Journal of American Studies, **46** (2012), e60. doi:10.1017/S0021875812001430

Sam W. Haynes, *Unfinished Revolution: The Early American Republic in a British World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010, £26.95). Pp. 378. ISBN 978 0 8139 3068 8.

A sense of the way in which mid-twentieth-century scholars understood the mid-nineteenth-century relationship between Britain and America can be garnered from F. O. Matthiessen's assertion in *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (1941) that the eponymous cultural flowering is best seen "not as a re-birth of values that had previously existed in America, but as America's ... coming to its first maturity and affirming its rightful heritage in the whole expanse of art and culture" (vii). Though far more alert to transatlantic cultural influences than their current reputation suggests, the myth and symbol school nonetheless tended to portray the nation as transcending its colonial past through the cultivation of distinctively American ideas and ideals. Looked at from the vantage point of the early twenty-first century, when the anti-exceptionalist drive of the postnational turn is reaching fruition in diverse arenas, this claim seems simplistic at best. Some of the most compelling studies of the antebellum period in recent years, such as Leonard Tennenhouse's *The Importance of Feeling English: American Literature and the British Diaspora, 1750–1850* (2007) and Elisa Tamarkin's *Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion, and Antebellum America* (2008), have, for example, emphasized the extent to which Americans continued to absorb, idealize, and imitate British culture right up until the Civil War. Like these groundbreaking studies, Sam W. Haynes's *Unfinished Revolution* is also indebted to the "new perspective" created when it "becomes possible to imagine the age of American empire drawing to a close" (2). But whereas Tennenhouse and Tamarkin focus on the republican citizen's lingering affinity with the mother country, Haynes is more interested in rethinking the strident Anglophobia which critics like Matthiessen once saw as evidence of the nation's ascent to cultural independence. Picking up on the the way in which antebellum Americans ironically sought confirmation of their autonomy from Britain, Haynes convincingly argues that their otherwise fierce rejection of British culture was a sign of weakness rather than strength. The "paradox of Anglophobia," he notes, is that "while it seemed to be a highly versatile and useful device in the process of nation-building, it actually served to reveal the preexisting fissures in American society" (294).

Tracking this reciprocal relationship between patriotism and disunity through its multiple manifestations – in responses to travel writing, fiction, and the theatre; in the rhetoric of election campaigns, abolition, and Manifest Destiny; and in debates about free trade and banking – *Unfinished Revolution* offers one of the best overviews we have of American attitudes toward Britain in the early nineteenth century. There may not be in these pages many facts we didn't know already, but the book's great strength is its synthetic range, which allows the reader to grasp previously overlooked connections between the Tariff of Abominations and the Astor Place Riot or the Hartford Convention and the Oregon Question. If *Unfinished Revolution* delineates the pervasiveness of American Anglophobia in an engaging and coherent fashion, however, it does not always successfully marry this analysis to the theoretical framework within which it is situated. Perhaps because the book is so concerned with corralling primary sources into an overarching narrative, some of the more knotty

and abstract implications of its argument feel underdrawn. A glance at three of the most important conceptual categories deployed by *Unfinished Revolution* will help to underline this problem. The issue of class, for instance, is central to Haynes's differentiation of Anglophiles from Anglophobes, particularly in the first half of the book. In these chapters, Anglophilia is repeatedly tied to "the landed gentry" (61) and the "most conservative members of the cultural elite" (56), while a distrust of Britain seems to come with equal ease to the more democratically inclined lower orders. This much is true in Haynes's chapter on the American stage, where the disturbances which regularly erupted over visiting British actors in the 1820s and 1830s did indeed take on "the character of open class warfare" (83). But more generally, the place of social status in debates over British influence could be fluid in a way which Haynes deals with too fleetingly. Thus he devotes only one paragraph to the point that "workingmen's groups . . . [saw] their struggle in broader, international terms" (158), and on the other side of the coin makes too little of the way in which writers like Charles Jared Ingersoll and James Fenimore Cooper defied their wealthy Federalist upbringings in order to embrace Anglophobia. Given the propensity of Americans to vary their sympathy for Britain according to the subject involved, Haynes writes early on, "subdividing Americans neatly into opposing camps of Anglophobes and Anglophiles" is no "simple matter" (11). It is unfortunate, then, that his rather schematic treatment of class sometimes gives the impression that such distinctions are all too easy to make.

The trouble with Haynes's equation between "well-to-do Americans" and an "innate Anglophilia" (12) is that it lacks enough internal nuance. The trouble with his use of another major analytical category, postcolonialism, is that it lacks enough external nuance. "For all its vaunted claims of distinctiveness, the young republic exhibited a set of anxieties not uncommon among nation-states that have emerged from long periods of colonial rule," Haynes observes in his short introduction to the book. "If this welter of insecurities has not garnered the scholarly attention it deserves, the oversight may be due in part to the fact that we do not really think of the early republic as a developing nation, at least not in any traditional sense" (2). Ergo, Haynes follows other scholars like Lawrence Buell and Edward Watts in viewing the fledgling US as a Second World country intractably caught between "the desire to repudiate *and* emulate the ancien regime" (2, original emphasis). Like many attempts to import postcolonial studies into American studies, however, *Unfinished Revolution* eschews the comparative dimension necessary to make this line of enquiry stick. In the absence of any detailed discussion of an equivalent experience of national independence or oppression, the book fails to live up to its claim "not to ignore the many differences between settler colonies and those of conquered peoples" (2). Haynes is very good on the "encirclement anxieties" (206) which Americans felt in the early nineteenth century, but for all the references to Indians and Mexicans in the book these groups are treated primarily as the satellites of British interests rather than as arbiters of colonization in their own right. The largely peripheral treatment Haynes offers of the way in which Indians and Mexicans, as well as African Americans, found an anti-imperialist ally in Britain is again symptomatic of his thinly sketched understanding of Anglophilia. Ultimately, beyond a thorough cataloguing of American grievances toward Britain, the most useful contribution *Unfinished Revolution* makes toward the postcolonial thesis is its closing discussion of how the US shook off its subaltern status. Notwithstanding the genuine solidarity it engendered in the immediate aftermath of the War of 1812, Anglophobia quickly became a tool of domestic disagreement,

especially when regional differences over the spread of slavery heated up in the 1830s. The willingness of men from all parties to use "anti-British feeling for political advantage" (118) persisted even as the nation overcame the threats to its territorial integrity, Haynes argues. While the ideology of Manifest Destiny may have "failed miserably as an instrument of national unity" (271), though, it did at least offer a firm sense of national independence. The acquisition of "an imperial identity of its own" (253) allowed the US to effectively move beyond its postcolonial inferiority complex: the "shifting adversarial dynamics of American expansion" were attended by a newly "racialized discourse" of "Anglo-Saxon vigor" and "a new narrative in which Great Britain occupied a much less conspicuous role" (273).

As this literary and political rapprochement of the 1850s took hold, Haynes notes, the rhetoric of Anglophobia was increasingly dismissed as "a transparent attempt to shift the focus away from worrisome domestic affairs" (289). But for most of the book Americans of all stripes are depicted as true believers in British iniquity, and it is this concept of an antebellum "paranoid style" which is probably the most central and most problematic of Haynes's themes. Throughout *Unfinished Revolution* everyone from Edwin Forrest to William Henry Harrison is inclined to see Britain as "an evil empire of Mephistophelean dimensions" (8). To the extent that these theories about "a sinister conspiracy headquartered in London" (119) have a single abiding spirit, though, it seems to be found in the nation's rabidly Anglophobic fifth President, Andrew Jackson. "If Jackson was susceptible to exaggerated and imaginary dangers, it was a mindset he shared with a great many Americans" (165), Haynes argues. "His tireless vigilance toward Great Britain ... which to later, more secure generations might seem irrational, even paranoid – goes far to explain his charismatic appeal" (117). Setting aside for a moment the question of how much political strategizing was involved in antebellum Anglophobia, this emphasis on the sheer pervasiveness of anti-British "conspiratorial thinking" (99) in Jacksonian America is both original and illuminating. The problems with it come when the reader wishes to dig deeper into the motives for this worldview. Americans, Haynes observes, were already "well-versed in a national creation myth ... of sinister parliamentary cabals" (30) thanks to the Revolution, but while historians like Gordon S. Wood have offered a thorough anatomy of why the colonists came to confuse rhetoric and reality in the 1770s, Haynes is less precise. In general he seems to conceive of antebellum Angloparanoia as identical with its late eighteenth-century predecessor. "Much like other people in the developing world who have feared foreign domination, [Americans] ascribed to the imperial power an omnipotence it did not possess" (8), he writes. "In the logic that frames a developing nation's worldview, the superior power exists as a well-oiled machine, incapable of error" (228). But this focus on the continuity of the colonial mindset often shortchanges the particularity of the very different events and ideas which were driving American paranoia in the early nineteenth century.

One of the obvious ways in which Jacksonian Anglophobia did mirror its Revolutionary counterpart was in its Paineian tendency to distinguish between ordinary British people and their "tyrannical system of government" (43). Lingering into an era when "new political ideologies that emphasized the innate rather than the institutional" (19) were emerging, this older emphasis on external forces of oppression helps to explain why the self-cultivating ambition of Romanticism failed to provide Americans with the sense of national identity they longed for. The difficulty Haynes appears to have, however, is in extricating his own analysis from a concern with sweeping structures. Like many works of transatlantic scholarship, *Unfinished*

Revolution is ultimately too centered on the American view of Britain. A consequent lack of detail about the views and intentions of Britons themselves thus makes it hard to discern the extent to which American paranoia was justified. In this respect, the few occasions where Haynes gives us the British perspective – as with his account of Charles Elliott's diplomatic machinations in Texas or George Thompson's antislavery speaking tour of the North – are those where the reader can most fully grasp the complex way in which Americans apprehended and misread British behavior. Equally, though, as I've already implied, the specificity of the Anglophobic response is also ill-served by Haynes's tendency to muddle the question of political calculation. At different points in the book, men like Jackson and Forrest are presented as both sincerely and strategically engaging in Anglophobia, but there is too little distinction between these impulses in regard to other historical players. Without a deeper theoretical engagement with the workings of ideology, then, *Unfinished Revolution* too often tends to echo the Anglophobic view of Britain as a "one-size-fits-all bête noire" (131). "Allegations of Britain's nefarious intentions . . . saturated the political culture to such an extent that Americans had long since ceased to weigh them individually according to intrinsic merits" (239), Haynes writes in his chapter on the annexation of Texas, but this blanket paranoia surely makes a case-by-case approach to Anglophobic conspiracy all the more necessary. Fortunately, the lateral-minded reader should be able to grasp by implication how Anglophobic ideas acquired "a life of their own" (131) and where "transatlantic scapegoating" (202) is most present. For if *Unfinished Revolution* leans too much toward generalities at the analytical level it remains packed with vital and intriguing details at the narrative level.

University of Nottingham MATTHEW PETHERS

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021875812001430 Published online by Cambridge University Press