white voters from other issues and to impose racist uniformity on often carelessly nondiscriminatory white cultural practices, and that black unity against disfranchisement in Louisiana in the late 1890s could not prevail in the face of white Democratic control of election laws and the ballot box. To determine whether divisions, if any, among African Americans affected an outcome, one must look at comparative instances and at white as well as black behavior.

Many of the essays are interesting and useful as individual papers. Vicki Ruiz surveys the extensive literature on struggles against school segregation by minorities other than blacks in the American West. Patricia Sullivan suggests that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) almost exclusive concentration on southern school segregation from 1934 to 1954 may have weakened the long-run campaign to overcome racial discrimination everywhere in the country. Mark Tushnet presents a crystalline discussion of the way two competing interpretations of Brown—"anti-discrimination" and "anti-subordination," requiring only desegregation or requiring integration—developed in Supreme Court opinions from 1948 through 2003. Most striking is David Douglas's comprehensive, bleak assessment of Brown's long-range impact on black education throughout the country.

But other essays overstretch. Volume editor Peter F. Lau seeks to move Clarendon County, South Carolina, the site of one of the five cases consolidated in Brown, "from the periphery to the center." But the efforts of Clarendon blacks to improve their schools were of only local consequence until activist Rev. J. A. DeLaine responded to an appeal by the head of the state NAACP, and it took the dictatorial efforts of Thurgood Marshall to transform the Clarendon fight for separate and a little more equal into one for integration. What Lau's paper really demonstrates is the violent, devastating white resistance to any black advance in the rural backwater. Christina Greene blurs distinctions between "pre-figurative politics" and actual protest, between private conversation and public action, between the failure to contest oppressive conditions openly and actual acceptance of those conditions, to lend some plausibility to her assertion that it was black women's largely invisible community organizing after Brown, and not black male religious, legal, and political leadership or white resistance, that led to the sit-ins and fueled the sixteen-year-long campaign to desegregate the schools in Durham, North Carolina. Michael Klarman severely distorts the nature of pre-Brown legal precedents on school segregation and speculates misleadingly about the stances of Justices Tom Clark, Felix Frankfurter, and Robert Jackson to support his dubious contentions that the Brown decision was not inevitable in 1954 and that it was more a matter of politics than of law.

The occasion of the semicentennial of Brown ought to have produced a more cohesive collection of more deeply considered essays.

J. Morgan Kousser
California Institute of Technology