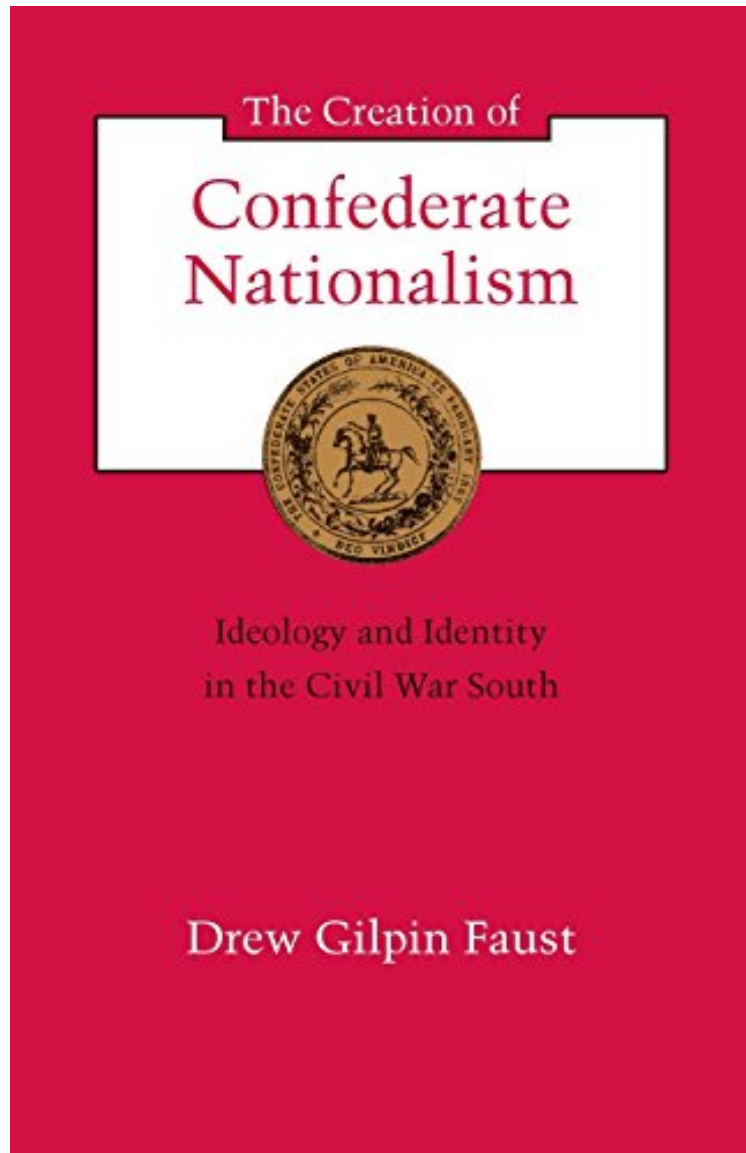


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(The Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History)

# The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South (The Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History)

*Drew Gilpin Faust*

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (The Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Worthwhile read, and important topic. But weak and reductive in its approach to religion. By Patrick Provost-Smith An important and necessary topic. And a reasonably well-written book. My primary complaint is that Gilpin Faust's treatment of religion suffers from some relatively serious shortcomings. There is a tendency in contemporary historiography to treat religion almost entirely (or even primarily) as a mode of "justification" for this or that way of thinking, action, etc. This provides for a very superficial view of religion, and one that is almost entirely instrumentalist. It fails to grapple with the aspects of religion which cannot be simply presented as means for justifying belief or behavior, and tends to reduce nearly all aspects of religion to that mode. A reasonable sense of what it means to study religion as an academic (historical, theoretical) subject does not allow for that kind of not terribly well-conceived reduction, and that kind of reduction is very often a cover for the author's ignorance of religion (including theology, doctrine, etc. when applicable). There is no such thing as "religion" in general or abstract, as the term serves really as a categorical shorthand, and that also complicates this kind of reductive approach. The fallout of this reductive approach is that religion is seen to justify behaviors or beliefs, but one is left with no actual conceptualization or information as to how those behaviors or beliefs function to produce, reinforce, inform, etc. whatever is being described. And when identical theological or doctrinal or lived-experience modes of religion - Christianity, to be precise, in this context - are seen as modes of justification, yet result in vastly different and even incompatible beliefs or behaviors, there is no further analysis of how and why and by what means this works to accomplish what it is said to accomplish. In her book, religion (meaning, again, Christianity, not "religion" in general) is seen to justify slavery, abolitionism, Confederate nationalism, and American (federal) nationalism. It therefore loses any actual explanatory capacity when treated in that way, and this problem is compounded when what is apparently justified by religion is something presented as external to religion. What is internal or external - or typically religious vs. political - is extraordinarily hard to sort out when a seriously informed sense of Christianity is taken into account, yet that is precisely the work that needs to be done. Gilpin Faust is here among the many, many contemporary historians whose work fails to demonstrate that the author has approached her topic with the kind of intellectual preparation necessary to do the work that she proposes to do. On other accounts, her portrayal of Confederate nationalism is both interesting and largely persuasive. It is simply that religion is such a central and important part of that historical phenomenon - as it was for the North as well, and the shaping of American nationalism (and especially American exceptionalism - of which Lincoln was a preeminent example). The work of Eugene Genovese is a good counter-example to Gilpin Faust when it comes to the treatment of religion. His approach could be improved upon, but it seems to me to quite studiously avoid the reductive genericism of treating religion simply as a mode of justifying various kinds of beliefs and behaviors. And there is often in his work something approaching a theological sensitivity to nuance and complexity that is lacking in Gilpin Faust's work.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Stuart E. Lawrence Jr. Great series. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic scholarship By civwarchick fascinating perspective on the construction of Confederate nationalism. The lecture format makes the book easy to read and comprehend, and Faust is an awesome scholar.

Analyzes the role nationalism played in the Confederacy and demonstrates how it changed and eventually defeated the social and political order it had been created to preserve.