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Benjamin E. Park. *American Nationalisms: Imagining Union in the Age of Revolutions, 1783-1833.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 262 pp. \$49.99 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-108-42037-2.

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Benjamin E. Park's *American Nationalisms: Imagining Union in the Age of Revolutions, 1783-1833* is an introductory analysis of different local and regional ideas of nationalism during the first few decades of the American republic. The monograph focuses on highlighting how local concerns, often at a state level, were vital in the construction of competing American ideas of nationalism that led to later justifications for disunion.

The introduction outlines these arguments through exceedingly clear and concise language. Exposing a general disdain for historical theory, *American Nationalisms* begins by summarizing historiographical fields that focus on studies of Western nationalism. Relying on a trusting tone regarding documentary evidence of different early American ideas of nationalism, Park implicitly pushes against postmodern, structural, and postcolonial analyses of nationalist consciousness. Consequently, *American Nationalisms* defines a greater importance for local and regional concerns among leading political figures within the chosen case studies of Pennsylvania, New England, and South Carolina.

The start of the work accordingly exposes both a desire to avoid theories of the postmodern academy and a longing to focus on the historicity of archival documentation applied within the later narratives of *American Nationalisms*. Because of this attention to clarity of writing, a dearth of historical theory, and the importance of honestly representing the archive, Park's analysis often avoids much modern concern with historical revisionism and the prejudicial and misleading languages of southern nationalism. Specifically scarce within Park's mono-

graph are significant readings related to theories of othering within recent and standard works on nationalism and the Black Atlantic, current work on nationalism from scholars of racism and American national development, and the analysis of the public sphere made famous by the Frankfurt school and applied greatly within the works of Jürgen Habermas.[1]

The first part of *American Nationalisms* explores how the foundations of disunion were present within original nationalist thoughts that arose after the ratification of the Constitution. The first chapter focuses on the heterogeneous population of Pennsylvania to discuss how local concerns with religious freedom from scholars like Benjamin Rush outweighed the nationalist, imposing, and exceptionalist rhetoric of New Englanders like Noah Webster. Although this analysis clearly and concisely examines the words and arguments of these founders, Park's treatment frequently begs for more engagement with scholarship on ideas of fellow feeling, the Scottish Enlightenment, and sentimentalism now common within studies of nationalism during the late nineteenth century.

The second chapter focuses on the importance of religious ideas of sectionalism and nationalism that emerged during the first decades of the American republic. Park analyzes ideas of exceptionalism and religious nationalism in New England through a short reading of the languages of different Thanksgiving sermons. This documentary analysis focuses on how Federalism came to represent religious ideas of national development rather than simply political motivations for New Englanders. Drawing on a goal to expand on the Atlantic patois of

nationalism, Park explores these religious ideals through summarizing the importance of the French Revolution to ideas of nationalism and of resistance to religious anarchy. However, following a general shortage of focus on race in these Atlantic discussions, Park offers only a few references to show the importance of the Haitian Rebellion to questions of nationalism and freedom during the era of the early republic. In some ways, *American Nationalisms* is a victim of the forgotten importance of slave revolts explored within *Silencing of the Past*, which examines the debated historical memory of the Haitian Rebellion in American history.[2]

The second part of Park's work explores how earlier ideas of nationalism in Pennsylvania, New England, and South Carolina turned into debates on disunion that culminated with the Nullification Crisis of the 1830s. The third chapter of *American Nationalisms* focuses on more Atlantic contexts of the debate on nationalism during the early nineteenth century. In the finest section of the work, Park focuses on which European scholars were read by American writers on nationalism. This analysis centers on German nationalist writers like Johann Gottfried Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. These scholars, for many nationalist writers in the United States, explored the importance of ethnic nationalism and popular consent to ideas of national development. For Park, these debates on ethnic nationalism came to a head with many discussions of westward movement, Native America during the War of 1812, and the attempt by New Englanders to protect merchant profits through the Hartford Convention of 1814.

The final two chapters, on the rise of the Nullification Crisis and intensifying patterns of disunion, focus on political leadership within South Carolina. This is again Atlantic history without much analysis of the experiences of Atlantic slavery. Considerable portions of these final two chapters consequently rely on older hero narratives of abolitionism that do not take into account much of the recent historiography of abolitionism that focuses partially on economic determinism and the agency of the slave. Some of this lack of attention to slave or free black beliefs on nationalism is cured by Park's discussion of James Forten and his ideas of autonomy and the mixed motives of the American Colonization Society.

The last chapter focuses on the fracturing of national interests during the Nullification Crisis that motivated a debate on the centralization of federal power against

states' rights rhetoric. Focusing on the language of slaveholders and their defenders, this chapter articulates the southern ideal of nationalism that resisted the rise of federal power during the middle of the nineteenth century. Near the end of this chapter, Park explores Elnathan Elmwood's *A Yankee among the Nullifiers* (1833) within a debate on nullification as a part of the public sphere. Despite the interesting analysis of this innovative work, it seems Park has misattributed the work to the pseudonym Elmwood at the expense of abolitionist and author Asa Greene. A brief epilogue concludes the work with a short note on the importance of race and nation to studies of nationalism. However, like much of *American Nationalisms*, this small section is quite short on the importance of whiteness, the displacement of Native American populations, and the racial aspects of slavery to discussions of nationalism within the emerging Herrenvolk democracy.

American Nationalisms is a clearly written analysis of the thoughts of leading politicians in New England, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina regarding questions of nationalism during the early republic. To portray these questions, Park relies on an older form of historical study that focuses on historicity and a relative disavowal of historical theory. As a result, *American Nationalisms* often trusts the words of the historical actors it summarizes without fully articulating the consequences of those thoughts for the lives of historically subaltern populations. Specifically, there are only limited discussions of different Native American, female, or African American understandings of nationalism applied within *American Nationalisms*. Consequently, Park's monograph can become an important narrative of disunion for the undergraduate classroom, but it rarely engages important revisionist questions that push historiography on nationalism into more productive fields of the graduate seminar.

Notes

[1]. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989); James Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016).

[2]. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995).

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