SUBVERSION AND THE DOUBLE VOICE IN LILLIAN SMITH AND KATHERINE DUPRE LUMPKIN

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Abstract: Lillian Smith and Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin provide a subversive framework for the history of the South through the genre of autobiography. This paper will explore how both authors use a double voice to articulate their confrontation with the Lost Cause. On the one hand, the child protagonist is a Southerner and therefore an insider and participant, while on the other hand, the adult protagonist subverts the dominant social discourse thanks to a critical distance which is both physical and psychological. Smith and Lumpkin use autobiography to challenge tradition, hence subverting the central roles of race and gender.

Keywords: Lillian Smith, Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin, Invented Tradition, Lost Cause, Double Voice, Southern Autobiography.

Resumen: Lillian Smith y Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin proporcionan un marco subversivo para la historia del Sur mediante el género de autobiografía. El presente trabajo explora como ambas autores utilizan la doble voz para expresar su confrontación con el Lost Cause. Por un lado, la protagonista niña es sureña y por lo tanto un participante desde adentro mientras, por el otro lado, la protagonista adulta subvierte el discurso social dominante gracias a una distancia crítica que es a la vez físico y psicológica. Smith y Lumpkin utilizan autobiografía para desafiar la tradición, así subvierten los papeles centrales de raza y género.

Palabras clave: Lillian Smith, Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin, Invención de la Tradición, Lost Cause, Doble Voz, Autobiografía Sureña.

1 INTRODUCTION

Lillian Smith and Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin wrote autobiographies in which they denounced the invented tradition of the Lost Cause myths. They did this from the point of view of the white homosexual Southern woman, that is, they occupied the double role of insider—thanks to birthplace and culture, and outsider—thanks to gender and sexuality.

The former leads to the establishment of a subversive double voice in the narrative with a focus on race and gender, while the latter was essentially silenced by cultural norms. As it did not form an explicit part of their published work, the sexuality of both women has only recently been the focus of scholarship.

Lillian Smith was known as a literary figure thanks to her popular novel *Strange Fruit* (1944), while her autobiography was largely ignored. She was born in Florida and lived most of her life in Georgia. After her formal schooling she studied music at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, spent time as director of music at a school in China, and attended Columbia University. The time she spent outside of the South is crucial to her development of the double voice, as was also the case with Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin, who was born in Georgia but lived most of her adult life in New York and California. She earned her Ph.D. in Sociology 1928 from the University of Wisconsin and was a lifelong academic rather than a writer, whose autobiography has only recently been the focus of gender study scholarship.

Smith and Lumpkin use the genre of autobiography as a tool to express their concerns about Southern society in which they were brought up and challenge the role of tradition through innovative narrative strategies. This allowed them to construct an identity based on similarity as well as difference, a double voice, as it were. Lumpkin, for example, told of the life her grandfather led in order to paint a bucolic picture of the South, a South in which she was raised, which would later fall apart at closer inspection by the grown-up Lumpkin. Smith portrays an innocent child who is accepting of southern tradition but in adulthood comes to critically understand what these traditions imply. The double voice is salient in this progression, where the roles of race and gender as buttressed by the Lost Cause are presented first as accepted tradition and later unpacked as a myth-making strategy.

This paper will provide a new perspective of both authors in terms of the double voice both women employ as subversive to the Lost Cause myth and more specifically the concepts of race and gender within this myth, through a comparative lens. It will start with an exploration of the Lost Cause and how they confront these invented traditions in the South, more specifically the legitimization of the origin myths and glorification of the South encompassed in the Lost Cause. Subsequently the subversive double voice employed by both writers will be explored in the context of autobiographical writing, with a focus on how Lumpkin, on the one hand, deals with politics and sexuality, and Smith, on the other, approaches segregation and splitting. Place and childhood in both authors will be examined, in that they inform a later rupture and subsequent moment of clarity from the point of view of the outsider. Finally, the silencing of their sexuality will be discussed, along with a brief sketch of the reception of their works.

2 THE LOST CAUSE

The Lost Cause is, in general terms, a myth which “sentimentalized slavery; reconfigured the Civil War as a noble lost cause fought, not to preserve slavery, but to uphold the constitutional principle of states’ rights; lauded the courage and sacrifice of soldiers on both sides of the battle; and portrayed Reconstruction as a tragedy that justified disfranchisement and segregation” (Hall 1998b: 449). Invented tradition¹ was originally delineated by Eric

1 The Lost Cause has been identified as invented tradition by Gaines M. Foster (1987).

Hobsbawm (1984) while the concept of communities being based more upon forgetting than on memory was articulated almost one hundred years earlier by Ernst Renan (1882): "Forgetting, I would even say historical error itself, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation, and thus the progress of historical studies is often, for nationality, a danger."

Lillian Smith and Katherine Du Pre Lumpkin questioned this consistent process of forgetting in order to create and sustain a collective national memory inasmuch as they "re-remembered the South, illustrating fallacies in the plantation myths, in the moonlight and magnolia schools, in the Agrarian ethos, and even in the agenda of liberal Southerners" (O'Dell 2001, 6). Smith and Lumpkin both explore the explicit history of the South as articulated in the Lost Cause, Smith focusing on race and gender and Lumpkin on the education she received at home, school, and from society in general.

Lillian Smith (1994) primarily confronts invented tradition in terms of segregation and gender. She links the sexual repression of women, based on sex and purity, to the racial repression of the African Americans, based on the invented dichotomy between black and white (87). She regarded certain parts of the body as being "segregated" from other parts while connecting religion, racism, and sexism, stating that the "lesson on segregation was only a logical extension of the lessons on sex and white superiority and God" (90). Skin color became in itself a religion, sexual purity sacred, and segregation holy. Sin was related to the body or the color of one's skin, and this created an unholy trinity "firmly triangulated on sin, sex, and segregation" (94).

Smith also identifies various types of Southern womanhood that either fit into the Southern identity or are excluded. The former are women who accepted the pedestal and "men's tribute to sacred womanhood" (141), and the latter are women who were liberated and therefore rejected their so-called "womanly qualities" (140). There is a more radical version of this, the women who managed to come down from the pedestal in order to "commit treason against a Southern tradition" (144) and attack segregation and the traditional South.

Smith explicitly connects sex and race when she identifies three ghost relationships (116). The first of these is the bi-racial relationship, which for Smith began the "race-sex-sin spiral" and placed the white Southern woman even higher on the pedestal, enveloped in "guilt, shame, fear, and lust" (121). This relationship is based on the perceived "psychosexual vigor" of the black race, threatening the patriarchy in the "front yard" and the matriarchy in the "back yard" with what Smith euphemistically calls "back-yard temptation" (117). The second ghost is the "South's rejected children", the children begotten in secret or extramarital relationships between a black woman and a white man (124). The third ghost is the colored nurse in charge of taking care of the white children, in essence creating two mothers for the children (128-31). Smith later implies that there is also the ghost of friendship between the two races (135), which I will later refer to in Smith's childhood experience with Janie. While European politics do not fall within the scope of this paper, it must be mentioned that a fourth ghost was introduced in Robert H. Brinkmeyer's study of Southern writers and European fascism, aptly entitled *The Fourth Ghost* (2009).

Lillian Smith (1994), then, through the trope of ghosts, splits the South according to sex and race. She discusses sexual repression in women as related to sin and Southern identity, illustrates three ghost relationships, and presents the traditional complacent Southern woman in counterpoint to the subtly subversive Southern woman. One of the themes

present throughout the book is the idea of a split, be it psychological, social, spiritual or even physical. Smith points out the split between body and mind, and both of these from the soul. She mentions how she split her conscience from her acts, and later how she split Christianity from Southern tradition (27), thus completing her transformation from a young girl accepting Southern invented tradition to placing it squarely in front of one its supposed foundations, Christianity.

Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin (1991) accomplished this in a different way, focusing on the Lost Cause. Like Lillian Smith, she described her father as being a Southern gentleman as well as a master, having both land and slaves. He was one of the main forces in her life regarding the Lost Cause. Her father encourages a continuation of the foundations of the South and teaches his children “to love the lost cause”, while her mother “teaches them their prayers” (121). She describes the Lost Cause in the personal terms of her experience in the Confederate Reunion in 1903, which included groups her father (United Confederate Veterans), mother and sister (Daughters of the Confederacy), brothers (Sons of Confederate Veterans) and smaller children including herself (Children of the Confederacy) belonged to (112-13). She mentioned that in history class at school, northern scholars were “alien historians” and one could not “depend on Yankee school books to tell of the heroism of Lee” (127). They learned the “sacred Southern principles” and the stark fact that the choice was between “white supremacy or black domination” (128).

Lumpkin (1991) described the Civil War in terms of its results for her family and parents—the worthless Confederate currency, the “heavy financial burden of restoring a plantation to productiveness”, the “major loss of capital” and the “change in the relation of white to black” (56). The Southern establishment rationalized their disappointment regarding freed slaves, saying that “the black man was happy as a slave” and that “the black man had not the qualities for freedom” (73). They should be expressing “gratitude, “loyalty” and “devotion” rather than leave the plantations (74). Lumpkin describes the Ku Klux Klan as mainly a political organization, in the sense that its underlying purpose was to scare the elected black legislators and return the white Southern Democrats to power, which is exactly what happened in 1872. Here we find a re-remembering of how wonderful things used to be, especially for the slaves. Lumpkin finds this especially poignant after seeing the film *The Birth of a Nation* in college. The film glorifies the Ku Klux Klan and vilifies the black man, which she interpreted as giving the collective group of Southerners the ability to re-remember the “nobility” of their history, the “righteousness” of their acts and the “righteousness” of their beliefs (200).

Lillian Smith and Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin confront and subvert invented tradition by confronting the legitimization of the nation coined in terms of a venerable history and Lost Cause reverence.

3 NARRATIVE DEVICES: THE DOUBLE VOICE

Lillian Smith and Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin narrate their childhood (or in Lumpkin’s case, well before she was born) and then illustrate the enlightenment they had growing up in terms of the Lost Cause and memory in Southern society, which are directly related to segregation, racism, and sexism.

One of the main themes in both books is the transformation from white Southern girl to white woman outsider, that is, the dismantling of the myths and ideas that shaped the former, and the prevailing split or separation of the typical Southern subject/community 'I' from the later mature critical individual 'I'. Smith tackled the idea of the physical and psychological split in terms of racism and sexism, specifically through mechanisms such as segregation and the lady's pedestal, while Lumpkin discusses the economics of slavery and of the South in general. They both discuss the rupture and subsequent moment of clarity which takes place between the innocence of childhood and maturity, culminating in a critical view of Southern tradition and the Lost Cause.

The points of view slightly differ when it comes to the narrator. Lumpkin uses third person to begin with, changes to first person in the second paragraph, and then intersperses the two, alternating as well between first person singular and plural. Smith used first person singular and plural. There are moments when irony or metaphor is used to contradict the assertions made by the younger narrator or in the first person plural (the collective group). In this way they use the narrator's position as insider and outsider, as Southerner and 'other'. There is certainly a double repositioning present, firstly with the narrator 'I' versus the South, and also the young 'I' versus the mature 'I'. Lillian Smith (1994: 21), in fact, calls her book "personal memoir" and also "every Southerner's memoir," essentially equating 'I' with the entire community, whether they accept it or not. Scott Romine (1994: 96) explains that Smith "relies on her self-construction as a Southern outsider" and uses this dual construction to create tension which results in "a de-centering of traditional Southern rhetorical tropes." Irony is also used to attack the major metaphor of the South: segregation. According to Hall (1998b: 453), Lumpkin uses the genre of autobiography for social criticism and also as a trope itself. The underlying assumption here is that both authors employ the autobiography with an ironic twist, using the rhetorical device as a tool with which to employ their double voice and subvert the prevailing Southern tropes.

The gap that separates childhood and adulthood in both autobiographies, and the ideologies surrounding both of these states is apparent in that they lead to fragmentation at the textual level. Lumpkin (1991) did this by using quotation marks to delineate her own thoughts, and also to create an ironic effect. She mentions that blacks were "thieving" and "irresponsible" (33), and also brings up political elements like "scalawag" (81), "unprincipled demagoguery" (85) and "carpetbaggers" (87). Likewise she includes negative adjectives applied to slaves such as "ungrateful", "irresponsible", "childish" (74), deeply ingrained concepts such as "white supremacy" and "black domination" (130), and more general ideas such as "Southern civilization" and "Southern principles" (238). There is a tension between the child who accepted the teaching of the South and the adult Lumpkin who rejects it. This leads to a reversal of religion and spiritual and moral roles, as Hobson points out: "what is 'sin' for the mature Lumpkin is not sin for the young Katharine. In fact, it is precisely the opposite" (45).

Smith, for her part, can be regarded as having a double voice or what Romine (1994: 98) calls "a double voiced discourse" consisting of her own voice in opposition to the voice of the South. There is also a further fragmentation in Smith's own psychological profile, which she recognized as Martha, the voice of her social conscience, and Mary, the voice of artistic creation. This split is mentioned by various authors: Will Brantley (1994: 664)

links this to Freud's theories of the id, the superego and the unconscious; Bruce Clayton (1994: 99) connects Martha to the superego and Mary to the libido; Thomas F. Haddox (2012: 51-2) calls Martha "liberal humanist, moralist, and therapist" and Mary "savvy and transgressive, a dissector and connoisseur of the grotesque." Smith herself calls it a "conflict between my creative daemon and my conscience" (Camacho 1992: 158). These elements work both with and against each other: the South and the juxtaposition between childhood and adulthood would be the driving force behind Martha, which would in turn inform the creative work of Mary, work which articulated the underlying ideas of Martha. These various voices are effects of the aforementioned double voice that encompasses the entire autobiography, that of the insider and the outsider.

4 A CLOSER LOOK

The fact that both authors lived outside the South as well as their formative experiences as youth allow them the double role of insider and outsider, especially in the context of gender, sexuality, and sexual identity.

Roseanne Camacho (1992) comments that China, where Lillian Smith lived and taught music for three years, was an "intellectual awakening" in which she came to realize the ravages of colonialism, thus informing her future Ghandi studies (162-3). China also introduced Smith to new thinkers, and thus affected her views and writing on the South, as Jay Garcia (2008) has pointed out: "Smith became one of the first American authors to write at length about the jealous cultural fashioning of whiteness as a social and psychological fund drawn upon to sculpt Southern culture, as well as American culture more generally" (63).

Katherine DuPre Lumpkin (1991) states that by the time she was three she had lived in three different towns, and was to move around a lot before the age of ten (100). However, even though she did not spend time outside of the country and was not exposed to exotic authors or postcolonial ideas, she does recognize the move from Georgia to South Carolina when she was young as very consequential. She later went north to Columbia for graduate school, where she would see "everything in a new light" (Hobson 1999: 48-9). Both authors spent time outside of the South and these stays served to give them distance with which to view their birthplace from the inside out. They were able to gain critical detachment, which is marked in certain episodes in their autobiographies.

There were specific formative experiences that each author had as a child, which ingrained in them specific ideas about the South. Through these incidents they become conscious of the limited role of the woman in Southern society, or the status of African American men and women, or the dangers of segregation, whether from a social, psychological or economic point of view. These were later interpreted as subversive experiences which are essentially turning points in each book; the moment of realization is the moment when the author moves from innocent childhood to being a mature woman. This moment is what can be considered a rupture with the collective memory. This first happens for Lumpkin (1991) when she witnesses her previously unimpeachable father beat the family's helpless black cook. It is telling that in this episode in the book neither her father nor the cook have names. They are referred to as "the white master of the house" and the "little black cook", thus establishing rigid roles heretofore thought to be more flexible by

the young narrator, who also learned the meaning of “impudence”, thereon establishing a clear power relation based on race and supported by language (132). The second episode was the fact that when they moved to South Carolina she saw poor whites, and got a taste of reality which created the first cracks in her vision of the Lost Cause. She first came into contact with poor whites as well as poor blacks, and much surprised by the latter, because previously “little of destitution had passed before my protected eyes”; here she would even see whites working in the fields, a role previously occupied only by blacks (160).

Smith (1994) experiences her rupture when, after playing for a few weeks with a new friend, she was forbidden to continue doing so. Janie was a “very white” child who was taken from her black family based on the consideration that the blacks must have kidnapped the little white child (35). She was eventually brought to the Smith home, and lived, played and grew close to young Lillian. Then her mother informed her that Janie had to return to “Colored Town” because she was colored. They had made a mistake in thinking that she was white. Lillian pleaded with her mother to let Janie stay, but her mother sealed the argument invoking the universal unwritten law: “you have always known that white and colored people do not live together” (36-7). Her father consented to this, calling it a “pretty simple” decision, in that there was only one correct path of action, ruled over by the concept of segregation (36). The lesson learned by young Smith, but not intellectually grasped and articulated until later on, was that race is an arbitrary category. She had not perceived this difference previously, and so this became her first consciousness of different races, race relations, separation and superiority.

In another important episode in the book, Smith (1994) relates a play put on by the white girls at the summer camp she ran, and based on *The Little Prince*. The play began with Every Child (whom they named Prince), accompanied by Conscience. The Prince was accompanied by Southern Tradition, Religion and Science. He traveled through the universe and wanted to have new experiences and play with other children, colored children. There was disagreement and unrest, and the Prince did not know what to do. The affair was turned over to Conscience, who stated that when “race is the issue I always refer to Southern Tradition”, who replied that if the Prince tries to play with the colored children, he will get hurt (47). Religion now came into the mix, only to say that it would not get involved, and Conscience confirmed that attention was not paid to the moral tenets of religion when it comes to questions of race. Hence Southern Tradition was stronger than Science and Religion. This allegory exposes the contradiction underlying racism and segregation in the South, especially children’s ability to distinguish good and bad, and right and wrong, with the tool of their own conscience. This idea was called into question by young Smith, admitting that, now that she has learned to question things such as religion and segregation, she is “unfitted” to live in the South (54), and would be considered crazy by her father (56).

The lessons of Smith’s childhood clearly ingrained the ideas of separation and segregation, and also an idea of eerie complaisance in the form of silence:

We learned the intricate system of taboos, of renunciations and compensations, of manners, voice modulations, words, feelings, along with our prayers, our toilet habits, and our games [...] I also knew that I was better than a Negro, that all black folks have their place and must be kept in it, that sex has its place and must be kept in it, that a terrifying disaster would befall the South if I ever treated a Negro as my social equal and as terrifying a disaster would befall my family [...]

I learned to believe in freedom, to glow when the word *democracy* was used, and to practice slavery from morning to night. I learned it the way all Southern people learn it: by closing door after door until one's mind and heart and conscience are blocked off from each other and from reality (1994: 27-29).

Lumpkin, like Smith with Janie, shares with the moment of clarity when, as a child, she realizes the difference between black and white. She explains that through education one reaches this realization: "I was fully aware of myself as a white, and of Negroes as Negroes. Thenceforth, I began to be self-conscious about the many signs and symbols of my race position that had been battering against my consciousness since virtual infancy" (1991: 133).

These experiences are put through moral filters and compasses by both authors later on, recognizing them as the moments when they learned what it was to be white and black in the South, and more importantly, what this entailed. Segregation was at the center of Southern traditions; Smith and Lumpkin suggest that the Lost Cause and white supremacy are one and the same problem, and treat segregation as a major socio-historical element that shaped identity in the South, Smith making it the centerpiece of her narrative strategy.

The trinity of gender, sexuality, and the father figure was very important for both authors. The last had forged a world view for them which they necessarily had to break, and did so by rejecting the "vertical Southern religion" and taking on a horizontal point of view, therefore being veritably "transformed from racial segregationist into racial integrationists" (Hobson 1999: 50). The patriarchy and authority that is present both physically and psychologically in the father figure is addressed with a certain amount of irony by both authors. This leads to the question of gender. Smith is generally regarded as taking on questions of gender, while "Lumpkin does not explicitly emphasize her gender as a shaping force upon her Southernness," due to the fact that she is more concerned with race and especially class than gender issues (Prenshaw 2011: 195).

While gender identity is a crucial factor in both books, sexual identity is one of the elements that is absent from both autobiographies. Katherine DuPre Lumpkin makes no mention of her relationship with Dorothy Douglas for two reasons:

Katharine ended her autobiography in the mid-1920s in part to avoid calling attention to her sexuality and her politics—each of which would have undercut the moral/political authority of the autobiographical personas she sought to create. Lesbianism and communism were, for Katharine, "open secrets" prevailing, omnipresent, but unspoken dimensions of her life which for me, writing women's history in the 1990s, it is unthinkable to ignore (Hall 1998a: 120-21).

Ironically she felt she should attack the pantheon of Southern mythology along with racism and sexism, but at the same time was in effect silenced by society regarding her political propensities and her relationship. She is, then, both covertly and overtly an 'outsider', and Hall suggests that this "[...] might have been central to Katharine's ability to step outside her culture, to view southern mores with detachment, to identify with the pain of prejudice and alienation" (233-34).

Margaret Rose Gladney edited Lillian Smith's letters in 1993. She found personal correspondence between Smith and "lifelong friend and companion" Paula Snelling (Gladney 1997: 95). The relationship was never made public and never definitively confirmed

before the discovery of the letters. Gladney (1997) states that while “Smith didn’t identify herself as a lesbian” (95), the letters between herself and Snelling are “unmistakably clear expressions of their physical as well as intellectual intimacy” (98). Smith attacked the pantheon of Southern mythology along with racism and sexism, but at the same time was effectively silenced regarding sexuality.

Lillian Smith and Katherine DuPre Lumpkin are insiders in terms of race and outsiders in a double sense in terms of gender and sexuality, the former clearly appearing in their autobiographies and the latter, recently brought to light, constituting an understandable omission considering the social climate of the time.

Scholars have largely ignored the autobiographies of Smith and Lumpkin until recently. They carried on an attitude that was cemented early on by groups such as the Agrarians, who upheld the Lost Cause and glorious past myths of the South and rejected writers such as Smith and Lumpkin (Brantley (1993: 8). The Agrarian movement, of which the Fugitives were a part of, made it clear in their 1930 manifesto *I’ll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition that they supported all of the invented tradition of the Lost Cause, referring to the South as a “minority” and calling to “support” and “defend” Southern tradition, that is, to “support a Southern way of life against what may be called the American or prevailing way [...] the way of life itself – in its bibles, chairs, portraits, festivals, laws, marriage customs.”*

Lillian Smith attacked the group for their historical point of view, for “propagating a view of the Old South which was as nostalgic and as escapist as that of Margaret Mitchell” (Groba 2011: 50). She also condemned them from an economic point of view: “The basic weakness of the Fugitives’ stand, as I see it, lay in their failure to recognize the massive dehumanization which had resulted from slavery and its progeny, sharecropping and segregation, and the values that permitted these brutalities of spirit” (Smith 1994: 225). Finally, she criticized them from a literary point of view as well: “She also strongly disagreed with their critical stance, the New Criticism, which placed the essential value of a literary work in the work itself rather than in any social or ethical purpose. Smith argued that the writer has a dual role as an artist and as a human being, and must show concern and compassion” (Groba 2011: 51).

The critical silence surrounding Lumpkin coupled with Smith’s criticism of history, economics, and literature epitomizes the nuances of the double voice present in both authors. It makes apparent the reckoning with the invented tradition of the Lost Cause as well as the neglect of scholars; both writers have been simply excluded or conveniently forgotten in works of literary history, and therefore have not been analyzed, until recently, within the context of Southern writing or Southern writers (Brantley 1993: 14).

5 CONCLUSION

Lillian Smith (1994) principally attacked the institution of segregation in *Killers of the Dream*, but at the same time she also addressed the problem of white women on the pedestal. At the end of the book, Smith admits that her story is “sorrowful” (219), but also displays a reserved optimism, citing the recent Supreme Court decisions, civil rights laws and the lifting of segregation in institutions and places (241). She champions equality for all, and believes

the blacks are “discovering their powers: moral, economic, psychological, physical” (250). She ends on a positive note, mentioning that humanity has always struggled, and that as a collective community we “have the means, the techniques, we have the knowledge and the insight and the courage”, and now all we need is the “desire” in order to make segregation a thing of the past, and convert equality into a *fait accompli* (253).

In a 1948 letter to the New York Times, Smith mentioned inaction of Southern liberals and White Supremacy, comparing the state of Georgia to the region of Georgia in the USSR (Gladney 1993: 120). This is not unparalleled in history. In a letter written to Joshua F. Speed on August 24, 1855, Abraham Lincoln stated that inept politicians (specifically referring to the nativist Know-Nothings or American Party) will lead to a nation where “all men are created equal except negroes and foreigners and Catholics”, and he would then prefer to move to Russia, “where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy” (Lincoln 1885: 323). The historical context is in fact not all that different. Russia is considered a home of tyranny and oppression, the antithesis of the democracy in the United States. Politicians are called upon to honor the ideas of freedom and equality for everyone rather than just for certain groups or races, instead of simply following political or economic ambition. In Lincoln’s time this was closely linked to the abolitionist movement, while in Smith’s time it was linked to the civil rights movement.

In the foreword to the 1961 edition, Lillian Smith echoes Lincoln’s sentiments and expresses concern about the racists and segregationists, stating that their “leaders are powerful in Congress and in many Southern and Midwest states, powerful in certain industries, powerful in terror groups, and powerful in their hypnotic control of minds for they, by indirection, reach into mass media influencing what is written and said, thus blocking the majority of our people from a full understanding and awareness of the dangers at this moment in history” (18). She then praises the civil rights movement for not fighting people but rather “fighting a past that bars them from a life of freedom and responsibility” (19). She does not know what the outcome will be (20), but does support a nonviolent means to attempt to create a better future for all races. Constante González Groba (2011) explores this topic and concludes that while Smith supported nonviolent resistance as opposed to moderation, she also championed the cause of literature in this fight against Southern tradition.

Lumpkin, in the afterword to the 1974 edition, gives a brief history of segregation in the 1940’s and 1950’s and maintains that work still needs to be done, especially regarding the housing situation of blacks in cities, which is reminiscent of segregation, along with the high rate of unemployment. She, like Smith, is hopeful concerning the future, and credits “nonviolent action” as the “principal instrument” that propelled a successful civil rights movement and a road to equality for both races in the South (252).

Lillian Smith and Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin, through autobiography, tackle the myths of the Lost Cause by unpacking received ideas and examining how they were forgotten or re-remembered. In order to do so, they employ a double voice and so occupy the position of insider, thanks to a similar formal and informal education when they were young, and subsequently outsider. The latter is made possible by the two essential elements that afford Smith and Lumpkin critical distance. First is the fact they lived outside the South for a time, putting physical space between the society in which they grew up while intellectually shaping their future ideas concerning the traditions and customs of this society. Secondly,

two formative experiences each had as a youth, which were at that time perceived as normal, were later interpreted by both as embodying the invented traditions of the South. These were precisely the seeds of subversion that became clear in their autobiographies, which end on a reservedly positive note concerning the future, a future which has recently embraced the study of the work of both women.

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