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Southeastern Geographer, Volume 44, Number 1, May 2004, pp. 90-114  
(Article)

Published by The University of North Carolina Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/sgo.2004.0007>



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# American Hegemony and the Irony of C. Vann Woodward's "The Irony of Southern History"<sup>1</sup>

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*The noted historian C. Vann Woodward made an influential contribution to the understanding of Southern identity through his essays "The Search for Southern Identity" and "The Irony of Southern History." Woodward argued that what he considered to be the Southern experience of defeat, humiliation, and impotence in the face of intractable social problems set the South apart from the American national self-concept of a successful, prosperous, and victorious people. In the face of potentially dangerous entanglements abroad, Woodward concluded that the lessons of Southern history would be salutary if heeded by national leaders. The purpose of this article is to analyze Woodward's argument through the application of the framework of internal orientalism to reveal the ironies that underlie Woodward's assumptions, particularly with regard to the influence of the political hegemony of the United States and the cultural hegemony of the internal orientalist production of the South. Next, the parallels between the contemporary period and the time during which Woodward wrote his essays are assessed, revealing that Woodward's description of the position of the U.S. in the world is remarkably similar to mainstream post 9-11 rhetoric. A content analysis of George W. Bush's radio addresses shows that the national myths of innocence, virtue, success, and victory still have currency, followed by an examination of "Southern" critiques of U.S. foreign policy. These critiques do not employ the vision of Southern identity set forth*

*by Woodward, and the possible reasons for this divergence are discussed. Reading "The Irony of Southern History" through the lens of internal orientalism provides useful lessons for understanding the connections between regional and national histories.*

KEY WORDS: Southern identity, regional geography, irony, American national identity

## INTRODUCTION

C. Vann Woodward was perhaps the most eminent historian of the South in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but his stature surpassed regional boundaries. In fact, Drew Gilpin Faust (2000) suggested that Woodward was the greatest American historian of the past century. One of the areas in which Woodward made his most influential contribution was in the analysis of Southern identity. In 1960, Woodward's essays "The Search for Southern Identity" and "The Irony of Southern History" were published in his book *The Burden of Southern History*.<sup>2</sup> In "Search," Woodward argued that the historical experience of Southerners was the foundation of Southern identity; for Woodward, the Southern experience was characterized by grinding poverty, political impotency, military defeat, racial conflict, and social guilt. In "Irony," Wood-

ward claimed that the lessons of Southern history have something salutary to offer the United States in the international arena. These views were greeted in academia with much appreciation and acclaim (e.g., England 1961; Ochs 1961; Donald 1961; Abbot 1962).

The purpose of this paper is to focus on the arguments developed by Woodward in "The Irony of Southern History." In particular, I examine Woodward's thesis that Southern identity and experience—steeped in frustration, failure, and defeat—may potentially temper the national legends of innocence, virtue, success, and victory, specifically in the context of U.S. foreign policy. I also interrogate Woodward's assumptions behind what he calls "Southern history" and "Southern identity" to reveal their problematic nature. My analysis applies the framework of internal orientalism (Schein 1997; Jansson 2003), which (in the case of the U.S.) holds that the South serves as an internal spatial other and that a privileged national identity is produced in part through representations of the South as the opposite of everything for which "America" (as an imagined space) stands.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how by reading Woodward's essays on Southern identity through the framework of internal orientalism we can uncover ironies within his own arguments. In addition, I consider the contemporary relevance of Woodward's thesis through a content analysis of post-9/11 radio addresses of George W. Bush and the question of whether "Southern" critiques of U.S. foreign policy today are similar to the contributions Woodward envisioned Southerners making to the national discourse.<sup>4</sup>

Woodward's views on post-Reconstruc-

tion Southern history had become firmly established in most American history textbooks by the 1980s (Kousser and McPherson, 1982), so in looking at him we are seeing an influential reading of Southern history. A review of Woodward's thinking on issues of regional history and identity can help illustrate some of the strengths and shortcomings of his approach and can demonstrate the relevance of the framework of internal orientalism to regional geography. Thus I begin by examining this framework.

#### INTERNAL ORIENTALISM AND THE U.S. SOUTH

The notion of internal orientalism is derived from Said's (1979) influential work, *Orientalism*, in which he argued that "the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (pp. 1–2). In order to play this role effectively, the Orient must be represented as fundamentally different and set apart from the Occident; this process is commonly referred to as "othering." It is the distinction between these two territories that facilitates the othering of the Orient, a process which involves the creation of "elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' destiny, and so on" (Said 1979, 2–3).

The discourse of Orientalism emerges out of and perpetuates the domination of the Occident over the Orient, and this domination occurs along several axes of power. Said considered culture to be one of the axes and he discusses the imbalance of "cultural strength" between the Occident and Orient. He described the cultural

confrontation in this way: “. . . so far as the West was concerned during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an assumption had been made that the Orient and everything in it was, if not patently inferior to, then in need of corrective study by the West” (Said 1979, 40–41). Orientalism is also, then, a characteristic attitude with which one approaches the “other.” At every moment, the cultural elements that are seen to be characteristically Oriental are designated as subordinate to those of the Occident.

Orientalism is implicated in the production of national (and supranational) identities (Said 1979). The othering of a geographic space external to the state is part of the process of (re)creating a national identity. As a result, the negative representations of a region outside the boundaries of the state allow citizens of that state to infuse their national identity with the opposite, positive values. Recently scholars have begun to use Said’s framework to investigate Orientalist discourses *within* states (Piterberg 1996; Gladney 1994; Bakić-Hayden 1995; Schein 1997). However, these studies do not extend Said’s geographic imagination to conceptualize the internal other in spatial terms. From an explicitly spatial perspective, internal orientalism involves the othering of a region within the state and the simultaneous production of an exalted national identity (Jansson 2003, forthcoming).

Gregory (1995) contends that the production of an essentialized other is unavoidably linked to the creation of an essentialized self; thus the discourse of internal orientalism produces an essentialized regional (other) identity and an equally essentialized national (self) identity. But the residents of the othered region are still

citizens of the federal state, and therein lies an important difference between Orientalism and internal orientalism. As such, they will likely have more of a voice in the discourse of internal orientalism than the others of Orientalism, as they have formal access to some of the institutions of power within the state, and this voice may be used to either contest or participate in the discourse. They may also feel a strong connection to the imagined community of the nation (Anderson 1991) in spite of their othering. But as they participate in national institutions, those citizens of the othered region may be weighed down by certain burdens that are considered unique to that region.

While one can point to other candidates for the distinction, such as Appalachia (Shapiro 1978; Batteau and Obermiller 1983), the South has served most consistently and effectively in the role of the internal other in the U.S.. The South has long been considered the most “distinctive” region (i.e., the most divergent from the national norm) in the country. The region has been vilified and celebrated for as long as there has been a United States of America (see Greeson [1999] for an analysis of othering of the South in the early days of independence). Negative representations of the region (which typically refer to white Southerners) as racist, backward, intolerant, poor, and xenophobic reproduce a vision of the national identity as enlightened, progressive, tolerant, prosperous, and cosmopolitan (Zinn 1964; Woodward 1971a; Griffin 1995; Ayers 1996). Even positive representations of the region tend to reinforce the binary of “the South”/“America” (Ayers 1996) and thereby strengthen

internal orientalism. Such representations create essentialized “Southern” and “American” identities and have facilitated periods of political and economic domination of “the North” over “the South.” We might include the notion of cultural strength here as well, which suggests that the cultural elements identified as “Southern” would tend to be considered inferior to the national culture.<sup>5</sup> To select just one example, it is common for Southerners to report that non-Southerners assume they are dumb because of their Southern accents (e.g., Bragg 1997).

All this is not to say that identities called “Southern” and “American” are timeless essences that have not changed over time. However, what has been consistent throughout U.S. history is the binary that places the two identities in opposition (Ayers 1996). The valorization of the binary may change depending on circumstances, such that “Southern” is seen as better than “American,” but it is uncommon for observers to break out of this binary. Even during a period when many commentators consider the South to be a powerful and influential region (Sale 1976; Conkin 1998), there is evidence that this binary has what I would call a particular “representational inertia” that still envisions a South that stands in opposition to the rest of the country and that is hobbled by its historical baggage (e.g., Bowles 2002).

As it relates to history, internal orientalism encourages the view that the history of the region is problematic while the history of the country as a whole is one of progress and triumph, a perspective that purges the unattractive aspects of the nation’s history (see Loewen [1995] for a review of the erasure of national vices

from U.S. history textbooks). In fact, even though the othered region is part of the federal state, the events that occur within that region would tend to be seen as happening outside the space of the nation. In other words, in the case of the U.S., there would be a clear distinction between “American history” and “Southern history.” According to historian Edward Ayers (1996, 65): “Without obvious and clearly demarcated difference, it appears, there is no justification for Southern history.” I turn now to an examination of Woodward’s take on this historical binary.

#### THE IRONY OF SOUTHERN HISTORY AND THE SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVE

Woodward first published “The Irony of Southern History” in 1953. He began his discussion by comparing the experience of “Southerners” with that of “Americans,” contrasting the exalted national mythology with the problematic historical experience of the South. For Woodward (1993), the “inescapable facts” of Southern history were

that the South had repeatedly met with frustration and failure. It had learned what it was to be faced with economic, social, and political problems that refused to yield to all the ingenuity, patience, and intelligence that a people could bring to bear upon them . . . It had learned to live for long decades in quite un-American poverty, and it had learned the equally un-American lesson of submission. (pp. 190–191)

In contrast, Woodward (1993) explained the national “legend of success and victory” in this way:

The collective will of this country has simply never known what it means to be confronted by complete frustration. Whether by luck, by abundant resources, by ingenuity, by technology, by organizing cleverness, or by sheer force of arms America has been able to overcome every major historic crisis—economic, political, or foreign—with which it has had to cope. This remarkable record has naturally left a deep imprint upon the American mind. (p. 188)

Clearly Woodward found “Southern history” to be quite apart and distinct from the national experience.

It is worth noting at the outset that there are some problematic aspects of Woodward’s conception of Southern and U.S. history. In his discussion of “Southern history,” Woodward added no racial qualifiers (e.g., “white Southerners”), but it is often clear from the context that his discussion applied most directly to Southern whites. This is a complicated matter, as Woodward took pains in his academic work to remind residents of the South of what he considered to be the experiences they all shared, regardless of race or geography (Kousser and McPherson 1982, xix). Ultimately, Woodward was not explicit about how restrictive his use of the terms “Southerner” and “the South” was meant to be. To the extent that he used “Southerner” as a synonym for “white Southerner,” Woodward contributed to the long-standing practice of conflating “Southern” and “white” (Kirby 1986, xx; Sullivan 1996, 12). Similarly, his notion of the “American” identity and experience appeared most immediately relevant to white non-Southerners, considering the

extensive legacy of racial discrimination and oppression throughout the entire U.S.<sup>6</sup> Woodward also failed to problematize the notion that unified and monolithic identities (and histories) such as “American” and “Southern” exist, but in this omission he was certainly not unique.

A second, and equally important, consideration is that some historians disagree with Woodward’s views on the “burden” of Southern history. For example, Gaines Foster (1997) has argued that rather than seeing the outcome of the Civil War as a defeat for the South, white Southerners tended to believe instead that it represented but a temporary setback and that God was preparing them for a greater purpose; therefore white Southerners were not consumed with guilt and beset by a sense of defeat because of their history. Woodward faced similar critiques from Bradford (1997) and O’Brien (1988), so clearly Woodward’s take on Southern history is not the only interpretation.

Having laid out his vision of Southern history and identity, Woodward then explored the national identity, using Reinhold Niebuhr’s *The Irony of American History* (1952) as a point of departure. For Niebuhr, the illusions of innocence and virtue have historically comprised a central part of the national character (which, again, seems to assume an unspoken whiteness). However, the mature federal state commands unprecedented power on the world stage, and the country’s political leadership is compelled to use this power in ways that are anything but innocent and virtuous. As the U.S. clings to the infant illusions of virtue and innocence and wields its new-found power, it is precisely the combination of overweening power and exaggerated virtue that endangers it.

Woodward added what he identified as the “American legends” of success and victory to Niebuhr’s illusions of innocence and virtue, and the result was the ironic situation in which this supposedly innocent and virtuous world power finds itself. For Niebuhr, the irony is that while the U.S. has more power than ever before in its history, it is also at its most vulnerable state. Sure of its virtue, the U.S. is accused by enemies, and even some allies, of embodying vices that are considered “un-American” according to the (inherently problematic) national myths. In Woodward’s (1993) words: “Driven by these provocations and frustrations, there is the danger that America may be tempted to exert all the terrible power she possesses to compel history to conform to her own illusions. *The extreme . . . expression, would be the so-called preventive war*” (p. 193, emphasis added). Woodward (1993) then elaborated on the geopolitical context facing the U.S. in the early 1950s (employing the totalizing “we” to refer to U.S. citizens).

While we see ourselves as morally sound and regard our good fortune as the natural and just reward of our soundness, these views are not shared by large numbers of people in many parts of the world. They look on our great wealth not as the reward of our virtue but as proof of our wickedness . . . For great masses of people who live in abject poverty and know nothing firsthand of our system . . . are easily persuaded that their misery is due to capitalist exploitation rather than to the shortcomings of their own economies. [They] are taught to believe that we are . . . ar-

rogant, brutal, immoral, ruthless . . . Among their leaders are extremists ready with the conclusion that people so wicked do not deserve to live and that any means whatever used to destroy their system is justified by the end. (p. 203)

Woodward’s argument here seems to be at once critiquing and supporting the national mythology. The argument critiques by pointing out how the mythology is quite disconnected from the perceptions of the world’s people, but the characterization of the complaints about the U.S. as perceptions generated by unnamed, manipulative leaders, subtly reinforces the idea that these complaints have no basis in reality.

Woodward (1993, 205) then presented an analysis of U.S. foreign policy thinking during this period, arguing that “America suffers from a divided mind,” which on one side features an isolationist approach reminiscent of the white South’s attitude leading up to the Civil War.

More reminiscent of the way of the North, on the other hand, are those who hold that this is an irrepressible conflict, that a world divided against itself cannot stand, that the issue is a moral one, that we are morally obliged to liberate the enslaved peoples of the earth, punish the wicked oppressors, and convert the liberated peoples to our way of thought. *The true American mission*, according to those who support this view, *is a moral crusade on a world-wide scale.* (Woodward 1993, 206–7, emphasis added)

I have quoted Woodward at length here because of the remarkable parallels be-

tween his discussion of the opprobrium being unleashed against the U.S. during his time and the siege mentality expressed by U.S. politicians and pundits in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Woodward's comments eerily foreshadow George W. Bush's "revised" national security strategy (Bush 2002) as well as the President's initial reference to his response to the terrorist attacks as a "crusade." These uncomfortable parallels suggest that Woodward's arguments are worth considering today.

Woodward agreed with Niebuhr (1952) that it would be salutary if the national legends and illusions were disavowed. The chances for this seem questionable, since as Woodward (1993) pointed out, "participants in an ironic situation are rarely conscious of the irony, else they would not become its victims. Awareness must ordinarily be contributed by an observer, a nonparticipant, and the observer must have an unusual combination of detachment and sympathy" (p. 193). This observer must take a balanced approach, refusing to deny the real presence of virtue while simultaneously acknowledging the weaknesses created by excessive devotion to the virtuous self-image. Woodward had a solution to this problem. The ideal detached yet sympathetic observer who might shake the national identity of its attachment to its exalted legends is, in fact, the Southern historian. Historians of the South, as "nonparticipants" in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy, are advantageously positioned to introduce the experiences of tragedy and irony into the American outlook. The Southern historian's view would "constitute a warning that an overwhelming conviction in the righteousness of a cause is no guarantee of

its ultimate triumph, and that the policy which takes into account the possibility of defeat is more realistic than one that assumes the inevitability of victory" (Woodward 1993, 210).

The special contribution of historians of the South envisioned by Woodward is perhaps one that could be matched by other groups.<sup>7</sup> Certainly the experiences of Native Americans, African Americans, and many immigrants could also contribute a tragic and ironic perspective to the national outlook. Moreover, the notion that there is an ideal, detached observer in any context sounds somewhat archaic given the contemporary understanding of positionality (see Rose 1997). That said, what Woodward admirably sought was a more humble approach in U.S. foreign policy. For Woodward, should the U.S. incorporate the lessons of Southern history into its national worldview, the world would be a safer place and the U.S. would finally span the gulf that separates it from the rest of the world.

#### THE PERILS OF INTERPRETING WOODWARD

To critique C. Vann Woodward's writings on the national mythology is a perilous venture for at least two major reasons. Considering that Woodward wrote his initial piece during a period of anti-Communist hysteria in the U.S., one must acknowledge the courage it took for a historian to discuss the national mythology in such frank terms. Indeed, Woodward exhibited this courage from the very beginning of his academic career, as he never hesitated to challenge the racist white Southern orthodoxy. His attendance at the Southern Conference for Human Welfare

in 1938 in Birmingham, Alabama early in his academic career was no small matter, considering John Egerton's (1994) description of the climate in higher education at that time:

Within the colleges and universities themselves, a rigid orthodoxy of thought and opinion governed virtually every discipline and field of study. Scholars who dared to broaden the prevailing historical, scientific, political, religious, or racial perspectives of their communities were forced out of one institution after another across the South in the first three decades of this century . . . With rare exceptions, academic freedom was perpetually endangered, if it existed at all. (p. 26)

In light of this, it is quite possible that in Woodward's essays on the irony of Southern history, he played down his true opinions on the topic of the national mythology with the hope that he would more effectively reach people with his argument.

There is another reason why it is risky to critique these essays, and that has to do with Woodward's use of irony. Woodward was not only writing *about* irony, but he may have been simultaneously *employing* irony to make his points. Woodward was a master of the ironic technique, using situational irony and verbal irony in his writing. According to Kousser and McPherson (1982): "Situational irony is an ironic state of affairs or an event viewed as ironic; verbal irony is an ironic style of speaking or writing. The latter is a means of communication; the former is the thing communicated" (p. xx). In his essays on the irony of Southern history, Woodward was writing about a situational irony. The danger in interpreting his argument lies in

the extent to which he was using verbal irony, for the interpretation of irony is never safe, especially in the context of political arguments (Hutcheon 1994, 16). After all, the ironist "intends something quite different from the literal meaning of his [sic] words; the reader must reject the surface meaning and reconstruct the passage to find the hidden and incongruous 'real' meaning" (Kousser and McPherson 1982, xxi). Because of the complexity of the relation between the stated and the intended, the ironist may not always succeed in conveying the desired messages (Hutcheon 1994, 11). Woodward (1993) himself advised that, regarding irony, "[t]he better part of wisdom would seem to be caution in all things related to the concept" (p. 261). It seems quite possible that Woodward, in seeming to accept aspects of the national mythology, sought instead to critique them. While I cannot pretend to give the "true" reading of Woodward's essays, I strive to be attentive to the presence therein of verbal irony. I also direct my critique at Woodward's argument rather than Woodward himself, recognizing that what I have read as the author's argument may not in fact constitute his intended meaning. Such issues are the unavoidable perils of interpreting an ironist.

Perhaps the situation is not hopeless. Woodward continued to write on these themes for another 40 years, and this paper trail provides the reader with opportunities to assess the evolution of his arguments. In "A Second Look at the Theme of Irony," published in 1968, the Vietnam War provided the background for a reconsideration of his earlier themes. Woodward (1993, 230) noted that in "this fateful hour of opportunity" the U.S. finds

itself with Southerners at the helm of the federal government, yet these leaders offer no humble lessons to the nation and showed no sign of hegemonic restraint. In offering an explanation, Woodward suggested that Southern politicians who gain national prominence and hold national office must to an extent shed their Southernness, as a strong Southern identity is a handicap on the national scene; thus these Southerners are unlikely to critique the national legends and illusions.

In "Look Away, Look Away," Woodward (1993) looked back on his previous treatments of the theme of irony in Southern history. Interestingly, he warned the reader of the danger of abusing the ironic perspective: "The most egregious abuse of irony would be to use it to indulge in or foster cynicism with regard to human motives and plans and their consequences" (p. 261). The plans and consequences of which he wrote relate to the efforts of the civil rights movement, in the sense that civil rights activists discovered that their "successes" were not always accompanied by the desired results. This passage suggests that Woodward would generally shy away from writing about situational irony by employing verbal irony, though it is not clear to what extent this applies to his past essays.

In his follow-up essays to "Irony," Woodward's original thesis regarding the roots of Southern identity remained essentially unchanged. His consideration of the irony of Southern history embodies ironies of its own. The two major ironies in Woodward's argument are based in the concepts of global political hegemony and cultural hegemony, which are addressed in the next section.

#### THE IRONIES OF WOODWARD'S "IRONY"

##### *The "virtuousness" of American political hegemony*

In acknowledging the unprecedented power of the United States in the international arena, Woodward essentially described U.S. hegemony. In the geopolitical context, world hegemony refers to "the power of a state to exercise governmental functions over a system of sovereign states" (Arrighi 1990, 366). It is a power that is traditionally interpreted as "dominance" through a notion of "leadership," which involves voluntary compliance by the subordinate states (Modelski 1987). For Arrighi (1990, 367), a crucial aspect of hegemony is the additional moral power that accrues to the hegemonic state through its ability to frame the values that it sees itself as representing as universal values benefiting the rest of the world (a kind of global Gramscian cultural hegemony). As Taylor (1993) argued, one function of the hegemon is to define the identities of other states by showing them the direction in which they "should" be heading. Arrighi (1990) noted that these claims of universality are virtually always fraudulent, but nonetheless they comprise a critical element of the phenomenon of world hegemony. Such claims and the discourses from which they emerge are a central concern of critical geopolitics (Ó Tuathail 1996). "It is through discourse that leaders act" and foreign policy is rendered meaningful (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992, 191). But the operation of this kind of world political system is problematic for another reason beyond the fraudulent claims of the discourses, one with serious ramifications

for the populations of states within this system. A potential contribution of the hegemon resides in its techniques of oppression, as a state may attain hegemony “because it can claim with credibility to be the motor force of a universal expansion of the collective power of rulers vis-à-vis subjects” (Arrighi 1990, 368). This view of hegemony suggests that the actions of the hegemon, though couched in exalted language, may in fact prove disastrous for a large proportion of humanity.

Woodward’s analysis of the role of the U.S. as a global hegemon *appears* to accept the validity of the national legends and illusions; his main concern seems to be that U.S. leaders might buy into these myths to such an extent that they institute foreign policies that are dangerous to U.S. citizens and to the rest of the world. Thus the argument relies on a rather benign view of the actions of the U.S. at the international scale, a view that does not hold up to scrutiny when one considers the evidence. According to the Foreign Affairs Division of the Congressional Research Service, there were well over 150 instances of the use of American armed forces abroad between 1798 and World War II (Blum 1995, 444–452). Many of these uses of force involved no bloodshed, but there are enough examples of the slaughter of “foreign” peoples that one certainly has ample evidence that the role of the U.S. in the international arena has hardly been unequivocally benign (e.g. the killing of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos at the beginning of the twentieth century as the U.S. crushed their drive for independence [Chomsky and Herman 1979, 231]). Indeed, the event that symbolically heralded the emergence of the U.S. as a hegemonic super-

power was the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, at the cost of over 150,000 Japanese lives. Hardt and Negri (2000) write that throughout the twentieth century “the United States, far from being that singular and democratic nation its founders imagined it to be . . . was the author of direct and brutal imperialist projects, both domestically and abroad,” and particularly in the Cold War period when “protecting countries across the entire world from communism (or, more accurately, Soviet imperialism) became indistinguishable from dominating and exploiting them with imperialist techniques” (pp. 176–177). Limitations of space preclude an analysis of U.S. interventions overseas, but such critical studies are available (e.g., Landau 1988; Musicant 1990; Blum 1995, 2000).<sup>8</sup>

Recall that Woodward cautioned against the potential abuses of irony, which might foster cynicism. This passage is itself ironic (in a way that does not seem intended) because if U.S. history demonstrates anything, it is precisely the need for more skepticism (or even, in his words, “cynicism”) toward the proclamations of the state’s leaders and the rhetoric that seeks to justify U.S. foreign policy.<sup>9</sup> Woodward (1993) presumed that during the Vietnam War, the President and Secretary of State were “pursuing the national myths of innocence and invincibility and with no apparent acknowledgement of the Niebuhrean stricture that ‘power cannot be wielded without guilt’” (p. 237). A more skeptical or cynical analysis, consistent with the methods of critical geopolitics, would distinguish between the rhetoric of the war leaders and the true purposes of the war, which according to some scholars

involved an attempt to prevent Vietnam from pursuing an independent economic path outside of the capitalist world economy.<sup>10</sup> Woodward's caution regarding the use of irony is notable (and ironic) when one considers the fierce critique (and yes, even "cynicism") embodied in his historical analysis of the South (e.g., Woodward, 1971b). If we take Woodward's argument at face value (and as we have seen, that may not be a safe thing to do), the irony here is that a historian so acutely aware of the fallibility and the limitations of the South would appear to fall prey to the very national myths that he would have shattered so completely if they were Southern and not American.

*The cultural hegemony of  
the idea of America*

The second irony regarding Woodward's argument is based in the dynamic that helps create the national myths in the first place: the discourse of internal orientalism. This brings us to the second aspect of hegemony related to Woodward's essays—cultural hegemony. Gramsci (1971) employed the notion of cultural hegemony to explain the dominance of certain ideologies in a society. A hegemonic ideology is propagated primarily through civil society, though it is also connected to the interests of the state. The discourse of internal orientalism operates hegemonically in the U.S. (Jansson 2003); the idea that "the South" and "America" are fundamentally different is the dominant (though not necessarily exclusive) way of thinking about the relationship between the two entities (Ayers 1996). This difference allows negative representations of the South to contribute the opposite, positive characteristics to the national identity.

Having established this fundamental difference between "the South" and "America" (as well as their taken-for-granted whiteness), internal orientalism discursively separates Southern history from U.S. history, so that what is characteristic of Southern history is exactly the opposite of the national story of a steady march of progress. The second main irony is that it is precisely this hegemonic "othering" of the South that helped create both the exalted national myths and a negative Southern identity. In other words, "America" is already aware of the lessons of Southern history—it simply confines them to the imagined space of the South and finds them irrelevant to the national experience. There is a metaphorical chasm between the ideas of "the South" and "America" that will not be bridged with ease, and the result is that advice from the South (to the extent that it is identified as emanating from a "Southern" perspective) will not be seen as obviously relevant to the country as a whole, or even worthy of acknowledgement. It is important to remember that Woodward envisioned the advice of the detached Southern historian in the context of the potentially dangerous role of the U.S. in the international arena. It is to that geopolitical context that I now turn.

IS WOODWARD'S THESIS  
RELEVANT TODAY?  
EMPIRICAL QUESTIONS

Having discussed the ironies embedded in Woodward's writing on irony, I move on to the empirical questions raised by the consideration of these themes in the contemporary period. The excerpts from "Irony" reviewed earlier suggest that the geopolitical situation of the U.S. dur-

ing the time Woodward was writing has considerable similarities to the present. If this is so, one immediately wonders what other conditions are shared between the 1950s and today. The first empirical question I ask is: To what extent does the current rhetoric about the “war on terrorism” and the military invasion of Iraq reflect the national legends that Woodward discussed? Does the current U.S. political leadership see the country as being in the kind of position Woodward described in 1953? If there are indeed parallels between the geopolitical situation of the U.S. in 1953 and 2003, at least at the level of discourse and rhetoric, this raises the second empirical question: Are there self-identified “Southern” critiques that notice the approaching danger, and if such criticism exists, are they framed in the way Woodward envisioned?<sup>11</sup>

#### *Bush in his own words*

To address the first question regarding the rhetoric of the “war on terrorism” and the invasion of Iraq, I conducted a simple content analysis of President George W. Bush’s radio addresses from September 2001 through the end of 2002. Content analysis emerged as a quantitative methodology as a way to count the number of times certain topics or codes appear in a text, but it can be constructively supplemented by a direct examination of the relevant parts of the text (Silverman 2001, 122). Content analysis has been used in the past to analyze the rhetoric of U.S. presidents (Prothro 1956; Toolin 1983; Hart 1984; Kessel 1974; and O’Loughlin and Grant 1990) as well as the worldviews of the leaders of small countries (Brunn 2000). These studies reveal the stated priorities (though not necessarily

the underlying agenda) of political leaders at various points in history. Because of this paper’s focus on hegemony, I found it desirable to analyze directly the statements of the President to assess the extent to which he used the national mythology to justify his administration’s foreign policy.

I focused on radio addresses because these are the President’s vehicle to speak directly to the U.S. public without being filtered by journalists. Using the codes “success/victory” and “innocence/virtue,” I examined the addresses to assess whether these archetypal national traits were an important part of the President’s rhetoric. I noted the occurrences of the codes in the addresses and excerpted the relevant passages, some of which are presented in Table 1. The number of excerpts demonstrates the frequency of the President’s use of these codes, and the excerpts show the ways the codes were employed. Through the words of President Bush one gets a sense of the U.S. as innocent (“great tragedy has come to us”), virtuous (we will help the Afghan people in spite of our own suffering), and victorious and successful (“we will prevail,” we will achieve victory through decisive actions). From this survey, it would appear that the exalted national myths discussed by Woodward maintain a vigorous presence in the rhetorical formation of “American” identity by the highest levels of the U.S. political leadership.<sup>12</sup>

#### *The “Southern” critique*

The evidence we have seen thus far suggests that the current period may be in some sense analogous to the time of “The Irony of Southern History.” Now it is necessary to move to the second empirical question, regarding the presence of self-

*Table 1: Content Analysis and Textual Excerpts from President George W. Bush's Radio Addresses on the War on Terrorism and the Proposed War Against Iraq*  
(Source: [www.whitehouse.gov/news/radio/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/radio/))

Date & Official Topic	Code: Success and Victory	Code: Innocence and Virtue
9/15/2001 Attack Response	We will prevail.	Great tragedy has come to us, and we are meeting it with the best that is in our country, with courage and concern for others.
9/29/2001 Progress Made in War on Terrorism	We did not seek this conflict, but we will win it.	—The United States respects the people of Afghanistan and we are their largest provider of humanitarian aid. —Our greatest advantages are the patience and resolve of the American people.
10/6/2001 Humanitarian Aid to Afghanistan		Helping people in great need is . . . a central part of the American tradition. Even as we fight evil regimes we are generous to the people they oppress.
10/20/2001 Terrorism	We will also defeat the terrorists by building an enduring prosperity that promises more opportunity and better lives for all the world's people.	Anyone who deliberately delivers anthrax is engaged in a crime and an act of terror, a hateful attempt to harm innocent people and frighten our citizens.
11/3/2001 Anthrax	We will solve these crimes, and we will punish those responsible.	
11/10/2001 War on Terrorism	The only alternative to victory is a future of terror. So we will fight for victory.	
11/24/2001 Thanksgiving	We will fight for as long as it takes, and we will prevail.	We're thankful for the character of our fellow citizens who are flying flags and donating to charity and comforting those who grieve. . . . This country has a good and generous heart.
12/22/2001 Economy, Terrorism		So many good-hearted Americans are giving time or money to make sure that there's a hot meal for homeless people, a Christmas present for disadvantaged children, food for the hungry in foreign lands, or just a visit to bring comfort to someone who is lonely or sick.
12/29/2001 Year in Review	We cannot know how long this struggle will last. But it can end only one way: in victory for America and the cause of freedom.	We have seen the strength of America in countless acts of kindness, compassion and courage.
4/20/2002 Terrorism	We are determined, we are steadfast, and we will continue for as long as it takes, until the mission is done.	
9/14/2002 Saddam Hussein		We must choose between a world of fear, or a world of progress. We must stand up for our security and for the demands of human dignity. By heritage and choice, the United States will make that stand.
9/28/2002 Iraqi Threat		We are determined to build a future of security and peace for ourselves and for the world.

Table 1: Continued

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10/5/2002 Iraqi Regime Threat	The United States does not desire military conflict, because we know the awful nature of war. Our country values life, and we will never seek war unless it is essential to security and justice.
12/7/2002 Iraq	Americans seek peace in the world. War is the last option for confronting threats. . . . By showing our resolve today, we are building a future of peace.

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identified “Southern” critiques of the actions of the U.S. I must be clear about what I mean by “self-identified Southern critiques.” I am not defining *a priori* what a “Southern” critique can and cannot be in terms of its specific content and focus. Woodward framed his analysis of U.S. actions abroad from the perspective of a U.S. citizen who grew up in the South, someone who therefore bore a particular regional burden which could (ironically) contribute something to the national discourse. Thus, Woodward explicitly identified his critique as emerging from his experience as a Southerner. As I am interested in the existence of similar critiques of U.S. foreign policy today, I sought analyses that were explicitly and intentionally presented as arising from the experience of the author as a Southerner, whatever that might mean for that individual. I do not assume a monolithic Southern identity; rather, I expect that what it means to be Southern will vary from person to person. I also do not automatically assume that such critiques will come only from white residents of the South. In this case, a “Southern” critique is one that is explicitly framed as being grounded in what are considered (by the critic) to be Southern

experiences and principles. Thus, for the purposes of this article, a critique of U.S. foreign policy by a native of the South was not a “Southern” critique unless it explicitly identified with a perspective shaped by the author’s life experience as a Southerner. I employed this rubric not because it is completely unproblematic but because it closely mirrors the way Woodward framed his own critique; as I am analyzing Woodward’s argument, this is the most relevant rubric to adopt.

There are in fact a few such self-identified “Southern” critiques, and given that many consider the South as “a region that prides itself on its patriotism” (Pharr 2003, 2), such critiques are notable. I examined the extent to which these critiques are explicitly embedded in a vision of Southern identity and Southern historical experience, focusing first on the opinions expressed by the white Southern nationalist movement. As several researchers have noted (Warf and Grimes 1997; Alderman and Good 1997; McPherson 2000; Webster and Kidd 2002), Southern nationalists have a considerable presence on the World Wide Web, and that is where one can find the bulk of their assessments of the wars on terrorism and Iraq. For exam-

ple, the League of the South, a Southern nationalist organization founded in 1994 that seeks independence for “the Southern people” (Webster 2004), has posted a “special statement” on its website ([www.dixienet.org](http://www.dixienet.org)), “Regarding Bush and War.” The statement argues that “President Bush lacks the moral authority to start a war with Iraq,” largely because he is guilty of many of the transgressions of which he repeatedly accuses Saddam Hussein, and the statement furthermore claims that there is no justification for the invasion of Iraq (League of the South 2002). This part of the critique is rather general and could be offered by anyone, but the statement does go on to contextualize it as a “Southern” critique.

Nor would this war be in the best interests of the Southern people. Our men historically have shed their blood in America’s wars far out of proportion to their numbers in the overall population. A war with Iraq in the volatile powderkeg of the Middle East would put many Southern servicemen in harm’s way for no purpose other than extending the reach and power of the American Empire. (League of the South 2002)

Interestingly, in light of Woodward’s argument, there is no reference here to a Southern experience with defeat and failure, but rather a simple cost-benefit analysis based on the notion that Southerners serve in the military disproportionately compared to other American regions. Also on the League of the South’s website is J. Michael Hill’s piece giving a “Southern perspective” on the war on terrorism. Hill argues that the elites who control the U.S. federal government and national economy

adhere to a “post-Christian” ideology and constitute a “deracinated class” of technocrats who are “committed internationalists and proponents of global democracy, global capitalism, and even empire” and thus “have no loyalty to any nation, regional identity, State, or local community” (Hill 2003). He continues:

Simply put, the Washington ruling elites are not about to do the hard things necessary to protect us from an aggressive Islamic jihad. To do so would undermine the very ideology that keeps them in power. If we are to successfully counter the threat, we must first free ourselves from the grip of their alien ideology and then declare to Islam that it is our intention, as Christians, to defend our God-given inheritance. It would appear that the South, as the last bastion of historic Christendom, would be best suited to make this bold assertion. (Hill 2003)

Hill clearly articulates the link between a particular religious view and the region of the South; thus, for Hill, the imagined space of the South is also a religious space (see Webster and Leib 2002), in addition to a racialized space. Hill does not spell out here what “our God-given inheritance” actually is, but as Euan Hague (2002) and Gerald Webster (2004) have pointed out, Hill’s writings have conceptualized the South’s heritage as an inheritance of (racially-coded) patriarchy, hierarchy, and commitment to local control.

A piece by League member Mike Tuggle (2003) employs an essentialized notion of culture and the assumption of a “God-given [human] nature” to argue that “traditional cultures” are “the essential human context for personal and social growth,

and the foundation of self-government,” and thus the United States should not seek to convert traditional peoples to modern “American” ways of life. Tuggle traces the emergence of the U.S. as a superpower to the Southern nationalist’s paragon of evil, Abraham Lincoln, who greatly enlarged and centralized the powers of the federal government; thus the ability of the U.S. to assume the role of global hegemon is born in its original imperialist conquest, that of the South in the Civil War. Tuggle’s points are closely echoed by Wayne Carlson (2003), who refers to the “infidel” Lincoln and offers what he considers a truly Christian analysis of the war on Iraq. Again we see a “Southern view” of U.S. foreign policy that is conspicuously grounded in religious belief and in a particular conceptualization of the historical experience of white Southerners. This view, of course, promotes a problematically unified notion of the experience and beliefs of white Southerners when the reality of Southern history defies such homogenization.

An essay by Clyde Wilson (2001), a professor of history at the University of South Carolina and a founder of the League of the South, addresses the national myths of success and virtue. Wilson implicitly criticizes the morality of Bush’s attack on Afghanistan but does not challenge the prospects for “victory.” The *Dixie Daily News* website ([www.southerncaucus.org](http://www.southerncaucus.org)) has several links to articles that are critical of the Bush administration, but few of these articles are written from a self-consciously “Southern” perspective; for the most part they do not challenge the notion that the U.S. might be successful in its war aims but generally question whether those aims are in the best interests of the people of the Middle East or the U.S.

Most of these essays present an essentialized notion of Southern identity as white, Christian, classless, and monolithic. There is little recognition of the contested nature of the historical experience of the South and the myriad perspectives on Southern identity. What is thereby produced is an ahistorical, racialized Southern identity that, while serving a particular political agenda, is blind to the real diversity that has always been characteristic of the region.

There are also “Southern” critiques of Bush’s wars that do not come from the Southern nationalists. One is the statement released by the Highlander Research and Education Center, based in New Market, Tennessee. Highlander announced in a recent newsletter that it opposed these wars, and its reasons consisted of a nuanced blend of class and region. The Center notes that “for over 70 years, we have worked with poor people, people of color, and young people” (Pharr 2003, 1), and that the consequences of the war on Iraq will fall disproportionately on the people with whom Highlander has worked for the following reasons: 1) the South is the poorest region in the U.S.; 2) the prevalence of military bases in the region; 3) military recruiters are generally welcomed into Southern schools; and 4) the military is often the only viable employment option for the South’s rural people of color. There is also criticism of “the Texas oilman Bush’s lust for war against Iraq” and the greed that is thought to inspire the push to war (Pharr 2003, 2). The overall tenor of the article seems to prioritize class as a concern, but it also clearly notes the interconnections with region and race: “We in the South know there has been class warfare for a very long time, and many of

us—poor and working class people—have been its bull’s eye” (Pharr 2003, 3). The South, as Highlander conceives it, is not so unique as to prevent interregional and international class alliances—the Center “supports the struggles of poor people around the world” (Pharr 2003, 3).

The Institute for Southern Studies (ISS) has also been critical of Bush’s wars, through its website and through the publication *Southern Exposure*. The Institute is the home of the Southern Peace Research and Education Center (SPREC), which was launched after September 11, 2001 and which sees its mission as encouraging the development of an alternative vision for the South, one that moves the region beyond its close relationship with militarism.<sup>13</sup> The ISS and SPREC have posted a statement against the Iraq war on the ISS website in an effort to mobilize U.S. citizens to “stop the war profiteers and end the corporate invasion of Iraq.”<sup>14</sup> This critique of war and corporate profiteering is based on the South’s disproportionate representation in the armed forces (“The South represents only a third of the nation’s population, but supplies 42% of the country’s enlisted soldiers—and 56% of troops in the continental U.S. are stationed in the South”), the militaristic record of Southern members of Congress, the South’s economic dependency on military contracts, and the use of Southern-made weapons against civilian populations around the world.<sup>15</sup> These are the common themes found in the web-based anti-war critique and in the pages of *Southern Exposure*. In fact, the magazine produced a special 2002 issue entitled “Missiles and Mag-nolias: The South at War,” which detailed the economic, political, and social impacts of the military-industrial complex in the

South. The magazine has continued to cover these stories (see Green and Kromm 2002; Kromm 2003).

The ISS and SPREC writers are not as explicit as the League of the South commentators in linking their critiques to a specific rendering of Southern identity, but they clearly place their critique in the context of the workings of the military-industrial complex in the South, and they argue that this complex uniquely implicates and compromises the South:

Today, more than any other region, the South remains ensnared by the politics, economics and culture of war, reaping the rewards—and shouldering the burdens—of administering a seemingly permanent military-industrial complex. The region hosts more than its share of war business; elects the most hawkish politicians to office; and supplies 42 percent of the nation’s enlistees—all products of the unique relationship with militarism that took root in . . . the South half a century ago. (Green and Kromm 2002, p. 15)

This piece and the other articles in the special issue of *Southern Exposure* document the impacts on the South of the region’s entanglement with the war machine, but this critique does not specifically identify a Southern identity or philosophy as the inspiration for the critique. In this view, Southerners should speak out against the military-industrial complex and the waging of war not because of any historical humility and perspective they might have acquired but because of the negative consequences of the war machine on the people of the South and others around the world, and because the region is so heavily permeated by the trappings of this milita-

rism. Thus the ISS and SPREC activists do not offer the kind of “Southern” critique that Woodward envisioned,<sup>16</sup> with perhaps one exception. *Southern Exposure* editor and publisher Chris Kromm (2003) writes that the region’s “intimate entanglement with militarism also creates a culture uniquely hostile to dissent. In states such as North Carolina . . . news outlets are especially reluctant to balance their coverage of troops shipping out with stories about citizens questioning the war” (pp. 2–3). This mirrors Woodward’s (1993) discussion of the intolerance of dissent in the South from the 1830s to (at least) the Civil War, when the power structure in the South clamped down on dissent regarding slavery and the plantation system. Woodward was concerned that the U.S. in the post World War II era is going down the same road by stifling frank and critical evaluation of national economic policies in the name of anti-Communism. Kromm makes a similar point without referencing events from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Kromm’s essay and all of the other articles in the magazine focus on the South’s recent (post-World War II) experience, which is a more limited temporal reach than Woodward’s. Overall, rather than trying to take the perspective of a detached observer, *Southern Exposure’s* point of view explicitly acknowledges the significant role that the South plays in any war efforts, and thus it becomes even more important for Southerners to voice objections to the militarism of the federal state.

Of the three “Southern” critiques reviewed above, the Southern nationalists are most direct and explicit in framing their analysis in the unambiguous terms of a particular vision of (white) Southern

identity, though certainly their critique is not what Woodward had in mind. Given their sensitivity to the contested nature of social life in the South, it is understandable that the Highlander Center and ISS eschew references to a homogenized and essentialized regional identity. Their critiques are certainly informed by certain aspects of the South’s history, but emphasize the region’s recent past and do not cover the historical ground Woodward considered relevant to the experience of the U.S. as a hegemon.

So none of the contemporary “Southern” critiques offer sobering lessons to the federal state that derive from the humble historical experience of Southerners, even though the present period seems to have some geopolitical parallels with the time of Woodward’s “Irony.” Why might this be? It may be that Woodward’s conception of Southern identity resulted more from his desire for a truly free and just South than it did from the historical record, and if so one would not expect it to be a prominent part of the public discourse of any period. Woodward lived during a period where improvements in social conditions in the South were attained haltingly and always incompletely; thus an awareness of the collective limitations of Southerners to institute social change and an appreciation of the difficulty of achieving lofty goals would have been of practical value. Clearly, there is a significant tradition in white Southern history that rejects any guilt or historical “burden” and asserts that the white South had it right all along, and we see this coming through in the League of the South statements. The Southern nationalists share Woodward’s interest in the question of “Southern identity,” though they do not share his poli-

tics. The Highlander Center and ISS share much of Woodward's political vision, though they do not see the issue of regional identity in quite the same way. As noted above, Woodward's scholarship was related to his activism, and perhaps he saw his take on Southern identity as something that could advance the cause at both the regional and national scales. As such, it may have been a conceptualization of Southern identity that was of limited relevance outside of the specific struggles that engaged Woodward's considerable talents and dedication.

#### CONCLUSION

It is important to emphasize that Woodward may have made a conscious decision in "Irony" to minimize the degree to which that essay would be seen as controversial, so as to increase the chances that his argument about the lessons of Southern history would have its desired effect. Wherever we might locate the ironies of "Irony," the point is not to impugn Vann Woodward, but rather to assess the approach of an eminent historian toward questions of regional and national identities and the intersection of these with regional and national histories. Questions of geographic identity continue to inspire research in geography (Alderman and Beavers 1999; Crang 1999; Paasi 2002; Yorgason 2002), and the contribution of the framework of internal orientalism to this research agenda is based in part on a recognition that regional and national histories and identities must be seen as inherently linked rather than as discrete and isolatable entities. Attention to the dynamics of internal orientalism in the case of the U.S. reveals that regional and national histories and identities are

as much process as product—they are continually negotiated and represented, contested and reified, all within the context of power relations that implicate various scales. "Southern identity"—what is said about it, what it means to various individuals, the uses to which the idea is put—cannot be understood except in relation to "American identity." A similar relationship holds for "Southern history" and "American history."

Woodward's prescience in describing the "crusade" of George Bush's preventive wars still stands as a startling insight. And with the U.S. government already sizing up its next target in the wake of the conquest of Iraq in the name of the exalted "American" values, the predicament U.S. citizens find themselves in cries out for a thousand Woodwards.

#### NOTES

1. I would like to thank Colin Flint and Lorraine Dowler for their comments on a previous version of this manuscript, as well as the anonymous reviewers and Derek Alderman for their insightful comments that forced me to sharpen my arguments and encouraged me to jettison the detritus that was getting in the way. I may not have pleased everyone fully, but I have attempted in good faith to address all the criticisms and suggestions.

2. "Search" was first published in 1958 in *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (vol. 34, pp. 321–338), and "Irony" was first published in 1953 in *The Journal of Southern History* (vol. 19, pp. 3–19).

3. I agree with Martinez (2003) that the terms "America" and "American" should not be used as synonyms for United States and citizens of the U.S., as they apply to and are embraced by peoples from all of the Americas. Thus I will avoid their use as much as possible, though

given that Woodward uses “Americans” to refer to citizens of the U.S., it will be difficult to entirely eliminate use of the term.

4. It is common to use the lower case when referring to the South as an adjective (southern) or to the residents of the region (southerner). However, in this article I capitalize “Southern” and “Southerner” to emphasize the point that I see “the South” as an imagined space that is linked to “America” and must be seen in the context of the internal orientalism that joins the two; hence “Southern” and “Southerner” refer to the discursive meanings of these labels, rather than implying some objective, non-discursive reality that the lower case would suggest.

5. I do not want to reify the notion of culture by adopting the idea of “cultural strength.” I do, however, wish to stress that in the realm that is generally referred to as “culture,” both Orientalism and internal orientalism privilege the culture of the self over the culture of the other. This binary obscures the very production of the idea of culture and the power relations that permeate both the conceptualization and the practice of culture.

6. It is certainly possible for racial minorities outside the South to identify with the national mythology in the context of foreign policy and to regard the South as an inferior region within the U.S. But given the racism that has permeated U.S. history from the beginning, they are perhaps more likely to have a sober assessment of the national mythology.

7. Woodward admitted that similar analyses could emerge from regions other than the South (Woodward 1993, 211), though he sees the South as their most logical source.

8. It may seem unfair to criticize Woodward for being unfamiliar with analyses written after his original essays. As discussed earlier, Woodward did not revise his initial thesis in his later essays; in addition, there were contemporaries

of Woodward, such as I.F. Stone (1963), who wrote incisive and critical analyses of U.S. foreign policy during Woodward’s time, most notably in *I.F. Stone’s Weekly*, founded in 1953, and before that in *The Nation*. And some of the more deplorable events in U.S. foreign policy history happened even before Woodward was born.

9. To be fair to Woodward, he may have meant only to refer to people involved in social movements, rather than politicians; he is not explicit on this matter.

10. See, for example, Chomsky (1969) and Hardt and Negri (2000, 178).

11. There are certain geopolitical reasons why these periods might be similar. In the late ’40s and early ’50s the U.S. was challenged in its global dominance by the Soviet Union, and in the late ’90s we saw the emergence of “terrorist networks” (exemplified by al Qaeda’s destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001) that posed a new challenge to U.S. hegemony in the post-Cold War era.

12. One might argue that George W. Bush, as a native of Texas, is indeed a Southerner himself. Does the flagging of the national mythology by a Southern politician then nullify Woodward’s thesis? Not necessarily. Admittedly, many observers count Texas as part of the South (e.g. Frank 1999; Grantham 1988, 30), though others have argued that Texas must be seen as part of the Southwest (Odum 1936, 5) or considered more Western than Southern (Key 1949, 254). Jewett (1999, 2002) argued that while Texas joined the Confederacy in the Civil War, Texans were also clear about their desire to preserve a Texan identity distinct and apart from a Southern or Confederate identity. I argue that Bush is seen by the public more as a Texan and Westerner (through the cowboy image) than a Southerner. For example, a resident of central Pennsylvania described the President as “a plain-talking Texan” (Rosenblum, Danahy

and Miller 2003) in an article about the Iraq war. Europeans see Bush as a “gunslinging cowboy” (Sanger 2003) with a “folksy Texas style” (Hoge 2003), a perception that appears consistent with the President’s own self-image (Friedman 2003). Lastly, we must remember that Woodward was stressing the potential contribution of Southern *historians* to the national discourse. Any politician from the South who attains the presidency would by definition probably lack the detachment Woodward sees as necessary for the cautionary Southern lessons to inform national policy (recall his discussion of the Southerners who led the country during Vietnam).

13. In the words of the SPREC: “We investigate the impacts of militarism on the South and country; We provide vital information and education to community leaders and policy-makers; We assist grassroots groups with information, analysis and strategy; We counter the media blockade of alternative voices through publications and media appearances. We help unite activists across lines of races, class and gender to build an inclusive movement for peace.” (<http://www.southernstudies.org/sprec.asp>)

14. Available at <http://www.southernstudies.org/reports/readthestatement.pdf>.

15. Enlistment data from <http://www.southernstudies.org/sprec.asp>. I have investigated the fatalities suffered by U.S. troops in the war on Iraq to determine whether the Southern states have in fact suffered a disproportionate number of deaths in this war. Data were compiled by the website Iraq Coalition Casualty Count (<http://lunaville.org/warcasualties/Summary.aspx>) from the U.S. Department of Defense and based on the hometowns listed for the soldiers, and I defined the South as the eleven states of the Confederacy. As of October 24, 2003, soldiers from the South comprised 32.8% of the fatalities of the U.S. armed forces. According to U.S. Census Bureau data as

of July 2002, the South had 30.3% of the national population. Thus the South has experienced slightly more deaths than the rest of the country, though the disproportionality is quite small.

16. In one article from the special issue there is a specific reference to Woodward’s views on Southern identity, though it results in what appears to be a non-sequitur. In an article on the Citadel, a military college in Charleston, S.C., where first-year students are subjected to brutal hazing rituals, Jenny Stepp writes: “C. Vann Woodward . . . understood Southern identity to be rooted largely in the experiences of defeat and poverty that are so foreign to much of the rest of the American experience. The desire to suffer through a tortuous period of hazing in order to be remade into a ‘Southern gentleman,’ is not then unlike the South’s readiness to hand over basics like environmental protection or taxes in return for low-wage jobs that foster an illusion of economic independence, while granting ever more control over the Southern economy” (Stepp 2002, 28).

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