

Why the Confederacy Lost: An Essay Review

Why the Confederacy Lost. Ed. by Gabor S. Boritt. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. Pp. xii, 209. Notes, for further reading, note on contributors, index. \$19.95.)

A conference at Gettysburg College, Pennsylvania, in 1958 led to the publication of *Why the North Won the Civil War*, a collection of essays edited by David Donald. Those essays treated such topics as political leadership, military strategy, and wartime diplomacy.¹ Since then, the historiography of nineteenth-century America has undergone a transformation. White women and African Americans, for example, are now central figures for historical study, as race, gender, class, and culture have become key analytical terms. Armed with a sophisticated understanding of political culture and ideology, historians have recast our understanding of the nature and importance of political parties. Local, state, labor, and legal history have become rich areas for inquiry, while constructs from historical sociology have generated useful comparisons with nation and state building in Europe. And a "new" military history has developed that integrally links homefront and battlefield.²

Surely it would seem time to seek to update the insights that the authors of the earlier essays brought to the study of the Civil War. And now, a generation later, a similar conference at Gettysburg College has produced such a reassessment—*Why the Confederacy Lost*, edited by Gabor S. Boritt. Boritt supplies an introduction, and James M. McPherson, Archer Jones, Gary W. Gallagher, Reid Mitchell, and Joseph T. Glatthaar contribute essays,³ none of which reconsiders diplomacy or focuses on politics. Each supplies a concise analysis of some aspect of the military history of the Civil War. Together the essays suggest where the historiography of the war might be heading in the 1990s.

"Matters military, including what took place on the field of battle, played a decisive role in determining the history of the Civil War, and specifically why the Confederacy lost," Gabor Boritt argues in a strident introduction. The "outcome of the war was determined on the battlefield," he asserts. He proceeds to attack a recent essay by Eric Foner in *The New American History* (one that attempts to show how social historians have transformed our understanding of slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction) for "ignor[ing] entirely the war—at least as that word is commonly understood."⁴

The five essays differ in tone with Boritt's introduction, but they agree with Boritt on the importance of military events and share his notion that "the battlefield cannot be separated from society and politics."⁵ Consistent with the new social and military history, the essays creatively explore the relationship between military events and the social order. They suggest the need for even more development of

the interaction of social, political, and military matters. Though they draw on much of the work of the past generation, they by no means displace the 1960 essays.

In "American Victory, American Defeat," James McPherson offers a "critical review of the literature on the reasons for Confederate defeat" that distinguishes between "internal" and "external" reasons. He outlines various dimensions of internal weakness in the Confederacy that are often cited as contributing to the outcome. Thus he cites Frank Owsley's statement that on the tombstone of the Confederacy should be carved the epitaph "Died of State Rights" as well as David Donald's essay in the 1960 collection, "Died of Democracy." In addition he discusses what he calls the "internal alienation" argument and the "lack-of-will" thesis.⁶

McPherson takes aim at assertions of Southern disunity or disillusionment as explanations for the outcome. He argues that, if large numbers of slaves and nonslaveholding whites failed to support the Confederacy, by the same token large numbers of border-state residents and Democrats elsewhere failed to support the Union. Moreover, "if the Confederacy had its bread riots, the North had its draft riots." McPherson speaks of the "fallacy of reversibility," by which he means that, had the North lost, not only would this book have a different title but the same "internal" explanations could account for the alternate outcome. Insisting that there was "intense conflict within the *northern* polity," he contends that internal conflict in one region more or less balanced, or neutralized, such conflict within the other region. As for "lack of will," he argues that no such static portrait does justice to the dynamics of wartime psychology. What happened was, rather, a "loss of will," and what explains it occurred on the battlefield. In short, "military defeat caused loss of will, not vice versa." This approach "introduces external agency as a crucial explanatory factor—the agency of northern military success, especially in the eight months after August 1864."⁷

McPherson's approach is evident in his account of the Battle of Gettysburg. Contrary to various explanations that rest on Confederate shortcomings, McPherson lets Gen. George Pickett draw, "I always thought the Yankees had something to do with it." Yet, though emphasizing external factors, McPherson refuses to adopt the notion that Union victory necessarily followed from its numerical superiority in everything from population to manufacturing capacity. For one thing, he dismisses Richard Current's confident assertion in his 1960 essay, "God and the Strongest Battalions," that "surely, in view of the disparity of resources," only "a miracle" could have produced Confederate victory.⁸ The Confederacy had, after all, only to hang on long enough for the Union to lose its enthusiasm for a war that was simply costing too much in blood and treasure. It could fight a defensive war, seeking only to hold on to its armies and its territory, and thus did not necessarily need to match the North's resources. McPherson cites to good advantage a 1986 book by Archer Jones and others contending that "an invader needs more force than the North possessed to conquer such a large country as the South, even one so limited in logistical resources." Or, as Confederate Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard wrote after the war, "no people ever warred for independence

with more relative advantages than the Confederates." Superior human and material resources, McPherson declares, comprised "a *necessary* but not a *sufficient* cause of victory."⁹

According to McPherson (and, for the most part, the other essayists presented here), the war was won and lost on the battlefield. Things could have gone either way. Often enough, they did. At times during the war, a Confederate victory appeared certain or at least likely. Time and again, Union victories made any such certainties vanish. In autumn 1862, after a period of Union military frustration and in time for the fall elections, Union armies stopped Confederate invaders at Perryville and Antietam. In summer 1863, similar gloom among Unionists and hope among Confederates faded away with reports from Vicksburg and Gettysburg. Had the 1864 presidential election been held in August, before the news of Sherman's capture of Atlanta, instead of later, observers then and virtually all commentators since have held that the election—a referendum on Lincoln's administration and the Union's war effort—would have put an end to both.

According to the central thesis of McPherson's essay, "it is this element of contingency that is missing from generalizations about the cause of Confederate defeat, whether such generalizations focus on external or internal factors. There was nothing inevitable about northern victory in the Civil War." "To understand why the South lost . . . we must turn from large generalizations that imply inevitability and study instead the contingency that hung over each military campaign, each battle, each election, each decision during the war."¹⁰

Contingency, however, cannot mean that both sides were in equal positions. If, to take only the matter of manpower, we use Roger L. Ransom's recent breakdown of all men ages 10–49 in 1860, the Union states had 6.9 million white men to call upon (850,000 of them in the slave, or border, states of Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri), while the Confederacy had only 1.7 million white men in addition to 1.2 million black men.¹¹ Both the strategic nature of the war and how these men were mobilized and deployed affected the contingent probabilities. The other four essays fit fairly well within McPherson's overall approach. They suggest how each side was able to use its resources in a manner that made Sherman's victory at Atlanta and the election of 1864 so important.

In "Military Means, Political Ends: Strategy," Archer Jones offers a useful set of strategic distinctions and matches them up against a "broad" strategic perspective that incorporates cultural and political considerations. Jones distinguishes between a "logistic strategy," which focuses on denying the enemy army the means of making war, and a "combat strategy," in which armies clash directly. He describes the "traditional ascendancy of the strategic defensive," which, particularly given the advent and adoption of the rifled musket with its much greater long-distance accuracy, moderated the North's manpower advantage on the offensive. He argues that Union generals, perceiving that the Union's predominance in resources was insufficient to permit a victory in combat that focused on clashes between armies, made "the tacit decision to seek to conquer the South's territory as the means of weakening its armies. The loss of control of territory would deprive the southern

armies not only of their food and other production but of the manpower the lost area would have provided." Jones also distinguishes between "raiding" approaches, which permitted armies to move swiftly and live off the land, and the logistically more demanding "persisting" approaches, where armies had to be ready to occupy territory for long periods. Regardless of whether conflict followed the strategy of combat or logistics, each side suffered as well as inflicted casualties, and Jones measures such attrition, or "manpower depletion," as "a percentage of [each side's] total forces." Thus, in any encounter, the Confederacy had to inflict more than twice the casualties it suffered, just to break even.¹²

Strategic constraints, Jones reminds us, must be understood within what others (like J. F. C. Fuller) have termed "grand strategy."¹³ "Thus northern and southern strategists had to consider the political effect of their military actions on not only the enemy but on the attitudes of foreign powers and the opinions of their own people, including the citizen soldiers." Political leaders and generals ignored such factors at their peril. "The attitude of the public," Jones reminds us, "had great importance in this war, the first large-scale, prolonged conflict between democratically organized countries in the age of mass circulation newspapers and widespread literacy." Thus he stresses "the role of public opinion . . . which meant that military campaigns often had to meet a double criteria for victory, the popular as well as the strategic."¹⁴

Jones's analyses of Robert E. Lee's 1862 invasion of Maryland and William Tecumseh Sherman's 1864 raid through Georgia suggest the utility of distinguishing among strategies and specifying the various constituencies. Lee, according to Jones, neither intended to nor could have stayed in Maryland for the winter. "Since the political definition of losing is retreat," and Lee "would have had to withdraw after any battle, his decision to fight assured a negative political result in the South and a positive one in the North." Thus, Lee's decision itself to face battle relying on his hungry, tired, and poorly-equipped troops—not just the outcome of the battle—enabled Lincoln to issue the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation and, perhaps, prevent foreign recognition of the Confederacy. (Lincoln had been waiting for a victory since Seward had cautioned him that a proclamation without one would be viewed as a pathetic "cry for help; the government stretching forth hands to Ethiopia.") "Strategically and politically," Jones concludes, "Lee's Antietam campaign was a fiasco." By contrast, Sherman's raid through Georgia, two years later, appeared to both sides as a Union victory and a Confederate defeat; for the North, it "constituted a significant political triumph as well as a major victory for the logistic strategy."¹⁵

In "Upon Their Success Hang Momentous Interests': Generals," Gary Gallagher focuses on the three generals who made the greatest contributions to the chances of victory by their armies: Lee for the Confederacy and Grant and Sherman for the Union. Working from the premise that, as McPherson and Jones agree, the Union's predominance in human and material resources for winning the war could by no means secure the victory, Gallagher asserts that "the North always enjoyed a substantial edge in manpower and almost every manufacturing category, but

none of Grant's predecessors proved equal to the task of harnessing and directing that latent strength." Relating homefront to battlefront, Gallagher "proceeds from the assumption that generals made a very great difference in determining the outcome of the war. Their actions decided events on the battlefield, which in turn either calmed or aggravated internal tensions that affected the ability of each government to prosecute the war."¹⁶

Gallagher draws on, but revises, J. F. C. Fuller's 1933 comparative study of Lee and Grant. Fuller, who began his work with the sense that Lee had transcendent ability and Grant was "a butcher," developed the position, instead, that Grant was the superior general. Gallagher accepts Fuller's evaluation of Grant's qualities but contests his diminished assessment of Lee. Gallagher cites strategic and political factors to justify Lee's emphasis on the Virginia theater. The Confederacy, he writes, "could lose in the West or the East, but it could win the war only in the East." And he offers evidence that the North, the Confederacy, and foreign observers alike viewed Virginia as the center of action. That the North focused on Virginia, for example, can be seen in the "demand that Grant go east when he became general in chief" in 1864. Thus Lee's emphasis reflected more than the narrow view of a parochial Virginian. As for Lee's alleged limitations, Gallagher argues that, "far from being innocent of the importance of the West and the psychological dimension of his operations, he [perhaps saw] more clearly than any of his peers the best road to Confederate independence." Lee's victories "buoyed" Confederate "hopes when defeat lay in all other directions, dampened spirits in the North, and impressed European political leaders. They also propelled him to a position where, long before the end of the war, he stood unchallenged as a military hero and his Army of Northern Virginia had become synonymous with the Confederacy in the minds of many southern whites."¹⁷

Strategies require men, and both Gallagher and Jones touch on this when they examine the relationship between homefront and battlefront. While Gallagher suggests the importance of military leadership to homefront behavior, Jones invokes World War II Germany to elucidate another aspect of the problem: "unlike the defeat of Germany . . . , the Civil War did not end almost entirely as a result of military victory." Confederate armies evaporated, Jones contends, "not because men lacked supplies but because they and their families no longer had the political motivation to continue."¹⁸

Reid Mitchell pursues these issues in his essay, "The Perseverance of the Soldiers." He offers a significant refinement of Current's position: "having the heaviest battalions does not proceed automatically from having the greatest population, wealth, or resources." It demands "the perseverance of the soldiers," something the Union retained and the Confederacy lost. Mitchell harks back to an antiwar slogan against the Vietnam War and asks: "What if they gave a war and nobody came? . . . What would have happened if the men of the North had not volunteered in droves in 1861?" Beyond 1861, what if the soldiers had not stayed? Endurance was not to be assumed, particularly during the bloody first month of the Army of the Potomac's 1864 campaign when it suffered 55,000 casualties—al-

most the total strength of Lee's army at the campaign's start. Numerically, the North could afford to absorb such losses since it could call up more troops, and, after all, it was inflicting 32,000 casualties on the Army of Northern Virginia. Still, to continue a protracted bloody strategy of attrition required support from soldiers and civilians alike, particularly with elections coming up. The Union secured such support in 1864; the Confederacy did not. "How did the Union succeed in employing its heaviest battalions? [It] succeeded because the men who made up those battalions volunteered to be employed, not just in 1861 when they did not know better, but in 1864 as well."¹⁹

Mitchell's analysis raises issues that have been touched upon by the new social and military history. "Small-unit" camaraderie, for example, and ideology (particularly a "love for the Union") bound Union soldiers together. In theory, similar bonds (with local autonomy replacing "Union") might have promoted the morale of Confederate soldiers. But, according to Mitchell, the Confederacy had a key structural and ideological weakness: it "was created as a means to defend racial slavery." White southerners themselves entered the war divided over slavery. And as the war progressed, the suffering of non-slaveholding families and "the fears men had that their families would be crushed as traditional southern society came crashing down" sapped Confederate soldiers' willingness to stay in the field. "If the Union army's cohesion made Union victory possible, lack of cohesion [that is, as McPherson would say, *loss* of cohesion] accounted for the timing of Confederate defeat."²⁰

Not only did this ideological weakness undercut the revolutionary government's attempt to keep men in the field, it also prevented the Confederacy from adopting one strategic approach that nations often use when facing overwhelming outside power: guerrilla warfare. And, "once the Confederacy decided on conventional warfare, the heaviest battalions would win—as long as the Union was willing to prosecute the war."²¹

If Reid Mitchell brings slavery back to center stage, Joseph Glatthaar highlights the central roles of black men and (sometimes) black women. In "Black Glory: The African-American Role in Union Victory," the most consistently innovative essay in the book, Glatthaar assesses the contributions of black Americans, free and slave, from North and South, to the outcome of the war. He takes seriously Lincoln's wartime words, that recruiting black soldiers in the South "works doubly, weakening the enemy and strengthening us." He shows how African-American agency forced the Lincoln administration to move toward a policy of adopting black labor, black emancipation, and black soldiers. He depicts black northerners acting out their sense that "the war offered a rare opportunity to strike a mighty blow at slavery, dispel prejudice, and demonstrate to all that blacks could contribute in real and significant ways to the nation in times of crisis, and therefore merited full and equal rights."²² He traces how white soldiers came to accept black soldiers as crucial allies in a common struggle.

Black soldiers, according to Glatthaar, provided the difference between defeat and victory. During 1864 they provided sufficient manpower to keep both Sherman's and

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Grant's armies in the field, contributing to Lincoln's 1864 election victory. "During those key months in the late spring and summer, when the picture for the Lincoln administration looked bleakest and the Union desperately struggled to maintain its uniformed strength, more than 100,000 blacks were serving in the Union army and thousands more were in the Federal navy. In fact, there were more blacks in Union blue than either Grant commanded outside Petersburg or Sherman directed around Atlanta."²³

The Confederate government's decision to free and arm slave men in the final weeks of the war, Glatthaar suggests, highlights the importance of black troops' contribution to the Union war effort. Moreover, quite aside from combat troops, black military laborers who relieved white Union soldiers from noncombat roles were just as important in freeing up white soldiers for combat duty as they had been, whether on the homefront or in logistics work, for the Confederacy.²⁴

Slaves' contributions went still farther. Glatthaar connects the battlefield and the homefront in two central ways. When slaves withdrew their labor from production for the Confederate cause, they contributed to shortages among soldiers and civilians alike. As Mitchell, too, suggests, they worked to destabilize the Confederacy; when they appeared restless, they contributed to apprehension among white civilians—and therefore among their kin in the Confederate army—that a slave uprising might be imminent.

All the essays share, in degree, Glatthaar's sensitivity to matters of race. Thus they demonstrate a refreshing consciousness of the language of race and a clear ability to distinguish social history from political history.

Gallagher's essay is (almost consistently) exemplary in this respect. Boritt sets the tone in denying any identity of "South" and "Confederacy." As he notes, a large minority of southerners were slaves and free blacks, and anti-Confederate white southerners were sufficiently numerous, he concludes, that "close to half of the South probably welcomed northern victory." Mitchell offers a similar statement and rationale.²⁵

Yet Mitchell often proceeds, in the pages that follow, to forget his caveat and thus misstate his findings. Neglecting the crucial contributions of black southerners to the Confederate war effort—the subject of Glatthaar's essay—he writes that most white men went "in the army and left the burden of farming and other work to women, the young, and the elderly." As a consequence, "the people of the South" faced hunger, even starvation. Again dropping the racial qualifier, he writes that "the women and children faced more than hard times and the threat of Union armies," that "slave management was a burden that fell increasingly on women," and that a "slave rebellion . . . might fall most heavily on women and children." Surely southerners in the 1860s, including women and children, cannot—empirically or ethically—be presumed white unless specified black.²⁶

The essayists sometimes differ with one another in interpretation. Their differences point up a lack of consensus on various matters and the need for further thought. Taking on Archer Jones (and the other three authors of *Why the South Lost*), McPherson states that they "conclude flatly, in the face of much of their own

evidence, that 'the Confederacy succumbed to internal rather than external causes.' While accepting Jones's concept of multiple constituencies, Gallagher displays a more favorable assessment of Lee's leadership than does Jones; he suggests that "Lee pursued a strategy attuned to the expectations of most Confederate citizens and calculated to exert maximum influence on those who made policy in the North and in Europe." Mitchell embraces a version of Current's 1960 notion of "the heaviest battalions" and writes, with McPherson's essay in mind, that "it is no assertion of inevitability to argue that the odds were more than a little in favor of the Union." Moreover, Mitchell takes an internal, more than an external, approach to explaining the Confederate loss: "What I would like to consider here," he writes, "is the way that the Confederacy's weakness on the home front—including the problem of racial slavery . . . —undermined the loyalties of its soldiers in the field." Thus Mitchell embraces, while McPherson dismisses, slavery as a wartime ideological problem for white southerners. Meantime, where McPherson has recently emphasized Lincoln's central role in emancipation (calling him the "sine qua non") and downplayed that of slaves themselves, Glatthaar emphasizes that, even in Confederate-held territory, slaves proved crucial in promoting Union victory.²⁷

That an internal explanation of Confederate defeat can still muster spirited support was recently demonstrated by Douglas Ball in *Financial Failure and Confederate Defeat*. His is an account of financial affairs, one of the dimensions of strategy that McPherson ("nor did the South manage its economy as well as the North") and Jones ("beyond strictly military concerns to . . . diplomacy, economic mobilization, and finance") mention but choose not to develop. Yet Ball also supplies a military strategy which, he argues, might very well have achieved Confederate victory—if, that is, Ball had been Confederate secretary of the treasury instead of Christopher G. Memminger, "an ignorant, blunt, laissez-faire zealot bemused by legalisms." Thus Ball writes in terms fully consistent with McPherson's rejection of the inevitability of Union victory and his theory of contingency. He nevertheless embraces an internal account of why the Confederacy lost. And he takes us back to the question of political leadership, a central issue in the 1960 collection but not the 1992 approach.²⁸ The fight over the war goes on.

If we are to understand better the dynamics of this civil war, issues of social and economic conflict must be explored in various comparative contexts. War, Steven Hahn reminds us in his study of southern yeomen, "tests the fabric of a social order as does nothing else, taxing social and political ties as much as human and material resources." While McPherson suggests that social conflict in both regions balanced each other out, the existing evidence might more readily support Roger Ransom's contention that, "although the mobilization effort on both sides exacerbated class tensions, the problem of inequality was far greater in the South than in the North."²⁹ While the essays usefully invoke comparisons with other American wars, European conflicts might better suggest the impact of social conflict on the battlefield.³⁰

The Civil War homefront, the focus of much exciting recent work, receives passing attention in every essay, particularly McPherson's and Mitchell's, yet it gets sustained analysis in none. Region, gender, race, and class, if combined, could give greater substance to assertions regarding the Confederate homefront.³¹ Such dimensions need not be developed only on their own terms. Indeed, the logic of these essays would suggest that those issues cannot be analyzed in isolation from events on the battlefield if they are to help answer the question "why the Confederacy lost." In connecting homefront and battlefield, civilians and soldiers, perhaps a single study could track the impact of military events on various social groups across the South. New studies of women (white and black) in North Carolina and slaves (male and female) in Virginia offer evidence that the materials for such a task continue to become available.³²

Another appropriate vehicle might be an essay that compared the homefronts of the Union and the Confederacy in terms of political efforts to support the families of soldiers and thus help keep those soldiers in the field. In North and South alike (though one would not know it from these essays), public authorities assumed the task of supplying soldiers' dependents with such necessities as food and clothing.³³ Such assistance could not protect civilians from military insecurity, but it did address economic insecurity, and thus it reduced one of the two war-related pulls of dependents on soldiers. Little work has explored this phenomenon in the South and even less in the North, and thus it cannot readily be synthesized. Yet surely such work must be pursued in the future, in part to get at questions of the regions' relative ability—as well as inclination—to play that role. Moreover, it is worth exploring whether the struggle for territory had other objectives than the military ones of securing manpower and provisions and the political one of making a psychological impact on the various constituencies. Did such efforts—in East Tennessee, for example—also relate to a desire to put in place local governments that could allocate supplies to the families of soldiers in the Union army rather than in the Confederate forces?

One essay surely appears to be missing from this collection. It relates directly to military affairs, and it observes the need to connect military developments with political events and expectations. To be sure, it fits less comfortably with McPherson's emphasis on external causes, and it leans against his stance that internal dissent in the two regions more or less canceled out in determining the war's outcome. Like Boritt in his introduction, McPherson and Mitchell refer to the large numbers of white Unionists in the Confederate states. No essay focuses on that crucial group in a way that matches Glatthaar's essay on black participation. But the state of West Virginia stands to this day as a monument to the great numbers of anti-Confederate white southerners. East Tennessee supplied even more white troops to the Union army than did West Virginia. In a recent study, which appeared at about the same time these essays did, Richard Current harks back to an early study by Charles C. Anderson, *Fighting by Southern Federals* (1912), which focused on Union soldiers from the South. Current concludes that perhaps one-tenth of the one million white soldiers from the eleven Confederate states fought for the Union, not against it.

Not only did they reduce Confederate forces by that number, but they offset an equal number.³⁴

Thus, counting white men only, as Current does, the eleven states produced a net figure of only 800,000 Confederate soldiers, down 20 percent from the estimate of a million. The roles of white Union troops from Confederate states can perhaps better be explained in terms of "internal" than "external" considerations. Regardless, in a war in which, as McPherson emphasizes, the outcome was by no means inevitable, any considerable force at the margins—denied the Confederacy and added to the Union's resources—could well have been critical to the war's outcome. By withholding or withdrawing their support from the Confederacy and supplying that support instead to the Union, black southerners and white southerners alike made a difference. Either one might have made *the* difference. Together, they surely did.

With Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri in mind, McPherson notes that "perhaps one-third of the border-state whites actively supported the Confederacy."³⁵ McPherson intends to establish the opposition that the Lincoln administration faced in the North. But perhaps we should consider "border-state whites," too, as southerners, large numbers of whom actively supported the Union. In other words, what if we considered all white Unionists who resided in slave states—whether in the Union or the Confederacy—as belonging to the same group? Perhaps it is better yet, in tallying the human and material resources of the time, to distinguish the slave states of the Union from the Confederate states and the "free states" alike. Lincoln knew he had to have those states. He could not hope to win without them. They hung in the balance, reflecting the divided loyalties of the people in those states, a microcosm of the North and South combined.

In sum, these five essays bring thoughtful and useful perspectives to the question they are designed to answer, "why the Confederacy lost." They should be, and no doubt will be, of considerable interest to popular and scholarly readers alike. But our reading of them is that they point up what still needs to be done as much as they summarize what is already known. They supplement, but they do not supplant, the 1960 essays. Long before another three decades has passed, one hopes that yet another effort will emerge that will synthesize current knowledge and propose new paradigms.

Gallagher concludes his essay by observing about a wartime Confederate writer that he "left no doubt about the connection between generalship and affairs on the home front. Modern students who neglect this connection do so at their peril." He goes on to stress that "any explanation of the war's outcome that slights military events cannot possibly convey the intricacies of the subject."³⁶ Readers are indebted to the writers of the essays in this collection for highlighting and elaborating that insight.

The rejoinder, if such it be, is that students of the war must continue to follow that road in both directions. Each side's military strategy was constrained by the nature of its own society, and the nature of that society determined how the twists and turns of fortune in military affairs would play at home. Another writer recently

decried "the division of labor" among Civil War historians between those who resonate to "things military" and those who focus on "things civilian."³⁷ We still need to know more about the homefront on each side, and further work remains to develop the two-way relationship, on each side, between social structure and military events.

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NOTES

1. David [Herbert] Donald, ed., *Why the North Won the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960). The authors thank Paul Finkelman of Virginia Tech for his critical reading of this essay.

2. For changes in general, see C. Vann Woodward, ed., *The Comparative Approach to American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1968); Eric Foner, ed., *The New American History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); and the full issues of *Daedalus*, 100 (Winter 1971), and *Reviews in American History*, 10 (December 1982). To sample the new military history, see E. Wayne Carp, "Early American Military History: A Review of Recent Work," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 94 (1986): 259-84, and Steven Rosswurm, *Arms, Country, and Class: The Philadelphia Militia and the "Lower Sort" during the American Revolution, 1775-1783* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987). Regarding the Civil War, leading examples of recent contributions are Drew Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," *Journal of American History*, 76 (1989-90): 1200-28, reprinted with other essays in Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, eds., *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Ira Berlin et al., *Slaves No More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Eric Foner, *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Jean H. Baker, *Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of the Democratic Party in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); and Maris A. Vinovskis, ed., *Toward a Social History of the American Civil War: Exploratory Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Other such works are cited below or in Joseph T. Glatthaar, "The 'New' Civil War History: An Overview," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 115 (1991): 339-69; Gary W. Gallagher, "Home Front and Battlefield: Some Recent Literature Relating to Virginia and the Confederacy," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 98 (1990): 135-68; and Daniel E. Sutherland, "Getting the 'Real War' into the Books," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 98 (1990): 193-220.

3. Gabor S. Boritt, ed., *Why the Confederacy Lost* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). The book also contains endnotes, an index, and a brief bibliographical essay.

4. Quotations *ibid.*, pp. 5, 6, 8. Contrary to Boritt's gloss on him, Foner makes his purpose clear when he states that, "*apart from works primarily military in orientation, recent studies of the Civil War carry forward themes dominant in the new interpretation of antebellum history.*" In contending that "the Emancipation Proclamation, rather than the battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, marked the war's turning point, for it transformed a struggle of armies into a combat of societies," Foner surely does take a position that contrasts with Boritt's. Foner, *The New American History*, pp. 79-80 (emphasis added).
5. Boritt, *Why the Confederacy Lost*, p. 14.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 26, 34.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 29, 34 (emphasis in original).
8. Our reading of Current leaves us convinced that, to a considerable extent, he would agree with McPherson as regards both inevitability and "lack of will." An early major blunder on the battlefield, Current argues, or early recognition by foreign powers, might well have prevented Union victory. But the war went on and became a war of attrition. What then happened on the battlefield, according to Current, was largely a function of the vastly superior economic resources that the Union could draw on. Allan Nevins, *The War for the Union* (4 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959-71), provides strong support for Current's position.
9. Boritt, *Why the Confederacy Lost*, pp. 19-20, 22-23.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 42.
11. Roger L. Ransom, *Conflict and Compromise: The Political Economy of Slavery, Emancipation, and the American Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 214.
12. Boritt, *Why the Confederacy Lost*, pp. 45, 47, 52-53.
13. J. F. C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (1933; 2nd ed., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), chs. 1, 7.
14. Boritt, *Why the Confederacy Lost*, pp. 46, 77.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61, 74; Seward quotation in David Osher, "Soldier Citizens for a Disciplined Nation: Union Conscription and the Construction of the Modern American Army (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1992), p. 403.
16. Boritt, *Why the Confederacy Lost*, pp. 85, 91.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 98, 100, 104.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 111, 113, 120, 122.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 121, 124, 130. See also Phillip S. Paludan, "The American Civil War Considered as a Crisis in Law and Order," *American Historical Review*, 77 (1972): 1013-34.
21. Boritt, *Why the Confederacy Lost*, p. 113. See also Ransom, *Conflict and Compromise*, ch. 6.
22. Boritt, *Why the Confederacy Lost*, pp. 147, 161.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
24. Glatthaar may actually understate the importance of African Americans and of federal policy regarding them; see Osher, "Soldier Citizens," chs. 11-12.
25. Boritt, *Why the Confederacy Lost*, pp. 13, 111-12.

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26. *Ibid.*, pp. 127–29. For another statement along these lines on the use of language, see a letter from Richard L. Aynes to the editor, *Georgia Journal of Southern Legal History*, 1 (1991): 499–501.

27. Boritt, *Why the Confederacy Lost*, pp. 35, 98, 112, 125; McPherson, "Who Freed the Slaves?" (and comments during discussion), a paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, Washington, D.C., December 1992.

28. Boritt, *Why the Confederacy Lost*, pp. 36, 45; Douglas B. Ball, *Financial Failure and Confederate Defeat* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), quotation p. 31. Various reviews of Ball's book have taken him to task for ascribing so much responsibility for Confederate defeat to bad leadership; nonetheless those reviews typically point to an alternative internal explanation—planters' disinclination to pursue other financial policies.

29. Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850–1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 116; Ransom, *Conflict and Compromise*, p. 199. Northern draft riots provide a case in point regarding the relative inequality in the two regions. For analyses that show the complex roles of class and party during the war, see Eric L. McKittrick, "Party Politics and the Union and Confederate War Efforts," in William Nisbet Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham, eds., *The American Party Systems: Stages of Political Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 117–51; and, among more recent work, Osher, "Soldier Citizens," chs. 9–10; Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Grace Palladino, *Another Civil War: Labor, Capital, and the State in the Anthracite Regions of Pennsylvania, 1840–1868* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

30. Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, A.D. 990–1990* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1990).

31. Recent treatments of the homefront include George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots*; and Palladino, *Another Civil War*. For a suggestive review calling for further work on the Confederate homefront, see Gallagher, "Home Front and Battlefield." An excellent interpretive synthesis of the North's Civil War experience is Phillip Shaw Paludan, *"A People's Contest": The Union and Civil War, 1861–1865* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

32. Victoria E. Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), pp. 111–50; Lynda J. Morgan, *Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 1850–1870* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), pp. 79–123.

33. Peter Wallenstein, "Rich Man's War, Rich Man's Fight: Civil War and the Transformation of Public Finance in Georgia," *Journal of Southern History*, 50 (1984): 15–42.

34. Richard Nelson Current, *Lincoln's Loyalists: Union Soldiers from the Confederacy* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), esp. pp. 213–28; Charles C. Anderson, *Fighting by Southern Federals* (New York: Neale, 1912). See also Peter Wal-

Wallenstein, "Which Side Are You On? The Social Origins of White Union Troops from Civil War Tennessee," *Journal of East Tennessee History*, 63 (1991): 72-103, and "Cartograms and the Mapping of Virginia History, 1790-1990," *Virginia Social Science Journal*, 28 (1993): 90-110. Moreover, tens of thousands of white men, natives (or the sons of natives) of Virginia but residents of Ohio and Illinois, returned to the South wearing blue, not gray. Wallenstein ("Cartograms," p. 100) and Anderson emphasize their importance, though Current (see p. 214) neglects them. Anderson gives a figure of one million for total manpower in the Confederate armed forces. Offsetting that figure, he states that 634,000 "southerners" fought on the Union side: 297,000 white residents of the "South" (including the slave states in the Union), 138,000 black southerners, and perhaps 200,000 whites who were natives of slave states but living in free states.

35. Boritt, *Why the Confederacy Lost*, pp. 13, 111-12. A monument to Confederate women is located in Baltimore, Maryland, on Charles Street at University Parkway.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

37. Sutherland, "Getting the 'Real War' into the Books," p. 200.

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