

In sum, Gilpin does an excellent job of organizing the most important religious traditions and trends to provide a religious context for understanding the poet's critical, skeptical, singular eye on religion. Yet, it is not an exhaustive portrait of religion in her time or in her writing. Instead, it is the senior scholar's "roundabout" and intriguing exploration of the two with selected instances of their intersection.

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Patrick Griffin, Robert G. Ingram, Peter S. Onuf, and Brian Schoen, eds. *Between Sovereignty and Anarchy: The Politics of Violence in the American Revolutionary Era* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015). Pp. 328, index. Cloth, \$45.00.

In the 2004 publication of *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic* a group of young historians sought to reinvigorate the study of political history by introducing what they proposed as a more encompassing approach to investigating circumstances during the early republic. Their method encourages scholars to go beyond merely partisan influences and assess the broader political culture of the era. The goal is to understand more fully the political impact of ordinary Americans who are typically relegated to the shadows of historical analysis. Whether a new paradigm was achieved remains a source of scholarly discussion, though clearly since its publication the anthology has influenced the study of the early republic. *Between Sovereignty and Anarchy* is an extension of those interpretative techniques introduced in *Beyond the Founders*.

The goal of *Between Sovereignty and Anarchy* is to begin constructing a synthesis of the ideological interpretation of the early republic introduced by Bernard Bailyn and Gordon Wood and the behaviorist interpretation proposed by Alfred Young and Gary Nash among others. To do this the anthology's eleven authors examine the effects that average citizens had on the evolution of the new nation. Several themes link the essays. One involves the methods used by Americans to adapt their understanding of sovereignty to the changing circumstances in British America. Another theme explores how violence, both as a concept and as a behavior, was used to mobilize populations. As the title implies, the thread that runs through all eleven

essays is violence. A third theme describes how expanded democracy became a justification for the suppression of potentially violent challenges similar to those earlier challenges that characterized the march to independence.

In two early pieces Andrew Clayton and Patrick Griffin argue that colonial Americans in the eighteenth century reflected a contradictory attitude about violence. On one hand Americans embraced a British commitment to the use of liberty and law instead of violence. However, in leading the world to a higher level of civilization the British justified selective use of violence against those countrymen who posed a threat to British civilization. In this they meant specifically Irish Catholics and later Highland Scotsmen. Colonial Americans rationalized the use of similar methods against Native Americans and slaves. Griffin contends that the American frontier and plantations were part of a continuum that began in Ireland during the seventeenth century, was carried to Scotland, and then on to the colonial backwoods. It was this application of the British perspective applied to the circumstances in colonial America that provided the spark of revolution that followed.

In two of the more engaging essays Jessica Chapin Roney and Peter Moser describe how the threat of violence and efforts to avoid that threat served as a source of popular mobilization and the creation of state governments. Roney expands to the province as a whole Richard Ryerson's discussion of mobilization in Philadelphia. She demonstrates how mobilization during the Seven Years' War fostered the creation throughout Pennsylvania of local militia that after independence replaced traditional leadership. She concludes that "Pennsylvania's was America's first—and for as long as half a century *only*—democratic revolution" (106). Messer uses mobs in Massachusetts and their potential for violence much as Roney describes the violent potential of Pennsylvania's militia. In both cases the threat of violence and the periodical limited use of violence facilitates the establishment of popular governmental authority. Messer's explanation also previews some of the tensions in Massachusetts that Pauline Maier describes in *Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, 1787–1788* during the state's struggles over ratification.

Several of the concluding essays explore the transition from British subject to American citizen that followed independence and new forms of acceptable political challenge and protest that accompanied the transition. Using several events in Pennsylvania as his focus Kenneth Owen assesses the use of violence as a justifiable post-independence action. He concludes that while violence generally remained an acceptable option when redressing grievances, increasingly it was only acceptable when protesting extreme

circumstances. (One wonders how Owen would assess Fries Rebellion—a popular confrontation that traveled a path different from those he uses to support his conclusions.) Jeffrey Pasley takes Owen’s conclusion a bit further when discussing the Whiskey Rebellion. Pasley’s description of the “democratic violence” associated with the Whiskey Rebellion can be seen as a precursor to the evolving “popular constitutionalism” that Larry Kramer has described in *The People Themselves*. Violent opposition came to be seen as a threat to democratic government and therefore was deemed unacceptable. Sanctioned protest increasingly came through newspapers, civic organization, and the rise of democratic societies rather than through mob action.

While *Between Sovereignty and Anarchy* is beset with several minor flaws, it is an exceptional collection of thought-provoking essays that will unquestionably influence the way we understand the process of revolution in colonial America and the evolution of the early American republic. Though it purports to produce analysis that encompasses social, political, and economic circumstances and thus identify a “political culture,” in fact the essays focus almost exclusively on political conditions. For instance, there is no mention of the colonial consumerism that Timothy Breen has argued laid the moral foundation for independence. Likewise, the absence of fundamental statistical data undermines some of the conclusions. Nor do the essays provide the synthesis that they set out to create. Nevertheless, the anthology should be considered a notable step in that direction. Each of the essays offers a well-conceived interpretation and often insightful analysis that adds a great deal to our understanding of the period. As such the essays will certainly generate much scholarly discussion and will be required reading in college classrooms for years to come.

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