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Susan-Mary Grant. *North Over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000. xiii + 250 pp. $35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7006-1025-9.

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"Is There A North?"

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So asked a Kansan, distraught over Southern violations of the voting rights of Northern settlers in Kansas territory. Susan-Mary Grant would answer, yes, there was a North.

Although the literature on the development of Southern nationalism is extensive and detailed, no one has examined the nature of Northern nationalism. Eric Foner's seminal work (*Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 1970) studied northern regionalism through the lens of the sectionalist Republican party. Although clearly influenced by Foner, Grant aims to go beyond that focus to study the emergence of a Northern regionalism and its conflation with Union.

Grant argues that Northern regionalism has been understudied precisely because Northerners, and students of nineteenth-century United States history, have equated the North with the Union. There has been no need to examine a unique Northern identity because the North was the norm, the South the deviant from the norm.

The North's identity evolved in opposition to Southern regionalism. Northerners increasingly saw themselves as the true heirs of the "civic religion" of the American Revolution. Whether romanticizing the Southern gentleman and his plantation setting or demonizing the region as an economic backwater, Northerners constructed an image of the South as a fundamentally different, and even un-American, place. Grant spends a chapter on the travel literature written by Northerners such as Frederick Law Olmsted and William Cullen Bryant about the South. Even the most sympathetic depictions of the South, and Grant argues that the literature was becoming uniformly hostile by the 1850s, still emphasized the South's exoticism. The Republican party merely capitalized upon the negative images of the South prevalent in Northern society to persuade Northerners that the South posed a political threat to the North.

Grant admits that her study is heavily weighted toward the Northeast and Northeastern politicians and intellectuals such as Daniel Webster, Horace Mann, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, all of whom receive extended treatment. One would have liked to know the impact of their ideas in the Midwest and among non-Whig/Republicans. Although the Republican party became the dominant party in the North in the 1850s, Northern Democrats were still a powerful minority, especially in Midwestern states such as Indiana and Illinois. Historians would consider them Northerners although many had ties to the South. And the Democrats argued that they were the truly national party, the Republicans being sectional agitators. Did they share the assumptions of Northern nationalism? If not, how successful can that nationalism have been? Or was it merely the reflection of a very narrow set of New Englanders?

I suspect Grant is right that Northern nationalism was widespread out of New England, but she defines her North quite narrowly in this study. Although the cover picture is of the Lincoln Memorial, the discussion of Lincoln's views on Northern nationalism is much more limited than her discussion of Webster or Mann. Much of that discussion occurs in the chapter on the Republican party. Certainly Lincoln did much to form and express the region's nationalism. Lincoln was not a Northeastern intellectual, but he was a Northern man of Southern descent who married into a slaveowning family. More attention to Lincoln might provide further insights into the appeal of Northern nationalism outside the Northeast.

Despite these criticisms, this is a well-written and thought-provoking volume. Grant weaves together a number of well-known stories but with a fresh perspective and fascinating observations. All students of United States nationalism and of nineteenth-century history will profit from this important new book.

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