

Unfinished Revolution: The Early American Republic in a British World (Jeffersonian America)

Sam W. Haynes



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After the War of 1812 the United States remained a cultural and economic satellite of the world's most powerful empire. Though political independence had been won, John Bull intruded upon virtually every aspect of public life, from politics to economic development to literature to the performing arts. Many Americans resented their subordinate role in the transatlantic equation and, as earnest republicans, felt compelled to sever the ties that still connected the two nations. At the same time, the pull of Britain's centripetal orbit remained strong, so that Americans also harbored an unseemly, almost desperate need for validation from the nation that had given rise to their republic.

The tensions inherent in this paradoxical relationship are the focus of *Unfinished Revolution*. Conflicted and complex, American attitudes toward Great Britain provided a framework through which citizens of the republic developed a clearer sense of their national identity. Moreover, an examination of the transatlantic relationship from an American perspective suggests that the United States may have had more in common with traditional developing nations than we have generally recognized. Writing from the vantage point of America's unrivaled global dominance, historians have tended to see in the young nation the superpower it would become. Haynes here argues that, for all its vaunted claims of distinctiveness and the soaring rhetoric of "manifest destiny," the young republic exhibited a set of anxieties not uncommon among nation-states that have emerged from long periods of colonial rule.

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