Dark Room



“Hannah Maynard Self-Portrait,” trick photograph, multiple exposure (ca. 1893). Image F-02852, courtesy of the Royal British Columbia Museum, BC Archives, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Tricks a Girl Can Do

Hannah Maynard (1834-1918) was a Canadian photographer who created surreal images after the death of her daughter; she was a proto-surrealist.

I will hang myself in picture frames
in drawing rooms where grief
is not allowed a wicker chair

then grimace back at this facade
from umbrella eyes

under a cage of silver hair.

Look! I've learned to slice myself in three
to sit politely at the table
with ginger punch and teacake;

offer thin-lipped graves
of pleasantries.I develop myself
in the pharmacist's chemicals

three women I'm loathe to understand—
presences I sometimes cajole
into modern light and shadow;

we culminate in a gelatin scene—
a daughter birthed from a spiral shell,
a keyhole tall enough to strut through.

Endless Forms, More Beautiful

After a multiple exposure self-portrait of Hannah Maynard, c. 1894

So she keeps her herringbone hands busy with teacups and white flowers
and murmurs to no one what she will create. No nephew sawed in half

will interest her today, no devoted husband measuring buttes
but a suitcase of her own bright follies. The living room pulses on

and off with gunpowder expertly fitted for her flash. Or perhaps
the room becomes a kind of snowbound mausoleum exhibiting her grief

one winter afternoon. (It's quite impossible to know but let's presume.)
No more inner voices to wake her from sleep, no more fussy wives

who arrive with meat pies and then hurry their bosoms home
to living daughters. In the frame, Hannahs stand here, sit there, bend over

to brush a bouquet of lilies from other Hannah's hair.
From house left and then house right solitary Hannahs float like smoke

rings into me. I should have known —the artful dodge, her concentric days,
unwavering dark-sky stare—recognized my own pathology.

Strange Symmetry of Past, of Present

after a self-portrait set in a keyhole: late 1890's

Actually, the past does slip forward
through a keyhole,

alive, feeding on our half-
recounted facts and figures,

penny-farthing bicycles and pancake
breakfasts annually eaten.

How we learn to study it
in private (the past)

like reading the phrasing
of rare birds or fisherman

sweaters or scat; to unlock
the world in retrospect –

a human kind of heaven.

Take photography, for instance.
Here the 19th century returns

as Hannah poses herself
in crisp black and white;

she’s made a negative space
on the threshold of a life-

sized paper cut-out: keyhole
fit for the movie sets

of Orson Welles (well before
Orson was born).

Her figure stands neither in
nor out of the century but floats.

She’s her own avant-garde parade

a riddle, amulet, sunflower seed;
comic, crazy, genius woman

finding the multiplicity of things –

patterns of desire across a face:
two dead daughters, ghost light, and similar fates.

The Tangible, Intangible

after a photograph by Hannah Maynard
on the death of her child, c. 1884

Afterwards, she surveys the site:
the jostled cups, a buffalo rug
faded burlap of bookcase

overstuffed with tromp l'oeil painted spines.

The sound of the photograph
would be island rain
and the animal cry of the child gone—

In the darkroom she works alone

cajoles waterfalls, brings to light
the floating picture frame,
the doily's difficult knowledge —

Commonplace days she survives
with a mirror trick, a few glass plates
that echo *don't let go; let go.*

Hannah, Decanter, and Cloud

~self portrait at 74

Age is still decanters on the table
the size of small chandeliers
or cloud foam. You, remember,
are the one that is unmade
as of yet, unknown. Medium
merely to an image, a woman

studio-posed. Self-portrait
developed for the afterlife—
our ticker-tape world

of tableaus and combs
circling on. And. Then. Somehow
your barnacled vessel
lit from within like a carriage
clock or sea-washed amber stones.
Have you been taken?

the Victorians inquired; from flesh
into silver salts, into gaslight paper
or gold? Everyone becoming older.

Your gaze darts forward, lifts
beyond the mayor’s clapperboard
home, the dead dove, the séance, the bones.
One unknowable instant—
even as the aperture quietly
holds, even as the light

decants over gloved hands
that turn into clouds.
Don’t tell me this is only a story.

Tell me there’s more to our lives
than jigsaws and doorknobs,
more than tumbleweed, sediment or sex.
We live for the tunnel, the years signatured
together into the surreal, for our art
imperfect and striving.

Yellow Bird and the Thunder



On Finding the Earliest Known Poem by John Rollin Ridge, the First Native American Novelist

I sometimes think that I could recognize John Rollin Ridge's voice anywhere. Considering he died in 1867—a widely hated California Copperhead newspaper editor, and the exiled scion of a once-powerful Cherokee family—this feeling is a bit uncanny. But, as many readers of *Common-place* can probably attest, spending a great deal of time with the work of a particular writer has the effect of rendering him familiar as an old friend. One grows accustomed to his repeated patterns of thought, his recurring metaphors, until finally one is able to recognize the writer's voice as easily as that of a remembered classmate heard from across a crowded room. And it was this voice—by turns bombastic and anxious, deeply Christian and yet infused with the rhetoric of Romantic transcendence—that I recognized while flipping through a copy of the *Arkansas State Gazette* in the American Antiquarian Society's reading room last January.

If John Rollin Ridge is familiar at all today, it is likely as the author of *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*, the first novel written by a Native American. Yet Ridge was a journalist for most of his career, and wrote throughout his life. I was visiting AAS to research Ridge's California newspaper editorials from the 1850s for a dissertation chapter dealing with Mexican resistance in California after the Mexican-American War. On a lark, I thought I might take a look at a few of the local newspapers from places where Ridge lived during his teenage years. I didn't expect to find much, but there it was: a previously unknown poem by a very young John Rollin Ridge, titled "To a Thunder Cloud." It was even signed with Ridge's pen name, Yellow Bird—an English translation of his Cherokee name, Cheesquatalawny. Even without the byline, though, I would have recognized that voice—dramatic, sing-song, redolent of violence—just about anywhere.

What was more, the poem appeared to be Ridge's earliest extant publication. Appended to the text was a composition date of November 1846, when Ridge was only nineteen. That date was earlier than any other known Ridge poem, including those that exist only in manuscript form. Scholars have had a hazy awareness that Ridge wrote poetry as a young man (biographer James W. Parins refers to, but does not identify, "several … poems, published under the pen name Yellowbird"), but much of this writing remains undiscovered. His earliest *identified* poem, "To a Mockingbird," was composed in May 1847, seven months after the composition of "To a Thunder Cloud," and not published until years later.

Much of this early poetry strikes readers as derivative and unconnected to Ridge's later complex politics. Take "Mockingbird," for example. The speaker of this poem addresses the bird of the title, which sits on a high perch. Below, human beings suffer. Above, the bird watches. Does the bird empathize with suffering people, the speaker wants to know, or does it instead exist in an immortal realm of "living thought," far removed from human concerns?

Considering that another name for the Northern Mockingbird is the American Nightingale, it is perhaps unsurprising that the poem is reminiscent of John Keats's more famous ode, which also links birdsong to immortality. But Ridge's "Thunder Cloud," it seemed, *was* inflected by the politics of the moment, and in ways that revealed the political dimensions of his other poems, like "Mockingbird." In order to explain, I'll have to back up.

Although Ridge was occasionally composing poems in a Romantic mode by 1847, writing had not been his primary concern. The twenty-year-old's life had been lived at the center of a political maelstrom. At the age of twelve he watched a gang of assassins brutally murder his father just outside the family home. This murder was the culmination of a conflict that had gone on for nearly a decade. Just prior to the elder Ridge's death, there had been *two* Cherokee nations—one bordering Georgia and another just across the western border of Arkansas. The state government of Georgia, however, coveted the lands of the eastern Cherokee nation. White settlers had, over the years, attempted to seize portions of it. This resulted in a power struggle within the eastern Cherokee nation itself. On one side stood the Ridge family and their allies, who believed the eastern nation would eventually be lost and therefore supported a plan to sell it entirely in exchange for millions of dollars and lands in the West. Some compensation for this loss, they reasoned, would be better than nothing. On the other side were the supporters of John Ross, who wanted to stay and fight for their ancient rights.

1. A reproduction of the poem itself. Yellow Bird, "To a Thunder Cloud," Arkansas State Gazette, page 2 (January 9, 1847). Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

In 1835, Rollin Ridge's father, John Ridge, signed the Treaty of New Echota, selling the entire eastern Cherokee nation in exchange for lands in the West and financial compensation to be distributed among the Cherokee people. This led to the infamous 1838 Trail of Tears—the militarily enforced expulsion of the Cherokee people from their nation in the east. Thousands died. From John Ridge's perspective, removal was the only option. He once compared it to the Exodus: a long march from slavery to freedom. But to John Ridge's enemies, the treaty and removal constituted a betrayal. And so, in 1839, supporters of John Ross surrounded the Ridge family's new settlement at Honey Creek, in the western Cherokee nation. They dragged John Ridge from his home and stabbed him twenty-nine times, killing him. Fearing for their lives, the surviving members of the Ridge household left for Arkansas a week later.

The conflict within the Cherokee nation continued during John Rollin Ridge's teenage years, which he spent exiled in Arkansas. By 1845, the long-simmering feud between the "Treaty Party" (as the Ridge family and their allies came to be known) and the more powerful John Ross faction had broken out into widespread, sectarian violence. Ridge's biographer, James W. Parins, writes

that we simply cannot know the degree to which the teenage John Rollin Ridge participated in or was affected by the violence marking this period of his life. What is clear, however, is that he wanted to be involved in some way. Ridge formed inchoate plans to murder John Ross. He wrote a letter to a cousin asking for a Bowie knife. He praised the guerrilla tactics of an anti-Ross fighter. When the United States government brokered a peaceful settlement to the violence in 1846, and ratified this settlement in August of that year, it marked an end, at least temporarily, to the fighting. But Ridge's letters from this period suggest that his mission to restore his family's position—and not his goal of becoming a poet and author—remained foremost in his mind.

And this restoration was precisely what Ridge set about accomplishing. He received reparations for his father's murder, as specified by the August 1846 treaty. He purchased the family farm at Honey Creek, near the Cherokee-Missouri border, which his mother had been forced to flee with her children nearly eight years before. And, in May 1847—the same month he wrote "To a Mockingbird"—Ridge married Elizabeth Wilson.

But the Cherokee nation was still riven by conflict. In 1849 Ridge murdered David Kell, a pro-Ross judge. (There is some evidence that Kell stole one of Ridge's stallions and castrated it in order to provoke a fight that would enable him to justifiably murder the heir-apparent to a marginalized but still threatening political faction. If this was Kell's plan, it proved to be something less than a complete success.) After this, the young poet was forced into exile, first in Missouri and then in California. It was then that he began to write professionally. At first he published articles about the California Gold Rush in newspapers and periodicals. Then, in 1854, Ridge published his first and only novel, *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*, a bacchanal of political violence set in U.S.-controlled California.

Or so goes the conventional account of Ridge's writing. But the text before me pushed the timeline of Ridge's authorship back by nearly a year. The poem I had encountered in the *Arkansas State Gazette*, "To a Thunder Cloud," had been published on January 9, 1847. More importantly, it was dated November 30, 1846. I was looking at an example of Ridge's poetry written not around the time of his marriage, but much earlier—only a few months after the U.S.-government brokered settlement between warring Cherokee factions.

2. "Portrait of John Rollin Ridge," photograph: daguerreotype-V, sixth plate (visible image 2 3/4 x 2 1/4 in), ca. 1850. Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California.

3. A portrait of John Rollin Ridge's father. "John Ridge," lithograph, hand colored (image and text 21.5 x 15.5 cm.) after a painting by Charles Bird King painted in 1825. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

And the poem was written in that recognizably bombastic Ridge style. Organized into two stanzas, made up of four and six tercets, respectively, the poem reveals a steely-eyed speaker unafraid of violence, death, or upheaval. Ridge begins by addressing the thunder cloud of the title:

Thou deep, black cloud, boom on, aye boom!
Thy utmost terrors—let them loom
To shroud the Earth in august gloom!
The body's knell thy sound may toll,
But not the death of man's high soul.

The speaker's address offers a challenge to a malevolent natural order. Even the weather in the world of Ridge's poem is dangerous, looming overhead with its "utmost terrors," shrouding "the Earth in august gloom," and tolling a grim, funereal knell. From any other nineteen-year-old poet, we might read the talk of death as merely imitative Romanticism—all that chiaroscuro, those picturesque shades of darkness and light. And yet Ridge's early life had been defined by violence: the death of his father, the sectarian bloodshed in the Cherokee nation, and the senseless brutality of the Arkansas frontier, where, Ridge once wrote to an acquaintance, "the people sometimes fight with knives and pistols, and some men have been killed here, but the people do not seem to mind it much."

And yet the text isn't only inflected with Ridge's violent past. It is also heavily invested in a transcendent individuality. In addressing the thunder, the poem valorizes the unique power of an individual to confront a terrifying natural order. Ridge begins the second stanza:

Then boom thou on!—I fear thee not;
My name by men may be forgot,
My works in cold neglect may rot,
But I have now a burning fire
Whose flame is lit with wild desire,
Which cannot by *thy* doom expire!
Go! Sound the fall of kingdoms' crown,
Of nations crushed and trodden down,
Of grandeur cast, of pride o'er-thrown;
Go! Sound thy deep-toned trump for worlds
That God in Heav'n to ruin hurls,
But *all in vain* thy tempest whirls
Around my brow, around my head!
Beyond, above thy threatening dread
My *spirit's* home is fadeless spread!

There's a lot here. Ridge's speaker resolves to accept the vicissitudes of fortune, and yet this acceptance is a screen for his defiance. Yes, he suggests, history may forget him and his works—all that as-yet-unwritten literature. But, despite this, he will struggle on. Ridge's writing career

would in fact be consumed by considerations of doomed struggle, particularly in the form of revolutionary bloodshed. His novel, *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*, considers a band of Mexican war veterans who wage a brutal conflict with white Americans, including U.S. soldiers. And Ridge's newspaper editorials, written in later years, equivocate about the U.S. Civil War by nominally defending the Union but nonetheless heaping criticism on President Lincoln and acknowledging the South's right of rebellion. The revolutionary perspective that defines these later texts is radically articulated even here, in a sing-song poem Ridge wrote when he was still a teenager. Acts of resistance, he suggests, are not to be measured by their potential for success. Kingdoms fall. Nations are crushed. And powerful factions—with their "grandeur" and their "pride"—are usurped. But the poem's speaker remains undaunted. Victory is less important, in this worldview, than fearlessness.

But, perhaps most interestingly, the poem offers a pair of interwoven beliefs animating this fearlessness. It ultimately argues that these powerful, natural forces remain ineffectual because a Christian God holds out a redemptive promise of salvation and grace. This perspective would remain with Ridge throughout much of his writing career, although it appears in no more than a few traces in his novel. But lurking behind this conventional message of Christian salvation is a veneration of the individual. Ridge's poem is brash in its defiance of impossible odds. He writes: "E'en, if thou wert the smoke of Hell, | My pride thy roaring could not quell—." And while he ends on a final note of salvation ("Eternity! with *thee* I dwell"), the poet nonetheless has given us a speaker who fears nothing—not the natural world, not the fall of nations, not "the smoke of Hell" itself. Ostensibly, it is his faith in salvation that gives him this strength—it is the "Eternity" of the final line. And yet, in the preceding line, Ridge provides another explanation: "pride," which the thunder's "roaring could not quell." The speaker finds strength both in his faith and, more blasphemously, in his own pridefulness.

> Ridge's poem, one might suspect, articulates his ambivalence about the new political order. It could also serve as a message to his enemies that he does not fear them.

Coming just a few short months after a treaty ostensibly settling the differences between warring Cherokee factions, Ridge's poem, one might suspect, articulates his ambivalence about the new political order. It could also serve as a message to his enemies that he does not fear them. In late 1846 and early 1847, Ridge was putting into motion his return to the Cherokee nation: collecting reparations, re-purchasing the family settlement, moving into his family's former home. Dated in late 1846, then, the poem becomes extraordinarily suggestive. If the poet does not fear the "smoke of Hell," it is unlikely that he fears John Ross.

Ridge never stopped writing poetry. Yet during his lifetime he was known more

as a Democratic newspaper editor than as a literary figure. Even his brief attempt to fashion himself as a novelist failed financially. After his death, his widow arranged for the publication of his collected poems. In an unsigned Preface, possibly written by Elizabeth Wilson Ridge herself, we learn that "Mr. Ridge lost in the excitement of political life his youthful ambition for literary fame." The posthumous collection was an attempt to restore Ridge's significance as a poet (the praise of the "Eastern … press" gets a mention), as well as to generate money for his widow. Interestingly, though, the collection does not include "To a Thunder Cloud," either because the poem was lost or because it did not conform to the apolitical, literary version of John Rollin Ridge put forward by the preface.

The collection sold poorly, in any case, and Ridge was largely forgotten for over a century. In a 1979 article in *MELUS*, Thomas King identified Ridge's *Joaquín Murieta* as the first novel by a Native American writer, and in 1990 Ridge's writing was included in the *Heath Anthology of American Literature.* After that, interest in Ridge developed in more significant ways. Today, scholars like John Carlos Rowe and Mark Rifkin have done excellent work on Ridge, particularly in reconsidering his first and only novel. Despite this, there is much more to do. No complete scholarly collection of Ridge's writing exists, and most of his prose remains scattered in nineteenth-century newspapers and periodicals from Arkansas to Texas to California, many of them un-digitized. For nearly a century, Ridge's prediction that his "works in cold neglect may rot" seemed to have come to pass. Now, however, his voice—in all its bombast—is re-emerging.

Further Reading

While Ridge's complete writings are not yet collected, his novel and many of the articles and poems he wrote throughout his life are available in print. See John Rollin Ridge, *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta, the Celebrated California Bandit,* ed. Joseph Henry Jackson (Norman, Okla., 1955); John Rollin Ridge, *Poems* (San Francisco, 1868); John Rollin Ridge, *A Trumpet of Our Own: Yellow Bird's Essays on the North American Indian,* eds. David Farmer and Rennard Strickland (San Francisco, 1981); and Edward Everett Dale and Gaston Litton, eds.*Cherokee Cavaliers: Forty Years of Cherokee History as Told in the Correspondence of the Ridge-Watie-Boudinot Family,* (Norman, Okla., and London, 1995).

The original manuscript of Ridge's "To a Mockingbird" is housed in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. A published version can be found in Ridge's posthumous collection, *Poems*, from 1868. For the poem considered at length here, see Yellow Bird, "To a Thunder Cloud," *Arkansas State Gazette* 9:2 (January 1847).

For a biography of Ridge, see James W. Parins, *John Rollin Ridge: His Life and Works*. (Lincoln, Neb., and London, 2004).

For the establishment of Ridge as the first Native American novelist, see Thomas King, “Additions to ‘A Bibliography of Native Novels.'” *MELUS* 6:4 (1979): 79.

For recent scholarship on Ridge, see especially John Carlos Rowe, “Highway Robbery: ‘Indian Removal,’ the Mexican-American War, and American Identity in *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*,” *NOVEL* 31:2 (1998): 149-173; Jesse Alemán, “Assimilation and the Decapitated Body Politic in *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*,” *Arizona Quarterly* 60:1 (2004): 71-98; and Mark Rifkin, “For the wrongs of our poor bleeding country’: Sensation, Class, and Empire in Ridge’s *Joaquín Murieta*,” *Arizona Quarterly* 65:2 (2009): 27-56.

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Making Slavery in New France



Indigenous and Atlantic Histories

Common-place sits down with Brett H. Rushforth to discuss his 2012 book, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France*, and the challenges of integrating Atlantic history, Native history, and continental history.

The enslavement of Native Americans in Canada is not usually high on the list of topics in early American and Atlantic history, or even the history of slavery. What led you to tell this particular story?

Between the 1660s and 1760s, the colonists of New France held thousands of American Indians as slaves, perhaps as many as ten thousand over the course of the century in a relatively small colony. Targeting hundreds of distinct Native peoples, the slave trade that supplied the colony reached across vast spans of geography, from Plains Apache villages on the southwestern Plains, to Sioux settlements in modern Minnesota, through Fox and Sauk communities near the Great Lakes, and into the St. Lawrence Valley. Enslaved Natives lived in every major settlement in New France, and many were shipped to French islands in the Caribbean. Unlike most North American colonies, in New France enslaved Indians remained the predominant form of unfree labor throughout the eighteenth century. Given the extent and scale of this slave system—and how profoundly it shaped both French-Native relations and social life in the St. Lawrence Valley—it is less remarkable that I stumbled onto the topic than that so little

had been written about it before.

My initial question was fairly straightforward. I knew that French fur traders were relatively successful at forming alliances with Native peoples: they lived in Native villages, learned Native languages, and developed long-term intimate relationships with Native women. These bonds, mostly forged for the purposes of trade, also translated into important military alliances that protected the people of New France from their much more numerous British colonial neighbors. Yet French colonists also held a significant number of Indians as slaves. *Bonds of Alliance* began as a dissertation studying the nexus of these two colonial dynamics, assessing the relationship between alliance and slavery in French-Native relations.



As long as Native history is treated as a separate field of study, Native peoples will likely remain marginal to serious discussion of "colonial America," absurd as it might seem to discuss settler colonialism without accounting for the people who lived in the areas being colonized.

Although I did not realize it at first, this question forced me into a simultaneous exploration of two worlds that had been discussed more or less separately in earlier scholarship. Until very recently, historians of New France, like those studying other North American colonies, tended to focus either on colonial settlements and their Atlantic ties, or on the history of European-Native relations, but rarely both together. This made the slave trade hard to see because in each context only a small piece of the system was visible. Social historians came across enslaved Natives a few at a time in judicial, notarial, or Catholic parish records: a handful of Fox teenagers growing hemp, a few Sioux children working as domestics, and a string of individuals vaguely identified as "Panis/Pany" washing laundry or loading boats. Scholars of French-Native relations read Fox and Sioux complaints about French-sponsored slave raids. But it was impossible to evaluate the significance of these fragments in isolation. My starting question forced me to cross the usual regional divides because answering it required me to look at both French colonial towns and French-Native interactions. I had to search for enslaved people in the baptismal and burial records, notarized contracts and inventories, court dossiers, and institutional papers that had provided such rich material for social histories of the St. Lawrence Valley. But I also had to search for evidence of the slave trade in the official correspondence, missionary letters, and travel accounts that informed studies of Native history. Over time I began to see connections between shifting slave populations in French settlements and shifting geopolitics in the western region the French called the *pays d'en haut* ("the upper country," roughly the western Great Lakes and upper Mississippi Valley). It also became clear that these connections spilled into the Atlantic. French ideas about the Niger River Valley influenced their reading of the Platte River Valley. Martinique's struggle to get African slaves during Saint Domingue's sugar boom facilitated slaving raids on the Great Plains. Freedom suits by enslaved Africans in Paris

emboldened enslaved Indians in Montreal.

Although Atlantic and continental approaches to early America overlap in important ways, Atlantic histories have tended to overlook the centrality of American Indians to the shaping of colonial development, while continental histories have often underestimated the degree to which Europe and Africa influenced interior North America. As long as Native history is treated as a separate field of study, Native peoples will likely remain marginal to serious discussion of "colonial America," absurd as it might seem to discuss settler colonialism without accounting for the people who lived in the areas being colonized. *Bonds of Alliance* links these two approaches, developing indigenous and Atlantic contexts with equal attention. By demonstrating the connections, and not just the distinctions, between these two worlds, I hope my work will inspire others to develop new ways of understanding early modern colonialism by fully reckoning with Native peoples as influential actors in the Atlantic world.

One of the key distinctions you make is between the process of enslavement and the status of being a slave. Why was that so central to your argument?

Slavery has taken so many forms throughout human history that historians, anthropologists, and sociologists scarcely know how to define it. That is why some of the most important works on comparative slavery center on the narrow question: what is slavery? Many of these studies—most notably Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death* and Claude Meillasseux's *Anthropologie de l'esclavage (The Anthropology of Slavery)*—respond to this question by searching for abstract analytic frameworks that make slavery more universally comprehensible. Slavery, they insist, is X but not Y; it has these attributes but not those. Recognizing the wide variety of societies that practiced slavery, the goal of these works is to filter out the extraneous particulars in order to identify common denominators that define the essence of a complex and evolving institution.

Bonds of Alliance takes nearly the opposite approach, reconstructing slavery within its specific cultural, legal, economic, and political contexts rather than reducing it to a set of common characteristics. The Latin term for slave, *famulus/famula*, nicely captures slavery's historical connection to other institutions that regulate intimate expressions of power. And like many of those institutions—family, household, and property, for example—the meaning of slavery varied significantly across time and space. As I began this book, it seemed much more interesting and useful to emphasize particularity over commonality, to recreate (to the extent possible) the specific ways that people conceived of and attempted to shape the role of enslaved people within their communities. My approach was most influenced by an article I read during my second year of graduate school, written by James Watson, a historian of China. As he explains, slavery is best understood in relation to other institutions and statuses within a given society rather than in relation to slavery in other societies. "The relationship characterized by slavery is by no means

universal," he argues, "but it is 'special' in the sense that, wherever and whenever it appears, slavery *is*distinguishable from other forms of exploitation in the same society."

As I worked to understand the particular expressions of slavery in both the Native communities of the *pays d'en haut* and the French communities of the Mediterranean and Caribbean, I was struck by just how different the logic of the two systems seemed to be. The usual commonalities were there: the violent alienation of outsiders, persons being owned like property, captive labor performing various tasks for another person or household. But, while slavery stood apart from other forms of subordination in each society, its essential purpose was quite different in Native and French minds.

One of the most marked of these differences was how each group understood *enslavement*: the process of making someone a slave. For Native people, enslavement was the most important aspect of slavery, really its central purpose. Subordinating enemies demonstrated the slavers' strength and, they believed, captured the power of the victims. But the intent was not to create a perpetual underclass to labor for the captors. Instead, slavery in the indigenous *pays d'en haut* was incorporative, drawing outsiders in through a process of forced assimilation. Native people thus spent very little energy policing pathways out of slavery, and in many ways they encouraged such journeys, because the more an outsider assimilated, the more fully the purpose of enslavement would be realized.

French slavery, on the other hand, focused on perpetuating slaves' status, keeping them in bondage as long as possible so they could work to produce sellable commodities like tobacco and sugar. Unlike their indigenous counterparts, French thinkers drew a strict legal and moral distinction between the act of enslavement and the institution of slavery. To their minds, enslavement was so complete as to effectively end the life of the captive, and the captor's choice to spare the victim's life granted him unrestricted ownership of the spared captive. Rather than focus on entries into slavery, then, French efforts centered on closing down pathways out of slavery. This often meant creating narratives of exclusion that made it difficult for former slaves to assimilate into colonial society. It also facilitated a legally plural empire in which enslavement, slavery, and the merchant activities that depended on both could operate in separate legal spheres—insulating Caribbean planters from continental critiques of West African slaving and French sugar merchants from the moral hazards of profiting from slave labor.

When these two very different ways of understanding slavery came into prolonged conversation in the North American slave trade, their divergent approaches to enslavement became both a point of conflict and a site of creative adaptation. The French would have preferred, for example, to obscure the ethnic identity of captives and to ignore the circumstances of their capture. This made little sense to their Native allies, for whom the identity of their captives and the means of their subordination were of central importance. Similar tensions

emerged over questions of how permanent and inescapable slave status should be, including what happened to enslaved enemies when their people reconciled and formed alliances with their Native captors or their French owners. Enslavement, then, provides a useful window onto both the cultural differences separating French and Native slaveries and the adaptations and innovations that grew out of their encounter.

The second chapter stands out in Bonds of Alliance *because it is primarily an intellectual history of French ideas about slavery in the Caribbean. When in the process of writing the book did you decide that you needed such a chapter, and can you expand a bit on the role of the Caribbean ideologically in Canadian slave practices?*

Chapter 2 ("The Most Ignoble and Scandalous Kind of Subjection") draws its title from the writings of the seventeenth-century legal philosopher Hugo Grotius, whose 1626 book *De jure belli et pacis* (*The Rights of War and Peace*) both reflected and shaped French approaches to slavery. I had initially meant for this chapter to be a brief synthesis of existing literature on the emergence of slavery in the French Atlantic world. As it turned out, relatively little work had explored the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century origins of French slavery, and most work focused on the later eighteenth century. So I had to piece the narrative together using a wide range of manuscript and printed primary sources in French and Caribbean archives.

The story that emerged centers on how French laws and institutions responded to a resurgence of slavery in the sixteenth century in the Iberian Atlantic and, more urgently, in North Africa where thousands of French captives labored as slaves themselves. So there is a fair amount of legal history, including some purely intellectual history, in this early discussion of French slavery. But those ideas are not legible outside their social context, which is why much of the chapter focuses on the lived realities of slavery in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French world.

A related question would be to ask why it seems natural to characterize the study of European (but not Native American) ideas about slavery as "intellectual history." The book's first two chapters ask essentially the same questions of two different communities, exploring how each of them understood, explained, and practiced slavery in the decades preceding their North American encounter. Yet I think many, and possibly most, readers will draw a similar distinction between the two because of the sources on which they are based. I would hope no one believes that only Europeans had ideas about slavery (while Indians had timeless, unthinking traditions). Yet it would be hard to dispute that analyzing Algonquian insults ("I lift up her breechcloth, treat her like a slave," "[you are a] slave woman's worthless penis") feels quite different than reading Grotius. But as Michèle Duchet, Laurent Dubois, and Hilary Beckles have argued, we should not allow the scarcity of surviving sources to persuade us that non-Europeans existed, in Beckles's words, "in an atheoretical world which was devoid of ideas." Instead, our challenge is to find creative ways to see

ideas where they can be seen, whether they were printed on a page or expressed in a ritual feast. Despite having access to quite different source bases, I have tried to take the ideas of each group seriously, and to see how they fit within a social world where slavery was only one of many subordinate statuses.

You argue that the slave trade empowered France's Indian allies in such a way that they were able to thwart French territorial expansion in the interior for decades. Can you explain how that process worked?

The North American slave trade did not operate with European aggressors on one side and victimized Indians on the other. Native peoples participated in the slave trade and often determined its contours to suit their evolving interests. Initially, slaves passed from Native to French hands in small-scale diplomatic ceremonies, where captive enemies were given as gifts to create or affirm alliances. Offering a captive to an ally signaled the giver's strength and enjoined the receiver to accept the victim's people as a shared enemy. The Native peoples of the *pays d'en haut* used slavery as a way to assert their vision of alliance with colonial newcomers. By raiding a neighbor, then giving or selling the captives to the French, they marked the victims as outsiders and asked the French to do the same. When these raids succeeded—and they often did—they profoundly limited French options as they tried to extend their colonial reach.

For example, when French traders started moving into Sioux country in earnest around the beginning of the eighteenth century, their allies (who were at war with the Sioux) felt betrayed, fearing the strength the Sioux would draw from European weapons. French traders, they complained, "were carrying aid to their enemies." For the next four decades, each time French traders reached into Sioux country, their efforts were thwarted by strategic slave raiding that targeted Sioux villages and then sold the slaves to French buyers. Slave raids disrupted trade in the short term, and French colonists holding Sioux slaves predictably hurt longer-term efforts to develop a French-Sioux alliance.

Perhaps the best example of this occurred in 1742. After months of negotiations, a French trader convinced a large number of Sioux that the French could stop the slave raids and mediate a peace between them and their French-allied enemies. When Sioux delegates made the long trip to Montreal to formalize this relationship, they found Sioux children working as slaves in French households. Angry at this obvious evidence of French duplicity, the Sioux delegation left Montreal without concluding an agreement, forcing French traders out of Sioux country for the third time in as many decades. The success of this strategy allowed New France's Native allies to use the French demand for slaves as a weapon against French westward expansion, blocking attempted alliances west of the Mississippi River that would have drawn the French far deeper into the North American interior.

One of the key concepts over the past twenty years for understanding Native-French interactions in the interior, or pays d'en haut*, has been Richard*

White's "middle ground." It seems in Bonds of Alliance *that you seek not only to revise the concept but also to transcend it (you cite White frequently, but rarely if ever use the phrase in your text). How did you come to decide to frame the book in that way?*

Richard White's *The Middle Ground* is an extraordinarily insightful book and has deservedly become one of the classics of twentieth-century American historiography. It would be difficult to overstate the book's significance in reorienting how historians discuss cultural encounters in early America, and French-Native relations in particular. Above all, White powerfully demonstrated that early American cultural relations were not a zero-sum game between two fully separate entities, with colonizers either eroding Native cultures or failing to do so in the face of Native resistance. In much of North America, colonizers and Native people could only obtain their objectives by adapting to what they perceived to be the cultural expectations of the other. Over time, through thousands of small acts of accommodation, a new regional culture emerged that was neither fully Native nor European but a product of the colonial encounter. *Bonds of Alliance* follows this way of understanding colonial-Native relations, arguing that the Native slave trade itself was a product of exactly the kind of cultural adaptation and innovation that White had in mind. As I explain in the introduction, "Slavery reveals a somber dimension to cultural accommodation in the Pays d'en Haut, showing that its success was often founded on a shared commitment to violence. Yet even this violence was a product of mutual adaptation and produced new cultural forms that persisted for generations" (11).

However, I decided not to use the specific term "the middle ground" for two reasons. First, as a general rule I avoided all jargon or catch phrases that would mean something particular to scholars already familiar with them but that might be misread or not understood by students or general readers. Second, as White himself has noted, in the two decades since he published the book, the idea of "the middle ground" has taken on a life of its own, applied to such varied historical contexts that it has come to mean many things to many people. Rather than use a phrase carrying so much scholarly baggage, I chose to explain my interpretation on its own terms, leaving it to others to make what comparisons they found most useful.

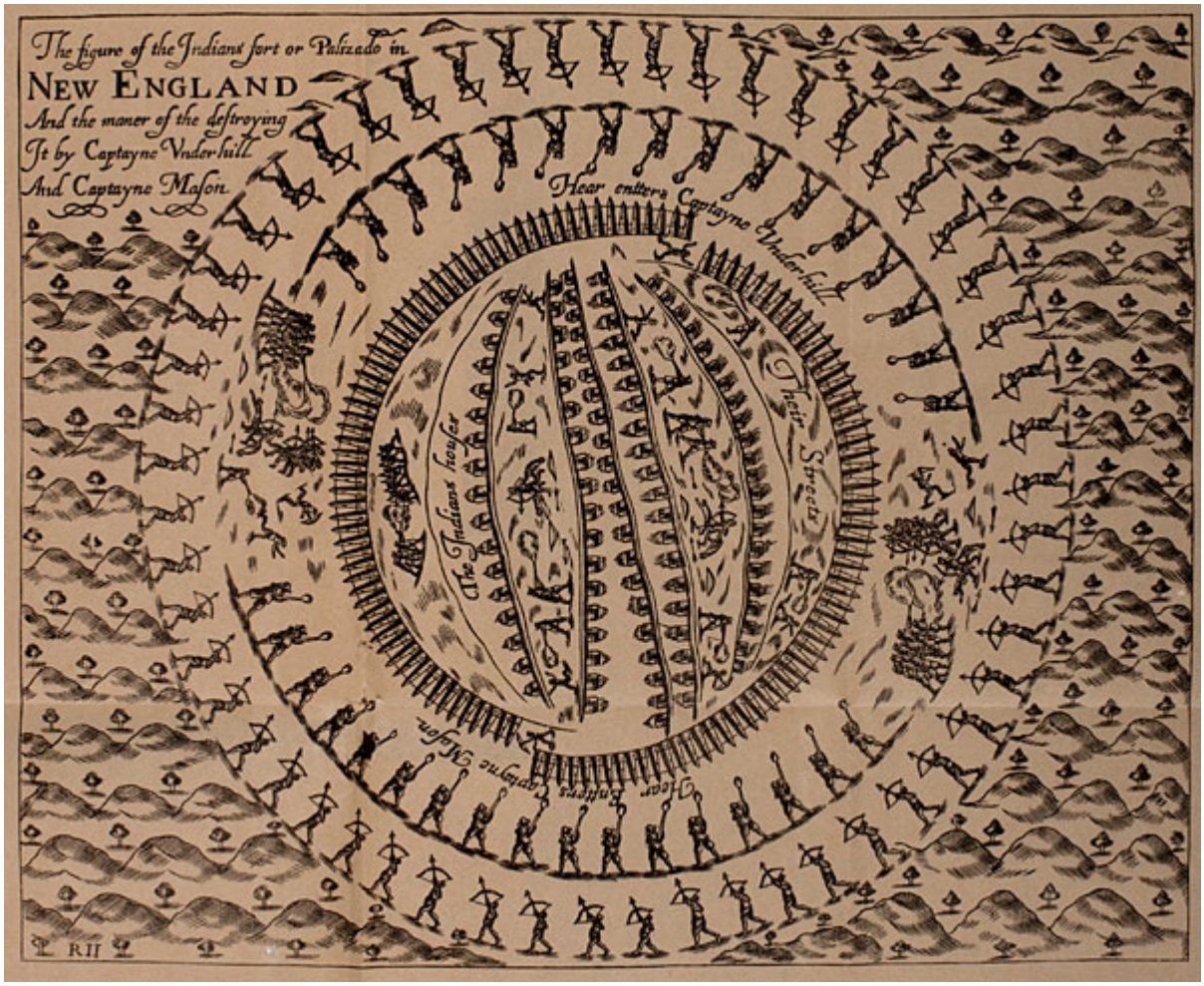
Then, too, despite broad agreement on the general *process* of cultural encounter, *Bonds of Alliance*and *The Middle Ground* offer substantially different readings of certain historical dynamics that shaped French-Native relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. With over nine hundred pages of text between the two books, it would be impossible to explain every interpretive difference here. But there are several ways that, in my view, accounting for Native slavery invites a reconsideration of important aspects of both Native and French colonial histories. Ranging from the nature of the indigenous social world of the *pays d'en haut* to the forces checking French westward expansion, the slave trade provides a new lens through which to view questions that have interested scholars studying this region for decades. And because it linked the

pays d'en haut to the broader dynamics of the early modern Atlantic, the Indian slave trade powerfully reveals that the Native people of the North American interior were simultaneously more connected to, and less overwhelmed by, early modern colonialism than previous studies have suggested.

Further reading:

For James Watson's comments on understanding slavery, see "Slavery as an Institution," in Watson, ed., *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Berkeley, 1980): 1-15. On the question of definitions of slavery, see Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982); Claude Meillasseux, *Anthropologie de l'esclavage: le ventre de fer et d'argent* (Paris, 1986); Laurent Dubois, "An Enslaved Enlightenment: Rethinking the Intellectual History of the French Atlantic," *Social History* 31 (February 2006): 1-14. For further perspectives on Native American and European interactions, see Paul Cohen, "Was there an Amerindian Atlantic?: Reflections on the Limitations of a Historiographical Concept," *History of European Ideas* 34 (2008): 388-410; Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge, 1991).

King Philip's Hand



Prologue

I had begun so many times.
With snow, with leaves, with wind and rain,
with a white initial A of sail,
with a woman’s voice recalled, with syllables
stilled centuries ago, with faces in the trees,
in the windows, in the fog.

I had begun so many times
before the tiny rubric of the crab’s claw appeared
in my palm, curling out from its scavenged shell,
just before the fog.
Before the cold rain began in my shoulders.
Before the fog.

Down where the ocean melts to a sheen,
looking back toward dune grass, the charred log
where my family sat, I watched the infiltration of the pines,
the vanishing of the islet we had planned to explore.
Then it was upon them,

or rather it erased us all—it poured through everything,
until I had just ten yards of water, sand, and white air to see,
the sun a spun nickel at my shoulder.

I was being brought about again.

Mutterings wavered up, strangers trembled past with awful smiles
and disappeared.
So now, say it, they said, say what
you knew of the earth, the where of it, the truth of it,
what soil, sea, what wind prevailed, what voices in your blood,
when it was blood, when it was wind,
when stars sang into your body as you lay there on the stones,
breathing there, remember, so long
it came to seem looking out as from the whole
planet's vast, sloping side.
What was given you to know?

Ogwhan
Ogwhan
Let the boat drift
Nickquenum nittauke: mishquawtuck
home to cedar trees.
Wunnagehan sowanniu.
before a southwest wind.

Belong there, settle, claim
at last the scents and leaves, the moody tidal song
of channel bells.
You will lose them just this way,
lose life after life.

I have begun so many times.
Begin again.

King Philip's Hand

In Memoriam E. M. F. 1900-1978

It is characteristic then, of what I have called 'angelic' consciousness that it does not develop a separate, hidden, inner world of private thoughts and feelings. These Beings reflect, or pass on, the light they receive from above; and that <u>is</u> their inner life. Or we can put it that they do indeed have an inner life, but do not feel it as being exclusively their own…not in the sense of [it] being at their disposal. …On the occasion of the Fall, all this was changed by the intervention of Lucifer. Lucifer induced man to begin hiding and hoarding his inner life, and to take pride in it—as a 'room of one's

own'—making it into something separate and detached alike from its outward manifestation (nature) and from the inner world of spirit beings… Man is now started on the long road which ends in his present normal relation to Nature, wherein nature is not merely his own outward manifestation, nor that of the higher Spiritual Beings who shine through him; whereinnature is not a manifestation at all, but an object—a finished work.

Owen Barfield

There they were, dignified, invisible, Moving without pressure, over the dead leaves, In the autumn heat, through the vibrant air, And the bird called….

T.S.Eliot

Everything only connected by "and" and "and."

Elizabeth Bishop

When the old Plymouth lost its brakes
on the bridge's far slope she didn't say
a word, just shifted down to an empty lot,
stopped them short with the parking brake,
raised a hand to her lips, and smiled at him.

   Ten years later, when he'd drive her to market
or the clinic, and she'd say "Home, James"
in her amused, quavering voice, he'd recall
the flicker of triumph on her face that day,
as though she'd been modestly enjoying
what she'd have called pluck, what now
was letting her live out winters alone
beside the bay. She had a cheerful dignity,
humorous self-possession, and a streak
of unpredictable severity, but he could bear
her gentle admonitions, about speeding,
sex, seamanship—even her once saying
she hoped he wouldn't always be an angry
young man. So he keeps yearning her back
across the lost waves, the old moraines,
longing, and fearing her arrival.

            She was interested
in history, (they were on the way
to Gilbert Stuart's house the morning
the brakes failed), and so one summer
suggested he accompany his cousin
to the museum, near Philip's last
stronghold on Monthaup, his people's

summer home—a spring, the granite throne.
There they sorted moccasins, and built
a wigwam with a student of anthropology
from Brooklyn, a young bearded man
whose anger took an ironic, Marxist form.

The museum was near the bridge, minutes
from an estate where they learned tennis.
No wonder he had them pegged: no hope,
or worse, the first who would perish
in the revolution's maw. In their whites
and sneakers they were helping make a story
out of items—that gentle catalogue of what's
presumed an extinct way of life, recalled
as a romance by those who murdered it.
Arrowheads and spearpoints, wampum
and beads—that frail dome of saplings
and bark they struggled to lash up said more
about their habits than lost cultures, but their
lives depended on finishing that hut, upon
reading labeled items under glass, selected
and arranged like stones for a path the mind
might follow down to the waters…

*

   Mud became the shale the glacier
crushed to stones we heaved as
children by the hour into whitecaps,
to become the gravel becoming
the sand piling at the tidemark. Legend
says that with the Devil's help, Philip
could throw a stone from Mount Hope
a mile across the harbor to Poppasquash…

   I would call her back, who passed
such history on to me. But I never
learned the faith she used to compose
past and future, that let old portrait
figures, villains, heroes, plain,
goodhearted sorts from several
centuries go about their lives
and works all at once in her mind,
as in some busy village Brueghel
painted. Now as the land she knew
is vanishing, her shadow comes
in me to belong somehow with Philip's,
like contraries the mind feels

obliged to hold together—the strange
comfort of distinction made and
overcome at once…

That is not your piping voice, not
your deliberate passage from the porch
to the kitchen, not your sigh heaved through me,
but it is, it isn't merely a gust of southwest wind.
The cardinal in the big oak isn't answering,
he is keening twice, then eight bunched,
rising whistles back to me, three times,
and then he adds cadenzas, until I cannot
say it back.

Cuppyaumen.

Pashpishea.

Mequaunamiinnea

Now you are there.

Moonrise.

Remember me.

Memory, no wish to be a hero
made Philip say*I am determined not
to live until I have no country.*Even if
his scattered bones calcified beneath
this earth, no prayer, no spell, no
moonrise will bring the lost to voice.
Salt wind on our skin is not their touch.
Aloof and disappointed, they only seem
to wake in episodes of our making, beneath
the wind-ridden trees, the driven clouds.

Cowwewonck.
Soul.
Wunnicheke.
Hand.
Keesauname.
Save me.

In her last years she wondered aloud
only whether she would recognize
her husband. I pretended to remember him
more clearly than the sharpest recollection
I have—clinging to his shoulders as
he swims toward a float. Could I reach
him, or even Philip in their afterworld,
I'd ask if they could locate her. And look
what I have done now, stranding her under
Matteson, in my life's encyclopedia,
across from Metacomet, far from her William.
Surely someone who knew them both to love
will put this right. And I think she would
forgive me, having called me more than
once by her lost son's name, dead suddenly
at about the age I was when she died.

Yes, I seek him rowing there among
a moonlit fleet of boats at anchor. *There are so many
places to look.*

Halyards gently slapping, an unlashed
tiller
waving slowly. With each
stroke he takes a pair of whirlpools
gleam.
Where is *Trilobite*, his tiny moth-winged
catboat, where? I cannot tell him, he
cannot hear me say the hurricane destroyed
her.
Spirits show across the scrim of present
spirits; uncannily kindred, he and I,
in letters we had written her, apologizing
for tickets we had gotten driving her car,
some twenty years apart…
just the continental wind…

*The wind is long and shadow-flagged
and moonstruck. The whole song,
beginning everywhere and nowhere,
flute-stopped upon the northwest
corner of the house. We are all
within it, all of us, all one. Stand
beside the winter window, there
beneath the bookshelf. Closer, in
the corner with the pestle and
binoculars. Feel your nape crawl.
The breath upon your knuckles*

Mere associations
that's all, dissolving from reverence to humor,
disappointing hope with common sense.
My ancestors read and read their holy
dictionary for signs of their god's will;
the random verses they lit upon made
metaphors with practical results—
destinies, space for English names to creep
west across the blank, benighted maps.

*The winters here are hard, the bright spaces of the snow as
smooth as vellum. Deerprints and sticks look like words I*

cannot read, just at the dark edge of the forest.

Listen, poor shadow, whirled among
the cedars. The bell, whose bird-limed
clapper we held silent for five minutes
one moonlit wild night years ago,
the bell goes on, telling the channel passage
to the ships, searing the darkness white
an instant, clanging, clanging.

This is the passage through, the right of way,
all else is damnation, a wilderness of death.

   Now that you wander, I know why
you told us more than once of that
Longley cousin. Taken, after
witnessing the slaughter of his parents,
he begged his captors to let him
return, just to set his father's cows to forage.
When he kept his promise and returned
to the tribe, they adopted him, and when years
later relatives redeemed him, the story goes
they had to bring him back by force. Claimed
by twenty stark Quebec seasons, he had
wandered, couldn't return to ownership,
the stonewalled plots of Groton. He grew
old, of course, and well-to-do (why
his story survived), but I have always
wondered what became of his two
sisters, and if you trembled to think
of them, or envied how they really
must have come to know the countryside?

As we know it now. Disaforested, routed, claimed,
a prospect of some acquiring mind. The dead have always known
what they, what you have done.

Fear their smiling. I was a teller of
stories. I am a story now.
The living suppose the stories belong to them.

But you seemed to bless my reverence
for waves and stars and trees. Because
it was your nature to love kinships,
affinities, or just the apt and lovely names
of things, I thought you left mere causes
and effects to the sententious…

It is not as you suppose. I pass freely in the light between the worlds.

No one needs to hold the quahog shut, answer the bird, fasten the blossom underneath the apple.
We can hear the sad improvisations inside the silent one, the snarl within that one's smile, all the threnodies of resignation, shame, desire,
but we cannot connect them, only listen.

When you spoke your hand would
undertake a gentle dance, fingers
tamp your thumb, drumming
syllables out upon a chair's arm,
a table, your lap. When you lay
down beneath a shawl on the daybed
under the window, your eyes
would strangely drift and close
while you spoke, but your hand
would flutter up with remembrance,
as if in the chambers of the years
to choose, cherish, caress what those
chambers would contain.
Items.
Exhibits. Evidence. That way of taking
the world was old and well in New England,
brought here like the germs thrashing
inside the Pilgrims, before they were the land's…
Exempla, symbols, wonders, the argot of god.
Divers Indian baskets filled with corn…

Today, on the way to cross
the Mount Hope Bridge we paused
beside the old stone walls near the north end
of the road. Hooves that forever changed this
soil (trampling the maize of Satan's children)
stamped in the clover, while my sons counted
the black, fly-tormented backs.
And I saw that all I can give to them
are curiosities, assembled under glass
or foggy legend: the sachem's jawbone
Cotton Mather kept, the black stone Philip
hurled across the harbor, the brass button
he tore from the emissary's coat, saying
this, *this*, is what your English religion
means to me, the Tyrian whorls inside
the quahog shell, the vile self-regard
of believers in the mirror of their faith,
the scalp's hot, moist peeling from
forehead to nape, the word of twenty
natives valued as that of one who prayed,
the mourning dove's doxology, the sachem's

son, nine years old, spared, to be sold
in the Indies. Items. Dis-rememberment.

Poor shade, walker, old woman I loved,
gone now with all the lost, lost one, you
didn’t say this land you gave us once
belonged to Church, deeded him in
gratitude by the magistrates he saved
from *the great, doleful, dirty, naked beast.*

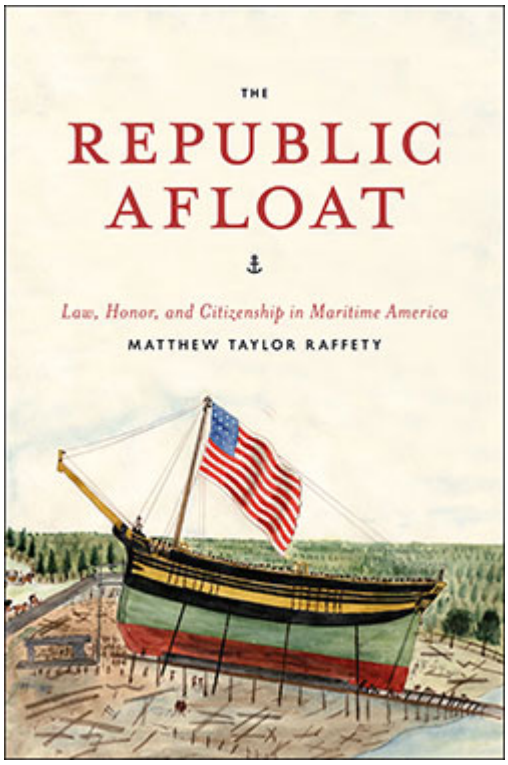
Their holy war came down to musket balls
and butchery, but the tale’s essence isn’t
cruelty, gross injustice, nor ferocious
piety. It’s how fitting was the payment
made to the one who betrayed the sachem’s
whereabouts to Church, and how he displayed
the wonder of it all around New England,
surviving on the coins he charged to view it.
And they didn’t fear it, all those avid
readers of signs and wonders…

   Now in my imagination a kindred
habit lives—gorging on remorseful
supposition, sometimes with the terror
of one holding closed a grievous wound,
it works at telling the world back whole
as it knew, beginning with the accidental
talismans, details that almost cohere,
but will not comfort. How naturally
it seemed to come to you, a dominion
I would covet if it still seemed possible—
whatever flower, bird, fish, or person
found dead or living, named, gathered in…

   whose bodiless curse would be a thousand
times more terrible than any word to me…
I cannot revive the song that water and wind
and your old house sang in me, nor
the sons you lost, the son I was when we
played evening checkers, your ancient,
waist length, wild hair, drying in firelight,
nor that terror when I found you waiting
up past midnight on the stairs, to warn me,
frighten me, look right through my after-
glowing rapture with some girl…
All I picture now
is your hand upon the tablecloth—
liver-spotted, translucent skin, the palm

pale, vulnerable, the fingers beating
gently beneath your words. Your hand.
And Philip's hand, Metacomet's stiff,
burled hand, cured in a pail of rum.

Between the Forecastle & the Federal Government, or "Jack Tar, American"



For liability purposes, it is the sea that will kill you.
—Pirate Captain, *The Simpsons*

"In the beginning was the land." So states Charles Sellers's classic look at antebellum American economic expansion, *The Market Revolution* (4). But to a swelling field of historians, the landlubber tradition in American history has led us to skip something quite fundamental: the sea. Maritime history has expanded rapidly over the past two decades, kindled in part by enthusiasm for global fields of study that examine the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceanic worlds. But we have been slower to appreciate that waterways have not simply served as conduits between distant lands, but were themselves sites of conflicts over labor, identity, and state formation.

In *The Republic Afloat*, Matthew Raffety uses violent encounters on merchant

vessels in the years between the American Revolution and the Civil War to suggest that it was on the water, not on land, that Americans settled key dimensions of federal governance and citizenship. Raffety contrasts his findings with Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker's hydrarchy of revolutionary mariners in *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. "Rather than the radical internationalists that some historians describe Atlantic seafarers as being in the eighteenth century," he writes, "the crews of American antebellum vessels used the apparatuses of the legal system to press their case, to demand redress, and to assert their understandings of the privileges of manhood and citizenship" (212). Through their democratic appeals, sailors of early America built the state.

The book contains three sections: law, honor, and citizenship. The first is the meatiest of the three. Raffety contends that "maritime issues made up the bulk of the work of federal courts before the Civil War" (27), and that federal judges were at the forefront of this national reach. While the Constitution explicitly gave the federal judiciary oversight of "admiralty and maritime" issues, the Judiciary Act of 1789 suggested that this did not include common law cases (35). Here, in the regulation of shipboard crime, Congress and federal judges made what may have been their strongest stand in favor of a robust national government over a loose federation.

Thus Raffety points to an overarching trend of growing "federal paternalism toward seafarers" before the Civil War (44). Two acts of 1790 formed the early basis of federal authority over mariners, requiring ship registration, establishing parameters for shipboard governance, and defining the terms of sea-based crime. Yet these acts proved vague and insufficient. While the 1790 Crimes Act provided the legal basis for punishing offenses committed at sea, the legislation gave courts little flexibility in differentiating between work stoppages and mutiny, grumbling and violence, harsh masters and the criminally abusive. Over the years, Congress increasingly limited officers' authority. In 1835, a new Crimes Act refined and strengthened the 1790 law and its 1825 revisions. The 1835 law curtailed officers' prerogatives in using corporal punishment to discipline their crew—or at least acts deemed in "haste" or in "excess." Finally, in 1850, even as the use of the lash waned, Congress banned flogging.

In The Republic Afloat, Matthew Raffety uses violent encounters on merchant vessels in the years between the American Revolution and the Civil War to suggest that it was on the water, not on land, that Americans settled key dimensions of federal governance and citizenship.

Of course, law differed from practice. Courts only limited punishments deemed cruel *and* unusual—not only those that were brutal, but also outside of the ordinary parameters of shipboard life. By using the weather or extreme chores, officers skirted liability. In the 1854 case of sixteen-year-old cabin boy

Stephen Whatley, the captain of the*Harvard* kept the lad at the wheel for long hours until his hands and feet froze, inducing permanent disability. “Cruel and unusual punishment” often translated into overwork and deprivation of food, rest, or clothing rather than outright assault. Regular tars became increasingly conversant in legal rights even as they persisted in resorting to “forecastle law” and convention. Officers and sailors alike used travel to renegotiate their contracts: “Just as captains ‘encouraged’ men to jump ship (and by doing so, forfeit wages) in ports where seamen were cheap and plentiful, seamen exploited their advantage, either at sea or in ports where a shortage of qualified tars meant a more lucrative berth could be found with ease” (108). The book is at its best when delving into delicious troves of newspaper accounts and case law to consider how mariners and officers wrangled over acceptable working conditions at sea.

Section two pushes into the murkier realms of custom, masculinity, and honor. Chapters five and six take us from the forecastle to the quarterdeck, from mariners’ demands that “conventions of the sea mandated food and conditions above and beyond the legal minimums” to officers’ tenuous claims to “mastery” (109). As older status-based models of authority came under attack, the question was, which model of authority would prevail? While in the 1843 *Somers* case, Justice Peleg Sprague upheld a naval officer’s authority to serve as both judge and jury over his men, courts compared officers on merchant ships to parents, schoolmasters, and master craftsmen. For captains in particular, authority rested upon a precarious balance of navigational expertise and claims to elite status by virtue of their position. Raffety uses court and consular records, newspaper accounts, treatises, and literature to show officers and tars alike wielding shared discourses of honor and reputation as weapons that could be put to use abroad and at home.

The final section examines citizenship in the legal and cultural senses. Here we have the building not only of the state, but also the nation. What is an American? Who could lay claim to national protections? What defined the national character? Raffety offers the familiar argument that distance from home forced individuals to clarify definitions of nation and citizenship. While this is most in evidence in chapter eight’s history of how the impressment crisis in the years leading up to the War of 1812 provided a template for the passport system through Seamen’s Protection Certificates, Raffety also recounts the development of consuls as arbiters of American identity in chapter seven and discusses sailors as a staple of American literature and iconography in chapter nine.

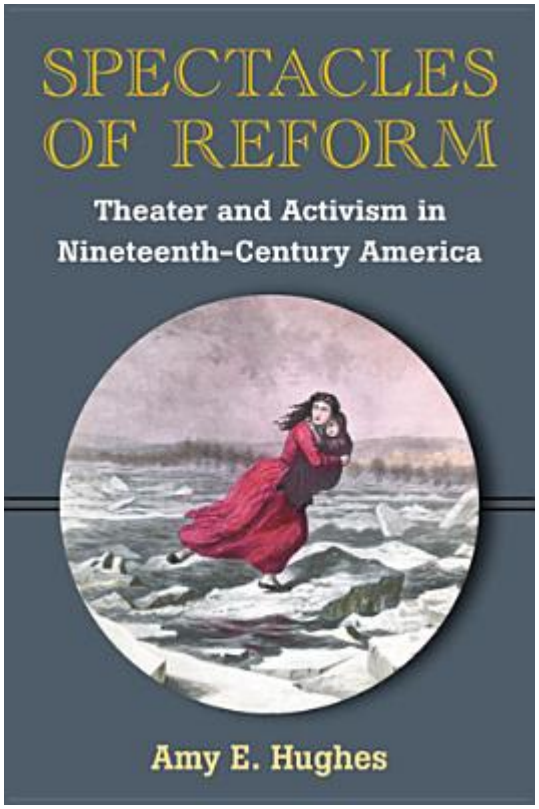
The Republic Afloat is especially valuable as a contribution to the literature on American state formation. Raffety highlights three ways in which the maritime story diverges from narratives of American statelessness, like the invisible state depicted in Brian Balogh’s *A Government Out of Sight*, or even William Novak’s local and state-based “well-regulated society” in *A People’s Welfare*. First, Raffety argues that articulations of nationhood and federal power flourished *through*American maritime expansion. The 1835 law sparked a

surge of criminal cases from sailors and officers, ultimately shifting the center of adjudication of sea-based crime "from the quarterdeck to the courtroom" (47). Second, federal judges handled offenses that on land would be reserved for state and local authorities. While states reformed penal codes in the 1820s and 1830s, representatives of the federal government outlined criminal offenses and regulated labor relations, within the marine context. And federal judges seemed more willing to intervene than their state-based counterparts. Finally, the 1790 legislation required ships to have articles—a contract establishing the terms of a voyage—and federal courts proved surprisingly willing to meddle in the enforcement of these contracts. Intentionally or no, sailors strengthened the federal government: "[S]eafarers' rights became one of the first important tests of federal law, the federal courts, and a national identity. Because they pressed Congress to regulate their work environment, and the courts to delineate how those rulings would be applied, seamen prompted the machinery of the new nation for definitions and structure" (196).

Readers of *Common-Place* may well recall Gautham Rao's 2008 article on early American marine hospitals as an initial example of public health care. Like *Republic Afloat*, Rao's article points to a broader national willingness to support federal intervention by the early American public than is commonly acknowledged, albeit for specific populations. But why was judicial intervention acceptable for mariners, but not land-bound laborers? Raffety suggests that the international context of shipping and, above all, mariners' status as wards of the state marked them as exceptional—more akin to children or slaves than other men (10). Thus, seamen helped to establish the federal apparatus, but within the distinctive context of admiralty law. Still, if this judicial activism was *about* a desired expansion of federal power, as suggested in chapter three, why was it so circumscribed? And was judicial paternalism on the rise? Raffety himself seems conflicted. In surveying New York federal court verdicts between 1835 and 1861, Raffety found that rulings tended to uphold officers' prerogatives: sailors were more likely to be convicted for acting against officers than vice versa. Likewise, given that support for consular service vacillated depending on the presidential administration, how does the national political context influence the book's broader narrative, especially given its focus on Massachusetts and New York?

Yet in shifting our attention from the land to the water, Raffety persuasively establishes the importance of America's maritime tradition to the nation's development. Raffety's work reveals that "Jack Tar, American" did not disappear with the Congress of Vienna, but continued to be central to the nation and state well after 1815.

I See, Therefore I Act?



More than two thousand years ago, Aristotle placed “spectacle” (*opsis*, that which is seen) dead last in importance among the six elements he listed as essential to drama when writing his *Poetics*, his notes on dramatic structure. Ever since, scholars and critics of the theater have maintained an uncomfortable relationship with stage spectacle, fearing that its very adoption arrives at the expense of thoughtful, verbal, literary content and, therefore, impedes theatrical performance from reaching some higher cultural purpose. Indeed, “most assume that spectacle’s main function is to decorate and amuse, or believe that it is a voracious vacuum,” Amy E. Hughes writes in *Spectacles of Reform*, “robbing us of our ability to think, feel, or act.” “But spectacle is rarely empty,” she argues, and throughout the mid-nineteenth century, the spectacles realized on the American melodramatic stage were overflowing with socially relevant, audience-activating messaging (166). Identifying and unpacking this previously unacknowledged freight is the mission of Hughes’s carefully researched, methodically wrought monograph.

As an interdisciplinary cultural history operating at the intersection of performance and print, *Spectacles of Reform* comprises at its core three chapter-long case studies that explore how visual images contributed to three nineteenth-century American reform movements: temperance, abolition, and women’s suffrage. Although the point of departure for each case study is a close reading of the so-called sensation scene—a scene of pumped-up emotional affect usually coupled with stagecraft designed to amaze—from a popular mid-

century stage melodrama, the discussion is by no means limited to things theatrical. Print images in books and periodicals, on sheet music covers, stationery, and even decorative kitchenware, rise alongside their theatrical counterparts as Hughes examines their roles in both reflecting and shaping American public opinion on some of the country's most pressing issues of the 1840s through the 1860s. Despite the author's position as a scholar of theater history, her book is as much (if not more) about the conversations these plays' spectacles provoked outside theater walls than it is about the responses and reactions elicited inside them, as the subtitle *Theater and Activism in Nineteenth-Century America* suggests.



It is the spectator's bodily response to bodies in perceived danger—danger effected through spectacle's affective jolt—that compelled melodrama's original audiences to consider, or else to reconsider, the sociopolitical conditions of real-world bodies located outside the orbit of theatrical representation.

Hughes offers a preliminary chapter to orient the reader's gaze upon the human body, which, she posits, can manifest itself *as* spectacle (in the case of societal and biological "freaks"), *in* spectacle (as performers within sensation scenes), and *at* spectacle (the audiences who behold the first two bodily varieties). Somewhat surprisingly, then, spectacular scenography—what is usually thought of as the primary vessel for melodrama's spectacular excesses—arrives secondary in interest to what Hughes calls "exceptional bodies," those that defy or exceed recognized social norms, in this study the drunkard, the fugitive slave, and the woman suffragist. Furthermore, Hughes argues that it is not melodrama's manufactured distresses themselves (such as the archetypal oncoming locomotive) that make a scene "sensational," but rather the presence of a "body in extremity" (the figure tied to the tracks in the path of the oncoming train) that creates a "rigorous stimulation of the senses" in the spectator (41). Therefore, it is the spectator's bodily response to bodies in perceived danger—danger effected through spectacle's *affective* jolt—that compelled melodrama's original audiences to consider, or else to reconsider, the sociopolitical conditions of real-world bodies located outside the orbit of theatrical representation, and to alter their own personal behaviors in light of what they have seen.

The first case study centers on the "spectacular insanity" of the *delirium tremens*, a violent, hallucinatory fit, invoked frequently throughout the nineteenth century as a cautionary result of excessive alcohol consumption. Along the proverbial road to ruin, mapped out visually by socially conscious lithographers, the "DTs" (in the common shorthand) marked a mere step away from destitution, and a mere two steps from death. Though the condition was typically experienced as a private episode, plays like W.H. Smith's pioneering temperance melodrama *The Drunkard* (1844) seized on the affliction's inherent theatricality and provided audiences with dynamic public exhibitions of its alcohol-induced hysteria. Hughes underscores that such displays were often made all the more effective as tools for reform by dint of their performers' own

personal histories of alcoholic indulgence, which seemed to enhance their credibility. This was the case for Smith, who himself portrayed the drunkard he authored, as well as for John B. Gough, who famously slipped back into drink while touting abstinence in autobiographical "lectures" featuring dramatic recreations of his own DTs. Whereas most scholarship on temperance drama has tended to privilege the image of the reformed drunkard's ultimate return to a "normal" state of bourgeois domesticity, Hughes intentionally focuses on the threat of the unreformed drunkard's withering-away in the country's newly formed insane asylums—of which she provides a brief social history.

Next Hughes considers the case of the fugitive slave, typified by the image of Eliza crossing the ice in several theatrical adaptations of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), including the best-known stage version, by George L. Aiken, which premiered only months after the novel's publication. These plays' varying melodramatic depictions of Eliza are made spectacular via the character's "excess of potential," explained as the surpassing of "racist, culturally constructed expectations of [her] innate abilities and proclivities" (23). And it is not the stage machinist's realization of the Ohio River ice floes that makes the scene sensational, but rather the Eliza character's precarious journey across them which does so. Assessing Stowe's original construction of this episode as an artistic response to the Compromise of 1850 (legislation that toughened the Fugitive Slave Act, demanding the return of escaped slaves to the South even after they'd reached free Northern territories), Hughes reads in sensational renderings of it—both on stage and in print—the character's fundamental transformation from being another person's property to being an autonomous human being. The famous scene, therefore, offered a corrective to the period's rampant dehumanization of fugitive slaves, frequently represented as chattel and reduced to stock typographical ornaments in print advertisements seeking their return.

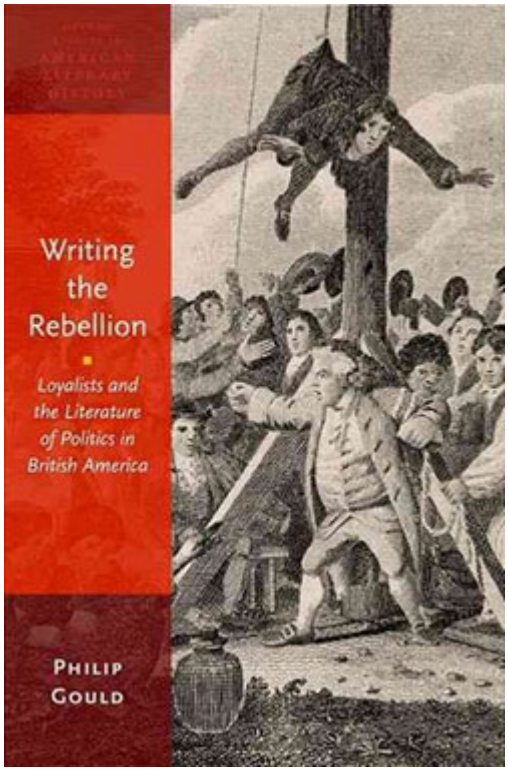
The final chapter, at once the most ambitious and satisfying, finds its theatrical root in the sensation scene of playwright-impresario Augustin Daly's *Under the Gaslight* (1867), the melodrama that inaugurated the trope of the railroad track rescue. Despite the seeming disconnect between railway accidents and gender politics, and her own caveat that the politics of the play "have been lost to us over time," making them "harder to detect than those of the temperance play or abolitionist drama," Hughes reads in this scene a timely exhibition of female potency (119). In Daly's play, the gender roles now typically assigned to victim and savior are swapped: it is the strong-willed Laura Courtland who rescues a male Civil War veteran from the path of the speeding train, a daring subversion of expectations one year after Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the American Equal Rights Association and one year before the implicit denial of women's suffrage in the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. In the context of this historical moment, Hughes argues a dissenting critical perspective, that the liberal politics of the victim's reaction to his deliverance ("And these are the women who ain't to have the vote!") and Laura's excessive display of progressive traits (not the least of which being her ability to wield the masculine "American axe" during

the sensational rescue) could not have gone unnoticed by the play's original audiences. Women had proved to be an indispensable force in aiding the earlier temperance and abolition movements, but resistance to their right to vote held fast. And whereas most voting-rights plays of the era sought to cement the status quo, Hughes claims that the audacious visual spectacle of Daly's pasteboard train provided a shock to the senses that allowed for the delivery of an alternative political message.

The author's close readings, both of the melodramas themselves and of their related extratheatrical images, demonstrate an impressive ability to weave together remarkably heterogeneous archival materials into a fluid scholarly narrative, of interest well beyond theater history. Her explanatory and bibliographic notes alone (which make up a fifth of the book) make *Spectacles of Reform* an invaluable reference, as does its trove of thoughtfully selected images, pulled largely from the periodicals collections of the American Antiquarian Society and New York Historical Society. In the analysis, however, there lurks on occasion a tendency to suppose the political intent of dramatic moments that were influenced, no doubt, by a number of factors, making conclusory leaps that might be taken with more cautious footing. For instance, her reading of *The Drunkard*'s inclusive final tableau—"that every American, despite personal failing and lapses in respectability, could rehabilitate and join the ranks of ordinary citizens once more"—is perhaps not inadmissible, but the the ensemble finale likely has as much, if not more, to do with plain old melodramatic stage conventions than with politics (65). To this point, it is sometimes more implied than explicated just how the social and political content located in these plays translates into direct real-world social or political action, leaving the subtitle's promise of *Theater and Activism* more of a laying-out of the two side by side than an argument for the theater as a driving agent of reform.

Nevertheless, when Hughes lifts her gaze from the past to consider how the nineteenth century's spectacular fascinations remain at work in our own spectacle-obsessed world of today—making, for example, an ingenious connection between the "freakish" bodies of *The Octoroon* (the racially charged Dion Boucicault melodrama from 1859) and the so-called Octomom (Nadya Suleman, who in 2009 gave birth to eight children in one pregnancy)—these reservations dissolve, and the project affords her entire subject refreshed relevance. American melodrama is so frequently relegated to the category of disposable, sub-literary entertainment that any attempt to treat it otherwise can feel like a *de facto* exercise in inconsequence. But by showing in transhistorical flashes how "the spectacular instant [that] offered producers, reformers, audiences, and consumers a unique opportunity to articulate ideas" still does (44), Hughes helps to close the temporal gap between her reader and the works she discusses, making the nineteenth-century popular American theater a little more relatable, a little more worthy of our attention. And that is no little achievement.

Fine Distinctions



There's an old military proverb: *No army ever rode into battle shouting fine distinctions.* In Philip Gould's *Writing the Rebellion*, however, the armies fight with pen and printing press, not sword and cannon. In this book, polemical writers shout, sneer, and hiss fine distinctions at each other on a paper battlefield of pamphlets and newspapers, broadsides and burlesques, satires and political theatre. Shades of rhetorical difference occupy every page: sublimity vs. bombast; true vs. false wit; apprehension vs. expression; genius vs. decorum; irony vs. invective; low vs. high burlesque—plus subtle and not-so-subtle contrasts among most of the classic rhetorical strategies and tactics. The subtitle, *Loyalists and the Literature of Politics in British America,* indicates why disputes about the nuances of literary and stylistic categories predominate in Gould's analysis. This is a war of words, a contest for the minds and feelings of British subjects in a time of rebellion. It is politics understood as literature, aesthetics understood as politics.

The controlling premise of *Writing the Rebellion* is that a writerly class of Patriots and Loyalists—each side claiming the title of "civilized English subject" (25)—used disputes over "literary form and aesthetic taste" in order to "leverage political authority" (32). Rebels and Loyalists alike got their political leverage by mocking their opponents as *bad writers* as well as bad thinkers. As Gould states, "the sometimes tendentious arguments about Parliament's sovereignty, the common law, and actual and virtual representation

segued almost seamlessly into those concerning literary style as a touchstone to political credibility" (32). Furthermore, a "focus on aesthetics assumes that the subject is always already politicized: it functions as the means by which British Americans were reimagining their cultural relations to one another and to Britain itself" (25).

Gould presents case studies in five chapters, each case analyzing in detail a few highly representative Patriot and Loyalist documents, beginning with the Stamp Act crisis of 1765, extending through the meeting of the Continental Congress and the formation of the Continental Association (1774), and concluding with responses to *Common Sense* (1776) and its various reprintings.

In sequence, the cases dramatize how a considerable percentage of British colonists (estimates range from 20 to 33 percent) at first supposed revolution against England too far-fetched to imagine. Suddenly, it was imaginable. Alarmed, the Loyalists then tried to arrest this momentum of nonsensical imagining, using their writing to restore good sense and calm order. But then the unimaginable kept happening. Rapidly. As events swiftly turned worse, and ultimately punitive, Loyalist lives were daily transformed. "The feelings of divided loyalty usually assigned to them" slipped into devastating feelings of loss, dislocation, isolation—a "dread of no longer being British *or* American." Although, Gould observes, we "traditionally have seen the Loyalists as being simply elitist or aloof in their writings, I would argue that such detachment was driven more by the increasing sensations of desperation, outrage, and fear" (168-170).


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The first case, on the Stamp Act Crisis, features the Loyalist Martin Howard Jr.'s *Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax* (1765) versus the answers of two Patriots, Stephen Hopkins (*The Rights of Colonies Examined,*1764) and James Otis (*Vindication of the American Colonies from the Aspersions of the Halifax Gentleman* and *Brief Remarks on the Defence of the Halifax Libel*, both 1765). The stylistic/political issue involves the "sublime" style (Samuel Johnson's "grand or lofty style") versus self-indulgent "bombast" and "bathos." Anticipating the debates a decade ahead, each side claims the grand style for itself and relegates the opposition to one or another level of bathos—drawing fine distinctions, and not gently.

The second case pits Anglican minister Samuel Seabury and his 1774-75 series of pamphlets published under the pen-name "West Chester Farmer" against Alexander Hamilton, who attacked the West Chester Farmer with his own pamphlets, including *The Farmer Refuted* (1775). Seabury and Hamilton tussled over the proper forms of ridicule: those conveyed by true wit ("ideally modulated, its humor proportioned to the targeted foibles, its premises rooted in sympathy with human nature") or false wit: self-indulgent, extravagant word-play and

punning. With each adversary mocking the other, the shadows of Pope's *Dunciad*, "Essay on Criticism," and "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot" seem to fall on their pages, with Seabury and Hamilton wittily assigning the other a seat among the dunces.

The extensive third case, "Satirizing the Congress: Ancient Balladry and Literary Taste," makes the Seabury/Hamilton exchange look positively jolly, for Congress gets satirized in "a literature of outrage: verse parodies, mock epistles and public confessions, satiric sketches, false advertisements, cards, cards-in-reply, squibs, closet-dramas, humorous ballads, and comic political fables" (84). The pertinent texts are the anonymous Loyalist burlesque *The Association, &c. of the Delegates of the Colonies, at the Grand Congress, Held at Philadelphia, Sept. 1, 1774, Versified, and Adapted to Music* (1774) paired with Major John Andre's take-off on the old ballad "Chevy Chase," a snarly satire on the American military that he called "The Cow-Chace" (1780). Each exploits the revival of serious interest in ancient ballads that had occurred in Britain around mid-century—a revival Gould treats in considerable detail.

In the widely popular *Common Sense*, of course, Loyalists encountered their greatest challenge. The fourth case, "Loyalists and the Author of *Common Sense*," uses the figure of Thomas Paine to explore the nature of "authorship," a topic much discussed today in theory circles. Once Paine was revealed as its author (an open secret all along), an increasingly anxious opposition targeted him in person and in *persona*. For Patriots, Paine qualified as a true "author," an honorable writer marvelously bringing eloquence to the cause of common sense; for Loyalists, he was unworthy of the name of author, a "scribbling imp," a "hired Grubb Street hack," out for the money and unscrupulously promoting the evil schemes and crazy policies of his employers. Yet Loyalists also found Paine useful, for he became a metonymy for the entire cast of rebellious leaders and their propagandists; by extension, if they could skewer him and his reputation, they could wound his sponsors.

The anti-Paine Loyalist works are pamphlets by Maryland's James Chalmers, *Plain Truth* and*Additions to Plain Truth* (1776), and a pamphlet by Charles Inglis, *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated in Certain Strictures on a Pamphlet Intitled Common Sense* (1776), plus a series of letters William Smith wrote under the pseudonym "Cato" for Philadelphia newspapers. (Paine answered "Cato" under his own pseudonym, "The Forester.") The Loyalists disdained *Common Sense* because Paine rejected monarchy and promoted American independence, but also because of his dangerous philosophy of natural rights and liberties, a wildly idealistic fantasy floating in an imaginary world of flawless people needing no social and political control. "I find no Common Sense in this pamphlet but much uncommon phrenzy," wrote Inglis (122). In Philadelphia, moreover, the controversy involved rival printers, who, since the conflicts involving Franklin and Zenger, had claimed political neutrality but now faced pressure from both sides to convert their presses into political instruments as opportunities presented themselves to print, reprint, and refute *Common Sense*.

The fifth case develops a revisionary argument explaining how the Loyalists located *Common Sense* "New Englandly." New England, Loyalists insisted, had *never* been truly English and never truly part of the British Empire. *Common Sense* is a *Puritan* text; when New England Puritans trumpet it, they forfeit any claim to "English credentials" (145). In *Plain Truth* and *Additions to Plain Truth*, Chalmers even posits Paine as the new Cromwell, thus connecting Loyalist fears of rebellion in 1776 by analogy to the English civil wars of the 1640s. As the Puritans then had nearly destroyed England through regicide, bloody violence, mendacity, and personal ambition (exemplified by Oliver Cromwell), their New England descendants, likewise infected with Puritanism, were now hell-bent on destroying British America.

Writing the Rebellion concludes with an epilogue urging historians to discard their stereotypes about the Loyalists and instead to "account for the seriousness and depth of their political critiques and positions" (172).

In his effort to persuade readers to rethink the literature of the rebellion, Gould faces some rhetorical challenges of his own. Because the specimens are "occasional," a reader needs information about the particular occasions that sparked the exchange between writers, and it also helps to be familiar with eighteenth-century British literary theories, for they carry over to the colonies. Gould supplies considerable context, but each case necessarily requires an effort to keep in mind the specific historical circumstances serving as the basis for the witticisms, satirical stings, local allusions, etc., of the specimen documents—in short, to get the joke. Although Gould includes sections summarizing the upshot of each case and connecting it with the case to follow, his very close readings do presuppose an attentive reader with some prior knowledge of transatlantic rhetorical practice.

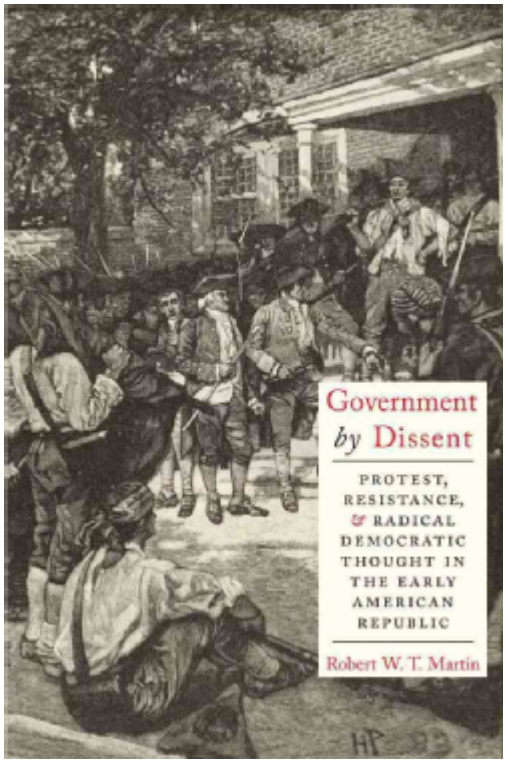
Several projects underlie this brief but dense book. One is surely the recovery of good-but-forgotten Loyalist writers. In this regard, two more maxims come to mind: *History is written by the winners* and *Literature is what gets taught*. Accordingly, the national narrative has for generations adopted the major premise that the system of laws, liberties, and values identified as truly American, accompanied by the culture that the United States developed, flows from 1776 and the principles of Independence established by the patriots in their successful conflict with England. Those beliefs likewise form the *credo* of the United States' civil religion, and Americans tend to call dissent from them "un-American." The Loyalists, having lost, are thereby banished to the insignificant margins of American history as we have constructed it. *Writing the Rebellion* returns them to the discourse.

That developmental narrative has also guided the teaching of American literature—itself a relatively new subject of study that American colleges, until the mid-twentieth-century, taught as a curious but minor departure from The Great Tradition of British Literature from Chaucer to Yesterday. Search the standard classroom anthologies of American literature for any selections from the writers Gould discusses and you will find a great deal of Franklin and

Paine but precious little of the Loyalist intellectuals who doubted the wisdom of rebellion from the Mother Country. Gould tries hard, though, especially when it comes to *Common Sense*. He writes that by "accounting for Loyalist responses to this magnum opus," he "has aimed to dislodge its traditional place in national history and emphasize instead the literary and political dissent it precipitated" (142).

That's one heavy rock to move. But maybe he got it to tilt a little. It's a start.

In Search of America's Radically Democratic Founders



Government by Dissent is an engaging meditation on one of America's founding fantasies—the fantasy of democratic self-government. In 1776 Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* articulated what we might call the "primal scene" of American democracy. According to Paine, emigrants to any new land (such as the American colonies, he implied) could initially live free from the external constraints of government because the community would be "bound … together in a common cause" by "the first difficulties of emigration." Over time, however, common

kindness and *esprit de corps* would be insufficient to preserve peace and justice, and thus the need to establish "some form of government" would arise. Paine wrote that "some convenient tree will afford them a State House, under the branches of which the whole Colony may assemble to deliberate on public matters. … In this first parliament every man by natural right will have a seat." Reduced to its common denominator, this is American democracy—every single inhabitant gathered together to create the rules that will bind them all. Paine readily admitted that population growth and increased social complexity would render this original political system obsolete, but the metaphor of the tree and its radically inclusive vision of literal self-governance remained an ideal to which he and other eighteenth-century democrats aspired.

As anyone with even a cursory knowledge of the history of American politics can attest, the reality of how Americans have governed themselves has rarely resembled Paine's depiction of an inclusive and productively deliberative picnic under a tree. Paine's eighteenth-century critics (almost all of whom were conservatives) argued that most citizens knew nothing about politics or law, and thus were entirely unfit to craft legislation. Political decision making, they claimed, should be the province of a small number of qualified (by which they meant wealthy and well-educated) experts, because truly democratic governance would result in short-sighted public policies that sacrificed the common good at the expense of the majority's short-term self-interest. Politics under that tree, they claimed, would always be the politics of provinciality and stupidity, and American politics since the founding has certainly seen its share of both.

The dissentient democrats we meet in this book envisioned a system in which political decisions percolated up from the general populace, rather than being imposed from above by political elites.

Paine's twentieth- and twenty-first-century critics (most of whom are progressives) emphasize the implicit exclusions that marked Paine's imaginary, tree-shaded Congress. Merely declaring that an ideal legislative body should include everyone did not change the fact that 50 percent of people at Paine's time were excluded from politics because of their gender, or that 20 percent of the colonies' population in 1776 consisted of enslaved people who obviously would not be invited to that picnic under the tree, or that the tree itself had been forcibly taken from Native Americans whose land use practices had shaped the verdant landscape that sustained both those settlers and the luxurious old tree they claimed as their own. If Paine's tree metaphor provided any sort of precedent for American politics, it was the precedent of white, male, propertied rule duplicitously carried out under the sign of an abstract, but perpetually deferred, commitment to universal equality and inclusivity. In sum, from the founding era up through today, there have been good reasons to dismiss Paine's democratic tree metaphor as a rhetorically powerful but intellectually and politically flimsy fantasy.

Martin, a professor of government at Hamilton College, acknowledges the perennial gap between democratic theory and American political reality, but rejects the idea that the gap represents a fatal flaw in the American political tradition. Martin's goal in this book is to restore the democratic credentials of the founding generation by bringing to light a cohort of late eighteenth-century writers (including, surprisingly, James Madison) who advocated strategies for making the nation more radically democratic. These "dissentient democrats," Martin argues, articulated a vision of democratic self-government far more robust than Paine's metaphor of the tree, and capable of withstanding the criticisms levied by American democracy's many skeptics, both past and present, progressive and conservative.

At the heart of Martin's "dissentient" democratic tradition rests a Habermasian conception of public opinion. The dissentient democrats we meet in this book envisioned a system in which political decisions percolated up from the general populace, rather than being imposed from above by political elites. They were not anarchists seeking to rip down Paine's governing tree, however. Like Paine, they recognized the need for a representative political system that set up a few hundred empowered seats under that governing tree and a spectator's gallery for everyone else. This tactical exclusion was a forgivable concession, however, as long as the governing few under that tree did the bidding of "the people," and not an unrepresentative portion of them. But how were legislators to know and enact what "the people" really wanted? To solve this problem, dissentient democrats advocated a diverse, contentious, and inclusive public sphere in which "the people" could work toward a shared, though never static, understanding of what "we" want. The point is not that dissenters have greater access to the truth than advocates of the status quo. Dissentient democracy is all about process, not content. The more voices that are heard, the more open the discussion is, and the more attuned and accountable elected leaders are to the rough consensus that emerges out of that never-ending discussion, the more "democratic" we can consider a polity.

This concept of dissentient democracy is Martin's promising way of dealing with what we might call democracy's representation problem. As literary critic Jay Fliegelman pointed out long ago, the nation's foundational texts all anxiously speak on behalf of a "we" that did not yet exist (and, arguably, never has existed). In 1776, Jefferson knew that many of his fellow colonists did not hold certain truths to be self-evident, let alone support independence. Something similar could be said of the 57 decidedly-not-representative men who, in the summer of 1787, claimed to speak on behalf of "We the People." As the nation has gotten even more populous and diverse, the idea that "the people" could speak with one voice or that there exists some entity that could discern the authentic will of "the people" seems even more outlandish. Virtual representation, in other words, did not end when the colonies separated from Britain, but has rather been standard operating procedure since long before the revolution. Whereas some critics emphasize the partial nature of all claims to representativeness (who really is speaking here and whose interests and aspirations are really being furthered by the authors of these texts and the

propertied men who took over the political reins of the new nation?), Martin focuses on the aspirational side of this political equation, the ultimately unachievable but still laudable goal of creating both a vibrant, participatory political culture and a political system that is responsive to it.

The most obvious form of political responsiveness is the vote, but Martin spends almost no time talking about elections because, he claims, the dissentient democrats of the founding era thought that "elections simply were not enough" (97) to ensure truly popular control over the political process. Eighteenth-century democrats recognized the extent to which the tradition of deference had disempowered ordinary citizens, and they worked to create "counterpublic spaces" where they could "amass their collective wisdom" and "find a shared voice" (105). Whereas contemporary Americans, when they think with any depth at all about what "democracy" means, associate it almost exclusively with the right to vote, Martin's subjects had a far more sophisticated understanding of how social and cultural forces empowered some and silenced others. They were not content to take a few minutes every couple of years to pick a proxy; rather, they wanted to build a political culture in which deliberation and debate were ongoing and dispersed throughout the nation's media and social structure.

This is just one of many ways in which Martin paints a very appealing picture of the founding era's dissenters, whether they be Anti-Federalist opponents of the Constitution, democratic critics of the Washington administration, backcountry regulators, or the cantankerous lawyers and radicals who took on John Adams and the Sedition Acts. Many progressive historians have written about the brave fight that such people waged against the elitists, land speculators, and anti-democrats of their day. The difference here is that Martin is less interested in taking sides with these dissenters, and more interested in demonstrating that such people espoused dissent as a robust political principle, a right that should belong to all and not just themselves. This combats what has long been a conservative, or merely skeptical, critique of eighteenth-century democrats—that they were grumblers, the embittered losers of history who, had they won, would have been just as intolerant as the winners who were the targets of their ire. According to Martin, these late eighteenth-century dissenters did not espouse dissent simply because they were outsiders who wanted to be heard. Rather, they valued dissent irrespective of its content. These impressively humble and tolerant dissenters did not want to rule the world according to their own lights; they wanted the world to be run in such a way that dissent of any sort would always be nurtured, valued, and heeded by the powers that be.

Martin's dissenters were also precociously aware of how a political system keenly attuned to public opinion could fall prey to an intolerant, stifling groupthink. These democrats privileged unending contestation, what Martin calls "dissensus," rather than the achievement of a complacent consensus. They also worried about the tendency of democracies to silence those whose opinions lay outside the boundaries of what the public deemed acceptable at any particular

moment. To combat this tendency, Martin's dissentient democrats offered a radical defense of the right to unmolested free speech, even speech they themselves detested or was demonstrably untrue.

Dissentient democrats also had a progressive solution to the problem of demagoguery. Where the conservative solution to this endemic, democratic problem was to leave governance up to the educated few, Martin's dissentient democrats argued that the best way to prevent demagoguery was to fund public education for everyone. An informed and intelligent citizenry would be inoculated against the danger of demagoguery, and be prepared to participate productively and intelligently in the process of political deliberation.

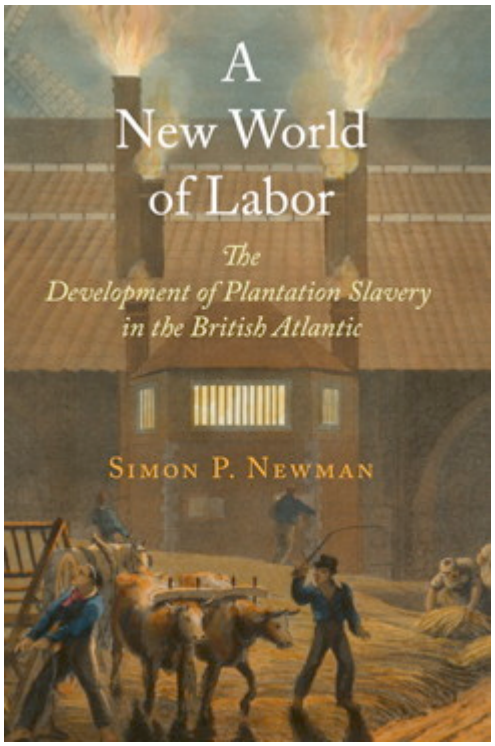
By now it should be clear that Martin greatly admires his subjects. Indeed, at times it almost seems as if his arguments were organized around the desire to rebut virtually every contemporary criticism of the Enlightenment political tradition that his dissentient democrats championed. Where feminist critics of the public sphere have highlighted the eighteenth century's gendered valuation of reason over emotion, Martin argues that his dissentient democrats were attuned to that issue and thought emotion had a legitimate role to play in public political discourse. Where other critics regard the Enlightenment as having an overly static and unchanging conception of truth, Martin stresses the epistemological subtlety of his subjects, making them at times seem more like early twentieth-century Pragmatists than figures from the Age of Reason.

These moments when Martin stretches a bit too far to make his dissentient democrats relevant and appealing to modern readers are understandable given his background as a student of political theory. His goal is to construct a usable genealogy for a bundle of political ideas that have their roots in the late eighteenth century, but which are still relevant for our contemporary political culture. This leads him to sometimes offer quite generous and decontextualized readings of his sources. This problem is most pronounced in the chapter on James Madison, where Martin interprets the "father of the Constitution" as a seminal, creative participant in the tradition of dissentient democracy. As early as 1785, Martin argues, we see Madison "hinting" at the idea that public opinion (rather than elected leaders) should function as "a positive, proposing force that could point toward new, better policies" (123). Given Madison's great disdain for the more populist state legislatures of the day and the elaborate roadblocks the Constitution placed between the "people out of doors" and the formal political system, this vision of Madison the radically populist democrat seems like an interpretive overreach. It is understandable that Martin would want his cohort of dissentient democrats to include at least one figure whom lay readers might recognize, but the Madison we encounter in this book will probably be significantly and provocatively different from the Madison that has emerged in the last few decades of historical scholarship.

These criticisms aside, Martin's work makes a strong case for the continuing relevance of the founding era's democrats, most of whom have long passed from the nation's political memory. In an era when many of our most vocal dissenters

are reactionary cynics—Glenn Beck, another contemporary fan of Thomas Paine, comes to mind here—Martin reminds us that democratic dissent is not just an end in itself, but, in its best forms, an aspiration toward a political culture and political system that values a diversity of perspectives, especially those perspectives that have been formed out of a history of exclusion. Dissentient democracy is about listening to those who disagree with you as much as it is about claiming space to be heard. Such a history of democratic listening would make an interesting counterpoint to this excellent history of how the nation's first democrats worked to create a political culture that not just tolerated, but positively valued, dissent.

"Barbadosed": Class and Race in the British Atlantic



In this erudite, thoughtful, and at times sparkling study, Simon Newman—author of noteworthy earlier books on festive culture in the early republic and on the Philadelphia poor—turns to one of the perennial issues in early American history, namely the origins of plantation slavery in the British colonies. Rather than concentrating on the traditional sites of scholarly attention—the Chesapeake colonies of Virginia and Maryland—he turns the spotlight on the pivotal Caribbean island of Barbados which he sees, with considerable justification, as the real "laboratory of labor" in the British Atlantic (251). It was there during the early seventeenth century that a powerful planter elite

first invented a radically new variety of bound labor to service an integrated plantation system that combined workers, land, and machines in an innovative fashion. Once established, he argues that this nexus did not simply remain *in situ*. Instead it was exported elsewhere, with this Barbadian model subsequently shaping the development of racial slavery not just on Jamaica and other Caribbean islands, but in South Carolina and its lower South neighbors as well. As he charts this compelling trajectory, two interrelated facets of Newman's underlying approach become increasingly evident. First, there is his gloss on the classic question of the balance between economics and race in the causation of American slavery, which Alden T. Vaughan several years ago dubbed the "origins debate." Second, in the process of addressing that issue, there is the way he places plantation slavery firmly in the context of other forms of labor—both unfree and free—characteristic of the early modern British world. His pursuit of this dimension propels him beyond the Caribbean and North America to Britain and the West African coast in a work that becomes genuinely circum-Atlantic in scope.

With regard to the first question, Newman supports a socio-economic rather than a racial interpretation of the transition to black slavery. Although he freely acknowledges that a set of ideas and prejudices about race came to constitute the ideological underpinnings of slavery during the course of the eighteenth century, it was, nevertheless, "a class-based system of labor rather than abstract ideas of racial difference that provided the foundation for slavery in Barbados, and for a system that spread to Jamaica, the Carolinas, and beyond" (248). There is, of course, nothing particularly original in this assertion. It merely represents one of the well-established poles in a long-standing controversy. Where Newman breaks new ground is in the crucial role he ascribes to the importance of English precedents with regard to attitudes toward labor, the work imperative, and the treatment of the poor and vulnerable. In particular, the Vagrancy Act of 1547 occupies a central place in his narrative. Despite the fact that there is little evidence that the measure was actually enforced, Newman plausibly suggests that its precedents, its language, and the very fact of its passage are all of compelling significance. They indicate that English rulers and landowners, faced with the challenge of controlling a growing mass of under- or unemployed people, believed that in the right circumstances one individual could seize the body and labor of another, taking away liberty and independence and extracting work through violence.


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The commodification of labor that this step represented only gained pace in the early seventeenth century as the settlement of Barbados got underway. On the island itself, the planter elite—unchecked by any lingering legal and social constraints—created the exploitative plantation system characteristic of sugar

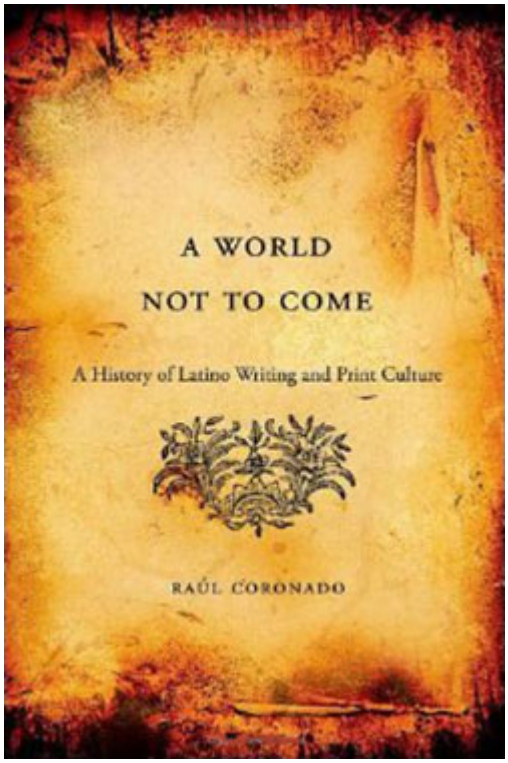
cultivation and brutally utilized first English indentured servants and then black slaves. The former served for far longer periods than English laborers and they were bought, sold, and traded in a manner unknown in Britain itself. What encouraged this tendency was an infelicitous combination of factors. First, indentured servants were in plentiful supply owing to the volatile economic, social, and political conditions in the metropolis and, second, an increasing proportion of those sent across the Atlantic were already unfree and enjoyed scant legal rights and protections. They were, in effect, "white slaves"—vagrants, criminals, and prisoners—whom planters viewed more as inferior and contemptible commodities to be exploited than as free-born individuals (71). According to Newman, their treatment laid the foundations for the late seventeenth-century development of black slavery, whose operation he then analyzes in some depth using an array of contemporary sources familiar to Caribbean historians, including Richard Ligon's *True and Exact History* (1657), Henry Drax's instructions, and the records of the Codrington and Newton estates. Although this is, perhaps surprisingly, the most conventional section of the book, Newman, to his credit, is at pains to stress how dynamic the institution was in Barbados. It was not static, but changed over time as planters adopted rather double-edged "amelioration" policies during the eighteenth century, promoted natural increase and family life, and encouraged the development of a more diverse, highly skilled and trained black workforce. He is also acutely aware of the gender dimension to life and labor on a West Indian sugar plantation and of the role that female slaves played in the fields. Finally, Newman rightly emphasizes the extent to which, with the rise of slavery, white servants and their descendants—the so-called "redlegs"—were marginalized in Barbados to a degree that was unusual even in other regions of the Caribbean.

For Newman this slave system was genuinely distinctive. It stood out from working practices in other parts of the British Atlantic world. Plantation slavery really did constitute "a new world of labor," to repeat the evocative phrase in the book's title. In order to underline this point, Newman focuses not just on earlier English precedents, but also on conditions in British-occupied West Africa and especially the Gold Coast, a region that had close connections with Barbados through the Atlantic slave trade. There, because of the primacy of the trading relationship and the demographic imbalance between Europeans and Africans, Britons were compelled to respect the local residents and their working practices. As a result, they had to engage with, understand, and utilize free and bound labor in ways that differed quite dramatically both from the early modern British Isles and the developing plantation society of Barbados. The Gold Coast was not a slave society akin to those that would evolve in the Americas, and until the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries slavery in coastal communities remained relatively small-scale, without any large and distinct slave class or caste. In addition, the existence of pawns, or voluntary and (at least in theory) temporary slaves, further blurred the lines between free and enslaved. Viewed in this wider context, then, the Barbadian experience was truly exceptional. While categories and forms of labor were extremely complicated elsewhere, on this particular Caribbean island more

rigid definitions of labor and subsequently of race usurped the more fluid ideas and practices characteristic of the larger British Atlantic. What accounts for this outcome? Embedded in Newman's text are several possible explanations: the strength of English precedents and attitudes towards labor; the fact that the initial settlement of Barbados coincided with a period of economic, social, and political turmoil in England; the resulting influx into the colony of British (principally Irish and Scottish) unfree convicts, vagrants, and prisoners of war; the unchecked power and freedom of the Barbadian planter class; and the evaporation with the Atlantic crossing of more fluid, flexible African definitions of slavery. For this array of reasons, according to Newman, the ideas and practices of plantation slavery actually owed more to England than to Africa, and more to class than to race.

This is, therefore, an interesting, suggestive book that merits a wide readership, particularly from those with an interest in Atlantic slavery and labor history broadly defined. Although there is a slightly repetitive quality to the discussion, with many of the same themes resurfacing at different points, the study's clear linear structure anchored around discrete sections on the various Atlantic contexts, British bound labor, African bound labor, and finally plantation slavery, succeeds in driving the argument forward in a compelling fashion. Also, while the study covers some familiar ground in its discussion of Caribbean, British, and African labor practices—and owes a distinct debt to earlier scholars such as Richard Dunn, Hilary Beckles, and Russell Menard—the triangular, comparative nature of his analysis enables Newman to develop his own rather novel argument concerning the distinctive nature of plantation slavery in British America. Here the one element that is perhaps missing is a clearer awareness of the significance of the inevitable entanglements with the Iberian and Dutch Atlantics. That important caveat aside, Newman nevertheless succeeds in highlighting the centrality of labor to our understanding of the early modern world and, as the best Atlantic historians do, raises important questions about the complex, fluid relationship between developments in the Americas, Africa, and Europe.

The Lost Histories of Past Futures: Revolution, Belonging, and the Times of Transnational Print Cultures



When I was a teenager in Catholic school developing a sense of political consciousness, I fixated on the Apostle Jude, patron saint of the hopeless and despairing, because his patronage seemed to extend broadly to what the Psalms call “the wretched of the earth,” the down-and-out and overlooked in modern societies and their written histories. I was also inclined toward Jude because I was forgetful, and so I was told I could pray to him when I lost something valuable, like a new jacket—a rather odd conflation of the transcendent and the banal. St. Jude is also sometimes described (along with St. Rita) as the patron saint of “the Impossible,” making his saintly office even more metaphysically puzzling, since he oversees a conditional, temporal category, impossibility, rather than a geographically bounded place (the Philippines, São Paolo), a profession (confectioners, bankers), or an ailment (bubonic plague, cattle diseases), like most saints in the pantheon. Jude belongs to the counterfactual conditional, that which would or could have happened, had not something else out of your control interceded—an illness, an act of violence, or one of the many other natural and structural injustices that shape the present and limit the futures of the despairing souls that petition Jude for hope and relief.

Jude’s realms, which combine the most quotidian and magnificent aspects of human frailty and aspiration and transcend the bounded present and the conditional future, are in some sense the domain as well of Raúl Coronado’s brilliant, provocative, and often moving book, *A World Not to Come: A History of Latino Writing and Print Culture.* Coronado’s book is ambitious, both theoretically and historiographically, rigorously researched, and eloquently written. His objective is twofold: first, to document the emergence of a Catholic Hispanic modernity in the Latin American age of revolution, one whose models of knowledge and systems of understanding did not match up with the

liberal individualism of the Anglo-American world, which has been generally taken to be*the* standard of political modernity that others in the hemisphere aspired to emulate. Secondly, he explores the emergence, and failures, of revolutionary, anti-imperialist republican thought in early to mid-19th century Texas, using this specific, largely peripheral geography to argue for the centrality of such short-circuits—"worlds not to come," lost futures birthed by revolutions yet to be completed—that nevertheless shape the national cultures that emerge out of the crucibles of empire, slavery, war, and revolution. In so doing, Coronado offers a compellingly rigorous corrective to the often presentist orientation of "transnational" cultural studies by excavating the contingent, unstable forms of social belonging and political meaning in Spanish America that helped create, but also elude, the national categories we have inherited from the revolutionary 19th century.


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The post-Reformation world of Catholic Scholasticism, in which the Spanish Empire took shape and in which it crumbled, is important to Coronado's history of print culture and national consciousness in Texas because it determined the kinds of social and geographic belonging available to those living on New Spain's periphery at the time. In Coronado's summary, Scholastic philosophy responds to the Protestant heresy of a priesthood of believers with direct, unmediated access to the divine Word by presenting the world as a single text, mandated by God, in which all things are intertwined, in a meaning that could only begin to be deciphered by an ordained clergy. (This entanglement of the visible and spiritual world helps explain St. Jude's alternately banal and profound offices.) As Coronado puts it, Scholasticism is an intellectual and social system that values not "innovation but interpretation," the skill of reading the world and uncovering "God's signature" within it (52). The Catholic world was an "enchanted" one, in which events were shaped not only by individual agency, but also by unseen forces and unknowable spirits. "Proximity to the divine," Coronado writes, "involves having a 'porous' self, where meaning emerges not within autonomous individuals but relationally with the visible and invisible world around us; where spiritual transcendence could at times be experienced by a community coming together during trying times" (51). In this "enchanted world," agency resides not just in individual bodies and intellects but also in impersonal forces that are both beyond these and yet also of them. This position is difficult to articulate in other than teleological terms because, according to Charles Taylor, a critic of Scholasticism that Coronado leans on for his own account, this enchanted world seems so strange, and thus so "traditional," to us.

This seeming anachronism points to the most exciting part of Coronado's

argument, which is his historiographical emphasis on the past futures "not to come" in 19th-century Texas, a historical project that takes seriously radical political desires, and the failure that inevitably accompanies them. The "future-in-past" grammatical formulation of *A World Not to Come* considers the history of Texas in terms of the spaces that radicals, pamphleteers, diarists, and generals imagined that they "would become," rather than the inevitability of the nation-states that they "became." As Coronado suggests, teleological narratives that presume the independence and later U.S. annexation of Texas as an inevitable product of Mexican instability, slave-state expansionism, the heroism of the Alamo, etc., tend to write those who would become "Tejanos," and still later, "Latinos," out of their region's history, reducing them to footnotes or obstacles along some other historical path. More broadly, Coronado's genealogical approach is essential, I think, for any serious approach to empire and anti-imperialist movements in the 19th-century U.S. and Caribbean, where national imaginaries, to say nothing of the territories themselves, were so dynamic that the very meaning of the things later called "Texas," "Cuba," or "Florida" changed profoundly across generations. *A World Not to Come* uncovers traces of national futures that look different from the territories we might recognize as inevitable—the post-1848 U.S.-Mexican border, or the revived Aztlán of Chicano nationalism—as well as a Hispanic Catholic epistemology that determined alternative worlds not to come, but not without leaving traces behind.

Given his emphasis on interpretation as a theological and social value in the time and place under consideration here, Coronado organizes much of his argument around close readings of key terms that ground his argument in his print and manuscript archive, while helping to organize this often sprawling book for readers. Besides "enchantment," he considers "Latino," a word he considers as "less…a subject position than…a literary and intellectual culture that emerges in the interstices between the United States and Latin America" (30). *Publicar*, the Spanish word meaning "publish" as well as "publicize," becomes an important combination in 19th-century Texas, where the rarity of printing presses meant that important documents were disseminated in manuscript and through oral performance. Coronado's use of unpublished manuscripts, listed for readers on a bibliographyposted online, is instructive for this reason. He shows how print was an instrument of religious and political authority in late imperial Spanish Texas, "the embodiment of the voice of sovereignty," as well as a rare technology in the northern periphery of Spain's American empire (271).

Yet challenges to temporal and religious authority often eluded these authoritative and authoritarian print forms; here, Coronado's interest in literary form and archival authority coincide with his project of historical recovery. The intellectual and political history of a short-lived 1813 revolution in Bexar, the New Spain city now known as San Antonio, Texas, is a particularly fascinating example. Coronado describes its preparation, aftermath, and legacy through various manuscript sources. The travel diary of José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, a polemicist and leader of the rebellion,

frames its political and theoretical background in Coronado's reading. The "Memoria de las cosas más notables que acaecieron en Bexar el año de 13 mandando el Tirano Arredondo" (Report of the Most Notable Things That Occurred in Bexar in the Year 13, under the Command of the Tyrant Arredondo), a hand-written eyewitness account of Spanish counter-revolutionary atrocities, offers harrowing testimony of the sudden, violent interruption of that revolutionary moment and the future it anticipated. Coronado concludes with a reading of the diary of Florencia Leal, a young Tejana woman living in San Antonio four decades later, as it comes under Anglo control. Coronado uses these manuscripts as records of historical moments pregnant with possibility and uncertainty—the protracted, bloody end of the Spanish Empire in Texas, in the former cases, and the dawn of an Anglo-American one, in the latter—and as peripheral, informal, or forgotten *forms* of writing that do not fit clearly into the genres that we have come to regard as conventional and modern.

The key terms *patria* and *pueblo* bring out some of the political implications of the Spanish-American Catholic modernity that Coronado argues for here, whose vibrations can be felt today.*Patria,* a word without a suitable English translation, refers to both a national homeland and the broader cultural, linguistic, and religious loyalties that radiate from it. *Pueblo* is similarly specific and expansive; it can be translated as "town" or as "people," giving it a paradoxical combination of bounded and vast meanings. Unlike either of its English equivalents, *pueblo* can also refer to an indivisible group, a collective entity. This is different from the sense of "people" enshrined in the beginning of the United States Declaration of Independence, a collection of discrete, individual subjects residing in a particular territory. The difference is critical and points to competing notions of sovereignty developing in the Americas at the time, which Greg Grandin has summarized in terms of an Anglo-American conception of republicanism predicated on individual rights and state sovereignty, and a Latin American valorization of collective rights and territorial sovereignty. The concept of social rights, Grandin argues in his recent article in the *American Historical Review*, bequeathed a tradition of political militancy that has been framed, in the U.S. context, as "disorder," a symptom of the cultural and racial deficiencies of Latin Americans. In his study of an 1856 print debate in the Spanish-language San Antonio newspaper *Ranchero*, for example, Coronado shows how these catholic (with a small and, he suggests, large "c") senses of national belonging struggled to survive amidst the growing tide of Anglo racism and Know-Nothing nativism. The *Ranchero*, edited by a Cuban émigré, José Quintero, gave voice to a "colonial history of Hispanic belonging based on concentric imagined communities," a capacious sense of belonging that could not restrain the discourse of racial nationalism in Anglo-American Texas (374).

Threaded through several of the chapters is the career of Bernardo, a leader of the short-lived Bexar rebellion. Its defeat, Coronado argues, short-circuited the intellectual legacy of Bernardo's revolutionary movement and doomed its history to oblivion. In his diary of a trip to New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Washington, Bernardo admires the visual world and apparent forms of republican

rule (such as new state legislative halls and the layout of the new capital city of Washington) but does so in a vocabulary that betrays his familiarity only with the politics of monarchy—describing Washington's government buildings as the "Corte de este Reyno," (the Court of this Kingdom) for example. Coronado explains how to read this slippage between seemingly republican and feudal modes of political knowledge:

Bernardo's voyage should not be understood as some teleological metaphor for the shift in his political thinking, with his departure from New Spain representing some break with a premodern, semi-feudal way of thinking and his arrival in the United States signifying the development of modern political thought. Such a metaphor would merely replicate our clichéd notion of the United States as the normative agent, positing it as the teleological end of the modern political world; at the other end of the spectrum, of course, would be Spanish America, hurriedly attempting to follow the United States' path to modernity. This is the conundrum of comparative work, the inescapability of positing norms and standards to which some fail to live up. The task requires us to decenter the normative history that has set up the Protestant Atlantic's path to modernity as the ideal (82).

The contradiction between Bernardo's fascination with the visual style of republican rule, and his intellectual dependence on feudal and Catholic modes of ordering the world, allows readers to see him wrestling with new forms of loyalty and political agency not yet articulated as a coherent ideological program, the kind of contingency, possibility, and uncertainty that Coronado is after in his readings of "peripheral" genres like this travel diary. Other notions of collective agency and sovereignty, which can be read in the Catholic modernity of the not-yet borderlands, reverberate elsewhere in Latin American political thought, from Simón Bolívar to José Martí, as Coronado suggests. The combination of social rights and collective agency encoded in the meaning of*pueblo*, for example, continues to reverberate in Latin American militant politics today, down to Hugo Chávez and contemporary Latin American social movements, as well as Anglo-American dismissals of these as irrational or "populist" deviations from democratic norms. Coronado's attention to what he calls the "indices of the irrelevant" is an impressive work of comparative scholarship, reflective of a determinedly skeptical approach to what the archive holds and what it hides.