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**RHETORICAL RERUNS:
CULTURAL CONTINUITY IN SOUTHERN POLITICAL ARGUMENTS**

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From Benjamin Harvey Hill in 1866 to William Jefferson Clinton in 1992, Southern business and political leaders have been proclaiming the region as the center of change. The phrase "New South" was already old when Henry Grady told the New England Society about an emerging region ready to embrace new attitudes toward the north in a spirit of national reconciliation.^[1] In 1927, more than forty years later, William J. Robertson wrote a book entitled *The Changing South*,^[2] *This Changing South*, by John M. MacLachlin and Joe S. Floyd, Jr., followed in 1956;^[3] in 1970, Raymond W. Mack edited a volume with the unchanging title, *The Changing South*.^[4] More to the point, in 1972, William C. Havard edited a collection of articles on *The Changing Politics of the South*,^[5] and in 1977 Jack Bass and Walter DeVries wrote *The Transformation of Southern Politics*.^[6]

The idea of change, of a "New South," has been voiced so persistently for over one hundred years that Frank E. Vandiver introduced a volume of essays on the South by remarking, "A striking constant ran through all the discussions: the south is always changing. Is change, after all, the elusive Central Theme?"^[7] If so, perhaps Professor Braden's conclusion that the Old South produced no genre of Southern oratory^[8] would be repeated by scholars investigating the several "New Souths."

Countering the claim that the south is always changing, Wilber J. Cash, in his classic work *The Mind of the South*, states that an understanding of the South must acknowledge that "the mind of the section . . . is continuous with the past."^[9] Variation on this theme of the strong continuity in the Southern "world view" can be found in such diverse sources as Francis B. Simpkins' *The Everlasting South*^[10] and a study by John Shelton Reed, *The Enduring South: Subcultural Persistence in Mass Society*.^[11] Even Braden noted "elements of commonality" based on "generally held tenets" in the speeches of Old South orators.^[12]

Perhaps nowhere is the dialectical tension between continuity and change more obvious than in election campaigns, when candidates speak to Southern voters and proclaim their shared values, and recent Arkansas political history provides an excellent case study. This essay advances the contention that in the face of a "changing South" and a succession of "New Souths," there is continuity in rhetorical strategy used by Southern political rhetors, based upon their intuitive or empirical reading of Southern voters, and that it employs historical *topoi* unique to the region. We also argue that the use of the strategy transcends both generations and political parties, for it is grounded in assumptions about a continuing regional psychology. To demonstrate the case, we focus on the campaign rhetoric in two Arkansas campaigns for the United States Senate, 1978 and 2002, as rhetorical exemplars.

A Unique Regional Psychology

Election campaigns do not occur in a vacuum but within the context of a particular political culture, and successful candidates understand that cultural values can be both rhetorical weapons in their messages and receptive targets in their audiences. Lewis M. Killian approached his study of *White Southerners* by classifying them as "a sociological minority group in the over-all context of American society;"^[13] and since most Southerners, by self-definition, also perceive themselves as sociologically and culturally unique, there is some basis for the emergence of a regional psychology. Book after book, article after article, and convention paper after convention paper attempt to explain the central theme of Southern history and rhetoric. C. Vann Woodward noted that the Southern experience of defeat in war was a deviation from the national experience that represented a historical continuity unique among modern peoples.^[14] What Woodward failed to note was that the resulting regional consciousness also had produced a rhetorical continuity unique among modern people. From the beginnings of sectional solidarity generated by the tariff issue in 1820 and continuing through the sectional solidarity toward the federal funding formulae issue of today, the South has continually adopted the rhetorical strategy of identifying an enemy outside the region and polarizing issues within that context.^[15]

The second sectional issue following tariff policy was that of slavery. As late as 1827, there were 106 abolition societies in the South; however, within ten years, after political rhetoricians had correlated abolition efforts with Northern radicals, not a single abolition society remained in the South. Whatever the issue--whether it be civil war, reconstruction policies, industrialization efforts, union organization in the cotton mills, New Deal wages, steel pricing railroad rates, integration of schools and public facilities, or voter registration--the primary Southern rhetorical response to change has been reasonably consistent. The know-nothing political allegiance before the Civil War reappeared in Klan membership in the 1920s. Both groups perceived threats to society from Catholics and foreigners, just as the Citizens Councils of the 1950s and 60s identified communists and outside (Northern) agitators as those responsible for undermining the social and political realities of the region.^[16]

Killian's analysis of the Southern psychology is based on a regional perception of minority status rooted in historical experience, and it seems closely related to what Herbert A. Miller labeled "oppression psychosis" in 1924. Group pride, said Killian, "seems to be nourished in adversity. A group that is the object of discrimination, or believes itself to be such, may react by developing a defensive group consciousness that sets it apart even more and serves to preserve its distinctiveness. This defensiveness sometimes leads to an aggressiveness that seems almost paranoid--a quickness to take offense and a readiness to strike back at forces seemingly on the verge of overwhelming an already persecuted people."^[17] The oppression psychosis leads to a common reaction among minority group members, and regardless of "however much discrimination and persecution may exist, the victims are hypersensitive and thus ready to perceive even more than actually exists."^[18]

The latent potential for paranoid response has frequently led Southern rhetoricians to employ complementary rhetorical strategies that raise fears of outside forces working to undermine Southern values and "the Southern way of life," and such strategies have also nurtured the regional psychology through their definitions of reality. Traditionally the response has been

employed to advance nullification, secession, or massive resistance to integration by those who label themselves conservative, but it also had been used effectively by Southern populists advocating "liberal" reforms by berating Northern capitalists and corporations.

The 1978 Arkansas Democratic Senate Primary

The announced retirement and subsequent death of Senator John McClellan opened a coveted seat in the United States Senate for the first time in a generation, and the contest for that seat offered an opportunity for communication scholars to study at least three prominent political figures who would spend one million dollars each during the campaign. U. S. Congressman Ray Thornton, U. S. Congressman Jim Guy Tucker, Governor David Pryor, and a political unknown, A. C. Grigson, filed for the seat.

Seduced by the New South myth, a Washington reporter covering the Mt. Nebo Chicken Fry, described the event for a national audience, observing, "all day long political speeches poured forth from the flag draped flat-bed truck that served as a platform for the candidates. It was, all in all, a classic tableau of old-time politics, southern style. But there was one thing about this year's chicken fry that did not match the old political mold: the politicians." Posturing as if having discovered some strange new phenomenon unknown to the locals, the reporter said, "The shift to a new politics here is most apparent this spring in the Democratic primary race for the Senate seat that was held for 35 years by John L. McClellan, a rough-hewn, rightwing country lawyer who died last winter at the age of 81. There are three major Democratic contenders for the seat--the state's governor and two congressmen--and none fits, the McClellan mold." Explaining the journalistic perception of the essence of the politics of the New South, he continued, "The people running for election in Arkansas this year seem to be a far cry from the race-baiting country boys who formed the stereotype of the southern politician until recently. The typical new breed candidate, here as elsewhere in the South, is an urbane, neatly tailored figure of vigorous youth who is liberal on racial questions and fuzzy enough on other issues to convince rural voters he is a conservative without losing his liberal image in the cities."^[19]

Following a May 30 preferential primary campaign of "style and smile," the voting was virtually a dead heat. Pryor led the field with 34.5% of the votes, Tucker with 32.3% edged Thornton who had 31.7% and gained a run-off slot by less than 4,000 votes. Grigson received 1.5% of the vote, a phenomenon that could be attributed to loyal family members and voter error.

The run-off campaign two weeks later produced an unexpected rhetorical strategy from Governor Pryor and revealed that the traditional *topoi* can be adapted successfully by "New South" moderates as well as recalcitrant rebels. Having lost to McClellan in a 1972 run-off, Pryor was presumed to have learned from the experience, but few knew how well. Pryor had also led the 1972 preferential primary, but in the run-off he conducted a passive, low-keyed campaign while McClellan was aggressive and constantly on the attack. McClellan's main issue was the support Pryor received from out-of-state labor unions, therefore implying that Pryor would be responsible not to the people of Arkansas but to sinister outside forces.

Pryor had been perceived as the more liberal candidate in the 1972 Senate campaign and in both gubernatorial campaigns of 1974 and 1976, but he was generally viewed by the national party as a moderate Southern spokesman. In a speech seconding the nomination of Vice

President Walter Mondale at the Democratic National Convention in July, 1976, he attempted to minimize regional differences by performing that role and telling a national television audience, "I'm a little weary of hearing about the New South. I'm a little weary of hearing about Southern Strategy, or about how we're going to the north and appeal to the Northerners, or to the East, or to the West. I think, as I believe this Convention thinks, it is time we forgot regions. It is time we talked about not a New South, but a New America, a new Democratic party, a new spirit within this great nation."^[20]

Governor Pryor again sounded that theme in September, 1978--three months after his primary victory--when he told the delegates at the Democratic State Convention that they must work to overcome regional differences to solve national problems. "It's not a North, or a South, or an East, or a West," he said, "It's one nation; we must stand together."^[21]

The theme of his run-off campaign between May 30 and June 13, however, was somewhat at variance with the above pronouncements regarding diminishing regional difference. At a news conference on June 1, Pryor attacked Congressman Tucker for talking like a Southerner and voting like a Northerner, and he proceeded to "talk about the 'double life' of Jim Guy Tucker."^[22] "When he's in Arkansas," Pryor said, "Jim Guy Tucker is packaged for home consumption as a staunch Southerner speaking out for those concerns that affect our part of America. He appears to stand up for private enterprise, for limited government, for fiscal responsibility, for a balanced budget, and for those values we treasure in Arkansas. But in Washington, he's a changed man."^[23] Pryor cited a *Congressional Quarterly* analysis that showed Tucker as voting with the "Southern bloc" on 28% of selected roll calls and with the "Northern bloc" on 64% of the roll calls and listed Tucker as one of the ten "least 'Southern' Southerners."^[24] "In other words," he said, "Almost three-quarters of the time, Jim Guy Tucker disagreed with his fellow Southerners and voted with Northern liberals in Congress. I am proud to report that the rest of our Arkansas delegation voted with us. New York has 39 congressmen, and Jim Guy Tucker voted with this delegation more often than he voted with his own."^[25] Although Pryor did mention the merits and substance of a few of the 168 roll calls in the analysis, the lead and focus of the attack was rooted in rhetorical regional prejudice.

The media response to the rhetorical strategy was as varied as the editorial policies of the newspapers. The state's leading daily disagreed with the governor, editorializing that "taking the offensive in politics is common enough but, alas, it is to prejudice that Mr. Pryor now makes his principal appeal. Prejudice against organized labor, of course. Prejudice against outsiders, and particularly--would you believe it?--prejudice against Northerners. The state is now told that Jim Guy Tucker votes in Congress like a damyankee."^[26] Another editor, in a similar vein, accused Pryor of launching "an old-fashioned Dixiecrat-style" attack and confessed to being "somewhat confused at the governor's line of reasoning. After all, it has been well over 100 years since General Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia, and it would seem high time to forget ancient regional antagonisms."^[27]

However, another editorial that was reprinted as a Pryor advertisement, echoed the news conference concerning Tucker's support from labor, out-of-state contributions, votes for taxes, and failure to single-handedly curb inflation and the national debt. In phrasing similar to Pryor's campaign brief, the conservative *Southwest Times-Record* said, "Tucker has not talked about a congressional voting record that went more with the liberal congressmen of the urban Northeast

than with the interests of the people of the developing South."^[28]

The rhetors, the campaigns, the states, and the dates change, but the rhetorical strategy often remains the same. The Arkansas campaign was not an isolated vestige that year, for in Alabama challenger Albert Lee Smith charged that Congressman John Buchanan of Birmingham had "gone North and turned left."^[29] While the "paranoid style" has been identified before,^[30] it can now be seen as the product of regional experience as well as in its relation to a challenged philosophy of the radical right. The rhetorical strategy employed by Governor David Pryor, previously viewed as a Southern moderate, was successful in polarizing the issues and the electorate around the theme that his opponent was sympathetic to and supported by forces from outside the region. When newspapers extrapolate both "liberal" and "urban" from a politician's "Northern," it can safely be assumed that at least some portion of the electorate, molded by the same regional psychology, makes those same inferences. Arkansas voters seem to have reached that decision, allowing Pryor to garner 55% of the vote and defeat Tucker in the June 13 run-off election.

Records and Rhetoric

As Arkansas' Junior Senator only three years into his first term, Pryor briefed Washington reporters on the reticence of Senate Democrats to propose an amendment to cut the MX missile program. The lessons of the 1980 campaign, when Republican consultants had used selected votes to tar incumbent Democrats as wild liberals with unacceptable values, were evident in Pryor's remarks as he explained, "The Vigueries of the world have made us seem antidefense."^[31]

Pryor faced and survived just such an attack, not unlike his earlier charges against Tucker, when he ran for reelection in 1984. Congressman Ed Bethune linked David Pryor with liberal icon Senator Edward Kennedy by making a voting comparison on 1,670 Senate roll calls and suggested that his opponent would make a better senator from Massachusetts than from Arkansas.^[32] Pryor replied indignantly that Bethune's tactics to cast him as a liberal were a distortion both of his record and of the truth. "I could pull out three or four votes of Barry Goldwater the conservative Republican senator from Arizona and paint him as a liberal if I wanted to. That's just the point, when you start pulling a few votes out of context."^[33]

Pryor easily survived the Bethune campaign's attack in 1984, and he was unopposed for reelection in 1990. Nonetheless, the Arkansas media continued to publish reports throughout his career suggesting that his voting record was far more liberal than other Southern Senators. An analysis by the *National Journal* and *The Baron Report* of 50 key Senate votes in 1985 ascribed to Pryor a more liberal position than 69% of his colleagues on economic issues, 68% on social issues, and 78% on foreign policy. The *Arkansas Gazette* reported that the "survey showed that the combined voting records of the state's two senators and four representatives were, on the average, considerably more liberal than those of any other Southern delegation," and concluded that Pryor's record was even more liberal that year than that of Senator Dale Bumpers.^[34] For the years 1988-1989, Pryor had a score of 80% on 20 significant votes rated by the liberal Americans for Democratic Action while the Senate average was only 48%.^[35] A similar stance was noted in 1990, when Pryor received a 56% rating from the AFL-CIO, a 25% rating from the national Chamber of Commerce, and an 18% score from the American Conservative Union.^[36]

During his three terms in the Senate, said one Arkansas journalist, David Pryor found himself "with uncomfortable frequency, in the company of Northern liberals when annual rankings of voting records are published,"^[37] and when Pryor retired from the Senate in 1996, he was recognized and referred to by one commentator as "the liberal Democratic senator David Pryor from Arkansas."^[38]

The 2002 Arkansas Senate Campaign

In the Arkansas general election of 2002, the nominees for United States Senator were Mark Pryor, Attorney General and son of former Senator David Pryor, and Republican Senator Tim Hutchinson, the incumbent who had been elected in 1996 upon the retirement of David Pryor. The race was fiercely contested by both national parties and caught the attention of national and international news media, including the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, *The New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *USA Today*, the British Broadcasting Corporation, *The Times* of London, and a French radio network.^[39]

To better understand the election contest and the familiar rhetorical strategy framing that campaign, it is instructive to examine the Senate campaign of 1986, 16 years earlier, when Democrat Dale Bumpers, the state's senior Senator, was challenged by Asa Hutchinson, then Chair of the Arkansas Republican Party and brother of Tim Hutchinson. Asa Hutchinson opened his campaign in January, 1986, by accusing Senator Bumpers "of voting with Kennedy and 'the liberal eastern establishment' instead of with good conservative Southerners." The interpretative context for those remarks was provided by an experienced Arkansas editor who illuminated the import of that charge by observing, "Senator Edward M. Kennedy is not up for re-election in Massachusetts this year, but across the South and in some other states he is, as in previous election years, a surrogate candidate. His name is not on the ballot but he gets a drubbing in the Senate campaigns. Kennedy is not very popular in the South, and he is from a state and a region of the country that are regarded with a little suspicion here and there, which makes linking him with incumbent Democratic senators a central Republican strategy." In Arkansas, the Republicans assumed, voters would "find it loathsome that their representative might cast votes that would meet acceptance in Massachusetts or among people in some other part of the country far from the borders of our state."^[40]

During the 1980s, Lee Atwater, the GOP political strategist from South Carolina, designed and deployed a new "southern strategy" that went beyond the old racist assumptions about "the Southern way of life" that had procured Southern Democrat defectors and Republican victories in the South following passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Atwater wanted to drive a "wedge" between Southern Democrats and their rural and small town constituents and often did so effectively by identifying and exploiting the issues of affirmative action, abortion, gun control, gay rights, flag burning, and school prayer. Southern Democrats were portrayed as "cultural liberals" and pawns of a national party no longer controlled by the benighted South but by outsiders--Yankees from Massachusetts--once the home of abolitionists David Walker, William Lloyd Garrison, and Wendell Phillips and now the base of liberal Democrats Ted Kennedy, Tip O'Neill, and Michael Dukakis, the only state in the Union to vote for George McGovern in the Nixon landslide of 1972.

By 2002, the argument had almost become an assumption in the South. "Democratic candidates face a cultural problem" in the region, concluded one observer, where "they must overcome the perception that they're in league with effete urban liberals, people who wouldn't know a Moon Pie or an RC Cola if it whacked them in the head. The party of Jefferson and Jackson, which not long ago owned the nation's back roads and general stores, is seen . . . as disconnected from--if not contemptuous of--the people who spend their weekends hunting, at church or watching stock cars."^[41]

Facing reelection in 2002, Senator Tim Hutchinson employed a variation on the theme, but the rhetorical situation was not quite the same. The 2000 Census reflected a changing demographic composition of the Arkansas audience, with only 63.9% of the population over five years of age having been born in the state and 10.1% of the population having lived in a different state in 1995.^[42] Moreover, Hutchinson's 1996 victory had been secured only by an overwhelming turnout and margin in the fast-growing Third Congressional District, a stronghold of traditional mountain Republicans since the Civil War, bolstered by the more recent transfer of business executives and relocation of retirees from outside the South. To win again against a much stronger opponent, Hutchinson knew that he would need to rely heavily on that constituency.^[43] Any overt anti-Yankee appeal to "Southern values" would risk alienation of his political base among the transplanted voters, many from the upper Midwest, among his core supporters.

In addition, Hutchinson was a Republican incumbent facing a Democrat challenger with no federal roll calls as evidence for the argument.^[44] The standard briefing books prepared for years by the National Republican Senatorial Committee comparing the similarity between the voting records of incumbent Democrats with that of Ted Kennedy would be of no avail in this campaign. In fact, Hutchinson had a record that could be and was compared to Kennedy's, with whom he had co-sponsored numerous bills, but he could also claim a greater affinity with the records of Minority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi, Jesse Helms of North Carolina, and Strom Thurmond of South Carolina for Southern rhetorical insulation.^[45] The case would have to be made on the basis of Mark Pryor's campaign contributions and the argument that out-of-state contributions signaled that Pryor would follow the lead of Kennedy and the liberal Democrats from outside the South.^[46]

Just days after the May primary and a full three months before the traditional Labor Day start of the general election campaign, Hutchinson's campaign issued a press release noting that the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee was "headed by west coast liberal Senator Patty Murray" and that Pryor was being "wined, dined and paid for by liberals who put Arkansas values last." Hutchinson campaign spokesman Anthony Hulen claimed that Pryor was an outsider, funded by "the elitist, liberal, big-money spectrum from San Francisco, California to Washington, DC, showing his true political stripes which he tries so hard to hide here at home. Very few Arkansans share the values of the gun-control hungry, pro-abortion pushing, give-me-more-tax-money Ted Kennedy and his friends. . . . With the Senate Democratic leadership of Ted Kennedy behind him, Pryor would be little more than a liberal lackey."^[47] Pryor's campaign, of course, had anticipated that strategy and had earlier adopted the campaign slogan "Arkansas Comes First." Demonstrating a shared perception of the "us versus them" *topoi*, Pryor contended that Hutchinson "votes around 95 percent of the time with the Republican

Party. He's not listening to the people back home, he's voting the way they tell him in Washington."^[48]

Later that month, the Hutchinson campaign reiterated the charge, now targeting "Mark's pal Ted Kennedy" and Pryor's "liberal friends in San Francisco, Boston and New York, where he is raising most of his money lately." Avoiding any slight to Hutchinson's party base, campaign spokesman Hulen said, "West coast and northeastern liberals are the last people to share Arkansas values, but the first to share their money with Mark because they know they can count on his votes for their causes."^[49] In case anyone might miss the point about "West Coast liberals," Hutchinson elaborated the point in a speech to the American Legion convention meeting in Jonesboro. Critiquing the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision regarding the unconstitutionality of the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance as "out of the mainstream of American thinking" and "just downright nutty," Hutchinson quipped that "God took the U.S. and turned it on its side and all the loose stuff went to California."^[50]

In July, the Hutchinson campaign attempted to transform the rhetorical sword into a shield, responding to the Reform Voter Project attack on his votes against campaign finance reform legislation. Deflecting the charges instead of explaining the votes on the merits, a campaign press release quoted Hulen's lament, "Once again, this Boston, Massachusetts, group that has no Arkansas ties whatsoever is trying to distort Senator Hutchinson's record."^[51] Then, regaining an offensive posture, another press release returned to the thematic drum beat against "Pryor's liberal friends outside Arkansas" and "his buddy Ted Kennedy," suggested to voters that "Arkansans know where Senator Kennedy stands," and implied that "Mark will also take the same stances as Kennedy in favor of gun control, higher taxes, abortion on demand, and more big government."^[52]

When the campaign moved into August, the Hutchinson campaign issued its last official press release tagging Pryor for "his close ties to liberals like Ted Kennedy,"^[53] as it became clear that the national parties were having greater influence on the campaign messages of both candidates and that other "issues" would have greater prominence in the media mix. Hutchinson's official campaign organization was determined to run only "positive" television spots, relying on the National Republican Senatorial Committee and other groups to handle the "negative" attacks on Pryor.^[54] Consequently, the intuitive North/South theme seemed to drop from the media; the outside organizations were dedicated to a different set of national party or interest group issues, and the campaign's press operation was following the pollster's advice to stress other issues having more salience in the campaign's internal polls.^[55]

As both their own polls and those commissioned by media outlets showed Pryor opening a lead of 8-10 points during the fall campaign, the Hutchinson strategists must have been reassessing the effectiveness of the "outsider" theme, a tactic that MIT political science professor Stephen Ansolabehere argues motivates committed partisans but does little to sway undecideds or peel those committed to one's opponent.^[56] That one of Hutchinson's strongest demographic base of supporters was among non-native Republicans in northwestern Arkansas, the least distinctively Southern part of the state, presented a further conundrum that undermined the efficacy of emphasis on the theme.^[57]

Another factor was that Pryor's "Arkansas Comes First" slogan not only blunted the Hutchinson campaign's attempt to disconnect him from the voters, it also worked by implication

to question whether Senator Hutchinson, after a decade in Washington, served the people of Arkansas or followed in lock-step with his national party's agenda "Our argument," said Arkansas Democratic Party spokesman Michael Cook, "is that Hutchinson went to Washington saying he was for families and seniors, but he votes time and time again against them. He has lost Arkansas values."^[58]

Hutchinson responded as if he only heard the words and missed the subtextual message that he was also a hypocrite for having been elected on a "family values" platform then having gone to Washington, lost his values, divorced his wife, and married a younger member of his staff. Even Ed Goeas, Hutchinson's pollster, admitted after the election that Hutchinson's divorce was "an albatross" and that voters "questioned whether he was the same Tim" they had elected in 1996.^[59] Yet, now floundering on the stump as well as in the polls, Hutchinson seized a psychological *non sequitur* and defensively insisted, "This is what Democrats do in Arkansas. They run as a moderate-to-conservative, and then they go to Washington and vote for Tom Daschle for majority leader and vote down the line with Tom Daschle and Ted Kennedy's agenda. That's what they've done, and that's what Mark Pryor will do."^[60]

Importing eloquence during the final weeks of the campaign, even at the risk of reinforcing the perception that he might be a lackey for the leadership, Hutchinson appeared at campaign events in northwest Arkansas with Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott, who declared, "Tom Daschle doesn't even know where Arkansas is."^[61] While Daschle might well have been of some obvious concern to Hutchinson and Lott, a substantial percentage of Arkansas voters probably didn't know who or from where Tom Daschle is either, returning the cognitive favor.

By the final week of the campaign, it must have become as clear to Hutchinson as it was to everyone else that they had failed to convince voters that Mark Pryor was Ted Kennedy's understudy or, perhaps, that the besieged Southern strategy could never have been employed with effect in the particular rhetorical situation. Striking the colors, Hutchinson appeared at a campaign rally at Fort Smith with former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani. Rattling the party saber before a crowd of only about 800 people in the Fort Smith Convention Center but reaching a larger statewide audience through media coverage, Giuliani declared, "As far as I'm concerned, I'm in Brooklyn. The only difference between here and New York City is there are more Republicans here."^[62]

Rhetorical Reflections

In 1978 run-off primary, Governor David Pryor made a concerted effort to portray Congressman Jim Guy Tucker as a Yankee, and he won both the Democrat party's nomination and eventual election to the United States Senate. Whether he would have won without that tactic can be argued, but it did appear to be part of an effective rhetorical strategy to gain party voters who had supported the more conservative Congressman Ray Thornton in the preferential primary election. While variations of that theme have been employed, sometimes successfully, in general elections since that time, it did not appear to have any positive impact on voters in the 2002 Arkansas campaign for United States Senate between incumbent Republican Tim Hutchinson and Democrat challenger Mark Pryor.

Possible explanations for the different results in different campaigns could include the

variables of chronological time, political party, incumbency, constituencies, saliency of other issues, personal characteristics of the candidates, effectiveness of articulation, the nature of the supporting evidence, or other factors, including the rhetorically malleable perceptions and mind of the South. That the tactic is not always effective does not mean that it cannot be employed successfully in Southern political campaigns as a means of persuasion through Kenneth Burke's concept of "identification" between the speaker and the audience and through "affirmation by negation" of the opposition candidate's voting behavior and reflected values.

Even after having been challenged from and moving to the right in a primary, Hutchinson's campaign released an internal poll by The Tarrance Group purporting to show the senator with a 51%-43% lead in May among likely voters in the general election.^[63] On November 5, Mark Pryor received 54% of the vote and carried 55 of Arkansas' 75 counties. Pundits offered various explanations for Hutchinson's loss, the only incumbent Republican Senator defeated in a year of significant gains for his party.

Hutchinson's editorial page supporters at the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* blamed the Senator's divorce and remarriage for defections among fundamentalist Christians in the primary and their lack of enthusiasm in the general election. Moreover, they suggested that Pryor had played upon that weakness with his own "family-friendly TV commercials . . . chock-full of Sunday school settings and kitchen conversations with the wife."^[64]

Perhaps more significant, however, the editors admitted the failure of Hutchinson's inept attempt to depict Pryor as the running dog of the Ted Kennedy liberals from Massachusetts and the Left Coast. "The mudslingers on the other side were left to portray [him] as a flag-burning, gun-controlling fanatic--pure fictions that voters quickly dismissed: 'Hey, that's David's boy. We know the family better than that.'"^[65] As election day approached, one independent poll revealed that 53% of likely voters reported favorable personal perceptions of Pryor, while only 43% said that about Hutchinson, and a post-election survey showed that only 17% of Arkansas voters thought Hutchinson ran a "fair" campaign against Pryor.^[66]

Additional evidence that the strategy failed can be seen in the voting results. In the heavily Republican Third Congressional District, where the "outsider" move was especially risky, Hutchinson's percentages dropped from 65% in 1996 to 56% in 2002, despite a last-minute rally headlined by President Bush.^[67] In Benton County (Hutchinson's home), his vote dropped from 73% in 1996 to 64% in 2002. In Washington County (where Trent Lott had dismissed Tom Daschle), his total was down from 64% to 52%, and in Sebastian County (where New York Mayor Giuliani declared his affinity), it dropped from 68% to 56%. Pryor carried the other three Congressional districts, with majorities ranging from 59% to 56%.^[68]

For voters who might be thought to make their decisions based on national issues, the candidates presented some clear differences. Hutchinson opposed increasing the minimum wage, while Pryor supported increasing it by at least one dollar an hour. Hutchinson supported and Pryor opposed allowing part of the Social Security payroll tax to be invested in the stock market. Hutchinson supported and Pryor opposed making President Bush's 1.35 trillion dollar tax cut permanent. Hutchinson supported and Pryor opposed the use of tax dollars to send children to religious or secular private schools. Hutchinson supported and Pryor opposed constitutional amendments authorizing prayer in schools, protecting the U.S. flag from desecration, and allowing the posting of the Ten Commandments. Hutchinson voted against the campaign finance

reform bill, and Pryor said he would have voted for the bill.^[69]

Republican loyalist Susan Power, a retired political science professor at Arkansas State University, argued that Hutchinson lost because he neglected his conservative base and "ran too moderate a campaign,"^[70] although observers might think otherwise based on the issue disagreements noted above and the aggressive campaign effort to link Pryor with bi-costal liberal icons. Furthermore, Power placed the blame on the intellectual infirmity of the voters who rejected Hutchinson. "Take a look at the number of educated people in this state. Only 20% have got a college degree--not too smart," she concluded.^[71]

Still to be considered are the explicitly Southern campaign messages of the candidates, and we do not think they were entirely unimportant. The conservative *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* was one of the few newspapers in the state to play the "South card" during the campaign, opining that when Hutchinson and Pryor were speaking before a black audience, a mystic chord informed their rhetorical practices. "It has to do with slavery, Jim Crow, Southern history and mores, and with what in the end saves the South: the human connection despite everything," suggested the editorial, before dismissing their own analysis with a feeble recognition that they had offered "enough Faulknerian ruminations." The writer then went on to pan Pryor for his criticism of Hutchinson's votes as a state legislator against a state civil rights bill and for a bill allowing state employees to devote a paid holiday to commemorate Robert E. Lee's birthday instead of the Martin Luther King Holiday. Praise was due from the newspaper to Hutchinson, though, for his argument that "greatest thing we could do for African American children across this country" would be to enact legislation for school vouchers.^[72] The *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* endorsed Hutchinson for reelection; a poll they commissioned showed that 6% of Arkansas' black voters shared that opinion.^[73]

Our analysis of the campaign's myriad messages leads us to the conclusion that the *topoi* of Southernness still has rhetorical power: sometimes when misunderstood by the journalists, such as those of the Old South mentality among the editors of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*; sometimes employed ineptly, as by the political operatives--and the candidate--in the Hutchinson campaign; and sometimes subtly as when the Pryor campaign adopted the "Arkansas Comes First" slogan to position the candidate against an opponent's campaign that seemed at times to ignore local political realities and to emphasize national political implications and power struggles as the core message.^[74]

As the 21st century unfolds, there will surely be yet another South, born again and perceived as "New." However, as long as citizens of the region continue to perceive a minority status within the national political culture, politicians who feel as threatened as the region will continue to execute rhetorical strategies that makes use of this perception. Nonetheless, the question remains as to when the vestigial Southern rhetorical *topoi* will work. The answer might be informed by political science, but it can only be answered by the intuitive and inventive art of politics.

Endnotes

^[1] Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970) 18.

- [2] (New York: Boni & Liverright, 1927).
- [3] (Gainesville: Univ. of Florida Press, 1956)
- [4] (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970).
- [5] (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1972).
- [6] *The Transformation of Southern Politics: Social Change and Consequence* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).
- [7] *The Idea of the South: Pursuit of a Central Theme* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964).
- [8] Waldo W. Braden, ed., *Oratory in the Old South, 1828-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1970) 17.
- [9] (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941) x.
- [10] (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1963).
- [11] (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1972).
- [12] Braden 17.
- [13] (New York: Random House, 1970) 3.
- [14] *The Burden of Southern History*, rev. ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1968) 188.
- [15] The use of such a strategy in a broader context is discussed in Bonnie MCD. Johnson, "Images of the Enemy in Intergroup Conflict," *Central States Speech Journal* 26 (1975): 84-92; and Martha Soloman, "The Rhetoric of STOP ERA: Fatalistic Reaffirmation," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 44 (1978): 42-59.
- [16] For example, see Howard W. Odum, *Race and Rumors of Race* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1943) 15; and Donald R. Matthews and James W. Prothro, *Negroes and the New Southern Politics* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966) 43.
- [17] Killian 5.
- [18] Killian 40.
- [19] T. R. Reid, "New Politics on Top of an Ozark Peak," *The Washington Post* 29 May 1978: A3.
- [20] David H. Pryor, "Speech to the Democratic National Convention Seconding the Nomination of Senator Walter Mondale for Vice-President," New York, New York, July 15, 1976. Audiotape in Arkansas Archives of Public Communication, Mullins Library Special Collections, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas.
- [21] David H. Pryor, "Speech to Democratic State Convention," Little Rock, Arkansas, Sep. 22, 1978. Audiotape in Arkansas Archives of Public Communication, Mullins Library Special Collections, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas.
- [22] Tom Hamburger, "Tucker Talks Like a Southerner, But Votes With North, Pryor Says," *Arkansas Gazette* 2 June 1978: 1A.
- [23] "Tucker's Record Attacked," *Northwest Arkansas Times* [Fayetteville], 5 June 1978: 4.
- [24] Hamburger 1A.
- [25] "Tucker's Record Attacked" 1.
- [26] "An Appeal to Prejudice," editorial, *Arkansas Gazette* 3 June 1978: 12A.
- [27] "Disappointment," editorial, *Northwest Arkansas Times* [Fayetteville] 5 June 1978: 4.
- [28] "David Pryor--Proven, Qualified," editorial, *Southwest Times-Record* [Ft. Smith] 4 June 1978: 6A, reprinted as advertisement in *Arkansas Gazette* 9 June 1978: 12A.
- [29] "Incumbent's 'Turn to Left' Heats up Race in Alabama," *Arkansas Gazette*, 3 Sep. 1978:18A.

- [30] Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967). For studies using Hofstadter's hypothesis, see Keith R. Sanders and Robert P. Newman, "John A. Stromer and the Hofstadter Hypothesis," *Central States Speech Journal* 22 (1971): 218-227; and Craig Allen Smith, "The Hofstadter Hypothesis Revisited: The Nature of Evidence in Politically 'Paranoid' Discourse," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 42 (1977): 274-289.
- [31] Steven V. Roberts, "Votes Influenced by Use of Records," *The New York Times* 14 Dec. 1981: A25. Richard Viguerie was the consultant who perfected such attacks by direct mail for conservative Republicans.
- [32] Ernest Dumas, "Bumpers Must Face Ted Kennedy, Too," *Arkansas Gazette* 19 Jan. 1986: 1C.
- [33] John Brummett, "Pryor Speaks on Radio Show Between Commercials Criticizing Him," *Arkansas Gazette* 3 Nov. 1984: 6A.
- [34] Carol Matlack, "State Delegation Rated as South's Most Liberal; Leads in Economic, Social Issues, Survey Says," *Arkansas Gazette* 23 May 1986: 21A.
- [35] Associated Press, "Congress Tiptoes to the Right; Rating from Liberals Shows Slight Decline," *Arkansas Gazette* 11 Feb. 1990: 4A.
- [36] James Powell, "Party Differences Clear in Ratings," *Arkansas Gazette* 26 Aug. 1991: 7B.
- [37] Roy Reed, "Clinton Country," *The New York Times Magazine* 6 Sep. 1992: Section 6, 33.
- [38] William T. Pelletier, "Election Commentary," 11 Nov. 1996; <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/4484/elec.com.htm> 8 Sep. 2002.
- [39] Michael Rowett, "Poll shows Pryor over Hutchinson by 52.5%-41.7%," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 3 Nov. 2002: 1A.
- [40] Ernest Dumas, "Bumpers Must Face Ted Kennedy, Too," *Arkansas Gazette*, 19 Jan. 1986: 1C.
- [41] Matt Bai, "Huntin' for Nascar-Lovin', Moon-Pie-Eatin', Bluegrass-Listenin', Shotgun-Totin' Democrats," *The New York Times Magazine*, 15 Sep. 2002: Sect. 6, 94.
- [42] United States Census Bureau, "Table DP-2. Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000. Geographic Area: Arkansas." <http://censtats.census.gov/data/AR/04005.pdf#page=2>. In 1990, 67.8 % of the population had been born in Arkansas. United States Census Bureau, "Table DP-2, Social Characteristics: 1990; Data Set: 1990 Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3) - Sample data; Geographic Area: Arkansas." http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsTable?_lang=en&_vt_name=DEC_1990_STF3_DP2&_geo_id=04000US05.
- [43] Laura Kellams, "Senate Race Heads Northwest," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* [Northwest Edition] 28 Sep. 2002: B1
- [44] For an analogous situation and a similar rhetorical response in the Senate campaign between Republican Congressman Lindsey Graham and newcomer Alex Sanders in South Carolina, see William M. Welch, "Democrats Shun Party Label in the South; Considered a Handicap in Effort to Retake the Conservative Region," *USA TODAY* 1 Nov. 2002: 13A.
- [45] Lott came to Arkansas to campaign for Hutchinson during the closing days of the campaign. See, Laura Kellams, "Hutchinson Is Needed in Senate, Lott Says; Minority Leader Pays a Visit to Arkansas," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 22 Oct. 2002: 9. For the observation that

Senator Hutchinson's record was much like that of Helms and Thurmond, see Scott Shepard, "Arkansans Battle for 'family values' Label; Senate Contest Features One Conservative vs. Another," *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* 25 Oct. 2002: 4B.

- [46] Contribution reports filed with the Federal Election Commission, however, would show that both Pryor and Hutchinson received approximately two-thirds of their contributions from outside the state. Michael Rowett, "U.S. Senate Race Largely Financed by Out-of-Staters," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 1 Nov. 2002: 13.
- [47] Hutchinson for Senate Press Release, "Non-Conservative Pryor Rakes in More Liberal Big Bucks at Ted Kennedy Fund-Raiser," 6 June 2002.
- [48] James Jefferson, "Senate Races Begins in Earnest with Senate Control in Balance," *Associated Press State & Local Wire* [Little Rock], 22 May 2002.
- [49] Hutchinson for Senate Press Release, "Hutchinson Poll and Message Show Positive Results; Meanwhile, Pryor Puts Boston & New York Fund-Raisers Ahead of Arkansas Job," 26 June 2002. Nonetheless, the campaign strangely felt compelled to deny involvement in a television sport aired by the state Republican Party (which shared the same offices), showing Pryor attending a Washington fund-raiser on his behalf hosted by Kennedy. See, "Hutchinson, Pryor Trade jabs on Fundraising," *Associated Press State & Local Wire* [Little Rock], 20 June 2002.
- [50] Stephen Hankins, "American Legion Hosts Hutchinson, Janet Huckabee," *Jonesboro Sun*, 30 June 2002; Reprinted on Hutchinson for Senate website, http://www.tim2002.com/cgi-data/doc_news/files/42.shtml, accessed 1 September 2002.
- [51] Hutchinson for Senate Press Release, "Massachusetts Group Shows It's Not So True Colors In Second Attack on Hutchinson," 16 July 2002.
- [52] Hutchinson for Senate Press Release, "Liberal Ted Touts Negative Mark on Senate Floor; Another Day, Another Massachusetts Liberal Taking Up for Pryor," 19 July 2002.
- [53] Hutchinson for Senate Press Release, "Pryor Repeats Mistake Proving He's a Tax Hiker," 14 Aug. 2002.
- [54] See also, Kelly Wiese, "Races Promise to Get Nastier as Election Approaches," *Associated Press State & Local Wire* [Little Rock], 30 Sep. 2002. One exception, however, was the conservative Club for Growth that announced plans to spend more than \$600,000 to broadcast an ad in several states, including Arkansas, depicting Tom Daschle, Ted Kennedy and Hillary Clinton in opposition to tax cuts and homeland security. See, Alan Fram, "Campaign Boogeymen: GOP Vilifies Sens. Clinton, Kennedy, Daschle; Democrats Target Executives," *Associated Press State & Local Wire* [Conway], 27 Oct. 2002. Such technical division of messages was, perhaps, too fine a point, since a survey showed that most Arkansas voters could not distinguish between ads produced by the candidates and the committees. Paul Barton, "Competition Fierce for Votes, Study Finds," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 14 Nov. 2002: 5.
- [55] The observation and interpretation in this paragraph were confirmed after the election by confidential interviews with staff members from the Hutchinson for Senate Committee. (9 November 2002; 28 November 2002)
- [56] Alann Fram, "Campaign Boogeymen: GOP ViliKennedy, Target Executives," *Associated Press State & Local Wire* [Conway] 27 Oct. 2002.

- [57] A Zogby International poll taken the week before the election showed that in the 479 Area Code [Northwest Arkansas] Hutchinson was leading 60.2% to 34.5%, but in the rest of the state he had less than 40%. See, Michael Rowett, "Poll Shows Pryor over Hutchinson by 52.5%-41.7%," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 3 Nov. 2002: 1A.
- [58] Scott Shepard, "Arkansans Battle for 'family values' Label; Senate Contest Features One Conservative vs. Another," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* 25 Oct. 2002: 4B.
- [59] Paul Barton, "Competition Fierce for Votes, Study Finds," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 14 Nov. 2002: 5.
- [60] Jill Zuckman, "Marital Strife Hurts Senator's Re-Election Bid; 'Family Values' Are Factor in Arkansas," *Chicago Tribune* 6 Oct. 2002: 12.
- [61] Laura Kellams, "Hutchinson Is Needed in Senate, Lott Says; Minority Leader Pays a Visit to Arkansas," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 22 Oct. 2002: 9.
- [62] Dave Hughes, "Giuliani appeals to GOP Faithful," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 2 Nov. 2002: 21.
- [63] James Jefferson, "Senate races begins in earnest with Senate control in balance," *Associated Press State & Local Wire* [Little Rock], 22 May 2002.
- [64] "The Divorce," editorial, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 15 Nov. 2002: 22
- [65] "The Divorce," editorial, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 15 Nov. 2002: 22.
- [66] Paul Barton, "Competition Fierce for Votes, Study Finds," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 14 Nov. 2002: 5.
- [67] Paul Barton, "Competition Fierce for Votes, Study Finds," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 14 Nov. 2002: 5.
- [68] Michael Rowett, "Senator Lost Ground in 20 Swing Counties," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 10 Nov. 2002: 19.
- [69] "Senate Issues," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 3 Nov. 2002: 18.
- [70] Michael Rowett, "Senator Lost Ground in 20 Swing Counties," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 10 Nov. 2002: 19.
- [71] James Jefferson, "Arkansas Voters Don't Follow Political Wind," *Associated Press State & Local Wire* [Little Rock], 11 Nov. 2002.
- [72] "Now He's Gone Too Far; Mark Pryor Takes on Robert E. Lee," editorial, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 6 Aug. 2002: B6.
- [73] "For Tim Hutchinson," editorial, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 20 Oct. 2002: E4; "Our Endorsements," editorial, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 5 Nov. 2002: 16 ; Michael Rowett, "Poll Shows Pryor Over Hutchinson by 52.5%-41.7%," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 3 Nov. 2002: 1A.
- [74] Michael Rowett, "Watchers Say Legacy, Message Helped Pryor," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* 7 Nov. 2002: 15.