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John Donoghue, *Fire under the Ashes: An Atlantic History of the English Revolution*. Maggi M. Morehouse and Zoe Trodd, eds. *Civil War America: A Social and Cultural History*.

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- 1 John Donoghue's excellent book is transatlantic history at its best: The author gives a gripping account of the political, economic, social, and religious dimensions of the English Revolution in virtually all parts of the English Atlantic world between c. 1619 and 1661. Donoghue, associate professor of history at Loyola University in Chicago, takes us on a journey from Old to New England, various Caribbean archipelagos, West Africa, and back again. Building on transatlantic studies of the revolutionary era such as Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker's *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (2000), Carla Gardina Pestana's *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution* (2004), and J. S. Maloy's *The Colonial American Origins of Modern Democratic Thought* (2008), Donoghue examines colonial interconnectedness on various levels: English Puritans brought innovative political, religious, and social ideas to the New World where they split into an ever-growing number of factions; they moved back to Old

England to lobby the government for new charters; they engaged in transatlantic commerce and settlement, often moving from the Caribbean to the North American mainland or the other way around. Skillfully combining religious history with a sound knowledge of political theory and economy, Donoghue reminds us that the English Atlantic world at the time of the Revolution was characterized by a diverse, multidirectional “circulation of goods, people, information, experience, and ideas” (3).

²
Coleman Street Ward in London serves as a case study of how one neighborhood became a hotbed of radical political and religious ideas, starting out as a gathering place for persecuted Puritans about to leave for Holland or the American colonies, turning into a site of republican resistance against the king, and later becoming a center of Leveller and Fifth Monarchist activism. Chapter 1 introduces one of the most ubiquitous and appalling themes of the book: the forced transportation of poor vagrant children and adolescents from England to the colonies in order to turn them into productive members of society. (However, most of them died because of the horrific conditions on the voyage or at the colonial plantations.) It also discusses the militant Protestant expansionism that was supposed to free native peoples from the yoke of Catholic Spain but eventually led to the establishment of yet another, the English (and later British), empire. In chapter 2, Donoghue briefly describes the situation on Bermuda and Providence Island, a former Puritan colony off the coast of Honduras, and points out the cruelty of Puritan slaveholding before delineating the conflict between the magisterial and radical versions of the Protestant Reformation as it played out during the Antinomian Controversy and the Pequot War in New England.

³
Chapter 3 shows the connection between forced labor and anti-Catholicism, as was obvious in the fact that numerous Irish were sold into bond slavery in the colonies and treated as bad as Native Americans, African slaves, and English vagrants because they were Catholic. It also emphasizes how colonial officials forged networks and participated in the revolutionary struggles in Old England. Transatlantic remigration is the subject of chapter 4 as well, which details the consequences of the events of 1640-42 for the North American colonies. While Puritans there sympathized with the revolutionary cause, they fretted about economic disruptions and a decrease in

emigrants wanting to move to the New World. Donoghue also discusses the inter-colonial migrations of Antinomians from Massachusetts Bay to more liberal settlements in Connecticut and Rhode Island. He finally shows that when Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Haven created constitutions, former Coleman Streeters took on leadership roles in each of these colonies. Donoghue convincingly states: “The experience of godly dissent and the accumulation of wealth, learning, and political influence, once transferred to America, had transformed saints marginalized by the Stuarts in England into colonial power brokers” (139).

4

In chapter 5, the author follows the journeys of New Englanders such as Henry Vane, Hanserd Knollys, Hugh Peter, and Stephen Winthrop as they return to the land of their forbears to fight in the Revolutionary War. (New England, unsurprisingly, was seen as the “nursery of sedition” by the royalists.) This chapter also discusses radical social innovations in England: women preachers, the Leveller condemnation of all forms of human bondage, and debates over extending the franchise to non-property holders. Donoghue chronicles the imperial turn of the Revolution in chapter 6, resulting in the mass slaughter of civilians in Ireland in 1649 and the disastrous failure of the so-called Western Design, a plan to invade Hispaniola and other Spanish possessions in the West Indies. Finally, chapter 7 “concludes that transatlantic radicals ... linked the realization of republican freedom in England and the colonies, and thus the progress of the apocalyptic project of the Protestant Reformation, to the end of slavery and slave trading in the empire” (241). Donoghue argues that while the practices of kidnapping children and adolescents for bond slavery in the colonies – the so-called spiriting – and forced military impressment met with little reproach by the authorities, luminaries such as James Harrington and John Milton (as well as dozens of lesser-known figures) used the press to voice protests against them. He points out that the former Coleman Street resident Richard Saltonstall the younger “launched the first judicial protest against the African slave trade in the history of the English Atlantic world” in 1645 Massachusetts Bay (263) and that Rhode Island passed laws banning slavery and the slave trade as early as 1652 (even though it repealed these laws in the eighteenth century). This chapter also features a helpful discussion of similarities and differences in the treatment of white (bond) and black or native (livelong) slaves. Donoghue writes that white impressed soldiers and

servants died in droves, even though African and Native American slaves fared far worse, of course.

5 All in all, Donoghue's well-argued book chronicles the fall from grace of the English Protestant republican empire, which had been designed to counteract the bloody excesses of Spanish Catholic colonization in the New World but turned into the very thing it was supposed to end. Successfully intertwining political and religious/intellectual history, *Fire under the Ashes* highlights the transatlantic revolutionary networks so crucial to this transformative period in English and American history. Donoghue's most valuable achievement is his convincing juxtaposition of political and economic freedom, of democracy (or at least republicanism) and opposition to all forms of human bondage. He always provides the intellectual and cultural context to his discussions of social conditions and successfully includes literary works in his analysis. The author's fast-paced, yet graceful and elegant writing style makes for an almost thriller-like reading experience at times. Any criticisms concern only negligible points, for example a number of typographical errors (e.g. 24, 73, 190, 265, 302n56, 348n43 and 44). Several lengthy passages on intra-English political struggles are not particularly interesting to Americanists. Nevertheless, with its gripping way of storytelling, impressive body of annotations, and truly transatlantic scope, *Fire under the Ashes* is a fascinating read for anyone interested in Puritanism, the English Revolution, or colonial America.

6

Morehouse and Trodd's ***Civil War America: A Social and Cultural History*** handbook on social and cultural aspects of the Civil War era is a valuable companion to undergraduate courses on nineteenth-century America. Divided into eight parts (Dissent and Disobedience, Labor and Land, Religion and Reform, Health and Education, Ethnic American Lives, Literature and Visual Culture, Leisure and Performance, Death and Aftermath) and twenty-nine brief chapters on topics ranging from draft resistance and reform and welfare societies to photography and baseball, *Civil War America: A Social and Cultural History* exemplifies the shift from pure military history to a focus on the home front in the teaching of the great American conflict. At no more than eleven pages each, they offer basic introductions into these topics and include suggestions for further reading that students would find

helpful. A companion website offers four to ten primary sources per chapter, each with a brief introduction, freely available for download in pdf format.

- 7 In his foreword to the book, John Stauffer reminds us that the Civil War occasioned a landslide “shift in the zeitgeist, or collective identity of America” that resulted in “the displacement of God” and “the masculinization of society” (xv). Unfortunately, these interesting arguments are not investigated in greater detail in the book; concepts such as masculinity and secularization are discussed only implicitly in various chapters. Still, the essays in Morehouse and Trodd’s collection, authored by specialists ranging from senior professors and independent scholars to graduate students, provide insightful first glimpses into “the daily life and societal transformations of Civil War America” (xix).

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