

THE BRITISH ATLANTIC

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That the Atlantic from the fifteenth century to the present has been more than just an ocean, that it has also been a particular zone of exchange and interchange, circulation and transmission, is not only true, in the sense that these exchanges and interchanges shaped life on four continents over a very long period of time. It is also a conceptual leap forward, allowing historians to make links among places, peoples, and periods that enrich our understanding about how societies were formed. The receptiveness of colonial British Americanists to Atlantic history can be seen in the titles of recent books, the enthusiasm for conferences incorporating an Atlantic theme, the reorientation of research institutes with an early British American focus toward Atlantic studies, and the proliferation of courses on aspects of Atlantic history.¹ But Atlantic history also has limitations. Those limitations, increasingly apparent, have the potential to limit the usefulness of the Atlantic perspective as an exciting historical frame of reference.

Britain as an Atlantic Nation

The British came late into the Atlantic Ocean, or at least late into the Americas. Moreover, a complex and fiercely contested internal colonization within the British archipelago itself, led mostly by England, accompanied expansion across the Atlantic. Technically, we cannot talk about a *British* Atlantic until the eighteenth century. Although a composite monarchy comprising the three kingdoms of England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland had existed since the accession of James VI and I to the three crowns of Britain in 1603, Great Britain came into existence only with the union of Scotland with England and Wales in 1707. If, during the sixteenth century, the English showed considerable interest in overseas expansion, their

attention was mostly confined to subduing and subjugating the nearby island of Ireland and to working out an accommodation with Scotland. The question of England's relations with the other nations of the British archipelago was far from resolved during this long era. Nor was England safe within a Europe from which it was increasingly estranged as a result of its adoption of militant Protestantism. Whereas by 1600 Spain had consolidated itself as a mighty Atlantic empire, England's interest in permanent colonization in the Atlantic outside Ireland was minimal. The English remained content with their lucrative but limited penetration of the Newfoundland fisheries and with privateering voyages designed to prick the Spanish Empire.² Scotland was hardly involved in overseas expansion until the disastrous Darien expedition to Panama in the last decade of the seventeenth century. Its interests lay overwhelmingly in continental Europe.³

Yet England and then Britain soon made up for its late start. By the middle of the eighteenth century its Atlantic possessions, including a relatively subdued Ireland, were second only to Spain's in size and importance. By 1760, the British Atlantic comprised twenty-three colonies with a total population of 1,972,608, of whom 1,326,306 were white and 646,305 were black.⁴ In addition, large numbers of unsubjected and unincorporated Native Americans lived in the American interior, and a proportion of them were allied to the British.⁵ Moreover, as was the case in Britain itself, the economic and social trajectory was decidedly upward. The major characteristic of the British Atlantic in the eighteenth century was growth in almost all areas. Rapid population growth was accompanied by even more rapid economic development in the northern American colonies from North Carolina to New Hampshire. Though white population growth was not so pronounced in the lower southern and island colonies, the maturation of the slave plantation complex designed to produce tropical commodities for a British market made these regions among the most valuable parts of the British Empire. Britain's stirring victories, especially in the Seven Years' War (mainly from 1759 to 1762), the first global war and the first war in which control of territory in the wider Atlantic was crucial, confirmed the success of Britain's intrusions into the Atlantic. As a result of a massive acquisition of territories, especially in Canada and the American interior, in Florida, and in the West Indies, by the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Britain had established itself as the dominant power in the Atlantic.⁶

Indeed, the British Atlantic had by the mid-eighteenth century become so powerful and its advances seemingly so inexorable that farsighted thinkers speculated that before long Britain's American possessions would outstrip Britain itself in wealth, population, and influence. In a

pioneering foray into political economy in 1751, Benjamin Franklin calculated that continental British America's population was doubling every twenty years as a result of the availability of land, widespread marriage, and a healthy environment. Even without further migration, he averred, the population of North America would "in another Century be more than the people of England and [that] the greatest Number of Englishmen" would "be on this Side of the Water." This eager imperialist was ecstatic about the prospects of this development: "What an Accession of Power to the British Empire by Sea as well as Land!"⁷ But it was not to be. British imperial policy turned calamitous in the 1760s and 1770s, leading to the American Revolution and an irreversible rupture between the majority of Britain's white American subjects and the British Empire. Nevertheless, the British Atlantic did not end with the loss of thirteen colonies in 1783. As P. J. Marshall insists, Britain's eastern empire did not begin to outstrip its Atlantic empire in importance until well into the nineteenth century. Britain retained significant holdings in the Americas—the West Indies and Canada—for well over a century after the American Revolution. Indeed, it still has possessions in the Atlantic: the quintessentially Atlantic colony of Bermuda remains formally attached to Britain.⁸ Moreover, the transition from British colonies to independent nation in what became the United States did not end the involvement of that area in the British Atlantic world. On the contrary, the United States continued to be an important trading partner with Britain while forms of settlement, colonization, and imperial aggrandizement worked out during the colonial era continued to characterize United States expansion across the continent throughout the nineteenth century.⁹

Exceptionalism, Euro-Skepticism, and Atlantic History

Britain took particular pride in its Atlantic empire, its success in the Americas being a crucial component of the creation of a British identity. That pride in British achievement in establishing an Atlantic empire continued even after the American Revolution.¹⁰ Those Britons (mostly English) who were ambivalent about Europe continued to advocate participation in an Atlantic world. More so than the French and Germans, Britons were—and still are—reluctant Europeans, viewing the English Channel less as a highway than as a convenient barrier to European contamination. That ambivalence toward Europe, ambivalence shared by North Americans then and now, is reflected in the historiography and may be one reason for the greater popularity of

Atlantic approaches for scholars of the Anglophone world than for those of the Francophone and possibly the Hispanic worlds.

Exceptionalism has a long history in the Anglophone world.¹¹ So, too, has Euro-skepticism. As the Tudor historian David Starkey argues, “the English Channel is much wider than the Atlantic.”¹² Consequently, the Atlantic has often been used by the British as a counterpoint to Europe because it enabled the British, especially the English, to convince themselves that their destiny was not linked with other Europeans. Britons liked to believe that their history should be viewed in an insular and maritime context. Colonial British Americans shared those prejudices, especially after British victories in the Seven Years’ War broadened their horizons and sharpened their ambitions, and as subsequent British actions in the 1760s disabused them of all dreams of fulfilling those ambitions. The future of continental British America was American, not British. Franklin, for example, once a stalwart of British imperialism, by 1767 had begun to think of America’s “manifest destiny” as being in continental America, which, he observed, was “an immense territory, favoured by nature with all the advantages of climate; soil, great navigable rivers, and lakes etc.” He predicted that it “must become a great country, populous and mighty; and” would, “in less time than is generally conceived, be able to break off any shackles that may be imposed on her, and perhaps place them on the imposers.”¹³

To mention Euro-skepticism or American exceptionalism is to admit that a British Atlantic perspective has always had a political dimension. In his account of the origins of interest in the history of the Atlantic world, Bernard Bailyn stresses the interaction between contemporary politics and historiographical developments. He sees its origins in the ambitions of international foreign policy realists after 1945 to protect America and western Europe through an organized Atlantic alliance.¹⁴ When historians such as the nineteenth-century imperial historian John Robert Seeley declared that the history of England in the eighteenth century was “not in England but in America and Asia,” and when Henrietta Marshall’s highly influential 1905 history book for children was titled *Our Island Story*, the political point was plain: England was not part of Europe but was an independent, outward-looking polity perched in the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁵

Reality, of course, was quite different. Britain had been closely tied to Europe since at least the Norman Conquest. Even during the eighteenth century, when the British Atlantic became a significant concern for policy-makers and politicians, Britain’s German possessions in the Holy Roman Empire were more at the heart of Britain’s foreign policy strategy than were

its Atlantic colonies. Not everyone was interested in the Atlantic, and among those not interested were leading Britons, including the Royal Family. Few prominent Britons ever ventured to the Americas or showed much knowledge of what went on there. The leading Whig oligarchical families—the Cavendishes, Russells, Churchills, and Pelhams—were no more involved in the Atlantic world than were the Hanoverians. Moreover, the apparatus of the fiscal–military state, including the Royal Navy and the standing army, was designed primarily to sustain Britain’s international role in Europe and was only tangentially related to developments in the Atlantic.¹⁶

The political imperatives involved in expanding the geographical scope of English history can be seen as much in the turn to “new” British history, as in Atlantic history. Indeed, two of the leading proponents of “new” or “greater” British history—J. G. A. Pocock and David Armitage—have also been primary movers in urging historians to look at how ideas brought the British Atlantic world together through state formation, imperialism, and a vibrant republican tradition.¹⁷ Greater British and Atlantic history developed together at roughly the same time (the early 1970s) and at least partly for the same reasons, including a desire to move away from what was perceived as the increasingly narrow parochialism of studies of small British or American towns or parishes, and a concomitant insistence that British history had been distinct from European history because of the particular importance of imperial expansion in British history and in British self-definition. With greater British history, Britain itself became the central problematic: how to write about the interconnected histories of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland in a way that avoided the entrenched assumptions that “England” could be a synecdoche for “Britain,” and how to focus on British involvement in, and then withdrawal from, empire is a dominant underlying organizing theme. Family resemblances exist between, on the one hand, Pocock’s call for a greater British history incorporating the histories of each part of the British archipelago and the imperial extension of those histories into the Atlantic as well as other places and, on the other hand, Seeley’s late-nineteenth-century argument for a conception of Britain and its empire as a “Greater Britain.” As Armitage notes, the “long, withdrawing roar of empire could be heard behind this plea.” Yet the worthy aims behind the “new” British history, especially the integration of British history and British American history, have not been fulfilled. Although colonial British American historians eagerly adopted Atlantic perspectives, British historians have been wary about approaches that join the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries into a single “early modern era.”¹⁸

A Chronology of European Expansion

Indeed, one major difference between the "new" British history and both British Atlantic and colonial British American history is that the former is more sensitive than the latter to chronological order. The writing of British history continues to be governed by the reigns of kings and queens or by reference to major historical events. It organizes books by time rather than by theme. Few scholars attempt to canvass the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a single period, as is customary in surveys of colonial British America.¹⁹ By contrast, colonial British American historians organize their books either thematically or, more commonly, by region. Even those historians who insist on the importance of chronology tend to focus on very long time spans and on broad patterns of social development in which later settled regions, such as Georgia, are linked with earlier settled regions, such as Virginia, on the basis of shared processes of social articulation over time.²⁰

The reason for this regional fascination is partly the historical continuity of strong regional identities in the United States and partly historians' wanting to see whether other regions accorded to patterns characteristic of New England, the region that before the late 1960s was for most colonial British American historians as much a synecdoche for early America as was England for Britain among English historians. Of course, this regional fixation was also a response to the obvious fact that the several reasonably coherent regions that developed in British America were conspicuously different from one another in how they were founded, how they developed socioeconomically, and how subject they were to metropolitan efforts to make them conform to a common standard. Consequently, the differences between colonial British American places seem to be more compelling than the similarities. British Americans could imagine their colonies as they pleased and had considerable latitude to shape societies to fit that imagination. Diversity in socioeconomic structures, however, was accompanied by shared political and ideological assumptions, the most important of which was settler insistence that, as Britons, colonial settlers enjoyed the same rights and privileges as British subjects resident in Britain. This insistence on the integrity of settler rights, together with settler defenses of a libertarian political culture, powerfully informed colonial resistance to metropolitan authority in the 1760s and 1770s, and such concerns remained important for white settlers in the British Caribbean and the white settler colonies of Canada, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand long after the creation of an independent United States.²¹

The key event that allowed the white residents of the British Atlantic to articulate the nature of the establishments they had settled was the English Civil War. The tumults of the mid-seventeenth century in the British archipelago were analogous in their effects on colonial politics in British America to the collapse of central authority in Iberia after the French invasion in 1808. In both cases the colonies were left to fend for themselves as the imperial center imploded. As Carla Pestana claims, the importance of the English Civil War to early American history is that "no American colony of any other European state experienced a comparable breakdown at the imperial center until the French revolution." A major difference between events in British America and those in French and Spanish America, however, was that in British America the breakdown of authority came early in the settlement process, even before that authority had been fully established. It also gave emerging settler leaders enhanced confidence in their ability to manage their own affairs, a confidence seemingly justified by their consolidation of local power in the 1640s and 1650s at the expense of proprietors and the Crown. Although Charles II endeavored to assert his authority over the colonies after regaining his crown, British American colonies never lost the extensive autonomy they had gained during the English Civil War. Britain's Atlantic possessions after 1660 would be commercial and diverse, wedded to slave labor on the model developed in Barbados in the 1640s, and committed to the rights of local landowners.²²

Pestana's concentration on the whole of the English Atlantic over a brief period of tumultuous change demonstrates the advantages that a chronological orientation can bring to British Atlantic history, and recent scholarship has clarified the chronological divisions in British Atlantic history. The first distinct period involved the imagining and then the realizing of late-sixteenth-century colonizing projects urged on the English Crown and on English merchants by propagandists such as Richard Hakluyt. That period lasted from roughly 1580 to the mid-1620s, covering Raleigh's early Roanoke Island ventures in the 1580s, the settlement of Virginia and Bermuda in 1607 and 1609, and the start of settlement in the West Indies and New England in the 1620s. In this early phase, English colonial enterprise in America emerged from a heady combination of national ambition, Protestant mission, economic pragmatism, and thirst for individual and collective greatness that, fermenting through the late Elizabethan period, coalesced during the reign of James VI and I. Shaped by competition in Europe with Spain, a desire to counter the Catholicization of the Americas with aggressive Protestantism, and a utopian urge to end English poverty through the exploitation of Atlantic resources, English entry into the Americas was,

in one sense, a last act of the Renaissance. Yet, it failed to realize any of its initial expectations. Up to the mid-1620s, English colonies in America were straggling, unhappy places that met none of the English objectives for Atlantic expansion. The major achievement was negative: a prolonged assault on the vibrant yet vulnerable indigenes through the occupation of Native American lands and the deterioration of English-Indian relations, as initially positive views of the indigenes degenerated into violent conflict and racial denigration within a decade of permanent settlement.²³

Failure was followed by success in a second stage marked by a great surge of English expansion across the Atlantic from the mid-1620s to the mid-1680s. By 1682, with the founding of Pennsylvania, England had established flourishing colonies along the Atlantic coast from New England to South Carolina and had acquired New York from the Dutch. In addition, the English had established settlements in Barbados and the Leeward Islands in the eastern Caribbean, and in 1655 had conquered Jamaica from the Spanish. Extraordinary numbers of Englishmen and a few Englishwomen left for these colonies and for Ireland—nearly 300,000 before 1660. Within a generation of settlement, English settlers in most colonies had established viable political and social structures, had developed economies that sustained themselves and pointed to future wealth, and had, largely independent from English control, started to articulate visions of what they wanted their embryonic societies to become. Most important, starting with Barbados and then in the Chesapeake and the lower South, Englishmen introduced African chattel slavery and began to transform their societies into slave societies producing tropical goods for European markets. These regions became sharply differentiated in socioeconomic and political character from northern farm colonies, where slaveholding was small-scale. These successes came at a cost, borne especially by indigenous peoples, many of whom died and some of whom were enslaved, and by Africans. Moreover, conflict was endemic between embryonic elites with few pretensions to civility and little inherited authority, and poorer whites, resentful that they were being excluded from political power. Thus, the successes of English colonization in the seventeenth century seemed to observers to be less than impressive, given the low standard of living enjoyed by most colonists and the combustible state of social and political life.

The British Atlantic became consolidated, in the sense of developing real and meaningful links among Europe, British America, and Africa, only in a third stage covering the first half of the eighteenth century. Until the late seventeenth century we cannot talk of an integrated British Atlantic community. Links with Britain were patchy, the African slave trade was

flourishing but not yet fully developed, and connections among separate British American colonies were quite limited. But in the early eighteenth century, the integration of the British Atlantic world became sufficient to constitute a genuine Atlantic community. The emergence of this community was partly due to developments in Britain, especially in finance (the growth of the stock market and the creation of a national banking system) and commerce (massive growth around 1700 in the number of merchants trading with the Americas). Partial limitations on the Royal African Company's monopoly in 1698 and its abolition in 1712 were crucial in opening up the slave trade and making it more dynamic, and in expanding the numbers of Britons connected to Atlantic commerce. The frequent wars in which Britain engaged with Spain and France from the late 1690s through the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763 also facilitated rapid Atlantic integration. King Philip's War in 1675–1676 was the last war in the Americas that did not involve serious conflict with European powers or their American colonies. Even in settler conflicts with Native Americans, such as the Yamasee War in the Carolinas in 1715, war took place within a context in which American and European power politics were inextricably linked. The culmination was the Seven Years' War, in which Britain obtained European mastery through dominance in the North American interior.²⁴

Throughout most of this period, the imperial touch was light. Britain largely left the colonies alone, abandoning in practice but not in theory, as Bernard Bailyn has pointed out, late Stuart attempts to bring the colonies under firmer centralized control. Despite considerable and growing ethnic and religious diversity, especially in the Middle Colonies of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and a degree of factional politics, politics and social life were remarkably stable. Powerful local creole elites established and dominated strong representative institutions in which they proclaimed their adherence to the liberties they believed were their inheritance and that had been confirmed in Britain by the constitutional settlement of the Glorious Revolution. Simultaneously and fervently, they also expressed their allegiance to the Hanoverian monarchy. Divisions existed in North American and West Indian societies between rich and poor, between evangelicals of several denominations inspired by revivalist preaching in the Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s and conventional Anglicans, between tidewater and backcountry, among different ethnic groups, and above all between blacks and whites. But what impresses most about this period of remarkable and sustained growth in all areas is the degree to which these diverse societies developed along similar lines and converged culturally. One means by which this convergence was achieved was through the expansion of the

world of goods and the development of a commercial culture based on the extensive importation of consumer goods from Britain that gave a stylistic uniformity to British American culture. Just as important was the rise to authority in every colony of creole elites who by midcentury not only dominated politics but also functioned as the arbiters of social style. Anxious to show their credentials as English gentlemen, these colonial elites shared devotion to gentility, improvement, and Anglicization that not only linked them culturally to elites in the British homeland but also made them culturally, socially, and politically similar to one another.²⁵

The dark undercurrent to British American stability and prosperity was slavery. For British American slaves, most of whom were unwilling migrants from West Africa, the first half of the eighteenth century was the period of their greatest degradation. The wealth of plantation British America and the gentility that resulted from planters' rising wealth were derived from the increasingly efficient and brutal exploitation of slave labor. Whites and blacks may have been intimately connected in relationships that were both close and negotiated, but those negotiations were unbalanced, allowing a savage master to exploit and traumatize, culturally and physically, vulnerable, isolated, and malnourished Africans. Planters achieved great success in their creation of a vicious plantation regime—slave revolts were few and ruthlessly quashed. But the threat of slave violence was a constant undertone in eighteenth-century British American life, and the climate of fear that governed relations between masters and slaves permeated all social interactions. White reliance on slavery rendered colonial claims of improvement and gentility extremely problematic.²⁶

The most difficult period to treat within the rubric of British Atlantic history is the fourth: the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These were years of epochal change and crisis that heralded both the completion of an integrated British Atlantic world and its partial destruction.²⁷ On the one hand, the imperial mistakes that led to the American Revolution, the underlying ideological causes of that conflict, and the reverberations of the conflict and its resolution indicate the extent to which Britain and its colonies were enmeshed in a common Atlantic world with a common political vocabulary. To take just one example of the Atlantic dimensions of the American Revolution: Christopher Brown argues that the radical commitment to egalitarianism espoused by the founders of the American republic (many of whom, of course, were slaveholders themselves) led to a re-envisioning of empire as based upon subjecthood without slavery rather than upon settler rights with slavery, a re-envisioning that informed the growing clamor during the 1780s for the abolition of the slave trade.²⁸

On the other hand, the formation of an independent United States left the British Atlantic truncated and reduced in power. The remaining communities of white Britons in the British Atlantic were small, isolated minorities, especially in the West Indies. They had diminishing influence within an empire where the vast majority of subjects were now brown or black. Whether the abolition of the slave trade and slavery would have occurred as soon as it did in the British Empire had the slaveholding colonies of North America remained attached to Britain is doubtful. Of course, independence did not end United States involvement with the Atlantic, as evidenced by continuing trade between Britain and its former colonies and by the origins of the War of 1812. But the resolution of that war and United States' acquisition of vast new territories with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 (itself a consequence of French defeat in the Atlantic, in Haiti) allowed the United States to turn inward, toward continental expansion. Moreover, the advent of the industrial revolution in Britain and in the northeastern United States, the transition from a world of empires to a world of nation-states, and, within the United States, the increasing urgency of internal disputes between southern and northern states all helped to diminish the importance of Atlantic concerns in the United States in the nineteenth century.²⁹

The Advantages of British Atlantic History

If this chronology largely predates the rise of Atlantic history after 1970, an Atlantic perspective has produced some other significant advances. Perhaps the single most important advance attributable to the Atlantic perspective has been its encouragement of the incorporation of Africans and Native Americans into the making of colonial British America. The British Atlantic world was mostly a black Atlantic world. British Atlantic historians have demonstrated that Africans comprised the large majority of migrants to British America—2.3 million Africans came between 1600 and 1800, compared to 1 million Europeans.³⁰ What they did when they came to British America was even more important than their numbers. Africans and people of African descent were the principal workers in British America. Their labor produced the goods—tobacco, rice, cotton, and, above all, sugar—that made British America prosperous and valuable to Britain. As Barbara Solow comments, "What moved in the Atlantic was predominantly slaves, the output of slaves, the inputs of slave societies, and the goods and services produced with the earnings on slave products."³¹ Africans were also important culturally and socially. As slaves, they did not have the power

to articulate the values and imperatives of colonial society in the way that culturally dominant British elites were able to do, but their influence on colonial sociocultural development was powerful nonetheless. In the Caribbean, particularly, their presence was so strong that African values permeated every aspect of society.

Recognition of the importance of Africans within British American history has encouraged British American historians to take Africa seriously as a region. What has become clear is the extent to which Africa was not a place that was acted upon by Europeans as much as a part of the world where European control was weak. Africans, not Europeans, controlled the tempo of the slave trade, and Africans, not Europeans, determined patterns of African-European interaction in West Africa.³² Yet if Africa can no longer be discounted as an originary region of American culture, its importance is still understated. Much of what we know about Africa in the Americas has been provided by historians of Africa who extrapolate from Africa to the Americas, rather than by historians of British America with a thorough understanding of African cultures. Even the best studies of slavery, for example, by Philip Morgan and Ira Berlin, talk little about the African origins of American slaves. Africa remains to be fully incorporated into British Atlantic history.³³

Native Americans are also not well integrated into Atlantic history, even though the work done on Native American history has increased exponentially in recent decades. The problem is related to chronology. In the seventeenth century, Native Americans were vital to Atlantic history, because they were the people whom Europeans first encountered when they crossed the Atlantic. Their differences from and similarities to Europeans forced Europeans to re-evaluate who they were, what type of society they came from, and what kind of world they wanted to create in the Americas. Britons' encounters with Native Americans in Virginia and New England helped shape attitudes to race and the environment that influenced all areas of early settlement.³⁴ Yet by the end of the seventeenth century, Native Americans in the colonies north of Virginia had been largely removed from the Atlantic coastline, to areas beyond the bounds of British settlement and into areas long occupied by other Native Americans. Historians have paid much attention to how Europeans and Indians interacted on what Richard White has called the Middle Ground, an arena of conflict marked by neither complete assimilation nor outright antagonism, but by an uneasy mixture of both. Little attempt, however, has been made to link what was happening in the interior to what was happening in the Atlantic. That linkage needs to be investigated more thoroughly, because mobility, fluidity, and instability

marked the interior of North America as much as these features marked the British Atlantic.³⁵

A second advantage of an Atlantic perspective has been a shift in geographical focus away from New England, especially, and from the mainland British colonies, generally. Two areas in particular have benefited from this shift toward seeing the Atlantic as an integrated region. We now pay much more attention than formerly to the sea and to the people who made their livings upon the sea. Pirates, sailors, and, above all, merchants play a prominent part in the British Atlantic world. As Alison Games argues, this world "depended not on the coherent vision imposed by a monarch or Board of Trade but instead on the experiences of men who lived around the globe in a series of overseas experiments."³⁶ The emphasis is on networks created not in the metropolis but in the peripheries, especially in the interstices between centers and peripheries. Particular attention is paid to the people who moved between different places in the Atlantic world, their peripatetic careers helping to cement linkages between people in a variety of loosely connected areas in ways that made the Atlantic world surprisingly integrated.³⁷ An excellent example of how networks operated in practice is David Hancock's study of a group of powerful and interconnected London merchants, whom he describes as "marginal, opportunistic, global, improving, and integrative." These merchants dwelt in both the metropolis and the provinces of Britain and America in the middle decades of the eighteenth century. In their search for wealth, they devised strategies that linked different parts of the Atlantic world, helping to "integrate the empire as they integrated their own business operations."³⁸ Another example of linkages, from a period somewhat later than is usually associated with Atlantic history, is Catherine Hall's illuminating study of the contested notions of race, class, and gender that connected Jamaica and Birmingham in the first half of the nineteenth century.³⁹

As Hall's work suggests, Atlantic history has also been instrumental in restoring the British West Indies to its rightful position as the most dynamic part of British America. In this respect, Atlantic history is a very welcome development, rescuing colonial British history from anachronistic assumptions that the regions of North America that became culturally and economically important as a result of the formation of the United States were the most vital parts of British America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The West Indies may have been charnel grounds, eating up whites and blacks in such numbers that enormous immigration led to relatively small populations, but the wealth they produced, mostly from sugar, was enormous, making the white residents of these islands not only the wealthiest

people in the empire but influential beyond their numbers in imperial calculations. The West Indies were so valuable to Britain that Britain hastened the loss of her North American colonies by withdrawing the navy from Yorktown in order to prevent the French from conquering Jamaica.⁴⁰ They were also the forging ground for that characteristic Atlantic institution, slavery, with all British slaveholding regions following in the footsteps of mid-seventeenth-century Barbados.⁴¹

By acknowledging the central role of the West Indian colonies in the British Atlantic and by emphasizing that the wealthiest, most dynamic, and most diplomatically important areas of British America were the slaveholding areas, scholarship is returning to the perspective that early modern Britons themselves held about the relative importance of the regions of British America. The Duke of Newcastle, for example, a leading British politician of the mid-eighteenth century, thought of West Indians when he employed the term "American." He and other British leaders considered the West Indies the most valuable part of the empire, because it produced wealth and attracted significant amounts of British mercantile and maritime capital. They derided as unimportant and troublesome the martial peoples of New England. To understand how the British got American opinion about imperial actions so wrong following 1763 is difficult without appreciating that Britons, continental Americans, and West Indians all thought of New England as the most distinctive, least integrated, and most troublesome region of British America. Lord North's fatal mistake was in supposing that this near universal opinion of the distinctiveness and isolation of New England would allow Britain to punish the region without outraging colonial opinion elsewhere.⁴²

A third advantage of doing British Atlantic history is that it redresses American and British exceptionalism. To study the British Atlantic without recognizing that British actions were shaped and constrained by the actions of other imperial polities, notably the Spanish and French empires, is no longer intellectually sustainable. Comparing the British Atlantic to the Spanish and French Atlantics is important in two ways. First, comparisons show that British settlement in the Americas would not have occurred in the way that it did without the examples of other imperial polities. As John Elliott insists, contemporary comparisons between the Spanish and British empires were "not between two self-contained cultural worlds, but between cultural worlds that were well aware of each other's presence."⁴³ The first settlers at Jamestown in 1607 had the Spanish example before them when envisioning their new dominions. They imagined that they would emulate the Spanish in finding gold and silver and in turning the Indians among whom they settled

into tributaries on the Spanish model, who would work to produce food and export items for them in return for European goods.⁴⁴ As settlement proceeded, comparisons continued to be made, mostly to the disadvantage of Spain and its empire. From the late sixteenth century, the "Black Legend" of Spanish cruelty and incivility was always a powerful force justifying British colonization, and it became the cornerstone of British discourse about British moral superiority as, in the eighteenth century, Spanish power declined. Spain became emblematic of backwardness, cruelty, and superstition. J. Hector St John de Crèvecoeur summed up British condescension in his comparison of the "gaudy" merchants of Lima, stuck in religious error and moral torpor, with the independent citizens of North America, whose upright behavior, tolerance of religious difference, and intensive pursuit of commerce and learning was an example that Spanish Americans needed to emulate. The boot was now on the other foot: the Spanish had to copy the British who had once copied them.⁴⁵

The example of the French in America, however, was less easy for the British to dismiss. By the first third of the eighteenth century, France seemed on the verge of displacing the British as the fastest-growing and most successful empire in the Americas. For half a century France and Britain competed for domination of both North America and the Caribbean, with the interior region of the Ohio country becoming a principal arena of contention in the mid-eighteenth century. For most of that period the French looked as if they were going to outstrip the British in power and influence. In the Ohio country and in the lower Mississippi Valley, the French established more cordial relations with Native Americans than the British, in part because there were fewer French settlers to intrude on indigenous life. In the Caribbean, Saint Domingue was the wonder of the age, an economic powerhouse producing nearly 40 percent of overseas exports to France by the 1770s and surpassing even Jamaica as the leading sugar producer in the Greater Antilles.⁴⁶ Moreover, the British could not deride France as a backward nation in the way that they increasingly did Spain, even if French absolutism and French Catholicism offended them. One of the advantages of seeing Britain and British America in an Atlantic context is that it makes the challenge of France to British power in the Atlantic apparent and demonstrates as well the growing importance of events in the peripheries of the Americas to European affairs. It also suggests the importance of the Seven Years' War—the first global war with an important theater in North America—in the history of both Britain and America. With the French threat largely removed, British North Americans were able to define themselves differently from how metropolitans saw them.⁴⁷

Placing British America in an Atlantic context produces yet a fourth advantage by encouraging historians to see what was distinctive about it. The distinctive features of early British American social development are most evident when counterposed to developments in Spanish America. Whereas Spanish American colonies tended to be amazingly polyglot societies that were internally heterogeneous but very similar in social and political organization at the macro level, and were subject to steadier efforts of control from a more authoritarian and intrusive center, British American colonies were internally homogenous, with powerful mechanisms that excluded outsiders from social and political membership except, in the cases of African-Americans and incorporated Native Americans, as legal outsiders without a political presence. Conversely, their internal homogeneity made them, by Spanish American standards, heterogeneous as polities. That heterogeneity was enhanced by the relatively ineffectual interference that the British government exerted over their social and political direction. British colonies had more autonomy and more latitude to make their own way in the world, a way usually determined by the twin factors of the nature of their individual origins and their experience in fashioning workable societies.⁴⁸

A fifth advantage of Atlantic history is that it has encouraged historians of colonial British America to study the connections and collisions of different cultural worlds and the identities formed as a result of them. The most obvious collisions were among Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans, making race and hybridity a particular focus in Atlantic history. But Atlantic historians have also been interested in how different groups of Europeans adjusted to new environments and new peoples in British America. Migration has been a particular interest among those historians specifically concerned to trace the formation of American identities, constructed out of the mix between inheritance and experience.⁴⁹ Those identities were also linked to both production and consumption; and commerce, especially in staples and slaves, the most dynamic areas of Atlantic commerce, has been much studied.

Merchants were the group who most symbolized British transatlantic connections, their trading relationships knitting together people on three continents⁵⁰ as they moved goods across the Atlantic. But the Atlantic was also a venue for the movement of ideas, including the republican ideology that linked British Americans with radical opposition in Britain and paved the way for the ideological split between the mother country and its American colonies in the 1760s and 1770s.⁵¹ More recently, scholars have turned their attention to how common ideas of science and natural history also connected Americans with Europeans in a shared Atlantic culture of

enlightened cosmopolitanism. They have shown how Europeans used their understanding of American knowledge systems to advance Enlightenment thought in Europe, while Americans advanced claims to equality with Europeans through their investigations into American natural phenomena.⁵²

But the Atlantic world was also knit together in less pleasant ways. The British Atlantic world was a remarkably underinstitutionalized world full of unassimilated populations who had little to unite them except mutual fear and cultural misunderstanding. The threat and application of force and the acceptance of a level of violence in relations with the enslaved and with indigenous peoples marked the peripheries of empire as savage and outside the normal experience of Europeans, themselves not unused to brutality. The colonial world was one riven by wars.⁵³ In the seventeenth century, these wars were especially brutal, both in Ireland and Scotland during the Civil War and in British America throughout the seventeenth century, from the Indian massacre in the early 1620s in Virginia to the savagery of Bacon's Rebellion and King Philip's War in the mid-1670s. Unlike wars in continental Europe, the objectives of these Atlantic conflicts with the indigenes were not just to defeat an enemy but also to destroy by any means, including torture and genocide, the civilizations of people characterized as "others." The violence left great scars, not only on the victims but also on the perpetrators. The ferocity of King Philip's War, which laid waste the New England countryside, confirmed for many observers not only that New England was declining from its high-minded ideals but also that America had turned even Europeans savage.⁵⁴ In the eighteenth century, outright savagery in warfare receded to the frontier, which remained as lawless and barbaric as in the seventeenth century. Violence, however, remained a constant part of British Atlantic life, even in settled and improved areas, because of the expansion of slavery, which became notably more vicious with the expansion of the plantation system in southern North America and the West Indies.⁵⁵

The Limits of British Atlantic History

Without question, an Atlantic perspective has reinvigorated colonial British American history, a field that was flourishing but was perhaps in danger of becoming too specialized and fragmented. It is a perspective, moreover, that in its emphasis on global connections and multicultural diversity speaks to contemporary concerns in the English-speaking world, especially in a United States undergoing significant Hispanicization. Yet it also has some

distinct limitations. British Atlantic historians display strong assimilationist and homogenizing tendencies in their relentless search for connections to link disparate parts of the Atlantic world. An important weakness is blindness to the fact that networks, transatlantic connections, cosmopolitan attitudes, and flux and mobility can be as destructive as they are creative. If Atlantic networks allowed previously unconnected activities and lives to be brought together, they also permitted previously connected ones to be wrenched apart, as in the Atlantic slave trade. Notably, historians of African-American migration focus less on how the Atlantic experience transformed Africans than on how aspects of African culture managed to survive. One way of avoiding the conclusion that the Atlantic experiences destroyed their sense of selfhood and community is to insist on continuity between specific African cultural practices from geographically defined African regions and African-American cultural development in the New World.⁵⁶

The excitement generated among British American colonial historians about the merits of Atlantic history, moreover, has not been shared by historians of either Britain or the United States. Atlantic historians pride themselves on escaping the straitjacket of nation-state history; United States histories remain implanted within a nation-state framework riven by the old assumptions that (1) United States history is exceptional and (2) that the audience for United States history consists mostly of Americans uninterested in how the United States interacts with the rest of the world. The number of studies using an Atlantic focus diminishes quickly after 1789 and comprises but a small proportion of the avalanche of scholarship produced by United States historians of the national era. Even Revolutionary and early republic scholars tend, in the main, to link their work with later periods, and are concerned mostly with illuminating themes in American national development rather than with the key findings on the colonial period. Colonial scholars are far more anxious than Revolutionary historians to avoid the teleology implicit in studying only those colonies that would later become part of the United States.⁵⁷

The possibility of escaping nation-state boundaries is exciting for historians but is fraught with problems, in part because other groups of historians continue to find comfort in the nation-state as an organizing device. Colonial history, with its predilection for regional organization and expansive interest in the larger British imperial world, has always resisted integration into the history of the United States. The movement to Atlantic history, where discontinuities are welcomed, multiplicities of places and perspectives are normative, and chronology does not always revolve around traditionally important political events, has only highlighted this lack of

integration.⁵⁸ No doubt, as Michael Zuckerman insists, floating free of the nation-state has costs, most notably in disconnecting the colonial history of British North America from its traditional role as a source for understanding the character of the United States.⁵⁹ To the extent that Atlantic historians have been reluctant to participate in this particular project, they have tended to distance themselves from the concerns of British and United States historians: chronological markers, national identities, and national institutions and development. One way of lessening this distance is to recognize that the colonial process did not end in North America with the creation of the United States.⁶⁰

Whether an Atlantic history framework is the best device for examining the continuities between either colonial and metropolitan spheres in the early modern British world or colonial and national eras in North America is unclear. The period since the late 1980s has witnessed a growing interest in the study of the phenomenon of empire, a subject that almost an entire generation had abandoned as a reminder of a shameful past. If this resurgence of imperial studies, referred to by some scholars as the imperial turn, has to date focused more on nineteenth- and twentieth-century empires, it also suggests that an imperial perspective might in many respects be preferable to an Atlantic perspective in the illumination of the early modern British overseas world.⁶¹ We do not have to discount the interconnections that existed among early modern American empires to appreciate the fact that competing national empires dominated the early modern Atlantic world, with the significant exceptions of West Africa and vast sections of the interiors of the two Americas. Organized into national entities, these empires represented dramatic expansions, if also significant reformulations, of emerging national European cultures that differed from one another in language, law, institutions, traditions, economic orientation, and religion. An imperial framework proceeds from recognition of the realities of power relations within the empire, realities that have been obscured by British Atlantic historians' emphasis on fluidity, connections, and transnational exchange.⁶²

Yet Atlantic historians, perhaps especially in the United States, a nation traditionally ambivalent about the virtues of empire, seem to be resistant to making the imperial turn, perhaps fearing that such a project would subordinate the interests of the peripheries to those of the center, and would overstate the extent to which the center was able to dictate how peripheries evolved.⁶³ Ironically, however, some British Atlantic historians, while avowedly anti-imperialist in orientation and methodology, have decidedly imperialist ambitions, arguing that the best way to see British Atlantic distinctiveness is

within a global context.⁶⁴ Making Atlantic history a subsection of world history, however, is likely to blur rather than weaken anti-imperialist assumptions. For one thing, it might accentuate two of the most glaring weaknesses in Atlantic history: its inattention to the interior life of individuals, especially ordinary individuals, whose connections to the larger themes of the Atlantic world were tenuous; and its fixation on extraordinary individuals, whose very extraordinariness raises questions about typicality. Two excellent recent books illustrate this last weakness. Randy Sparks relates the tale of highborn African slave traders hijacked into the Atlantic slave trade, who, through their considerable linguistic and interpersonal skills and their advantage of being "princes," managed to return to being slave traders in Calabar. Jon Sensbach tells us about the remarkable life of Rebecca Proppen, a converted Christian who proselytized in both the Caribbean and Africa. But such lives were wildly atypical for Africans and African-Americans condemned to a short and brutish life on sugar, rice, or tobacco plantations, and thus hide the normative experiences of most slaves. Clearly, we need to pay attention to people at both ends of the continuum.⁶⁵

The real test for history done in a British Atlantic way is what happens next. Clearly, the interest in Atlantic history by early modern British American historians is not a fad. The British Atlantic is not a figment of the historical imagination. Its existence is undeniable, and the transmission of people, ideas, and goods across the Atlantic and among different regions led to important and lasting connections that shaped early American, British, and West African life. We need to study those connections and try to make sense of what the constant motion of the Atlantic world meant for power relations and quotidian existence. But the limitations of such an approach are real, and what we have gained from an Atlantic perspective is almost matched by what we have lost by abandoning other ways of doing history. Indeed, if we compare what has been achieved by Atlantic historians to the advances in our understanding of New England, the Chesapeake, and English society in the heyday of the "new" social history of the 1970s, Atlantic history scarcely comes out as superior. Moreover, the natural tendency of an approach in history is to expand until it reaches unworkable limits. With calls to expand the Atlantic world into Asia, the Pacific, and the world generally, and with increasing pressure for British Atlantic historians to master the languages and histories of other European nations and of West Africa, instead of concentrating on linking their work with the history of the United States and Britain, and with work done in disciplines other than history, we may be reaching a point at which the limitations of this rapidly expanding subject are beginning to become apparent.

NOTES

1. For a recent discussion, see "Forum: Beyond Atlantic History," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., LXIII (2006): 675–742.

2. Peter E. Pope, *Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the British Empire 1480–1650* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978).

3. For the relationship between British Atlantic history and "new" British history, see David Armitage, "Greater Britain: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?," *American Historical Review* 104 (1999): 427–445, and *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). For the European context, see Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). For Ireland, see Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British 1580–1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). For Scotland, see T. M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire 1600–1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2003).

4. Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 179.

5. See, inter alia, Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); and Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

6. Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000); Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

7. Benjamin Franklin, "Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind," in Leonard W. Labaree et al., eds., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), vol. 4, pp. 233–234.

8. P. J. Marshall, "Britain Without Empire—A Second Empire?," in Marshall's *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 579. For Bermuda in the Atlantic world, see Michael Jarvis, *Bermuda and Bermudians in the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680–1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

9. Jack P. Greene, "Colonial and National History: Reflections on a Continuing Problem," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., LXIV (2007): 235–250.

10. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (London: Verso, 1992); Eliga Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

11. Joyce E. Chaplin, "Expansion and Exceptionalism in Early American History," *Journal of American History* 89 (2003): 1431–1455; Jack P. Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America: Exceptionalism and Identity from 1492 to 1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

12. David Starkey, "Little Englanders Have History on Their Side," *Sunday Times*, October 17, 2004.

13. Cited in G. S. Stourzh, *Benjamin Franklin and American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 98.

14. Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 9.

15. J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures* (London: Macmillan, 1894), p. 9; H. E. Marshall, *Our Island Story: a child's history of England* (London: T.C. and E.C. Jack 1905).

16. For a vigorous exposition, see Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire, 1714–1783* (London: Allen Lane, 2007). See also Jeremy Black, *America or Europe? British Foreign Policy, 1739–1763* (London: UCL Press, 1997); and Marie Peters, "The Myth of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, Great Imperialist: I. Pitt and Imperial Expansion, 1738–1763," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 21 (2003): 31–74.

17. David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006); J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

18. Armitage, "Greater Britain," pp. 434–446. See also J. G. A. Pocock, *The Discovery of Islands: Essays in British History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 3–46. An extremely influential survey of colonial British America that provided a vital link between the "new" social history of the 1970s and British Atlantic history expressly insists in its subtitle that all of colonial British American history belongs to the early modern period. Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds., *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

19. A significant exception is J. C. D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660–1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), in which Clark sees England in terms of ancien régime during a very long eighteenth century.

20. See, for example, Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness*; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998); and D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America*, vol 1: *Atlantic America, 1492–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

21. David Lambert, *White Creole Culture: Politics and Identity During the Age of Abolition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Alan Lester, "British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire," *History Workshop Journal* 54 (2002): 27–50. For indigenous opposition to settler assumptions, see Daiva Stasiulis and

Nira Yuval-Davis, eds., *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class* (London: Sage, 1995).

22. Carla Gardner Pestana, *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution 1640–1661* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 9, 226; Russell R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2006).

23. For representative works, see Karen Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007); Peter Mancall, *Hakluyt's Promise: An Elizabethan's Obsession for an English America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); James Horn, *A Land as God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Jorge Cañizares Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550–1700* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

24. William A. Pettigrew, "Free to Enslave: Politics and the Escalation of Britain's Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1688–1714," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., LXIV (2007): 3–38; Wayne E. Lee, "Early American Warfare: A New Reconnaissance," *Historical Journal* 44 (2001): 269–289; Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675–1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*; and Anderson, *Crucible of War*.

25. Bernard Bailyn, *The Origin of American Politics* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968); Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America 1688–1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Alan Tully, *Forming American Politics: Ideals, Interests and Institutions in Colonial New York and Pennsylvania* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); Cary Carson et al., eds., *Of Consuming Interest: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994); Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society and Politics in Colonial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 161–186; and Michael Rozbicki, *The Complete Colonial Gentleman: Cultural Legitimacy in Plantation America* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998).

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27. For global crisis, see C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 86–120.

28. Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), pp. 209–258, 333–390.
29. Armitage, *Declaration of Independence*; D. W. Meinig, *Continental America: 1800–1867*, vol. 2: *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Chaplin, “Expansion and Exceptionalism,” pp. 1440–1441; and Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).
30. Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); James Horn and Philip D. Morgan, “Settlers and Slaves: European and African Migrations to Early Modern British America,” in Carole Shammas and Elizabeth Mancke, eds., *The Creation of the British Atlantic World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 32–74.
31. Barbara L. Solow, ed., *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 1.
32. David Richardson, “Shipboard Revolts, African Authority, and the Atlantic Slave Trade,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., LVIII (2001): 69–70.
33. Berlin, *Many Thousands Came*; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).
34. See, inter alia, Joyce E. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500–1676* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).
35. See the inattention to Atlantic history in “Forum: The Middle Ground Revisited,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., LXIII (2006): 1–96.
36. Games, “Beyond the Atlantic,” p. 692.
37. David Lambert and Alan Lester, eds., *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 13.
38. David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735–1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 3, 14.
39. Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003).
40. Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *The Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), pp. 231–233. For the wealth of the British West Indies, see Richard B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623–1775* (Bridgetown, Barbados: University of the West Indies Press, 1974).
41. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*.
42. Julie Flavell, “British Perceptions of New England and the Decision for a Coercive Colonial Policy, 1774–1775,” in Flavell and Stephen Conway, eds., *Britain and America Go to War: The Impact of War and Warfare in Anglo-America, 1754–1815* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2004), pp. 95–115.

43. J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492–1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. xvii.

44. Horn, *A Land as God Made It*.

45. Crèvecoeur, "Sketch of a Contrast Between the Spanish and the English Colonies," in Dennis D. Moore, ed., *More Letters from the American Farmer* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995); Charles Gibson, *The Black Legend: Anti-Spanish Attitudes in the Old World and the New* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), pp. 82–89.

46. Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 20–21.

47. Colley, *Britons*; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, pp. 641–746.

48. Elliott, *Atlantic Empires*, pp. 409–411.

49. Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986); Alison F. Games, *Migration and the Origins of the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); Aaron S. Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717–1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

50. John J. McCusker and Kenneth Morgan, eds., *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Sheryllynne Haggerty, *The British Atlantic Trading Community 1760–1810: Men, Women, and the Distribution of Goods* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

51. The classic work is J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). For the ideological impact of the Revolution, see Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

52. Susan Scott Parrish, *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005); Joyce E. Chaplin, *The First Scientific American: Benjamin Franklin and the Pursuit of Genius* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

53. Bruce P. Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688–1783* (Harlow, U.K.: Longman, 2000).

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55. James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), pp. 285–288; Berlin, *Many Thousands Came*, pp. 98–116; Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, pp. 137–174.

56. Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University

of North Carolina Press, 1998); Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

57. Chaplin, "Expansion and Exceptionalism."

58. Few scholars treat the Atlantic world as continuing into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but see Donna Gabaccia, "A Long Atlantic in a Wider World," *Atlantic Studies* 1 (2004): 1–27.

59. Michael Zuckerman, "Regionalism," in Daniel Vickers, ed., *A Companion to Colonial America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 319, 329.

60. See Greene, "Colonial History and National History."

61. See essays by Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, Susan Pennybacker, Robert Gregg, and Tony Ballantyne, in Antoinette Burton, ed., *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and Through the Nation* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003).

62. A useful corrective is P. J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, and America c. 1750–1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

63. Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, p. 5; Jack P. Greene, *Peripheries and Centers: Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States 1607–1788* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), pp. 7–12.

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