

Joseph Eaton. *The Anglo-American Paper War: Debates About the New Republic, 1800-1825*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 248pp.

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Joseph Eaton's recent book *The Anglo-American Paper War: Debates about the New Republic, 1800-1825* makes a valuable contribution to an area of scholarship which has seen something of a renaissance over the last few years. The Anglo-American relationship during the first half of the nineteenth century and in particular the symbolic role played by each nation in the domestic politics of the other is now a flourishing field of study. Through works such as Sam Haynes's *Unfinished Revolution: The Early American Republic in a British World*, Emma McLeod's *British Visions of American 1775-1820* and Brent Kinser's *The American Civil War in the Shaping of British Democracy* scholars are coming to appreciate the complex relationship between the two nations.

Eaton analyses the Anglo-American connection through the lens of the Paper War, a period during which prominent intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic disputed the relative merits of Britain and the United States in print. While recognizing recent scholarship which places this period at the heart of any examination of the formation of American nationalism Eaton also highlights the lack of attention paid to 'the development of American and British nationalisms within trans-Atlantic literary quarrels. (1)' It is Eaton's belief that by correcting this, oversight scholars will be able to engage more meaningfully with the development of these nationalisms.

The Anglo-American Paper War traces the exchanges between Britain and America chronologically with extended examinations of key staging posts including the publication of Charles Jared Ingersoll's *Inchiquin's Letters* (1810) and the foundation of Morris Birkbeck's settlement of English Prairie (1817). Eaton's first chapter concentrates on the first decade of the 19th century and provides an overview of the development of periodicals and the culture of literary reviews on both sides of the Atlantic. By examining the content of British texts such as the *Edinburgh Review*, *Eclectic Review* and *Quarterly Review* and their American counterparts including the *Port-Folio*, *Monthly Anthology*, and *Boston Review* and the *Literary Magazine and American Register* Eaton establishes the domestic uses of Britain by American

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commentators and vice-versa. His three subsequent chapters involve an examination of the debates stimulated in these periodicals by a range of publications and events.

Through his analysis Eaton highlights the high level of complexity that characterized treatments of nationalism within the publications of the Paper War. In doing so he convincingly demonstrates that, rather than fostering a unified form of national identity, the Paper War actually fractured the meaning of the early United States. For instance by highlighting the enduring Anglophilia among key Federalists such as Joseph Dennie and Timothy Dwight Eaton emphasizes the significance of the Anglo-American connection in constructing regional identities within the United States. Eaton's analysis of Dwight's response to *Inchiquin's Letters* and the Bostonians concern that the British could not distinguish 'between good American (Federalist, New England) and bad American (Republican, anywhere south of the Mason-Dixon Line)' provides a fascinating insight into the significance of the Paper War for understanding the roots of sectional tensions in the United States (74-75). In fact it is in instances such as this in which Eaton uses the Paper War as a lens through which to examine the range of American nationalisms which were presented during the period that his work is at its most compelling.

Eaton's examination of the British side of the war is similarly informative. He identifies the importance of the United States as a point of reference for commenting on domestic British issues and the sympathy for the nation among liberal and radical commentators (37). Although not new insights, Eaton does identify the nuances within these images which are often unappreciated. More innovative, however, are Eaton's comments on the relationship between British Tories and American Federalists (39-42). He identifies an enduring sympathy for Federalist politicians and intellectuals within the pages of publications such as the *Anti-Jacobin Review* even after the decline of Federalism within America itself. This differentiation between parties and the identification of 'good Americans' among a class of Britons usually characterized by anti-Americanism is fascinating and raises a variety of question which demand the attention of scholars.

Through *The Anglo-American Paper War* Eaton provides a reinterpretation of a subject worthy of examination in its own right and a lens on the development of Anglo-American nationalisms. He identifies the complex and sometimes surprising reactions to American commentary in Britain and in doing so emphasizes the unstable meaning of the United States in British cultural and political discourse. He also eschews the claim that the era saw the construction of an American national identity with reference to Britain and instead highlights the divisive nature of the nationalisms offered during the period.