

# H-Diplo ROUNDTABLE XXIV-21

Steven J. Brady. *Chained to History: Slavery and US Foreign Relations to 1865*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022. ISBN: 9781501761058

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 Introduction by Jay Sexton, University of Missouri
 

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Slavery defined the political order of the early US republic. A proliferating body of scholarship probes how the ‘peculiar institution’ conditioned the democratic experiment of postcolonial America.<sup>1</sup> The novel constitutional and electoral system of the United States bore its imprint. The insatiable land-hunger of the enslaving cotton planters conditioned the colonization and exploitation of what came to be known as the ‘black belt’ of the Deep South. The ports, infrastructure, and financial institutions of early America all emerged in relation to the increasing importance of American slavery to the Atlantic economy. The moral politics of slavery infiltrated nearly every social institution of the young republic, metastasizing throughout the body politic like a malignant cancer until it caused the great crisis of the Union in the mid-nineteenth century. The list could go on.

For all of our awareness of the centrality of slavery to US history, one topic has been surprisingly neglected: the relationship between slavery and US foreign policy. To be sure, specific dimensions of this topic have been the subject of examination, most recently in Matthew Karp’s study of the pro-slavery Southerners who sought to control the US central state in the 1840s and 50s.<sup>2</sup> But a sweeping historical overview of the relationship between slavery and diplomacy had not appeared. Enter Steven Brady. “What has thus far been missing from the scholarly literature,” he notes at the beginning of the book that is the subject of this roundtable, “is a single, synthetic volume that addresses the full sweep of the interconnection of slavery and US foreign relations from the American Revolution until emancipation in the 1860s” (6).

Brady’s *Chained to History: Slavery and US Foreign Relations to 1865* aims to fill this gap. In this work of high diplomatic history, Brady examines the key issues in which slavery conditioned US foreign policy: post-Revolutionary US-British relations; US responses to the Haitian Revolution; international slave trade suppression and the colonization of African Americans; the territorial expansion of the United States; and, finally, the international dimensions of the US Civil War. The chronological sweep of this study is one of its strengths. By taking the long view, Brady is able to show how the United States’ preoccupation with safeguarding slavery was a recurring point of friction with foreign powers. It also brings to light how the project of insulating slavery from external pressures was a *national* one. Even those Northern statesmen who harbored personal antislavery views, such as President and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, were sucked into the force field of American slavery, despite the fact that, as Brady argues, the ‘peculiar institution’ undermined the international position and power of the United States. Finally, the long view provides the scope required to situate US slavery diplomacy within context. A particularly important takeaway is that, while Brady shows the centrality of slavery to America’s engagement with the world, the book also acknowledges how the issue of slavery fit in with the other dynamics of early US diplomacy.

The four reviewers assembled for this roundtable provide helpful summations of Brady’s book, and push his analysis in new directions. All of them, to varying degrees, endorse *Chained to History*, arguing (in the words of Maureen Connors Santelli) that it “is a well-researched and useful contribution to the field and will certainly arouse interest in future scholarly research.” As a synthetic work of high diplomatic history, Brady’s book succeeds on the terms he set for himself for this study, not least in showing, as Andrew Priest points out, how slavery “undermined the global position of the United States, which purported to be a beacon of freedom to many around the world, but which kept many of its own people in bondage.” Nonetheless, the reviewers point out the lacuna in this study. Ronald Angelo Johnson is among the reviewers who ask how the

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<sup>1</sup> David Waldstreicher, *Slavery’s Constitution: From Revolution to Ratification* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010); Edward Bartlett Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2009); Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Karp, *The Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

incorporation of more Black voices and actors might have enriched Brady's analysis. There is little in *Chained to History* about abolitionism, which was one of the fastest growing social forces of the Atlantic world in the nineteenth century. In a particularly engaging and imaginative review, James Shinn, Jr., contends that future scholarship should explore "the role of public opinion and popular movements in antebellum foreign-policy making." One could add to that list the emergent capitalist economy of the Atlantic world, which both nurtured and challenged American slavery.

In his response, Brady generously engages with the reviewers, noting how future research might pick up on their suggestions. Thanks to *Chained to History*, we now have an indispensable starting point for future research on slavery and early U.S. diplomacy.

### Participants:

**Steven J. Brady** is assistant professor of history at The George Washington University. He holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Notre Dame. His previous book was *Eisenhower and Adenauer: Alliance Maintenance under Pressure, 1953-1961* (Lexington/Harvard Cold War Studies, 2010). Currently, he is finishing a book with the title "Less than Victory: American Catholics and the Vietnam War," and researching a book on paradiplomacy, with the provisional title "Reason of States: The Foreign Relations of American Governors."

**Jay Sexton** is Rich and Nancy Kinder Chair and Director of the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy at the University of Missouri. He is the author or co-editor of seven books on America and the world, including *A Nation Forged by Crisis: A New American History* (Basic Books, 2018). Look for his forthcoming essay in *Diplomatic History* on the bicentennial of the Monroe Doctrine.

**Ronald Angelo Johnson** holds the Ralph and Bessie Mae Lynn Chair of History at Baylor University. He is the author of *Diplomacy in Black and White: John Adams, Toussaint Louverture, and Their Atlantic World Alliance* (UGA Press, 2014) and co-editor (with Ousmane Power-Greene) of *In Search of Liberty: African American Internationalism in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World* (UGA Press, 2021). His current research examines racialized relations between the United States and Haiti across the Age of Revolutions.

**Andrew Priest** is senior lecturer in the Department of History at the University of Essex. His most recent book is *Designs on Empire: America's Rise to Power in the Age of European Imperialism* (Columbia University Press, 2021), and he is currently working on a project about Civil War veterans and United States foreign policy.

**Maureen Connors Santelli** is an associate professor of history at Northern Virginia Community College. She attended the University of Montana in Missoula, where she earned undergraduate degrees in History and Classics. Santelli's combined interests in ancient Greece, Rome, and early American history inspired her research as a graduate student at George Mason University, where she completed her Master's and PhD. She has published an article with *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, "Depart from that Retired Circle:" *Women's Support of the Greek War for Independence and Antebellum Reform* (Winter 2017). Her recent book, *The Greek Fire: American-Ottoman Relations and Democratic Fervor in the Age of Revolutions* (Cornell University Press 2020), examines the rise of philhellenism in the United States and how the movement influenced both foreign and domestic policies during the early American republic.

**James M. Shinn, Jr.** is an Assistant Professor of History at the University of South Carolina-Beaufort. He received his Ph.D. from Yale University in 2020. He is currently writing a book about the entangled histories of Reconstruction in the United States and the Ten Years' War in Cuba.

## Review by Ronald Angelo Johnson, Baylor University

The historical study of slavery in the United States has experienced a boon over the last decade and a half. The quality and volume of books on the forced bondage of Black people are reminiscent of the historiography from the 1970s, when foundational authors like Eugene Genovese, Edmund Morgan, and David Brion Davis produced some of the more important and renowned works heavily influenced by the viewpoints of the white American slaveholders and policymakers.<sup>3</sup> Recent, award-winning books on slavery by Daina Ramey Berry, Erica Armstrong Dunbar, and Annette Gordon-Reed utilize new historical methods and offer fresh perspectives that focus greater emphasis on the lives of the enslaved through the lens of Black lived experiences.<sup>4</sup> The 1619 Project, a creative journalistic work of historical writing suggesting the founding of the United States dates to 1619, when enslaved Africans arrived in Virginia, created scholarly, political, and cultural shock waves across America.<sup>5</sup>

For the most part, the study of slavery in the United States remains centered as a domestic topic of study. Even works that address slavery within an Atlantic world context make only passing references to the impact of human bondage on bilateral relations or foreign policymaking. Several years ago, Matthew Karp published a stellar work of scholarship examining how slaveholders and their supporters employed the federal government to maintain a decades-long grip on US foreign policymaking and control over enslaved Black lives in America.<sup>6</sup> Piero Gleijeses recently produced a US diplomatic history textbook that foregrounds slavery in early American foreign policy.<sup>7</sup> Still, as Steven J. Brady correctly assesses, “What has thus far been missing from the scholarly literature is a single, synthetic volume that addresses the full sweep of the interconnection of slavery and US foreign relations from the American Revolution until emancipation in the 1860s” (6). To fill the void, Brady presents a needed monograph that unabashedly discusses slavery at the center of major events in early US diplomacy. In the endeavor, he convincingly integrates existing scholarship with new research in a cohesive, sustained treatment of slavery as a significant determinant of US foreign policy from the Articles of Confederation to the Thirteenth Amendment.

Across the book’s six chapters that are studiously researched, organized coherently, and written in clear, straightforward prose, several themes emerge. First, white American policymakers across the first nine decades of the United States committed themselves to defending and sustaining the right to enslave Black people. For Brady, the insistence by white Americans on their right to control Black women’s bodies and to sell Black children as commodities represented more than economic interests or the affirmation of racialized hierarchies. He writes, “in the minds of these men, a threat to slavery in America’s neighborhood was an existential threat to America” (5). In one of the nation’s foundational diplomatic engagements, the Treaty of Paris in 1783, American representatives made the repatriation of freed Black people, whom white Americans considered their property, a major point of negotiation. During the American Revolution—and again during the War of 1812—the British emancipated enslaved Black people across North America. Thousands of Black men, women, girls, and boys escaped white American enslavers in search of freedom. US negotiators accused

<sup>3</sup> Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976); Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975); David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017); Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washingtons’ Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* (New York: 37 Ink, 2017); Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Heminges of Monticello: An American Family* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Nikole Hannah-Jones, *the 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* (London: One World, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Piero Gleijeses, *America’s Road to Empire: Foreign Policy from Independence to World War One* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021).

the British of “carrying away” enslaved people (18). Brady illuminates how ineradicable American animosities over the British freeing Black people on American soil tainted bilateral diplomatic ventures, including the Jay Treaty (1794) and the Treaty of Ghent (1814). US diplomats failed to grasp that enslaved Black people, rather than being carried away, exercised agency to become ‘black loyalists’ during the American Revolution and ‘runaways’ during the War of 1812.<sup>8</sup> Successive diplomatic efforts to return freed people to slavery “demonstrate that American foreign policy had been, in a question involving slavery, oriented toward the interests of that institution and of those who profited from it” (32).

Second, for white American policymakers, slavery was not *the* overriding determinant in foreign policy decisions prior to 1865. Instead, issues related to slavery “interacted with other goals, issues, and priorities, thus bringing about policy that could not have been easily foreseen” (6). For Brady, early US policymakers, many of whom were slaveholders, at many levels made foreign policy decisions in response to dominant European nations. Race or slavery was not the central issue. “International politics of the great powers, as well as trade interests, complicated the picture for American policymakers, who wanted to avoid conflict with Britain, alienation of France, or loss of markets” (33). Brady presents US diplomacy with Saint-Domingue (later Haiti) from 1791 as a prime example of slavery *not* being the overriding issue for white American policymakers. In that year, some 500,000 enslaved Black people rose up militarily against their enslavers to eventually destroy the French-controlled slavocracy in Saint-Domingue. Brady marshals an impressive selection of secondary sources predominantly from North American-based scholars on early Haitian-American diplomacy to elucidate the confusing and, at times, conflicting foreign policies of three successive US administrations. President George Washington sent cash and arms to put down the Haitian Revolution. According to the author, “race and slavery were an essential part of this decision, but there were other factors to consider as well. One was, of course, trade” (36). For the diplomatic efforts of the John Adams administration, which considered seriously the prospect of Dominguan independence under the leadership of formerly enslaved Haitian revolutionary leader Toussaint Louverture, “concerns about national interest trumped those of race” (43). And Thomas Jefferson, who served as president when Haiti’s founder Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared independence in 1804, feared the exportation of Black revolutionary violence from Haiti in an effort to secure Black freedom in the southern United States. At the end of an incredibly lucid discussion of American diplomatic advances and policy reversals in Haiti, Brady concludes:

Slavery had never been the sole determinant of the American response to the Haitian slave revolution. The interconnected issues of commerce and national security were major factors in helping to determine the US course in the Caribbean from 1791 until 1803. Yet American attitudes toward slavery, interacting with these other two issues, helped shape this response in significant ways” (61).

From the failure of twelve American presidents to recognize Haitian independence until 1862, to the colonization of and human rights abuses in Liberia, to the Africa Squadron, to continued US efforts to annex Cuba, to Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, “slavery was one of a number of issues that shaped these relations and interactions and,” Brady cautions, “it would be a mistake to attribute too much causative effect to the institution” (181).

Third, *Chained to History* encourages US diplomatic historians to engage slavery and its effects on early American foreign policymaking with greater diligence. One of the book’s precious gems is a bibliographic essay to spur more targeted, in-depth primary source research around slavery-related foreign policy issues like colonization, the Negro Seamen Acts, American expansion, Haiti, and filibustering. Brady makes some unequivocal arguments for greater attention to the US diplomacy of slavery, suggesting “one cannot speak about early American foreign relations without assessing the role played by slavery. Bonded labor was, in fact,

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<sup>8</sup> Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty’s Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 50; Alan Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013), 4.

a significant factor in every one of America's foreign policy priorities in the period leading up to 1865" (5). He addresses—reframes from some—discussions around the annexation of Texas as a foreign policy question. Similar to Haiti, Texan-American diplomacy from 1836 to 1845 involved changing policies—most centered around slavery—across four presidential administrations and includes input from some of America's top slaveholding leaders. The author suggests that "the case of Texas demonstrates the extent to which slavery was, at this time, a central element in the foreign policy thinking of America's political elite" (133). Despite the intricate nature of the Republic of Texas's diplomatic engagements over slavery with Britain, France, Mexico, and the United States, much remains to be written on the topic from a foreign policy perspective. Brady correctly points out that slavery "was among the most significant reasons and one that has not yet been thoroughly explored by scholars of US foreign relations" (4-5). The book does a fine job, using famous and lesser-known diplomatic incidents to the end of the American Civil War, surveying the central role of slavery in early US foreign policy. The last sentence states the book's message to US diplomatic historians most succinctly: "To understand America's diplomatic history, one must understand the impact and legacy of slavery on America's relations with the world" (184).

One of the more effective parts of the book is Brady's methodology. He presents the policymaking with respect to American slavery as international history, seeking "to situate its topic in the broad international framework in which United States foreign relations with regard to slavery was both conceived and conducted" (6). Doing so allows the book to engage the diplomatic techniques of foreign ministry officials that seemed to temper the economic power and political prowess of Southern slaveholders. The international context of the questions around human bondage highlights what Brady describes as the inconsistencies and "the 'messiness' of the connection between slavery and America's foreign relations" (181). His method demonstrates how the commitment to slavery came at the cost of American unilateralism, offering the important contribution that "Americans could not retain anything like a 'splendid isolation' from Europe. America's status as a slaveholding society was enough to prevent that" (6).

The international history perspective, without a sustained conversation about race and racism, has its limitations. In its analysis of US diplomacy, this study, at times, seems to reduce slavery to an 'institution,' offering an impersonal survey of indignities and brutalities inflicted upon people of African descent and the pervasive, corrosive nature of racist ideologies and policies that negatively impacted peoples of the United States and around the world. After finishing this important book, I am left wondering if utilization of fresh historical methods from the plethora of recent scholarship to include more Black voices from across the Atlantic world would not have enriched the texture of diplomatic negotiations and policy debates by predominantly white men that resulted in wide-ranging consequences for the lives, futures, and descendants of Black people.<sup>9</sup>

Steven Brady set out to write a book to "re-center slavery as a key element in American foreign relations" (7). He has done that brilliantly. For some time to come, his work "will arouse interest in further scholarship on a highly significant aspect of America's early international relations" (7). I am preparing an undergraduate

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<sup>9</sup> Jennifer L. Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021); Jessica Marie Johnson, *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020); Marisa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Daina Ramey Berry and Kali Nicole Gross, *A Black Women's History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2020); Brandon R. Byrd, *The Black Republic: African Americans and the Fate of Haiti* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019); Lawrence Aje and Nicolas Gachon, ed., *Traces and Memories of Slavery in the Atlantic World* (New York: Routledge, 2020); Ronald Angelo Johnson and Ousmane Power-Greene, *In Search of Liberty: African American Internationalism in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2021); P. Gabrielle Foreman, Jim Casey, and Sarah Lynn Patterson, eds., *The Colored Conventions Movement: Black Organizing in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

seminar entitled “The Diplomacy of American Slavery.” I could not imagine teaching this course without *Chained to History*.

Steven J. Brady's important new book places slavery at the center of United States foreign policy in the first 80 years of the nation's existence. In doing so, the author teases out some of the fundamental paradoxes that the institution of chattel slavery and the international slave trade created for policymakers in Washington: Brady argues that slavery often drew Washington into foreign interactions it eschewed, limited its diplomatic leverage on the international stage, and caused tensions with the major imperial powers. Slavery thus undermined the global position of the United States, which purported to be a beacon of freedom to many around the world, but which kept many of its own people in bondage. As Brady shows, these paradoxes reverberated in the Atlantic world and beyond. He also illustrates how some policymakers believed that slavery offered opportunities—often more imagined than real—to grow their nation, advance particular policies, and divide the other international powers to their advantage. Yet as he argues, because slavery limited more than enabled the range of foreign policy possibilities, and crucially “interacted with other goals, issues and priorities,” because it was inextricably linked with so many of them, it often had consequences that these men could rarely have understood or foreseen (6).

In the early part of the book, the author explores one of the most pervasive problems in Anglo-American relations after the Revolution and before the Civil War: the stopping and searching of ships for contraband goods. During the age of the transatlantic slave trade and its aftermath, such contraband included human cargo. The slave trade was made illegal under US federal law after 1808 and had been abolished within the British Empire the previous year, but it continued in practice even as Great Britain attempted to enforce prohibition—albeit with little assistance from its American counterpart. Indeed, Brady demonstrates how resistance from American policymakers to Britain's attempts to suppress the trade because of the implications it had for independent American policy led to continued tensions compounding extant strains with the British in the decades after 1815.

Brady also brings into focus the expendable nature of the enslaved people themselves—the people who were forced to toil for the benefit of their captors and the nation—from the perspective of those in power. While these millions of people whose bodies were not their own could influence foreign diplomacy because of their monetary value if they escaped or were captured by foreign enemies, they had no agency in negotiations. Brady covers the long-running issue of those who fled to British lines during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. As he elucidates in the first chapter of the book (and picks up in subsequent sections), questions about these slaves and who controlled them were important strands of late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century diplomacy between the United States, Great Britain, and other European powers, and they remained unresolved after the 1783 Treaty of Paris, Jay's Treaty of 1794 and the 1815 Treaty of Ghent, even as the politicians continued to negotiate over them.

At home, the issue of how to expand United States territory became increasingly fraught internationally as well as domestically. Of course, many politicians were deeply implicated in the institution of slavery by virtue of being slaveholders themselves. Most early presidents enslaved people during their lives and eight of them were slaveholders while in the highest office. This naturally had an impact on their policies, including how they approached regional issues. But Brady shows that its implications were much wider. In essence, a hugely complex matter was made infinitely more complicated because policymakers knew that both politicians and settlers wanted to expand the reach of slavery to ensure its survival. In this respect, many of those who claimed to be against the expansion of slave territory effectively acceded to it because of their desire to grow the footprint of what Daniel Immerwahr has called the Greater United States.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A Short History of the Greater United States* (London: Bodley Head, 2019).



Brady highlights the ways the expansion of slavery could cut across regional interests and non-slaveholders could effectively uphold growth in the institution, such as Secretary of State and President John Quincy Adams who oversaw the admission of new territory that he knew would permit slavery. This issue of slaves fleeing to territory outside the United States animated Adams, who negotiated the Transcontinental Treaty of 1819 to acquire Florida, ensuring, among other things, that Spanish land would not be available to receive people escaping from slavery. Previously, this problem had led General Andrew Jackson to destroy the so-called Negro Fort just across the border from Georgia, which the British had given up in 1815 and was then occupied by a group of “runaway slaves, maroons and Choctaw” (30), and to kill almost all its inhabitants the following year. Adams, who approved of Jackson’s actions, railed against the expansion of slavery as a driver of the war with Mexico at the end of his career in the House of Representatives but was “eager to serve its interests at this time” (30-32). The question of territorial growth was therefore made even more complex by slavery and the issues it raised at home and abroad, and for everyone in the political establishment as it evolved, often regardless of faction or party.

Brady discusses another domestic matter with international ramifications that united white people from northern and southern states: the fear of rebellion by enslaved people. The growth of the United States and the prospect of states entering the union as ‘slave’ or ‘free’ was fraught with growing tension as the nineteenth century progressed, and this was equally the case as Americans grappled with growing divisions between slave and non-slaveholding polities abroad.<sup>11</sup> The specter of insurrection in response to slavery was simply the most immediate way that the issue could be brought home and spoke to all kinds of anxieties related to Americans’ deep-seated racism and insecurity about their position of power in the hierarchy of white supremacy that underpinned chattel slavery as an institution. Thus, many elites, regardless of where they lived and whether they were themselves enslavers, constantly foresaw and feared the possibility of such uprisings. Rather than persuading them of the practical as well as moral poverty of slavery, however, this deep concern led most of them to double-down on their subjugation of millions of people in their own nation and persuaded many Americans to cultivate stronger relations with other slaveholding polities, even as their fevered imaginations foresaw the potentially terrible consequences of their choices.

It also led to often poor relations with one of the United States’ closest neighbors, Haiti, which fought against French rule under the charismatic military and political leadership of the former slave Toussaint Louverture and eventually became independent in 1804.<sup>12</sup> Haiti hangs over almost everything detailed in this book, serving as a reminder to many about what they believed slaves might do if given too much latitude. In particular, southerners feared that the insurrection on the island of Saint Domingue could spread to their states by setting an example that slaves in the United States might replicate. Indeed, this seemed to be coming to pass with the outbreak of Gabriel’s Rebellion in Richmond, Virginia, in 1800. Despite this, as the author shows, presidents could use the issue flexibly according to circumstance and need. John Adams (John Quincy Adams’s father), the second US president, corresponded closely with Louverture and seriously considered the advantages to the United States of an independent Black republic governed by former slaves. Even Adams’s successor as president, the leading slaveholder Thomas Jefferson, was willing to support Haiti against France to facilitate what became the 1803 Louisiana Purchase (52-60). Yet generally ties with Haiti were strained and it was not until 1862 that the United States recognized it as a sovereign nation.

In a different way, the status of the island colony of Cuba as a slaveholding entity also offered a range of possibilities and threats to the United States. As part of the Spanish Empire, Cuba practiced slavery on its plantations, and US reliance on Cuban sugar once again implicated US Americans from the north and south.

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: American Exceptionalism and Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny’s Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Kevin Waite, *West of Slavery: The Southern Dream of a Transcontinental Empire* (Chapel Hill, NC: North Carolina University Press, 2021);

<sup>12</sup> For a recent study, see Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Black Spartacus: The Epic Life of Toussaint Louverture* (London: Allen Lane, 2020).

But especially for southern slaveholders, Cuba offered the potential of an alliance and perhaps even the expansion of the institution in the United States itself if Cuba could be brought into the union as a slave state. Conversely, the fear that slavery could end on the island was ever-present and drove American failed attempts to acquire Cuba either by sale or force, culminating with the 1854 Ostend Manifesto.

It was, of course, Abraham Lincoln's Republican Party that sought to halt the expansion of slavery and threatened the end of the entire institution, which comprises the final chapter of the book. Lincoln's election in 1860 precipitated the secession of slaveholding states, the formation of the Confederate States of America, and the outbreak of the Civil War. Brady shows, however, that Lincoln's refusal to make slavery the central issue of the 1861-65 conflict in its earliest stages limited his range of actions, just as the contentious issue of slavery had constrained those of so many of his predecessors. This undermined support for the Union among antislavery campaigners in the two main global powers, Britain and France, but ultimately contributed to preventing military and, on the whole, diplomatic intervention, fulfilling a priority of Lincoln's policy and in the long term helping to ensure a union victory. More importantly, however, Brady argues that the mistakes and limitations of the Confederacy as a slaveholding entity gave the Union advantages over it (179). As part of this, Lincoln's issuing of the primary Emancipation Proclamation in 1862 clarified the central issues to other powers and began the process of ending slavery in the United States.

The strength of the book is thus in dealing with an issue so fundamental to the early life of the republic, but one that has often been sidelined in international studies of American policy because people, including scholars, have too often perceived slavery as an almost exclusively domestic institution. In making this observation, Brady's study invites parallels with another book on the regional and international implications of slavery, Matthew Karp's *This Vast Southern Empire* (2016).<sup>13</sup> Brady has no particular contentions with Karp's work and draws on it frequently, but he develops more fully the ways that slavery implicated northern as well as southern policymakers, drawing them into a web of interactions that effectively endorsed its continuation and extension. Moreover, Brady's thesis about the centrality of slavery as an issue in the international life of the United States also invites readers to reflect on how it impacted the diplomacy of other nations. Here especially, the connections between domestic slavery in the United States and the institution and practice of slavery in other nations and colonies, particularly Brazil and colonial Cuba, are obvious. Less obvious are the ways slavery influenced the major imperial powers of Britain and France in conducting their overseas engagements and the possibilities and concerns it raised, which Brady details so well.

In examining such major issues, Brady's focus is always high-level diplomacy and those who practiced it. He has less time for conceptual or theoretical underpinnings of how policymakers approached international issues. One intriguing set of ideas, for example, concerns not the juxtaposition of nationalism or unilateralism and internationalism in American diplomacy, but rather obstructionism and internationalism. This seems worth exploring further as a key way of understanding foreign relations during this period. Nor does he incorporate many protagonists beyond those who directly influenced international actions. To be sure, Brady's thesis illuminates the impacts of human bondage on international affairs, but it might have been useful to hear more about how antislavery voices affected this diplomacy. Here, considering figures such as abolitionist Martin Delany could add to our understanding. Delany argued in favor of colonization—an important theme that appears at points in Brady's study—and saw Liberia as a model for potential future American colonization projects in West Africa before the Civil War, just as many white people, including Lincoln, did.

So while this is a book about slavery, it is also about freedom, as a major theme of the book is the fate of the free Black population of the United States. As is well known, colonization was a potential solution that policymakers often reached for because they could not imagine a world in which free Black people would be

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<sup>13</sup> Matthew Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2016).

able to live at peace with their white peers in the United States. Brady shows that this concept drove elites to think more carefully about West Africa, leading the United States to become more involved there jostling with the imperial powers of the day than might otherwise have been the case. But more than this, the possibility and then promise of freedom meant that the importance of slavery as an issue became more contingent, especially during the Civil War. This leads to a fascinating question that Brady's book raises: namely, how do we account for the *lack of* resonance of the slavery issue at certain times? While its influence is obvious in some cases, slavery was complex and contentious. While it could be deployed as an issue in some instances, in others leaders felt that it had to be downplayed, such as during periods of territorial expansion and in the early stages of the Civil War. How do we assess this, and is there any way we can account for it?

Overall, Brady shows that, just as slavery was a fact of domestic political and social life, so it threatened the nation from without as well as within. In this respect his study of how the domestic institution of slavery had an effect on so many aspects of the United States' burgeoning international power, but how ultimately that fact has been lost—or perhaps assumed and thus not sufficiently explored—is timely. Slavery undermined many of the United States' interests abroad as it influenced the trajectory of its foreign policy. The implications of this were profound, meaning that the continuation of slavery on United States' soil was predominantly negative in practical as well as moral terms, raising the prospect of domestic revolts and the possibilities of international intervention and even imperial vassalage. Yet too many white elites were in thrall to a logic of racialized hierarchies and wrong-headed ideas about slavery's economic benefits. They were so anxious about the retribution that might come from free formerly enslaved Black people should slavery ever end that they took little action to end it or prevent its further spread. The extent of slavery's grip on early American foreign policy is thus a testament to the ways it exposed and exacerbated the fledgling nation's precarity.

Steven J. Brady's *Chained to History* represents another important contribution to the expanding body of scholarship that seeks to appropriately place the foreign and domestic interests of the early American republic into an international context. Brady draws on a range of sources including letters, pamphlets, congressional proceedings, and treaties while also providing exhaustive secondary source support as he assesses the extent to which slavery played a "central role in the history of America's early relations with the world" (4-5). *Chained to History* is divided into six chapters, each focusing on the diplomatic and commercial challenges that the United States faced, including the international slave trade, relations with Britain, France, Spain, Haiti, Cuba, Mexico, and Columbia. While Brady concedes that slavery was not the only foreign policy issue early America faced, he also posits that slavery played an integral role in early American foreign policy. Some of the topics Brady addresses are not ones that historians have traditionally connected with the issue of slavery. The goal of this volume is to "integrate previous scholarship that has appeared on the topic, while simultaneously breaking new ground through research in the primary source documentation that sheds light on a still-neglected topic" (6-7). Brady succeeds in this goal.

*Chained to History* begins with discussing the extent to which slavery was a part of the peace negotiations concluding the American Revolution, which lays the foundation for some of the diplomatic interactions the United States had with Great Britain in the coming decades. From the moment of formal recognition of American independence with the 1783 Treaty of Paris, the question of whether Great Britain would compensate former colonists for the loss of their slaves during the war complicated an already tense negotiation process. Tension emerged as a result of differing interpretations of a clause found in the Treaty of Paris stating that the British should withdraw forces from the United States "without causing any Destruction, or carrying away any Negroes or other Property of the American Inhabitants." Brady argues that what followed was "the most significant diplomatic conflicts in early Anglo-American relations" (9).

Brady reveals that slavery was often part of an underlying debate in diplomatic interactions with Europe in surprising ways. Jay's Treaty, or the 1796 Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation is one example. From the British perspective, slaves that had fled to British lines during the revolution and had taken up arms against the American rebels were given their freedom. Certain slaveholding Americans supported the legality of this perspective, including Secretary of Foreign Affairs John Jay. For many Southerners, however, the refusal to return runaway slaves or to provide compensation was Britain's first violation of the peace treaty. When George Washington selected Jay to negotiate with Britain regarding commerce and navigation in 1796, some slaveholders were concerned by the selection. Their concerns were confirmed when Jay did not manage to press the British on the issue of compensation. Jay explained that Britain was immovable on the subject of compensation and thus it "became advisable to quit those topics" at the negotiation (14). While the treaty does not mention the contested issue of compensation for slaves, Brady convincingly reveals that slavery was very much at the center of the debate over the Jay Treaty.

Brady's discussion of the international slave trade and how ongoing negotiations concerning its regulation shaped and molded US foreign policy is also compelling. Although viewed as violent and immoral by many Americans in the late eighteenth century, the international slave trade was also no longer as financially advantageous as it once had been. The demand for labor had declined with the replacement of tobacco for wheat, especially in the upper south, leading to a desire to restrict the supply of slaves entering the United States. The framers of the Constitution provided 1808 as the date for which a ban on the international slave trade could begin. Slaveholders such as Thomas Jefferson provided a strong voice against the continuation of the slave trade, making the importation of slaves illegal on the first day the Constitution allowed. *Chained to History* demonstrates, however, that while importation of slaves was illegal, enforcement on the moratorium was another matter.

Brady links lingering issues surrounding the War of 1812, especially impressment, with the United States' reluctance to aid in the enforcement of the ban on the importation of slaves. Britain banned the slave trade in 1807, at approximately the same time as the United States. After the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars, Britain began a campaign to convince other European countries and the United States to join them in prohibiting the trade. As a result of conflict with the United States that had culminated in the War of 1812, convincing the United States of the measures Britain wanted to take to prevent and enforce the slave trade was a difficult task. While the US Congress passed a new law in 1818 that facilitated the prosecution of those who were in violation of the ban, the topic was heatedly debated, and many members of Congress were reluctant to engage in a multilateral effort to curb the slave trade. In addition, the Monroe administration also expressed reluctance toward working cooperatively with the British, especially when it came to allowing British warships to search American ships for enslaved cargo. British Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh tried in vain to convince Secretary of State John Quincy Adams of Britain's proposal, who stated in 1820 that "we had had one war with Great Britain for exercising what she alone claims of all the nations of the earth as a right—search of neutral vessels in time of war to take out men" (69). The search of neutral American ships and the impressment of American sailors into the Royal Navy had "served as the key justification for the war once it began" and the memories of this issue "would bedevil attempts to end the trade in slaves for half a century" (67).

American annoyance at Britain's continued refusal to compensate slaveholders for runaway slaves was also an ongoing source of distrust and reluctance to help enforce the ban on the slave trade. Long after the American Revolution and the War of 1812, runaway slaves who fled to British controlled territories were immediately granted their freedom without compensation to their owners. In 1834 the British government abolished slavery in most of Britain's colonies. From the American perspective, slaves should be returned, but from the British perspective, there was no British law against slaves running away and the government had "no legal power or authority to restore them to a state of slavery" (93). Thus for example, slaves could flee the short distance from Florida to the Bahamas and gain their freedom.

Brady illustrates this possibility with a discussion of the 1841 *Creole* Affair in which slaves onboard the ship *Creole*, which was bound from Norfolk, Virginia for New Orleans, mutinied and seized control, killing a slaveholding passenger and wounding the captain and other members of the crew. They sailed for the Bahamas and upon arrival were free. Slaveholders were enraged and demanded compensation for the loss of their human property. American irritation with the *Creole* Affair jeopardized ongoing efforts by the British to secure greater support from the United States to regulate the ban on the international slave trade.

The treaty then in negotiation was the 1842 Webster-Ashburton Treaty, in which the United States wanted promises of compensation for the *Creole* Affair should it enter into a treaty with Britain where the United States would "deploy a force of eighty guns on the African coast and... the Royal Navy and US Navy ships would hunt in pairs" (112). While the treaty did not address the long-standing disagreement over the right of search and impressment, the joint cruising agreement was a workable one that both sides found acceptable. Payments from the *Creole* Affair were ultimately exchanged some years later. Brady argues however this "ruckus over the liberation of slaves in the Bahamas had stirred domestic sectional dispute while imperiling the conclusion of a treaty that was crucial to establishing amity in Anglo-American relations" (96).

Brady builds on work by historians such as Kenneth Morgan and Richard Huzzey, demonstrating that Americans viewed British efforts to negotiate greater US cooperation in the regulation of the slave trade with suspicion, believing that Great Britain merely desired greater maritime domination.<sup>14</sup> He argues that "American policy toward slave trade suppression can thus be usefully viewed as an attempt to remain outside

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<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire: From Africa to America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 169, 171. Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 41, 51-52.

of this [Britain's] gravitational field to the greatest extent possible while doing what could be done to suppress the trade with this imperative in the forefront" (103). Americans perceived that Britain's ultimate plan was American subordination and efforts at abolition were colored through this perception.

Brady weaves the ongoing debate over colonization through his work, revealing it as one of the "persistent themes in America's exterior policy well into the Civil War" (78). He begins with Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in which the author of the Declaration of Independence argued that "the two races could not live side by side in freedom," and asserted that it was instead better "in his estimation, to deport Blacks when they reached their majority to some faraway place" and declare them free (79). Brady links American interest in the colonization movement with slave uprisings, including the Haitian Revolution and Nat Turner's Rebellion. He references Eric Foner's argument that by the Lincoln-Douglas debates and Abraham Lincoln's campaign for president, "colonization was part of a plan for ending slavery that represented a middle ground between abolitionist radicalism and the prospect of a United States existing forever half-slave and half-free."<sup>15</sup>

In entertaining the prospect of colonization, especially through the efforts of the American Colonization Society, the United States was induced "to engage in further engagement with the Atlantic world" (102). For European powers, the establishment of Liberia in particular meant "an extension of American protection" and "would be tantamount to declaring that Liberia was, in fact, an American colony" (99). Brady reveals the complications the United States faced in establishing Liberia while also maintaining its dedication to the Monroe Doctrine and the "assertion that the United States had no interest in colonization outside its hemisphere, in regions of interest to European powers" (101). In addition, Liberia was not granted independence until 1847 and the United States did not recognize its independence until 1862. Given this reality and the fact that the United States had long refused to enter into a multilateral effort at regulating the slave trade, the British government viewed American involvement in the west coast of Africa with contempt.

*Chained to History* also brings slavery and foreign policy into the context of the annexation of Texas and the prospect of Cuba. Brady illustrates that American expansionism for slaveholders was not an endeavor for merely more land, but that it was an issue that specifically helped slavery. While this argument is not a new one, Brady combines this discussion with Britain's efforts to prevent the annexation of Texas. Britain's desire to see the abolition of slavery in Texas, along with the rest of Latin America, is revealed through letters between British and American government officials. In a letter to Lord Brougham, British Foreign Secretary Lord Aberdeen, for example, wrote that "no one was more anxious than himself to see the abolition of slavery in Texas" (125). American slaveholders' concerns for this were communicated to the American Minister to Great Britain, Edward Everett. As historian Matthew Mason notes in his biography, while Everett was a Northerner and philanthropist, he was no radical abolitionist and instead approached the issue of slavery from a more moderate perspective. In addition, Everett believed that slavery was headed toward extinction and did not require additional agitation to accomplish that goal.<sup>16</sup> Due to the ongoing friction between the US and Great Britain, Americans, especially Southerners, increasingly were convinced that it was Britain's intent to "abolish domestic slavery throughout the entire continent and islands of America" (126). The issue of the annexation of Texas became yet another sticking point for cooperative relations between the United States and Great Britain.

*Chained to History* also shows how US leaders were willing to concern themselves in European and Latin American affairs where slavery in the western hemisphere was concerned. Great Britain demanded that Spain follow through with an agreement that had been made in 1817 that slavery would be abolished in its colonial possessions, including Cuba. In order to satisfy Britain's demands, Spain promised to implement reforms and sent an antislavery captain general to Cuba. In response, Southerners became wrapped up in what became

<sup>15</sup> Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 125-127.

<sup>16</sup> Matthew Mason, *Apostle of the Union: A Political Biography of Edward Everett* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016),

known as the Africanization scare. Elite Cubans were alarmed at the prospect of full abolition and feared another slave uprising such as had taken place in Haiti. Agreeing with their concern were Southern slaveholders and their Northern Democrat supporters. Louisianan annexationist Pierre Soulé led the charge for purchasing Cuba with Secretary of State William Marcy's blessing. This effort, combined with the 1854 Ostend Manifesto, a statement that demanded that the US government should immediately purchase Cuba, outraged Northerners and Europeans alike.

These themes come together nicely with Brady's final chapter. Building on the growing amount of scholarship on the subject, Brady argues that the key to diplomatic success during the Civil War was for the Union to "cast the war as a contest between slavery and freedom" and for the Confederacy to "downplay its significance in the conflict" (154). He addresses two misconceptions regarding the Emancipation Proclamation. The first is that after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, there was no possibility of European intervention on behalf of the Confederacy. The Confederacy had argued that slavery was not the only reason for secession, hoping to garner support from Britain, France, or Spain. As Brady points out, French interest, for example, continued even after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect in 1863. The second misconception is that Lincoln had given up on colonization by the end of 1862. British Honduras or Dutch Suriname became possible candidates for colonization. Building on work by Allen C. Guelzo and others, Brady argues that it was rather the "internal administration infighting and opposition from legislators like [Senator Charles] Sumner" that were enough to derail any emigration schemes for emancipated slaves (178).<sup>17</sup> Thus, the Confederacy found itself at a disadvantage in gaining European support because "the South always labored diplomatically under the weight of its 'peculiar institution'" (179).

*Chained to History* is an important work that brings together recent scholarship on slavery's role in US foreign relations while also presenting new research on the subject. At times in the work, it would be helpful if Brady more clearly delineated his unique perspectives from the scholarship on which he is building so that his new discoveries stand out. In addition, a bibliography, even if a selected one, would be useful for those who wish to reference the current body of work in the field. That being said, Brady presents an excellent as well as thought-provoking historiographical conversation on slavery's place in American foreign relations up to the Civil War. *Chained to History* is a well-researched and useful contribution to the field and will certainly arouse interest in future scholarly research.

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<sup>17</sup> Allen C. Guelzo, review of Magness and Page, *Colonization After Emancipation*, *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 34, no. 1 (2013), 87.

By now, it is almost conventional wisdom that slavery profoundly influenced the growth and development of the American state. As scholars in numerous fields have shown, slavery left its mark on virtually every aspect of antebellum political development, from constitutional design, to taxation, to law enforcement. Moreover, thanks to initiatives like the 1619 Project, this fraught history of slavery and domestic state formation is more widely known than ever before. Much less well known is the role that slavery played in the growth and development of US foreign policy. Steven J. Brady's *Chained to History: Slavery and US Foreign Relations to 1865* offers a comprehensive survey of slavery's entanglements with US foreign policy from the Revolution to the Civil War. Accessible and useful, Brady's book should help bring this overlooked history to a wider public that has been primed by studies of slavery and domestic development.

*Chained to History* consists of six chapters, plus an introduction and an epilogue. The organization is both thematic and chronological: each chapter largely revolves around a single problem or event, while also advancing the overall narrative through time. Chapter 1 narrates the decades-long dispute between the United States and Great Britain over the status of enslaved people who escaped to the British side during the American Revolution. For years following the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, American diplomats pressed Britain to return wartime fugitives (or, failing that, to provide compensation to slaveholders), while their British counterparts steadfastly refused. As Brady observes, the issue proved to be an "insoluble irritant" in late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Anglo-American relations, a small but chronic obstacle to cordial relations between the two powers (18). The dispute was reignited during the War of 1812, which saw yet another mass exodus of enslaved people to British lines. Thus renewed, conflict over rendition and compensation persisted until a final settlement in 1826.

Chapter 2 traces US policymakers' reactions to the Haitian Revolution. The events of the Haitian Revolution—a massive slave uprising in French Saint Domingue 1791 that was followed by a revolutionary abolition decree in 1794, and culminated in the founding of an independent Black state in 1804—were the stuff of nightmares for many white Americans. And yet, as Brady shows (following recent work by Ronald Angelo Johnson and others), the US government did not shrink from engaging with Haitian rebels.<sup>18</sup> The administration of John Adams allowed Americans to sell arms to Toussaint Louverture and on one occasion even dispatched the US Navy to help him in a struggle against a rival. Unsurprisingly, the Jefferson Administration was less eager to assist the cause of Black liberation and self-determination. And yet, as Brady notes, even with a slaveholder in the White House, US military support for Haiti did not cease immediately.

Chapters 3 and 4 take up the parallel stories of international slave-trade suppression and colonization. The major slave-trading powers—Great Britain, the United States, France, Spain, and Portugal—all banned the international slave trade in the early decades of the eighteenth century. To enforce these bans, Britain negotiated a series of treaties which gave the Royal Navy the right to search the ships of suspected slavers that flew the flags of other nations. But the United States held itself aloof from this British-backed multilateral system. While this reluctance owed much to generalized Anglophobia, Brady notes that it was also due to a paranoid belief among southerners that slave-trade suppression was merely the opening move in a nefarious British plot to undermine the 'peculiar institution' itself. It was this belief, as much as anything, which led the United States for decades to refuse to grant Britain the right of search. And because US-flagged ships could not be searched, they became sought-after vessels for illegal slavers of all nations. Only in 1862 did the Lincoln Administration finally permit the Royal Navy to search US-flagged vessels that were suspected of participating in the slave trade.

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<sup>18</sup> Ronald Angelo Johnson, *Diplomacy in Black and White: John Adams, Toussaint Louverture, and Their Atlantic World Alliance* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2014).



Brady weaves together the story of international slave trade suppression with the contemporaneous story of US colonization efforts in West Africa. Projects for removing Black Americans from the United States and settling them in overseas colonies proliferated during the first decades of the nineteenth century. American abolitionists founded one such colony, Liberia, on the west coast of Africa in 1822. In its early years, Liberia was beset not only by disease amongst the population and poor planning, but also by a kind of jurisdictional confusion. Was Liberia a colony of the United States? Or an outpost of the private American Colonization Society? A succession of US administrations affirmed the latter interpretation, disclaiming any rights to sovereignty in the colony, while also refusing to recognize Liberia as an independent state. As a result, Liberia lingered in a state of international limbo for decades.

Chapter 5 rehearses the familiar story of slavery and territorial expansion. Following a long line of historians, Brady argues that the 1845 annexation of Texas was primarily driven by a desire to expand slavery and shore up the political power of slaveholders.<sup>19</sup> Southern paranoia about British antislavery designs on independent Texas also played a crucial role. Similar concerns lay behind the unsuccessful movement to annex Cuba. As long as slavery on the island was secure, proslavery US policymakers were largely content to leave Cuba in Spanish hands. However, in the early 1850s, perceptions of British meddling, as well as the rapid expansion of the African-born slave population (leading to fears of demographic ‘Africanization’), changed the calculus. For the rest of the decade, proslavery policymakers went to great lengths to acquire Cuba from Spain, by means fair or foul.

Chapter 6 relates the story of slavery and US foreign policy during the Civil War. At first, Brady argues (echoing Don H. Doyle and others), Union leaders downplayed the significance of slavery as a war issue abroad.<sup>20</sup> This had the effect of dampening enthusiasm for the Union cause in Europe. Over time, however, President Abraham Lincoln and company learned the value of framing the Civil War as an antislavery struggle for foreign audiences. Two results of this shift in strategy were the long-delayed diplomatic recognitions of Haiti and Liberia (1862) and the Lyons-Seward Treaty (1862), which granted the Royal Navy the right to search US-flagged vessels suspected of slaving. Another outcome—deeply ironic, in retrospect—was the resurgence of colonization efforts. Despite the support of Lincoln and the backing of the federal government, however, attempts to establish colonies in Haiti, Honduras, and Surinam ultimately came to nothing.

*Chained to History* is a work of synthesis. It breaks little new ground, either archival or interpretive. Instead, Brady’s main accomplishment is that he has condensed a vast amount of scholarship about slavery and US foreign policy into a brisk, readable narrative. This is a commendable achievement. Brady’s summaries of tangled issues like slave trade suppression and territorial expansion are careful, thorough, and well-informed. These summaries will be eminently useful to undergraduates and non-specialist historians. And to his credit, Brady does have a few surprises up his sleeve. His discussion of the diplomatic aspects of African colonization is the most complete and insightful that I have encountered.<sup>21</sup> Chapter 6 contains a fascinating excursus on the Russian reaction to the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation that is apparently based on research in Russian newspapers. Thus, while *Chained to History* is perhaps most useful as an introduction to the diplomatic history of slavery, it can also be read profitably by scholars in the field as a complement to texts like Don E. Fehrenbacher’s *The Slaveholding Republic* and Matthew Karp’s *This Vast Southern Empire*.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Frederick Merk, *Slavery and the Annexation of Texas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972); Matthew Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Don H. Doyle, *The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> See also Eugene S. Van Sickle’s work, not cited by Brady. Van Sickle, “Reluctant Imperialists: The U.S. Navy and Liberia, 1819-1845,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 31 (Spring 2011): 107-134.

<sup>22</sup> Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government’s Relations to Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Karp, *The Vast Southern Empire*.

In addition to being a work of synthesis, *Chained to History* is also a book written squarely in the tradition of old-fashioned, high-level diplomatic history. It is a history of marquee names and celebrated treaties, told from the perspective of the White House and the State Department. This approach makes a certain amount of sense in an introductory text. By limiting the number of actors and forces in play, Brady is able to tell a clear, tightly-focused story. But the result is a somewhat thin and incomplete picture of the dynamics of antebellum policymaking. Simply put, antebellum foreign policy was *political*. It took shape in the context of partisan political struggle. Federalists and Republicans, Whigs and Democrats, all held distinct visions of foreign policy, as well as different ideas about what role slavery should play in foreign policy. Every major foreign-policy decision related to slavery was controversial. Indeed, some, like the annexation of Texas, were downright explosive. For the most part, however, *Chained to History* elides this history of political contestation.<sup>23</sup>

Likewise missing is any sustained discussion of the role of public opinion and popular movements in antebellum foreign-policy making. Recent studies by Caitlin Fitz, Timothy Mason Roberts, and others have shown that antebellum Americans were deeply interested in international events and questions, and that they mobilized to press their views on the government.<sup>24</sup> Yet little of this (as it were) grassroots foreign policy history appears in Brady's narrative. In a study of the relationship between slavery and foreign policy, it is especially surprising to find so little in these pages about abolitionism. Did abolitionists mount a critique of proslavery statecraft? What were their foreign policy ideas and aims? How did they lobby the government to advance their international goals? Readers looking for answers to these and other related questions will have to look elsewhere.<sup>25</sup>

As mentioned, *Chained to History* is not primarily a work of original argument and interpretation. Nevertheless, in the introduction and epilogue (and periodically in the main body of the text), Brady does venture two claims of his own about the relationship between slavery and antebellum foreign policy. First, he argues that slavery "drew the nation into relations with the broader Atlantic world" and in this way continually foiled American policymakers' desired goal of a "unilateralist foreign policy" free from "European entanglements" (4, 6). The result was a policy of "hesitant multilateralism" (120). Second, Brady argues that US policymakers were constrained by international conditions and the actions of foreign powers. As he puts it, proslavery policymakers "were never in a position to fully control the issues" that confronted them (181).

Brady's second argument strikes me as indisputable, though hardly groundbreaking. (Jay Sexton, for example, has argued convincingly that nineteenth-century US foreign policymaking operated within the framework of British global hegemony.)<sup>26</sup> Brady's first argument is more interesting, but also somewhat confusing in light of the very history he relates. Certainly there were moments when a desire to protect slavery drew the United States into the international system—as, for instance, when US policymakers appealed to an arbitrator to settle their fugitive slave dispute with Great Britain (an episode recounted in Chapter 1). But as *Chained to History* amply demonstrates, proslavery considerations could also lead policymakers to *reject* international engagement and go it alone. Take, for example, America's decades-long refusal to join the British-backed anti-slave trade system. Or consider slavery-driven expansionism in the 1840s and 1850s. During these decades, proslavery policymakers first waged an unprovoked war of aggression against Mexico in order to

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<sup>23</sup> One symptom of this larger tendency is Brady's habit of using the term 'Washington' as a shorthand to refer to the U.S. foreign policymaking complex, and then noting that 'Washington' did or said something. But 'Washington' was not a unitary, homogenous actor, and it did not speak with one voice.

<sup>24</sup> Caitlin Fitz, *Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of American Revolutions* (New York: Liveright, 2016); Timothy Mason Roberts, *Distant Revolutions: 1848 and the Challenge to American Exceptionalism* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> For abolitionists' popular mobilization against the annexation of Texas, see Corey M. Brooks, *Liberty Power: Antislavery Third Parties and the Transformation of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> Jay Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2011).

secure slaveholding Texas, then ran roughshod over international norms at every turn in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to ‘detach’ Cuba from Spain. Was this conduct really evidence of “hesitant multilateralism”? *Contra* Brady, I think the rather banal conclusion we ought to draw from this history is that slavery’s influence cut two ways. Sometimes it pulled the United States toward multilateralism and constructive international engagement, but at other times it prodded policymakers to act unilaterally.

For Brady, the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 represents a watershed in the history of US foreign policy. While race (and racism) would continue to play a critical role in US foreign policymaking, slavery itself “ceased to be a factor” (182). I think this somewhat oversimplifies matters. It is true that slavery as an economic and political interest ceased to guide US foreign policy after 1865. At the same time, however, there can be little doubt that ‘slavery’ *as an idea and a symbol* remained a live issue in American statecraft. Scholars like Moon-Ho Jung have shown how immigration restrictionists appropriated the rhetoric of slavery and antislavery to bolster the case for Chinese exclusion in the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Michael Salman’s work on indigenous slavery and US colonial rule in the Philippines demonstrates the continuing political resonance of slavery in the era of overseas expansion.<sup>28</sup> In the final analysis, 1865 was perhaps not so much a clean break as an inflection point. If slavery was no longer a primary driver of US foreign policy, ‘slavery’ nevertheless continued to be an indispensable touchstone and rhetorical resource for policymakers and politicians of many stripes.<sup>29</sup>

Having noted these limitations, let me say again that *Chained to History* succeeds admirably as an introduction to the entangled histories of American foreign policy and slavery. Undergraduates, international relations scholars and practitioners, and interested lay readers will find it a clear, accessible, and useful guide to the field.

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<sup>27</sup> Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

<sup>28</sup> Michael Salman, *The Embarrassment of Slavery: Controversies over Bondage and Nationalism in the American Colonial Philippines* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>29</sup> Richard Huzzey’s analysis of the complex afterlife of antislavery ideology in British foreign policy may be particularly illuminating in this connection. See Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

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 Response by Steven J. Brady, The George Washington University
 

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It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to express my gratitude to Ronald Angelo Johnson, Andrew Priest, Maureen Connors Santelli, and James M. Shinn. Each of these scholars has engaged *Chained to History* deeply and with analytical rigor. An author cannot ask for more. I would also like to express my thanks to the editors at H-Diplo for selecting the book for a roundtable, and to Jay Sexton for providing the introduction. I am likewise grateful to the reviewers for, overall, such positive assessments of the book. I will focus this response, however, on some of their suggestions for improvement.

I am very pleased, to say the least, that Johnson found much value in the book. I am also especially grateful that he has chosen to use *Chained to History* in teaching his upcoming seminar. I worked very diligently to write a book that would be challenging, yet accessible, to students. It is truly gratifying that a professional colleague has found it useful for his undergraduate teaching. Having said that, Johnson accurately observes that “the international history perspective, without a sustained conversation about race and racism, has its limitations.” I grant that it would have been ideal to include more of a discussion especially of racism in the book. But working with both my particular skill set and a word limit, I chose to focus on the international history of the book’s subject; an approach which had not yet been explored. I believe that this made for a quite valuable contribution to the scholarship. But it certainly does not exhaust the possibilities for further study, which I would welcome.

Likewise, I agree with Priest when he says of my treatment of the foreign policy of slavery that “it might have been useful to hear more about how antislavery voices affected this diplomacy.” I did attempt in the book to demonstrate the *negative* impact of antislavery and abolitionism on policymakers who responded to these movements by redoubling their efforts to protect slavery in the Atlantic realm. But an exploration of the positive influence of antislavery actors in shaping policy receives less attention. Yet Priest’s is a fascinating suggestion, and I would certainly be pleased to find that antislavery and abolitionist forces exerted more influence on US foreign relations than I have credited them with.

Santelli calls attention to the book’s contributions to scholarship on the issue of slavery and US foreign relations. She therefore suggests that I could have “more clearly delineated [my] unique perspectives from the scholarship on which [I am] building so that [my] new discoveries stand out.” In this, I suspect that she is correct: in writing the book, I was seeking to give due credit to the many scholars on whose work I was building. In doing so, I may have partially ‘buried’ some of what is unique in *Chained to History*. I suspect that this was in part the result of my desire not to overclaim in my conclusions. As to the inclusion of a bibliography, I concede that this would be very useful; I, for one, always appreciate them.

Shinn asserts in his review that *Chained to History* “breaks little new ground.” He has, I would note, fully engaged my own claims to originality. Yet he finds my assertion regarding the limitations placed on US policy by foreign actors “hardly groundbreaking.” But in fact previous scholarship has tended strongly to focus on domestic determinants of foreign relations; on the success of slaveholders and their northern allies in controlling US foreign policy, rather than on the external impediments imposed by the power and interests of other actors.<sup>30</sup> I would add that all of the actors that Shinn points to as missing from the book were themselves domestic. The historian’s tendency has been to tell the story of US foreign relations regarding slavery as an “inside-out” process. I believe that *Chained to History* makes a significant contribution by refocusing the discussion to include non-US actors and their role in shaping the results and limitations of US foreign policy.

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<sup>30</sup> Matthew Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); and Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Shinn also, though gently, objects to my use of the term “hesitant multilateralism,” arguing that “slavery’s influence cut two ways. Sometimes it pulled the United States toward multilateralism and constructive international engagement, but at other times prodded policymakers to act unilaterally.” I agree with Shinn’s summary so wholeheartedly that I wish I had said it that way myself. But as a critique of *Chained to History*, it falls wide of the mark. The quotation about “hesitant multilateralism” (120) in fact refers specifically to US cooperation with Britain in slave trade suppression. It would be difficult to claim that this matter was not solved multilaterally. And US participation in its solution was surely reluctant. That is all that I have asserted on this point. I did not use the term “multilateralism” to describe the foreign policy impact of slavery in general, since I view that impact as overwhelmingly and profoundly negative.

Finally, Shinn calls *Chained to History* “a book written squarely in the tradition of old-fashioned, high-level diplomacy.” While my treatment of, say, African colonization and Russian opinion—which Shinn assesses positively—contain much that deals with private actors, I nevertheless grant his point. This book *does* focus significantly on high-level actors. Such a book was needed. I will leave it to other scholars to take it from here.