



The Great Amnesia

Today the museum words *Cherokee Lands Become Georgia* overtly deny any sinister past, though the original settlers were forcibly dispossessed by the United States. American denial of the four thousand Cherokee deaths on the Trail of Tears was immediate. Within months of these losses, in August 1839, the literary wonder Edgar Allan Poe took the national temperature in “The Man that Was Used Up,” likely the most sustained and insightful commentary on white social reaction to Indian Removal. It is a social satire in general and in particular of US General Winfield Scott, the Virginia career officer who oversaw the Cherokee round-up. In the tale, our worldly and educated narrator seeks news of the late Indian campaigns led by Brevet Brigadier General John A.B.C. Smith, whom he has the fortune to encounter socially. However, the general never speaks of anything except the nation’s progress, and a “proper sense of delicacy” forbids our hero from broaching the Indian subject directly. In later efforts, at the theater, in the church pew, etc., everyone he asks says variations of the same thing:

“Smith.... Why, not General John A. B. C.? Horrid affair that, wasn’t it?—great wretches, those Bugaboos—savage and so on—... Smith!—O yes! great man!—perfect desperado—immortal renown—prodigies of valor! Never heard!”

Finally deciding to call upon the great man at his quarters, our narrator is received by the general’s slave Pompey and shown to a room where he can hear a squeak but cannot locate the general. He soon realizes, however, that the sound *is* the general. John A.B.C. Smith cannot speak until his palate is inserted. Further, he is composed of glass eye and wood leg and shoulder padding and wig, and he is dependent upon a slave to put him together to face the day. Publicly presenting the extraordinary appearance of a man, the general is in truth so variously wounded that his main impulse is to chatter gamely about the

best false limb and tooth men in America. Our narrator sees clearly that the general is “the man that was used up” in national service best unnamed or forgotten.

But in a campaign from the 1780s to the 1840s, Southern states, the United States, and Andrew Jackson systematically removed the Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Seminole peoples from lands now Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Tennessee—virtually the entire Cotton Kingdom. These Southern Indians had more land—some twenty-five million acres, virtually the entire inland South—and were more populous than the more scattered and numerous Northern Indian peoples. For generations Southern Indians encouraged their daughters to marry British and Scots traders who settled on their lands. These Anglo-Indian Christian marriages produced large, prosperous clans with names like McDonald, Ross, Hicks, McGillivray, Lowrey, Brown, McIntosh, Harkin, and LeFlore. These clans formed an English-speaking social elite, and with Christianization and “civilization” to the plow and loom American policy, Southern Indians were eager for schools. From 1800 until the late 1830s their lands comprised the main operating theater for America’s Great Awakening missionary movement, which brought the revolutionary news that any human soul could be saved. Baptists, Moravians, Presbyterians, Methodists and other groups established permanent missions or schools in Indian Country or provided sermons by preachers on horse-riding circuits; post offices sprang up to bring parcels of books and clothes from New England, where millions of working people aided the cause through one-cent philanthropies. This commitment to Native Americans was part of a larger Northern social movement that included abolition, suffrage, temperance, education, and tolerance. At a time when only white men voted, this reform movement, alive with Christian underpinnings, helped Northern states voluntarily abolish slavery by 1831 and win the Civil War that ended it.

In 1799, the State of Georgia was mostly a strip of settlement on its small Savannah coast. Georgia *claimed* land to the Mississippi River, though the Cherokees, Creeks, Chickasaws, and Choctaws lived there. But as slave-produced cotton emerged as the South’s main export after the 1793 invention of the cotton gin, Georgia dreamed its grandest dreams, and the agrarian republican President Thomas Jefferson helped them. In 1802 the State of Georgia pressed him into a compact with

it to acquire Indian titles within its claimed borders "peaceably, and on reasonable terms." No Indian was party to this compact, and plantation slavery never came peaceably or on reasonable terms. But for thirty-six years Georgia statesmen insisted vociferously on the pact's fulfillment so as to dispossess Indians and install white settlers and black slavery wholesale.

In 1814, through military conquest, General Andrew Jackson made an unauthorized land grab of some half of the well-rivered Creek Nation and what became Alabama, burning and destroying and leaving a beaten people. Seminoles officially resisted removal from 1816 to 1858, and some fifteen hundred American lives were lost removing less than four thousand of them from the Florida swamps. The smaller Chickasaws and Choctaws, plagued by white intrusion no one would police, ceded land in the 1810s, as Jackson, a US treaty commissioner, worked to create islands of Indian settlement in a sea of whites. By the 1820s, white squatting, direct intimidation, and bribed leaders forced remaining Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Cherokees to make it a capital crime for any unauthorized person to sign a land cession with the United States.

After being painfully pressured to make a huge unwanted cession in 1817 and again in 1819, the Cherokee Nation, the most advanced, established, culturally secure and cohesive of the five original Southern peoples, definitively declared that it would not cede "one more foot" of its core inland island homeland straddling Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. They wanted their annuities paid promptly because this allowed for future plans. By the mid 1820s, the Cherokee Nation was home to more than sixteen thousand people and had orchards, fields, and a healthy agricultural trade as well as ferries, inns, and schools; it had a constitution, a judiciary, and a separation of church of state. Singularly in linguistic history, a man called Sequoyah, whose English name was George Guess, devised a syllabary to write and read Cherokee. It was easy to learn to read and popular, and with it the nation enjoyed majority literacy. The Nation acquired a printing press and published a bilingual newspaper, *The Cherokee Phoenix*. A Cherokee translated and printed the Bible.

But elected in 1828 and unlike Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, who were deeply influenced by European political thought, Andrew Jackson was the first president from the lower South, an anti-intellectual child

of revolutionary violence who had no cultural ties to Britain and an Irish, anti-crown ancestry. The South that Jackson moved ever westward in the 1810s and 20s was fueling industrialism's textile mills in New England and Britain. And after Jackson's election Georgia simply annexed the Cherokee Nation and began passing and enforcing Anti-Indian laws with language lifted directly from the slave codes. An Indian could not testify against a white man in court and could therefore never defend his or her property. Most remaining Creeks, Choctaws, and Chickasaws were made to fulfill their treaties and remove. Then in the Cherokee country's Dahlonega region, gold fields were discovered in 1829, prompting an influx of transients Cherokees called the "Great Intrusion." A militia known as the Georgia Guard, essentially an anti-Indian paramilitary force, set in to take control of the gold mines.

Meanwhile, in Congress, the benignly entitled 1830 "Act to provide for an exchange of lands with the Indians residing in any of the states or territories, and for their removal west of the river Mississippi," made Indians into an ethnic group subject to Congress at a time when the only other people so legislated for were African-American slaves. No matter that the United States were solemnly pledged in treaties to defend the borders of Cherokee and other Indian nations from any and all intruders whatsoever. At a time when land was the most valuable commodity in the nation, the US effectively insured Indian impoverishment by making them wards of the state. The eighteen-day debate on Indian Removal seemed "the greatest question that ever came before Congress, short of the question of peace and war." The vote was very close, but the South, overrepresented by three-fifths of a man for every slave, and by what was known as the Jackson Party, prevailed. And once the Indian Removal Act passed the Jackson Congress, the race was on for Southern land.

With his country overrun, Principal Cherokee John Ross went to the Supreme Court, hiring perhaps the finest lawyer in America, William Wirt, a best-selling author, prosecutor of Aaron Burr, and US Attorney General for twelve years under Monroe and Adams. Ultimately the Court came down unequivocally against Georgia and declared its laws over the Cherokee Nation null and void. But Jackson deliberately failed to enforce the decision, which would have meant sending US troops to police Americans. Instead, he allowed Georgia to keep intruding,

so that in the 1830s, as the Cherokees, led by Congressionally well-known Principal Chief John Ross, refused to sign a treaty to cede the country, white settlers continued to take Cherokee land as if they were born to it in a living example of Manifest Destiny. President Jackson, who could move armies, and Principal Chief Ross, who had words only, both knew that Jackson needed a treaty to comply with the Removal Act and that Ross was not going to sign one. Ross and the Cherokee Council and most Cherokee people believed that the best course of action was to retain possession, reasoning presciently that if the US broke its treaties and pushed them out, there would be no basis to trust US word on lands in the west. And as tens of thousands of Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw people were forced west under ghastly conditions, Ross compared the Cherokee Nation's situation "to a solitary tree in open space, where all the forest trees have been prostrated by a furious tornado—save one."

In late 1835, after helping to detain Ross some nine days and to release him for travel to Washington City to make a treaty he did not want, agents of President Jackson in New Echota, Cherokee Nation made a treaty of cession with influential and well-to-do Ross opponents scared of losing their wealth to advancing whites. One leader and respected elder said he had signed his death warrant. In Washington, Ross repudiated this "pretended treaty" with a Cherokee protest signed by some fifteen thousand people. But the Jackson White House just stopped recognizing Ross and his government. The Senate deliberated on the treaty in secret so that Ross did not even know what documents the senators saw. The fraudulent Treaty of New Echota was ratified. The country was immediately occupied.

In 1836 US General John Wool, who was fluent in Cherokee, came into the Cherokee Nation thinking the people accepted the Treaty of New Echota and found to his shock that they did not. Making no plans to leave, they planted their crops and waited, and Ross encouraged this non-violent resistance a hundred years before Ghandi. Their pacifism made Wool feel he had no choice but to feed the hungry, for Georgians who scorned them racially and in every other way were daily taking over their farms. Wool was succeeded by the more effective General Winfield Scott immortalized by Poe, and in May 1838 Scott directed his forces to round up all Cherokees who could not escape and bring them to pre-built stockades. Torn from their homes usually only

with what they were wearing, they were imprisoned all summer in stockade forerunners to Andersonville and the concentration camp. In the Aquohee camp in Tennessee, the Cherokee National Government convened and passed a resolution that was printed for posterity as a US government document in 1840:

Resolved, that the title of the Cherokee people to their lands is the most ancient, pure, and absolute, known to man; its date is beyond the reach of human record; its validity confirmed and illustrated by possession and enjoyment, antecedent to all pretense of claim by any other portion of the human race; and

Resolved further...that the Cherokee people, in...receiving payment...for their improvements, do not intend that it shall be so construed as yielding or giving sanction or approval to the pretended treaty of 1835; nor as compromising, in any manner, their just claim against the United States hereafter, for a full and satisfactory indemnification for their country and for all individual losses and injuries.

"The expulsion, imprisonment, or killing of an ethnic minority by a dominant majority in order to achieve ethnic homogeneity" is the Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition for ethnic cleansing. More than sixty thousand people were removed by Andrew Jackson, but, separated and away, Native Americans have long been out of sight and mind to most Americans. Then, too, since the 1860s a flattering portrait of Jackson looking out with wise imperialist gaze has adorned the twenty-dollar bill. This alone creates a national narrative in which Jackson's "expansion of the area of freedom," was his great contribution. His flip side, his belief in the total disposal of Indian matters by the government, his profitable plantation where one hundred and fifty slaves tended ten to fifteen white people, is occluded. And for many whites after the Cherokee ouster, the great land bounty seemed pure Jacksonian Democracy: "All I want in this Creation / is a pretty little wife and a big plantation / away up yonder in the Cherokee Nation," a ditty caught the mood. Buoyed by the bonanza of the Indian lands, Georgia and Alabama and Mississippi now committed themselves fully to white-on black slavery. They turned away from the schools and missions and small farms of the displaced Indians to plantation slavery with its gang labor and prohibitions on slave reading. The great

cotton barons and the slaveless yeoman were united in their common whiteness, their non-blackness, and their honor, which they regularly defended by duel or brawl because to lack it was to be a slave. And in the scant twenty-three years before the Civil War the Deep South flourished, extending a virtually uncontrolled domestic slave trade that by 1860 had moved some million people to Deep Southern captors. Enduring well into the twentieth century, the idea of being sold down the river has suggested naked exploitation and the national importance of the Mississippi River and New Orleans, a great slave trading market and point of sale for cotton.

To the Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson, author of a study of sixty-six slave systems through time, the US South was "the last and most perfectly articulated slave culture since the fall of the Roman Empire." Planters were generally rich, and Deep Southern planter culture concerned itself, when not directing the field work of slaves, with clothes, furnishings, and the European trappings of wealth. But it was intellectually stagnant because it forced all people, white and black, to submit to the racial system. Clamped down upon the region by highly articulated legislation, bound by rules and social codes that enforced conformity, slave society was the exact opposite of New England Transcendentalism and its faith in the individual mind. Antebellum Southern writers worked within a censorship of newspaper and press and mail because the hyper-inflated ideology of white supremacy had to be maintained every day at all costs. Raised in abolitionist New England and preferring anyway to stay in Virginia, Maryland, and further North, even Poe tended away from direct discussion of slavery in favor of direct horror. In the 1880s Mark Twain, raised in the slave state of Missouri, remembered that the antebellum South relied too heavily on the cavalier novels of the "posing" and "artificial" Sir Walter Scott, who Twain believed "did measureless harm in our South...[which] flourish[es] pretty forcefully still." The romantic and chivalrous ideal remained among the white elite because it fit the reigning ideology and was therefore permissible. Then too, after 1800 Georgia, for example, spent very little on education, which was largely reserved for the sons of planters, who could be tutored or sent to the North or England or to the handful of private academies founded by missionaries or, in the newly opened lands, straight to Sir Walter. Slaveholding intellectual development was further retarded

by the overblown egos of the masters themselves. Until the North abolished it, bondage made white Americans North and South into a Master Race who had the right to make money without moral bounds. This bred, among other problems, a brutal management heritage with which to greet European masses yearning to be free and labor in Chicago, or the Chinese, or the Irish, and always the Indians and blacks. But as bondage ended in the North, laws protecting it hardened in the South. The Jackson Congress got so tired of being bothered by the issue that they moved to create a "gag rule" by which any memorial or protest about slavery was silently tabled.

Charles Dickens, chronicler of the poorhouse, debtors' prison, and of the general tyranny of the British monarchy, traveled through the American slave territory in 1842. "In all [districts] where slavery sits brooding... there is an air of ruin and decay abroad, which is inseparable from the system. The barns and outhouses are mouldering away; the sheds are patched and half roofless; the log cabins (built in Virginia with external chimneys made of clay or wood) are squalid in the last degree. There is no look of decent comfort anywhere. The miserable stations by the railway side, the great wild wood-yards... the biped beasts of burden slinking past: gloom and dejection are upon them all." Dickens was especially shocked at how slavery inhibited people's faces. Slaves and whites who helped them had to lie or try to appear "very low in the scale of intellectual expression." Most disturbing for Dickens, however, was "the darkness—not of skin, but mind—which meets the stranger's eye at every turn; the brutalizing and blotting out of all fairer character" by white willed violence and supremacy backed up by the states.

American slavery is often discussed as an economic system, but Thomas Jefferson saw its political aspect by calling it "unremitting despotism on the one part; and degrading submission on the other." As a system of laws backed up by police and militia and jails, it functioned as a government, and most antebellum Southern political leaders were planters. If Indian Removal and subsequent Indian policy evinced tyranny and then some, the experience of Southern slaves, whose only alternative to slavery was death, was something more. The political philosopher Hannah Arendt remarked that historically, under the Old World tyrannies, the private life, including family, could remain somewhat intact. This was not the case in the antebellum

South, where slave families could be separated by sale as a matter of course. Further, slave facial dejection seen in surviving photographs, the need to appear stupid, and white willed indifference to suffering are signs that the system of slavery reached into the inner lives of men and women white and black, which for Arendt was a hallmark of totalitarian regimes. The psychologist and camp survivor Bruno Bettelheim concurred: "The [Nazi concentration camp] system was too strong for an individual to break its hold over his emotional life, particularly if he found himself within a group which had more or less accepted [it]." And though mostly concerned with Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia, Arendt thought it important to remark that "a tyranny over 'laborers' . . . as for instance the rule over slaves in antiquity, would automatically . . . tend to be totalitarian."

Arendt posited that totalitarian political systems depend upon maintaining a fictional reality kept in place by an ideology in which the people of the land are seen not as individuals but as part of a larger force of Nature or History. In the US slave South, the reigning ideology was that whites were the Master Race and white progress the only cause. Bettelheim's remark that the system's "main goal was to produce in the subjects childlike attitudes and childlike dependency on the will of the leaders" applied equally to American slavery. Whites sought child-like submission of slaves and then from freedmen and their families well into the twentieth century.

Because the South was primarily an agricultural region with little educational infrastructure, after its defeat in the Civil War, freedmen and Northern Republican congressmen hoped for land reform. Lincoln set the moral issue in the Second Inaugural by declaring that if God willed that the offense of American slavery should continue "until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk," then still "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." But the South did not want to see any remaining wealth sunk or its source recognized, and after Lincoln's assassination by a Southerner, his successor, the Tennessean President Andrew Johnson, threw away the Union victory by allowing former Confederates back into Congress with an oath of allegiance and then restored to whites the lands they owned before the conflict. His vision of Reconstruction was the reconciliation of Northern and Southern whites, and the freedmen, whose murdered numbers in 1865 reached

some two thousand in Louisiana, weren't much of an issue. Johnson vetoed land reform. The extremely moderate Southern Homesteading Act of 1866 served, by varying estimates, four thousand or twenty-six thousand, or other numbers in the thousands when there were four million freedmen in the land. Few tenant farmers and sharecroppers could raise the associated land fees, and efforts to make the four million aware of the act were actively suppressed by local Southern authorities. Congress impeached Johnson, but aspirations for land reform had of necessity shifted to paid contract labor that could not be enforced and led to eliminating money almost completely in sharecropping. During Reconstruction, there was significant black representation in Southern legislatures; some blacks built schools for themselves, Northern missionaries and teachers came down, and a preliminary school program was created. But by the 1870s the American public turned its eyes toward the West, where the railroads had reached the Pacific. The Union occupation was expensive and unpopular to all but the freedmen, and it ended in 1877. Dixie politicians thereupon revised their old pre-war "black codes" to formulate Jim Crow segregation backed up by the Ku Klux Klan terror and lynching, and the modest gains that blacks had made in land ownership were wiped out. The Georgia government funded public and private projects like railroad tracks and roads and mining through gang convict labor. For a century after 1865, the American South remained an unsupervised, impoverished, and ruthless land of human exploitation where segregation was codified into state law and it was easy to be a criminal.

In 1919 there was still so little public expenditure in Savannah that the Northern capitalist philanthropist Andrew Carnegie funded an impressive public library; in accordance with racial laws he also built a smaller red-brick library for African-Americans elsewhere. Anticipating Arendt by decades, in 1931, the Russian writer Maxim Gorky, murdered by Stalin's forces five years later, described as fascist the mine company and police revenge against striking black miners in Harlan County, Kentucky and the Alabama police action in the Scottsboro case, in which eight young black men were "seized by the police at random, they were unacquainted with one another; nevertheless they were sentenced to death." In 1932 Robert Elliott Burns's best-selling memoir *I Am A Fugitive From a Georgia Chain Gang* exposed the nation to the complete institutionalization of gang convict labor.

In 1936 James Agee and Walker Evans recorded the poverty of white Alabama subsistence farmers in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, the opening chapters directly addressing the daily fear blacks lived to set the context. The success of the American Southern white privilege plan of no land reform or education or reparation and every conceivable financial oppression and humiliation as a part of daily business was poignantly illustrated in Martin Luther King's meeting with a sharecropper who had never seen a five-dollar bill. The Voting Rights of 1965, which King and President Johnson helped bring about, was enacted to strengthen the Fifteenth Amendment, allowing all born in the country to vote; it was created to reverse the de facto ability of Southern states to keep blacks from voting and contains specific reference to race and color. The Act was necessary because after three hundred and fifty years of segregation, and a hundred years after the Civil War, Southern states still opposed anything resembling equal treatment for African-Americans.

After *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1956, the national phenomenon of "white flight" left Southern public schools to impoverished black populations in states with no history of support for reading or education. Moreover, punitive judicial structures became so institutionalized in places like Georgia and Florida, for example, that even today there exists what has been called a "pipeline" between public schools and the prisons. Troublesome high schools students in Savannah, for example, are often put into juvenile detention—jail—instead of being expelled. Troy Davis, who was killed by Georgia in 2011 after spending his entire adult life on death row despite international protest of his innocence of a white policeman's murder, went through that pipeline, and for a long time afterwards many African-Americans wore T-shirts saying I Am Troy Davis. Young black men often leave high school and remain in cultures of unemployment and routine encounter with the criminal justice system, as often as not unwilling or unable to express their dreams and plans or their own individuality except among themselves. Many understand standard English but rarely speak it, let alone comprehend it as a passport to opportunity, enrichment, and change. The Troy Davis execution, the senseless slaying of young Trayvon Martin and the hideous release of his killer without penalty are reminders to Southern African-Americans that the death-dealing racism they know so well is still

alive and in the land and that the value of human life continues to be low in the South.

Rather than the law of the land, segregation functions today on a more cultural level. In Savannah, for example, segregated from 1733 to 1965, black and white just don't interact much. There are black and white churches, downtown clubs, and social and historical societies. At a historic home tour downtown with a mostly white clientele, the Civil War is still referred to as "the war for Southern independence" and "the late unpleasantness." These are words of denial—yes we had a conflict, but it wasn't over slavery, wink, wink, nod, nod, and it didn't vanquish us. The continuance of this segregation is part the horrible history and part the total social and cultural differences between the two. One result of this continuing segregation is that both sides adopt a stereotyped conception of the other.

Just as enduring is the deprivation. A third of Savannah children live in poverty, along with a quarter of the whole city. Buses advertise the convenience of using banks because so many people don't. Unless it's a drunk driver, Savannah Metro seems rarely to make routine traffic stops because so many drivers have no license, registration, or insurance, and therefore consume time and paperwork in a city with a high murder rate and in which gunfire is often heard. In downtown Savannah, on any given street outside the Historic District, there are people living in houses without electricity or water, with a government cellphone or not at all, listening or not to a battery-powered radio. People often cannot pay the meager taxes that support the public schools. Federal aid to education might help, but that relatively short-lived mid-twentieth century program could not be politically sustained in the face of Southern politicians who saw to its death in the 1970s in a ruling concerning property taxes and their equal distribution, a concept the Texas court found unnecessary. Since then, the dominant reliance on property taxes for education has meant great schools for rich children and bad schools for poor children, insuring a tremendously large number of under-educated people produced across the country each year.

Since the Obama presidency, there has been talk that we have entered a "post-racial" era, as if electing one black man after forty-seven white makes the racial equation equal. Chief Justice John Roberts came close to articulating the magical thinking that our racial problems

have been solved in striking down the part of the Voting Rights Act that called for nine former Confederate states to check with the federal government before changing their election laws. The case was of Shelby County, Alabama against the Attorney General Eric Holder and his colleagues. In his ruling, Roberts cited the forty-eight years since the passage of the Act as if it were a long time in the more than three centuries of American racism; he never mentioned the post-Civil War century of routine terror and exploitation necessitating the Act except to say that in 1965 these were "extraordinary measures" in "extraordinary circumstances." "Our country has changed," Robert wrote, "and while any racial discrimination in voting is too much," remedial legislation must "speak [] to current conditions." That the Voting Rights Act was in continuous use, for instance in thwarting Republican gerrymandering in Savannah in 2011–2012, was not mentioned in the opinion, which cited the many improvements in voting since 1965 but was primarily concerned with the unequal treatment of the former Confederate states as compared to other states. The Act "not only switches the burden of proof to the suppliant jurisdiction, but also applies substantive standards quite different from those governing the rest of the nation," Justice Roberts wrote. However, the Voting Rights Act was *meant* to switch the burden of proof to jurisdictions and ensure standards because the injustice against African-Americans was so pervasive and longstanding. Sections of the Act remain intact, but these primarily Republican-controlled states are now largely free from federal oversight of their election laws.

The Southern Indians who were removed to Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, continued to stress education and to build schools and became known there as the Five Civilized Tribes. In the United States at large, the Indian Removal Act lasted. It served as the great green light to the late nineteenth century Indian round-up, was precedent for the internment of Japanese, German, Italian-Americans, and Native Alaskans during World War II, and continues today in the segregation, incarceration, and denial of basic human rights in Guantanamo. No new world country except the United States eradicated slavery at the stunning cost, by new estimates, of some seven hundred and fifty thousand of its own young men and then abandoned the freedmen to the wrath of the conquered for some eighty-five years until the Civil Rights and Voting Acts. The white history of unbridled power without

moral boundary is a foundation of the national identity whether it is articulated or not. Today in the culture itself, it endures in the need to cling to the gun as a God-given right. In the government it manifests itself as a surveillance state ready to criminalize whistleblowers. The dark hard central core of America politics and business is still based on power. The chicanery against the Indians, the reign and fall of the racist South, and a malevolent moral heritage are true American exceptionalisms, peculiar to this country and no other, and overcoming the denial of its past violence is America's peculiar, necessary, and undeniable burden.