

Discontinuity or Continuity? The Historiography of the Woodward-Williamson Controversy, 1955–2020

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Introduction

Segregation laws, known as the Jim Crow laws, were passed predominantly in the South within two decades after the end of Reconstruction¹ in 1877. Although systems of racial separation existed long before this time, these laws, whether state or local municipal statutes, made it legitimate to restrict African Americans' access to public spaces and accommodation, from public transportation such as streetcars and railroad cars, to public spaces such as parks, restaurants, hotels, and toilets.²

The Woodward-Williamson debate is one of the best-known academic discussions regarding when, why, and how Jim Crow developed. C. Vann Woodward argued in his best-selling history book *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955) that legalized segregation in the South was not inevitable, and appeared only in the 1890s, as opposed to the previously held belief that it appeared immediately after the Reconstruction period.³ Since then, many scholars have been challenging or complementing the Woodward thesis and sometimes casting new perspectives from different angles. Among the numerous scholars who joined the debate, Joel Williamson was one of the most avid opponents of the

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1. Reconstruction, or the Reconstruction era, was the period in which a series of attempts were made by the federal government to readmit the eleven former Confederate states to the Union. For more details, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper Collins, 1988).

2. Nikki L. M. Brown and Barry M. Stentiford, eds., *The Jim Crow Encyclopedia: Greenwood Milestones in African American History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), xvii; Mary Beth Norton, Carol Sheriff, and David W. Blight, *A People & A Nation: A History of the United States* (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2008), 523.

3. John David Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001), vii; C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

Woodward thesis.⁴

Though more than half a century has passed since the first edition of *Strange Career*, the debate remains unsettled and continues to be updated. This is partly due to various topics and periods the debate deals with, and is a response to current academic trends in Southern history. Recent scholarship on Southern history has constructed a longitudinal historical perspective, and more historians are interested in finding out connections among historical events that have been analyzed separately from one another. The wide range of topics and periods that the debate encompasses to explain the origin of Jim Crow does not complicate the discussion with too much content, but rather it makes a longitudinal historical analysis possible from multifaceted perspectives. Analyzing what scholars agree on in the debate should enable us to see Southern history from different angles and eventually construct a whole historical map of the South.

In this period of post-legal segregation, de facto segregation in particular requires more attention and analysis from academia. Despite the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s achieving full equality under the law and Barack Obama winning the presidency twice in 2008 and 2012, the United States has not yet overcome the issues of de facto segregation and racial inequality. Although de jure or legal segregation was abolished in the 1960s, de facto segregation continues to restrict African Americans' access to certain social opportunities in areas such as housing and employment and still degrades them even without any implicit mention of color or race.⁵

The strongest message Woodward provided in his *Strange Career* was that there must have been “forgotten alternatives” to race relations in the Jim Crow era. As he was born and grew up in the era of Jim Crow, Woodward had an incentive to make people see the possibility of more peaceful race relations. His attitude was sometimes criticized as “presentism” by other historians. However, one important role of history is to tell us that what led us to today was not inevitable,⁶ and this helps us to consider whether there are “forgotten alternatives” for our future. In order for the country to move forward on social justice issues,

4. Joel R. Williamson, *After Slavery: The Negro in the South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861–1877* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965).

5. Recent racial discrimination has become much harder to break because it has evolved into a fuzzier and more elusive form of racism, subtly and intricately woven into the social structure. In the midst of recent struggles for more racial equality and racial justice, the Black Lives Matter movement has been growing. This movement has been fighting not only to end police brutality but also to remove confederate monuments. Along with this, the ongoing COVID-19 crisis has arguably caused more people to pay attention to social and economic inequality, which has disproportionately affected African Americans. “Black Lives Matter: Birth of a Movement,” *The Guardian*, January 17, 2017.

6. Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (New York: Harper Collins, 2015), 241.

people must look back on the past and understand the circumstances that have led to the current situation, and so understanding the origins of racial segregation is crucial to this process.⁷

This article will discuss how the Woodward-Williamson debate has developed, from its beginnings in the mid-twentieth century to this day. The article is comprised of four sections that discuss the various stages of the development of the debate: the origins of the debate, the second/middle stages of the debate, the post-Woodward school of thought, and the continuation of this debate into the future. In some parts of the article I use the term “segregation studies” to indicate studies that focus on racial segregation. I use this term to refer generally to all types of studies on this topic, from Jim Crow studies to Reconstruction studies. The arguments asserted in this article are not limited to a specific time in history and are sometimes trans-regional, trans-national, and even cross-disciplinary.

I: The Beginning of the Debate, 1955–1988

1. The Woodward-Williamson Debate, 1955–1966

The first part of this article will discuss the origins and first stages of development of the Woodward-Williamson debate. *Strange Career* is originally from a lecture series Woodward gave at the University of Virginia in October 1954. He gave the lecture to a largely Southern audience made up of both Black and white people just five months after the historic decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954).⁸ In 1955, Woodward published *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, just one year after this landmark Supreme Court decision was made. The ruling was historic because it declared that the separation of public schools by race was unconstitutional and overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896),⁹ which allowed each state to establish laws to enforce racial segregation if they offered “separate but equal” facilities. Enough time had passed since the Jim Crow system pervaded throughout the South, and so it was widely believed that segregation was the tradition of the South and thus could not be removed. Woodward challenged this belief with his historical study of the origins of segregation.

To address the questions of when, why, and how segregation began, Woodward focuses on segregation stipulated by law as the origin of Jim Crow-era race

7. “We Need to Overturn White Supremacy,” *New York Times*, June 14, 2020.

8. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) is a landmark Supreme Court case that desegregated public schools, overturning *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). Mary Beth Norton et al., *A People & A Nation*, 768.

9. *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) is a Supreme Court case that legalized separate facilities for Blacks and whites as long as they were equal. *Ibid.*, 523.

relations. According to his analysis, the turning point toward Jim Crow was during the 1890s, when segregation laws started to apply to passengers aboard trains and street cars in some Southern states. Following South Carolina in 1898, North Carolina and Virginia immediately passed segregationist train laws in 1899 and 1900, respectively. Over the next few decades, other Southern states employed similar segregation laws. These laws were not limited to public transportation but extended to every segment of public life. Woodward insisted that these changes had come from the relaxation of three opposition forces against extreme racism: Northern liberalism, Southern conservatism, and Southern radicalism. Northern liberals began to retreat from the fight against extreme racism, as sectional reconciliation mattered more to them at the time for maintaining peace and stability within the nation. Soon after, Southern conservatives, who believed on one hand that the Black race was inferior and insisted it was the duty of the superior race to uplift inferior people, also began to move away from the cause. The last stronghold remaining was the Southern radicals, often considered part of the white Populists, but they too began to give up on the coalition of class beyond race following the bitter failure of their political movement.

Woodward argued that these public transportation laws in the late nineteenth century signaled the beginning of Jim Crow, and he often emphasized that race relations at that time were very fluid and not so rigidly divided between integrationist and segregationist. This so-called Woodward thesis, which focused on “discontinuity” in the history of segregation, pays more attention to the significance of laws rather than cultural systems. According to Woodward, it was the passing of these sorts of laws that established the rigid racial systems of Jim Crow. Although many scholars accepted the Woodward thesis and used it as a basis for their studies of racism at the state level,¹⁰ others challenged his views.

10. The following is a list of some publications by scholars who agreed with Woodward: Charles E. Wynes, *Race Relations in Virginia, 1870–1902* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1961); Frenise A. Logan, *The Negro in North Carolina, 1786–1894* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964); Henry C. Dethloff and Robert P. Jones, “Race Relations in Louisiana, 1877–98,” *Louisiana History* 9 (Fall 1968); John W. Blassingame, *Black New Orleans, 1860–1880* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1973); Dale A. Somers, “Black and White in New Orleans: A Study in Urban Race Relations, 1865–1900,” *Journal of Southern History* 40 (February 1974); Margaret Law Callcott, *The Negro in Maryland Politics, 1870–1912* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969); Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872–1901* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1981); John William Graves, *Town and Country: Race Relations in an Urban-Rural Context, Arkansas, 1865–1905* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1990).

Joel Williamson presented one of the most famous and intractable counterarguments. Drawing upon the argument raised by Richard C. Wade,¹¹ Williamson's book *After Slavery* (1965)—unlike Woodward—placed more emphasis on de facto segregation, that is, segregation through customs and/or so-called “racial etiquette.” Though he agreed with Woodward that legal segregation first appeared in the 1890s, Williamson argued that “[w]ell before the end of Reconstruction, separation had crystalized into a comprehensive pattern which, in its essence, remained unaltered until the middle of the twentieth century.”¹² According to Williamson, the difference in sentiment between the two races was the same before and after the Civil War. Though no laws enforcing separation of the two races existed until the 1890s, cultural separation that stemmed from racial tensions before and after the war could be seen long before the Reconstruction in many public spheres, such as in governmental and public facilities, common carriers such as streetcars and railroads, accommodations, and cultural places. And even with the Radical Reconstruction government, patterns of separation persisted and escalated. Williamson focused on engrained cultural habits in the minds of both whites and Blacks and argued that these habits, more so than any laws, were the decisive factors in defining race relations. He believed these cultural habits codified a social order which already existed.¹³

Many other scholars also reacted to Woodward's thesis. In his study of Reconstruction in Virginia, Charles E. Wynes presented historical facts to reinforce Woodward's arguments regarding the inconsistency of race relations. It was documented in Wynes's work that before 1900 white Virginians did not demand legalized white supremacy and Black disenfranchisement. Until the end of the nineteenth century, race relations in Virginia showed flexibility and tolerance rather than exclusion of the Black race.¹⁴ On the other hand, as mentioned above, the position of Richard C. Wade is closer to that of Williamson. Wade studied

11. Wade stated that Jim Crow customs and regulations were an alternative to keep Blacks under whites' control after the demise of slavery. Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

12. Williamson, *After Slavery*, 275.

13. Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?*, 3; Williamson, *After Slavery*, 275, 298–99; Joel R. Williamson, “C. Vann Woodward and the Origins of a New Wisdom,” in *C. Vann Woodward: A Southern Historian and His Critics*, ed. John Herbert Roper (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1997). Examples of studies agreeing with Williamson are: William Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge: Black Mobility and the Southern White Quest for Racial Control, 1861–1915* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991); Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: Pantheon, 1974); John W. Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

14. Woodward, *Strange Career* (1966), 33–34; Wynes, *Race Relations in Virginia, 1870–1902*.

Southern cities such as New Orleans, Mobile, Savannah, Charleston, and Richmond, and concluded from his observations of these cities that segregation had already begun in Southern urban life in the 1850s.¹⁵ Leon F. Litwack expanded the debate into the new topic of segregation in the North. In *North of Slavery* (1961), Litwack “exposed numerous forms of segregation and racial discrimination in the antebellum North that prefigured the South’s Jim Crow system.”¹⁶ In the antebellum North, “while statutes and customs circumscribed the Negro’s political and judicial rights, extralegal codes [. . .] relegated him to a position of social inferiority [. . .]. In virtually every phase of existence, Negroes found themselves systematically separated from whites.”¹⁷

About a decade after it was first published in 1957, *Strange Career* needed to be updated to address the challenges to its original claims and arguments. The 1966 edition accomplished just that. Though Woodward appreciated and sometimes came to accept the arguments of his critics, he remained steadfast in his original arguments. For instance, while valuing Wade’s work on segregation in antebellum Southern cities, Woodward questioned the significance of the research regarding the greater debate. Segregation in that area was not pervasive and legally constructed, and urban lifestyles in the antebellum South had yet to develop. Woodward even concluded that the evidence Wade provided about physical interaction between the races in fact had gone to further prove the relevancy of Woodward’s thesis.¹⁸ Woodward also praised Litwack’s focus on segregation in antebellum Northern cities, but continued to emphasize that his main concern was with segregation in the South, not the North.¹⁹ As for Williamson’s thesis, Woodward mentioned the possibility that “the experience of South Carolina may have been exceptional in some respects” and maintained that race relations had not yet crystallized in most parts of the South.²⁰ Throughout the 1966 edition, the main argument of Woodward’s thesis was not altered: it maintained that the first Jim Crow laws did not appear in official legislation in any Southern state immediately after emancipation or Reconstruction, but rather toward the end of the nineteenth century.²¹ Though Williamson emphasized the influence of both white and Black people’s thoughts on physical separation and criticized Woodward for overlooking such a factor, Woodward’s focus remained on laws and statutes.

15. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*.

16. Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?*, 35.

17. Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 97; see also Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?*, 11;

18. Woodward, *Strange Career* (1966), 13–14.

19. *Ibid.*, 18–21.

20. *Ibid.*, 25–29.

21. *Ibid.*, 34.

2. Debates Continue over *Strange Career* Revised Editions, 1967–1988

This section will discuss the development of the Woodward-Williamson debate after the first revision of *Strange Career* in 1966. The books and articles published around 1970 pay more attention to the importance of the views of African Americans in the interpretation of the history of segregation. Books by August Meier and Elliot Rudwick as well as Howard Rabinowitz are highly notable examples of this remarkable change in the historiography of segregation. Rabinowitz's work in particular is widely credited as being one of the most substantial contributions to the development of the debate.²² I will also discuss a comparative study with international viewpoints first presented by John Cell, which brought the debate into the global spotlight.

The work of Meier and Rudwick balances the two conflicting viewpoints surrounding the debate and focuses on Savannah, Georgia, in the early 1870s, where a street railway company provided racially separate cars, and thus physical separation already existed at the beginning of the Reconstruction. However, this separation was enforced only through the company itself, and it was not until 1899 that legal segregation was finally instituted through legislation. It is argued that the presence of successful opposition forces in that area are responsible for the delay of separation laws entering legislation. Though there had always been a white stronghold trying to push physical separation into law before 1899, there had also been strong protests against such actions from the city's Black community. Citing whites' unchanged hostility toward Blacks as well as the Blacks' protests to deter the immediate legalization of segregated streetcars, Meier and Rudwick held that the Woodward and Williamson theories were both correct.²³

If Meier and Rudwick were reconcilers of the debate, Howard N. Rabinowitz was a driving force to elevate the debate to the next level by putting more emphasis on the viewpoint of African Americans, the so-called "victims." Pointing out that both de jure and de facto segregation appeared during the Reconstruction era and not just in the 1890s, Rabinowitz was of a position closer to that of Williamson. In his *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865–1890* (1978), Rabinowitz affirms that urban Blacks experienced segregation in public spaces as early as 1873, in places such as galleries in theaters, leading hotels,

22. The second revision of *Strange Career* published in 1974 also gives greater attention to Black people. Howard N. Rabinowitz, "More Than the Woodward Thesis: Assessing 'The Strange Career of Jim Crow,'" *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 3 (December 1988): 855.

23. Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?*, 32; August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, "A Strange Chapter in the Career of 'Jim Crow,'" in Meier and Rudwick, eds., *The Making of Black America: Essays in Negro Life & History* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 2: 14–19.

restaurants, bars, railroad stations, and others. This affirmation dismisses the portrait of uncertain race relations Woodward had painted. But in reality, Rabinowitz's main point of focus lay elsewhere; in addition to emphasizing Black people as the same subjective actors in history as in other contemporary works, Rabinowitz indicated that Blacks saw segregation as an improvement compared to slavery, in which Blacks were excluded from every aspect of social life. Though racially separated, it was certainly progress for Black people to have access to their own hospitals, theaters, and social services, which had hardly existed for them before. While Woodward implied integration as "a forgotten alternative" to segregation, Rabinowitz suggested exclusion as another forgotten alternative, which was worse than segregation in the eyes of Black people just after the end of the Civil War.²⁴ This entirely new perspective provided by Rabinowitz became the new academic trend in historical studies around Jim Crow thereafter.

John W. Cell investigated the origins of segregation by comparing South Africa and the American South. Supporting the Woodward thesis, Cell insists that in the American South, segregation was crystallized as a system in the 1890s and emphasizes its distinction from the antebellum period. Though Cell's analysis is unlike the other works mentioned so far in that it mainly based itself on the views of white people, it is significant in that he illustrates how strong advocates of segregation in the American South shifted from left-wing white moderates in the 1890s to extreme right-wing white supremacists in the 1920s and 1930s. Also, he attributes the origin of segregation in the American South to a combination of economic, social, and political factors found in a period of massive change at the turn of the twentieth century.²⁵ When the American South was gradually industrialized and the whole nation modernized toward the end of the nineteenth century, segregation was employed to place the race question, or so-called "Negro problem," on hold due to the rising anti-immigration sentiment and cultural racism along with the possession of former Spanish colonies overseas.²⁶ Cell's work succeeded in relativizing the debate over segregation in the American South by comparing its similarities and differences with that of South Africa.

To summarize the development of this debate in the first stage: the early arguments at this stage were mainly focused on when and why segregation began. Taking examples from the works cited above, Woodward maintains it was in the

24. Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?*, 10, 33; Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865–1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 127–82, 331–32. Herman Belz agrees with Rabinowitz in his *Emancipation and Equal Rights: Politics and Constitutionalism in the Civil Rights Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 147.

25. Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy*, 190; Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?*, 5; Howard N. Rabinowitz, "The Not-So Strange Career of Jim Crow," *Reviews in American History* 12, no. 1 (1984), 59.

26. Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy*, 169–73; see also the well-written review essay by Rabinowitz, "The Not-So Strange Career of Jim Crow."

1890s when legal segregation started to appear in the South. While Cell agrees with Woodward,²⁷ Williamson, who focused on de facto segregation, states that segregation existed much earlier than the 1890s.²⁸ Wade and Litwack present similar views to Williamson's, and Rabinowitz also insists that the post-1890 segregation laws were codified from a system that had already been long widespread in practice. The work of Meier and Rudwick tries to strike a balance between Woodward and Williamson, arguing that before the end of the nineteenth century de facto segregation was widely in practice and later legal segregation was instituted. As for the origins of segregation, we can see a wide variety of arguments and viewpoints among scholars. Woodward at least partially attributed the rise of Jim Crow to "the erosion of Northern liberalism and the weakened commitment of Southern conservatives and agrarian radicals to defending Black political rights."²⁹ On the other hand, Cell emphasized the altered economic situation in the South during the 1890s.³⁰ Rabinowitz insists its origins derive from the Blacks' resistance to de facto segregation and the withdrawal of Northern support for Black civil rights issues, thus partly agreeing with Woodward. According to Williamson, its origins lie in the economic struggles of the late 1880s and early 1890s and the threat of renewed Northern Republican interference in Southern affairs.³¹

While Woodward revised *Strange Career* three times, he continued to engage sincerely with his critics, accepting their points at least partially when convinced, and trying to reflect them in newer editions of his work.³² For example, regarding the timing of the appearance of segregation, Woodward acknowledged some of his critics, saying that substantial racial segregation was found prior to the period Woodward had emphasized. He also accepted the argument from his critics that there were more examples of both de facto and de jure segregation in the early nineteenth century than he had initially concluded.³³ At the same time, in the

27. Rabinowitz, "More Than the Woodward Thesis," 849; Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy*, 82–102.

28. Williamson mentions the sharp increase in racial violence in the 1890s, and the period may have been a turning point in racial relationships. Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 80–223; Rabinowitz, "More Than the Woodward Thesis," 849.

29. Rabinowitz, "More Than the Woodward Thesis," 849.

30. Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy*, 82–170.

31. Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 112–14.

32. Rabinowitz described the frustration that Woodward's critics felt: "Since the master [Woodward] continues to absorb what they see as knock out blows and even to incorporate adversaries' weapons into his own arsenal." Rabinowitz, "More Than the Woodward Thesis," 846.

33. C. Vann Woodward, "Strange Career Critics: Long May They Persevere," *Journal of American History* 75 (December 1988): 858, 862.

revised third edition, just as he did in the 1966 edition, he did not forget to restate the core of his argument: formal, legalized, universal segregation, which Woodward meant as physical separation, did not appear immediately after the Reconstruction, and there was an uncertain and fluid period which could provide other alternatives to race relations in the South before the establishment of Jim Crow.³⁴

II: The Second-Stage Controversy, 1989–2000

The works published in this period were influenced by and inherited the perspective of Rabinowitz to a great deal, which made the Woodward-Williamson debate flourish even further. These works deal with the traditional premise of the debate—the timing and causes of the birth of segregation—but try to find different ways to approach the question. In addition, some of them incorporate new topics such as gender and law into the debate.

Edward L. Ayers, one of Woodward's last graduate students at Yale, focuses on segregation in railroad cars in the 1880s, and describes the process of how "separate but equal" facilities—which at the beginning just stipulated the privilege to ride on first-class cars according to class and gender—gradually turned toward compulsory separation by race. Succeeding Rabinowitz's stance of looking at Blacks as subjective actors,³⁵ Ayers made a small but indispensable modification to Woodward's thesis, but mostly reinforced it. Regarding the timing of the emergence of Jim Crow, Ayers insists that the 1880s—not the 1890s as argued in Woodward's thesis—was the beginning. However, Ayers argues that the Jim Crow system was not a legacy of antebellum slavery, but rather a new and powerful force born in an era of economic and social modernization represented by the development of railway networks in the 1880s. In Ayers' words, Jim Crow was "a badge of sophisticated, modern, managed race relations" at least in the eyes of the white ruling class in the South.³⁶

34. Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?*, 31–32; John A. Garraty, "C. Vann Woodward: The Negro in American Life: 1865–1918," in *Interpreting American History: Conversations with Historians* (New York and London: Macmillan Company, 1970), 2: 51–52; C. Vann Woodward, *American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North/South Dialogue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 237–38.

35. The following works in particular were written from the standpoint of Black people: Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

36. Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?*, 34; Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 145. Ayers demonstrated that segregation was still not pervasive in the 1880s. Ayers, *The Promise*

Litwack, who most notably brought his studies of segregation in the North into the debate, investigated race relations in the South as well. In *Trouble in Mind* (1998), he examines Southern Black communities during and after the Civil War. Litwack's position is closer to that of Williamson's. Technically speaking, Litwack develops a new version of the continuity thesis with a modification of Rabinowitz's thesis, which views segregation as a better alternative to exclusion. Litwack insists that preexisting de facto segregation was codified into laws, just as other advocates of Williamson's thesis claim. According to Litwack, age-old racial fear and hate that formed under the era of slavery culminated in a legalized and socially separated system by race from the late 1870s until the 1920s. As for the origin of segregation, Litwack points out the rise of the "New Negro."³⁷ Fearing that this new generation would not "stay in their place" as they used to, white people felt an urgent need for legal forces to make the societal distinction between the "superior" and "inferior" race clearer.³⁸

Like Cell's comparative study, Anthony Marcs, in his book *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil* (1998), discusses the construction of racial order in three nations—the United States, South Africa, and Brazil. According to Marcs, the existence or non-existence of legalized segregation depends on whether a nation has experienced a civil war between its major groups—in this case, groups of white people. For stabilization and prosperity, a nation could employ racially exclusive or oppressive policies on its minority groups to recover integrity within the majority—that is, whites. In South Africa, the Anglo-Saxon white people and the descendants of early white immigrants, called Afrikaners or Boers, were hostile to each other, and after several civil wars a legal segregation system called Apartheid was instituted by the Anglo-Saxons to racially discriminate against the Black population. The purpose was to introduce reconciliation between the two dominant white groups at the expense of the Black African population. In the United States, as a result of local conflicts between the white populations of the North and the South, the Black population was legally separated from the white population through Jim Crow. On the other hand, Brazil did not see such local or ethnic conflicts inside

of the New South, 136–37; Grace Elizabeth Hale also sided with Woodward by analyzing how the emergence of modern mass racial identity was synchronized with the establishment of de jure segregation between 1890 and 1940. Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?*, 34; Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890–1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998).

37. "New Negro" is a term used to describe a Black person who did not fall in line with the "established" racial etiquette of the South stemming from the time of slavery and the Reconstruction period.

38. Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?*, 13, 35; Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 218–19, 229. Litwack also investigated race relations after slavery in *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 262–63.

its white ruling population and any legal segregation systems did not appear because it was unnecessary for them to reconcile with each other. Though Marcs's focus revolves around the development of the nation itself rather than its people, this globally comprehensive research further widens the discussion of segregation studies.³⁹

Toward the end of the twentieth century, new factors such as gender and sexuality began to enter discussions surrounding the debate. For instance, Barbara Y. Welke shines light on the fact that Black women were not always excluded from first-class sleeping cars, called the "ladies' car," due to common laws of railroad companies to separate cars by gender (although legal segregation already existed in some states just after the emancipation), thus partly supporting and partly opposing Williamson's thesis. Only afterwards in the 1880s were Black women completely excluded because of their race.⁴⁰ The work of Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, Laura F. Edwards, and Tera W. Hunter has also contributed to the development of gender viewpoints in the studies of segregation.⁴¹ Although this new gender-focused scholarship has grown since then, it still remains in the process of development as most historians in this field have not paid much attention to the role of gender in the Woodward-Williamson debate.⁴²

Studies of judicial cases and segregation laws also made substantial contributions to the Woodward-Williamson debate in this period. For instance, Stephen J. Riegel analyzed many Lower Federal Court cases and found a strong sense of continuity in the "separate but equal" doctrine from the end of the Civil War leading up to Jim Crow. Many historians, especially the advocates of the Woodward thesis, tend to view *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 as a turning point of race relations in the South. Although these historians—even those specializing in legal history—widely agree that the "separate but equal" doctrine first appeared in 1896, Riegel dismisses this perspective as a misconception. According to Riegel, Lower Federal Court cases dealing with civil rights amendments and laws before 1896 had already been accepting the doctrine, since it was not inconsistent with the Civil Rights Act of 1875 or the fourteenth amendment, and these cases became

39. Anthony W. Marcs, *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); see also George M. Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

40. Barbara Y. Welke, "When All the Women Were White, and All the Blacks Were Men: Gender, Class, Race, and the Road to *Plessy*, 1855–1914," *Law and History Review* 13 (Fall 1995).

41. Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Laura F. Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*.

42. Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?*, 32.

the precedents leading to the decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. However, Riegel points out that the word “equal” as it was used in *Plessy v. Ferguson* was meaningless from the very beginning—at least to Southern whites.⁴³ During this period Rabinowitz also began to shift his focus to analyzing the Jim Crow statutes themselves as one of the remaining points of the debate. The work of Riegel and other legal historians in the 1990s significantly influenced the nature of the debate from then on, despite Rabinowitz having died in his fifties in 1998.⁴⁴

C. Vann Woodward passed away in 1999 when he was ninety-one. Through the three revisions of *Strange Career*, Woodward often defended his work from his various critics, but also made some modifications to his own theories when necessary. In this sense, the third revision of *Strange Career* in 1988 can be seen as the result of a thirty-year academic discussion among countless historians who supported, criticized, or complemented Woodward’s thesis. However, the original purpose of *Strange Career* was unchanged; it set out to argue that Jim Crow was not an embedded institution of the South but rather a phenomenon that developed over time, and thus could be abolished just as much as it could be created. It can be argued that Woodward’s perspective is too optimistic about race relations and seems to succumb somewhat to presentism, but at least at the beginning of the twenty-first century, nobody could have denied the strength and formidability of his message. A collection of essays about Jim Crow, *Jumpin’ Jim Crow* (2000), demonstrates this fact. The purpose of the book, as indicated in the introduction, is to denaturalize white supremacy through “stressing the contingent nature of Jim Crow.” The essays are intended to demonstrate that “Jim Crow was not the logical and inevitable culmination of the Civil War and the emancipation, but rather the result of a calculated campaign by white elites to circumscribe all possibility of African American political, economic, and social power.”⁴⁵ From

43. Stephen J. Riegel, “The Persistent Career of Jim Crow: Lower Federal Courts and the ‘Separate but Equal’ Doctrine, 1865–1896.” *The American Journal of Legal History* 28, no. 1 (1984). In 1973, Paul Oberst argued for the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 and its relation to the debate. However, it was not until around the 1990s when more studies in this field made their way into segregation studies. Paul Oberst, “The Strange Career of *Plessy v. Ferguson*,” *Arizona Law Review* 15 (1973).

44. Rabinowitz, “More than the Woodward Thesis,” 850. Following Riegel, several other legal historians contributed to the controversy. See David Bernstein, “Notes: The Supreme Court and ‘Civil Rights,’ 1886–1908,” *The Yale Law Journal* 100 (1990); James C. Cobb, “Segregating the New South: The Origins and Legacy of *Plessy v. Ferguson*,” *Georgia State University Law Review* 12 (1996); Elizabeth Dale, “‘Social Equality Does Not Exist among Themselves, nor among Us’: *Baylies v. Curry* and Civil Rights in Chicago, 1888,” *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 2 (1997); Michael J. Klarman, “The Plessy Era.” *The Supreme Court Review*, vol. 1998 (1998).

45. Jane Dailey, Elizabeth Glenda Gilmore, and Bryant Simon, *Jumpin’ Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,

these statements, it is possible to conclude that Woodward was successful in breaking through the prevailing notion of Jim Crow as an inevitable phenomenon, and passing his ideas along to the next generation of historians.

III: The Post-Woodward Debate, 2000–2020

This section will analyze how the Woodward-Williamson debate has had a continuous effect on segregation studies in the twenty-first century—that is, the posthumous era of Woodward, who passed away in 1999. In the last two decades, the development of segregation studies has been notably progressive. In addition to updating existing theories in the debate, research produced in this era reflects new perspectives from different academic fields outside of the traditional studies of Southern history, and it has given the debate even more diversity and color. The focal point of the debate has also shifted. It no longer pays attention to the timing of Jim Crow’s emergence, but instead to the process and the causes. And whereas segregation studies before the twenty-first century tended to focus on the end of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth century, more recent scholarship focuses on unexamined eras such as the second quarter of the twentieth century, and sometimes argues how these times have influenced racism in the twenty-first century. These exciting developments are expected to attract more researchers to segregation studies and illuminate the potential of the debate.

Recent segregation scholarship dealing with gender, which started to evolve at the end of the twentieth century, has steadily increased. The work of Barbara Young Welke published in 2001 succeeds in relating the topic of gender to the Woodward-Williamson debate. Through her diligent examination of legal records from lawsuits between railroad and streetcar companies and their African American female passengers, Welke attempts to show the process of legalizing segregation on public transportation, and how it was influenced by the companies’ daily practices and gender conceptions. When Black female plaintiffs sued these companies for forcing them to sit in smoking cars—rather than ladies’ cars—because of their race, what they stressed was their right as women to be protected in public places. African American women, being both Black and female, stood as symbols of the ambiguous race relations of the Progressive Era.⁴⁶ The work of Sarah Haley is also worth mentioning. Building on the work of Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore in 1996,⁴⁷ Haley suggests an answer to one of the pressing questions of the debate: What are the causes of segregation? Differing greatly from other gender studies in this field, Haley’s work focuses on criminalized African

2000), 4; *Times Literary Supplement*, May 12, 2000, 17.

46. Barbara Young Welke, *Recasting American Liberty: Gender, Race, Law, and the Railroad Revolution, 1865–1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

47. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*.

American women who were seen as “examples of juridical inverts: perverse, primitive, pathological, and therefore not entitled to protection or freedom.”⁴⁸ Investigating the struggles Black women faced against stereotypes painting them as vulnerable and lacking in autonomy, Haley concludes that the white supremacy represented by segregation was the result of gender ideology and whites’ resistance to the activism of Black women.⁴⁹

While Woodward’s *Strange Career* is seen as one of the classics that Southern historians must read as part of their studies, recent work on segregation has not necessarily always referred to *Strange Career* or the historical debate it caused over the origin of Jim Crow.⁵⁰ This is partly because more scholars of fields different from Southern history have gradually participated in segregation studies, not necessarily because Woodward’s book or the debate it explores are seen as outdated in any way. Many young scholars are not familiar with the field of Southern history and the background of its theories, but new insights these scholars bring are unmistakably beneficial to not only the Woodward-Williamson debate but also the traditional academic field of Southern history as a whole. For example, Bobby M. Wilson, an expert in geography and public policy, investigates the economic aspects of segregation as seen in commodity exchange.⁵¹ Additionally, the work of Karl Hagstrom Miller, a cultural historian who focuses on music, reveals how a “color line,” that is, the barrier based on skin color, had been intentionally drawn through the development of folk and pop music.⁵² Another possible reason why *Strange Career* and the debate caused by it are often missing in recent segregation studies is provided by J. Morgan Kousser. According to Kousser, it is not because the debate and its scholarly issues are settled but “because contemporary racial problems seem less pressing or less tractable.”⁵³ As racial discrimination becomes more sophisticated and elusive—such as that it does not necessarily mention the word “race” or “color” to exclude a certain group

48. Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 6.

49. Ibid. The work of McCluskey also illuminates African American women who acted independently against Jim Crow. Audrey Thomas McCluskey, *A Forgotten Sisterhood: Pioneering Black Women Educators and Activists in the Jim Crow South* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

50. Patterson Toby Graham, *A Right to Read: Segregation and Civil Rights in Alabama’s Public Libraries, 1900–1965* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 181.

51. Bobby M. Wilson, “Postbellum Race Relations in Commodity Exchange,” *GeoJournal* 75, no. 3 (June 2010).

52. Karl Hagstrom Miller, *Segregating Sound: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

53. J. Morgan Kousser, “‘The Onward March of Right Principles’: State Legislative Actions on Racial Discrimination in Schools in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Historical Methods* 35, no. 4 (Fall 2002): 177.

in a society—recent scholars of race relations have faced some difficulty attracting people’s attention to the severity of race issues.⁵⁴

Of course, there are still many studies on segregation that respond directly to the Woodward-Williamson debate. One point these studies agree on is that the struggles of African Americans continued throughout the Jim Crow era and most likely up to the present, and that race relations stipulated by de facto and de jure segregation were always a product of an ever-changing society and thus never stable or static. One example to emphasize this continuity is a collection of essays edited by Stephanie Cole and Natalie J. Ring, *The Folly of Jim Crow: Rethinking the Segregated South* (2012). The essays brilliantly depict the more recent developments of the debate: focusing on African Americans, Native Americans, women, and/or poor whites, segregation issues are investigated in a different light. The book suggests that formal or legalized segregation was built through a trial and error process, and its conclusion parallels Woodward’s argument about the precarious and uncertain nature of the segregated South.⁵⁵ Similar to this argument, in *To Render Invisible: Jim Crow and Public Life in New South Jacksonville* (2013), Robert Cassanello acknowledges this continuity of the struggle of African Americans in his case study of Jacksonville, Florida. By investigating the Black resistance against segregation in churches, schools, and public transportation, Cassanello points to the political nature of Jim Crow, seen in a struggle over not only public spaces but also discursive control in the political arena between white and Black people.⁵⁶

54. Examples of work that focuses on segregation but does not refer to the controversy are as follows: Michael Fultz, “Black Public Libraries in the South in the Era of De Jure Segregation,” *Libraries & the Cultural Record* 41, no. 3 (2006); Rachel D. Godsil, “Race Nuisance: The Politics of Law in The Jim Crow Era,” *Michigan Law Review* 105, no. 3 (December 2006); Jason Kuznicki, “Never a Neutral State: American Race Relations and Government Power,” *Cato Journal* 29, no. 3 (Fall 2009); Ruth Thompson-Miller, Joe R. Feagin, and Leslie H. Picca, *Jim Crow’s Legacy: The Lasting Impact of Segregation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); James W. Endersby and William T. Horner, *Lloyd Gaines and the Fight to End Segregation* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2016); Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright, 2017).

55. Stephanie Cole and Natalie J. Ring, *The Folly of Jim Crow: Rethinking the Segregated South* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2012), 10.

56. Robert Cassanello, *To Render Invisible: Jim Crow and Public Life in New South Jacksonville* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2013). For examples of other publications emphasizing the fluidity of race relations, see Kousser, “The Onward March of Right Principles”; James B. Bennet, *Religion and the Rise of Jim Crow in New Orleans* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Joseph Gerteis, *Class and the Color Line: Interracial Class Coalition in the Knights of Labor and the Populist Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007). For the experiences of African Americans in the segregated South, see Paul Ortiz et al., *Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans Tell About Life in the*

Although many of the recent studies no longer pay attention to the question of when legal segregation emerged, this does not mean the question has left the debate.⁵⁷ Acknowledging the fluid nature of Jim Crow and the impracticability of trying to decide the timing of its emergence, scholars have shifted their main focus to the process and causes of Jim Crow, and have succeeded in expanding and deepening the debate. For instance, building on the work of Meier and Rudwick in 1969,⁵⁸ Blair L. M. Kelley investigates the process of segregation in street cars in Tennessee. According to Kelley, it was white Tennesseans' fear of social equality between white and Black people that led them to demand legalized segregation. Despite these white communities having the common sense that segregation in street cars was impractical and unfeasible, they ended up supporting segregated street cars, fearing that integration would lead to social equality between the two races.⁵⁹ Elizabeth A. Herbin-Triant's transnational and trans-regional study of segregation should also be mentioned. In her case study of rural areas of North Carolina in the early twentieth century, Harbin-Triant reveals how a local politician was influenced greatly by international segregationist ideology imported from pre-Apartheid South Africa, and how progressivism flourished mainly in the Northern urban areas of the United States. It is also significant that the work finds interclass disagreement among white populations over issues of segregation. Though the segregation policies were not adopted in the end, small-scale white farmers supported segregation because they wanted to secure their ownership of land, over which they had been fighting with African American farmers.⁶⁰

Segregation studies before the twenty-first century often focus on the period before the twentieth century, probably because the purpose was to find the origins of Jim Crow. For the last two decades, however, more researchers have been dealing with the time period after the first decade of the twentieth century. Stephen A. Berrey, for example, has examined race relations and race-related

Segregated South (New York: The New Press, 2001).

57. Still, some studies work on the classic argument of the controversy of when segregation began. See Nicholas Guyatt, *Bind Us Apart: How Enlightened Americans Invented Racial Segregation* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

58. Meier and Rudwick, "A Strange Chapter in the Career of 'Jim Crow.'"

59. Blair L. M. Kelley, *Right to Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era of Plessy v. Ferguson* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010). As another example, see William L. Anderson and David Kiriazis attribute the cause of Jim Crow to progressivism in the early twentieth century. William L. Anderson and David Kiriazis, "Rents and Race Legacies of Progressive Policies," *The Independent Review*, no. 18 (2013).

60. Elizabeth A. Herbin-Triant, "Southern Segregation South Africa-Style: Maurice Evans, Clarence Poe, and the Ideology of Rural Segregation." *Agricultural History* 87, no. 2 (April 1, 2013).

culture in Mississippi from the 1930s to the 1950s. Berry's research—which emphasizes whiteness, Blackness, and the never-ending cycle of Jim Crow—indicates that the color line was never rigid, and thus had to be reaffirmed repeatedly through physical separation.⁶¹ Some studies argue that these systems of segregation have had a lasting influence on the twenty-first century, post-Jim Crow era. Michelle Alexander focuses on the modern-day issue of mass incarceration, referring to it as the “new Jim Crow.” Alexander sees a resemblance between today's mass incarceration and Jim Crow, insisting that the legalized discrimination once applied to African Americans in the Jim Crow era is now applied to people who are convicted criminals or felons. Starting her argument from the era of slavery, Alexander implies that there is a racial caste system that has always existed, changing its exterior into a more complex and subtle form following the abolition of outward legal segregation.⁶²

Before ending this section, I would like to mention a book that asks the American people which path for the future they want to choose. In *The Burning House: Jim Crow and the Making of Modern America* (2018), Anders Walker illuminates positive sides of segregation. In a Black community as a whole, there have always been two ways to evaluate segregation; while Black leaders, called integrationists, have been searching for a way for Black and white people to live in the same community, separationists have insisted that Black people need their own space to cultivate Black culture and to be independent from white society both economically and socially. What Walker emphasizes is that, while the separationist intellectuals in the book did condemn racial injustice, they also embraced a sense of autonomy for Black people and celebrated the Black culture realized by segregation. While this work adds a new perspective in which segregation is seen as a promoter of diversity and a possible alternative for the future besides integration, it also reminds us of some of the risks of celebrating such pluralism blindly. Unconditionally celebrating the diversity of all cultures and worldviews could end up vindicating certain dangerous worldviews, such as radical white nationalism, which insists on the legitimacy of white supremacist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan. As Walker suggests, arguments over civil rights have not reached an agreement, even among intellectuals. America is still in the process of searching for a way in which both equality and diversity can

61. Stephen A. Berrey, *The Jim Crow Routine: Everyday Performances of Race, Civil Rights, and Segregation in Mississippi* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015); William E. O'Brien examines segregation in state parks from the 1930s to the 1960s. William E. O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion: State Parks and Jim Crow in the American South* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016).

62. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2010). Although not referring to *Strange Career*, Thompson-Miller, Feagin, and Picca's *Jim Crow's Legacy* is worth reading.

coexist.⁶³ Kousser argues that “[i]ncomplete, oversimplified, superficial history provides an inadequate background for making or assessing policy. To control the future, we must begin by understanding the past.”⁶⁴ Just as Woodward once rose up to suggest forgotten alternatives to race relations—besides that of an inevitable dystopian one—historians of the present can also suggest possible alternatives for the future by carefully studying the past.

IV: The Future of the Controversy: Constructing a Historiography of Southern History

This final section will discuss the potential for the future of the Woodward-Williamson debate. As shown above, segregation studies dealing with the debate are not limited to examining only Jim Crow. They also study periods before Jim Crow, such as the Reconstruction, antebellum slavery, and even the colonial days to answer when, why, and how segregation began. This debate has also been connected to a number of topics such as politics, economics, law, the daily lives of people, gender, and violence, sometimes crossing over to different academic fields. The wide range of topics and fields available for the debate enables researchers to give more multifaceted analyses to the question of segregation.

Regarding the future of the debate, I would like to briefly discuss the current trend in the field of Southern history. Eric Foner is a noted historian of Southern history, and thirty years after its first edition, his prominent book *Reconstruction* (1988) is still classed as one of the most important books in the field.⁶⁵ Foner presents a couple of suggestions for further research of the Reconstruction era, one of which is to analyze the Reconstruction through longer periods and capture a more dynamic view of history. In response to this suggestion, recent developments in the field see studies of the Reconstruction over longer periods, such as *The Two Reconstructions* by Richard M. Valelly and *The Long Reconstruction* by Frank J. Wetta and Martin A. Novelli.⁶⁶ This tendency of a longitudinal or macro analysis of history is not limited to the field of Reconstruction history. Ira Berlin discusses in *The Long Emancipation* that the abolitionist movement has a longer history than previously thought. More recent scholarship on Southern history appears to pursue macro analysis.⁶⁷

63. Anders Walker, *The Burning House: Jim Crow and the Making of Modern America* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2018), 217–20.

64. J. Morgan Kousser, “The Strange, Ironic Career of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, 1965–2007,” *Texas Law Review* 86, no. 4 (March 2008): 674.

65. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*.

66. Richard M. Valelly, *The Two Reconstructions* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Frank J. Wetta, and Martin A. Novelli, *The Long Reconstruction: The Post-Civil War South in History, Film, and Memory* (New York and Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2014).

67. Ira Berlin, *The Long Emancipation: The Demise of Slavery in the United States*

The Woodward-Williamson debate may seem timeworn since it started in the 1950s. But despite its lengthy duration, the debate has been continuously updated by modern historians. This comes from the vast array of topics and periods the debate can be connected to. As old as this is, the debate can still play an essential role in answering current questions in Southern historical analysis. Topics in Southern history, such as the Reconstruction, Populism, and disfranchisement, have often been studied independently, and separated from the whole historiography of Southern history. This is because each topic is rich in content and significance and it could almost feel reckless to try to integrate these gargantuan topics together in one long streamlined historical timeline. Through studying the history of the Woodward-Williamson debate, we can see that actually this could very well be possible. With the wide range of topics and fields it has covered so far, the debate may help us to understand Southern history more as one long story consisting of a number of short segments and historical events. The analyses that have so far been produced by numerous scholars from various fields will continue to contribute greatly to not only the development of segregation studies but that of Southern history as whole.

(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).