area and regularly took them for hikes up the mountain.²¹ Ms. Holliday explained that their movement up the mountain helped them to transcend day-to-day worries and focus on more important goals. She explained further that while her initial effort to organize an ecumenical forum was not successful, she planned on continuing to use the mountain as a focal point for her efforts to address religious differences and the legacy of racism represented by the memorial.

The interviews conducted over the past few years have added personal perspectives to the historical data and impressions derived from large group gatherings at events held at the park. The fact that most of the interviewees identified in the case studies agreed to sign the Interview Consent Form I formulated under the guidance and approval of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's Research Ethics Committee means that they were fully informed of their rights and agreed to support the project. In addition, even those few who declined were made aware of their rights in the process. Since I shared my notes with the consenting subjects after our meetings, providing an opportunity for revisions if necessary, the information has a degree of integrity that reinforces its value to the research used in the case studies.

²¹ Lisa Holliday, Personal interview (Stone Mountain Park, 2013).

Supplementing data gathered from historical, observational, and interpersonal sources is information developed from online sources such as personal blogs, Facebook, and other social media. The Internet, and social media in particular, provide increased opportunities for research into how individuals and like-minded groups of individuals view Stone Mountain.

Examples of sources from the Internet include FaceBook pages run by individuals discussed in Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven; web sites created by individuals interviewed in Chapter Seven; comments posted to various local media sources such as the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* used to identify groups discussed in Chapter Five; videos posted to YouTube, Vimeo and similar multimedia sites used in Chapter Five; and archive sites such as Internet Archive and Google's caching system to explore material no longer active on the Internet which was used in Chapter Eight. In some instances, I used a web-crawling application to download the contents of a web site in order to mine it for information not readily available without prior knowledge of the contents. In all instances, information retrieved was public and available to anyone with some basic knowledge of the many sources available on the Internet.

While I have been able to identify and locate individuals and groups through the Internet, there have been challenges which are persistent features of the media. Unlike personal interviews which can be conducted with a wealth of non-verbal cues, online, text-based communication is usually deficient in such matters. Therefore, the

principle of charity must be consistently invoked when working through online exchanges -- every effort to understand what was being communicated in the most positive light has been taken. So, for example, during my efforts to locate individuals associated with the Foundation of Truth, an Atlanta spiritualist organization no longer in existence which I discuss in Chapter Seven, I made several e-mail queries briefly highlighting my research interests and using language which I considered fairly innocuous. After a particularly terse response to one query, I responded in a more careful manner and was able to elicit an e-mail that was helpful if not ultimately informative in relation to my research. As is the case when in person, in online communications tone is important. And, lacking the visual cues provided by body language and facial expressions, the tone of written communication is even more crucial to successful exchanges.

Another significant challenge is the equivocation between private and public space involved in online communication. Often, individuals will exchange relatively personal information in online forums which may not be consistent with their expectations of privacy. The researcher must be careful to take note of such matters as information is being gathered.

This ties in to a final issue related to the use of social media, the ethics of online research, which has only recently started to receive the attention it merits. While professional organizations such as the American Anthropological Association have yet to address the ethics

of online research in their official codes of conduct, individual researchers are mindful of the need to be aware of the ethical challenges.²² In this project, I have been careful to treat online communication as public when it is quite clearly the intention of the author. This approach is consistent with how I treated information gathered from public events held at the monadnock and I think it reflects a proper concern for the individuals studied in both real and virtual contexts. Finally, it is in compliance with the guidelines developed by the University's Research Ethics Committee and explained in the Research Integrity and Ethics Code of Practice.

So, when I came across an announcement in Facebook calling for a gathering to celebrate the summer solstice, I was able to observe or "follow" the thread of conversations associated with the individual via the application.²³ Although that particular gathering did not take place, I subsequently contacted that individual and requested an interview. Rev. Sharon Vimala E. Manuel, who also goes by

²² Tom Boellstorff, et al., *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012); Mariann Hardey, "Ubiquitous Connectivity: User-Generated Data and the Role of the Researcher," in *The Handbook of Emergent Technologies in Social Research*, edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 111-30; Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, "Emergent Technologies in Social Research: Pushing Against the Boundaries of Social Praxis," in *The Handbook of Emergent Technologies in Social Research*, edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3-22; Heather A. Horst and Daniel Miller, eds., *Digital Anthropology* (London: Berg, 2012); Robert Kozinets, *Netnography: Redefined*, second ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015).

²³ The ability of Facebook users to explore posts and comments by linking to other users has proven to be a powerful tool for the exploration of subject matter related to this thesis on that particular social media platform.

the name Vimala Emanuel on some of her web sites, agreed to an interview and it was conducted via telephone at her request.²⁴ In addition to the interview, I located an extensive web site developed by Rev. Manuel which helped to contextualize the system of spiritual entities which were connected to the sacred space at the summit of the mountain (see Figure 3.5 in Appendix 4).²⁵ My contact with another individual who viewed Stone Mountain as a spiritual space, David Furlong, emerged after finding a brief account of his visit to Atlanta on his personal web site.²⁶ Mr. Furlong, it turned out, was familiar with *Holy Stone Mountain* and explained via an e-mail exchange that he used the text to illustrate his claims about the status of the mountain as a special spiritual space among a limited number of spaces on the planet.²⁷ Yet another spiritual practitioner, Kady Hall, was discovered through a routine search of activities related to Stone Mountain on the Internet. During an extended interview via Skype, Ms. Hall explained that she conducted an event at the top of the mountain during which she channeled an ancient spiritual being.²⁸ While her contact with the entity was not due solely to Stone Mountain, Ms. Hall viewed it as similar to Uluru in Australia since both appeared to be sacred spaces connected via spiritual forces that encircled the planet. These

²⁴ Sharon Vimala E. Manuel, Telephone interview (2012).

²⁵ Vimala Emanuel, "Archangel Metatron's" (Accessed March 1, 2013. <http://www.vimalaemanuel.com/id25.html>, 2013).

²⁶ David Furlong, "Stone Mountain - Atlanta" (Accessed March 1, 2013. www.kch42.dial.pipex.com/sacredsitestone.htm, 2006).

²⁷ David Furlong, E-mail interview (2014).

²⁸ Kady Hall, Skype interview (2014).

contacts are explored in Chapter Seven but they would not have been part of this project had I limited my research solely to more traditional sources. Clearly, the Internet represents a major innovation in research tools and it has added significantly to the resources drawn upon in this project.

The various research strategies utilized in the following case studies, knit together from a range of sources, reflect research as a type of *bricolage*. "The qualitative researcher as *bricoleur* or maker of quilts uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical methods are at hand."²⁹ Using the tools available to me -- theories of religion, archival research, direct observation, participant observation, personal interviews, and data derived from various virtual sources -- I assemble five case studies reflecting differing efforts to create and cultivate sacred space on Stone Mountain.

Just as Stone Mountain has served to anchor the sacred aspirations of a population confronting social changes in a dynamic region, in this project Stone Mountain serves to anchor a series of case studies. Mixing theoretical, historical, observational, and online approaches, I proffer a sketch of a location that resists domination by any one vision of the sacred just as it has resisted erosion by the forces of nature. Yet, by escaping a singular vision, Stone

²⁹ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research," in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, second ed., edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003), 6.

Mountain serves as a canvas for many. It is this multiplicity that allows us a glimpse into the mechanisms that facilitate the construction of sacred space wherever that process takes place.

Chapter Four
A Spatial Survey of Religion at Stone Mountain

A central claim within spatial studies is that there has been an excessive focus on the historical analysis of cultural phenomena at the expense of understanding the dynamics involved in space, place, and location. As space became a more abstract concept in the early modern period, an emphasis upon history emerged as one of the primary tools of critical analysis. Drawing upon Foucault, Edward Soja captures the key issue at stake in this debate.

In words that have been epigraphically echoed repeatedly in contemporary discussions of space, Foucault asked why is it that time has tended to be treated as "richness, fecundity, life, dialectic" while in contrast space has been typically seen as "the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile"? He answers his question by referring to a persistent overprivileging of the powers of the historical imagination and the traditions of critical historiography, and the degree to which this privileging of historicity has silenced or subsumed the potentially equivalent powers of critical spatial thought.¹

The criticisms brought to bear against historicism are not intended to delegitimize the tools of the historical sciences or propose they need to assume a subordinate position in exploring cultural movements. What is being suggested is the spatial dimensions of human experience should also be engaged in order to more fully understand

¹ Soja, *Thirdspace*, 15. Soja is quoting from Foucault's "Question on Geography" where Foucault is discussing the "devaluation of space": "Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic" (Michel Foucault, "Questions on Geography," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Writings and Other Interviews 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, et al. [New York: Pantheon, 1980], 70).

human experience.² An exposition of any aspect of human experience, including religious beliefs and practices, is incomplete if it lacks a critical awareness of place in addition to history. Recalling the point made in the first chapter in reference to Crites's articulation of the elements that "spatial articulation" add to the narrative nature human experience,³ so too does spatial awareness help avoid an impoverished understanding of human actions over time.

Therefore, this historical survey of religion at Stone Mountain simultaneously engages spatial dynamics relevant to the mountain's history. While there are already a few historical accounts of Stone Mountain,⁴ this chapter will explore that history primarily from a spatial perspective. Coverage of important aspects of a spatial approach to Stone Mountain are already available in the work of Brian Campbell.⁵ However, while Campbell's case study of Stone Mountain helpfully illuminates the connections between religion and ecology at the park, including the power dynamics of various groups contesting the cultural legacies of Stone Mountain, this particular chapter surveys Stone Mountain from a diachronic perspective and, in the process, anticipates themes which will resurface in the subsequent

² Soja, *Thirdspace*, 16.

³ Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," 308.

⁴ Willard Neal, *Georgia's Stone Mountain* (Stone Mountain, Georgia: Stone Mountain Memorial Association, 1970); David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone*; Paul Stephen Hudson and Lora Pond Mirza, *Atlanta's Stone Mountain: A Multicultural History* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2011).

⁵ Brian G. Campbell, "Place."

case studies. Thus, this project extends the spatial analysis of Stone Mountain both in depth and breadth.

In order to utilize a spatial method, it is necessary to appreciate the temporal framework within which space has been and continues to be conceptualized and transformed.⁶ By developing the relationships between the spatial and the temporal, the significance of "place" then emerges as a dynamic pivot at the intersection between space and time.

In experience, the meaning of space often merges with that of place. "Space" is more abstract than "place." What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value. Architects talk about the spatial qualities of place; they can equally well speak of the locational (place) qualities of space. The ideas "space" and "place" require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.⁷

The pauses in movement point to the temporal flow inherent in place and illustrate the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the spatial and the temporal. The narrative of history does not unfold in the abstract but instead is grounded in the particularities of place. Thus, a summary of the history of Stone Mountain will serve to orient the reader along both the spatial and temporal dimensions.

⁶ Edward L. Ayers, "Turning Toward Place, Space, and Time," in *The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship*, edited by David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, and Trevor M. Harris, Spatial Humanities (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 1-13.

⁷ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 6.

First, familiarity with the natural history of the monadnock is vital to understanding its use by various cultures over the past few millennia. From a geologic perspective, Stone Mountain is the result of a massive intrusion of magma that stopped short of the earth's surface over 350 million years ago. The same geologic events associated with the creation of what would become Stone Mountain were responsible for the formation of the Blue Ridge Mountains although, as an intrusion event, Stone Mountain is independent of the formation of those mountains.⁸ Since the magma intrusion did not erupt through the earth's surface, it is thought that erosion or flooding of the surrounding Piedmont region eventually allowed the peak of the intrusion to emerge through the surface of the landscape. Millions of years of erosion were responsible for the gradual emergence of the monadnock into the landscape. Stone Mountain is, therefore, the product of both phenomenally powerful geologic events and incredibly long temporal processes that exposed the hardened granite to the surface.⁹

Even as the monadnock moved through time, it is instructive to think of its movement in relation to the changing Earth. As Doreen Massey helpfully explains in her discussion of the "immigrant rocks" that constitute the

⁸ Max E. White, "Georgia: The Natural Setting," in *The Empire State of the South: Georgia History in Documents and Essays*, ed. Christopher C. Meyers (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2008), 2.

⁹ James A. Whitney, Lois M. Jones, and Raymond L. Walker, "Age and Origin of the Stone Mountain Granite, Lithonia District, Georgia," *Geological Society of America Bulletin* 87, no. 7 (July 1976): 1067-77.

rocks of Skiddaw in northern England,¹⁰ Stone Mountain also was carried along by the tectonic forces of the planet as the continents jostled for position. The vast span of time involved in the movement of the continents obscures the mobility of "places" such as Stone Mountain. Moreover, even while it crept along with what was to become North America, sliding west and then north away from what would later become Africa, the monadnock "moved" into the vertical as the land around it gave way to the forces of nature over time.

As the erosive powers of the environment slowly revealed the top of Stone Mountain, it eventually achieved its current elevation of 1,683 feet above sea level or 780 feet above the surrounding landscape. The monadnock is about 8,300 feet long and approximately 3,500 feet wide with a circumference at its base of about 3.8 miles.¹¹ Within a more mountainous landscape, Stone Mountain most likely would not merit much attention. However, given the relatively flat terrain typical of the Piedmont plateau region, Stone Mountain clearly is an unusual presence in the North Central Georgia terrain as the bare rock monadnock stands guard over the forested landscape below. The significance of the formation lies not in its size but rather in the perception of its exceptional presence in the relatively level region into which it has emerged.

Given its presence, it is not surprising that indigenous peoples appear to have set-up small sites --

¹⁰ Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 130-37.

¹¹ David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone*, 1.

perhaps as hunting camps or as stopover points while traveling in the area -- around the base of the mountain. Artifacts dating to the Archaic period (10,000 to 3,000 years ago) have been uncovered suggesting transitional camps near the mountain.¹² Eternally fixed into the landscape of the region, Stone Mountain would have provided a focal point, a natural tool for orienting hunter-gatherers moving through the terrain.

Much later, during the Woodland and Mississippian periods (3,000-1,000 years ago and 900-1550 CE), larger indigenous communities in the region began to construct mounds and other efforts to circumscribe their place within their local environments. Using the natural waterways as means of transportation, these small communities grew close to streams and rivers. Since the area immediately around Stone Mountain does not lie along any significant waterways, it appears to have not been incorporated into the mound-building cultures of the region. There is no evidence of any long-term settlements near the mountain during the Woodland and Mississippian periods.

It may have been the case, however, that the top of the mountain was utilized for some ritual purposes. It is thought that a large wall encircling the summit of Stone

¹² Sudha A. Shah and Thomas G. Whitley, *An Overview and Analysis of the Middle Archaic in Georgia*, Georgia Department of Transportation: Occasional Papers in Cultural Resource Management #16 (Atlanta: Brockington and Associates, 2009); Roy S. Dickens Jr., "The Stone Mountain Salvage Project, DeKalb and Gwinnett Counties, Georgia, Part I," *Journal of Alabama Archaeology* 10 (1964): 43-49; Roy S. Dickens Jr., "The Stone Mountain Salvage Project, DeKalb and Gwinnett Counties, Georgia, Part II," *Journal of Alabama Archaeology* 11 (1965): 123-32.

Mountain may have reflected an effort to demarcate a space on top of the monadnock. Built to a height of about four feet, the wall had only one entrance. Since there is no water source on the mountain, the walled space could only be used for short durations. Therefore, the walled space may have been used as a meeting space for important events or for some ritual celebrations. Unfortunately, the wall was eventually dismantled in the early part of the previous century by tourists who found pleasure in rolling the stones over the edge of the mountainside and workers who used it for constructing roadways.¹³ Most likely, the purpose of the walled space will never be known with certainty.

Nevertheless, the views from the top of the monadnock and the relative ease by which it may be accessed via the mile-long trail, help to explain the persistent appeal of Stone Mountain across several centuries and cultures.

Recently, a work has been self-published which claims to have located evidence of the intentional alteration of boulders at the site by indigenous people in order to resemble human faces and animals. In *The Effigy Boulders of Stone Mountain*,¹⁴ Greg Seals, a social studies teacher at a high school in the Atlanta area, presents his evidence for the production of natural sculptures dating back as far as 3500 years ago.

In the following pages I lay out an argument for the existence of *in situ* prehistoric sculptures of real and mythic creatures carved into the boulders on the slopes of Stone Mountain. . . . The lost effigy boulders of Stone Mountain give poignant testimony to the creative

¹³ Hudson and Mirza, *Atlanta's Stone Mountain*, 30-31.

¹⁴ Greg Seals, *The Effigy Boulders of Stone Mountain* (Kindle Edition, 2014).

brilliance and cultural sophistication of the ancient peoples of the American Southeast.¹⁵

Seals is clear about the tentative nature of his observations and appreciates the need to have the work examined by authorities in Native American archaeology. However, given those caveats, the possibility of symbolic works created at the monadnock, perhaps for ceremonial or religious purposes, reinforces the idea of Stone Mountain's possible historical significance as a sacred space for the indigenous peoples before the arrival of Europeans.

During the colonial period, after the demise of the mound-building cultures, the Creek and Cherokee confederations emerged and used the area around Stone Mountain as a buffer zone between their competing groups. Moreover, the proximity of two major trails to the mountain and its landmark status made Stone Mountain an ideal area for trade exchanges. In addition to their own trade, Native Americans were able to conduct meetings with European traders in and around the mountain.¹⁶

After the American colonies gained their independence, efforts to colonize Georgia gained momentum. Various treaties were brokered between the new federal government and the tribal groups in Georgia in order free-up land for colonists and to hold off efforts by Spain to absorb the area into Florida.

In one notable effort to negotiate with the Creek leaders in 1790, President Washington sent Colonel Marinus Willett to facilitate the process. Willett was to escort

¹⁵ Seals, *The Effigy Boulders of Stone Mountain*, 146.

¹⁶ David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone*, 13-14.

several Creek leaders back to New York to work out the details of the land treaty. Their point of departure from the region was Stone Mountain, or "Stony Mountains" as Willett called it in his memoir.

June 9, at nine o'clock, A. M., arrived at the Stony Mountains, about eight miles from which we encamped. Here we found the Cowetas and Curatas, to the number of eleven, waiting for us. Lay by until three o'clock, P. M., then proceeded eight miles, and encamped by a large creek of the waters of the Oak Mulgee. Course in general nearly E. N. E. Pleasant day: shower of rain after we encamped. While I was at the Stony Mountains I ascended the summit. It is one solid rock, of a circular form, about a mile across. Many strange tales are told by the Indians of this mountain. I have now passed all the Indian settlements, and shall only observe, that the inhabitants of these countries appear very happy; and while the red and white alternately blend in their countenances, health and fragrance breathe around.¹⁷

The optimistic description that closes Willett's brief comments about the Indians near "Stony Mountains" would very soon give way to a century of coerced negotiations to cede more land, broken treaties, and a series of forced migrations of the indigenous peoples of the new state into Western territories. As the last colony, Georgia needed to be settled and its resources incorporated into the emerging economy of the United States.¹⁸ Any claims the indigenous peoples had to the region around Stone Mountain were ignored and the land, including the mountain, was divided into parcels and distributed via a series of land lotteries in the 1820s.¹⁹

¹⁷ Marinus Willett, *A Narrative of the Military Actions of Colonel Marinus Willett, Taken Chiefly from His Own Manuscript*, Newberry Library, Chicago (New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1831), 110.

¹⁸ Martin, "Indians, Contact, and Colonialism in the Deep South: Themes for a Postcolonial History of American Religion."

In the nineteenth century the southern part of Georgia was incorporated into the cotton plantation system which became the engine for the economy.²⁰ The piedmont region in the northern part of the state, including the lands around Stone Mountain, remained tied to subsistence farming.²¹ The area around the monadnock might have remained dominated by small farms were it not for the fact that by the 1820s a stagecoach route from a nearby county seat to the state capital passed alongside Stone Mountain. Soon, the mountain became an attraction for tourists and the recreational use of the mountain increased with the arrival of the Georgia Railroad in the early 1840s. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Stone Mountain was a popular stopover on the way to the new but rapidly developing rail hub of Atlanta.²²

The prominence and perceived stability of Stone Mountain helps one to understand its appeal to nineteenth century members of a rapidly changing culture. Industrialization was beginning to undermine the plantation system in the south and the transportation system allowed manufacturing to reach in from the coastal ports up into the northern part of the state. Even before the massive disruptions brought about by the Civil War, the region was

¹⁹ David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone*, 23-27.

²⁰ Richard W. Griffin, "The Origins of the Industrial Revolution in Georgia: Cotton Textiles, 1810-1865," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (December 1958): 357-58.

²¹ George B. Crawford, "Cotton, Land, and Sustenance: Toward the Limits of Abundance in Late Antebellum Georgia," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 215-17.

²² Hudson and Mirza, *Atlanta's Stone Mountain*, 42-47.

rapidly changing and adapting.²³ It is understandable, then, how scenic excursions on the rail system from Atlanta would attract those looking for some peace and quiet while enjoying the views from the top of Stone Mountain. Once again, as had been the case with the use of the mountain as a neutral ground between the Creek and the Cherokee, Stone Mountain's spatial presence served to arrest the temporal disruptions which were being experienced by the tourists.

While the mountain's presence provided a refuge for many, it afforded others a livelihood derived from the dismantling of the mountain. The quarrying associated with the monadnock dates back to the 1830s but became a thriving industry after the rail connection to Stone Mountain was completed in 1847. Later, the invention of the pneumatic drill in 1861 helped to make the removal of granite a cost-effective enterprise. In 1867 the Stone Mountain Granite Company was created and purchased most of the mountain. Whereas headstones were the primary market for granite up to this time, the reconstruction efforts after the Civil War helped to drive new demand. Another innovation in the 1880s, the use of explosives to expose pristine granite ripe for harvesting, helped to inject new energy into the industry. By the end of the nineteenth century, production of granite had increased to 20,000 rail car loads each year. Quarrying would continue well into the twentieth century, reaching a peak in the 1920s as newly emerging suburban

²³ James C. Cobb and John C. Inscoe, "Georgia History: Overview," in *New Georgia Encyclopedia* (2017).

areas used the stone for paving, road curbs, and building material.²⁴

The success of the quarries and the commercialization of the granite from Stone Mountain competed with consumption of the area as a source of recreation and leisure. A striking example of this contested space was the area on the top of the mountain known as the Devil's Cross Roads. Accounts of this natural formation described two fissures in a gigantic bolder which began as cracks but widened and crossed at right angles. The width and depth of the fissures was five feet at their intersection. The cracks were of different lengths, with the longer one extending about 400 feet. Interestingly, one crevice ran north and south while the other ran east and west. This natural "compass" was a popular destination for visitors to the top of the mountain and quite often served as a picnic area. The imagery associated with the compass helping to orient tourists in the space of the mountain is rich in implications. However, the granite which made up the Devil's Cross Roads was discovered to be of an especially high grade and the entire formation was broken up and lowered down the mountainside in 1896. The owners of the quarrying operations were criticized for their mutilation of the mountain and calls started to emerge for the State of Georgia to purchase and protect the mountain.²⁵ The

²⁴ Leo Anthony Herrmann, *Geology of the Stone Mountain-Lithonia District, Georgia*, The Geological Survey Bulletin No. 61 (Atlanta, Georgia: Georgia State Division of Conservation, Department of Mines, Mining and Geology, 1954), 80-83.

²⁵ David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone*, 51.

acquisition of the mountain would not take place until 1958 when the decision was driven not as much by a desire to preserve the mountain as a natural wonder as it was the need to carve a sacred space into side of Stone Mountain.

The quarrying industry would continue into the twentieth century but another carving enterprise would shortly arise and soon eclipse the business of cutting up and carting away parts of the monadnock. The decision to place a memorial to the Confederacy on the side of the mountain was driven by several variables. Memorials to the values of the defeated South were under-represented on the national landscape, it was thought, and the Lincoln Memorial Commission was gaining momentum as efforts to memorialize the Confederacy were renewing in the early twentieth century.²⁶ At about the same time William H. Terrell, an Atlanta attorney, published a 1914 call for a memorial to the heroes of the Confederacy on the side of Stone Mountain.²⁷ The following year, building upon the popularity of D. W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation*, the Ku Klux Klan was reconstituted on the top of the mountain and members of the KKK would be intimately involved in the early planning and construction of the memorial (see Figure 4.1 in Appendix 4). The United Daughters of the Confederacy took the lead in the design of the memorial and retained the

²⁶ William M. S. Rasmussen, "Planning a Temple to the Lost Cause: The Confederate 'Battle Abbey'," in *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, ed. Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 168-69.

²⁷ William H. Terrell, "Stone Mountain, Eternal Temple to Confederacy, is Terrell's Suggestion," *The Atlanta Constitution*, 26 May 1914.

first sculptor, Gutzon Borglum, to create a model for a monument in 1915. Actual carving began in 1923 but only lasted for two years under Borglum's leadership who soon abandoned the project in a dispute with the officials coordinating the memorial project. Two other sculptors, Augustus Lukeman and Walker Hancock, would continue work on the project on an infrequent basis over the next several decades (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3 in Appendix 4). The monument was officially dedicated on May 9, 1970 while final work was completed in 1972 (see Figure 4.4 in Appendix 4).

In the four decades since the completion of the memorial, control of various concessions and attractions has been centralized under the authority of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association (SMMA). SMMA was created by the Georgia state legislature in 1958 in what is known as the "Stone Mountain Memorial Association Act" within which the creation and purpose of the SMMA is explained as follows:

§ 12-3-192 - Creation Of Association

O.C.G.A. 12-3-192 (2010)

12-3-192. Creation of association

(a) There is created a body corporate and politic and instrumentality and public corporation of this state to be known as the Stone Mountain Memorial Association. It shall have perpetual existence. In such name it may contract and be contracted with, sue and be sued, implead and be impleaded, and complain and defend in all courts.

(b) The association is assigned to the Department of Natural Resources for administrative purposes only.

§ 12-3-192.1 - Purposes Of Association

O.C.G.A. 12-3-192.1 (2010)

12-3-192.1. Purposes of association

The purposes of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association shall include:

- (1) To preserve the natural areas situated within the Stone Mountain Park area;
- (2) To provide access to Stone Mountain for Georgia's citizens; and

(3) To maintain an appropriate and suitable memorial for the Confederacy.²⁸

The SMMA coordinates and oversees all facilities in the park, often contracting with businesses to run various aspects of the park. Since Stone Mountain Park is charged with not taking any tax dollars from the State of Georgia, it must generate all revenue necessary to operate, maintain, and improve the park.

A conference center and second golf course were added along with venues for events associated with the 1996 Olympics. In 1998, the SMMA contracted with Herschend Family Entertainment (HFE) to manage the commercial aspects of the park while the SMMA continued oversight of Stone Mountain Park's historic and natural resources. For example, in 2001 the SMMA opened an outdoor exhibit documenting the impact of the quarry industry on the mountain. HFE, in the meantime, opened new entertainment attractions such as the Crossroads area, a reproduction of an 1870s town with exhibits of glass blowing, candle making, and candy making in addition to various shops and live shows.

In addition to the historical, natural, and amusement attractions, Stone Mountain Park operates seasonal festivals and events such as an Easter Sunrise Service in the spring; summer holiday celebrations of Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Labor Day; the Yellow Daisy Festival and the Indian Festival & Pow-Wow in the fall; and the Stone

²⁸ State of Georgia, "Stone Mountain Memorial Association Act; Creation of Association; Purposes of Association," in *Georgia Code*, reprint, 1958, O.C.G.A. § 12-3-190, § 12-3-192 and § 12-3-192.1 (2010).

Mountain Christmas in the winter. Most recently, HFE debuted an elaborate snow mountain amusement ride complete with a four hundred foot long hill for snow tubing and various snow-related activities. All of these events and activities take place within view of the images of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson staring stoically into a distant horizon.

However, as will be discussed in the next chapter, the struggle to control the role of the memorial continues, almost a century after work began on the site. While it has periodically attracted controversy, new tensions emerged in 2015 when suggestions were made to remove the Confederate battle flag from a terrace displaying the various flags of the Confederacy. The United Daughters of the Confederacy Flag Terrace, positioned at the bottom of the walk-up trail, displays the first, second, and third national flags of the Confederacy and the Confederate battle flag on poles of equal height and the U.S. national flag on a pole higher than the other four. Resistance to the possible removal was swift as defenders of the Confederate battle flag staged several rallies during the latter half of 2015 and the first half of the following year (see Figure 4.5 in Appendix 4). While the issue remains unresolved as of 2017, it indicates enduring connections many make between the memorial and its role in preserving their preferred cultural identity.

Even with the brief historical sketch of Stone Mountain provided above, it is clear that the temporal and the spatial are necessarily interconnected in an account of the monadnock. The events and actions which took place in and

around Stone Mountain are explained and understood in part by the narrative accounts to which we have access. At the same time, the spatial aspects of the mountain -- its exceptional status in the immediate landscape, its utility as a gathering place, its availability as a refuge, its potential as a commodity, its symbolic status -- all provide additional insights into our understanding of Stone Mountain. To fully understand the history of Stone Mountain it is necessary to examine it more carefully using the tools of spatial analysis.

As was explained in the Chapter Two, the schema used to analyze religious practices at Stone Mountain is derived from the work of Kim Knott and Thomas Tweed. The components of the schema are (1) body; (2) home; (3) homeland; (4) cosmos; the dimensions of space which are (5A) physical, (5B) social, and (5C) mental; the properties of space which involve (6A) configuration, (6B) extension, (6C) simultaneity, and (6D) power; the aspects of space encompassing (7A) perceived space, (7B) conceived space, and (7C) lived space; and the dynamics of space incorporating both (8A) production and (8B) reproduction. When these components are brought to bear upon a location, a mapping of the area will begin to emerge that will provide greater insight to the multiple ways in which religious practices have utilized the landscape in and around Stone Mountain.

So, for example, the discussion in Chapter Eight of the decision by HFE to provide a nativity scene and narration of the biblical account of angels announcing the birth of the

messiah can be placed within the historical context of the efforts by the corporation to avoid charges of church-state entanglement. That, alone, is an interesting illustration of contemporary popular religion. However, adding the perspective of the component aspects of space, especially conceived space, provides further information. The placement of the nativity drama at a remote location far away from the more popular versions of Christmas, allows visitors to see it as a space set apart. It is a dedicated space, accessible only via a pilgrimage on a train, and serves to reinforce the impact of the narrative to those who subscribe to the Christian theology of incarnation. HFE, in placing the story of the birth of the Christian messiah in that location, insulates itself from charges of asserting its Christian corporate identity at the state-owned park while simultaneously preserving those Christian values. Utilizing the idea of conceived space, that is space shaped by dominant power, helps to isolate some of the religious dynamics at work which otherwise might be missed from a strictly historical perspective. This is an example of what spatial analysis can contribute to efforts to better understand contemporary religious practices at locations like Stone Mountain.

From any perspective within miles of the site, it is a significant mass emerging from the relatively level landscape of the lower Piedmont in what is now north-central Georgia. The plateau region is at about 800 feet above sea level and the mountain rises approximately another 800 feet above the surrounding area. Yet, while Stone Mountain is

certainly an imposing part of the landscape, it provides easy access to individuals who wish to traverse the mountain. At its western base, a walk-up trail allows for a mile-long path to the summit. Moving from the lightly wooded area near the top of the path, one emerges onto a barren, rocky landscape that stands in sharp relief to the surrounding forests of the area.

The path to the top of Stone Mountain engages those who would conquer the mountain. In that quest, moving slowly up the side of the mountain, the individual is traversing a well-worn path, initially cleared by deer and other animals, and much later reinforced by the indigenous populations over the course of centuries. That the trek invites an appreciation for the mountain, and perhaps for the sacred, is attested to by reports of a stone wall that circled the top of the mountain.²⁹ Accounts of the wall are consistent with other structures in the region dating to the Middle Woodland period (ca. 1,000 BCE to 1,000 CE) which suggest at least seasonal use for religious purposes.³⁰

Evidence gathered to date supports the view that these enclosures were used for religious or ceremonial purposes, where the wall marking the boundary of the sacred area. The scarcity of artifacts within the area indicates very light usage, perhaps only once a year. The entrance that must be negotiated on hands and knees may have enforced a ritual act of supplication or have been symbolic of the womb.³¹

While certain knowledge of the site has been lost due to neglect and petty vandalism, the account is nonetheless

²⁹ David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone*, 7.

³⁰ David S. Williams, *From Mounds to Megachurches: Georgia's Religious Heritage* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 5-17.

³¹ David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone*, 8.

suggestive of the importance of the summit of Stone Mountain to those who undertook the task of moving themselves through space to place. In addition, if the initial research into possible boulder effigies proves accurate, further evidence of the monadnock's importance to the indigenous peoples will have been demonstrated.

The continuing appeal of the ascent up the monadnock is illustrated by hikers such as Ms. Lisa Holliday who permitted me to interview her about her activities at Stone Mountain.³² Having noticed a call for a gathering to walk up the mountain on Facebook, and as was explained in the previous chapter, I contacted Ms. Holliday and she agreed to meet with me on the patio area overlooking the memorial carving. Ms. Holliday characterized her many treks up the mountain as helping her experience a closer connection with the divine. Her continuous journeys up the mountain were responsible, she explained, for her recovery from a fear of heights and her decision to guide others along the same path of spiritual well-being she has experienced while ascending the monadnock.

What I bring to Stone Mountain is a sense of achievement by engaging in the ascent up the mountain. This has helped me to break through boundaries that have previously held me back. By climbing up the mountain, it helps to bring manifestations of God's will.³³

So important are these ascension experiences to Ms. Holliday that, at the time of our conversation, she was working at organizing ascents for local teens to help them focus on positive alternatives to less desirable temptations in their

³² Holliday, Personal interview.

³³ Holliday, Personal interview.

lives. As Tuan has argued, the physical movement of the body up into higher space signifies a movement into the future.³⁴ This physical movement contributes to the positive and optimistic feelings experienced by many who ascend the mountain. Ms. Holliday has built upon the sense of well-being the walk up the mountain has provided for her by inviting local youth to join her in her walks as a way of helping these young people make informed choices about their current and future circumstances.

The category of home is not readily applied to the mountain. Evidence for long-term indigenous settlements at the site are lacking but this may be due to the appropriation of the mountain for quarrying and the reshaping of the area around the monadnock by road construction and the subsequent creation of two golf courses and a 600-acre lake as part of the park's attractions. While there is some evidence of the use of the area around the mountain for temporary foraging and hunting camps,³⁵ the idea of the region as a home did not attach to the indigenous peoples of the area.

Homeland, however, provides a more helpful interpretative schema for understanding the importance of Stone Mountain to many peoples over time. As Tweed notes, homeland "extends to the boundaries of the territory that group members allocentrically imagine as *their* space, but

³⁴ Tuan, *Space and Place*, 34-38.

³⁵ Roy S. Dickens Jr., "Contrasting Woodland and Archaic Environmental Adaptations at Stone Mountain, Georgia," *Bulletin of the Eastern States Archaeological Federation* 22 (April 1963): 10; Shah and Whitley, *An Overview and Analysis of the Middle Archaic in Georgia*, 37-38.

since the homeland is an imagined territory inhabited by an imagined community, a space and group continually figured and refigured in contact with others, its borders shift over time and across cultures."³⁶ While it is highly likely Stone Mountain has served as a homeland for indigenous peoples who have used the area as foraging and hunting and for meetings among differing tribes and confederations, it may, as has been noted, have also been used for religious purposes which are now lost to us. The relevance of homeland as an analytical spatial category is most obvious when considering the location for its role in the construction of the Lost Cause narrative and contemporary efforts to resurrect that myth which will be addressed in the next chapter. So, while we are limited in our ability to fully appreciate Stone Mountain as homeland for the indigenous peoples which made use of the space for thousands of years, there is an opportunity to explore the category in the contest for meaning surrounding the Civil War in the Southland.

Once again, given the absence of data available from the time when Stone Mountain was part of the territories controlled by indigenous groups, we are left with supposition about the significance of the area in relation to the schema of cosmos. Relevant myths of the structure of the universe and its origins in relation to Stone Mountain, if they ever existed, are unknown and most likely will remain so. However, a more recent cosmography has emerged in association with Stone Mountain which will be examined in Chapter Seven. Ideas relevant to the spiritual landscape of

³⁶ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 110.

New Age metaphysics will be examined as contemporary examples of the significance of the monadnock as a location for imagining the cosmos. The fact that some of the practitioners studied invoke Native American spiritual concepts in their ritual performances at Stone Mountain is perhaps as close as we may ever come to the early history of cosmos construction at the mountain. Those contemporary varieties are nonetheless helpful in the exploration of that spatial category.

The dimensions of space -- the physical, the social, and the mental -- help to flesh out the contours of religious practices associated Stone Mountain. The physical dimension is marked by the appropriation of the mountain and various efforts to amend and extend its religious significance. As discussed above, prehistoric efforts to enclose the summit of the mountain most likely reflect an appreciation for the sacred space encompassed by the wall. Much later, as Georgia became a frontier area for English immigration, the summit was amended in 1835 with the construction of a large observatory known as Cloud's Tower. Constructed as a tourist destination, the observatory provided an opportunity to extend the gaze of its occupants several more miles into the region surrounding the mountain and, at night, it allowed magnificent opportunities to appreciate the unobstructed night sky. The various efforts to make the mountain more readily accessible for recreational activities reflects the emergence of a leisure class in late nineteenth-century Georgia, and the Atlanta area in particular.

Yet another example of the physical dimension of space is the path cut into the side of the mountain on its steep North side in the 1840s. Tourists were given the opportunity to pay for the privilege of standing just inches away from the edge of the path from which they could peer hundreds of feet to the base of the mountain. Created with blasting powder, the construction of the path anticipated the decades long effort to sculpt a tribute to the Confederacy into the side of the mountain just below the path.

The social dimensions of space associated with Stone Mountain are as varied as have been the different groups who have utilized the mountain. A consistent set of practices attached to the mountain has had to do with community gatherings. For example, since it occupied an area between two major Native American tribal groups -- the Creeks and the Cherokees -- Stone Mountain was considered an optimal location for border skirmishes and, according to some accounts, less violent games and contests in the Etowah period just before European colonization.³⁷ Later, after the region had become thoroughly colonized, Stone Mountain served as a destination for local retreats for picnics and other amusements. The continuing development of the mountain as a place for recreation facilitated its emergence as a park in the twentieth century and its current status as a major amusement park.

The manifold ways Stone Mountain has been appropriated illustrates the mental dimension of space. Coinciding with

³⁷ Hudson and Mirza, *Atlanta's Stone Mountain*, 33-35.

our status as bipedal hominids, there is a cognitive perception of vertical space that is autocentric and serves to orient us to our immediate environments.³⁸ As a significant landmark within the geography of the region, Stone Mountain understandably represents an orienting marker erupting into the space of the horizon. Known variously as Bald Mountain, Stony Mountains, Rock Mountain, and finally as Stone Mountain, the monadnock readily calls to mind images associated with the heavens and the realm of the sacred. While this is not quite Eliade's *axis mundi*,³⁹ the mountain nonetheless provides a space for the projection of the sacred. The most notable example of this projection is the monument to the Confederacy with its religious imagery of a tragic lost cause. But the more recent use of the mountain as a solid canvas, made malleable with the latest laser and video technology, allow individuals to participate in the narratives projected each summer evening over the very images of the Lost Cause.

By virtue of the manner in which Stone Mountain has attracted different cultures to it and served as a mechanism for the transmission of ideas, beliefs, and practices, the mountain enables the configuration of these diverse cultural systems. They are not free-floating, detached from the earth, but are instead grounded in the space of Stone Mountain itself. Whether it is the idea of a sanctioned conflict zone safely at a distance from contesting tribal boundaries, the celebration of the natural wonders of the

³⁸ Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 93.

³⁹ Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 36-47.

region as entertainment in the nineteenth century, the consecration of a Lost Cause ideology in the twentieth century, or the celebration of nationalistic virtues of patriotism and civic spirituality in the twenty-first century, Stone Mountain provides the means by which these values may be expressed in concrete actions and behaviors.

The history of the site would be covered by the category of extension or the temporal features of a location. However, since the first several pages of this chapter have already rehearsed that information, there is no need to repeat it in this section of the schema.

The mountain's role is not limited to the diachronic extension of values and ideas already sketched above. While it is clear there is a legacy to be explored that can be traced through a historical process, the space of the mountain is also the locus for simultaneous expressions of differing perspectives that coexist if not always without tension. The small natural history museum housed in the Confederate Hall Historical and Environmental Education Center explains the formation of the mountain over spans of hundreds of millions of years. At the same time, tours of the museum led by Christian creationists provide alternate accounts that reconcile the geology with Biblical texts.⁴⁰ In the midst of a pastiche of buildings gathered from different areas of the state in an effort to represent an Antebellum plantation, a multi-day gathering of Native American tribal groups engage in a ritual dance to honor

⁴⁰ C. R. Froede Jr., "Stone Mountain Georgia: A Creationist Geologist's Perspective," *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (1995): 212-24.

fallen brothers and sisters whose lives have been lost in service to their country or as a result of their incarceration within the penal system. In the museum used to commemorate the creation of the monument to the Confederacy, between two large reproductions of small sections of that memorial, a Snow Angel -- part of an emergent mythos attached to Stone Mountain -- holds court during Christmas and provides photo opportunities for families to purchase of their children next to the celestial being. These and other events taking place throughout Stone Mountain Park indicate the simultaneity, the ability of the space to be appropriated by different perspectives at the same time that is endemic to the location.

Power has been expressed through the mountain in a number of ways. As the accounts of the stone wall at the summit might suggest, the height of the mountain facilitates its use as a natural panopticon. With but one easy route to the top, the summit could easily be used to watch over a wide area in the region. The construction of the observation towers in the nineteenth century reinforces this perspective on the mountain. Those with the requisite leisure time and funds could purchase the enhanced view from the highest vantage point in the region. The pull of the summit helps to explain its use on a Thanksgiving night in 1915 to launch the second Ku Klux Klan movement.⁴¹ Again, the height of Stone Mountain is extended and its power amplified as the image of a burning cross is displayed for

⁴¹ MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan*, 5, 142.

all to see. So, too, is power manifest in the space of the mountain when the images of President of the Confederate States of America Jefferson Davis, General Robert E. Lee, and General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson are carved into the side of the monadnock.

The elevation of the mountain carving to the status of a state-owned recreational facility also reflects some of the power dynamics at work in the location. Most recently, the images become the focal point for the power of technology to transform and transmit current civic virtues such as patriotism and humility to the thousands gathered at the base of the mountain several evenings each week throughout the course of the Georgia summer. Recently rebranded as the "Lasershow Spectacular in Mountainvision," the various narratives engage those gathered into what a representative of the company charged with creating the laser show, Full Spectrum, called a temporary "blanket city" (see Figure 4.6 in Appendix 4). The spectacle and the intimacy shared by the hundreds and, often, thousands gathered to watch it on the Memorial Lawn helps create a shared sense of appreciation for core American values communicated during the show.⁴²

The penultimate component in the schema -- aspects of space -- draws directly upon Lefebvre's work.⁴³ Lefebvre, it bears repeating, argues social space is experienced via *spatial practice* or 'perceived space' (the realm of everyday social life often ignored by the dominant realm),

⁴² Anonymous-Full Spectrum, Telephone interview (Stone Mountain, Georgia, 2012).

⁴³ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.

representations of space or 'conceived space' (the dominant realm of technical professionals who manipulate space for capitalism), and *spaces of representation* or 'lived space' (the realm of culture that may be drawn upon to challenge the dominant realm).⁴⁴ These multiple perspectives allow Lefebvre to avoid reductionism and establishes space in the interplay between the physical, the mental, and the social.

Recall perceived space is constructed as being religious by practitioners and their observers. So, for example, when we consider ritual practice it is "ritual, as sacred-making behavior, [which] brings about 'sacred' space."⁴⁵ At Stone Mountain, the annual Easter sunrise services, discussed in Chapter Six, reflect this "sacred-making behavior" as the summit is once again adorned with a cross but in celebration of the most significant event within the Christian religious system. That is, the natural and ostensibly secular space at the top of the mountain is rendered sacred by the placement of the symbol and by the ritual actions which are enacted at the summit.

As a conceived space, accordingly, Stone Mountain has been manipulated over the years by those authorities who view it as a tool for the reproduction of dominant values. So, for example, the memorial not only captures a particular moment in American history, it is an on-going effort to preserve and replicate that perspective. The commodification of the Lost Cause to be discussed in the next chapter allows it to be reproduced and sold to

⁴⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 36-40.

⁴⁵ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 43.

consumers as souvenirs at the various gift shops in the park. In a similar manner, the continuing commercialization of the Christian Christmas holiday as a generic time of warm sentiments and family values, which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Eight, marks a high point in the secular liturgical calendar at the park.

Lived space may erupt with religious significance as cultural forces are drawn upon in order to subvert dominant social norms via the creation of oppositional spaces. Chapter Seven will examine the appropriation of Stone Mountain as a portal for communication with spiritual beings who use the interior of the mountain as a repository for the Akashic records. The New Age spirituality exemplified by C. E. Cantrell's *Holy Stone Mountain* illustrates the subversive potential of spaces of representation in an analysis of the history of the mountain. Cantrell, a local businessman, was known for his extended visits to Stone Mountain when he would sit and meditate on the image of the Confederate leaders and visualize the spiritual activities taking place behind the memorial.

The production of space -- an element of the final component in the schema, the dynamics of space -- is constrained by the mountain itself. A natural feature of the landscape, it is not directly subject to production or reproduction.

However, ancillary spaces have been produced and reproduced. The Memorial Lawn was created from an original forested area beneath the Confederate Memorial and serves as a space for secondary memorials to the Confederate states of

the Civil War that are placed around the perimeter of the lawn (see Figure 4.7 in Appendix 4). The Memorial Hall houses a Stone Mountain Museum and various exhibits related to the memorial carving. A separate Confederate Hall located at the foot of the walk-up trail has been reconstituted as the Confederate Hall Historical and Environmental Education Center. While it still displays films related to the Battle of Georgia and the construction of the memorial, it also serves as a facility to educate local school children about the geology and ecology of Stone Mountain. Driven by the interests of HFE, consistent with its long-term lease to operate and develop the amusements located at the park, new recreational spaces have been added over the past decade that serve to drive tourism to the park throughout the year. Amidst the varied supplemental spaces that have been created and re-created, Stone Mountain stands guard, a Granite Sentinel of the region.⁴⁶

A Spatial Survey of Religion at Stone Mountain

| Categories | Spatial Analysis |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Body | physical presence of monadnock in relation to bodies ascending it |
| 2. Home | N/A - not a domesticated natural space |
| 3. Homeland | indigenous peoples, Lost Cause mythos |
| 4. Cosmos | indigenous myths unknown; New Age metaphysics |
| 5A. Dimensions of Space - Physical | summit of mountain, views from mountainside |
| 5B. Dimensions of Space - Social | communal gathering space |

⁴⁶ George D. N. Coletti, *Stone Mountain: The Granite Sentinel* (Stone Mountain, Georgia: Self-published, 2010).

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5C. Dimensions of Space - Mental | marker for verticality, projection space |
| 6A. Properties of Space - Configuration | gathering space for different cultures |
| 6B. Properties of Space - Extension | geologic time, legacy of diverse uses by different groups |
| 6C. Properties of Space - Simultaneity | natural history museum, antebellum plantation, museum, Christmas |
| 6D. Properties of Space - Power | tower, burning cross, CSA images, state property |
| 7A. Aspects of Space - Perceived Space | sacred-making practices, Easter sunrise service |
| 7B. Aspects of Space - Conceived Space | Lost Cause, commercialized Christmas |
| 7C. Aspects of Space - Lived Space | alternative religious practices |
| 8A. Dynamics of Space - Production | N/A - mountain is natural creation |
| 8B. Dynamics of Space - Reproduction | Memorial and associated buildings, amusements |

As the categories from the schema illustrate, a spatial reading of the history of Stone Mountain helps to highlight the importance of the physical characteristics of the monadnock in relation to how it has attracted use in what little can be surmised about pre-Columbian history and in the period since Europeans migrated into the region. While much of what has been covered in this chapter will be developed further in the following chapters, the significance of the material basis for the activities at and engagement with the monadnock is a central theme in this chapter. Bald Mountain, Stony Mountains, Rock Mountain, Stone Mountain -- the granite monadnock in what is now north

central Georgia afforded opportunities for human activities due to its perceived unusual presence in the region.

While it initially seems obvious to point to the mountain itself, taking careful note of the physical characteristics of the site as an attractor helps to move the focus away from the idea of the monadnock as a *sui generis* manifestation of the sacred and shift our view instead to the many environmental and cultural variables at work in how humans constructed the location as sacred. Activities as mundane as moving up a trail to the top of the monadnock can become opportunities for engagement with the divine for some visitors. The presentation of a relatively flat mountainside can be viewed as an invitation to create a representation rich in the symbolism of a failed revolution. The history of the mountain is deeply intertwined with its material characteristics in the landscape of the region.

A spatial history of religious and spiritual practices and beliefs at a monadnock located in a large metropolitan area in the southeastern United States may initially appear to be a bit like attempting to fit a square peg into a round hole. The dissonance between the primacy accorded built environments set aside as sacred spaces valorized by long-standing religious institutions and the marginal status typically reserved for natural spaces and the more pedestrian modes of religiosity often associated with such spaces can be substantial. However, drawing upon the spatial schema developed in Chapter Two, this chapter illustrates the potential insights which emerge when the mundane is filtered through those interpretative lenses.

The remaining case studies will use similar methodological analyses as further examples of religion at Stone Mountain are examined. The studies, while focusing on unique and unrelated examples of spirituality at Stone Mountain, nevertheless are executed using the same spatial schema followed in the current chapter. The goal is to provide the reader with a common point of reference as the various spatial analyses illuminate the many spiritual practices exercised at Stone Mountain.

Chapter Five Making Space for a Lost Cause

The creation of a memorial to honor the leaders of a failed effort to establish a new nation inevitably involves the emplacement of abstract ideas and values onto a concrete object. Certainly, the physical aspects of the memorial provide more than enough data for spatial analysis, especially inasmuch as the carved object calls to mind concepts of salvific sacrifice and moral tragedy. However, the subcategory of power as a property of space particularly illuminates the ways various struggles marked the process of creating and producing the memorial. Beginning at the end of the nineteenth century and continuing into the early twenty-first century, the story of the myth of the Lost Cause at Stone Mountain develops as an invented narrative or tradition, as Eric Hobsbawm explains the term, seeking to react to and address the charges of treason and immorality leveled against the failed Confederacy.

'Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.¹

The claim of a transcendent sacred identity is a claim for the power of a certain kind of South and connects to the actual white power exerted in the South. Each time the

¹ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

memorial becomes 'visible' on the cultural landscape -- either during or after its creation -- is a time when there is a perceived need to assert this white power, albeit under changing circumstances.

The effort to create the memorial on the side of a small granite mountain was contentious from the beginning. Internal disputes about the nature of the memorial, what was to be carved and how it was to be created, anticipated the larger and much more lengthy struggles involved in the emplacement and preservation of the myth of the Lost Cause at the site. For a period of time early in the process of carving the memorial, General Lee had two heads. In 1925, the original sculptor hired to create the memorial to the Confederacy, Gutzon Borglum, had been dismissed and Augustus Lukeman was selected to complete the work. Borglum had only completed the head of Lee before his departure. His successor had a different vision for the memorial and started his own carving just below Borglum's effort. Throughout most of 1927 and well into 1928, workers carved a second head while the first head continued its vigil. Weeks before Lukeman revealed his progress on the carving for the first time, Lee's first head was blown off the side of the mountain (see Figure 5.1 in Appendix 4).

The image of the two heads of Lee and the subsequent destruction of the first carving reflects the long and convoluted effort to invent the story memorializing the heroes of the Confederacy. While the various parties involved in the contested process generally agreed about the sentiments behind the effort to create the memorial, their

particular interests often pushed them in different directions. Ultimately, those differences were forgotten and the greater purpose to which the memorial was dedicated -- the Lost Cause -- prevailed.

In the scholarship that has emerged on the Lost Cause, there are various approaches to the religious aspects of the myth. While scholars such as Charles Wilson² prefer to apply Robert Bellah's "civil religion"³ to the transcendent themes evident in the Lost Cause writings, sermons, speeches, ceremonies, and monuments, others offer such terms as "Confederate religion",⁴ "religious nationalism",⁵ and "southern culture religion"⁶ as more accurate characterizations. However, the juxtaposition of the political and the sacred captured in the term "civil religion" accurately underscores the dynamics at work in the world view manifest in the Lost Cause narrative.

The Lost Cause myth came to function as a form of civil religion that enabled many in the defeated South to move beyond the reality of their devastating losses and into a fanciful and nostalgic salvation history justifying their placement within in the reconstituted United States.

Physical memorials served key roles in cultivating the propagation and wide acceptance of the Lost Cause mythos in

² Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*.

³ Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96, no. 1 (1967): 1-21.

⁴ W. Scott Poole, *Never Surrender: Confederate Memory and Conservatism in the South Carolina Upcountry* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004).

⁵ Catherine L. Albanese, *America, Religions, and Religion* (Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2013).

⁶ Hunter, "The Immortal Confederacy: Another Look at Lost Cause Religion."

the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. For example, Gaines Foster's description of the ritual aspects of monument dedication ceremonies during this period merits quoting at length as it illustrates the key role of ritual performance in engaging material memorialization.

The parade clearly demarcated a break in the normal sequence of time, and the festive gathering created a sense of community that, being outside the normal order of things, transcended the usual social and economic divisions of society. Within this special sense of time and structure, southern communities formed at the base of a statue honoring not a leading general but a likeness of the private soldier, the common man who had faithfully defended his fellow citizens. The ceremony and the speech delivered by a prominent citizen paid homage to this representative follower. The event reversed the order of society, as the common man became the focus of attention and praise. When the ceremony ended and people resumed their daily lives, when the ritual time closed, the order of society returned. But the temporary establishment of a special sense of community and the town's and its leaders' testimony of respect to the common man served to enhance the bonds of unity within society.

The enhancement of unity helped ease the social tensions of the era, but the monuments also offered salve for the scars of defeat. For the veteran, the homage paid to the stone soldier symbolized his community's respect for him. The unveiling ceremony reminded him that he had acted with honor and nobility, had given of himself for the good of all. The statue celebrated not just the veteran but also his cause. It dignified the South's conviction that it had acted rightly.⁷

The suspension of temporal structure and the inversion of social order precipitated during the ceremonies reflects the liminoid nature of the monument dedications when romanticized memories of the past overlap with hopes and aspirations for a more secure and respected future. The

⁷ Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 131.

continuing presence of the memorials, with their focus on the 'everyman' may serve as a reminder of the brief period when a *communitas* was achieved by those united in their commitment to the Lost Cause.⁸

While "civil religion" will be unpacked more fully in Chapter Eight, a central value of the concept relevant to this chapter is its clear connection between the political and the sacred. As Bellah notes, civil religion refers to transcendent ideas and related practices associated with the nation and quite often tracks alongside other religious systems with which civil religion may share common values. "What we have, then, from the earliest years of the republic is a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in a collectivity. . . . [t]his religion -- there seems no other word for it -- while not antithetical to and indeed sharing much in common with Christianity, was neither sectarian nor in any specific sense Christian."⁹ So, while there is merit in the alternative approaches, "civil religion" remains a useful tool for gaining insight into the religious aspects of the Lost Cause.

In *Upon the Altar of a Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War*, Harry S. Stout provides an argument for viewing American civil religion as taking two distinct paths during and after the Civil War.

I describe not one but two civil religions during the war, each identical in theological terminology and morally opposed. With Confederate surrender,

⁸ Victor Turner, "Liminal to Liminoid in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology," *Rice University Studies* 60, no. 3 (1974): 53-92.

⁹ Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 1, 8.

vestiges of a Confederate civil religion would endure in the "Religion of the Lost Cause." But this would fade and, in time, the white North and South would reunite under one comprehensive and compelling American civil religion.¹⁰

While they ultimately would merge into a more unified American civil religion, the remnants of the Confederate version would endure well into the twentieth century. What is instructional about Stout's work is his recognition of the role the Civil War played in shifting the locus of religious language and imagery from the dominant Christian institutional location to that of the nation. Stout locates only a nascent civil religion in the antebellum national discourse.¹¹ While there are anticipations of a truly national civil religion in the early documents of the United States, it was not until the Civil War that the shift from a collection of disparate states to a united nation of states was effected. "Before the Civil War, Americans would routinely say 'the United States are a republic.' After the war they would instinctively come to say 'the United States is a republic'."¹²

While it remained primarily Christian in its language and imagery, the civil religion emerging during the Civil War served to valorize the two national cultures and their respective sacred missions. "By the war's most devastating years of 1863 and 1864, no Americans were said to be dying for their Christian faith, but plenty of 'martyrs' were

¹⁰ Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the American Civil War* (New York: Viking, 2006), xxii, n.20.

¹¹ Bellah, as shall be explained in Chapter Eight, locates a nascent civil religion emerging in the period around the American Revolution.

¹² Stout, *Upon the Altar*, xxi.

dying for their country."¹³ The shift from the sphere of the church to that of the nation in a moment of extreme crisis provided the opportunity for the nationalization of the dogmas of sin, sacrifice, and redemption. The challenge after the Civil War was to promote the civil religion of the North into that of the newly reformed United States. Memorialization efforts, funded by the Federal government, were one of the devices used to inculcate this civil religion and the denial of funds for memorials to the Confederate dead aided those efforts.

The Lost Cause emerges from the context of the Civil War as the ideological mechanism used to transmit and develop the southern civil religion over the following decades. It is distinct from the varieties of Christian Protestantism that dominated the South but it shares similar theological ideas of sin, sacrifice, and redemption. As it gained increasing currency within the culture, the Lost Cause provided a cathartic outlet for the shame and resentment that understandably accompanied the defeat of the Confederacy. Within just a few years after the end of the war the Lost Cause began to gain material expression in the ceremonies and memorials that emerged across the South. By the end of the nineteenth century, the earlier Ladies' Memorial Associations -- which had taken on the task of identifying, relocating, and burying the Confederate dead in cemeteries -- had given way to the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) which was more clearly invested in the promulgation of the Lost Cause. "The result was a creation

¹³ Stout, *Upon the Altar*, xxii.

of an entire generation of powerful memory brokers Prolific formulaic sculpture of veterans as 'common soldiers' were erected in town squares throughout the South"14 The numerous statues of white Confederate soldiers erected by these associations created shared dignity in the face of the shame of defeat and simultaneously erased any memory of slavery and black/white relations. It is by way of the UDC that the Lost Cause found one of its most notable manifestations in the memorial carving on Stone Mountain.

The decision to commission a memorial to be carved into the side of Stone Mountain was not novel when it was proposed in 1914. Decades earlier, just after the end of the Civil War, the idea appeared in a poem by Francis Orray Ticknor titled "Stone Mountain" in which the poet argued for a memorial to Confederate Vice-President, and fellow Georgian, Alexander Stephens.¹⁵ About the same time as Ticknor published his plea to "mate the mountain and the man",¹⁶ the first known mention of the "lost cause" appeared in the title of Edward Pollard's history of the Civil War. In the closing pages of that work, the legacy of the sacred sacrifices associated with the Lost Cause are already clear.

Defeat has not made "all our sacred things profane."
The war has left the South its own memories, its own
heroes, its own tears, its own dead. Under these
traditions, sons will grow to manhood, and lessons sink

¹⁴ Lori Holyfield and Clifford Beacham, "Memory Brokers, Shameful Pasts, and Civil War Commemoration," *Journal of Black Studies* 42, no. 3 (2011): 442.

¹⁵ Francis Orray Ticknor, "Stone Mountain (To Alexander Hamilton Stephens)," in *The Poems of Francis Orray Ticknor*, Michelle Cutliff Ticknor (New York and Washington: The Neale Publishing Company, 1911), 147-48.

¹⁶ Ticknor, "Stone Mountain," 148.

deep that are learned from the lists of widowed mothers.¹⁷

Others would eventually provide more detailed justifications for the revisionism associated with the Lost Cause and it soon became a coherent mythic account of the war. Slavery, according to the fable, was not the reason for the war. Rather, it was the aggressive intrusion of the North into the harmonious relations that existed between masters and slaves in the antebellum Southern states that precipitated the conflict. The North, intent on gaining access to the underdeveloped natural resources of the South, usurped states' rights through a corrupted Federalism and threatened the stability of the region. It was the heroic and ultimately tragic efforts of the leaders of the Confederacy that should be honored and memorialized.

Yet, even in defeat, continues the narrative, the nobility of the people of the Southland will be redeemed. This inversion of defeat into triumph is captured in a pamphlet detailing the efforts to create the memorial by the originator of Confederate Memorial Day and a major architect of the Lost Cause mythology and vice-president of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association, Mildred Lewis Rutherford (1851-1928).

In 1865 the surrender came at Appomattox and the Southern Army was overcome by a larger force. "**Might does not make right,**" and the surrender did not mean a "Lost Cause." The principle for which the Confederate soldier fought **was not lost**. The violation of the Constitution by an interference with state rights is today a vital issue in our United States Government. The spirit in which the Confederate soldier returned to his home was the spirit that really preserved the

¹⁷ Pollard, *The Lost Cause*, 751.

Union. Time has proven that the cause was a just cause and this memorial vindicates it.¹⁸

Connections between home and homeland are mediated by a defense of Constitutional principles which, it is claimed, ultimately saved the Union. The "spirit" of the Lost/Just Cause served to restore the bonds of the fractured country and the Southland's heroic misery was the balm that healed those wounds.

So, it is no surprise that visitors to the memorial can see not only the images of Davis, Lee, and Jackson on the mountainside, at the base of the mountain they can see representations of the virtues of *Valor* and *Sacrifice* standing guard on either side of the memorial. *Valor* is represented by a Confederate soldier stabbing into the air with a broken sword. Beneath the soldier are the words "Men who saw night coming down about them could somehow act as if they stood at the edge of dawn" attributed to a Confederate soldier shortly before his death (see Figure 5.2 in Appendix 4). On the other side of the lawn, *Sacrifice* is symbolized by a woman holding a small child on her shoulder with her right outstretched toward the earth. Beneath the statue are the words "The country comes before me" attributed to Caroline Deslondes Beauregard as she lay on her deathbed knowing that her husband could not be spared to leave his military duties to visit his dying wife (see Figure 5.3 in Appendix 4).

¹⁸ Mildred Lewis Rutherford, "The History of the Stone Mountain Memorial," Stone Mountain ephemera, ms 2817. Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries (Athens, Ga.: United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1924), 3, (emphasis in original).

The two statues are striking but casual observations indicate they are seldom visited and certainly do not figure prominently in the current informational literature available to park visitors. The statues and the memorial plaza which encircles the Memorial Lawn at the base of the mountain in front of the memorial establish the boundaries for the monument area. But the focus is not on the Lost Cause or even on the memorial itself. Instead, families and visitors gather for the summer laser light shows which date back to the early 1980s or rides down the "snow mountain" amusement constructed on the memorial lawn late each fall and available until late winter since 2008. The meaning of the memorial recedes into time and becomes a backdrop to other activities and entertainment.¹⁹ Almost a century after the work on the monument began, there is a disconnect between the ideas of the Lost Cause that inspired the work and the practices of many visitors to the park. Many of the daily visitors to the park are African-American and reflect the changing demographics of the area immediately surrounding the park. As one visitor explained to me, referring to the memorial carving, he simply did not pay much attention to "that thing."

Yet, the function of the mountain as a sacred space may still be discerned within a new narrative. The focus has shifted from the redemptive aspirations of the Lost Cause as other values have emerged. The southern civil religion has

¹⁹ Victoria J. Gallagher, "Displaying Race: Cultural Projection and Commemoration," in *Rhetorics of Display*, edited by Lawrence J. Prelli (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 188.

been eclipsed by a civil religion that celebrates the virtues of national rather than regional patriotism. Thus, during the laser light show, General Lee breaks his sword and the two halves fall to the earth only to transform into representations of the North and the South which then reunite into a single nation. This imagery, along with the figure in the *Valor* statue offering his broken sword toward the heavens, is both a recognition and a repudiation of the Lost Cause. Even at the memorial's dedication ceremony in 1970, aspects of this renewed national civil religion are clear in Vice President Agnew's speech.

We must set aside the evils of sectionalism. Just as the South cannot afford to discriminate against any of its own people, the rest of the nation cannot afford to discriminate against the South. . . . I bid you turn with me your face to the future, quickened by the memories of the past, but with nothing to do with the contests of the past, knowing as we have shed our blood upon opposite sides, we now face and admire one another.²⁰

The movement is away from redemptive suffering and toward mutual respect and forgiveness while looking toward the future.

In the brief scene of the broken swords uniting into the United States, played out against the side of the mountain overlaying the memorial itself, we can see a shift between Jonathan Z. Smith's locative and utopian spatial orientations. As explained by Chidester and Linenthal, "[l]ocative space is a fixed, bounded, sacred cosmos, reinforced by the imperative of maintaining one's place, and the place of others, in a larger scheme of things. . . .

²⁰ Jon Nordheimer, "Agnew Mellow in Talk Hailing Confederate Heroes," *New York Times*, 10 May 1970, A69.

[whereas] utopian space is unbounded, unfixed to any particular location, a place that can only be reached by breaking out of, or being liberated from the bonds of a prevailing social order."²¹ The transition from local Lost Cause to a national civil religion could be viewed through these two perspectives. On one reading, the locative orientation of the Lost Cause and its regional civil religion gives way to the more utopian view associated with the national civil religion of the United States.

Yet, as Chidester and Linenthal are quick to point out, another reading of the scene suggests the inherent limitations of civil religion on any scale. "American nationalism has been locative in defending its boundaries and borders, but utopian in its appeals to a manifest destiny of territorial expansion and its aspiration to transcend all geographical limits in assuming a position of world power."²² In practice, it could be argued, the utopian impulse emerging from American civil religion has been used to reinforce the aspirations and goals of the American national security state and its almost apocalyptic vision of the tragic consequences of asserting its influence across the globe.

Perhaps a stronger candidate to challenge the Lost Cause mythos lies in the brief reference to Martin Luther King, Jr. which is flashed across the mountain during the light show. Following Bellah's identification of the civil

²¹ David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, "Introduction," in *American Sacred Space*, edited by David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 15.

²² Chidester and Linenthal, "Introduction," 15.

rights movement as the third distinct phase in the emergence of an American civil religion, the reference to King suggests a more hopeful spatial orientation. However, recent debates over the confederate flag indicate continuing contestations over memory and identity.²³ The strong opposition to proposed changes at the park suggests that while the religion of the Lost Cause may have been displaced in these post-civil rights years, the exact nature of its replacement has yet to be determined and that the displacement itself may be reversed.

These contested events at Stone Mountain serve to illustrate both the continuing significance of not only the question of memory but also the area as a site of contested space. The activities taking place in the period between August 2015 and April 2016 reflect both the enduring appeal of the Lost Cause mythology and the claims made upon Stone Mountain by dissenting perspectives. On Saturday, August 1, 2015, approximately one hundred vehicles made their way to the Yellow Daisy Parking Lot at Stone Mountain Park to participate in what had been advertised on social media as a Confederate States of America Flag Rally. The trucks -- cars were in the minority -- paraded through the park with Confederate battle flags flapping furiously in the wind. A

²³ Mark Davis, "Stone Mountain Petition on Rocky Ground," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 30 April 2013; Jim Galloway, "Adding the African-American Experience to a Confederate Memorial," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 18 November 2015; Ernie Suggs, "Civil Rights Groups Oppose King Monument on Stone Mountain," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 13 October 2015; Ernie Suggs, "Why Black Civil War Soldiers' Stories Are a Challenge for Museum," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 27 November 2015; Ernie Suggs, "Black Civil War Museum at Stone Mountain Slowed but Marching On," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 31 May 2016.

few vehicles also flew Christian flags alongside the battle flags (see Figures 5.4 and 5.5 in Appendix 4).

Several hundred individuals gathered to share their concerns regarding efforts to remove the Confederate flags and other Confederate symbols in the wake of the shooting of members of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina just a few weeks earlier. Proposals that had been floated publicly included removing the multiple versions of the Confederate flag from the United Daughters of the Confederacy Flag Terrace located at the base of the walk-up trail and to alter or remove the vast memorial carving. Since its resurgence during the post-Civil Rights era, Civil War heritage controversies in the contemporary American South have largely centered on the public flying of the Confederate battle flag.²⁴ The events of 2015-16 reveal some of the dynamics involved in these contestations of space.

In speaking with those who displayed both Confederate and Christian flags, it was clear their defense of the former was tied to their commitment to the latter. For them the rally conveyed the significance of the sacrifices their ancestors had made in order to preserve the Southland

²⁴ Gerald D. Webster and Jonathan Leib, "Whose South is It Anyway? Race and the Confederate Battle Flag in South Carolina," *Political Geography* 20, no. 3 (2001): 271-99; Gerald D. Webster and Jonathan Leib, "What Would Robert E. Lee Do? Race, Religion, and the Debate Over the Confederate Flag in the American South," in *Faith and Race in American Political Life*, edited by Robin Dale Jacobson and Nancy D. Wadsworth (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 96-120; Jon D. Bohland, "'Look Away, Look Away, Look Away to Lexington': Struggles Over Neo-Confederate Nationalism, Memory, and Masculinity in a Small Virginia Town," *Southeastern Geographer* 53, no. 3 (2013): 267-95.

against the invasion from the North and their own efforts to continue honoring this legacy, vital to their shared identity. However, they insisted their protest was about "heritage, not hate", asserting their positive efforts to claim their identity were not, in fact, engaged in the kind of racism and violence they implicitly recognized had been part of the "Lost Cause."

In making their cases, advocates for the retention of the Confederate battle flag are reviving the religious ideas associated with the Lost Cause in their efforts to construct their self-understanding as primarily, although not exclusively, white Christian members of the Southland. Tensions between the parochialism of a Confederate civil religion and a civil religion that celebrates the virtues of national rather than regional patriotism have been heightened by efforts to remove Confederate symbols.

The use of Stone Mountain as a sacred space for the aspirations of the Confederate flag advocates attempts to subvert the more recent narrative of reconciliation which is projected nightly at the park. Even though the recent protests attempt to include at least acceptance of racial differences, the links made among Christian and southern white identity, along with the insistence of the dignified heritage of the Confederacy, suggests the persistent denial of the heritage of slavery and, indeed, of the validity of African-American perceptions of the Confederate flag.

This tension framed the entire August 1, 2015 event supporting the flag. Many of those rallying came from other states (as their license plates and self-reporting

suggested) so, in a sense, they were "outsiders" to this state park which offers inexpensive year round access for "locals." And they carried out their demonstrations against a backdrop of extraordinary diversity. From my ongoing observations a large number of regular patrons of the park are African-American, Hispanic, and Asian. While a few African-Americans engaged the protestors, the majority of those in the park simply ignored them. Whatever they might think about the heritage the park celebrates, they were clearly determined to enjoy their time there. And in doing so, they manifest a different civic identity, with a very different relation to the Confederacy, than that offered by the white protestors.

These differences became especially clear during the events on Saturday, April 23, 2016. Advertised on social media as a pro-White rally, Rock Stone Mountain was to be a gathering of white supremacists opposed to calls for the memorial to be altered or Confederate flags be removed from the park. The fact that such an alteration of the memorial was against state law did little to assuage the passions of the protestors.²⁵ The supremacist group was distinctly different from the Confederate battle flag defenders I had observed the previous year. Indeed, in their respective

²⁵ "Any other provision of law notwithstanding, the memorial to the heroes of the Confederate States of America graven upon the face of Stone Mountain shall never be altered, removed, concealed, or obscured in any fashion and shall be preserved and protected for all time as a tribute to the bravery and heroism of the citizens of this state who suffered and died in their cause" (Description of state flag; militia to carry flag; defacing public monuments; obstruction of Stone Mountain [GA Code § 50-3-1 (2015)]).

social media outlets, the groups went out of their way to separate themselves from each other.

As might be expected, the announcement of the rally earlier in the year prompted a large response of disparate groups including the original CSA Flag Rally group which gathered in August of the previous year.²⁶ While the leader of the pro-White rally dismissed the CSA flaggers as “rainbow Confederates” who were ignorant of the need to tie the Confederate flag to race, the flaggers assembled on the Memorial Lawn in front of the memorial to stage their own rally in favor of Southern heritage and against racism.

While the approximately two dozen white separatists staged their protest safely behind police stationed to protect them from hundreds of protestors (see Figures 5.6 and 5.7 in Appendix 4),²⁷ the Heritage Not Hate group experienced an encounter with members of Black Lives Matter and the Black Panthers at the foot of the memorial carving. Recordings of the encounter reflect the tensions between the groups. After several minutes of heated exchanges, and the intervention of park police, the groups acknowledged the KKK and white supremacists as their common enemy and the conversation turned to the use of the battle flag (see Figure 5.8 in Appendix 4).

²⁶ At the April 23 rally, the members of CSA Flag Rally group identified themselves under the name “Heritage Not Hate” to distinguish their members from the group advertising itself as pro-White.

²⁷ Maura Friedman, “White Supremacy at Stone Mountain: 2016 Edition,” in *Scalawag*.
<http://www.scalawagmagazine.org/articles/the-klan-at-stone-mountain-2016-edition>.

One member of Black Lives Matter explained his antipathy to the battle flag was due to its resurgence as a symbol of racism in the backlash to the Civil Right movement in the 1960s. When the response from the Heritage Not Hate flaggers invoked the importance of heritage he suggested they fly the original flag of the Confederate States of America instead of the one which had been appropriated for clearly racist purposes.²⁸ "The optics are everything."²⁹ The exchange ended with handshakes as the two groups went their separate ways.

Still, the encounter was clearly tense and could have easily become violent at several points in the twenty-minute confrontation and debate. Afterwards, a photo appeared on Facebook depicting a telephone pole repurposed as an ersatz cross looking over the Heritage Not Hate flaggers shortly after their interactions with Black Lives Matter. The suggestion was that divine providence had shielded the

²⁸ The Confederate battle flag was never the official flag of the Confederate State of America. It was one of several flags used by the various state armies and military groups within the CSA. The battle flag of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was widely adopted by other military units during the Civil War. While the original battle flag was square, the elongated, rectangular version soon became more popular and was a widely used cultural symbol in the South throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Confederate battle flag became politicized when it was displayed by the Dixiecrat Party formed in opposition to the Democratic Party's support of civil rights in the late 1940s. Over the following decades, in addition to becoming a widely accepted part of youth culture, the battle flag was appropriated by white separatists and others opposed to the civil rights movement. It is this use of the Confederate battle flag, as a symbol of institutional racism, to which critics are responding. See John M. Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 132-60.

²⁹ GA Security Force III%, "Untitled Video."
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/85978242>.

Heritage Not Hate flaggers during the confrontation between the groups. “[T]he Good Lord was over us on this rally!” explained the caption accompanying the image.

The activities of the Heritage Not Hate group at Stone Mountain have been minimal since the spring of 2016. A rally scheduled for the month after the April event was canceled. It was not until the early autumn of 2017 that another rally was announced. The “Georgia State Wide Rally To The Mountain 2017 For Our Veterans” took place on November 11, Veterans Day, and the goal was to recognize all veterans, including those from the Civil War during the rally. The rally only drew about twenty individuals in half a dozen vehicles. Most of the time was spent wondering where everyone else was since the posts on Facebook had indicated there would easily be at least a hundred attending.

At that event, I was able to interview Wes Freeman, one of the organizers of the group. Mr. Freeman was of particular relevance to my research since he claimed to have worked on the construction of the Confederate memorial carving, under the guidance of Roy Faulkner, from 1970 until work stopped on it in 1972. Mr. Freeman made it clear that the flag, the memorial carving, the park represented his heritage and he was committed to defending any efforts to diminish that legacy. He stated he considered the memorial to be about “history not hate” and did not think it should be altered in any way.³⁰ After I completed my conversation with Mr. Freeman, I decided to leave the gathering. Later

³⁰ Wesley Freeman, Personal interview.

Facebook posts indicated those waiting for additional Confederate battle flag defenders to show-up were disappointed in the outcome.

The struggle for control of the symbolism of the Confederate memorial may be best illustrated by the representation of General Lee breaking his sword during the laser light show, as noted previously. On the one hand, the appeal of the Lost Cause remains evident during the nightly shows when the figure of General Lee becomes animated. His image is traced onto the side of the mountain by the lasers and then appears to turn and emerge from the mountain side. As his two comrades join him, the three figures appear to gallop toward the thousands of spectators as cheers and applause greet the warriors. Yet, on the other hand, after a short view of battle scenes and when Lee's broken sword pieces shift to represent the North and the South coming together in unity, the audience's cheers and applause are no less enthusiastic. In these few moments, played-out during the warm and humid Georgia summer evenings, the tragic struggle of the South is redeemed as the Union is ultimately preserved and valorized as a unified political community. With several thousand witnesses, the heroes of the Lost Cause then turn to march back into the mountain. The granite appears to reach out and re-absorb the animated figures into its surface as they return to their eternal vigil, staring into the increasingly distant past. According to the Lost Cause, the tragic suffering of Confederacy served to ultimately reinforce the stability of

the Union. For many, that appears to be an apt summary of their understanding of the memorial carving.

For others, however, that is an incomplete narrative. Instead of allowing the myth of the Lost Cause to remain unchallenged in the memorial carving, additional symbolism has been called for at the site. On August 28, 2013, several hundred people marched to the top of Stone Mountain to honor the fiftieth anniversary of the March on Washington and recall the words of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Drawing from the words of that speech -- "Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia" -- a small bell carried up the mountain was rung in celebration of King's call for freedom for all.³¹

While I was not able to attend the event, I did secure a telephone interview with Sen. Emanuel Jones, a member of the Georgia legislature. Sen. Jones had helped organize the celebration and I asked him about the significance of the event and its relation to the memorial carving.

The context is historical and the carving is part of our state's history. As a historical artefact, it is to be respected as any other monument in the state. It captures a moment in time in the life of the state and should be granted preservation status as part of the history of Georgia. . . . While the commemoration of Dr. King's speech was historical, it is important to remember that Dr. King, as a minister, spoke as a religious leader. However, his speech transcends all religions, cultures, ethnicities, etc. It speaks to universal values. In addition, some people go to Stone Mountain to reflect on larger questions of life. Stone Mountain is no longer just a reminder of segregation. We have moved beyond that.³²

³¹ Ernie Suggs, "Birth of an Idea: Where the King Monument on Stone Mountain Came From," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 17 October 2015.

³² Emanuel D. Jones, Telephone interview (2013).

In the years since that event, Sen. Jones has remained actively involved in discussions about how to bring the park dedicated to honoring the memory of the Confederacy into the twenty-first century. Most recently, Jones delivered a speech at an event commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King during which he called for the installation of a Liberty Bell monument "featuring the words and memory of Martin Luther King, Jr., instantiating the vision elucidated in his iconic I Have A Dream speech and memorializing his desire to let freedom ring from atop Stone Mountain, Georgia."³³ Rather than removing the memorial carving, the current political climate appears more amenable to adding new symbols to the space in recognition of a growing awareness of the increasingly limited appeal of the Lost Cause mythos.

While much is evident from the history of the emplacement of the Lost Cause myth into the memorial carving at Stone Mountain, important additional insights can be derived from a spatial analysis using the schema detailed in Chapter Two.³⁴ The embodied aspects of space, the first

³³ Emanuel Jones, et al., *Liberty Bell Monument at Stone Mountain*, SR 913 (Georgia General Assembly - 2017-2018 Regular Session, 2018), 1; Tia Mitchell, "Speakers Say King Still Relevant, Call for Monument at Stone Mountain," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 4 April 2018.

³⁴ As a reminder to the reader, the categories in the schema are: 1. Body; 2. Home; 3. Homeland; 4. Cosmos; 5A. Dimensions of Space - Physical; 5B. Dimensions of Space - Social; 5C. Dimensions of Space - Mental; 6A. Properties of Space - Configuration; 6B. Properties of Space - Extension; 6C. Properties of Space - Simultaneity; 6D. Properties of Space - Power; 7A. Aspects of Space - Perceived Space; 7B. Aspects of Space - Conceived Space; 7C. Aspects of Space - Lived Space; 8A. Dynamics of Space - Production; and 8B. Dynamics of Space - Reproduction.

component of the schema, are evident in the carving itself. The most obvious feature of the memorial are the three figures mounted on their horses facing toward the eastern horizon. The religious aspects of these figures emerge from the manner in which their mounts have had their lower halves "feathered" into the mountain. The figures have a ghostly, ethereal quality as if caught in the midst of a material manifestation from the mountain itself. This idea is reinforced in the laser show scene in which the images are animated and emerge from the mountain to become fully human figures on their horses who charge across the mountainside. At the end of the segment, they are re-enshrined into the side of the mountain, silently standing guard and waiting their next opportunity to remind the viewer of their past and constant valor.

The heroic presentation of Davis, Lee, and Jackson is consistent with the earliest efforts to memorialize the leaders of the Lost Cause dating back to at least 1875 when the first statue of the South, honoring Stonewall Jackson, was dedicated in Richmond, Virginia.³⁵ Jackson and Lee, and to a much lesser extent Davis, are viewed as martyrs to the Lost Cause and served to validate the lives of their soldiers lost in the struggle. The fact that only the torsos of the figures are visible -- a concession to the need to complete the memorial on a limited budget -- coincidentally serves to remind the viewer of their failed quest. The incomplete memorial, the truncated figures, and

³⁵ Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 18.

the Lost Cause all come together in three lonely figures carved into the side of the massive monadnock.

Inasmuch as the memorial provides a location, a point of reference to the ideas of the Lost Cause, it serves as a type of domestic space for those still committed to the myth. The construction of an ersatz antebellum plantation, near the base of the memorial reinforces the sentiments attached to the space as home. Pieced together from buildings and furnishings gathered from throughout the South, many of the relocated structures have a view of the memorial with the main house squarely situated with the memorial looming over its backyard. The sixteen acres complex was constructed at a cost of \$650,000 (just over \$5,000,000 in 2017 dollars) and opened in 1962, just a few years after the final effort to complete the memorial was launched. Text from the promotional literature explaining the history of the effort to create the plantation reinforces the claim that understanding and appreciating the system requires careful attention to the complexities involved in the use of slave labor.

Plantation life in the Old South was an incredibly luxuriant amalgam of realities and dreams, of high human drama and low. No wonder the plantation mystique is the stuff of which literature is wrought, and the source of so much meaning which still impacts on contemporary society and culture.

To understand something of this fertile, heaving period in the drama of the Old South is to begin to grasp the richness of its heritage, its complexity and its challenge.³⁶

The Stone Mountain Memorial Association's decision to create a living museum of the primary engine of chattel slavery in

³⁶ Norman Shavin, *The Antebellum Plantation at Georgia's Stone Mountain Park* (Atlanta: Capricorn Corp., 1985), 4.

the early eighteenth century as an adjunct to the memorial carving reflects the effort to tie the Lost Cause to the intimacy of the domestic sphere of a romanticized vision of an upper-class family's home. Offering this relatively sanitized version of home and hearth embedded within the slavery system under the near distant gaze of the three heroes of the Lost Cause presents a facade of credibility for the idea that antebellum life really was not so awful, all things considered.

Just as the building themselves have been assembled, the assemblage of this framing both conceals and rewrites history into a valorization of Confederate heritage. The reality of the plantation system in Georgia is that the vast majority of landowners did not qualify as planters since they simply could not afford to own slaves. In 1860 the planter elite -- typically defined as slaveholders with more than twenty slaves -- composed less than five percent of Georgia's adult white male population.³⁷ The placement of the plantation near the memorial represented the power held by the planter elite in antebellum Georgia which was disproportionate to their numbers.

The over-representation of the planter elite at the park reflects the significance of the Lost Cause mythos within the realm of homeland, the extension beyond the domestic realm to greater spaces of shared identities. As the primary economic engine in antebellum Georgia, the plantation system also helped drive the myth of a unified

³⁷ Jeffrey R. Young, "Slavery in Antebellum Georgia," in *New Georgia Encyclopedia* (2015).

Southland. The narrative reclaims a defeated nation within a nation, the Confederacy was reconstituted as an imagined community which battled valiantly for regional autonomy against an unjust aggressor. Slavery and its attendant spheres of oppression are relegated to the footnotes of the narrative and even there the history is distorted as the enslaved are held up as beneficiaries of the genteel culture they served.

As was noted in Chapter One, the Antebellum Plantation was re-branded the Historic Square starting in 2016. The description of the Historic Square on the park's web site is instructive.

Historic Square at Stone Mountain Park is a collection of original buildings from around the State of Georgia, built between 1793 and 1875. Each structure was moved from its original site and carefully restored to preserve its authenticity and historical value. . . . This fascinating area also houses the most extensive collection of period furniture and decorations in the south, reflecting the diverse lifestyles of 18th and 19th century Georgia residents.³⁸

Absent from the new listing is any mention of the plantation system or the slave quarters (evidently part of the "diverse lifestyles") which are still part of the collection of buildings on the site.

The effort to distance the former plantation from the history of slavery and the Confederacy was likely driven by the same forces which were pushing for the removal of the battle flag. This supposition is reinforced by the fact that during this same period all souvenirs referencing the

³⁸ Stone Mountain Park, "Historic Square: A Collection of Georgia Homes and Antiques."
<http://www.stonemountainpark.com/Activities/Attractions/Historic-Square>.

Confederacy have been removed from the seven gift shops located at the park. Clearly, the Stone Mountain Memorial Association, reacting to the waves of criticisms of Confederate symbolism in 2015, has made a concerted effort to minimize opportunities for controversy at the park.

In the expanding spaces of body, home, and homeland, a sacred trajectory can be discerned as the myth of the Lost Cause inflates into the realm of the cosmos. In this ultimate egocentric space, one within which meaning-making encompasses the shared destinies of its adherents, the Lost Cause provides a justification for the suffering endured and a basis for a more purposeful future.

Southerners have tapped this existential religious resource in their Lost Cause religion. Taking a profound historical experience based in suffering and linking it with the deeply felt Christian forms resulted in institutionalizing a distinctly existential outlook among Lost Cause devotees. . . . Southerners . . . could not bear their experience without the support of religion -- the Lost Cause religion. They have remembered their suffering and have cultivated the memory, in order to affirm that it was not meaningless.³⁹

Viewed from this context, the memorial carving, the sculptures representing the virtues of valor and sacrifice, the Memorial Lawn flanked by terraces dedicated to the Confederate states, the memorial hall and its museum, and the plantation placed a short distance away just across Robert E. Lee Boulevard all represent a "shrine of the ages."⁴⁰

³⁹ Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 15-16.

⁴⁰ Stone Mountain Confederate Monumental Association, *A Temple of Sacred Memories in the Breast of a Granite Mountain*, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University (Atlanta: Lyon-Young, 1920).

Moving on now to the dimensions of space, this component of the schema encompasses physical, social, and mental spatial orientations. In terms of the physical dimension, the sheer scope of the memorial suggests otherworldliness. However, the size of the memorial is only revealed as one moves closer toward it. Given the size of the mountain onto which the memorial has been carved, the memorial is easily mistaken for a much smaller monument. It is only as one stands in close proximity at the base or rides past the memorial in a cable car that the mass becomes apparent. The size of the memorial was driven in part by the proximity of Stone Mountain to Atlanta and the memory of the Union's burning of the city. However, the size was also part of an effort in the early twentieth century to compensate for the multiple federally funded memorials to the Union army and its heroes, denied to the South. This exclusion resulted in more modest memorials throughout the South. It was no coincidence that just as Congress was preparing to finally dedicate itself to the construction of the Lincoln Memorial in 1914 after decades of delays that the first published call for a memorial to the Confederacy on Stone Mountain appeared three months later.⁴¹

The social dimension is exemplified in the various assemblies which take place at the memorial. Over the past century, the lawn at the base of the memorial has served as a gathering place for a range of events attached to the planning, construction, dedication, and utilization of the memorial. Early gatherings reflected the greater interest

⁴¹ David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone*, 55.

in the values attached to the Lost Cause and the need to celebrate the virtues and values associated with that mythic reconstruction of the culture of the antebellum South.

More recently, there has been a shift away from the Lost Cause as the forces of consumerism and the leisure industry have appropriated the space. The Memorial Lawn as it is called hosts several different events throughout the year. Most notable are the evening laser shows during the summer with their rich imagery and music. The culmination of the five-mile train ride around the mountain is at the base of the memorial on a track that separates the Memorial Lawn from the lower area where a small pond serves as a buffer between visitors and the debris field left over from the construction of the memorial and the mechanisms for launching the nightly fireworks displays.

The virtue of patriotism, associated with the Lost Cause mythos, continues into the twenty-first century but on a national rather than a regional level. It remains for those who have gathered at the space in front of the memorial for the laser shows to assent to this expansionary version of patriotism. Such assent can be facilitated through the social interactions which occur among the visitors to the park as they position themselves on the lawn in the extended time before the scheduled start of the shows. Triangulated between the memorial carving where the show will be displayed and their many temporary neighbors, the crowds mingle, talk, play, eat, and, embody the ideas not of the Lost Cause but of the more inclusive aspirations of Bellah's civil religion.

When considering the manner in which the space associated with the memorial is mentally represented, the ideas connected to patriotism clearly emerge. Indeed, well before the memorial was carved Stone Mountain was associated in the popular imagination with patriotic celebrations. The earliest Fourth of July celebration on the top of Stone Mountain for which we have documentation dates back to 1828.⁴² The use of the mountain for such purposes almost a century before the work on the memorial began reflects its attraction for the local residents and its ready association with quasi-religious events such as the Fourth of July. The idea that Stone Mountain was of some special significance was not new, then, to those who wished to use it as a canvas for the memorial. The annual staging of Confederate Memorial Day at the base of the memorial captures the attraction the site has for those invested in the mythology of the Lost Cause (see Figure 5.9 in Appendix 4). In many ways, the relatively flat side of the mountain easily viewed from the surrounding lands seemed an ideal location for the memorial. It readily lent itself to the motif of the mountainside as a screen upon which sacred images could be viewed.

The properties of space are realized in four variables. First, the configuration of the memorial is an amalgamation of the physical, social, and mental dimensions of space it occupies. Obviously, the physicality of the memorial is one

⁴² David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone*, 28; Adiel Sherwood, *A Gazetteer of the State of Georgia*, Second ed. (Philadelphia: J. W. Martin and W. K. Boden, 1829), 152, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries.

of its prominent attributes. Yet, the memorial also serves as the spatial medium by which the ideology of the Lost Cause myth has been represented. Moreover, the memorial embodies the social dynamics envisioned both in the nostalgic longings of the devotees of the Lost Cause and as they actually existed among the various groups involved in the creation of the project.

Next, the diachronic aspects of the memorial touch on the use of the space around it as a meeting place from pre-colonial to contemporary times. The space occupied by the memorial serves as focal point highlighting the shifting dynamics of the Lost Cause mythos. From its development as a coping mechanism for the grief and guilt suffered by the Confederacy, to its later turn toward the self-serving myth of tragedy and honor, to its eclipse by the greater needs of a unified national patriotism demanded by the extended warcraft of the twentieth century, to its appropriation by reactionary political forces engaged in a losing effort to resist fundamental social reforms demanded by the civil rights movement, to its current status as the incidental tableau upon which the post-9/11 patriotism swaggers across the nation, the Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial maps one hundred fifty years of social change into the space carved into the mountain.

The third variable involves the synchronic property of the memorial which is reflected in the overlapping uses of the space. Surrounding the memorial is a system of subordinate memorials to individual Confederate states that are terraced into the Memorial Lawn in front of the

memorial. At the same time, various gatherings catering to Asian, African-American, Scottish, and Native American groups take place in and around the memorial. Celebrations of ethnic and national heritage, reflective of the many streams of immigration and migration into the region, appropriate the space and temporarily sever the links between the park and its dedication to the memory of the Confederacy. The spatial nature of the social relations illustrated in these gatherings reflects Foucault's "heterotopias of indefinitely accumulating time."⁴³ Even as the memorial seems locked in time, its space continues to evolve and shift as differing groups arrive and add their own, distinct view of the memorial and its significance to their histories and imagined futures.

Finally, power is illustrated in the efforts to dominate the space which were symbolically launched with the founding of the Second Ku Klux Klan on top of the mountain in 1915, the same year that plans got underway to start the memorial project. While the carving was intended to be funded through subscriptions and private donations, both the city of Atlanta and the state of Georgia were amenable to the project, reflecting the power dynamics at work in the creation of the memorial. Even the U.S. government was invested in the project as evidenced by the creation of a commemorative fifty-cent coin. The Stone Mountain Half Dollar was designed by Borglum and minted at the Philadelphia mint in 1925 and sold at a small premium to

⁴³ Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 26.

help fund the memorial carving.⁴⁴ While the effort failed to generate the funds necessary to complete the memorial, the political commitment to the project was clear (see Figure 5.10 in Appendix 4).

For the next fifty years, the ideals associated with the Lost Cause continued to resonate with the efforts to complete the construction of the memorial. When the legal landscape began to shift beneath the feet of the Old South with decisions such as the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case, renewed efforts to complete the monument were undertaken. Just a few years after *Brown* and the subsequent requirement to desegregate the public school systems, the state of Georgia invested significant funds into the acquisition of Stone Mountain and the final push to complete the monument. However, in order to recover the state's investment into the memorial and the park, greater efforts were made to create amusements to supplement the appeal of the monument as a tourist destination. With the opening of Six Flags Over Georgia in 1967, located on the other side of Atlanta, additional investments in funding attractions were necessary. The changes brought about by court decisions, the civil rights movement, and the shift toward an amusement park and away from a memorial and museum format worked to undermine the hegemony of the Lost Cause mythos.

More recently, as the demographics of the region have continued to diversify -- greater Atlanta's suburban non-Hispanic Black population grew from 27% in 1970 to 87% in

⁴⁴ William D. Hyder and R. W. Colbert, "The Selling of the Stone Mountain Half Dollar," *The Numismatist* 98, no. 3 (March 1985): 466-84.

2010⁴⁵ -- those visiting the park reflect those changes. In 1998, the first African-American mayor of the town of Stone Mountain, Chuck Burris, moved into a house previously owned by a relative of a KKK Imperial Wizard.⁴⁶ Politics, economics, and demographics have worked against the dominance of the Lost Cause mythos formerly associated with the spatial property of power at Stone Mountain. The memorial remains but the power dynamics associated with it continue to shift. Contemporary efforts to reassert the hegemony of white European values -- real or imagined -- are confronted by previously subaltern social groups steadfastly resisting claims of "heritage not hate" and false equivalencies regarding equal representation of familial and communal legacies.

Recall that the aspects of space take place in three domains. The first aspect -- perceived space -- is sometimes obscured by the more dominant aspects. Yet, in connection with the Lost Cause, its power can be substantial. "Spatial practice, 'denotes the ways people generate, use, and perceive space'. It structures all aspects of daily life and urban living, from minute, repeated gestures to rehearsed journeys from home to work and to play."⁴⁷ The image of the memorial on the side of the mountain is visible to those who use the park for exercise and recreation. The mere act of walking, for example, may

⁴⁵ Richard Lloyd, "Urbanization and the Southern United States," *Annual Review of Sociology* 38 (August 2012): 497; Karen Pooley, "Segregation's New Geography: The Atlanta Metro Region, Race, and the Declining Prospects for Upward Mobility," *Southern Spaces*, 15 April 2015.

⁴⁶ Brian G. Campbell, "Place," 217.

⁴⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 39.

at first appear of little relevance to spatial practice. However, as de Certeau has argued, walking functions as a "pedestrian speech act" which has three functions.

At the most elementary level, it has a triple "communicative" function: it is a process of *appropriation* of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian (just as the speaker appropriates and takes on the language); it is a spatial acting-out of the place (just as the speech act is an acoustic acting-out of language); and it implies *relations* among differentiated positions, that is, among pragmatic "contracts" in the form of movements (just as verbal enunciation is an "allocution," "posits another opposite" the speaker and puts contracts between interlocutors into action.)⁴⁸

In the context of Stone Mountain, the walkers circumnavigate around the five mile route at the base of the monadnock. There are also joggers, runners, and bicyclists. With this use of the space, the memorial is no longer a stationary object demanding the attention of the viewer. Instead, it becomes part of the scenery as it emerges into view and then recedes out of sight by those making their circuits. These actions, part of the routines of many who visit the park often if not daily, are not overtly religious in nature. However, they have the effect of desacralizing the memorial. Since many of the pedestrians who are appropriating the space of the mountain are local, they represent the significant African American population which has increased locally over recent decades. The walkers illustrate the importance of viewing the spatial dynamics at various levels and understanding how even mundane and secular actions can have important implications for religious ideas and practices. It is the power of the experience of perceived

⁴⁸ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 97-98.

space that has enabled African-Americans, on the whole, to simply ignore the memorial and events such as the demonstrations in support of the Confederate battle flag.

Conceived space is most immediately associated with the memorial. Indeed, Knott notes that "[i]t is the space of capital, its objective examples being factories, monuments, towers and office blocks."⁴⁹ The ideology of the Lost Cause, dominant in the South for decades after the Civil War, is carved into the space of the monadnock and represented in the heroes of that narrative. They are a part of the landscape, coextensive with the 300 million year old monadnock -- timeless witnesses to a South that might have been. The ideological dominance of the Lost Cause is demonstrated by the conspicuous absence of any direct reference to the institution of slavery since, according to the myth, slavery was not the true cause of the war. Instead, the memorial represents the fruition of efforts by engines of nostalgia such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy to celebrate the southern way of life and the war as a noble attempt to preserve that cherished fable against the onslaught of Northern aggression.

The mythos of the Lost Cause cannot be separated from the resentment generated by the dominance of the more heavily industrialized North during and after the war. The location of the memorial on a mountain quarried for its stone captures the legacy of the less developed economies of the South as they struggled to catch up with the North.

Ultimately, as the entire nation fought through the wars of

⁴⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 36.

the twentieth century, regional tensions would abate. However, nostalgia for the Lost Cause would erupt once again during the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. The final effort to complete the memorial would become the mission of the politicians in the state government anxious to stand firm against desegregation. Purchased by the state and with oversight from an appointed body of citizens, the memorial would finally be completed as a symbol of Southern aspirations and enduring power. Standing guard over the past, the memorial was completed in part to retard the social changes which threatened white hegemony in the region. The fact that an antebellum plantation was created in conjunction with the memorial in the early 1960s indicates the nature of the connections between the monument and the Lost Cause mythos. To this day, one may stand in the quadrangle of the plantation complex and see the figures of Davis, Lee, and Jackson hovering over a romanticized way of life that has been manufactured to obscure the basic goal of the Confederacy: to preserve the institution of African slavery.

"What makes this *lived* space different to perceived space . . . is the intervention of culture, not as ideology (as in *conceived* space), but through the imagination as tradition and symbol. In his example of mediaeval life, [Lefebvre] identified such spaces as the village church, graveyard, and belfry -- all of which were, to a greater or lesser degree, interpretations or symbols of cosmological representations."⁵⁰ At the base of the memorial, in the

⁵⁰ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 37.

space between the mountain and Memorial Hall, lies the Memorial Lawn (see Figure 4.7 in Appendix 4). It is well-known as the gathering space for viewing the laser light shows during the summers. Surrounded by the memorial, the terraces dedicated to each of the states of the Confederacy, the ancillary monuments to *Valor* and *Sacrifice*, and the Memorial Hall, the great Memorial Lawn is at the center of the sacred space constructed to honor the Lost Cause. The role of the lawn, however, is occasionally challenged by opposing perspectives.

For example, each year since 2008, on the first Saturday in June, the Memorial Lawn becomes the location for the Family Soul Fest. Sponsored by a local radio station and other businesses, the event provides a full day of activities for families culminating in the evening's laser light show. While none of the literature publicizing the event specifies a particular racial identity, it is clear that the event is intended to invite African American families to the park. As one Facebook listing stated, "Atlanta, KISS 104.1 invites you to the ultimate in family fun as we take over Memorial Lawn at Stone Mountain Park for 'Family Soul Fest'." The language of appropriation -- "take over Memorial Lawn" -- reflects the intentional occupation of the Memorial Lawn in a manner that subverts the Lost Cause mythos.

Music plays throughout the day as the radio station broadcasts live from the lawn. The Georgia Terrace, dedicated to the state's role in the Confederacy, is the locus for the Adult Pavilion where games of Whist, Spades,

Dominoes, and other board games are played. Family-friendly events such as sack races, croquet, and Frisbee tosses are located in the Family Soul Fest Field Games Pavilion on the South Carolina Terrace. The Lower Terrace is set aside for the Kids Pavilion where the younger children are invited to color, blow bubbles, watch the creation of balloon animals, and play Tic-Tac-Toe and Chutes & Ladders. Blankets, lawn chairs, and even small tents are placed all over the lawn as families gather for picnics. Later in the day, live music is performed by bands. Finally, the day ends as other visitors join in on the lawn to watch the evening's laser light show.

The image of the large gathering of African American visitors to the park assembled on the Memorial Lawn at the base of the monument vividly illustrates the function of lived space to intervene in the dominant display of the Lost Cause and counter that myth with a symbolic appropriation -- a taking over -- of that space. While a specific alternative religious system is not proffered as a replacement, the disestablishment of the Lost Cause mythos carries its own connotations about the nature of the sacred space during that first Saturday in June.

The dynamics of space take place in a cycle of production and reproduction. As was noted at the end of the previous chapter, the production of space at Stone Mountain is determined by the mountain itself. While it has been carved and quarried, the bulk of the mountain remains an intractable fixture in the natural landscape.

Nevertheless, various built-places have been fabricated in order to produce and, especially, reproduce elements of the values associated with the Lost Cause mythology. In addition to the memorial carving, the Memorial Lawn at the base of the carving and Memorial hall seated at the other end of the lawn are dedicated to the reproduction of ideals elevated to the memorialization of the virtues of the Confederacy and the Lost Cause myth. Just a short distance around the side of the mountain, at the base of the walk-up trail, the Confederate Hall and Environmental Education Center continues to cycle through short films on the Civil War and the effort to create the memorial carving.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, within sight of the Confederate Hall, and at the start of the walk-up trail, the United Daughters of the Confederacy Flag Terrace hosts a permanent display of the First, Second, and Third National flags of the Confederate States of America along with the Confederate Battle flag, notorious for its appropriation by twentieth and twenty-first century racist groups. Flying above the other four flags is the flag of the United States of America. The terrace both produces and reproduces "innocuous" associations between the Confederacy and the United States as the five flags move in unison to the wind rolling up the side of the mountain.

Up until 2015, after the most recent Confederate memorial controversy erupted, all gift shops provided opportunities for the purchase of Confederate memorabilia. Confederate battle flags were available on a wide range of items from spoons and dishes to hats and shirts. Busts of

Lee and Jackson were displayed alongside those of Grant and Lincoln. For decades, all of the gift shops throughout the park provided material reminders of the remnants of the Lost Cause in the form of tourist souvenirs and kitsch. As mentioned above, many of these items were removed after the flag controversies in the fall of 2015 but there remain historical accounts of the Civil War and the Confederacy. The mechanisms for the preservation and dissemination of the ideas and values associated with the Lost Cause, although reduced in variety, remain firmly in place at Stone Mountain.

Making Space for a Lost Cause

| Categories | Spatial Analysis |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Body | three mounted figures, animated figures, truncated figures |
| 2. Home | antebellum plantation |
| 3. Homeland | myth of Southland |
| 4. Cosmos | Lost Cause as metaphysics for suffering and hope |
| 5A. Dimensions of Space - Physical | macro/micro nature of memorial, politics of scale |
| 5B. Dimensions of Space - Social | various gatherings, patriotic celebrations |
| 5C. Dimensions of Space - Mental | patriotism as an idea emplaced at the site |
| 6A. Properties of Space - Configuration | physicality, ideology, nostalgia |
| 6B. Properties of Space - Extension | common meeting place throughout history |
| 6C. Properties of Space - Simultaneity | various ethnic and cultural gatherings |
| 6D. Properties of Space - Power | KKK, Lost Cause, segregationists, heritage not hate |

| | |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7A. Aspects of Space - Perceived Space | recreation as disestablishment of memorial |
| 7B. Aspects of Space - Conceived Space | ideology of Lost Cause and white hegemony carved into mountain |
| 7C. Aspects of Space - Lived Space | Memorial Lawn as space for alternative events |
| 8A. Dynamics of Space - Production | mountain is natural creation; appropriated for various productions |
| 8B. Dynamics of Space - Reproduction | memorial and associated buildings, Flag Terrace, gift shops |

Perhaps more than any other case study in this thesis, the issue of power is central to what is revealed via a spatial analysis of the Lost Cause as Stone Mountain. In viewing the site through the schema of spatial analysis, the efforts to celebrate the virtues associated with the Lost Cause are highlighted as the products of both the intentional and accidental exercise of authority by those officials who designed, created, and maintained the memorial carving and its associated built environment and activities.

With the shifting demographics and politics in the New South, the original purposes of the memorial carving have faded for some and recently been reasserted by others. As the hegemonic structures in the region which authenticated the celebration of the Lost Cause have slowly eroded over the course the late twentieth century, the site has attracted visitors for whom the memorial is at best a curiosity and at worst a nuisance to be ignored while enjoying all the natural environment of the park has to offer. Others, reacting to the perception of lost status as members of the de facto dominant culture in the region, seek

to reinstate the cultural values associated with the Lost Cause.

In sum, the legacy of the Lost Cause mythology continues a full century and a half after its emergence from the ashes of a defeated Confederate States of America. The function of that myth as a self-serving system for justifying the imagined virtues attached to the genteel veneer overlaying the sordid realities of the chattel slavery system which subsidized the political economy of the Confederacy has been captured in the memorial carving on the side of Stone Mountain. The complexities of the layers of contestations over the symbolism of the carving and the various spaces at the park has been laid out and illuminated through the components of spatial analysis used in this chapter. While the distinctive space afforded by the monadnock and the enormous memorial carving have dominated the claims on this space, more recent history has brought new groups and activities that, as will be discussed, repurpose or reconfigure the space for alternative narratives.

Chapter Six:
The Emplacement of Good Friday and
Easter Rituals at Stone Mountain

The previous chapter focused on the incidental appropriation of Stone Mountain for sacred purposes attached through the memorialization of the Lost Cause mythos. With the exception of speculation surrounding the possible uses of the monadnock for religious practices by pre-colonial indigenous groups covered in Chapter Four, so far this study has examined groups making use of the mountain in ways that allow sacred actions to be explored through spatial analysis. The specifically religious or confessional elements of the actions of these groups, especially in relation in the Lost Cause in the previous chapter, have not always been apparent without lenses such as those afforded by the spatial analysis used here.

In this and the following chapter, we turn to more intentional appropriations of Stone Mountain as the focal point of ritual practices. In the events taking place during the Easter weekend explored in this chapter and the uses of the mountain by those engaged in New Age spiritual practices covered in Chapter Seven, we see clearly articulated ritual practices taking place at Stone Mountain. The analysis in this and the next chapter of this study will work with self-evident religious practices and uncover perhaps less obvious spatial aspects of those practices.

This chapter surveys the use of Stone Mountain by two different Christian groups on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

One event is in its seventh decade while the second is entering its second. In addition, an individual operating independently of either group is examined. The individual has only been active since 2011 but provides an interesting illustration of the more individualized and innovative nature of some contemporary appropriations of Stone Mountain. The traditional Protestants who celebrate the Easter sunrise, the Hispanic Roman Catholics who enact the *Via Crucis* on Good Friday, and the eager young Evangelical who emulates Christ carrying his cross to his death represent a small part of the diversity within the Christian tradition while sharing the same sacred space provided by Stone Mountain. Their differing and overlapping appropriations of that space is the subject of this chapter.

The Christian practice of gathering to watch the sun rise on Easter appears to have emerged from the Moravians in the eighteenth century in Germany.¹ Departing from the older Easter Vigil tradition, the practice appears to emulate the New Testament account of Mary's discovery of the empty tomb as a group of young men from the Moravian church gathered in the local cemetery to watch the sun rise and sing hymns in celebration of the Easter event.² The practice soon spread to other Moravian churches. In the U.S., the earliest recorded celebration of the Easter dawn is that of the

¹ Gail Ramshaw, *Three Day Feast: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Fortress, 2004), 26.

² Tanya Gulevich, *Encyclopedia of Easter, Carnival, and Lent*, illustrated by Mary Ann Stavros-Lanning (Detroit, Mich.: Omnigraphics, 2002), 587-88.

Moravians in Salem, North Carolina in 1752.³ There is no evidence of a direct connection between the Moravians and the founding of the Easter Sunrise Service at Stone Mountain. However, the Moravian practice was certainly widely known in the Southeast region by no later than the early part of the twentieth century.⁴

It appears the earliest published account of an Easter service at Stone Mountain is from 1936 in a brief notice from the *Atlanta Constitution*.⁵ Three years later, the same paper reported that the Boy Scouts and leaders of the Atlanta area council would be presenting an Easter sunrise service on top of the mountain.⁶ The following year the city of Atlanta offered its own first annual sunrise service which resulted in the cancellation of the Stone Mountain service by the Boy Scouts. Instead, the Scouts acted as ushers for the 30,000 who attended the Atlanta celebration.⁷ The Easter Sunday Sunrise Service at Stone Mountain began its current run in 1944 when Lucille Lanford led the youth

³ Coincidentally, the only Moravian Church in Georgia is located in Stone Mountain. Founded in 1975, the First Moravian Church of Georgia is a reminder of the Moravian presence in Georgia dating back to 1735. While their missionary efforts ultimately failed, the Moravians remained active in the region until the early nineteenth century Aaron S. Fogleman, "Moravians," in *New Georgia Encyclopedia* (2013); Williams, *From Mounds to Megachurches: Georgia's Religious Heritage*, 20-21.

⁴ "Moravian Easter Service Attracts Many Thousands," *The Atlanta Constitution*, 29 March 1929, 10.

⁵ "Churches Plan Easter Service on Summit of Stone Mountain," *The Atlanta Constitution*, 29 January 1936, 9.

⁶ "Service Planned on Mountain Top: Scouts to Present Easter Sunrise Observance," *The Atlanta Constitution*, 2 April 1939, 2A; "Chilly Morning but Sun to Beam on Easter Parade: Atlanta Churches to Make Day with Special Rites," *The Atlanta Constitution*, 9 April 1939, 1A.

⁷ "Atlanta to Celebrate Easter Under Chilly, Cloudy Skies," *The Atlanta Constitution*, 24 March 1940, 1A.

group from the local Methodist church to the top of the mountain.⁸ The event proved popular with those attending and would go on to become an annual celebration sponsored by local Stone Mountain churches.

Decades later, the observance still attracts about three thousand attendees from the region to two concurrent services on Easter Sunday. The gathering at the top of the mountain faces east as the sun emerges over the horizon. Hundreds of feet below, seated on the terrace facing south toward the monadnock is another gathering of several dozen who prefer to remain at ground level where they watch as the sun's rays slowly creep across the side of the mountain and illuminate the carvings of Davis, Lee, and Jackson. However, the memorial carving is irrelevant to the service location which has been selected primarily for the large space provided by the Memorial Lawn. Both services are ecumenical but of a strong Protestant orientation consistent with the possible origins of the practice within one of the oldest Protestant traditions. There is no celebration of the Eucharist and the hymns and brief sermons cater to the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches that dominate the region. While this long-standing tradition is well-known (see Figure 6.1 in Appendix 4), a more recent use of the mountain reflects the shifting religious and ethnic landscapes around Stone Mountain.

In 2003, almost sixty years after Lanford first led her Methodist group to the summit, Father Francesco Iacona

⁸ Stone Mountain First United Methodist Church, "About Our Church" (2013), [Http://stonemountainumc.org/about.html](http://stonemountainumc.org/about.html).

organized the first Good Friday *Via Crucis* up the same trail.⁹ A member of the Claretian order which oversees the Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Stone Mountain, Father Iacona helped expand the Hispanic ministry of the church and drew upon the *Via Crucis* in order to serve the spiritual needs of the largely Mexican Hispanic members of Corpus Christi and surrounding parishes. Even after Father Iacona's departure from the parish for another assignment, the annual event continues to flourish with several hundred making the mile-long climb up the mountain together, gathered around numerous volunteers who take turns carrying the eight-foot wooden cross to the summit. The focus is not on the summit itself but on the ritual ascent up Stone Mountain as a community of believers.

Conducted in Spanish, the pilgrimage offers a striking confirmation of the shifting demographics in the Atlanta region. For example, in the period between the 2000 and 2010 censuses, the total population in Georgia grew 18 percent while "the Hispanic population grew 96 percent, followed an 81 percent increase in Asian residents and a 26 percent increase in black Georgians."¹⁰ While the immediate area surrounding Stone Mountain is primarily African-American, the Hispanic presence is increasing rapidly.

The juxtaposition of the two Christian appropriations of Stone Mountain over the course of the Easter weekend

⁹ Anonymous-Corpus Christi Catholic Church, Personal interview (Stone Mountain, Georgia, 2012). The individual I interviewed at the church decided not to permit me to use her or his name after examining the consent form.

¹⁰ Craig Schneider and Leon Stafford, "Blacks, Hispanics Lead Metro Population Growth," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 18 March 2011.

provides an opportunity for exploring the spatial dimensions of the ritual practices. In addition, changing demographics and evolving religious perspectives suggest the influence of Lanford's Methodist church over the mountain may be waning. Moreover, the mountain continues to attract others with less traditional approaches to engaging the sacred space it represents. For example, over the past few years "crosswalkers" have been observed during the Easter sunrise service. These evangelical Christians place large crosses on their shoulders and drag them up the walk-up trail as part of their efforts to witness their faith to others. According to Jason Johnson, a young man who has made crosswalking his personal ministry,¹¹ the introduction of the practice into the decades-old sunrise service has been met with some resistance from the ministerial association in charge of the Easter services who wish to avoid innovations which may undermine the integrity of the traditions associated with the service. However, just as the appropriations of the mountain for the Good Friday service illustrates, innovations will take place with or without the approval of those with more established practices and perspectives.

¹¹ *Jesus Walks Ministry* was the name Jason Johnson selected for his evangelical efforts. Jason created a Facebook page by that name and periodically provides updates about his efforts. In early 2014, Jason rebranded his ministry as *The Walk Ministries* and is attempting to obtain status as a 501(c)(3) religious nonprofit organization (Jesus Walks Ministry Facebook page, accessed March 3, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/JesusWalksMinistry>; The Walk Ministries Facebook page, accessed April 12, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/TheWalkMinistries>).

The following observations, recorded in my field diary, provide some insight into the use of the space at Stone Mountain. It is the last day of March in 2013, Easter Sunday, and at 5:30 a.m. the parking lot at the base of the walk-up trail is only about half full. Most of the cars parked on the other side of the mountain in order to have a shorter walk to the convenience of the cable cars of the Summit Skyride waiting to whisk them to the top. Still, there are enough people present to make the walk up the side of the mountain in the pre-dawn darkness seem less intimidating. Most of the people are in small groups arriving in one or two vehicles. Some have children and appear to be family units. Others seem to be friends or arriving as smaller groups from churches in the area. I overhear one group discussing their drive in from the next state -- the event was an annual celebration dating back to when they lived in Atlanta. I check my flashlight and start the slow and cautious walk up the trail. The fog and intermittent drizzle intensifies the darkness but the light bouncing along the path in front and those of my fellow pilgrims offer some reassurance that all will be well. The journey is slow and somewhat solitary. The groups start off and remain independent of one another. As I gain greater height up the mountainside, I turn to look back down and see the lights from the groups bouncing along as discrete units marking the trail leading to the summit.

As the hikers reach the top of the mountain, they find a place to settle among a crowd of several hundred sitting and waiting for the service to start. The cable cars

continue to bring individual loads of 25-30 people every few minutes while additional hikers make their way over the summit. Prerecorded religious music from the park carillon is playing on the set of four large loudspeakers and two sets of lights illuminate a large wooden cross standing against the still dark horizon. Throughout the period before the service, people stand in front of the cross and have their pictures taken.¹² By the time the service starts at around 7:00 a.m. there are two to three thousand people spread out over the relatively flat rocky surface of the mountaintop.

Having observed the past five annual Easter services, it appears the order of services has remained the same for several years. The service is standardized down to the same two hymns -- "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" and "He Arose" -- being used each year for the past few years. A production of the Stone Mountain Ministerial Association, the format appears to be the results of the sort of deliberation necessary to satisfy the needs of the Baptists, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches which make up the SMMA. The attendees follow along using bulletins passed out by volunteers situated around the gathering. After a welcome,

¹² The cross had been brought up in a cable car on Thursday according to one of the Park workers with whom I spoke. This was a departure from earlier years when the cross was simply stored under the structure receiving the cable cars (see Figure 6.8 in Appendix 4). The older cross had seen better days so it had been replaced and the practice of keeping the cross on the mountain for use each year appears to have been discontinued. Still, as late as 2012, the administrators of the state park had no reservations about storing a large wooden Christian cross throughout the year in an open space beneath the ascending and descending cable cars.

there is call to worship and prayer. Next, "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" is sung followed by a scripture reading from the Book of Acts. There is more music sung by a couple and then a reading from the Gospel of John. A brief, nondenominational message is delivered followed by the singing of "He Arose." Finally, a benediction is offered and the service, lasting about thirty minutes, ends (see Figure 6.2 in Appendix 4).

People slowly start making their way to the cable cars while a smaller number start back down the trail. Many linger to enjoy the early morning view as the fog begins to lift and the landscape slowly emerges below. Photo sessions in front of the cross begin again as crews from local television stations interview attendees to add to their videos of the event. The success of another annual event having been demonstrated yet again, the advertisements for next year's service appear soon thereafter on the Stone Mountain Park official web site. However, while this long-standing tradition is well-known, the more recent use of the mountain for the Good Friday celebration reflects the shifting religious and ethnic landscapes around Stone Mountain

Two days earlier, at just after 7:30 a.m. on Good Friday morning, there were already about 300 people who were waiting for the pilgrimage to start.¹³ Most attendees appeared to be Hispanic and Lorena Morales, my translator, explained the majority of the Hispanic members of the Corpus

¹³ Since the pilgrimage is conducted in Spanish, I worked with a translator, Lorena Morales, who attends Corpus Christi and is familiar with the Good Friday pilgrimage.

Christi Catholic Church were from Mexico. However, she noted, there were also people attending from other parishes in the greater Atlanta region and individuals from Central America, South America, and Puerto Rico -- recognizable due to their differing Spanish accents -- were also represented in the gathering. Since the event, unlike the annual Easter service, was not advertised on the Stone Mountain Park web site, I asked Lorena how those who did not attend Corpus Christi knew about the event. I was informed it was fairly well-known now since it was about ten years old and also that the local Spanish-speaking radio stations advertised the event to their listening audiences. Additional cars continued to arrive and the crowd slowly grew to about 500 by the time the pilgrimage commenced.

After initial greetings from the organizers of the event and an associate pastor from Corpus Christi, Father Peter Pedroza, the group started up the trail at about 8:15 a.m. (see Figure 6.3 in Appendix 4). The pilgrimage was slow and deliberate, ultimately taking about two hours to reach the top of the mountain. The crowd remained closely gathered around the individuals carrying the large wooden cross and the two smaller crucifixes. Most individuals coming down the trail as we made our way up took a detour around the pilgrims -- there was no easy path through the dense crowd. At various spots up the mountain, everyone stopped while a station of the cross was observed. Those who had been carrying the cross surrendered their roles to new volunteers eager for the honor of bearing the cross further up the mountain. According to Lorena, the older

pilgrims spoke of the feelings of comfort they derived from the pilgrimage experience. They also tended to mention a closer proximity to the divine as they made their way up the mountain. Interestingly, when Lorena spoke to the younger members of the group, they reported being there as a result of a request from a family member, usually a mother or grandmother. While Good Friday pilgrimages are common in the areas of Mexico from which their families came, the younger attendees did not seem to know much about the nature of the pilgrimage other than the fact they were honoring their familial obligations. That appeared to be sufficient motivation since there was a significant presence of young people in the group with many bringing their young children along for the celebration.

The pilgrims worked their way slowly toward the summit of the mountain (see Figure 6.4 in Appendix 4). At the top, the cross is raised and the two crucifixes are positioned in front of it. The final station is observed and Father Pedroza offers a few brief words of appreciation and encourages everyone to go home to their parishes where they may attend evening services and prepare for Sunday's Easter service. The pilgrims then turn and slowly make their way back down the mountain.

The *Via Crucis* ritual continues to evolve. In 2015, elements of a Passion Play were introduced as a few attendees dressed as Jesus, his mother and disciples, and Roman soldiers. While the practice of carrying the large cross remained part of the service, it was supplemented by enactments of the stages of the cross by the costumed

adherents which culminated in a dramatization of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus at the top of the mountain. In 2016, more adherents were added to the Passion Play and the crucifixion included the two thieves on either side of Jesus (see Figure 6.5 in Appendix 4). The expansion of the pilgrimage event reflects the growing influence of Hispanic members of the local congregation and their increasing presence in the Atlanta region. The appropriation of the mountain for several hours each Good Friday also reflects their efforts to add their own traditions to those already in practice at Stone Mountain.

The uses of the cross during the Easter service and the Good Friday pilgrimage symbolize the differing approaches of the two groups. The Easter cross represents the continuity of the long-standing and widely accepted tradition. Mounted atop the mountain with the assistance of park officials, it is slowly illuminated as the Easter sun rises and reveals it to the attendees watching the service. The *Via Crucis* cross is carried up the mile-long trail by shifting groups of pilgrims sharing in the labor of devotion. It appears animated, moving up and down over the rocks, as it is carried by the bearers and surrounded by the community of pilgrims. Ultimately, it is lifted into position above the two crucifixes reflecting the symbolism of the risen Christ. For a few moments on Good Friday, in what is an unplanned coincidence, the *Via Crucis* cross and the Easter cross -- already in place for the coming Sunday service -- share the same summit and remind one of the diversity of Christian practices taking place over the course of the Easter weekend

(see Figure 6.6 in Appendix 4). Just as they share the same summit, both events draw people beyond the immediate members of the churches sponsoring them. So, although the predominantly Protestant Easter sunrise service is much more individualistic, and the *Via Crucis* celebration stresses communal ties, both make use of the mountain as a space to facilitate their respective approaches to communicating the importance of their Christian traditions.

There is yet a third use of the cross during the weekend. Drawing upon rural evangelical passion plays, this cross is dragged up the mountain by the same individual from the base to the summit. The ritual has both the dynamism of the Good Friday pilgrimage and the individualism of the Easter sunrise service. It serves both as a testimony of the crosswalker's faith and an invitation to others to engage his ministry. This particular use of Stone Mountain is quite recent and it is not clear how long it will endure, but it points to the continuing ability of the monadnock to draw those seeking sacred space to its presence.

After having made the ascent up the mountain on Easter morning, I turned to observe the trail of lights below moving slowly through the darkness and thick fog. Dimly, but then more clearly, I observed three figures come over the horizon of the mountainside and approach the summit. I had to look carefully because at first I was not sure I was seeing correctly. It then became clear that each of the three figures was carrying a large cross over his shoulder.

I moved closer to observe that one of the figures was a young boy, about ten years of age, dressed in a hooded sweat

shirt and shorts who held the smallest of the three crosses. The second figure was a man in his late thirties or early forties wearing khakis and a white t-shirt with a cross on the front, on the sleeves, and on the back. His cross was larger than the boy's cross but it had padding where it rested against the man's shoulder. The largest cross was being carried by a younger man, who looked to be in his mid-twenties and who wore exercise shorts but was shirtless. He wore a crown of thorns on his head and red dye was painted on his face and across his chest and back. The vertical portion of the large, blue cross he carried had the words "YOU" and "ONLY" painted in yellow on it. The horizontal portion of the cross had the words, also in yellow, "LIVE" and "ONCE" painted across it. The "YOLO" phrase has seen renewed use as an acronym in contemporary popular culture. However, in this context, painted across the cross symbolizing the resurrection of the messiah, it was not quite clear whether the phrase was intended as a contemporary slogan or if it had deeper theological meaning (see Figure 6.7 in Appendix 4).

The three men stood at the back of the crowd while several curious attendees slowly approached and asked to have their pictures taken with them. I made my way to them and, when the opportunity presented itself, introduced myself and asked if the man with the crown of thorns might consent to an interview. After I left and the service started, I occasionally looked back at the three crosswalkers who remained standing throughout the service,

set back from the main crowds and watching over the celebration, crosses elevated the entire time.

What was interesting about the crosswalkers and their use of the mountain was the overlap between aspects of the Good Friday pilgrimage and the more traditional Easter service. The crosswalkers' evangelical use of the cross reaches across traditions. It is rooted in the proselytizing central to the Baptist tradition yet it also reflects the importance of penitential practices within Hispanic Catholicism. At the same time, each performance differed in the ways it was/was not embedded in a collective tradition.

The common point of reference -- Stone Mountain -- remains yet it is subject to the differing interpretations of those who view it as part of their religious landscape. As was mentioned in the first chapter, Stone Mountain lacks an intrinsic sacred status -- it is sacred because of what the people do there.¹⁴ The monadnock continues to provide a place of clarification for those seeking to exercise their religious practices. However, while the geography remains stable, the population around it continues to change. The oldline Protestant hegemony long associated with Stone Mountain is beginning to be challenged by Roman Catholic and evangelical practices. As the following analysis will demonstrate, the events associated with Good Friday and Easter Sunday provide a case study in the dynamic forces at work in and around Stone Mountain.

¹⁴ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*, 54.

The spatial analysis of the three independent ritual practices sketched above discloses additional dimensions of the practices not revealed by a strictly historical presentation.¹⁵ Based on observations from 2011-2017, I estimate about thirty per cent of those attending the Easter service take the walk-up trail. The majority of those attending the Easter service take one of the two cable cars from the base to the summit. The latter is not an option for those participating in the Good Friday service since the very act of ascending the mountain together as a group, a *pueblo* -- both a "people" and a "town" as one participant explained it, is essential to the ritual. In the case of the Good Friday service, the *plaza del pueblo* is centered on the cross and the pilgrims gathered around it as they move up the mountain.¹⁶ This concept is important to understanding the significance of the pilgrimage since, as it was explained to me, "you are your town, it is who you are."¹⁷ In the Good Friday service, the community -- many of whom have migrated to the area surrounding the mountain -- rehearses their mobility in the process of ascending the

¹⁵ As a reminder to the reader, the categories in the schema are: 1. Body; 2. Home; 3. Homeland; 4. Cosmos; 5A. Dimensions of Space - Physical; 5B. Dimensions of Space - Social; 5C. Dimensions of Space - Mental; 6A. Properties of Space - Configuration; 6B. Properties of Space - Extension; 6C. Properties of Space - Simultaneity; 6D. Properties of Space - Power; 7A. Aspects of Space - Perceived Space; 7B. Aspects of Space - Conceived Space; 7C. Aspects of Space - Lived Space; 8A. Dynamics of Space - Production; and 8B. Dynamics of Space - Reproduction.

¹⁶ Manuel A. Vásquez and Marie F. Marquardt, *Globalizing the Sacred: Religion Across the Americas* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 152-56.

¹⁷ Morales, Personal interview.

trail to the top. Yet, even as they traverse the slope, they remain *pueblo*.

There may be economic considerations involved in the decision of many of the pilgrims to walk back down the mountain. Those attending the Easter service tend to be tourists who have the resources needed to pay the fare for the Skyride. The pilgrims participating in the Good Friday service are local and may prefer to avoid the costs associated with paying for a return trip down the Skyride. However, it may be that the trip back down the mountain with family and friends provides yet another opportunity to reinforce the bonds of the *pueblo*. This is the case with the crosswalkers who use the return trip as an opportunity to stop and speak with the curious about their ministry.

For all who walk up the trail, however, they are most certainly engaged in negotiating the ascent with a heightened awareness of their bodily locations in relation to the space of the mountain. The pull of gravity, the angle of the incline, the cautious movement of their feet over the uneven rocky surface all serve to reinforce the clear awareness of one's location on the mountainside. For those walking in the dark of Easter morning, the challenges are obvious. However, even for those ascending in the full light of Good Friday morning, there are challenges involved in maintaining a dual focus both on the moving cross and one's path up the mountain. The concentration on one's bodily movements in conjunction with the *telos* of the journey helps to spiritualize the process. For all who make the trek, the culmination of their efforts will deliver them

from the myopic view of their feet moving slowly along the trail, their eyes scanning for the best route ahead, to the momentary exhilaration of relief and freedom that waits for them at the top of the trail. Having completed their ascent and defeated gravity, if for but a few moments, they float above the world beneath. This is no less true for the crosswalkers who report their sense of accomplishment in having conquered the monadnock in service of their witness to others.

For all three groups under consideration, the status of the mountain as a home or a domestic space during their respective rituals is less evident than was the case in the previous chapter regarding the use of the antebellum plantation in relation to the Lost Cause. A case could be made arguing that those who return to the mountain to revive childhood memories of the service with their families are emplacing their domestic values onto the mountain. In this sense, perhaps, the space exemplifies appropriation for domestic reasons but only for the purposes of nostalgia.

There is more evidence of Stone Mountain functioning as a homeland for the celebrants of the Good Friday service. As was noted above, the ritual provides an opportunity for the emplacement of the *plaza del pueblo* during the communal ascent. Yet, even in this example, the mountain is only of instrumental value for the ritual celebration of community. There is nothing inherent in the space which facilitates the process of becoming a people. The Good Friday pilgrimage is an effort to temporarily reproduce another communal life. Stone Mountain is convenient and available but the

historical narrative connecting the ritual to the monadnock is in its infancy.

For all three examples, the function of the mountain as a locus for cosmos is clear. In each ritual process, the ascent up the mountain provides an opportunity to connect with the spiritual values associated with each particular version of the Christian story of incarnation and reconciliation with the divine. For those attending the Good Friday service, the ascent is conducted within the narrative of a dramatic reenactment of the core drama of the Christian tradition. It culminates in the death of the messiah who is taken to an ersatz tomb after being removed from the cross. Importantly, there is no resurrection and the pilgrims leave the event anticipating that celebration later that weekend. Those who ascend the mountain on that Easter morning gather to watch the sun rise, symbolizing the resurrection of the crucified God and the victory over death. The celebrations reflect the highest aspirations of the Christian faith as it applies to the reconciliation between humanity and the divine. So, while the Easter service is actively not about a common homeland as is the case with the Good Friday service, it is about an abstract commonality of the Christian cross and all it represents.

As was noted above, the physical dimensions of Stone Mountain are integral to the ritual process involved in making its ascent and then partaking of the fifty-mile view from its top. The topography of the mountain, the weather-beaten and uneven terrain, add to the impression that one is in a different place. For those making the ascent in the

dark on Easter morning, the mountain can be almost threatening. It emerges as a liminal space between the safety of the landscape below and the ominous potential of the heavens above. It is only with the breaking dawn that the boundaries between earth and sky come into focus, offering assurance that the ascent was not undertaken in error.

There is a significant distinction in the social spaces between the two main sets of pilgrims. On Good Friday, the predominantly Mexican Hispanic practitioners gather first at the base of the walk-up trail and are exhorted to recognize the religious significance of the stations of the cross they are about to recall. They gather around those carrying the large cross and sing the penitential hymn *Pequé, pequé, Dios mio* ("I've sinned, I've sinned, my God") between the stations and prayers. As a single entity, they make their way to the summit for a sermon and the elevation of the cross. The addition of the passion play into the ritual during the 2015 celebration intensified the social dimension of space during the procession.

In contrast, those making the climb on Easter morning do so in small groups separated by distance and time. They share the same path but remain isolated from each other until they assemble at the top of the mountain. Once there, they are united in their orientation toward the cross set-up for the occasion and the dawn breaking behind it. When the service is over, they disperse into their smaller groups going their separate ways. The Good Friday pilgrims, on the other hand, complete their final station and then turn to

return down the mountain together albeit in a more casual manner.

The crosswalkers, once again, represent both aspects of social space. The three crosswalkers move as a small unit up the trail, pausing only to speak to those who ask about their presence. Yet, at the summit, they stand together and draw members of the Easter service to them, engaging them in their ritual performance and explaining their ministry. They work as uninvited adjuncts to the Easter service, standing sentry in the rear of the crowd as the more traditional activities take place.

For the three groups, the possibility of encountering the divine at the peak of the mountain appears to be a shared ambition and an example of the mental dimension of space. For those attending the Easter service, the sun brings the promise of a new day and symbolized the resurrection of the Christian messiah. The Good Friday pilgrims, too, contemplate the divine as they symbolically re-enact the sacrifice of their messiah and then anticipate his resurrection as the crucifix gives way to the cross at the top of the mountain. The crosswalkers, especially the leader dressed as the soon to be crucified Christ, both emulate and re-enact the divine in their own Passion Play. The mountaintop thus provides the location for the possibility of encountering the divine.

As was mentioned above the Easter sunrise service has become a homecoming opportunity for those who no longer live in the area. From local television segments on the event, to postings on Facebook, and to articles in the local

papers, it is clear that the event is gaining exposure as a regional celebration of the Easter holiday.¹⁸ The Good Friday service may soon take on this same sort of remembering function, serving as a marker of solidarity for many whose extended families remain out of their reach in their home towns. The crosswalkers also make use of social media in order to transmit the importance of their activities to others but their particular ritual remains in its infancy and it is too soon to say whether it will establish itself as a tradition at Stone Mountain.

The interactions between the sacred and the profane during these ritual events mark the configuration of the spiritual and the material. The mountain, itself lacking spiritual status, is valorized as a sacred space by the actions of these pilgrims. As one of the participants in the *Via Crucis* commented, "we meet the divine at the top of the mountain."

While the Good Friday service is barely a decade old, the Sunrise Service has extended through a longer period of time and illustrates the spatial property of temporal extension. In the development of the service, it has reflected the cultural shift in the region from segregated religious services to the much more diverse gatherings. The more culturally diverse Easter service is in large part the product of changing demographics as the region immediately around the mountain has drawn an increasing number of African Americans into the area. The history of the service

¹⁸ Ann Hardie, "Sunday Conversation: Easter Sunrise 'is Quite a Moving Experience'," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 23 April 2011.

captures the dynamic changes which have impacted the region over the past several decades. Similarly, the Good Friday pilgrimage illustrates the impact of globalization in the greater Atlanta region and specifically the area around Stone Mountain.

The celebrations occur within the Atlanta region and are among many similar events. In this case, the space of the mountain is linked to the other sunrise services taking place throughout the metropolitan area and illustrates the property of space known as simultaneity. Similarly, the Stations of the Cross are celebrated in other locations such as the one conducted in downtown Atlanta which terminates at the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial. According to Jason, other crosswalkers undertake pilgrimages on Easter Sunday at locations throughout the U.S.

The power differentials of the rituals may in part be traced to their differing histories. While the Good Friday service was introduced early in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Easter service emerged toward the end of the first half of the previous century. The longevity of the Easter service, and its grounding in the history of Stone Mountain when the demographics and culture were primarily white, helps to explain the institutional support and space provided for it by the Stone Mountain authorities. For example, the fact that the cross used in the service was stored in a space beneath the sky car arrival area at the top of the mountain illustrates the tacit support of the park administration for the service (see Figure 6.8 in Appendix 4). While it was not

conspicuous, the fact that it was stored there at all indicates the support provided for the service. Similarly, the park opens early on Easter Sunday and provides support staff to assist with the event. The event is advertised by the company which runs Stone Mountain on its web site and media coverage is extensive.

The Good Friday pilgrimage, on the other hand, lacks official support by the park though it has institutional support by the local church. It does not have the approval of the authorities and almost operates "below the radar" of the institution. I write "almost" because at the 2013 event, two park police vehicles were stationed along the route, observing the procession from a distance. Those vehicles have been observed at the subsequent Good Friday services I have attended. Given the tensions surrounding immigration in the U.S., the presence of park police -- and their absence from the Easter sunrise service -- suggests the nature of the power dynamics involved in the appropriation of the mountain for the pilgrimage. The claim made by the Roman Catholic Hispanic community to the park space may not be contested but it remains to be fully integrated into the power structures associated with Stone Mountain.

Stone Mountain becomes sacralized for Christian practitioners on Good Friday and Easter. (Christmas at Stone Mountain is, as I shall demonstrate in Chapter Eight, more properly considered an example of a corporate religion.) The mountain takes on a very specific spiritual significance during these two days. However, during the

rest of the year, visitors continue to ascend the walk-up trail and survey the landscape from the top of the mountain. These activities, while certainly rewarding and worthwhile, remain part of the natural beauty of the site. It is when religious ritual engages the practices of walking up the mountain and reaching its summit that the perceived space is transformed into sacred space. As Knott observes: "Ritual practice itself is interesting when seen from the perspective of spatial practice as it is none other than spatial practice ["perceived space"] transformed by religious meaning, and often -- though not always -- performed in the context of a space set apart as sacred and by an appropriate ritual practitioner."¹⁹

The use of the space along the walk-up trail and at the top of Stone Mountain represents an effort to elevate the natural value of the mountain above the memorial and the other structures below. With the exception of the building housing the arrival area for the sky car and the large array of communication antennae, the mountaintop retains much of its primitive nature. In effect, the conceived spaces in these areas are "designed" to retain their natural status.

The summit serves as the location for the Easter sunrise service, the culmination of the *Via Crucis*, and the end of the crosswalkers' Passion Play. The walk-up trail provides a means for adding significance to these events as a test of the pilgrim's resolve and commitment. This is especially the case for the crosswalkers who literally must drag their crosses up the side of the mountain. These

¹⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, 43.

natural spaces have been symbolically appropriated as sacred places associated with their respective rituals.

The crosswalkers' presence at Stone Mountain is dependent upon the previous appropriation of the mountain for the Easter sunrise service. Jason's fledgling ministry threatens to subvert the hegemony of the long-standing Easter service and challenges the authority of that tradition in a manner similar to the unease precipitated by the Good Friday ascent with the cross. The dynamic movement of the crosses up the mountainside underscores the intransigence of the static cross of the established Easter service. Whereas the *Via Crucis* cross symbolizes the rapidly shifting demographics of the region, the crosswalkers' crosses represent the changing dimensions of religiosity within contemporary evangelical Christianity. In both cases, the newer rituals challenge the tacit control of the sacred space of Stone Mountain enjoyed by the oldline Protestant traditions.

Although it had its start in the effort of a church leader to engage the young Christians in her charge, the Easter Sunday sunrise service at Stone Mountain has been cultivated over the years into an institution and tradition firmly entrenched in the history and space of the mountain. The celebration reinforces the hegemony of white oldline, Protestant Christianity in the region while at the same time adapting as new cultural and social forces challenge previous racial hierarchies. In the process, it has become incorporated into the marketing strategy of the organization which runs the park and serves to substantiate the

Protestant Christian ideals associated with the corporation and the culture. These dynamics are illuminated by the recent emergence of the Good Friday pilgrimage which challenges the dominance of Protestant Christian ideals. Eventually, I submit, the authorities may move to incorporate the new religious practices into its corporate culture since to ignore the shifting demographics represented by the pilgrims is simply bad business. Until that time, however, the Good Friday pilgrims will represent a gathering to be tolerated if not cultivated. As for the crosswalkers, it is simply too soon to say much about the practice's ability to reproduce itself within the framework of the park administration. Jason reported that a colleague recently was challenged by a park official while attempting a separate trek up the mountain. This suggests the subversive nature of the crosswalkers renders them peripheral to the interests of the park administration at this time.

The Emplacement of Good Friday and Easter Rituals

| Categories | Spatial Analysis |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Body | ascent up mountainside |
| 2. Home | N/A - perhaps some familial nostalgia |
| 3. Homeland | immigrant celebration of origins |
| 4. Cosmos | vertical movement toward the sacred |
| 5A. Dimensions of Space - Physical | navigating the mountainside |
| 5B. Dimensions of Space - Social | cohesive communal experience; smaller groupings |
| 5C. Dimensions of Space - Mental | encounter with the divine |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6A. Properties of Space - Configuration | sanctification of mountaintop |
| 6B. Properties of Space - Extension | shifting demographics over time |
| 6C. Properties of Space - Simultaneity | global Christian celebrations of passion and resurrection of Christ |
| 6D. Properties of Space - Power | sanctioned by park; ignored or monitored by park |
| 7A. Aspects of Space - Perceived Space | nature walks transition into ritual |
| 7B. Aspects of Space - Conceived Space | natural spaces appropriated as sacred spaces |
| 7C. Aspects of Space - Lived Space | crosswalkers as disruptors |
| 8A. Dynamics of Space - Production | sunrise service created to celebrate oldstream Protestant Christianity |
| 8B. Dynamics of Space - Reproduction | repetition leads to reproduction and appropriation by other groups |

Unlike the study of the Lost Cause at Stone Mountain in the previous chapter, this chapter clearly illustrates the ability of the mountain to serve as a natural space which affords opportunities for engaging meaning-making or sacred perspectives apart from any efforts to alter or amend the material environment of the monadnock. All three examples explored in this chapter -- the Good Friday ritual, the Easter Sunrise Service, and the case of the crosswalkers -- engage in activities which emerged outside of the particular history of Stone Mountain. Yet, the practitioners are able to readily translate their rituals to the mountaintop and view it as a space at which encounters with the divine may be realized. The mountain both invites and serves to display the sacred.

For decades the Easter sunrise service at Stone Mountain has provided the clearest indicator of the projection of sacred space onto the mountain. Several generations of visitors have made the trip to the site to participate in the melding together of nature and theology that is represented in the celebration of the dawn. Well before the site was entrusted to the care of an entertainment company with strong Christian values, the sunrise service reflected the dominant Protestant perspective of many who lived around the site.²⁰

The emergence of the Good Friday *Via Crucis* service in the first decade of the twenty-first century similarly reflected the growing presence of Roman Catholic adherents who had been moving into the region in increasing numbers in the closing decades of the previous century. Stone Mountain once again provided another emplacement of the sacred reflecting the changing and contested nature of such space.²¹ The two appropriations of the space overlap at the summit of the mountain on Good Friday as the different crosses come into range of each other. At that time, the mountain is doubly-emplaced with constructions of the sacred.

Similarly, on Easter morning, as the crosswalkers take their positions at the rear perimeter of the service, differing crosses represent the stability of tradition and the dynamism of potential change and a call for renewal. In these various efforts to sacralize the monadnock we see the

²⁰ "Stone Mountain Park Managers Riding Into Church-State Conflict," *Athens-Banner Herald*, 15 December 2000. http://onlineathens.com/stories/121500/new_1215000003.shtml.

²¹ Thomas F. Gieryn, "A Space for Place in Sociology," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (August 2000): 465.

enduring appeal of the Stone Mountain as a focal point for religious traditions and innovations.

In his study of American sacred space, Belden Lane offers a theological perspective which resonates with some of the observations in this chapter. "In Christian thought, the one great practical truth of the incarnation is that the ordinary is no longer at all what it appears." The granite monadnock at Stone Mountain presents itself as an occasion for the ordinary to become extraordinary in the eyes of the Christian adherents explored in this chapter. That it has this potential to engage those seeking sacred space from other religious perspectives will be demonstrated in the following chapter.²²

²² Lane, *Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality*, 65-66.

Chapter Seven Locating the New Metaphysicals at Stone Mountain

The previous chapter detailed several aspects of the use of Stone Mountain for Christian Good Friday and Easter services. The Easter sunrise service is decades old and attracts thousands. The Good Friday service is just over ten years old and draws hundreds of pilgrims. However, as the example of the cross walker indicates, individuals and small groups are also engaged in religious activities at Stone Mountain. The emplacement of Good Friday and Easter Sunday rituals at Stone Mountain documented in the previous chapter illustrated the potential for spatial analysis of traditional yet fluid religious practices.

The bundles of beliefs and practices termed New Age religion or spirituality provide a contrast to the Christian traditions engaged so far, seen perhaps as operating within informal networks with greater organizational fluidity, particularly with the recent emergence of increased capacities for social networking. The New Age presence at Stone Mountain is not immediately evident yet is not surprising as the emphases on cosmology and healing are often present in natural settings, especially ones with unique configurations like the Stone Mountain monadnock.

This chapter concentrates on a particular case of one individual's published account of his eclectic spiritual beliefs and practices at Stone Mountain and traces the continuing influence of those activities over the past two decades. After several years of study and meditation at the

mountain, this individual's spiritual memoir was published in 1975 and provides the basis for much of the work in this chapter. Since that work was created, others have followed the lead of the author, C. E. Cantrell in his *Holy Stone Mountain*,¹ and are in the process of describing Stone Mountain as one of several etheric or spiritual cities within a network of New Age sacred spaces.

This particular effort is especially instructive as a use of spatial imagination in emergent spiritual practices in relation to Stone Mountain. As I shall demonstrate in this chapter, the specific use of the Confederate memorial carving on the side of the mountain as a "focusing lens" for astral projection into the interior of the mountain provides an exceptional opportunity for the application of spatial analysis to religious practices at Stone Mountain.²

At the same time, the examples of New Age spiritualities discussed in this chapter provide an opportunity to incorporate additional tools into this spatial study of religion. Specifically, the term "New Age" poses particular challenges which may be met using a spatial model of religion sensitive to the complexities inherent in understanding religious movements which fall beyond the borders of traditional concepts utilized in comparative religious studies. This is especially the case in addressing the virtual spatial dynamics involved with the

¹ C. E. Cantrell, *Holy Stone Mountain*, Stone Mountain Collection, Emory University Archives (Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library: Emory University, 1975).

² Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*, 54.

Internet and social networking connections which have added complexities to naming and identifying religious movements.³ The four examples of New Age spirituality explored in the following pages serve to facilitate a more substantial description of religion and sacred space at Stone Mountain.

Initially, a self-published tract on spiritual self-discovery from the 1970s might not warrant much attention. After all, with the production of numerous works, the period represents a high water mark in spiritual innovation in recent American religious history.⁴ Nonetheless, Cantrell's *Holy Stone Mountain* is of interest for a number of reasons. As a work of spiritual autobiography, it reflects the author's personal struggles to integrate his Christian faith with aspects of New Age metaphysics. In addition, Cantrell's connections with a New Age organization in Atlanta, the Foundation of Truth, are reflected in the work and helps to provide some insight into that once influential organization.⁵ Moreover, Cantrell's use of the memorial to the Confederacy on the side of Stone Mountain captures one dimension of the religious symbolism associated with the carving. Finally, Cantrell's description of the spiritual

³ Rachel Wagner, *Godwired: Religion, Ritual and Virtual Reality, Media, Religion and Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 206-35.

⁴ Sarah M. Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*, Columbia Contemporary American Religion Series (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 67-89.

⁵ The Foundation of Truth was incorporated as a non-profit organization in May of 1973 and remained active for twenty years as a meeting place for new age religionists in the region. According to Cantrell's son, Rachman Cantrell, his father lectured at the Foundation of Truth for several years during the 1970s (R. Cantrell, Skype interview [2013]).

interior of the monadnock as a repository for the Akashic Records has established Stone Mountain as a "crystal city" within the small network of adherents engaged in practices related to these sources of spiritual knowledge. *Holy Stone Mountain* provides a snapshot of spiritual innovation in 1970s Atlanta while also serving to introduce Stone Mountain to a community of "new metaphysicals" invested in New Age spiritual practices.⁶

The primary focus of this chapter is Cantrell's mapping of Stone Mountain into the spiritual landscape of Theosophical and Spiritualist metaphysics. The incorporation of the monadnock into the etheric geography of these traditions provides an opportunity to illustrate the spatial turn in the study of religion. In addition to mapping the physical and social dimensions of the sacred associated with Stone Mountain, the mental dimension merits particular attention. Cantrell's projection of a thirdspace into the very heart of the mountain -- a vast spiritual archive of all knowledge -- provides a case study in "spatial imagination, the creation of another mode of thinking about space ... [that is] [s]imultaneously real and imagined and more."⁷ *Holy Stone Mountain*, much like the portal it locates on the side of Stone Mountain, provides a conduit to an important period of religious experimentation in late twentieth century America. It also establishes a point of reference for subsequent reflection on and

⁶ Courtney Bender, *The New Metaphysicals: Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).

⁷ Soja, *Thirdspace*, 11.

practices at Stone Mountain by adherents sympathetic to Cantrell's visions.

The primary aim of "A Thinker" -- the pseudonym the author lists alongside his name on the cover of *Holy Stone Mountain* -- is to invite others to join him in his quest to bring about a spiritual revolution. Throughout the sixty-two pages of text in the self-described "booklet" are invitations to help Cantrell start a "School of Thought" near Stone Mountain which will provide the institutional support necessary to bring about the establishment of Christ's kingdom sometime during the period from 2000-2036, "either 2000 years from Jesus's birth or 2000 years from the time of Christ ensouled him at his baptism, 30 or 33 years later, on or about 36 years according to our calendar."⁸ While Cantrell does not appear to have been successful in achieving his goal of establishing a school dedicated to his vision, he did continue his efforts with the Foundation of Truth in downtown Atlanta.⁹ Cantrell's vision of a meeting of the spiritual leaders of the world at Stone Mountain to precipitate a new Pentecost also remained unrealized.¹⁰ Yet, Cantrell's booklet remains an interesting example of imagined space as it relates to religious expression. It is these spatial dimensions of *Holy Stone Mountain* which merit further consideration.

⁸ C. E. Cantrell, "Holy Stone Mountain," 49.

⁹ Allen Joyce, "Cantrell Seeks Holy Ghost Inside Stone Mountain," *The DeKalb New Era*, 14 October 1976, 2, Stone Mountain Collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library Emory University.

¹⁰ C. E. Cantrell, "Holy Stone Mountain," 46.

Cantrell's *Holy Stone Mountain* is a plea to discover the wisdom which the spiritual beings he sees in his visions can provide in order to help bring about Christ's Kingdom, the successor to Jesus's Church, in the near future. Cantrell's spiritual understanding of the memorial and the mountain provides an opportunity to analyze the space as it was perceived, conceived, and lived by Cantrell. This in itself is enough to merit the application of spatial methods in the study of religion.

Years after Cantrell moved to the west coast, his vision of Stone Mountain has endured. Reflecting some of the new forms of communication he hoped would help spread his message, the Internet has become a resource for reproducing and disseminating some of Cantrell's ideas. For example, David Furlong, a spiritual healer and author, has a brief article about Stone Mountain on his web site.¹¹ After discussing and quoting from *Holy Stone Mountain*, Furlong describes his own experience with the mountain.

My own connection to Stone Mountain occurred in the early 1990's. I had just visited Sedona and had just received some powerful inner revelations about an 'etheric' race of beings called the Elohim who had been responsible for generating the genetic mutation that had lead [sic] to the development of modern human beings. They had created a number of "crystal cites" in different parts of the planet one of which was in Sedona, which is why this area is so special.

Shortly after visiting Sedona I came to Atlanta to see an old friend. Whilst there I journeyed with my friend to visit the Etowah Indian mounds. Sitting in the warm sun on one of the mounds I was pondering my experiences in Sedona, when a very clear message came to me that I would find an important site of the Elohimic race -- one of their "Crystal Cities" -- just to the east of Atlanta.

¹¹ Furlong, "Stone Mountain - Atlanta."

I mentioned this to my friend but she was not aware of anything obvious until I looked at a map and the name "Stone Mountain" leapt out from the page. From my inner journey work I would confirm that this is indeed one of the "holy sites" of the Elohim and can still be accessed today for inner knowledge and wisdom as Clifford Cantrell has stated.¹²

Beneath this text Furlong points to his upcoming workshop in Atlanta which will include a visit to Stone Mountain where "participants will be shown how they can themselves connect to the mountains [sic] unique and very special energies."¹³ In my subsequent correspondence with Furlong, he made no mention of this planned workshop and stated he had visited Stone Mountain once in the early 1990s and again in 2001. Even so, in a small way, Cantrell's vision of Stone Mountain as a destination for spiritual pilgrims has been at least partially realized.

More recently, another practitioner of contemporary New Age spirituality has come to view Stone Mountain as a unique location. Rev. Sharon Vimala E. Manuel, who was mentioned in Chapter Three, is a native of Atlanta who only recently returned to Stone Mountain. On her web site, a series of web pages she has created and has hosted by an Internet service provider serving the Atlanta area,¹⁴ Rev. Manuel reports receiving encouragement from Archangel Metatron to go to Stone Mountain and it was during the 2012 summer solstice that she experienced witnessing the opening of a

¹² Furlong, "Stone Mountain - Atlanta."

¹³ Furlong, "Stone Mountain - Atlanta."

¹⁴ Vimala Emanuel, "Welcome Home," in *Gifts of the Spirit & Vimala Emanuel: The Healing Site* (Accessed February 10, 2014. <http://home.mindspring.com/~giftsofthespirit/index.html>, 2014).

portal over the top of Stone Mountain which allowed for inter-dimensional movement. During my interview with Rev. Manuel in November 2012, she recounted how her shamanic drumming on top of the mountain facilitated her visions of Archangel Metatron, Archangel Michael, and Jesus. In addition, she observed two star ships stationed over the city of Atlanta. Rev. Manuel described her first viewing of the recently updated laser light show at Stone Mountain. Toward the end of the show, there is a short film that moves rapidly from the emergence of Stone Mountain from its volcanic origins and its development as a massive crystalline structure up to a futuristic image of the Atlanta skyline with various flying vehicle crossing over the skyscrapers. Rev. Manuel recalled her shock at how closely this segment of the popular laser light show aligned with her spiritual visions of the interior of Stone Mountain and its role as a portal. In her view, it was another confirmation of the wisdom of Archangel Metatron's instructions to her.

Rev. Manuel also believes the Akashic Records which are located within Stone Mountain became accessible as the portal was opened under Archangel Metatron's guidance.¹⁵ Notably, the Ancestors (indigenous Americans) were also present and were crying with joy that a portal was being opened between the material world and the spiritual realm.

Rev. Manuel continues to visit Stone Mountain which will serve, she believes, as an instrument for healing the

¹⁵ Furlong reported that the beings discussed by Cantrell were no longer present having since moved on to another spiritual dimension (Furlong 2014).

planet. During my interview with Rev. Manuel, she reported that she had been unfamiliar with Cantrell's work until someone had given her an excerpt from it. She made it clear, however, that her return to Stone Mountain had been facilitated by Archangel Metatron. Indeed, as a subsequent post on Rev. Manuel's site indicates, the invitation is extended to all.

Good Day to you as the sun rises in the east I have come once again to these pages to offer you my blessings and some urgent news. We are overcoming the battle for the peace love light of earth's people. This is good news to share with all. However we must remain delegend [sic] and continue to focus on our own inner love light and feel its awesome glow and beam this glow out to all people. It is coming time again to journey to the great Holy Stone Mountain. Spring has almost arrived in the South. Remember you never have to wait on me to tell you to go, just go when you feel called. The energies at the Holy Stone Mountain are growing more clear and easily experienced. Pass the word. Peace remain with you and Love embrace you. I AM Archangel Metatron.¹⁶

While Rev. Manuel's use of Metatron and other Ascended Masters is more prominent than Cantrell's work in *Holy Stone Mountain*, the message is similar. Stone Mountain is a sacred space of spiritual forces and is there for those who wish to draw upon its energies.

In 2014 I observed a celebration of the summer solstice at the top of Stone Mountain. Led by Kady Hall, who describes herself as "a third-generation energetic healer, Intuitive Artist, Reader and channel," a group of about twenty people gathered in a circle for a few hours in the early evening. As they listened to Hall channel a Star Being named Anü, they manipulated their crystals in an

¹⁶ Emanuel, "Archangel Metatron's."

effort to align Stone Mountain with the energy fields of the planetary grid (see Figure 7.1 in Appendix 4). Speaking with Hall after the ceremony, she explained that she channels different beings and that she came to Stone Mountain because it was one of the power sites of the planet. In the announcement posted online about the event, the following text is attributed to Anü, the Star Being Hall channels.

This is an evening full of expansion, conscious exploration of the universe, and truly a deeper understanding into how to be a piece of the great change that is occurring on the planet. . . . This will touch the entire planet and will assist humanity in evolving more peacefully and sustainably. . . . I would like to offer myself to assist in this process for humanity on this day particularly. There is a lot of work to be done and I understand it can be difficult to know where to start. Particularly when so many of your ancient structures are 'off-line' so to speak. I would like to come through and assist in this process so that we can utilize this high, potent energy and beam it onto the planet solidifying and grounding the crystalline grid in a particular major location in this area. I suggest that I would like to do this in Stone Mountain.¹⁷

As this text indicates, the gathering at the top of Stone Mountain is intended to locate the site within the global energy network through which spiritual forces are manifested.

When asked why she led the ceremony at Stone Mountain, Hall explained the energy she felt emanating from Stone Mountain during an earlier visit precipitated a vision of "ancient cultures actually raising Stone Mountain from the ground with sound and vibration and ceremony."¹⁸ Hall then stated that Stone Mountain was connected to Uluru or Ayers

¹⁷ JoAnn Wilson, "Special Stone Mountain Solstice Ceremony!" (2014). <http://www.horizonhealing.net/id98.html>.

¹⁸ Hall, Skype interview.

Rock in Australia in a polarity with the former representing the masculine and the latter the feminine. The connection between the two sites, explained Hall, operate as a "harmonic stabilizer for our planet."¹⁹ Stone Mountain's purpose, according to Hall, is to provide stability for the planet. People are drawn to Stone Mountain, she explained, because it is a focal point for the lines of energy pervading the planet. This is why she was instructed by Anü to gather on the mountaintop on the summer solstice and work with others in an effort to "distribute energy outwards in all directions [and] assist humanity in evolving more peacefully."²⁰ Hall had not read Cantrell's *Holy Stone Mountain* but had acquaintances in the area who were familiar with claims about the spiritual significance of the monadnock. That the location has become important to a new generation of New Age practitioners indicates its burgeoning status as a sacred space within the landscape of contemporary alternative spirituality in the region.

The following spatial analysis focuses on Cantrell's work with additional attention to Furlong, Rev. Manuel, and Hall as examples of Cantrell's continuing influence in this particular stream of New Age spirituality at Stone Mountain.²¹

¹⁹ Hall, Skype interview.

²⁰ JoAnn Wilson, "Special Stone Mountain Solstice Ceremony!"

²¹ As a reminder to the reader, the categories in the schema are: 1. Body; 2. Home; 3. Homeland; 4. Cosmos; 5A. Dimensions of Space - Physical; 5B. Dimensions of Space - Social; 5C. Dimensions of Space - Mental; 6A. Properties of Space - Configuration; 6B. Properties of Space - Extension; 6C. Properties of Space - Simultaneity; 6D. Properties of Space - Power; 7A. Aspects of Space - Perceived Space; 7B.

Each one of the individuals under consideration in this chapter -- Cantrell, Furlong, Rev. Manuel, and Hall -- illustrate the significance of the body as a resource for space in the process of exploring and utilizing Stone Mountain for their particular spiritual practices. Clifford Cantrell's weekly meditative sessions sitting in front of the memorial went on for years and enabled him to refine the spiritual visions described in *Holy Stone Mountain*.²² Cantrell reported the projection of not simply his spirit but his spiritual *body* into the sacred repository of wisdom housed inside the mountain. His discussion of the physical characteristics of the sacred library drew upon the use of his body's senses of vision and hearing and the placement of his spiritual body within the context of the massive repository described in his memoirs. Cantrell wrote he was limited in his ability to explore the full extent of the repository of the Akashic Records located within the spiritual interior of Stone Mountain.²³ So, even his spiritual body, projected into the interior of the mountain, retained some of the limiting features associated with his fully-corporeal body. Indeed, Cantrell's reporting indicates that his spiritual presence was dwarfed by the massive size and scope of the storage facilities he envisioned within the mountain.²⁴

Aspects of Space - Conceived Space; 7C. Aspects of Space - Lived Space; 8A. Dynamics of Space - Production; and 8B. Dynamics of Space - Reproduction.

²² Joyce, "Cantrell Seeks Holy Ghost Inside Stone Mountain."

²³ C. E. Cantrell, "Holy Stone Mountain," 6.

²⁴ C. E. Cantrell, "Holy Stone Mountain," 12.

David Furlong's pilgrimages to the mountain in search of a potential crystal city demanded his physical presence at the mountain as he worked at placing Stone Mountain within the etheric landscape. His experience as a guide for pilgrims to other sacred spaces helped him to utilize his trips to Stone Mountain to lay out a basic argument for the placement of the site among the network of "'holy sites' of the Elohim."²⁵ Furlong provides an account of having "walked through or passed through the walls of the cavern" in the process of working with the crystals in the interior of Stone Mountain.²⁶ His account of his movements within the space of the mountain, observing the various colors and crystals, parallels Cantrell's discussion of his actions in the mountain.²⁷

Just a few years after Furlong's last pilgrimage to Stone Mountain, Rev. Manuel was conducting drumming circles at the base of the mountain in front of the memorial and at the summit. According to Rev. Manuel, the physical act of the "shamanic drumming" and the sounds produced in the process helped to facilitate her visions of Archangel Metatron, Archangel Michael, Jesus, and two "star ships"²⁸

²⁵ Furlong, "Stone Mountain - Atlanta."

²⁶ Furlong, E-mail interview.

²⁷ Interestingly, Furlong believes he met Cantrell during one of his trips since he received a copy of *Holy Stone Mountain* from the author of the booklet at that time. It was most likely during his first visit to the mountain in the early 1990s since Cantrell had already relocated to Washington state by the time of Furlong's second trip in 2001 (Furlong, E-mail interview).

²⁸ As Rev. Manuel explained it to me, the "star ships" are vessels used by spiritual beings to move between dimensions. Their presence over Atlanta coincided with the "opening of a portal" at the top of Stone Mountain between the mundane and supra-mundane realms (Manuel, Telephone interview).

over the city of Atlanta.²⁹ The positioning of Rev. Manuel and her associates at the summit of the mountain, deeply engaged in their drumming, provided the opportunity for their experience of gaining access to the spiritual realm of the Ascended Masters. The account provided on her web site of the event makes clear reference to Cantrell's own work several decades earlier.

BLESSINGS TO YOU! We traveled to Stone Mountain for the Summer Solstice 2012, ascended to the top, found a lone Pine tree providing shade and began our drumming to open the Portal of Love and Light for Archangel Metatron and all beings. We then anchored the portal through our meditation. It was an amazing experience filled with Divine Presence and we were told that we were successful. Now we consider the Stone Mountain as Holy. Holy Stone Mountain.³⁰

Kady Hall's status as a channel of a star being demanded her active presence in the midst of those circled around her. Her body served as a conduit to the spiritual realm and, like Rev. Manuel, her actions served to sanctify the top of the mountain as a significant place within the spiritual energy fields of the planet.

In each of these encounters with Stone Mountain, the physical presence of the practitioners and their use of their bodies during their time at the mountain played an important role in their differing views of the sacred nature of the space in and around Stone Mountain.

The domestic element is much less relevant to this chapter's study than was the case, for example, with the study of the Lost Cause. In a manner similar to the study of Protestant and Roman Catholic religious practices during

²⁹ Manuel, Telephone interview.

³⁰ Emanuel, "Welcome Home."

the Easter season, those engaged in New Age practices are not tied to the domestic sphere in their appropriations of Stone Mountain.

Initially, the homeland component also appears to provide little opportunity for analysis of the practices of the individuals studied in this chapter. However, the claim that Stone Mountain is located near an energy network which crosses vast stretches of space on the planet can be viewed as a system for providing large spaces of shared identity for practitioners of New Age spirituality.

In terms of connecting the local and the global, one of the most striking quasi-physical expressions of interconnectedness is the concept of leylines, perceived as lines or identifiable channels of earth energy and power. Leylines are envisaged as connecting places: they tie together apparently historically, geographically, culturally and religiously disparate places like Glastonbury, Stonehenge, Ayers Rock (Uluru), Mecca and the Great Pyramid into a global package of earth energy, power and sacredness. The sacred places of the world are literally bound together.³¹

While leylines were not specifically mentioned in connection to Stone Mountain by any of the individuals studied in this chapter, both Furlong and Hall appear aware of the general concept. Furlong has an article on the subject on his web site and offers a service which will locate leylines near one's home in order to determine whether they "might be affecting the energy balance of your home."³² As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Hall indicated Stone Mountain

³¹ Marion I. Bowman, "Ancient Avalon, New Jerusalem, Heart Chakra of Planet Earth: The Local and the Global in Glastonbury," in *Handbook of New Age*, edited by James R. Lewis and Daren Kemp, Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion, v. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 309-10.

³² David Furlong, "Ley Check" (Accessed May 1, 2016. www.davidfurlong.co.uk/leycheck.htm, 2016).

attracts spiritual seekers because it is a focal point for the lines of energy pervading the planet. In addition, it is on a polar line, according to Hall, which connects Stone Mountain to Uluru. Clearly, Stone Mountain has some significance as an important place in a spiritual energy field for those involved in New Age spiritual practices at the site.

The monadnock's significance for shared identity formation is reinforced by statements made on social media sites. For example, a video on YouTube references the Arcadian Leyline that runs from Stonehenge across the Atlantic through Pilot Mountain in North Carolina and then through Stone Mountain and culminating at the pyramids in Teotihuacan near Mexico City.³³ Another site, Geometry of Place, hosts an image file representing the "Pilot Mountain Wheel" with Stone Mountain positioned on the Arcadian Lei (see Figure 7.2 in Appendix 4).³⁴ The inclusion of Stone Mountain into New Age sacred geography provides an opportunity for adherents to tap into an extended system of spiritualized spatial relations which link them to other who share their beliefs across large regions in North America and Europe. Their "homeland" is in effect the entire planet.

Beyond the energy fields of the planet, the cosmos is readily incorporated into the spiritual system. Stone Mountain represents not only a node on an intricate grid of

³³ TheStarchild2009, "Pilot Mountain Energy Vortex & Ley Line" (2012). <https://youtu.be/7qPIiIhr38s>.

³⁴ Peter Champoux, "Leys and Alignments" (Accessed May 1, 2016). <http://www.geometryofplace.com/ley.html>, 2016).

energy fields, it also serves as point of access to spiritual dimensions beyond space and time. As mentioned above, the memorial carving served as a portal into a vast spiritual dimension of Akashic records which Cantrell described in his writings. The top of the mountain, under the right circumstances, served as a point of access for Rev. Manuel to envision angelic beings and inter-dimensional star ships stationed over Atlanta. Similarly, Hall used the top of Stone Mountain to channel the star being Anü in order to better receive his messages regarding the spiritual evolution of the human race. These examples all reflect the significance of Stone Mountain as a sacred space essential to the various goals of the New Age practitioners.

The physical dimension of space is clearly evidenced by the role of Stone Mountain in the spiritual practices. The monadnock is essential to the construction of the sacred at Stone Mountain within the narratives provided by the representatives of New Age spirituality surveyed in this chapter. Once again, the exceptional presence of the large monadnock on the relatively level plane of the Piedmont plateau makes it an easily identifiable location in the region. In addition, the Confederate Memorial and the Memorial Hall built in front of it provided a focal point and observational place for Cantrell over time at Stone Mountain. Furlong mentions the proximity of the monadnock to the Etowah Indian Mounds located sixty miles northwest of Stone Mountain as a factor in his emerging awareness of the spiritual energy located in the mountain. Rev. Manuel describes being drawn to the mountain even as she had to

overcome her disapproval of the ideas associated with the memorial carving. Hall noted that while she worked primarily in North Georgia, the unique placement of the monadnock in the geography of the region drew the attention of those interested in spiritual energy fields. In each instance, the physical location of the site was instrumental in the construction of spiritual space.

The social dimension of space is illustrated in Cantrell's early efforts to promote the importance of Stone Mountain as a repository of spiritual knowledge which reflected his skills as a small business owner in Atlanta. He developed contacts with like-minded spiritual seekers at the Foundation of Truth and was able to lecture on his experiences to receptive audiences. His *Holy Stone Mountain* was distributed via his store and personal transactions such as the one described by Furlong. It was only with the advent of the Internet and social media that knowledge of Stone Mountain as a significant spiritual location became more common among the network of adherents seeking insights into the changing spiritual landscape of the early twenty-first century. Thus, Furlong's extensive web site and his lectures on YouTube and Rev. Manuel's own web sites and active presence on Facebook illustrate an extension of Cantrell's promotion of the mountain via new social media. Similarly, the announcement of the solstice ceremony on the web site of the Horizon Center for Intuitive Awareness in Sandy Springs, Georgia allowed for several like-minded individuals to gather at the mountain for the event. The use of social media in the dissemination of information

about New Age spirituality illustrates the relevance of an adjunct spatial method which will be discussed below.

The mental dimension of space is illustrated in the manner in which the metaphysical framework of New Age spirituality provides an explanatory system justifying the elevation of Stone Mountain to the status of a crystal city within the network of sacred places on the planet. In addition, the conjunction of the ideology of the Lost Cause with the avertive apocalypticism found in aspects of both Cantrell's and Rev. Manuel's predictions illustrates the ability of Stone Mountain to serve as a convenient location for the signification of abstract ideas.³⁵

The mountain provides a focal point for the spiritual explorations of these four individuals. In this capacity, it serves to gather together or configure the three dimensions of space into a single site.³⁶ Importantly, that configuration is driven not only by the monadnock but by the subsequent incorporation of the site into the etheric geography circulated among adherents through the use of the Internet of social media sites.

The mythos of the New Age theology espoused by Cantrell, Furlong, Rev. Manuel, and Hall places Stone Mountain within an account of supra-dimensional beings who have focused their interests on the planet over hundreds of thousands of years. The monadnock was once a great center of spiritual knowledge which, according to Cantrell, is

³⁵ Daniel Wojcik, "Avertive Apocalypticism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, edited by Catherine Wessinger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 66-88.

³⁶ Knott, "Spatial Methods," 496.

awaiting a revitalization by those willing to put the necessary effort into learning how to access its resources.

Stone Mountain, however, is but one of many crystal cities currently available to the initiated. Many of these are much better known as spiritual centers. The effort to promote Stone Mountain as a crystal city is to bring attention to its own contributions to the network of sites visited by pilgrims throughout the world. Whether, as Furlong suggested in his communication with me, that status is in decline due to the departure of the spiritual beings to another dimension, or whether Stone Mountain is eventually firmly established within that spiritual network of energy fields as indicated by Hall's more recent encounters at the top of the mountain, remains to be determined.

The property of space associated with power raised particular challenges for a spatial analysis. In this respect, the advocates of Stone Mountain as a center for New Age spirituality lack the resources and numbers to be considered more than marginal to the more established religious uses of the mountain. However, the ability to circumvent the traditional systems of marketing the image of the mountain via self-published projects merits some consideration. Cantrell's *Holy Stone Mountain*, Furlong's web site and videos, Rev. Manuel's web sites and use of social media, and Hall's integration into the North Georgia metaphysical community all illustrate the ability of marginalized individuals to commodify, replicate, and distribute their spiritualized appropriations of Stone

Mountain to others with similar interests. As Knott points out, "[e]xamining how a [space] is produced, contested and maintained by its residents, planners, vendors and consumers, and how it is subject to the flows of power that moved through and within it can reveal much about religious struggles in the context of ostensibly secular space."³⁷ Just as the official powers at Stone Mountain worked to propagate their view of the place as a recreational centerpiece in the New South via post cards and other media, those with alternative views have successfully challenged that monolithic perspective using their own media.

The intentional use of interactive media to promulgate New Age spirituality is an example of the "mediatization of religion" which occurs within the space of public communication. As Ingvild Sælid Gilhus explains in her spatial model of religion, the space of "religion everywhere" involves a process in which "media acts as agents of religious change."³⁸ Expanding upon Jonathan Z. Smith's spatial model of religion³⁹ and borrowing from Stig Hjarvard's work on the mediatization of religion,⁴⁰ Gilhus argues that "religion everywhere" explains the prevalence of

³⁷ Knott, "Spatial Methods," 497.

³⁸ Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, "'All Over the Place': The Contribution of New Age to a Spatial Model of Religion," in *New Age Spirituality: Rethinking Religion*, edited by Steven Sutcliffe and Ingvild Sælid Gilhus (Durham, England: Acumen Publishing, 2013), 39.

³⁹ Jonathan Z. Smith, "Here, There, and Anywhere," in *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, edited by Scott Noegel, Joel Walker, and Brannon Wheeler, *Magic in History* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 21-36.

⁴⁰ Stig Hjarvard, "The Mediatization of Religion: Theorising Religion, Media and Social Change," *Culture and Religion* 12, no. 2 (2011): 119-35.

New Age spirituality in many contemporary Western societies. The intentional appropriation of interactive media to engage potential adherents in the ideas and practices associated with "Holy Stone Mountain" reflects both the power dynamics circulating around the contested space and generative appeal of popular religiosity associated with the mountain.

The idea of perceived space is intended to capture the "normal" aspects of daily life associated with the location under analysis. In the case of Stone Mountain in the 1970s, it had emerged as a state park funded by the citizens of Georgia after its acquisition in 1958. The memorial to the Confederacy was completed in 1972 but work had started in 1915 so it had been known as a site for the memorial for sixty years by the time Cantrell published his booklet. Cantrell would spend many of his Sunday mornings sitting in Memorial Hall, constructed during the state-sponsored investment in the park in the early 1960s, meditating upon the memorial across the expanse of the Memorial Lawn between the mountain and the hall.⁴¹ Already a tourist destination in the 1800s, Stone Mountain continued to be developed as a recreational area and it was this context which framed Cantrell's visits to the memorial.

As a conceived space, Stone Mountain was the product of various efforts to market the location for almost 150 years by the time that Cantrell wrote his work. The early Fourth of July celebrations, mentioned in Chapter Five, and Cloud's Tower, discussed in Chapter Four, demonstrate the appeal of

⁴¹ Joyce, "Cantrell Seeks Holy Ghost Inside Stone Mountain," 2.

Stone Mountain as a local tourist destination well before the Civil War. Accounts in the local newspapers throughout the nineteenth century report on excursions by stagecoach and later railroad to Stone Mountain for picnics and other celebrations. However, it was not until the efforts to carve a memorial to the Confederacy began in the second decade of the twentieth century that clearly identified architects of power began to exert their influence on Stone Mountain. It is in this conceived space that the spatial dimensions of religiosity blended with regional identity begin to emerge.

As explained in Chapter Four, organizations such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) worked to create memorials to the Confederacy throughout the South. Cantrell acknowledges the UDC's important role in the creation of the monument. However, Cantrell views the efforts of the UDC to have been coordinated by the Great Spiritual Beings in order to bring attention to Stone Mountain.

Now that these Great Beings have worked through people, especially the U.D.C. "United Daughters of the Confederacy" and their interest in preserving Southern confederate history, They have allowed them to develop the mountain enough to attract state leaders to buy and transform it into a tourist attraction thereby becoming more and more accessible. Please note that They will utilize any available medium to accomplish their purpose. They used the zeal of these sensitive people to undertake the carving, a project which helped to draw attention and attract people who could benefit from Their near presence.⁴²

Cantrell's blunt acknowledgement of the utilitarian thinking of the Great Beings reflects the commodification of sacred space essential to the success of Stone Mountain.⁴³ Without

⁴² C. E. Cantrell, "Holy Stone Mountain," 16.

the encroachment of property rights onto the mountain and the powers of the state to enforce them, the possibility of a memorial would not exist. An understanding of the various domains of power at work in Georgia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is essential for understanding the status of the memorial and the mountain in the current century.

The category of lived space provides the most helpful illumination into Cantrell's appropriation of the memorial at Stone Mountain. Drawing upon Theosophical doctrines of karma, spiritual evolution, reincarnation, spiritual hierarchies, universal consciousness, and the Akashic records, Cantrell subverts the space of the memorial itself.⁴⁴ No longer only a carving on the side of the mountain, the memorial is a portal, a gateway through which the initiated may move in order to gain access to the vast repository of knowledge contained within the mountain.

[The Akashic records] are archaic records that are kept by recording angels of everything that takes place in a particular area. . . . I have been permitted to observe some of the spiritual activities taking place within the mountain. . . .

⁴³ Chidester and Linenthal, "Introduction," 28.

⁴⁴ While the meaning of the terms used within the framework of Theosophy depends on a number of factors, an awareness of the historical background of the movement helps to contextualize these concepts. See, for example, Antoine Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition: Studies in Western Esotericism*, trans. Christine Rhone, SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 3-48; Catherine L. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 257-329; René Dybdal Pederson, "Defining Theosophy in the Twenty-First Century," *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis* 20 (2008): 139-53; and, Nicholas Campion, *The New Age in the Modern West: Counterculture, Utopia and Prophecy from the Late Eighteenth Century to the Present Day* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 57-70.

I have experience contact with at least three of these great spiritual beings [I was permitted to enter the area through the carving after extensive meditation.] When I became conscious, I found myself within a great or mammoth enclosure, a tremendous place with such large rooms or sections extending as big as a city block and very high. It was so tall you could get 15 to 20 story buildings easily within one of them. There were tremendous corridors leading in different directions and very wide, so wide you could get a two way express system within them with room to spare.⁴⁵

The interior of Stone Mountain contains a massive spiritual repository of Akashic records and Great Spiritual Beings charged with their care.

It is worth noting that the idea of "opening" the interior of the mountain was part of the original planning for the memorial project. As documented in *A Temple of Sacred Memories in the Breast of a Granite Mountain*, there was to be a large "temple" carved into the base of the mountain below the memorial carving (see Figure 7.2 in Appendix 4). "Memorial Hall will not be a structure built stone upon stone, but a vast semi-circular chamber hollowed out of solid rock; ninety-five feet wide, fifty feet deep and fifty feet high; every detail of architecture and sculpture carved out of the living stone; the most enduring and beautiful shrine of the ages; a temple of sacred memories in the breast of a granite mountain."⁴⁶ Cantrell makes no mention of this project and it was abandoned several decades before he started to visit Stone Mountain. Nonetheless, he may have encountered talk of the plans in

⁴⁵ Joyce, "Cantrell Seeks Holy Ghost Inside Stone Mountain," 1.

⁴⁶ Stone Mountain Confederate Monumental Association, *A Temple of Sacred Memories in the Breast of a Granite Mountain*.

some form or seen representations of it on postcards since the final shape of the Memorial Lawn was not finalized until the 1970s.

The dynamics of space are constituted by both the production and reproduction of space. In the former instance, space is primarily spiritualized in and around Stone Mountain. For Cantrell, Stone Mountain serves as a depository for massive collections of Akashic records to which only the initiated may gain access. Furlong locates Stone Mountain among a network of crystal cities which provide access to a spiritual realm for those who have been properly educated about the nature of these centers of etheric power. Rev. Manuel shares some of the same perspectives as Cantrell and Furlong. However, she understands the monadnock as a space which may, with proper ritual actions, become a portal to other spiritual dimensions which are the domain of angelic beings who provide guidance to the initiated. Hall views Stone Mountain as a significant location among the energy fields of the planet and uses that energy to channel a particular entity to which she has the ability to communicate. In all cases, the mountain's perceived unique status generates significant spiritual space important to each practitioner's religious system.

Spiritual space has been reproduced at Stone Mountain since Cantrell's *Holy Stone Mountain* initially incorporated it into the etheric geography of the New Age movement. Cantrell's self-published work brought Stone Mountain to the attention of others in the 1970s and 1980s. With the wider

availability of the Internet starting in the 1990s, Cantrell's work would slowly gain a larger audience. Furlong's web site is one example of the dissemination of *Holy Stone Mountain* to a global spiritual marketplace. By the time Rev. Manuel and Hall become acquainted with Stone Mountain, the concepts associated with Cantrell's original work had already become deeply incorporated into the Internet via social media sites such as Facebook. What had initially appeared to many as the work of an eccentric character who would while away his Sunday afternoons staring at the monadnock had taken on new significance with the emergence of the Internet. Over forty years after he printed his reflections on the monadnock, Cantrell's holy mountain is a fixture within the etheric geography of a small segment of the New Metaphysicals. The space of Stone Mountain has been extended into a virtual global network and become more widely available to those seeking to discern the spiritual forces understood to be at work in the monadnock.

Locating the New Metaphysicals at Stone Mountain

| Categories | Spatial Analysis |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Body | spiritual bodies; astral projection |
| 2. Home | N/A |
| 3. Homeland | networked spiritual energy fields and sites |
| 4. Cosmos | portal to spiritual dimensions |
| 5A. Dimensions of Space - Physical | mountain as physical vessel for the spirits |
| 5B. Dimensions of Space - Social | building social networks via traditional and online media |
| 5C. Dimensions of Space - Mental | dissemination of New Age metaphysics |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6A. Properties of Space - Configuration | mountain as a spiritual focal point |
| 6B. Properties of Space - Extension | locus for New Age metaphysics in latter part of 20th century and early 21st century |
| 6C. Properties of Space - Simultaneity | Stone Mountain as one of many crystal cities |
| 6D. Properties of Space - Power | use of media to by-pass official representations of Stone Mountain and promulgate New Age thinking |
| 7A. Aspects of Space - Perceived Space | memorial carving as a contemplative focal point |
| 7B. Aspects of Space - Conceived Space | construction of planned memorial appropriated as a sacred space constructed by spiritual entities |
| 7C. Aspects of Space - Lived Space | memorial carving is portal into spiritual realm |
| 8A. Dynamics of Space - Production | creation of a spiritual repository and locus of spiritual networks |
| 8B. Dynamics of Space - Reproduction | New Age reading of Stone Mountain replicated in social networks |

The schema categories reveal the interplay between spiritual beliefs and the centrality of Stone Mountain among the subjects of this chapter. Cantrell's personal spiritual journey, specifically tied into the mountain and his perception of its role as a source of wisdom for spiritual entities, is subsequently echoed by the writings and practices of Furlong, Manuel, and Hall. However, whereas Cantrell focuses on the specific contributions of Stone Mountain and its status as a historical site commemorating the Confederacy to his understanding of the shifting spiritual landscape in the second half of the twentieth century, the other three individuals locate Stone Mountain within a nexus of spiritual energy fields and sacred spaces

common to New Age writings, especially online sources, in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Cantrell's orientation is to the cultural and historical legacy of Stone Mountain while the others appear to be using the monadnock as a natural space onto which they may project their respective cosmologies. Stone Mountain is increasingly incorporated into an ethereal geography which, for the most part, is decoupled from the history of the site as a war memorial.

The four practitioners sketched in this chapter illustrate the importance of understanding the use of spiritual geographies in their overlapping religious systems. While these perspectives can be accurately described as contemporary appropriations of nineteenth-century Theosophical ideas, the spatial interpretation outlined above affords additional insight into the beliefs and practices of these individuals. Shifting away from a focus on doctrines and institutions, a spatial approach can explore the phenomenon of popular religion or, as Hjarvard describes it, "banal religion" as it is cultivated and promulgated via interactive media.

The label 'banal' does not imply that these representations are less important or irrelevant. On the contrary, they are primary and fundamental in the production of religious thoughts and feelings, and they are also banal in the sense that their religious meanings may travel unnoticed and can be evoked independently of larger religious texts or institutions. . . . The holy texts, iconography and liturgy of institutionalized religions may contribute to the stockpile of banal religious elements, and as such they may circulate and activate meanings that are more or less related to the authorized religious interpretation. The power relationship between banal religious representations and institutionalized religion may, of course, vary

historically and geographically, but the increasing role of media in society seems to make room for more of the banal religious representations.⁴⁷

The beliefs and practices of the persons highlighted here present mixes of cosmological, religious, historical understandings formed into frameworks bringing the "extraordinary" into the "ordinary" banal life. "Religion everywhere" adds an important layer to the ideas of power developed in Tweed's and Knott's spatial methods and a hybridization with Gilhus on this point will prove beneficial as this project moves on to a study of corporate religion at Stone Mountain in the next chapter.

An important adjunct to the value of recognizing that religious beliefs and practices can be revealed in mundane and innocuous environments is an appreciation for the movement away from clear boundaries between secular and sacred spaces. Not only are previously banal religious representations increasingly important objects of religious studies but long ignored or marginalized institutions and locations are valid candidates for exploration and analysis.

[S]pirituality is produced in multiple social institutions, including many that we regularly do not consider religious. Locating the production of spirituality in so-called secular institutions unsettles the logics of institutional differentiation that continue to lie at the heart of our theories of secularization and, thereby, our projects of analyzing religion. This calls us to investigate the multiple spaces (including secular ones) where religious sensitivities and selves are robustly explored and cultivated.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Hjarvard, "The Mediatisation of Religion: Theorising Religion, Media and Social Change," 15-16.

⁴⁸ Bender, *The New Metaphysicals: Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination*, 182-83.

Just as this chapter has examined the use of Stone Mountain for minority religious practices, the following chapter will explore purportedly secular institutions and their appropriation of the site for religious purposes.

Chapter Eight Corporate Religion at Stone Mountain

Earlier chapters of this work examined spatial aspects of religious practices associated with Stone Mountain involving groups or individuals. This chapter shifts the focus to institutions to explore an example of what I call *corporate religion* as it is being cultivated and practiced at Stone Mountain Park. By corporate religion I mean the use of popular religious ideas to reinforce the interests of a business entity. When developed against the background of civil religion, the analytical device *corporate religion* may be used to gain additional insight into the religious implications of business practices taking place at locations such as Stone Mountain Park.

This chapter will focus on Herschend Family Entertainment (HFE), the company contracted to run most of the amusements and concessions at Stone Mountain Park. It will show how the company utilizes aspects of a particular stream within American civil religion in order to sanctify elements of the park which are in turn commodified and sold to the consumers of its version of a corporate religion. Commercial spaces, now embedded within the constructed sacred spaces of both the Lost Cause mythos and the Christian celebration of the incarnation, mitigate the overtly religious aspect of both in the pursuit of a sanitized and generic cultural commodity that can be easily sold, purchased, and consumed.

The manner in which HFE is using popular religious ideas at the park is not new. Well before the entertainment

company took over management of the amusement attractions in 1998, the Stone Mountain Memorial Association charged with running Stone Mountain made use of popular religious sentiment to draw visitors to the location. For example, on Saturday, December 12, 1970, Blanche Thebom, an established opera star and director of the Southern Regional Opera in Atlanta, made her way to a platform resting upon construction scaffolding some four hundred feet up the side of Stone Mountain. Surrounding the memorial, still a work in progress at that time, was a holiday wreath composed of over three hundred fifty tree branches and more than a quarter mile of lights. At the top of the memorial, over the stoic faces of the three heroes of the Confederacy, the phrase "Peace on Earth" glowed in lights. It was beneath these words, and above the figures of Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, and Jefferson Davis, that Thebom performed "Silent Night" before a large crowd gathered on the Memorial Lawn at the base of the memorial.

The Christmas performance and display merits mention because, as was noted in Chapter Three, it was a widely-circulated Associate Press news item attached to a striking photograph of the decorated memorial (see Figure 3.1 in Appendix 4). The symbolism of the three men of war stationed beneath a dominant pacific theme attached to the Christmas celebration served to help normalize the controversial effort to complete the carving at the end of a decade of rapid social change in the region and nation. The image provides a striking snapshot of a central objective of corporate religion: to appropriate popular religious

sentiment and values in the production of consumable objects and experiences which can be offered to customers attracted to and uplifted by the emotional and cognitive connotations of the products. Although the SMMA was created as and remains a state agency, its purpose is to maintain and promote Stone Mountain Park without state allocations which requires, of course, attracting visitors and customers. This purpose became even more evident when SMMA contracted with HFE in 1998 to maintain all of the attractions at the park and to add new attractions as HFE determined appropriate. Since HFE is a company which says its corporate work is conducted "in a manner Consistent with Christian Values and Ethics," the continued blending of religious-tinged values and commercial practices was possible.¹

In this context, corporate religion is intended as a descriptive rather than an evaluative phrase. The term reflects a shifting landscape in corporate management strategies and HFE is but one practitioner of this approach. For example, in a management text titled *Corporate Religion*, the author claims:

Corporate Religion is an alternative way of focusing a company's goals. It is a centralised model, which required that management takes real responsibility and, if necessary, draws power back to the company's core. A Corporate Religion's essential purpose is to strengthen and unify a company's efforts -- regardless of its market. Corporate Religion then, is a holistic concept in which the whole company chooses to be run by a "spiritual" management.²

¹ Herschend Family Entertainment, "Our Commitment" ([Http://www.hfecorp.com/our-commitment/](http://www.hfecorp.com/our-commitment/)).

² Jesper Kunde, *Corporate Religion: Building a Strong Company Through Personality and Corporate Soul* (London: Financial Times Prentice Hall, 2000), 7-8.

A similar attitude can be found in *Love Works* written by Joel Manby, the CEO of the Herschend Family Entertainment Corporation from 2003 until leaving for a position at SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment in 2015.³ Using Paul's discussion of proper church sentiments in 1 Corinthians 13, Manby develops seven principles of effective corporate leadership: patience, kindness, trust, generosity, truthfulness, forgiveness, and dedication.⁴ While explicit religious references are absent in *Love Works*, Manby's web site makes it clear that his is a religiously-based system for advancing the interests of HFE and other enterprises open to those biblical principles.⁵ The integration of copies of the *Love Works* in the Christian merchandise section at one of Stone Mountain's gift shops reinforces these connections (see Figure 8.1 in Appendix 4). Clearly, there is a strong religious basis for the core principles by which HFE operates its various enterprises, including Stone Mountain Park.

Behind the concept of corporate religion is the similar term -- civil religion -- which, as was mentioned in Chapter Five, has a longer history of use by sociologists of religion. An understanding of civil religion is instructive in appreciating the particular usefulness of the idea of corporate religion as it is applied to the subject of this chapter. The emergence of civil religion is traceable to a

³ Sandra Pedicini, "New SeaWorld CEO Joel Manby Combines Business with Faith," *Orlando Sentinel*, 6 April 2015.

⁴ Joel Manby, *Love Works: Seven Timeless Principles for Effective Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 2012); Joel Manby, "The Seven Principles," JoelManby.com (accessed May 3, 2014), <http://joelmanby.com/the-seven-principles/>.

⁵ Manby, "Seven Principles."

concept developed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *On the Social Contract* which was published in 1762. Rousseau's version of the concept suggested that within the ideal political community he envisioned, a civil religion would be necessary to preserve the unity and permanence of the democratic state. Rousseau was writing under the assumption that the state and its citizens were interdependent. The moral life of the citizen had direct implications for the viability of the state (a concept that would later resurface in the work of Durkheim⁶). Thus, according to Rousseau, once the citizen assents to the civil religion, he or she is bound to remain faithful to it under the penalty of at least exile from the state, or, if necessary, death.

There is, therefore, a purely civil confession of faith, the articles of which it belongs to the sovereign to establish, not exactly as dogmas of religion, but as sentiments of sociability, without which it is impossible to be a good citizen or a faithful subject. While not having the ability to obligate anyone to believe them, the sovereign can banish from the state anyone who does not believe them.⁷

Without such a constraint, Rousseau believed intolerance and social unrest would prevail.

Writing two centuries after Rousseau, Robert Bellah suggested that within the American context there was a variety of civil religion unique to the United States. What

⁶ Emile Durkheim, "The Dualism of Human Nature and Its Social Conditions," trans. Irène Eulriet and William Watts Miller, *Durkheimian Studies* 11, no. 1 (2005): 36, reprint, 1914; Ruth A. Wallace, "Emile Durkheim and the Civil Religion Concept," *Review of Religious Research* 18, no. 3 (Spring 1977): 287; Chris Shilling and Philip A. Mellor, "Durkheim, Morality and Modernity: Collective Effervescence, *Homo Duplex* and the Sources of Moral Action," *The British Journal of Sociology* 49, no. 2 (June 1998): 194.

⁷ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, translated and edited by Donald A. Cress, introd. by Peter Gay (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1987), 102.

is to be noted is that Bellah was not arguing -- as was Rousseau -- for the construction of a civil religion as a device for achieving national unity. Instead, Bellah's essay delineated the characteristics of a civil religion he claimed was already fully developed in the United States. "While some have argued that Christianity is the national faith and others that church and synagogue celebrate only the generalized religion of 'the American Way of Life,' few have realized that there actually exists alongside of and rather clearly differentiated from the churches an elaborate and well-institutionalized civil religion in America."⁸

Using John F. Kennedy's 1961 presidential inaugural address as an example, Bellah points to the fact that Kennedy referred to God at three strategic places in his speech. That he did so was not the move of a politician concerned with cultivating votes, contends Bellah. Rather, he suggests that the address draws upon "a theme that lies very deep in the American tradition, namely the obligation, both collective and individual, to carry out God's will on earth."⁹ Bellah's understanding of civil religion departs significantly, then, from Rousseau's and illustrates the distinctly American version of the concept as Bellah understood it.

The bulk of Bellah's essay is an attempt to illustrate three major phases in the development of civil religion in America. In its first phase, civil religion was linked with the notion of the newly independent America as a type of

⁸ Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 1.

⁹ Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 5.

Israel, an "American Israel." While it was not an attempt to subvert Christianity, civil religion served as the public vehicle through which political officials could draw upon religious sentiments for the purpose of uniting the nascent country.¹⁰

This unifying function became explicit during the second phase of civil religion. During the Civil War, the civil religion reflected a movement away from its Hebraic imagery to that of a reinterpreted Christianity. "With the Civil War, a theme of death, sacrifice, and rebirth enters the civil religion. It is symbolized in the life and death of Lincoln. Nowhere is it stated more vividly than in the Gettysburg Address, itself part of the Lincolnian 'New Testament' among the civil scriptures."¹¹ Lincoln was "God's chosen one" and the "theme of sacrifice was indelibly written into the civil religion."¹² The national cemeteries are the shrines of the martyrs of civil religion and the country celebrates the common religion during national holidays: the Fourth of July, Veterans Day, the birthdays of Washington and Lincoln, and most especially Thanksgiving and Memorial Day.¹³

¹⁰ Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 7-8.

¹¹ Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 10.

¹² Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 11.

¹³ However, as it was discussed in Chapter Five, the initial refusal by the federal government to fund memorials to veterans of the Confederacy, part of the impetus for the Lost Cause mythos, indicates a problem with Bellah's claims about the unifying role of the second phase of his version of American civil religion. Efforts to officially recognize Confederate dead by the federal government only emerged in the early twentieth century after the Spanish-American War. See Jeff R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 222-25.

Bellah believed that the trials of national independence and Civil War served to solidify a civil religion which "at its best is a genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent religious reality as seen in or, one could almost say, as revealed through the experiences of the American people."¹⁴ However, Bellah argued that the third phase of civil religion is the one that threatened to dissolve it. Writing in the turbulent late 1960s, Bellah suggested that if American civil religion is to survive it must be able to deal with the problems of "a revolutionary world, a world seeking to attain many of the things, material and spiritual, that we [Americans] have already attained."¹⁵ To do this, Bellah maintained that American civil religion must become a part of a world civil religion. Bellah closed his essay recognizing the precariousness of the American civil religion. However, he was somewhat optimistic about its ability to survive the difficult times ahead.

That Bellah's global civil religion never materialized is not relevant to the importance of the concept in understanding and analyzing the cultivation of corporate religion at Stone Mountain. In fact, more recent scholarship, reflecting the importance of globalization, has proffered "global civil society" as a revision of Bellah's project. For example, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im states "there is an emerging global civil society (GCS) that is manifested in an underlying social reality of networks or

¹⁴ Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 12.

¹⁵ Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 16.

transnational, national, and local actors who are engaged in negotiations about civil matters with governmental, intergovernmental, and transnational business actors at various levels."¹⁶ An-Na'im develops a position that optimistically looks toward progressive movements in contemporary religious traditions which may contribute to the development of human rights as a resource for "infusing moral values into the institutions and processes of economic globalization."¹⁷ Therefore, what is important about Bellah's "civil religion" is that it points to a long-standing tradition of religious ideals by which diverse segments of society may bind themselves together using their common values. However, what neither Bellah or An-Na'im consider are the different ways economic globalization may affect values and religion. Thus a corporation may generate forms of corporate religion that can draw upon the earlier unifying strands of national civil religion not only to unify but also to broaden its possible audiences and, therefore, its profitability.

The utility of corporate religion in the academic study of religion also represents a timely acknowledgement, at least within the context of the United States of America, of the idea that legal aspects of personhood attach to corporations. Especially since the recent landmark U.S. Supreme Court decisions *Citizens United v. Federal Election*

¹⁶ Abdullahi A. An-Na'im, "The Politics of Religion and the Morality of Globalization," in *Religion in Global Civil Society*, edited by Mark Juergensmeyer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 25.

¹⁷ An-Na'im, "The Politics of Religion and the Morality of Globalization," 44.

Commission¹⁸ and *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores*,¹⁹ the application of constitutional rights of free speech and freedom of religion to associations in addition to individuals has become firmly entrenched within the legal landscape in the United States. The concept of corporate religion is not only helpful as a descriptive tool in cases such as *Stone Mountain*, it also serves as a useful analytic tool in parsing the emerging complexities involved as contemporary corporations exercise rights previously limited to individuals. The expansive idea of personhood developing in the second decade of twenty-first century American legal doctrine helpfully aligns with the wide-ranging implications of corporate religion in contemporary religious studies. The analytic device corporate religion can thus enable a more comprehensive understanding of the religions dimensions of the symbolic performances of business practices seen in *Stone Mountain Park*.

In the case of *Stone Mountain*, aspects of concepts associated with corporate religion will be joined to the tools provided by spatial analysis in this chapter in order to better understand the manner in which civic space is created and cultivated at the park for individuals by a corporation. In his study of the National Shrine in Washington, D.C., Tweed dedicates a chapter to the idea of claiming civic space in relation to the Roman Catholic presence in the nation's capital. In a note to his brief

¹⁸ *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, 558 U.S. 310 (2010).

¹⁹ *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores*, 573 U.S. ____ (2014).

mention of civil religion, he points to the particular spin he places on the concept.

Civil religion is the set of religious beliefs, myths, symbols, saints, and rituals associated with the political realm. Usually that term is understood to mean the loosely framed faith that arises outside the churches, although in the variant I discuss in this chapter, civil religion in the nation's capital can be denominationally coded.²⁰

My contention is that civil religion can be coded as corporate religion in terms which makes it compatible with the business interests that oversee the operations of the park.

The cultivation of corporate religion can be observed during highly structured patriotic celebrations such as Memorial Day and the Fourth of July at the park. However, the merging of business interests into the sacred space of corporate religion can, perhaps, be most clearly seen in the practices associated with corporate religion evident during the extended holiday season dedicated to Christmas at Stone Mountain. The winter celebration, running from mid-November through the beginning of January, provides clear examples of the intentional creation of space dedicated to a holiday which celebrates values associated with the secularized religious tradition. In addition, new mythologies have been developed and older mythical characters from popular culture have been acquired in an effort to provide a family-friendly venue which threatens no particular tradition. All of the events which shall be discussed indicate the importance of marketing religious sensibilities to consumers who do not

²⁰ Thomas A. Tweed, *America's Church: The National Shrine and Catholic Presence in the Nation's Capital* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 335 n. 18.

care for orthodoxy or orthopraxis with their amusements. The genius of the corporate religion at Stone Mountain lies in the ability to make it as innocuous as possible.

As was explained in Chapter Five, Stone Mountain has been used for celebratory purposes at least as far back as there is documentation available. Newspaper accounts of the use of Stone Mountain for Fourth of July celebrations date back to the middle of the nineteenth century.²¹ As we have seen, that celebration, along with Memorial Day and Labor Day, continue to be significant patriotic events at Stone Mountain. In addition to the standard laser show and fireworks display, these three national holidays include a coda acknowledging the contributions of military service men and women while Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the U.S.A." plays over the sound system. As important as these celebrations are for the cultivation of civic pride at the park, they predate the involvement of Herschend Family Entertainment with Stone Mountain Park. It was not until after HFE secured its fifty-year lease in 1998 and added the Crossroads village complex in 2002 that there emerged a prolonged celebration of the Christmas season.

Modeled after a small Georgia town from the 1870s, the Crossroads was built around the original Stone Mountain Railroad train depot set just west of the memorial and not far from the base of the mountain. The Crossroads provides venues for several events such as stories told by Mrs. Claus, a rendition of the Christmas Carol, a musical with

²¹ David B. Freeman, *Carved in Stone*, 28.

dancing and singing toys, a special building where children may visit with Santa Claus, and an area over which the Snow Angel takes flight as she closes out each day's events accompanied by artificial snow and fireworks (see Figure 8.7 in Appendix 4). A Christmas parade takes place earlier in the evening and Santa and Mrs. Claus are escorted by a variety of characters to Santa's reception area. Connecting the Crossroads to Memorial Hall is a tunnel of white lights which pulse to different Christmas carols. Inside the great room in Memorial Hall, the Snow Angel holds court on a special throne and children may have their photographs taken with the Snow Angel and her two assistants (see Figure 8.3 in Appendix 4). More entertainment is available in the hall's auditorium where traditional Christmas carols are performed by a trio of musicians. Further north from the Memorial Hall, the Antebellum Plantation hosts a Christmas celebration consistent with the early nineteenth century. Back at the Crossroads, the Stone Mountain train carries passengers around the mountain to the other side where it pauses while the Christian nativity story is delivered by an actor who claims to be connected to the family which originally owned the small town that used to exist at that location in the early part of the twentieth century. With the addition of Snow Mountain -- a four hundred foot long snow tubing course constructed on the memorial lawn -- in 2008, visitors have a full day of activities to occupy their time during the Christmas season.

In 2016, Stone Mountain Park's Christmas season ran from November 12 until January 4, 2017 (see Item 8.1 in

Appendix 3). As has been the case for several years, the extended period provides two months for visitors to take part in the Christmas celebrations. The attractions and entertainment events at Stone Mountain Park represent a major investment by HFE into the park. The success of the event is dependent upon the creation of a holiday atmosphere at the park. The ability of HFE to create the holiday season is due in part to the widespread cultural acceptance of Christmas as a religious but not necessarily a Christian holiday. This distinction is important since U.S. laws restricts any direct state support for particular religious traditions. In this regard, the Christmas events at Stone Mountain are consistent with the corporate religion espoused by HFE in its corporate philosophy as represented in *Love Works*. That is, both Manby's *Love Works* and the Christmas celebration draw upon Christian ideals but in a manner that is readily accepted in secular contexts. Kindness and generosity, two of the seven principles advocated by Manby, are clearly elements of the contemporary popular Christmas holiday. They can be traced to biblical ideas but their acceptance by a popular audience is not contingent upon that association.

On another level, however, the season is a success because it is draws upon Christian ideas which are at least tacitly understood by many attending the Christmas activities. The corporate religion of HFE is understood by many as Christian. Those who know the HFE culture, the values of its founders and its current CEO, are confident in the Christian orientation of the company. For those who are

not aware of that information, the Christmas celebration appeals to the American popular cultural values consistent with Christmas as a celebration of family and fellowship in ways that are accessible to newer immigrants to the United States and to those who are not Christian. The two tracks of discourse, each independent of the other, provide the corporation access to a larger consumer base. The genius of HFE lies in its ability to cater to both sets of consumers at the same time. One of the ways in which this is accomplished is in the judicious use of space to keep the practitioners of the two types of religion -- traditional Christianity and corporate religion -- engaged while largely unaware of the other.

Throughout the Crossroads village, there are thousands of lights and decorations. There are entertainment venues offering a variety of family-oriented activities celebrating the holiday season. However, there are no significant indications of the Christian basis for the holiday. Within Crossroads, Christmas is a celebration of family values and fellowship. Similarly, the decorations and signage in Memorial Hall reflect the emphasis on Christmas as a time of familial bonding and celebration. In addition to the Snow Angel's palace, there is musical theatre and an area where children may make Christmas cookies. The Antebellum Plantation exhibit displays examples of nineteenth century American Christmas celebrations and explains how the holiday changed from earlier bans by the Puritans in the 1650s to its wide acceptance two centuries later. From all three locations the broadcasting tower atop the mountain is

clearly visible as it has been strung with lights to resemble a great Christmas tree. These spaces are transformed into a holiday greeting card experience during the two months the park dedicates to the Christmas season.

Recalling Gilhus's "mediatization of religion" introduced in the previous chapter, the formulaic presentation of popular holiday traditions represent yet another example of "religion everywhere" enacted within a highly familiar space of public communication at the park.²² Visitors arrive with tacit knowledge of how Christmas should be celebrated as a family holiday and enjoy the experience of having that knowledge validated. Parents and grandparents make certain their children and grandchildren are trained in the various practices and rituals and another generation is primed for the holiday. Even the mythical narrative used in the Snow Angel's speech to her young audience specifically mentions the children's "parents and their parents' parents" at two separate places (see Item 8.3 in Appendix 3). The effort to create inter-generational familial bonding around the events makes sense as HFE seeks to grow its consumer base over time. The corporation sells the experience and the consumers are happy to purchase the holiday as entertainment and the site as a touchstone for family memories.

Amidst all the decorations and events, there is one sign pointing to the Christian basis for the holiday (see Figure 8.4 in Appendix 4). The sign, about eighteen by

²² Gilhus, "'All Over the Place': The Contribution of New Age to a Spatial Model of Religion."

thirty inches in size, provides an illustration of Joseph behind Mary as she kneels beside the infant Jesus. Each figure is accompanied by a halo and the image is rendered in the manner of a colorful stained glass window illustration. Immediately to the right of the nativity scene are the words: "The reason for the season is a train ride away. Experience 'The Gift'." Beneath the image and the text are the words "Stone Mountain Railroad." In my most recent visit in 2016 I counted only five such signs throughout the village and they were interspersed with signs to other attractions in the area in a manner to render them rather innocuous advertisements to yet another Christmas event.

However, the location of the event indicates the importance of spatial and temporal separation from the holiday celebration and the Christian myth of the incarnation of the divine. In order to hear the story of "The Gift," visitors must wait in line -- often for a period of over thirty minutes -- in order to board the Singalong Christmas Train. After the train is filled with passengers, it starts the trip to the other side of Stone Mountain. During the slow ride around the mountain, passengers are encouraged to sing along to various Christmas carols, the majority of which are "secularized" carols, such as "Jingle Bells." New to the train in 2013 was the addition of a number of monitors mounted to the ceiling of the train cars. As the carols were being played over the loudspeakers, the lyrics were displayed. This proved quite successful as the rate of participation was noticeably greater than in previous years. In addition, the screens displayed the

antics of two of Santa's elves, Newt and Holly, who periodically appeared "via satellite" from Santa's headquarters to explain his preparations for the holiday.²³

While the passengers sang carols, various lighted displays appeared on either side of the train. Christmas trees, snowflakes, snowmen, igloos, penguins, candy canes, and other holiday items passed by the windows as the train moved along. One of the more elaborate displays provided a visual accompaniment to "The Twelve Days of Christmas." In addition, several newer displays appeared which were "animated" by rapidly shifting lights. Clearly, HFE had invested significantly in updating the experience of its visitors on the Singalong Christmas Train.

As the train approaches the other side of the mountain, it slows and the facade of a very small town appears on the left side of the train. An actor emerges from inside one of the buildings and introduces herself as Julianne Lacey, the wife of Ed Lacey (see Figure 8.5 in Appendix 4). The Laceys, she explains, run the hotel in the small town of Buzzard Hollow. Julianne is from Cottdale, Florida and is not used to the cooler north Georgia weather. Julianne then asks the audience if they had ever made a present for anyone and engages a child on the train. She then mentions that she has to be outside for a while because her husband and father-in-law are making her Christmas present inside the hotel. Julianne then recalls receiving a homemade gift from

²³ As of 2017, the videos of Newt and Holly interspersed with the lyrics for the carols had been removed. This change along with others over the years reflects the evolving nature of HFE's efforts to engage and enlarge its audiences.

her grandmother when she was a child back in Florida. She explains that her grandmother used to tell her and the other children the same story every year on Christmas Eve and wonders if the audience wouldn't mind her telling the story as it would make her feel better about being away from her grandmother for the first time.

Receiving an affirming response to her query, Julianne then recounts the story of "The Gift" and as she does, various displays light up revealing sheep, shepherds, angels, a great star, the three wise men, and the nativity scene. Julianne ends her story explaining the significance of the infant at the center of "The Gift."

Now do y'all know that that's why we give each other gifts at Christmastime today? Yeah, it's so we can remember how those rich, powerful men humbled themselves in front of a tiny, little baby. But it's also to remember how that baby grew up to give all of us the gift of everlasting life. And you can't put a price tag on a gift like that, now can you? And that's why it doesn't matter how much money you put into a gift, it matters how much love you put inside it.
(Item 8.6 in Appendix 3)

After she finishes her story, Julianne invites the audience to shout "Merry Christmas" as loud as they can so that her grandmother might hear the greeting. The audience responds enthusiastically and the train begins its trip back to the station as Julianne waves good-bye. The carols begin again and the audience sings along as the various holiday displays appear outside the windows.

The placement of the nativity narrative on the other side of Stone Mountain, well out of reach of the visitors gathered at the Crossroads, Memorial Hall, and the Antebellum Plantation, reflects the compartmentalization of

the Christian theology of incarnation by the HFE. On this particular spatial arrangement, HFE appears to have learned its lesson after receiving criticism in 2000 for displaying its Christian mission on Internet sites advertising the park. Around the same time, the corporation had conducted telephone surveys to visitors asking for comments on the "Christian atmosphere" of the park they had just recently won a contract to manage. Interestingly, when challenged about the appearance of a church-state conflict, an HFE representative stated "it is merely our intent to treat people by the Golden Rule."²⁴ This early effort to decouple confessional Christian terminology from the mundane activities of the park helps to contextualize the placement of the nativity story. Isolated from the broader, and more widely accepted, celebration of Christmas as a family holiday of recreation and bonding, the placement of the Christian basis for the holiday at a distance from the popular venues allows visitors an opportunity to experience the conventional religious narrative in a location free of commercialization and rival myths. Seated in a train car, with no ready access to an alternate mode of transport, the park visitors are witnesses to a retelling of the Christian basis for the holiday shared by another visitor to the area, Lucille, who herself is a newlywed and away from home for the first time. The narrator bonds with the other visitors and they share their common commitment to the idea that the entire "reason for the season" lies in the "gift of

²⁴ Ben Smith, "Stone Mountain's Conflict: Church Aura on State Property; Park Management Gets Criticism on Message," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 14 December 2000, 1E.

everlasting life" which the infant will proffer to the world as an adult. Once the shared story has been told, the visitors are transported back to the train station where they seamlessly reintegrate with the large crowds attending the various Christmas events created by the HFE at Stone Mountain Park.

Even as HFE cultivates the dedicated space reserved for the traditional Christian nativity story, an alternative myth has emerged over the past several years which has enabled the corporation to appropriate the consumer good will associated with the Santa Claus fable for its version of corporate religion. The Snow Angel Sisters -- Angelina, Kenya, Sora, and Nevada -- represent the four directional winds and are tasked with bringing gifts of happiness, kindness, wisdom, love, and hope to people across the planet (see Item 8.4 in Appendix 3 and Figure 8.6 in Appendix 4). The Snow Angel of the North Wind, Angelina, makes her home at Stone Mountain and during the Christmas season she is a prominent presence. Known simply as the Snow Angel, Angelina supplements Santa Claus at Stone Mountain Park and assists him in the task of gathering wish lists from the children who visit with her. The Snow Angel is part of the daily Christmas parade and has her own Snow Angel Palace. The Snow Angel, not Santa Claus, closes out each day with the Snow Angel Snowfall and Fireworks Finale (see Figures 8.7 and 8.8 in Appendix 4). Finally, for the week between Christmas Day and New Year's Eve, the Snow Angel remains the dominant figure when Santa Claus has left the area after Christmas Eve. The creation of the Snow Angels and the

insertion of the Snow Angel of the North Wind into the popular narrative of Santa Claus illustrates the development of HFE's corporate religion at Stone Mountain.

Interestingly, when I asked a park worker how the Snow Angels were created, she indicated she did not know. However, she did state that the names of the four angels were created by a daughter of one of HFE's employees in charge of running Stone Mountain Park.²⁵ If accurate, this claim suggests the angels were not derived from an existing account of angels of the four winds but rather a novel creation of members of HFE in charge of that particular program at the park. Alternatively, the idea may have come from Jewish and Christian tradition relating to the cardinal points of the four archangels. Whatever the source, the exclusive focus on Angelina as the Snow Angel has grown over the past decade just as illustrations of her more diverse siblings have disappeared from recent Stone Mountain Christmas events (see Figure 8.6 in Appendix 4).

Throughout most of the year the Great Room in Memorial Hall provides a panoramic view of the memorial carving at the base of the mountain through a twenty-five feet high by seventy-five feet wide wall of glass. At either end of the glass wall are scale model replicas of parts of the memorial carving. Staircases on either side of the room curve gracefully up to the second floor which houses the Stone Mountain Museum. During November and December, the room is transformed into the Snow Angel Palace. A large throne sits

²⁵ Anonymous-Stone Mountain Park, Personal interview (Stone Mountain Park, Stone Mountain, Georgia, 2012).

in the center of the room with sheer curtains flowing from ceiling to floor behind it. The curtains serve to obscure the view of the memorial and focus attention on the throne room. Small Christmas trees are placed on either side of the throne. They are decorated only with large snowflakes and blue, purple, and silver orb ornaments; there are no religious symbols. The white throne and curtains are lit in muted purple hues. Snowflakes hang on long strands from the high ceilings and the stair banisters are decorated with garlands and orb ornaments.

Several times each day, lines form outside the Snow Angel Palace as children and their parents wait for the next scheduled audience. At the set time, trumpets are sounded by two Tin Soldiers who are positioned on the second floor balcony overlooking the throne below. A recorded announcement is played to which the Snow Angel mouths the words (see Item 8.2 in Appendix 3) and she is then escorted down one of the set of stairs to her throne. The Snow Angel is seated on her throne and she visits with children, listening to their Christmas wish lists, while a professional photographer captures the moments and offers parents the opportunity to purchase the images.

In 2015, a new component was added to the Snow Angel mythology. While she still sits on her throne with children for photos, a story is told before she starts accepting guests explaining in greater detail the connection between the angel and snow. Called "A Wish for Snow" (see Item 8.3 in Appendix 3), the story explains the great desire of children of a town with no snow for a reprieve from their

snowless existence. After being magically transported from their dreary town, the children open their eyes to a magnificent throne room and tin soldiers who proclaim the presence of "Our angel, our queen, and soon, your new friend." The Snow Angel asks the children to repeat the phrase "Let it snow" and artificial snow starts to drop from the ceiling. Angelina, as she calls herself, then explains her nightly journeys over towns waiting for children to ring their magic bells and call upon her for the gift of snow (see Figure 8.9 in Appendix 4). This, she explains, will be demonstrated later in the evening when she will take flight over the town at Stone Mountain.

The Snow Angel repeats her audiences until it is time for the evening Christmas parade through the Crossroads village. When that is over, she is accompanied back to her palace for more visits until her final event of the day. Well after dusk each evening, the crowds are directed to the main intersection in the Crossroads in front of the original train station. Then, their attention is directed toward the sky and the Snow Angel appears floating above the buildings on one side of the street. The wires fool many of the youngest children who are delighted -- and not at all surprised -- by the sight of a flying celestial being. The Snow Angel moves gracefully back and forth over the crowds while the voice of a small child announces her arrival. Then, the Snow Angel shares her message to the people in which she explains how she and her sisters can hear the Christmas prayers of everyone across the planet as they make their rounds through the starry skies (see Item 8.5 in

Appendix 3). To confirm the magic attached to the Christmas season, the Snow Angel then exhorts the crowd to help her in bringing about a snow fall. After three refrains of "Let it snow!" are shouted to the sky, strategically placed snow machines shoot artificial snow into the night air from the rooftops of the buildings in the Crossroads. The crowd is pleased with its act of faith and hear these final words from the Snow Angel.

We did it, we made snow fall from the sky
My work here is done and I really must fly
But before I leave I have one last request
Grant me this wish and I'll truly feel blessed
When you hear the bells, look straight up in the sky
And watch for a sparkle of light to fly by
For when spirits are high and the moon shining bright
The stars will all twinkle to bid you good-night
Remember, look to the stars
for between each bright light
a miracle is born every night (Item 8.5 in Appendix 3)

Then, a series of fireworks explode in front of the memorial carving. While the audience turns toward the display, the Snow Angel flies to the other side of the Crossroads and disappears from view. The fireworks draw to a close and the crowd disperses.

The Snow Angel character emerged from the cast of a musical performance of "Go Tell it to the Mountain" in the early part of the previous decade. At about the same time as the criticisms mounted concerning the HFE's overtly Christian orientation, the live nativity performances were discontinued. The transition from a specifically Christian Christmas, such as the one reflected in the telling of "The Gift," to the more generalized spirituality of the Christmas holiday celebration was most likely driven by the pressures experienced by HFE as it sought to realize its spiritual

values in a secular venue. Responding to the popularity of the Snow Angel, HFE granted the character a more prominent role in announcing the closing fireworks displays. Then, in 2008, the Snow Angel took flight over the Crossroads for the first time. With the support of corporate sponsors such as the national Kroger grocery chain, the Snow Angel soon became an annual focal point of the Stone Mountain Christmas celebration. In 2013, two representations of the phrase "Snow Angel" were recognized as registered trademarks of a HFE subsidiary, Silver Dollar City Stone Mountain Park, Inc.

In providing a dedicated space for the Snow Angel -- and enabling her flight through space -- HFE is creating a spiritual tradition which escapes criticisms of church-state entanglement. The values of the Snow Angel Sisters -- wisdom, happiness, kindness, love, and hope -- overlap conveniently with the biblical virtues advocated by HFE CEO Manby in his seven principles of effective corporate leadership: patience, kindness, trust, generosity, truthfulness, forgiveness, and dedication. For those who understand the Christian basis of the virtue of sacrificial love advocated in "The Gift," the space on the other side of the mountain is sufficient. For those who are not particularly concerned about Christian orthodoxy, Angelina's throne provides all the sentiment necessary to carry them through the holiday season.

The following spatial analysis will explore the secularized Christmas celebrations located at the Crossroads, Memorial Hall, and to a lesser extent, the

Antebellum Plantation. In addition, it will include analysis of the specifically Christian nativity story told at Buzzard Hollow.²⁶

The importance of the body is readily apparent in a spatial analysis of the Christmas celebrations. Throughout the various venues, the senses are fully engaged by the lights, the sounds, the smells, the assorted activities, and the memories of past seasonal celebrations. Movement through tunnels of lights underneath multi-colored trees and along streets filled with buildings outlined in white lights serves to demarcate the special space that has been created for the holiday season. Similarly, the physical movement of passengers on the train ride around the mountain helps to reinforce the importance of spatial and temporal separation between the two constructed villages of Crossroads and Buzzard Hollow. The isolated location of Buzzard Hollow lends a special status to the telling of the nativity myth. The myth is not available at that time to all park visitors but is only accessible to those who have been transported there by train at a distance from the "outsiders" remaining behind. Again, the placement of the Christian narrative helps to reinforce its special status to those invested in the religious system while insulating the park management

²⁶ As a reminder to the reader, the categories in the schema are: 1. Body; 2. Home; 3. Homeland; 4. Cosmos; 5A. Dimensions of Space - Physical; 5B. Dimensions of Space - Social; 5C. Dimensions of Space - Mental; 6A. Properties of Space - Configuration; 6B. Properties of Space - Extension; 6C. Properties of Space - Simultaneity; 6D. Properties of Space - Power; 7A. Aspects of Space - Perceived Space; 7B. Aspects of Space - Conceived Space; 7C. Aspects of Space - Lived Space; 8A. Dynamics of Space - Production; and 8B. Dynamics of Space - Reproduction.

from charges of violating the separation of church and state.

The emphasis on children at the park during the Christmas celebration is ideal for the construction of nostalgia associated with the home. Venues such as Mrs. Claus telling stories from the front porch of her cottage and Santa Claus receiving children for photographs inside his home away from the North Pole at the park focus on the importance of the domestic realm. Similarly, the recreation of a mid-nineteenth century Christmas at the plantation focuses on the values of home and family. The nativity narrative recounted at Buzzard Hollow also emphasizes the values associated with family as the narrator mentions the crafting of homemade Christmas presents going on inside the hotel and the sentiments attached to those personalized gifts. The implicit religious values reflected in these events serve to imbue familial relations with a sacred character intended to reinforce those ties as they are connected to the pleasant memories associated with the holiday celebrations.

In an interesting contrast with older SMMA events such as the laser light show and Memorial Day and Fourth of July celebrations, the category of homeland is underdeveloped in the Christmas celebrations. If anything, the events serve to erase the boundaries of the national identity and point toward the larger realms encompassed by cosmos. The many references to the shared destinies of the universal sphere of cosmos are indicative of the sacred aspects of the holiday activities at the park. This is especially acute in the

actions of the Snow Angel as she flies above the crowds framed against the starry night sky. In her speech to her admirers, and especially the children, the Snow Angel invokes the power of prayer and miracles and the values of peace and hope for the whole world. As the snow descends upon the crowd gathered below, the celestial being flies into the heavens to continue her mission of celebrating the values of the holiday season.

The physical dimension of space is reflected in the Crossroads, the Antebellum Plantation, and the Stone Mountain Railroad are all instrumental in placing visitors in a nostalgic space which is conducive to experiencing the iconic Victorian Christmas which has become entrenched in the culture. Buzzard Hollow remains even more clearly isolated as a space unto itself due to its limited accessibility by park visitors. Memorial Hall offers a mythical space, the creation of HFE, within which the Snow Angel is allowed to rule from her throne.

Attendance at the Stone Mountain Christmas is a communal endeavor and illustrates the social dimension of space. Singing songs together on the train ride around the mountain, watching from the crowd as the Christmas parade moves through the village, staring at the Snow Angel as she flies across the main intersection of the Crossroads -- all of these are communal activities with shared ritual significance.

The mental dimension of space is crucial to the success of the Christmas celebration at the park. The expectations associated with the Christmas season are already in place

well before visitors enter into the park. There is no need to explain how an old man dressed in red travels across the planet in a single night and why he likes to gather children onto his knees for photographs. The appearance of a reindeer with a red nose during the 2012 Christmas season was novel only because it was the first time HFE had licensed the character -- but most people familiar with one of the most popular television programs broadcast over the past fifty years during the holiday season knew who it was as soon as they saw Rudolph along with Bumble the Abominable Snow Monster (see Figure 8.10 in Appendix 4). There is no need to explain to children what a woman with wings is doing in the air -- even children know how angels move. The image of the male and female figures focused on an infant in a manger is immediately recognizable as a founding myth in the Christian religion. These and other Christmas allusions work because they are a part of the cultural legacy shared by many who attend the park.

The Crossroads is ideally situated for the rehearsal of familiar Christmas ideas and practices. Again, since it was built to model a late nineteenth century small town, it is exceptionally configured for nostalgic celebrations which are traceable to that period in time. Similarly, the Antebellum Plantation, with its efforts to historically reconstruct domestic Christmas celebrations from the middle of the nineteenth century. Buzzard Hollow represents a more rural but no less recognizable space which allows visitors to focus on nostalgic images of family and faith as they

listen to the folksy retelling of the Christian nativity story.

The property of extension is illustrated by the Crossroads and the Antebellum Plantation. The latter was created in the 1960s out of historic buildings transported to the site in order to illustrate life on the plantation before the Civil War. The main house hosts an example of a Christmas celebration as it would have taken place in the early part of the nineteenth century. The Crossroads, coming decades later, emulates life in the latter part of the same century. Both locations illustrate the continuity of Christmas practices over time. Another example of extension takes place on the other side of the mountain as the Christian nativity story is told by an actor portraying a community member in a fictional Buzzard Hollow from the early part of the twentieth century.

Simultaneity is evidenced as the various temporal snapshots of Christmas past are juxtaposed against the contemporary visitors attending the park and celebrating Christmas present. From this analytical perspective, the melding together of nineteenth century Christmas celebrations with early twenty-first century commercialized and commodified versions of those memories is successfully achieved due in part to the tacit knowledge of these ideas shared by park visitors. A Snow Angel, Santa Claus, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, the elf on the shelf, and the baby Jesus are all accepted as part of the bricolage that is contemporary American Christmas. As these and other elements of contemporary Christmas are cultivated for

popular consumption, they are increasingly removed from the context of orthodox Christian theology. The decoupling of the Christmas holiday from Christianity enables the appropriation of significant metaphors and symbols from the Christian tradition by the architects of corporate religion in the case of Christmas at Stone Mountain.

The introduction of a prolonged Christmas celebration is due to the management of Stone Mountain Park by HFE and the power of the corporation is clearly at work in this property of space. The two other major amusement parks owned by HFE -- Dollywood and Silver Dollar City -- have their own versions of the holiday. As a state park, Stone Mountain provides unique challenges for Herschend Family Entertainment. So, while Silver Dollar City has a living nativity show and specifically mentions "the birth of Jesus Christ," there is no similar mention to be found on the Stone Mountain web site. The nativity story is described as "the very first Christmas" and it is placed on the other side of the mountain. Clearly, HFE has carefully structured the park so as to provide as much space as possible for the Christmas attractions and located the Christian nativity at a train ride's distance. The secularized version of the Christian holiday, firmly established in the dominant culture, is appropriated by HFE as an attractive entertainment experience. Unlike previous chapters in this study, however, there are no apparent dissenting perspectives which might challenge HFE's efforts. It speaks to the success of the HFE that the entire two month Christmas programming has been executed over the past

several years free of any official inquiry into its propriety at a park owned by the state of Georgia. It has generally been accepted by the public that Stone Mountain Park will become a Christmas destination for two months of every year.

Perceived space is especially relevant due to the recreational use of the space apart from the holiday season. During most of the year, the Crossroads is a tourist destination for food, entertainment, and shopping. For the few weeks in November and December it becomes the focus of the Christmas season, these activities continue uninterrupted. The only difference is the veneer of corporate religion which overlays those practices. The relative ease in which the movement into the fantastical season takes place by the consumers of the park's entertainment is due to the mundane aspects of Gilhus's "religion everywhere."²⁷ The visitors already know what is expected and normal behavior during the Christmas season so they can easily transition into the park's altered environment during its holiday celebration.

As a conceived space, the Stone Mountain Park Christmas is the product of a carefully planned and executed effort to capitalize upon the dominant cultural assumptions associated with the Christmas season. The primary obstacle to the project, the secular status of the state park, is easily circumvented by a Christmas celebration which is religious but not specifically Christian. With the exception of the

²⁷ Gilhus, "'All Over the Place': The Contribution of New Age to a Spatial Model of Religion," 39.

story of The Gift and various Christian items tucked away in the corners of the souvenir shops (see Figure 8.11 in Appendix 4),²⁸ HFE has successfully crafted a holiday celebration to which most visitors would not take exception.

The concept of lived space does not readily apply to the holiday celebration at the park. The corporate religion which supports HFE's version of the Christmas celebration appears to be free of critics. I have yet to identify anyone for whom the event poses a problem. If so, they do not attend the event. Given the number of children too, I suspect that any potential criticism is dimmed by their obvious enjoyment.

Stone Mountain Park Christmas illustrates the production of space for religious beliefs and practices which are nominally linked to the Christian tradition but have since developed into what may be described as an example of a corporate religion. Some of the values associated with Christmas -- and illustrated in the story of The Gift and the Snow Angel's speech before she creates snow -- such as kindness, trust, generosity, and forgiveness are consistent with the corporate values espoused by HFE.²⁹ These ideals are also identified with the secularized

²⁸ In addition to t-shirts and baseball caps targeting the important American Christian youth market ("Change your shirt, change the world" is the marketing slogan of one clothing company), one interesting example of a Christian commodity was a box containing *The Christmas Crown: A Crown of Thorns from the Holy Land*. The box pictured a red holiday candle burning inside the crown of thorns. On the back of the box was a poem attributed to Hana Haatainen Caye which reads, in part, "I see beyond the Christmas tree / A plan for you, a plan for me / And so I place on highest bough / A crown of thorns -- sweet symbol now."

²⁹ Manby, *Love Works: Seven Timeless Principles for Effective Leaders*.

Christian holiday known as Christmas which has become one example of a contemporary civil religion. HFE's particular construction of Christmas serves to reinforce its own corporate values while also offering consumers an attractive product. The fact that HFE has copyrighted the Snow Angel character indicates the care which has gone into the creation of an acceptable mythos for the visitors to the Stone Mountain Park Christmas. Moreover, HFE recently retained the services of IO Productions, an entertainment production company located in Cincinnati, Ohio, to "take [the Snow Angel] experience to the next level."³⁰ As the alternative myth transitions from its relatively humble origins in a musical production number to an engaging children's fable, it will gain greater credibility. It will be reproduced in subsequent years and eventually may become just another facet of the various components which go into the construction of the holiday season at the park.

Corporate Religion at Stone Mountain

| Categories | Spatial Analysis |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Body | sensory engagement; movement around mountain via train to engage religious narrative |
| 2. Home | home for the holidays; centrality of kinship systems |
| 3. Homeland | N/A |
| 4. Cosmos | Snow Angel's invocation of universal peace and hope |
| 5A. Dimensions of Space - Physical | constructed spaces for holiday celebrations |
| 5B. Dimensions of Space - Social | communal singing; parades; Snow Angel spectacle |

³⁰ IO Productions, "Holiday: Snow Angel."
<http://www.ioproductions.net/holiday/#/snow-angel/>.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5C. Dimensions of Space - Mental | idealized American Christmas as common cultural value system |
| 6A. Properties of Space - Configuration | Crossroads/Snow Angel Palace/Antebellum Plantation/Buzzard Hollow as focal spaces for holiday ideas |
| 6B. Properties of Space - Extension | snapshots of Americana from 19th century and early 20th century |
| 6C. Properties of Space - Simultaneity | idealized nostalgia presented to early 21st century recreation consumers |
| 6D. Properties of Space - Power | HFE authorized to create secularized Christmas celebration |
| 7A. Aspects of Space - Perceived Space | transition from daily recreational space to holiday celebration readily accepted by public |
| 7B. Aspects of Space - Conceived Space | highly planned holiday entertainment attraction |
| 7C. Aspects of Space - Lived Space | N/A |
| 8A. Dynamics of Space - Production | HFE is the producer and owner of the event (i.e., copyright on "Snow Angel") |
| 8B. Dynamics of Space - Reproduction | readily reproducible across generations |

A spatial analysis of corporate religion at Stone Mountain is especially useful in revealing the elaborate productions involved in creating an annual holiday entertainment attraction premised on specifically sectarian ideas and beliefs but exhibited in a manner that successfully isolates theological claims from more popular ideals associated with seasonal sentiments of peace and good will. While it is not clear whether the original reason for the placement of the nativity story was intentional or more a matter of convenience, the fact that the signage mentioning the exhibit is sparse and the text oblique,

suggests HFE's current practice regarding the location of "The Gift" is deliberate. Moreover, the continuing evolution of a novel spiritual narrative loosely linked to Christmas but with its own spiritual entity linked to nightly miracles, and the centralized location afforded the Snow Angel, indicates an effort to cultivate a meaning-making system acceptable to the greatest number of potential consumers.

The development and evolution of the Stone Mountain Park Christmas since Herschend Family Entertainment took over management of the entertainment venues in the late 1990s merits a case study in business textbooks. HFE has thus far successfully negotiated the requirements of constitutional and state principles regarding the separation of church and state while avoiding censure from the more conservative representatives of the Southern Christian establishment in the region. When comparing their work at Stone Mountain -- a facility they manage but do not own -- with their Christmas events at the parks they do own, it is clear that HFE has deliberately cultivated a secularized Christmas entertainment venue at Stone Mountain. For example, HFE's fully-owned Silver Dollar City near Branson, Missouri, provides a daily living nativity production throughout its Christmas season.

Transport your family to ancient Bethlehem and experience life as it may have been that clear and silent night so many years ago. The real reason for the joyous season is revealed in dramatic fashion by the angel Gabriel in this thrilling musical account of the greatest story ever told. This celebration of the

birth of Jesus Christ takes place each operating day during the festival.³¹

Unlike Stone Mountain, the nativity story at Silver Dollar City takes place in the one of the main performance venues at the park, the Riverfront Playhouse, where it is available for all park visitors without any travel requirements.

At Stone Mountain, HFE has provided a separated sacred space for reflection on the Christian myth of the incarnation of the messiah for those who value that narrative as an integral part of their Christmas celebration. The judicious use of space by an entertainment corporation indicates the importance of spatial analysis in examining the various aspects of the events at the park. At the same time, it is just as important to have an understanding of corporate religion and similar concepts which help to reveal the subtle dimensions of religious and spiritual concepts and practices often deployed outside of traditional religious institutions and their structures. HFE's success at Stone Mountain is in large part due to the cooperation of the visitors who attend Stone Mountain Park Christmas events informed by their own training in American Christmas beliefs and practices. Without their tacit knowledge of these ideas and activities, it is doubtful HFE would realize the degree of success it has experienced.

Finally, an indication of the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the corporation and its consumers is found in the training of the next generation which is

³¹ Herschend Family Entertainment, "Living Nativity."
<http://www.silverdollarcity.com/theme-park/Attractions/Shows-Entertainment/Living-Nativity>.

apparent throughout the Christmas celebrations at the park. Parents gently guide their children through the intricacies of the various myths and narratives associated with the American Christmas experience. This process, supported by HFE with the many child-friendly activities available to visitors, helps train a new generation of consumers of this corporate religion. These will be the visitors to future celebrations who fondly will look back upon their Christmas memories as they lead their own children through the familiar and beloved rituals and stories. This formation and training process is similar to the ways in which civil religion is cultivated, only in this context it is being undertaken by a corporation weaving Christian and national values with its own business practices.

Chapter Nine
Conclusion: Crafting Sacred Spaces

The massive monadnock now known as Stone Mountain is an ancient feature of the landscape of the southern Piedmont geographic region in the southeastern United States of America. As the land surrounding the monadnock settled and eroded over time, the granite outcrop emerged slowly to dominate the relatively flat countryside. Stone Mountain, referring back to psychologist James Gibson's notion of affordances or the impact of the environment on observers, is an ecological presence which provides affordances for human agents.¹ That is, the mountain impresses upon human agents and in so doing opportunities for meaning-making emerge which are as varied as befits both the range of observers over time and the monadnock's status. This point merits emphasis as usually we might view the mountain as merely a background against which various social practices unfold. Doing so misses the significance of the mountain as the material conduit which constrains and shapes human interactions.

As the philosophical proponents of object-oriented ontology make clear in their rejection of Kantian claims about the primacy of human cognition, objects are important if not fully appreciated sources of knowledge about our world.² Natural objects such as Stone Mountain may be understood apart from how we humans view them and recognized

¹ Gibson, "Notes on Affordances," 403-4.

² Graham Harman, *Tool-Being, Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (Peru, IL: Open Court, 2002); Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

for their own forms of agency both within and independent of our epistemological frameworks. The natural environment is not simply a static and passive background against which the actions of human agents are played-out. Human agency does not exist in an empty space of abstract affective and cognitive operations. It is realized within the context of a complex and engaging landscape of both built and natural environments.

The more we study it, the more we see that, beyond the fact that many different people have many different opinions about it, nature in itself flickers between things -- it is both/and or neither/nor. . . . Nature is . . . animals, trees, the weather . . . the bioregion, the ecosystem. It is both the set and the contents of the set. It is the world and the entities in that world. It appears like a ghost at the never-arriving end of an infinite series: crabs, waves, lightning, rabbits, silicon . . . Nature. Of all things, nature should be natural. But we cannot point to it. What we usually get is a suggestive effusion on something "Whose dwelling is in the light of setting suns, / In the round ocean, and the living air, / And the blue sky, and in the mind of man," as Wordsworth marvelously put it. Nature becomes supernatural, . . . Or nature dissolves and we are left with sheer matter, and a sequence of ideas with numerous high points in radical materialist philosophy We want there to be something in between. But would that be natural? Would it not be supernatural? Would that be supernatural like a spirit -- more of a refined essence -- or a ghost -- something more substantial, maybe made of ectoplasm? . . . Our journey to the middle, to the "in between" space, whatever we call it, would go on generating binary pairs, and we would always be coming down on one side or the other, missing the exact center. It does not matter whether this is materialist spirituality, or spiritual materialism. Thinking posits something "over there" that maintains a mysterious allure.³

Human engagement with an object such as Stone Mountain goes beyond any simple dualism of subject engaging object and opens into an "in-between", that is, a space that affects both social relations and epistemic framings.

³ Morton, *The Ecological Thought*, 18-19.

Stone Mountain may be viewed as an example of how a striking natural feature becomes a mechanism by which humans might gain insight into their relationship not only with nature, but with a cosmos it appears to signify. The various practices and beliefs surveyed in this study are in no small part contingent upon the unique contributions of Stone Mountain itself, as a natural entity, for their origins and continuing development. If we can temporarily set aside the idea that agency is fundamentally about human volition and reason and instead entertain the idea that agency may also be akin to a dynamic and fluid network of interactions and relations, we can start to make space for the significance of Stone Mountain as a natural force within that system.⁴

When discussing his approach to locating anthropology within a broader environmental context, Tim Ingold points to the parallels between Gibsonian ecological psychology and Ingold's own concept of the organism-in-its-environment. "Both approaches" explains Ingold "take as their point of departure the developing organism-in-its-environment, as opposed to the self-contained individual confronting a world 'out there'. . . . the objection is to the idea that what an organism does, or what it perceives, is the calculated output of an intelligent design, whether that intelligence be equated with the mind or with natural selection."⁵ The displacement of reason or intelligence as the main engine

⁴ Linda Nash, "The Agency of Nature of the Nature of Agency?" *Environmental History* 10, no. 1 (January 2005): 68.

⁵ Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 4.

driving human engagement with the environment, conjoined with the demotion of agency as the exclusive domain of human cognition, sets the stage for alternative imaginings regarding the roles nature has to play in our perception of our world.

The attribution of a form of circumscribed agency to the monadnock, understood within very particular limits, mitigates against the temptation to frame Stone Mountain almost entirely within the context of the war memorial and its associated controversies. The diverse social goods Stone Mountain Park provides to local residents and regional and national tourists are quite often obscured by the notoriety attributed to the Confederate memorial. A superficial viewing of the park will center on the carving and miss the many other important traditions and practices which have developed at the site. On several occasions over the past few years, for example, I have found it necessary to explain my research to colleagues who have initially dismissed the park as a playground for racists and bigots. Without ever having visited the park, university educators simply assumed the worst about the site based on their visceral reactions to the politics of white supremacy associated with the memorial carving.

However, by attending to the perspective that agency is achieved within a network of relationships with other humans, with other animals, and with the natural and built environments, space is cleared to consider Stone Mountain's role, its own agency, within that network. While the idea initially may appear suspect, it is hardly novel and the

suspicions we may have about it are most likely the product of a particular stream of Western reflection on agency. Consider, for example, George Santayana's effort to address the assumption that humans are the measure of all.

[I]f the philosophers had lived among [the] mountains their systems would have been different from what they are. Certainly, I should say, very different from what those systems are from which the European genteel tradition has handed down since Socrates; for these systems are egotistical; directly or indirectly they are anthropocentric, and inspired by the conceited notion that man, or human reason, or the human distinction between good and evil, is the center and pivot of the universe. That is what the mountains and woods should make you at last ashamed to assert.⁶

In many ways, Santayana's naturalism anticipates more recent efforts, such as object-oriented ontology, to dislodge the anthropocentric centering of epistemology and locate it instead within the interplay between action and environment.⁷ However, for the purposes of this project, it is sufficient, I think, to highlight this example of an alternative to dominant concepts of agency and reason constructed on assumptions regarding the centrality of humans alone. In considering alternatives, the potential for Stone Mountain's presence within a more broadly construed system of agencies, helps to explain its role in helping shape religious perspectives.

One of the goals of this study has been to locate the broader context of the monument and, drawing upon the tools provided by spatial analysis, explore the various forces at

⁶ George Santayana, *The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy; and, Character and Opinion in the United States*, ed. James Seaton, reprint, 1911 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 19.

⁷ See, for example, George Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith: Introduction to a System of Philosophy*, reprint, 1923 (New York: Dover, 1955).

work in the memorial movement, its implementation, and developments since the memorial's dedication in 1970. In doing so, the centrality of the memorial carving as the primary reason for exploring Stone Mountain has been challenged in this thesis. While it is certainly accurate to claim that the cultural and political motivations for the memorial carving have not faded and are currently being drawn upon in contemporary debates about the Lost Cause as was discussed in Chapter Five, a strictly historical approach to the site might be inclined toward only that particularly controversial narrative stream. As has been demonstrated, spatial analysis approaches the material from a different trajectory and has proven useful in helping to reveal other, less prominent, agents and religious actions taking place at Stone Mountain. Expanding the scope of religious analysis beyond the Confederate history also reveals the way spatial analysis enables consideration of the religious/spiritual dimensions of sites, events, and encounters that have not been typically considered "religious." This broadening of the category has been discussed for some time in religious studies, of course, but the developing categories of spatial analysis enable more precise forms of analysis.

The application of spatial methodology in the study of religion deployed in the various case studies illustrates the significant contributions of the work of Knott and Tweed to the critical study of religion explained in Chapter Two while simultaneously reflecting the materialist turn in contemporary religious studies as was sketched in the review

of Vásquez's work in the same chapter. The common commitment these scholars share is to the claim that space, illustrated in Lefebvre's complex system for social production and reproduction, is inextricably bound to human bodies grounded in their respective built and natural environments and that religious ideas and practices are a vital part of this system of social and cultural transmission. In addition, as individual, communal, and societal values interact, efforts to ascribe meaning to specific places are inevitably contested. The power dynamics circulating around particular places provides another opportunity for spatial analysis to shed light onto transactions which are often obscured by dominant narratives of power. Without spatial analysis, it is too easy to miss the material structuring of authority and power at sites like Stone Mountain.

The case study analyses of this project have, I believe, both underlined the importance of the analytic spatial frameworks of Tweed and Knott, and also suggested the potential of working with a schema drawing on both. In my earlier discussion I pointed out that Knott's emphasis on the spatial analysis of non-sacred sites, in contrast to Tweed's focus on evidently religious sites, enables the highlighting of sacred dimensions of a broader array of sites. As I already suggested, looking only at events and encounters at Stone Mountain that were evidently religious would have prevented me from seeing some of the meaning-making present in Crossroads Village and in some of the New Age encounters with the mountain.

Further, I believe that Knott's careful enunciation of dimensions, properties, aspects, and dynamics of space allows more a nuanced consideration of events. It has been especially useful in revealing the various ways in which power and authority are both made manifest and may be challenged at a site. For example, the sanctioned use of the mountaintop for the annual Easter celebration is supported in ways that the Good Friday ritual is not. Whereas park police are a helpful presence assisting with traffic and guiding visitors on Easter morning, they serve as silent sentries monitoring the pilgrims' ascent on Good Friday. Attention to the positioning and intention of park officials helps to underscore the power differentials at work in these two related yet differing events. An attentiveness to these types of dynamics is developed via spatial analysis.

However, Tweed's understanding of the ways culture works collectively over time was essential to my analysis of Stone Mountain, particularly as it enabled more concrete and expansive analysis of the roles of history and social/cultural change. His categories, for example, of home and homeland, allowed me to contrast the space of the plantation as a home invoking a homeland to the space of the Good Friday stations of the cross where participants remembered home in an old homeland as they sought a place in a new homeland.

The multiple dimensions of the combined schema used in this project, drawing on space as an ongoing analytic category, shows the rich possibilities for spatial methods

to illuminate the religious or spiritual aspects of identity formation not only in obviously religious settings but in such relatively secularized locales as a state park. Concepts such as place identity from environmental psychology,⁸ sense of place from neuroscience,⁹ and place attachment from anthropology¹⁰ resonate with classic work in the sociology of religion on religion and identity formation which centers on the "sacralization of identity"¹¹ and more recent work in affective theory.¹² The overlap between work in religious identity and various efforts to understand and explain individual and communal attraction to place lies in the ways in which religious, spiritual, and transcendent sensibilities are activated and reinforced through material engagement with locations which have gained significance as Jonathan Z. Smith's focusing lens "place of clarification."¹³

Hans Mol's work is an especially helpful adjunct in this endeavor inasmuch as Mol attempts to highlight a wide range of activities and patterns in contemporary society which all too often are overlooked for their religious implications.¹⁴ Mol's definition of religion as the

⁸ Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff, "Place-Identity: Physical World Socialization of the Self."

⁹ Lengen and Kistemann, "Sense of Place and Place Identity: Review of Neuroscientific Evidence"; Plumert and Spencer, *The Emerging Spatial Mind*.

¹⁰ Low, "Symbolic Ties That Bind: Place Attachment in the Plaza"; Low, *Spatializing Culture: The Ethnography of Space and Place*.

¹¹ Mol, *Identity and the Sacred*, 1; Mol, "Introduction"; Mol, "The Identity Model of Religion: How It Compares with Nine Other Theories of Religion and How It Might Apply to Japan."

¹² Schaefer, *Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power*; Supp-Montgomerie, "Affect and the Study of Religion."

¹³ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*, 54.

¹⁴ Mol, *Identity and the Sacred*, 4.

sacralization of identity emphasizes religious identity formation as a process -- not a specific state. Indeed, for Mol, the dynamic is a dialectic which vacillates between identity and differentiation.¹⁵ The meaning-making function of religion, then, is to reconcile the tensions between identity and differentiation through the process Mol terms "sacralization" which "protects identity, a system of meaning, or a definition of reality, and modifies, obstructs, or (if necessary), legitimates change."¹⁶ While the inherent movement between identity and differentiation is never fully arrested, sacralization provides stability even it is subject to subsequent corrections as new circumstances emerge.

Within this framework, Mol views the process of secularization as involving both institutional and cultural modes. Institutional secularization describes the process by which religious institutions gradually lose their religious orientation and are absorbed into the larger, secular society. Cultural secularization is intended to describe the phenomenon of the loss of influence by religious institutions and religion in general.¹⁷ The significance of Mol's approach to secularization is that while conventional religious institutions exhibit a process of increasing distance from dominant cultural norms and practices, the need for religious identity formation, for

¹⁵ Mol, *Identity and the Sacred*, 21-22.

¹⁶ Mol, *Identity and the Sacred*, 6.

¹⁷ Hans Mol, "Secularization and Cohesion," *Review of Religious Research* 11, no. 3 (Spring 1970): 183.

sacralization, continues and can be achieved apart from traditional religious institutions and locales.

Thus, Mol casts a wide net around activities which may be considered religious arguing that "*whatever sacralizes identity or a system of meaning*"¹⁸ qualifies as religious. Secularization is not a threat to religion since novel forms of religiosity centered on religious identity have emerged as a countervailing force.¹⁹ This observation coincides with the examples of connections between religion and identity sketched above and suggest potential areas of additional research.

As we have seen in Chapter Four, the indigenous peoples of the region, to the extent that we can reasonably speculate, found the monadnock a sacred space within which they could meet and interact with various other tribal groups under a respite from conflict which the mountain engendered. Tribal identities and shifting confederations were developed, maintained and reinforced while allowing for commerce and recreation with competing groups. After colonialism and major governmental efforts to wrest control of the region from indigenous peoples, leisure and recreational activities at the mountain granted visitors from burgeoning mid-nineteenth century urban and agricultural centers opportunities to retreat from their

¹⁸ Mol, "The Identity Model of Religion: How It Compares with Nine Other Theories of Religion and How It Might Apply to Japan," 16.

¹⁹ Mol, "The Identity Model of Religion: How It Compares with Nine Other Theories of Religion and How It Might Apply to Japan," 33-34; Theodore E. Long, "*Identity and the Sacred: A Sketch for a New Social-Scientific Theory of Religion* by Hans Mol [Review]," *Sociological Analysis* 38, no. 4 (Winter 1977): 421.

labors while developing their regional and national identities. By the third decade of the nineteenth century it is clear that the national Independence Day celebrations at the top of the mountain used the space to cultivate Southern American self-understanding.

Later, after the wounds of the Civil War had started to scar over, the site became a location for the construction of a particular variety of late nineteenth-century Southern white identity tied to an imaginative project to revise the war narrative as a sacrificial effort to heal the nation. Recent efforts to reinvigorate the Lost Cause mythos in response to public calls to reject the Confederate flag as an innocuous symbol of a virtuous antebellum South use the flag to symbolize a particular stream of Southern white identity entwined with conservative Protestant values. The juxtaposition of the Confederate battle flag and the Christian flag at various rallies held at the mountain supporting the renewed Lost Cause mythos indicates the nature of the identity values under construction at the location.

As was explained in Chapter Six, perhaps the clearest examples of Christian identity formation at Stone Mountain take place over the Easter weekend. The use of the space of Stone Mountain for both a Protestant Easter Sunrise service and a Good Friday *Via Crucis* ritual reflect the growing presence of Roman Catholic adherents who have been moving into the region from Mexico and Central America in increasing numbers since the closing decades of the previous century. In a different religious stream, the appropriation

of the monadnock as a depository of spiritual knowledge and a conduit to ascended beings in other dimensions reflects the ability of the location to foster a particular stream of New Age spiritualism at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries as seen in Chapter Seven. Finally, the values associated with a constructed corporate religion amenable to widely-accepted holiday sentiments reinforcing familial bonds and general goodwill feed into a consumer identity which is willing to invest in the replication of those values in the service of holiday entertainment and amusement activities.

As the case studies in chapters four through eight have revealed, opportunities for identity formation overlap with the use of Stone Mountain as the locus for those activities. In her discussion of the links between social history and urban landscapes, Dolores Hayden notes the need to approach the material "grounded in both the aesthetics of experiencing places with all five senses and the politics of experiencing places as contested territory."²⁰ Without an informed immersion into the subject site, it is all too easy to ignore or miss how identities are being shaped by the location. Construing Stone Mountain as a passive venue for various activities runs the risk of neglecting the dynamic forces at work in the interaction between the monadnock and those who make use of the site. As Hayden notes, "[p]laces make memories cohere in complex ways."²¹ A spatial analysis

²⁰ Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, 43.

²¹ Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, 43.

helps to contextualize the various groups who find the mountain important to their efforts to define and refine their particular religious identities in the midst of shifting cultural and social contexts.

In addition to the case studies covered in the previous chapters of this work, three other events at Stone Mountain merit mention in this closing chapter as examples of the particular value of a spatial analysis for religious identity formation and maintenance. Space and time considerations prevented dedicated case studies for each of the three examples but the following sketches illustrate the value of this approach to the study of religion, space, and identity. In addition, as these brief sketches illustrate, by moving beyond religion as a function of traditional institutional structures or organizations, opportunities are presented which point to the many and diverse ways in which the sacred is intricately linked to the mundane in the social realities of everyday religious practices. As Nancy Ammerman has noted, "[i]f all modern action involves having access to patterns from multiple social contexts, then we should not rule out the possibility that religiously formed patterns of action may find their way into situations outside the religious sphere."²² The celebrations taking place in a public park outlined in the following few pages indicate the potential value in examining such events for a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary religion.

²² Nancy Ammerman, "Studying Everyday Religion: Challenges for the Future," in *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives*, edited by Nancy Ammerman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 228.

The AtlantaFest Christian Music Festival and the Stone Mountain Scottish Festival and Highland Games are conducted in a large area cleared of trees just northwest of the memorial. This multipurpose area is popular for various events since it is immediately adjacent to both the largest parking facility in the park, the Yellow Daisy Lot, and the park police headquarters. For events which attract large crowds and may need crowd control, the meadow area is ideal. The Indian Festival & Pow-Wow makes use of the smaller area occupied by the Antebellum Plantation complex. In addition to using the quadrangle area for dance competitions, the large fenced-in area behind the manor house of the plantation is used for various exhibits and demonstrations during the festival. All three events require separate admission in addition to the parking admission required to enter the park.

The AtlantaFest Christian Music Festival, up until its final appearance at Stone Mountain in 2014, ran for almost thirty years as a major Christian music festival in the Southeast. The final festival at Stone Mountain drew approximately 20,000 visitors over the course of the four day event. Following patterns common since the advent of popular American Christian music gatherings in the early 1970s, the festival provided several musical acts rotating among a main stage and two other smaller stages (see Figure 9.1 in Appendix 4). Those attending the event also had the opportunity to visit a number of booths set-up to highlight Christian colleges, Christian-owned businesses, missionary groups, anti-abortion organizations, and similar groups

reflecting a primarily evangelical orientation. For example, one of the more popular attractions was in a tent screening segments from *Hellbound?*, a film examining the question of whether or not hell, understood as at the very least a separation from God, really exists.²³ Another notable attraction was a large bus operated by one of the event sponsors, Mission: Pre-Born. The bus was set-up to allow visitors to walk through displays depicting the negative aspects associated with abortions. It also explained the focus of the group on providing pre-natal counseling services and ultrasound images for women considering abortion along with information about alternatives such as adoption. The events appeared to attract numerous interested visitors while various Christian musical acts played throughout the day.

Over the course of the four days of the festival, dozens of artists performed while thousands attended with many setting-up tents in the adjacent camping area for the duration of the festival. The separation from the rest of the park and the other visitors and the investments involved in attending the event for several days served to reinforce a common identity of the participants as members of their particular understanding of contemporary evangelical Christianity. Both the construction of the sacred space in the park and the temporary nature of the gathering suggest the event functions as a liminoid event for those attending

²³ Kevin Miller, *Hellbound?* (Santa Monica, CA: Area 23a, 2012).

during which a *communitas* is achieved even if only for those four days.²⁴

The categories of cosmos and lived space are most clearly evident in the events associated with the Christian festival. Set apart immediately from other park visitors and more broadly from the corrosive forces of "the world", these pilgrims establish a lived space free of distractions and engage in extended worship and praise. The music, borrowed from the secular culture which is being rejected, is re-imagined as sacred praise used to facilitate contact with the divine. Isolated from home and mundane routines, the pilgrims gather in the space of the festival to experience a community of believers united in their ephemeral emplacement at the park.

Perhaps most importantly for those gathered at the festival, the dedicated space of the large meadow at the park facilitates the production and reproduction of ideas, beliefs, and practices associated with the evangelical Christians attending the event. The music attracts a younger audience but a significant segment of those in attendance are young, mostly families with children and church youth and young adult groups. Sermons emphasizing the status of contemporary Christians as marginalized victims of the secular culture of the United States serve to reinforce the solidarity of those in attendance. The gathering reinforces aspects of the worship services the audience experiences on a weekly basis. That familiarity

²⁴ Turner, "Liminal to Liminoid in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbology," 64-65.

facilitates opportunities for the identify formation required to enable the continuation of the central beliefs of this particular stream of Christianity across time as it moves from one generation to the next.

The next example moves from the sphere of a strictly religious event to that of a celebration of ethnic and political culture and tradition. For over forty years, the Stone Mountain Scottish Festival and Highland Games has taken place on a weekend in October in the same area used by the AtlantaFest. Drawing approximately 25,000 attendees from well beyond the local Atlanta area, the festival provides opportunities for Scottish clans and societies to gather and present their stories in dozens of booths set up around the area. There are athletic and dance competitions and music performances offered on two stages which underscore the shared heritages of attendees coming from Scottish and Celtic backgrounds. Many attendees appear to be connected in some capacity with the various clans which set-up gathering spaces throughout the camping area of the field. Large groups socialize around the clan booths and it is clear from the literature on genealogy and clan history available throughout the area that cultivating the traditions of Scotland in the United States is an important component of the gathering.

Of particular relevance is the small Kirk set-up along the pathway leading to the various clan booths. It is a very modest, open air tent with a simulated stone steeple and three stained glass windows displayed along the sides apart from the entrance. One of the windows is an image of

the burning bush which bears the Scottish church slogan "Nec Tamen Consumebatur" ("it is not being consumed"). A small table is placed at the front of the space with a large platter in the middle depicting the symbols of the four gospels: angel, lion, ox, and eagle. A prayer bench is in front of the table and eight folding chairs have been placed in the audience section. The sacred space is largely symbolic as the Kirk was most often empty whenever it was observed. However, it is clear the space has become an important aspect of the gathering as indicated in the booklet distributed at the games.

The Stone Mountain Highland Games has a truly unique chapel space casually known by some of our guests as our "Wee Kirk in the Woods." This is a public special place that is intended to provide a place for our guests, attendees and visitors to spend time in spiritual or meditative reflection. It is just a "quiet place" in a normally busy event.²⁵

The Sunday morning service, held on the final day of the 2016 games, was attended by several dozen, many dressed in traditional Scottish clothing. Held in a larger space on the parade field the service was interdenominational and consisted of a processional with various clan tartans and banners which were lined up behind the games chaplain, Rev. David Monroe, as he led the service. The order of worship included a call to worship, reading of scripture, homily, and a baptism ceremony. Of particular interest was the baptismal candidate who was the chaplain's grandson. After the ceremony, the Kirkin' of the Tartans took place which

²⁵ Stone Mountain Highland Games, *44th Annual Stone Mountain Highland Games & Sottish Festival: October 14-16, 2016* (N.p.: Stone Mountain Highland Games, Inc., 2016), 36.

involved the elevation and blessing of the symbols of the clans in recognition of the importance of the tartans as important symbols of heritage (see Figure 9.2 in Appendix 4). Following the recessional, and at the invitation of the chaplain, many attendees reassembled at the Kirk and participated in a communion service (see Figure 9.3 in Appendix 4). Rev. Monroe explained that this was the third year he had celebrated the Eucharist and he had introduced the ceremony in an effort to give those attending an opportunity to practice the ritual even while away from their homes and attending the games.

The categories of home, homeland, and cosmos are clearly reflected in the temporary sacred space manifest in the "Wee Kirk in the Woods" during the games. Participants in the Scottish diaspora, a construct which both reflects the economic forces behind the displacement of Scots and glosses over the imperial forces at work behind the migrations of many Scots into the United States,²⁶ draw upon invented traditions associated with their imagined Scottish homelands and rationalizes them via the religious imagery associated with the Christian ceremonies centered on their church in the woods.

The final example sketched in this chapter shares aspects of religious identity as developed in the AtlantaFest Christian Music Festival and ethnic identity celebrated in the Stone Mountain Scottish Festival and Highland Games. The Indian Festival & Pow-Wow has been held

²⁶ Paul Basu, *Highland Homecomings: Genealogy and Heritage Tourism in the Scottish Diaspora* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 208.

annually in November at Stone Mountain since 2000. It draws about 25,000 visitors over the course of the four-day event and more than fifty tribes are represented. A large segment of those attending are school children from throughout the Atlanta region. Almost 10,000 children participate in field trips organized by the various school systems in conjunction with Stone Mountain officials and the organizers of the festival. Some of the exhibits the children and other visitors view make reference to the indigenous tribes which occupied the Stone Mountain region long before the arrival of Europeans. A Southeastern Native American encampment demonstrates the daily life before European colonization. Skills important to indigenous communities such as flint-knapping, bow making, and pottery are on display alongside several native dwellings. A steady stream of visitors from a wide range of ethnic and cultural perspectives circulate among the exhibits. The events of the festival occupy a much smaller space than the other two festivals so it fits, if a bit snugly, into the two main open spaces available at the Antebellum Plantation: the lawn in front of the main plantation house and the meadow behind that same building.

One of the more striking events at the festival, held within sight of the memorial carving, is the ceremonial dance and the recognition of a class of U.S. citizens over-represented, on a per capita basis, in two American institutions: the U.S. military²⁷ and the federal prison

²⁷ Alison R. Bernstein, "Native Americans in the Military," in *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, edited by John Whiteclay Chambers II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 477-78.

system (see Figure 9.4 in Appendix 4).²⁸ In the case of the former, while World War II represented the first time Native Americans were included in the United States military draft, volunteerism has always been high among this particular demographic.²⁹ With regard to the latter, reservation crimes are prosecuted under U.S. federal guidelines which are stricter than state guidelines and the federal guidelines lead to higher rates of incarceration.³⁰ The sacred dance honoring the legacy of indigenous Americans began with a special prayer for active-duty service members and veterans and current and ex-prisoners. As the dance continued, other categories of people were invited including emergency response personnel. The figures wove around the area, moving to drum beats and chants, in the midst of a museum to the plantation system and within sight of a memorial to the Civil War.

The event provides a striking opportunity to consider the many ways colonialism, slavery, and the construction of nationhood intersect in the American context. The categories of body, home, homeland, cosmos, and lived space are reflected in the ceremonial dancing, the reconstructions of the domestic realm, the various regional groupings represented by the different tribes, the evocation of

²⁸ David Lester, *Crime and the Native American* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1999), 23-40.

²⁹ Office of Tribal Government Relations, *American Indian and Alaska Native Servicemembers and Veterans* (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2012). http://www.va.gov/TRIBALGOVERNMENT/docs/AIAN_Report_FINAL_v2_7.pdf.

³⁰ Office of Justice Programs, *American Indians and Crime* (U.S. Department of Justice, 1999). <https://www/bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/aic.pdf>.

indigenous spirituality in connection to calls for reciprocity between humankind and the natural order, and the efforts to symbolically link the park to its original inhabitants.

In addition, the category of conceived space allows helpful analysis of the several booths selling various items related to indigenous culture. The commodification of tribal cultures and values is reflected by the jewelry, religious objects such as ceremonial pipes, dream catchers, and kachina dolls, art work, and other items indicative of ideas and practices associated with Native Americans. The consumption of these artifacts by festival visitors reflects the tensions between the celebration of culture and its appropriation by others. Nevertheless, the Indian Festival & Pow-Wow provides a contemporary simulation of the use of the space at Stone Mountain for sacred purposes which predates colonialism and its appropriation by European settlers. In this sense, it is a fitting bookend to this spatial analysis of religion at the mountain, connecting the original inhabitants of the area read through a history of colonization, displacement, slavery, nationalism, and commodification, all enacted in a space dominated by the monadnock itself.

What is instructive about these three events is how they provide opportunities for the exploration of identity formation in relation to Stone Mountain. As was illustrated in the cases of the Lost Cause and its past and current proponents, the various Christians celebrating the Easter

weekend, the practitioners of New Age spirituality, and the Christmas season consumers of corporate religion, the appropriation of the mountain facilitated the process of validating the self-understandings of the respective groups within the contexts of their social and cultural systems. Similarly, the AtlantaFest Christian Music Festival and the Stone Mountain Scottish Festival and Highland Games enable those attending to reaffirm their respective cultural, ethno-religious identities, the former more overt than the latter, within the context of the park space.

The Indian Festival & Pow-Wow stands apart from the other two events in that the main participants are invested not only in identity maintenance but also in the dissemination of the values associated with their respective Native American spiritual ideals to park visitors who are there to consume the spectacle manufactured for their benefit. Both the AtlantaFest Christian Music Festival and the Stone Mountain Scottish Festival and Highland Games appear to be structured primarily for those who already have a strong attachment to the events and their associated values. In the case of the Indian Festival & Pow-Wow, however, there is a more focused effort to educate the public, and certainly the thousands of school children who visit during the week, about the history and values of the indigenous peoples of North America. The two groups, the participants in Native American identity preservation and the park tourists, interact in proximity to where Creek, Cherokee, and their Woodland and Mississippian predecessors most likely gathered at the base of the mountain centuries

earlier. The Indian Festival & Pow-Wow uses that space to point both back toward that history and toward the future as Native Americans continue their efforts to represent their many cultures and values in contemporary American society. The mountain is not only a screen upon which the self and the sacred are projected but a mirror which serves to confirm and reinforce identity.

As the preceding case studies indicate, the significance of secular, extra-ecclesial locations for the development and practice of religiously-oriented systems of meaning merits careful consideration by scholars interested in shifting patterns of religiosity in contemporary society. By focusing on the material dimensions of religious activities, the importance of one location in the southeastern United States suggests possibilities for similar research endeavors in other locations which might otherwise have been overlooked.

At the outset of this project, three methodological concerns served to orient the thesis. First, the importance and significance of spatial analysis in religious studies was a driving force in the five case studies developed in the thesis. The relevance of spatial analysis was demonstrated in studies of the monadnock, its use as an icon of the Lost Cause mythology, Christian and New Age celebrations, and a corporate appropriation of popular religiosity. Insights were developed into a range of religious practices which would have been obscured by strictly historical accounts of the sacred at Stone Mountain.

The case studies also demonstrated the need to employ expansive understandings of religion and sacred space in order to encompass practices which might otherwise be ignored. A public park dedicated to the Confederacy surrounded by a system of loosely connected amusement areas and a more recent entertainment complex controlled by a national recreation corporation does not immediately present itself as a candidate for religious studies. However, when approached with more fluid perspectives on religion and sacred space and place, ideas and practices amenable to these more broadly construed concepts were evident. Moving beyond limited notions of what constitutes religion and what types of spaces may be sacred enables numerous opportunities for additional religious studies research.

The third issue, only coming into focus during the course of research, relates to the ways in which space, religion, and identity interact. As the three brief sketches in this chapter indicate, if only roughly so, there are reasons to consider the ways in which the use of space for religious and spiritual purposes resonates with identity formation and maintenance. Religious experience, for example, has been characterized as primarily constructed within clear historical contexts of development yet lacking reference to material spatial contexts.³¹ A more recent approach to the phenomenon continues in the same trajectory of attributional theory but with additional attention to work in cognitive science and neuroscience as these relate

³¹ Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

to religious experience.³² Yet, this approach also lacks a discussion of the spatial aspects of religious experience.

One potential avenue of research may lie in seeking to establish connections between the significance of space and place for religious experience and religious identity. The approaches mentioned at the outset of this chapter -- place identity from environmental psychology, sense of place from neuroscience, place attachment from anthropology, and especially Mol's work on identify and differentiation -- may provide additional tools for exploring these connections between space, religion, and identity. Such a venture remains highly speculative at this stage but the case studies in this thesis indicate that this approach may well generate new and viable research projects.

At the time of this writing in the winter of 2016, the Stone Mountain Memorial Association, the body created by the State of Georgia to oversee the park, is in the early stages of plans to develop a museum exhibition honoring the achievement of black Civil War veterans.³³ Emerging after the most recent calls to remove Confederate battle flags from the state-owned park in 2015, the museum idea replaced an earlier plan to place a memorial to Martin Luther King, Jr. at the top of the mountain. Even with the support of Governor Nathan Deal and the SMMA, the proposed King memorial was abandoned as the Sons of Confederate Veterans

³² Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009).

³³ Suggs, "Black Civil War Museum at Stone Mountain Slowed but Marching On."

and local branches of the NAACP and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference united, albeit for differing reasons, in opposition to the memorial.³⁴

Instead of a memorial, a museum exhibit honoring the role of black soldiers in the Confederate Army was suggested. Yet, plans for the museum are challenged by the fact that there are no historical records verifying claims that black soldiers served on the side of the Confederacy. Any memorial to black Civil War soldiers would be to the approximately 200,000 who served in the Union forces.³⁵ This fact, often contested by contemporary proponents of the Lost Cause myth, makes it difficult to reconcile the placement of such a museum at a facility which was created by the State of Georgia specifically as a memorial to the Confederacy.

As was mentioned in Chapter Five, however, the Georgia General Assembly just approved this year (2018) a resolution commending the construction of a Liberty Bell monument "featuring the words and memory of Martin Luther King, Jr., instantiating the vision elucidated in his iconic *I Have A Dream* speech and memorializing his desire to let freedom ring from atop Stone Mountain."³⁶ The resolution is non-binding and provides no funds but, significantly, it does mark the first time the legislative body has indicated support for altering the official mission of Stone Mountain as a memorial to the Confederacy.

³⁴ Suggs, "Civil Rights Groups Oppose King Monument on Stone Mountain."

³⁵ Suggs, "Why Black Civil War Soldiers' Stories Are a Challenge for Museum."

³⁶ Emanuel Jones, et al., *Liberty Bell Monument at Stone Mountain*, 1.

The controversies over the nature and purpose of the memorial at Stone Mountain and the efforts to address those disputes indicate the continuing importance of Stone Mountain for those for whom it serves as a place of history and a source of identity while also providing a vantage point from which an "ultimate horizon of human life" may be discerned.³⁷ The search for an ultimate horizon is evident in Cantrell's *Holy Stone Mountain*, the work which helped to launch this project (see Figure 9.5 in Appendix 4). He writes, "Just as God creates a universe, a solar system, with the sun and planets of which our earth is one, and is responsible for all life and existence evolving on it, we, too, as tiny gods, create thoughts, give them emotional life and feeling, and put them into physical and material action."³⁸ The study of religion has, for a long time, considered the ways beliefs manifest in "physical and material action." But, at the same time, as the case studies indicate, the materiality of our existence helps illuminate areas of our thinking which often lie beyond our immediate vistas. Perhaps, then, it is not as tiny gods but rather as embodied and emplaced agents we strive to craft our systems of meaning-making, using all the resources nature has placed at our disposal.

³⁷ Tweed, "Crabs, Crustaceans, Crabinesss, and Outrage: A Response," 450.

³⁸ C. E. Cantrell, "Holy Stone Mountain," 20.

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Appendix 1: Schema of Spatial Analysis
of Religion at Stone Mountain

The categories in the schema are: 1. Body; 2. Home; 3. Homeland; 4. Cosmos; 5A. Dimensions of Space - Physical; 5B. Dimensions of Space - Social; 5C. Dimensions of Space - Mental; 6A. Properties of Space - Configuration; 6B. Properties of Space - Extension; 6C. Properties of Space - Simultaneity; 6D. Properties of Space - Power; 7A. Aspects of Space - Perceived Space; 7B. Aspects of Space - Conceived Space; 7C. Aspects of Space - Lived Space; 8A. Dynamics of Space - Production; and 8B. Dynamics of Space - Reproduction.

| | Ch. 4 Spatial Survey | Ch. 5 Lost Cause | Ch. 6 Easter Weekend | Ch. 7 New Age | Ch. 8 Corp. Religion |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | physical presence of monadnock in relation to bodies ascending it | three mounted figures, animated figures, truncated figures | ascent up mountain-side | spiritual bodies; astral projection | sensory engagement; movement around mountain via train to engage religious narrative |
| 2 | N/A - not a domesticated natural space | antebellum plantation | N/A - perhaps with some familial nostalgia | N/A | home for the holidays; centrality of kinship systems |
| 3 | indigenous peoples, Lost Cause mythos | myth of Southland | immigrant celebration of origins | networked spiritual energy fields and sites | N/A |
| 4 | indigenous myths unknown; New Age metaphysics | Lost Cause as metaphysics for suffering and hope | vertical movement toward the sacred | portal to spiritual dimensions | Snow Angel's invocation of universal peace and hope |
| 5A | summit of mountain, views from mountain side | macro/micro nature of memorial, politics of scale | navigating the mountain-side | mountain as physical vessel for the spirits | constructed spaces for holiday celebration |
| 5B | communal gathering space | various gatherings, patriotic celebrations | cohesive communal experience; smaller groupings | building social networks via traditional and online media | communal singing; parades; Snow Angel spectacle |
| 5C | marker for verticality, projection space | patriotism as an idea emplaced at the site | encounter with the divine | dissemination of New Age metaphysics | idealized American Christmas as common cultural |

| | Ch. 4 Spatial Survey | Ch. 5 Lost Cause | Ch. 6 Easter Weekend | Ch. 7 New Age | Ch. 8 Corp. Religion |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | | | value system |
| 6A | gathering space for different cultures | physicality, ideology, nostalgia | sanctifi- cation of mountaintop | mountain as a spiritual focal point | Crossroads/ Snow Angel Palace/ Antebellum Plantation/ Buzzard Hollow as focal spaces for holiday ideas |
| 6B | gathering space for different culture | common meeting place throughout history | shifting demograph- ics over time | locus for New Age metaphysics in latter part of 20 th century and early 21 st century | snapshots of Americana from 19 th century and early 20 th century |
| 6C | natural history museum, antebellum plantation, museum, Christmas | various ethnic and cultural gatherings | global Christian celebra- tions of passion and resurrec- tion of Christ | Stone Mountain as one of many crystal cities | idealized nostalgia presented to early 21 st century recreation consumers |
| 6D | tower, burning cross, CSA images, state property | KKK, Lost Cause, segregation ists, heritage not hate | sanctioned by park; ignored or monitored by park | use of media to by-pass official representa- tions of Stone Mountain and promulgate New Age thinking | HFE authorized to create secularized Christmas celebration |
| 7A | sacred- making practices, Easter sunrise service | recreation as disestab- lishment of memorial | nature walks transition into ritual | memorial carving as a contempla- tive focal point | transition from daily recrea- tional space to holiday celebration readily accepted by public |
| 7B | Lost Cause, commercial- ized Christmas | ideology of Lost Cause and white hegemony carved into mountain | natural spaces appropri- ated as sacred spaces | construc- tion of planned memorial appropriat- ed as a sacred space constructed by | highly planned holiday entertain- ment attraction |

| | Ch. 4 Spatial Survey | Ch. 5 Lost Cause | Ch. 6 Easter Weekend | Ch. 7 New Age | Ch. 8 Corp. Religion |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | | spiritual entities | |
| 7C | alternative religious practices | Memorial Lawn as space for alternative events | Crosswalk- ers as disruptors | memorial carving is portal into spiritual realm | N/A |
| 8A | N/A - mountain is natural creation | mountain is natural creation; appropri- ated for various productions | sunrise service created to celebrate oldstream Protestant Christian- ity | creation of a spiritual repository and locus of spiritual networks | HFE is the producer and owner of the event (i.e., copyright on "Snow Angel") |
| 8B | Memorial and associated buildings, amusement | Memorial and associated buildings, Flag Terrace, gift shops | repetition leads to reproduce- tion and appropria- tion by other groups | New Age reading of Stone Mountain replicated in social networks | readily reproduci- ble across generations |

Appendix 2: Research and Fieldwork Information

Archives and Libraries Consulted

DeKalb History Center Archives
Historic DeKalb Courthouse
101 East Court Square
Decatur, GA 30030

Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library
University of Georgia Libraries
Russell Special Collections Building
300 S. Hull Street
Athens, GA 30605

Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center
130 West Paces Ferry Road NW
Atlanta, GA 30305

Newberry Library
60 West Walton Street
Chicago, IL 60610

Special Collections
Gorgas Library
University Libraries
University of Alabama
711 Capstone Dr.
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

Special Collections and Archives
Library South
Georgia State University
100 Decatur St SE
Atlanta, GA 30303

Stuart A. Rose Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library
Rose Library at Robert W. Woodruff Library
Emory University
540 Asbury Circle
Atlanta, GA, 30322

Interviews¹

Anonymous-Corpus Christi Catholic Church, Personal
Interview, Corpus Christi Catholic Church, Stone Mountain,

¹ This list contains information related to individuals I interviewed and asked for permission to identify them in this thesis. Some consented and those who did not are listed as "Anonymous" with some identification to make it easier for the reader to distinguish among the anonymous sources. In addition, I often spoke with individuals during observation opportunities, at times of casual conversations, from whom I collected information. Those individuals are not identified in this list.

Georgia (April 30, 2012). The individual I interviewed declined to provide permission for the use of her/his name in this thesis.

Anonymous-Full Spectrum, Full Spectrum, Telephone interview (March 27, 2012). The individual I interviewed at Full Spectrum declined to provide permission for the use of her/his name in this thesis.

Anonymous-Stone Mountain Park, Personal Interview, Stone Mountain Park, Stone Mountain, Georgia (December 23, 2012). The individual I interviewed declined to provide permission for the use of her/his name in this thesis.

Anonymous-Via Crucis Ceremony, Personal Interview, Corpus Christi Catholic Church Via Crucis Ceremony, Stone Mountain, Georgia (March 29, 2013). The individual I interviewed declined to provide permission for the use of her/his name in this thesis.

Cantrell, Rachman, Skype interview (October 29, 2013). Mr. Cantrell gave me permission to use his name in this thesis.

Freeman, Wesley, Personal interview, (Stone Mountain Park, November 11, 2017). Mr. Freeman gave me permission to use his name in this thesis.

Furlong, David, E-mail interview (March 21, 2014). Mr. Furlong gave me permission to use his name in this thesis.

Hall, Kady, Skype interview (July 8, 2014). Ms. Hall gave me permission to use her name in this thesis.

Holliday, Lisa, Personal interview (Stone Mountain Park, September 11, 2013). Ms. Holliday gave me permission to use her name in this thesis.

Johnson, Jason, Personal interview (Stone Mountain, GA, April 5, 2013). Mr. Johnson gave me permission to use his name in this thesis.

Jones, Emanuel D., Telephone interview (September 10, 2013). Mr. Jones gave me permission to use his name in this thesis.

Manuel, Sharon Vimala E., Telephone interview (November 8, 2012). Rev. Manuel gave me permission to use her name in this thesis.

Morales, Laura Lorena, Personal interview (Stone Mountain Park, March 29, 2013). Ms. Morales gave me permission to use her name in this thesis.

Site Visit Dates and Context

April 4, 2010 - Easter Sunrise Service
July 4, 2010 - Fourth of July
January 2, 2011 - Carillon

April 24, 2011 - Easter Sunrise Service
 May 21, 2011 - Laser Light Show
 July 4, 2011 - Fourth of July
 September 3, 2011 - Laser Light Show
 September 10, 2011 - Yellow Daisy Festival
 September 19, 2011 - Valor and Sacrifice: The Faces of the
 Civil War
 September 24, 2011 - Hike Along Cherokee Trail
 October 1, 2011 - Visit Stone Mountain Museum
 October 8, 2011 - Annual Rice Festival
 October 16, 2011 - Scottish Festival and Highland Games
 October 23, 2011 - Visit Confederate Hall Historical and
 Environmental Center / Antebellum Plantation
 November 6, 2011 - Indian Festival and Pow-Wow
 December 23, 2011 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
 December 29, 2011 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
 December 30, 2011 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
 January 1, 2012 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
 January 16, 2012 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Day of
 Service
 April 6, 2012 - Good Friday *Via Crucis*
 April 8, 2012 - Easter Sunrise Service
 May 28, 2012 - Memorial Day
 June 2, 2012 - KISS 104.1 Family Soulfest
 June 5, 2012 - Transit of Venus Observation Event
 June 16, 2012 - AtlantaFest
 July 4, 2012 - Fourth of July
 July 29, 2012 - Dock Dogs Competition / Laughing Pizza
 Musical Show for Children
 November 4, 2012 - Indian Festival and Pow-Wow
 November 28, 2012 - Snow Mountain
 December 21, 2012 - Quarry Exhibit
 December 23, 2012 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
 December 28, 2012 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
 March 24, 2013 - Sheep Shearing Day at Farmyard
 March 29, 2013 - Good Friday *Via Crucis*
 March 31, 2013 - Easter Sunrise Service
 June 22, 2013 - Summer Solstice
 November 3, 2013 - Indian Festival and Pow-Wow
 December 23, 2013 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
 December 24, 2013 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
 December 31, 2013 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
 April 18, 2014 - Good Friday *Via Crucis*
 April 20, 2014 - Easter Sunrise Service
 June 14, 2014 - AtlantaFest
 June 21, 2014 - Summer Solstice
 December 23, 2014 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
 December 30, 2014 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
 January 1, 2015 - Mind Body and Soul New Years Day Mountain
 Climb
 January 4, 2015 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
 April 3, 2015 - Good Friday *Via Crucis*
 April 5, 2015 - Easter Sunrise Service
 August 1, 2015 - CSA Flag Rally
 August 22, 2015 - CSA Flag Rally
 September 6, 2015 - Labor Day
 November 11, 2015 - White Supremacist Flag Rally
 December 20, 2015 - Christmas at Stone Mountain

March 25, 2016 - Good Friday *Via Crucis*
April 2, 2106 - Confederate Day
April 23, 2016 - Rock Stone Mountain and Counter-Protests
October 16, 2016 - Scottish Festival and Highland Games
December 24, 2016 - Christmas at Stone Mountain
April 14, 2017 - Good Friday *Via Crucis*
April 16, 2017 - Easter Sunrise Service
November 11, 2017 - CSA Flag Rally

Appendix 3: Christmas at Stone Mountain Texts

Item 8.1 is text taken from the Stone Mountain Park web site advertising the most recent set of attractions for the Stone Mountain Christmas season from November 12, 2016 through January 4, 2017. Items 8.2-8.6 were transcribed from the various events attended by the author while observing Stone Mountain Christmas events from 2011-16. Item 8.2, the announcement of the arrival of the Snow Angel for visitors, was replaced in 2015 by Item 8.3 when a more elaborate presentation regarding the role of the Snow Angel was added to the Christmas at Stone Mountain narrative. Item 8.4 was transcribed from large posters set on either side of the Snow Angel's throne. The only mention of the other Snow Angels is in the speech of the Snow Angel during the closing ceremony as she "floats" above the audience (Item 8.5). Item 8.6, The Gift, is the nativity story as told during one of the many nightly performances taking place over the holiday season at the park.

8.1: Stone Mountain Park Christmas 2016

Atlanta's Most Heartwarming Christmas Celebration
November 12 - January 4 (Select Dates)

Have a Holly Jolly Christmas at Stone Mountain Park, where the true magic of the season is in the air. Enjoy the glow of more than two million lights, festive music and visits from some of your favorite holiday characters. Start a new tradition and create memories that will last a lifetime for your kids...and you.

- Rudolph The Red-Nosed-Reindeer 4-D! The beloved movie comes to you in a new and exciting format! Inside our 4D theatre, enter the world of Rudolph, Bumble, and the Misfit Toys and experience our new activities, décor, and photo opportunities.
- Skylights Spectacular: A Musical Walk-through Experience. Feast your eyes on thousands of lights, projections, special effects and photo opportunities!
- Clarice the Reindeer joins Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer® and Bumble™ the Abominable Snow Monster at Rudolph's Merry Little Meet and Greet. Kids of all ages can meet these heartwarming characters or catch them in the nightly Christmas parade!
- Enjoy live performances that are sure to get you in the Christmas spirit, including The Littlest Christmas Tree, Forever Christmas, Twas the Night Before...A Holiday Cabaret, and A Christmas Carol.
- All aboard the Singalong Train to hear your favorite Christmas tunes as well as the heartwarming story of the first Christmas in The Gift.
- Wander through the Wonderland Walkway, a dazzling tunnel of lights guiding you to the Snow Angel® Palace, where YOU are a part of the experience as we tell the story of Angelina the Snow Angel in A Wish For Snow.

- Take in the sights and sounds of the season with a nightly Christmas Parade including whimsical floats and the arrival of Santa Claus. Be sure to stay for the magical Snow Angel® Snowfall Finale to wrap up the evening.
- Bring your Christmas wishes and visit with Santa Claus – Named by USA Today as one of the ten best places in the country to catch Santa Claus.
- Enjoy great holiday shopping that includes hand blown glass ornaments, homemade fudge, unique toys and seasonal apparel.

Additionally, enjoy Stone Mountain Park's fun attractions that will be open during the daytime - included in your Christmas Adventure Pass ticket: Summit Skyride, Discovering Stone Mountain Museum, Historic Square & Farmyard, The Great Barn, and more!

<http://www.stonemountainpark.com/Events/Stone-Mountain-Christmas>

8.2: Announcement of the Arrival of the Snow Angel and Her Message to the Audience

The Snow Angel's Tin Soldiers, dressed in uniforms, trumpet her arrival and announce "Presenting the Snow Angel!" The Snow Angel stands on the second floor overlooking the Memorial Hall Great Room and recites the following greeting:

Well, hello everyone.

Oh, I knew you were here!

I could feel your warm spirit and good Christmas cheer.

I'm so happy to see your bright shining faces.

I'm sure you've all come from near and far places.

Won't you please stop and visit and tell me your name,

Or a wish that you have and I will do the same.

To see each of you will be no small feat,

And those who are patient will receive a nice treat.

Thank you for coming, I'm so honored your here.

May the spirit the Christmas last all through your year

The Snow Angel's escorts march down the stairs leading her to her throne in the Memorial Hall. Once everyone is in position, a tin soldier states: "The Snow Angel is now ready to receive her guests. You may step forth so she may greet you."

8.3: A Wish for Snow

Once upon a time, there was town where it never snowed. All the children in the town were sad because they had heard of other places in the world where it snowed all the time. The children in these faraway towns got to build snowmen, and go sledding, and have snow ball fights. But the children in our town and their parents and their parents' parents all lived a snowless life. One night, when the stars were shining their brightest, the children came together and decided it was about time their town got to see snow. So they all held hands and made a wish.

We wish, we wish, under stars so bright

That our quiet town see snow tonight

All of a sudden, they heard a noise. It was two, tall, strong soldiers dressed all in silver and white. The children were wary but the soldiers smiled and spoke to them.

A wish has been made by the children in town

Please close your eyes and don't make a sound

The children closed their eyes and didn't make a sound. The wind started to blow in their faces and the children felt like they were flying.

When they opened their eyes, the children were in a magnificent room. There were big spiral staircases and a glittering throne in front of a huge window that looked out into the night sky. The soldiers spoke.

May we introduce you to the host of the place,

For you're wondering who lives in such an exquisite space

Please stand at attention as she descends

Our angel, our queen, and soon, your new friend

The soldiers suddenly stood at attention. A beautiful angel, all in white, appeared and spoke with a voice unlike any they'd ever heard before.

Welcome young friends, I'm so glad you're here

I love having company this time of year

Say this with me, they are words that you know

Let it snow

Let it snow

Let it snow

Let it snow

The children looked up in wonder and excitement as they saw snow for the very first time. They realized this angel standing before them must be the Snow Angel! The Snow Angel held up her hands and the children all leaned in to listen.

I am Angelina, Snow Angel from the North

And every night I fly the skies to bring the snowfall forth

I listen for children's wishes, the ones that are fervent and true

And I tell them a little secret, like the one I'll share with you

There's a bell you can ring up high, and then again down low

No one can hear it but me, it's like a prayer for snow

So when you're feeling sad and you need a little lift

You ring this magic bell and conjure up a snowy drift

In the center of your town, at a certain time tonight
You will see me fly above when you wish with all your
might

Now I very much would like to meet you all, Tin
soldiers, one by one

I'll give the gift of snow to you so you'll always have
wintery fun

And with that, each boy and girl got to meet Angelina. She
gave each and every one of the children a magic bell just
like she promised. Once each child had their magic bell
Angelina said good-bye. And the children felt the wind in
their hair as they were transported back to their town.

When they arrived, they were stunned to see their
parents and their parents's parents playing in the softest,
most beautiful snow they had ever seen. And from that point
on, the town that had never seen snow, was blanketed in
snowfall each and every winter. Only the children knew that
it was their magic bells rung with the truest of wishes that
Angelina heard and smiled upon with the gift of snow.

8.4: The Four Snow Angel Sisters

Angelina - Snow Angel of the North Wind

Angelina whispers her message of winter magic on the North Wind. This beautiful angel flies all over the world, but calls Stone Mountain her home. Every year she blesses the mountain with her gift of snow spreading happiness to all.

Kenya - Snow Angel of the South Wind

As the Angel of the South Wind, Kenya guides the dreams of the young and the young at heart. Her regal nature and beauty are unmatched, but her humility and kindness are her strongest traits.

Sora - Snow Angel of the East Wind

Like a cherry blossom, Sora softly descends to the Earth on the Eastern Wind. The magic of this angel is fueled by humor and wisdom, and she leaves a trail of laughter and enlightenment everywhere she goes.

Nevada - Snow Angel of the Western Wind

Gracing the Western Wind, Nevada honors the wishes of winter. Nevada always follows her heart with passion, and her powerful wings bring love and hope to all around.

8.5: Closing Ceremony with Snow Angel Flying over Crossroads Village

Child's Greeting

When the north winds blow
and a chill nips the air
and magic fills the minds
of children everywhere
families gather close
and friends all draw near
to share in the joy of this time of year
with eyes full of wonder and a wide open heart
we wait for the moment of magic to start
when you hear the bells look straight up in the sky
and watch for a sparkle of light to fly by
for when spirits are high and the moon shining bright
a miracle can happen on nights like tonight

Snow Angel's Speech

Greetings and warm wishes
Good evening everyone
How nice to see you all together
Here to have some fun
So many happy faces
Smiling up at me
Can any of you guess
Just who I might be?
Ah-ha, ha, ha
A snow angel
Yes, that was such a good guess
I flew down from the heavens
In all my frostiness
To bring dreams of candy canes, holly, and snow
Ginger bread and Christmas trees
That twinkle and glow
To share the special magic of Christmas with you
And together we might make a Christmas wish come true
You may have travelled far from home
Or someplace very near
To be with the loved ones that you hold so dear
To snuggle by the fire
To enjoy a family feast
To turn your thoughts to hope
And a future of peace
All over the world
It's the same everywhere
And my sisters and I can hear every prayer
So we glide through the clouds spreading holiday cheer
To the young and the young at heart every year
For you see all Snow Angels are born with this gift
When the moon shines like ice
And the snow starts to drift
And wishes collide with sprinkles of starlight
Between falling snowflakes so frosty and white
That's when the magic of Christmas is strong
And a Snow Angel just like me comes along
Is it a miracle? Some say it's so
For Christmas is a time of miracles, you know

Perhaps with the help of all of you here
We might make another miracle appear
Are all my junior Snow Angels here?
Let's hear some yells
It's time to make a wish
And ring your magic bells
And now with a starlight sprinkle
We add a little dash of twinkle
And with Christmas wishes in your heart
Let the magic of the holiday season start
Gaze up at the stars and say the words you all know
Let it snow!
Let it snow!
Let it snow!
That's it, raise your voices, ready, go!
Let it snow!
Let it snow!
Let it snow!
Louder now, so the stars can hear us below!
Let it snow!
Let it snow!
Let it snow!
We did it, we made snow fall from the sky
My work here is done and I really must fly
But before I leave I have one last request
Grant me this wish and I'll truly feel blessed
When you hear the bells, look straight up in the sky
And watch for a sparkle of light to fly by
For when spirits are high and the moon shining bright
The stars will all twinkle to bid you good-night
Remember, look to the stars
for between each bright light
a miracle is born every night

8.6: The Gift

Once upon a time, far away, there was a grassy green hillside and on that grassy green hillside were some wooly white sheep. There were some shepherds there too, looking over their flock on a dark winter night, just like tonight. When all of a sudden they found themselves surrounded by a bright white light. And when those shepherds looked up in the sky, well they saw the biggest, brightest star they'd ever seen in their whole entire lives. And if all of that wasn't exciting enough, in the next moment, the whole sky filled up with angels and they were singing Glory and Hallelujah, and folks, if you have never heard an angel sing, let me tell you, they can sing.

And the shepherds, they didn't know what was going on, they were just shaking in their sandals. And the little sheep got to be about as sheepish as they could be. And one of angels looked down and said "Now don't be scared, y'all, cause we're here with glad tidings of comfort and joy. 'Cause tonight down in Bethlehem a child's being born. He'll grow up to be Savior of the whole entire world. And you'll find him wrapped-up in swaddling clothes and laying in a manger."

Well, after that, those angels, they went on their way and the shepherds got back to shepherdin'. But, y'all, they couldn't stop talkin' about all the beautiful things they'd heard and seen that night. So they called their little sheep over to them and they said "Now, little sheep, we need to take us a trip down to Bethlehem to see what all this fuss is about. So we need y'all to stick together and be real good for us while we're gone. Can you do that?" And the little sheep looked-up and said "Baa, baa!" And off the shepherds went. Over hill and dale, and over the river and through the woods, until they finally make it to that little town of Bethlehem.

And, y'all, when they got there, well they went knockin' on doors, visitin' house to house, tryin' to find a brand new baby. But they didn't find a newborn anywhere. I bet that y'all know why, don't you? Well they stopped in the square, and they're thinkin' and they're thinkin' until finally one of them remembers that the angels said the baby would be layin' in a manger. So, they went around back to where the stables were and guess who they found?

Yeah, it was the baby Jesus. He was all wrapped-up in those swaddlin' clothes just like the angel said. And he was layin' in a manger, which is a feed trough, with his momma and daddy kneelin' down on each side of him. Well, it was a beautiful sight. I bet those shepherds were gettin' kinda choked-up.

But, well, one of them started doubtin' and said "Well hold on now just a minute! If he's supposed to be the Savior of the whole entire world, then what's he doin' sleepin' in a barn? Are we sure we got the right baby?" Just as they were lookin' towards the door and they were thinkin' about leaving, guess who walks in? Now were just three of them. That's right, the three wise men! And let me tell you something about them, now. These weren't just a couple of smart alecks, these were powerful kings from far

out in the East somewhere. Now these were men who were used to havin' other men bowin' down in front of them. And, you know what they were doin' that night? They were bowin' down in front of the baby Jesus. And not only just that, y'all, they brought him presents, too. Things like gold and frankincense and myrrh. You couldn't find things like that just anywhere back then.

Now do y'all know that that's why we give each other gifts at Christmastime today? Yeah, it's so we can remember how those rich, powerful men humbled themselves in front of a tiny, little baby. But it's also to remember how that baby grew up to give all of us the gift of everlasting life. And you can't put a price tag on a gift like that, now can you? And that's why it doesn't matter how much money you put into a gift, it matters how much love you put inside it.



Figure 1.1. View of mountain, Stone Mountain, Georgia, May 1951 (AJCP552-064f, Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library)



Figure 1.2. Aerial view overlooking Stone Mountain, 1965 (AJCP582-027j, Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library)



Figure 1.3. Aerial view of Stone Mountain, 1992 (AJCP582-027h, Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library)



Figure 1.4. 2016 map of Stone Mountain Park attractions distributed via park web site (www.stonemountainpark.com/).



Figure 2.1. Confederate Memorial carving representing, from left to right, Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, and Jefferson Davis, April 24, 2011 (photo by Michael Bradley)

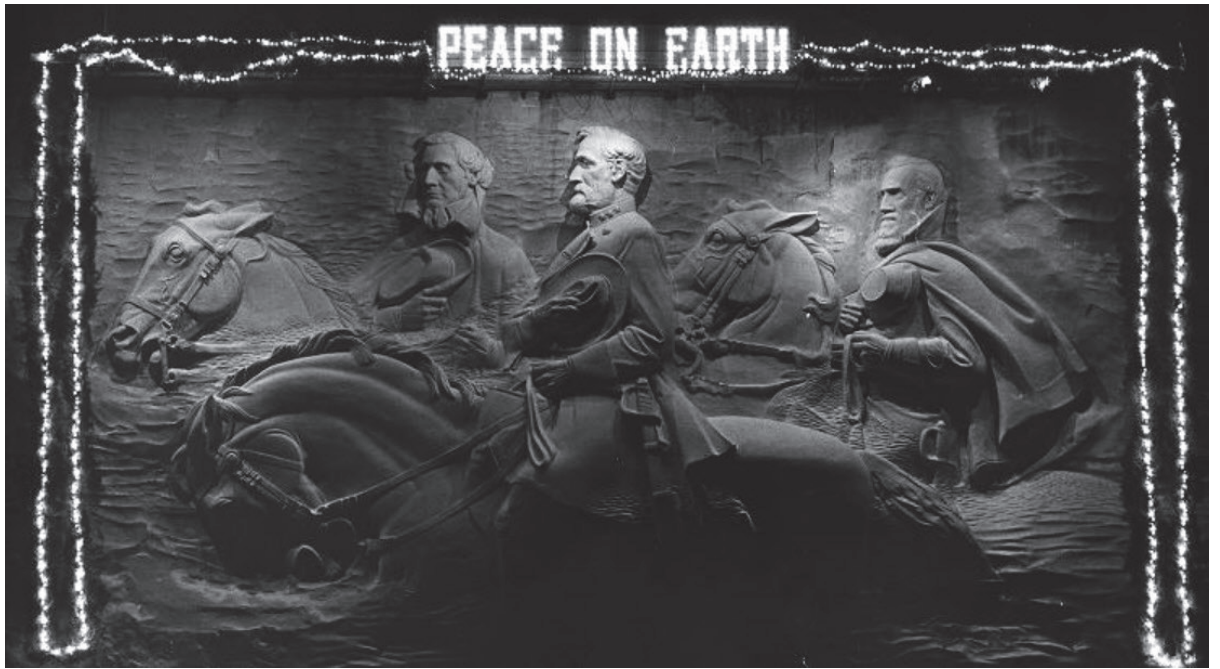


Figure 3.1. Christmas decorations around the Stone Mountain Memorial, Stone Mountain, Georgia, December 18, 1970 (AJCP308-044a, Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library)



Figure 3.2. Roy A. Faulkner, with author, during book signing for *The Man Who Carved Stone Mountain*, taken by Zach Wharton (photographer for the event) at The Southern Heartland Art Gallery in Covington, Georgia on November 19, 2015. Mr. Faulkner passed away at the age of 84 on September 23, 2016.



Figure 3.3. Adherents carry cross up the side of mountain during the Good Friday service on March 29, 2013 (photo by Michael Bradley).

A Day of Declaration
& Prayer

My Time
To Be a Witness
Calling All FAITHS

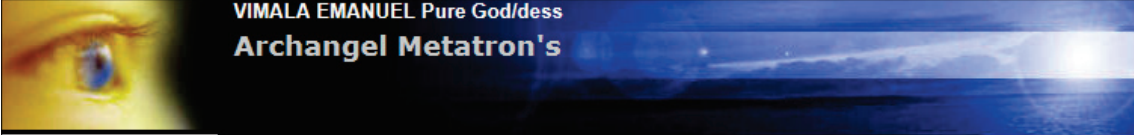
09.03.2013

Meet & Greet/Impact Forum 8:30-8:45am
Stone Mt. Cafe, 933 Main St. Stn Mtn, GA 30083

9:00am MYT2BAW will meet at West Gate entrance
to climb Stone Mt. for prayer and declaration
Light Refreshments will be served

For More Info Contact
Lisa Holliday @ mytime2bawitness@yahoo.com

Figure 3.4. Lisa Holliday's announcement from Facebook.



VIMALA EMANUEL Pure God/dess
Archangel Metatron's

VIMALA
Archives
ONENESS BLESSINGS
ANGEL MESSAGES
CRYSTAL/INDIGO CHILD
Archangel Metatron's
SPIRIT GUIDES
GODDESS & my websites
POWER ANIMALS
2012 Solar Wave

"I AM METATRON, an Archangel who is able to be with many in many places at one time. I AM asking Vimala to write these words for you. We are now beginning our planning for the opening of the portal a top Stone Mountain on the Summer Solstice, June 20th 2012. I have asked Vimala to be your hostess. She will be holding a group of helium filled balloons on the Laser Show Lawn at Stone Mountain, in Stone Mountain, Georgia, just east of the city of Atlanta, Georgia. It is best to gather there first. At 10:10am. After this meeting, all who want to help open the Portal of Love a top Stone Mountain will begin to ascend. There is a tram, or one can walk up the mountain. Form a circle and begin the drumming at 12:00 noon. At 12:12 noon, begin a silent meditation. I will be there. Some will be able to see me, some will feel me and some will not. Some will be able to hear me, some will not. Drumming will then begin again at 12:48pm, to close the meditation. It is also advisable to have a meditation at the foot of the mountain as well. Some will want to meditate there, especially those with smaller children. It will be a huge help for the opening of the portal of Light and Love. I have asked Vimala to send emails to many of you and she will do that soon. Also she will post on the Crystal page and Face Book the date and times. After the meditation all will be free to gather together for a lunch, break up into smaller groups, or just be individuals, but play the whole day. I AM calling you to attend. Stone Mountain is becoming a very sacred place for all the people of the earth. From this new portal opening there will be a great influx of light and love pouring through. It will be a majestic event that you will want to share with others. Blessings for your journey there. Ask me to help you prioritize and become motivated to attend. A gathering like this is supremely special and only comes around some 5600 years or so. You don't want to miss it. Bring something comfortable to sit on the huge granite top of the mountain, bring water to sip and also bring your drum. It will be warm and clouds will cover and then the LIGHT WILL BURST THROUGH carrying LOVE LOVE LOVE!!!!" more info in the future!!!!
1/5/12

Figure 3.5. Vimala Emanuel's web page describing plans to open a portal at the top of Stone Mountain during the 2012 summer solstice (<http://www.vimalaemanuel.com/>).



Figure 4.1. Ku Klux Klan ritual on Stone Mountain, Georgia, July 14, 1939 (LBCE12-015b, Lane Brothers Commercial Photographers Photographic Collection, 1920-1976. Photographic Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library)



Figure 4.2. Confederate leaders carving on Stone Mountain Memorial, Stone Mountain, Georgia, ca. 1928 (AJCP553-143a, Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library)



Figure 4.3. Stone Mountain carving before completion, 1963 (AJCP582-027i, Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library)

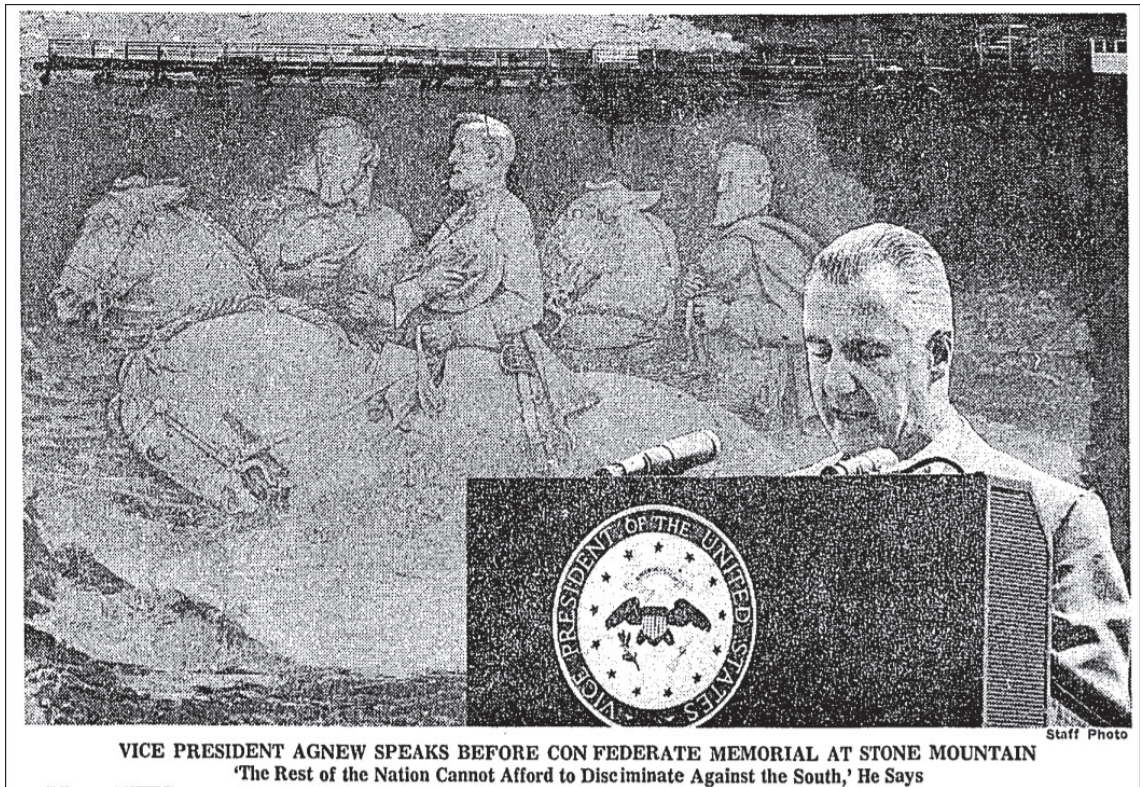


Figure 4.4. Vice President Spiro T. Agnew delivering speech at dedication of Confederate memorial carving at Stone Mountain on May 9, 1970 (*The Atlanta Constitution*, May 10, 1970, A1)



Figure 4.5. Stone Mountain Park visitors gather at the base of the United Daughters of the Confederacy Flag Terrace on November 14, 2015 to protest calls for the removal of the Confederate battle flag (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 4.6. Park visitors start to assemble the “blanket city” at the base of the memorial carving on the great lawn as they wait for the evening’s laser show and fireworks display on May 21, 2011 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 4.7. 2015 map of Memorial Lawn at Stone Mountain Park distributed via park web site (www.stonemountainpark.com/).



Figure 5.1. The remnant of General Lee's first head, after initial efforts to remove it, are visible above the newly carved image of Lee on his horse (Edgar Orr, photographer, "Stone Mountain," photograph, Atlanta History Photograph Collection [Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center: Digital Library of Georgia, 1928]).



Figure 5.2. Tribute to the virtue of valor located near the base of Stone Mountain on the Memorial Pavilion (photo taken September 24, 2011 by Michael Bradley)



Figure 5.3. Tribute to the virtue of sacrifice located near the base of Stone Mountain on the Memorial Pavilion (photo taken September 24, 2011 by Michael Bradley)



Figure 5.4. Display of Confederate battle flag, Christian flag, and United States flag on back of truck at August 1, 2015 rally in support of the Confederate flag at Stone Mountain (photo by Michael Bradley)



Figure 5.5. Prayer at start of rally in support of the Confederate flag at Stone Mountain on November 14, 2015 (photo by Michael Bradley)



Figure 5.6. White Power group at Stone Mountain, April 23, 2016 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 5.7. Crowd protesting presence of White Power group at Stone Mountain, April 23, 2016 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 5.8. Passionate discussion between members of Heritage Not Hate group and members of Black Lives Matter on the Memorial Lawn at the base of the Confederate memorial. The former group was being escorted by armed members of the GA Security Force III% while the latter was accompanied by armed members of the Black Panthers (image from video taken by GA Security Force III% on April 23, 2016 [<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/85978242>]).



Figure 5.9. Confederate Memorial Day being celebrated at Stone Mountain, April 2, 2016 (photo by Michael Bradley).

"NOBLESSE OBLIGE"



By this token Uncle Sam offers to help finance the South's great Memorial to the Confederacy on Stone Mountain; to honor the soldiers of the Confederacy as no other soldiers have ever been honored in the history of the world; to right the wrongs of history; to heal the wounds of war; and to cement all sections in everlasting and indissoluble brotherhood. Will the South accept his offer or pass it by?

A period cartoon symbolizes the conciliatory spirit of the Stone Mountain project.

472 THE NUMISMATIST

Figure 5.10. Illustration from William D. Hyder and R. W. Colbert, "The Selling of the Stone Mountain Half Dollar," *The Numismatist* 98, no. 3 (March 1985): 472. The cartoon is most likely from either 1925 or 1926.



Figure 6.1. "Preparing for Easter at Atlanta: Workmen raised a cross atop Stone Mountain near Atlanta, Ga. yesterday in preparation for the annual sunrise services Easter. The mountain is the largest exposed granite in the world" (AP wire photo, April 9, 1971).



Figure 6.2. Easter Sunrise Service on the top of Stone Mountain, April 8, 2012 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 6.3. Starting the ascent up Stone Mountain during the Via Crucis pilgrimage, April 4, 2017 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 6.4. Cresting at the summit of Stone Mountain during Via Crucis pilgrimage on the top of Stone Mountain, April 6, 2012 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 6.5. Culmination of Via Crucis passion play on the top of Stone Mountain, March 25, 2016 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 6.6. The cross to be used for Easter morning service is already in place when the Good Friday Via Crucis crucifixion scene takes place at the top of Stone Mountain, Friday, April 14, 2017 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 6.7. Crosswalkers at the top of Stone Mountain on Easter, March 31, 2013 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 6.8. Previous version of the cross used for Easter Sunrise service stored beneath the sky car arrival area at the top of Stone Mountain, April 4, 2010 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 7.1. Gathering at the top of Stone Mountain to celebrate the summer solstice, June 21, 2014 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 7.2. Stone Mountain's placement along the Arcadian Lei or Leyline running from Stonehenge across the Atlantic through Pilot Mountain in North Carolina and then through Stone Mountain and culminating at the pyramids in Teotihuacan near Mexico City. (image retrieved from <http://www.geometryofplace.com/ley.html>, May 1, 2016)

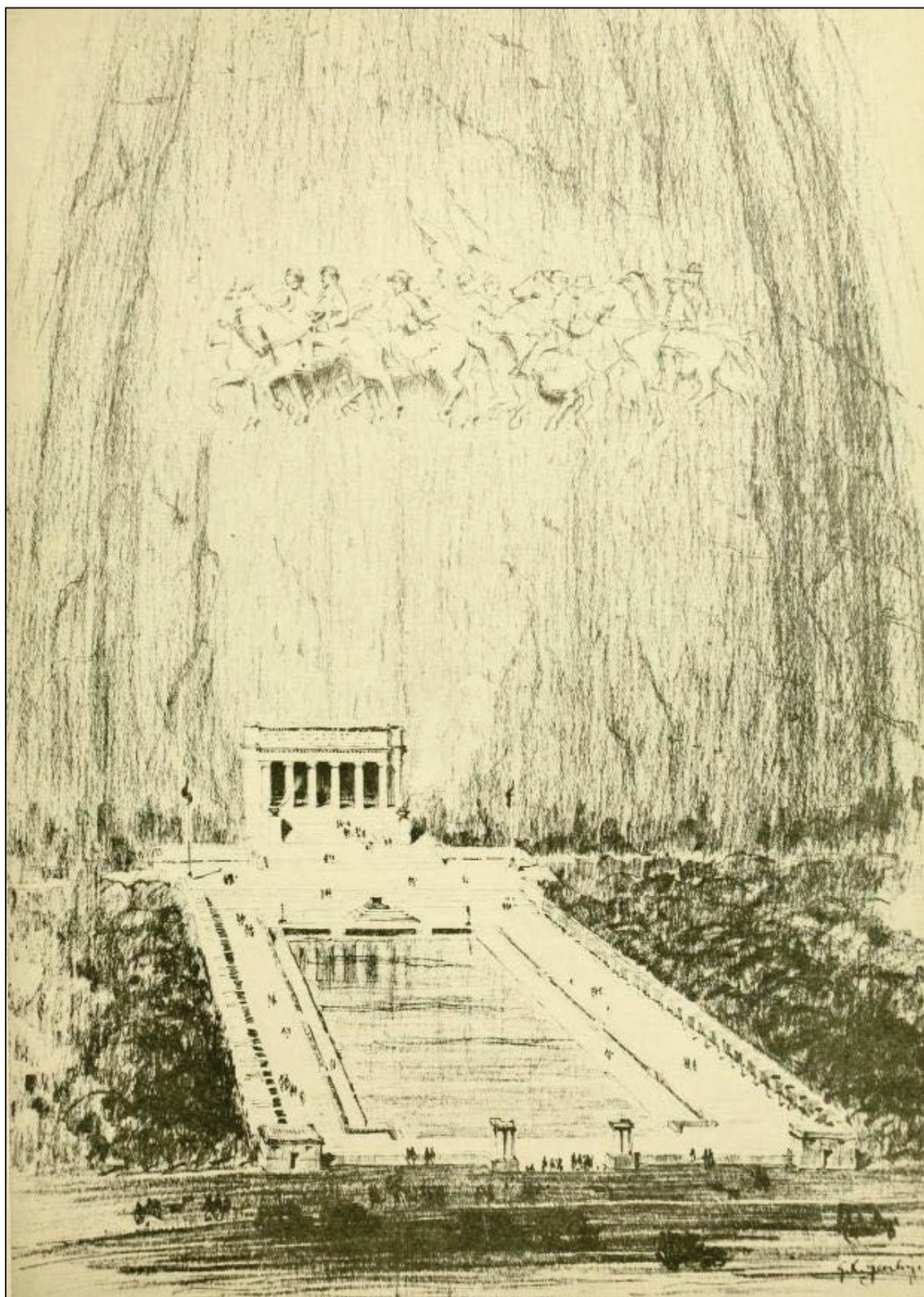


Figure 7.3. "General view showing central group of sculpture, Memorial Hall grand stairway, tomb of unknown soldier, and reflection pool" (*A Temple of Sacred Memories in the Breast of a Granite Mountain* [Stone Mountain Confederate Monumental Association, 1920, n.p.]).



Figure 8.1. Display of *Love Works* in the Christian merchandise section at one of the Stone Mountain gift shops, December 28, 2012 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 8.2. Promotional image of Snow Angel "flying" over Stone Mountain's Crossroads village with the memorial carving in background and giant Christmas tree on top of the mountain (Stone Mountain Park Facebook page, November 13, 2014).



Figure 8.3. Snow Angel poses with visiting children and flanked by her Tin Soldiers, December 23, 2012 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 8.4. Sign advertising "The Gift" at Stone Mountain, December 23, 2014 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 8.5. Actor performing "The Gift" on the porch of the Lacey Hotel, with nativity scene to the left, at Stone Mountain, December 24, 2013 (photo by Michael Bradley).

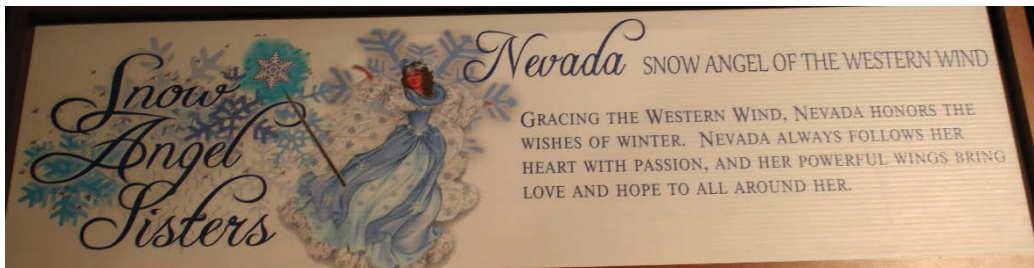


Figure 8.6. The Snow Angel Sisters display located in the Snow Angel Palace at Stone Mountain Park, December 29, 2011 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 8.7. The Snow Angel hovers over audience assembled in the Crossroads village during the nightly Snow Angel Snowfall and Fireworks Finale at Stone Mountain, December 29, 2011 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 8.8. Promotional image of the Snow Angel in flight demonstrates the Angel's illuminated gown, wings, and magic wand added in 2015 (Stone Mountain Park Facebook page, December 29, 2015).



Figure 8.9. Snow Angel descends stairs into her palace as she introduces herself as "Angelina, Snow Angel from the North," during the "A Wish for Snow" production, December 24, 2016 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 8.10. Signs advertising presence of characters from Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer licensed by Herschend Family Entertainment for the Stone Mountain Christmas, December 24, 2016 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 8.11. Display of Christian apparel in one of the Stone Mountain gift shops, December 28, 2012 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 9.1. Main stage at AtlantaFest at Stone Mountain, June 16, 2012 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 9.2. The Kirkin' o' the Tartans during Sunday morning service of the 44th Annual Stone Mountain Scottish Festival & Highland Games at Stone Mountain, October 16, 2016 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 9.3. Celebration of the Eucharist after Sunday morning service of the 44th Annual Stone Mountain Scottish Festival & Highland Games at Stone Mountain, October 16, 2016 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 9.4. Ceremonial dance during the Indian Festival & Pow-Wow at Stone Mountain, November 4, 2012 (photo by Michael Bradley).



Figure 9.5. "THE MOUNTAIN MAN — Through meditation, C.E. (Buddy) Cantrell believes that he can send his spirit flying through the carving at Stone Mountain into the record room inside. He meditates at Memorial Hall every Sunday at 11:00 a.m." (Joyce 1976, 1).