extended analysis of Sarah Mapps Douglass, an African American abolitionist from Philadelphia who wrote for the Ladies' Department of William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* and whom Kent identifies as a "'republican mother' for African American women" (p. 61). The author misses a vital opportunity to consider domestic maternity—a crucial aspect of sentimental fiction—and specifically, black maternity during enslavement, particularly as it has been figured by African American women writers like Harriet Jacobs, whose 1861 slave narrative deploys conventions of the sentimental novel worthy of further critical consideration, and Harriet E. Wilson, whose autobiographical novel, *Our Nig* (1859), requires a more extended analysis, even if it remained "largely unremarked on in white abolitionist circles" (p. 117).

Kent rightly observes that "the racial uniformity of writers publishing in antislavery periodicals and with antislavery presses in the 1850s, unfortunately, limited the discussions of race and slavery present in the fiction of this decade," and her book highlights the nuanced history of intersectional feminism and social activism (pp. 118–19). As such, *Her Voice Will Be on the Side of Right* reminds readers of the revolutionary possibility of counter-histories that make audible the voices of ex-slaves and render visible not only white allies, but also the people whose existence is threatened by local and national violations of civil and human rights.

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Rethinking America: From Empire to Republic

By John M. Murrin

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When musicians near the end of their career, they produce "Best of" albums. Presidents begin to plan their libraries and statues are erected for military heroes. For historians, the culmination of their achievements is often memorialized in a collection of their finest essays. Such is the case with *Rethinking America: From Empire to Republic*, a series of articles penned by John Murrin throughout his illustrious career. In fact, this collection was "in the works" for quite some time and represents some of Murrin's best writing about the American Revolution and the Early Republic period. Reviewing a set of essays that were written over an extended period of time is not an easy assignment. Indeed, one of the weaknesses of this collection is repetition

of certain ideas from chapter to chapter, rather than a consistent narrative throughout. Another problem is that these essays were clearly written for varying audiences, in some cases other academics and in other cases for the general public. Consequently, some of the essays assume a historiographical background with which the average reader would be unacquainted. Nevertheless, these deficiencies can generally be forgiven as the "nature of the beast."

Certain themes permeate more than one essay and thus bear consideration in this review. Throughout this volume, Murrin argues that the American Revolution was a crisis in "imperial integration" which the British government could not handle. The eighteenth century was a time when the colonies were bound to the mother country with multiple ties: a transatlantic religious awakening, expanding trade, effective royal governors in every colony save New York from 1720 to the 1760s, the shared notion of an Englishman's rights, and even the language itself. Victory over the French in the Seven Years War represented the culmination of this integration. And yet, the failure to learn what worked under the leadership of William Pitt during that war created a series of imperial crises in the 1760s and 1770s that produced what Murrin called the "countercyclical event" of American independence. Murrin argues that "America" was a British idea (that became a nightmare) long before the colonists were forced to make it a reality in the wake of the Revolution.

As a result, in Murrin's words, "American national identity was, in short, an unexpected, impromptu, artificial and therefore extremely fragile creation of the Revolution." (p. 197). In fact, the author makes the point in multiple essays that the colonists really didn't like each other all that much. Loyalty to "America," whatever that was, stirred much less devotion than loyalty to province or Empire. There were no common historic institutions outside of England with which to build a new national identity. In the essay, "A Roof Without Walls," Murrin argued that the shared sacrifices of the Revolutionary War itself and the Constitution provided a stopgap remedy to buy time until a more substantive nationalism and national unity could be forged. In that sense, Murrin claims that the Constitution served the same purpose for the new nation that the Half-Way Covenant had offered to Puritans whose orthodoxy was evaporating.

Some of the more entertaining essays in this volume deal with counterfactual historical scenarios. In the second chapter, Murrin sends George Whitefield to a Spanish prison, casts Jonathan Edwards into a catatonic state, and kills Gilbert Tennent by lightning (which he actually endured albeit not fatally) to ask the question: without the Great Awakening, would there have been a Revolution. His answer is yes, but the caveat is that America post-1800 would have been very different. Murrin argues in two of these essays that the religious revivals of the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries had more to do with precipitating the Civil War than the American Revolution. He poses another such argument in the third chapter: If Canada had remained French after 1763, would the Gallic threat have intensified colonial dependence and worked against Revolution? The British victory in the Seven Years War generated a great deal of colonial good will and the British army remained popular in America until it was sent to Boston in 1768. While some contemporary British leaders speculated that the removal of the French from Canada hastened independence, solid supportive evidence is lacking.

Murrin includes an excellent essay comparing and explaining the failure of the Confederate States of America, more motivated than the thirteen colonies, to win the Civil War while the hesitant revolutionaries succeeded in the eighteenth century. Another essay describes the six competing value systems that jostled for priority in the colonial mind—with a great discussion of the religious beliefs of the framers. Other essays explore the socio-economic landscape of the eighteenth century and the failure of a ruling class to emerge after the Revolution. Murrin ends this volume as he began, with a plea to colonial historians of different schools to recognize each other's value and to engage in productive dialogue, especially regarding the causes of the American Revolution.

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