

*The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America, 1500–2000.* By FRED ANDERSON and ANDREW CAYTON. New York: Viking, 2005. 544 pages. \$27.95 (cloth), \$16.00 (paper).

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A mythology persists that America has always abhorred militarism, instead offering refuge to those escaping such tyranny and going to war only as a last resort to defend liberty. In part because of these beliefs, the Revolution, Civil War, and World War II, in particular, have resonated strongly in the national consciousness, whereas the Seven Years' War, the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, and the Spanish-American War, all tainted by imperialistic expansion, have stirred fewer memories. Yet these conflicts directly led to crises of governance that necessitated the more vaunted wars of liberation. Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton have sought to draft "a history of North America that emphasizes wars and their effects and stresses the centrality of imperial ambitions to the development of the United States" (xiii). They have structured their book both chronologically and biographically, covering five time periods and crafting capsule biographies of eight individuals to personify the complex historical changes they document. The book constitutes neither a traditional military history nor a general survey of American history. Rather they ruminate on the strained relationship between militarism and liberty within North American history; clearly, this intellectual exercise was cultivated in the ground (zero) of 9/11 and harvested during the war in Iraq.

The authors first explore the life of Samuel de Champlain to reveal the pattern of warfare that developed from the "*Age of Contact* (the 1500s)," when the "radically different systems of war, trade, and empire" (xv–xvi) of Europe and the Americas collided. Just as Champlain was drawn into native practices of warfare, diplomacy, and social interaction that bound the French colonial project in reciprocal relations with *les sauvages*, Indian peoples' exposure to European technologies ensnared them in expanding circuits of warfare and commercial exchange. After the devastating Beaver Wars (French and Iroquois Wars) of the mid-seventeenth century, the French and their native allies established relations in which European gift giving and mediation established mutual cultural bonds to avert warfare and present a united front to counter the developing English-Iroquois axis. Such was Champlain's legacy, a bicultural world in which native autonomy balanced European expansion in uneasy equipoise.

William Penn pursued another objective in the "*Age of Colonization and Conflict* (c. 1600–1750)" (xv): the establishment of a community of religious tolerance in his colony of Pennsylvania, where relations with the Delaware Valley's native peoples would be based on "peace, fair trade, and liberality in dealing with Indians on terms that Indians found acceptable" (56). Given form by the treaty of 1682, this accommodationist strategy enabled Pennsylvania to expand without precipitating warfare with the Delaware and Shawnee until the mid-eighteenth century. The success of Penn's model, however, bore the seeds of its own destruction, as unhindered Euro-American expansion inevitably met the limits of Native Americans' capacity for retrenchment. When the great imperial war erupted in the 1750s, these peoples sided with the French.

George Washington personifies the formative period of the "*Age of Empires and Revolutions* (c. 1750–1900)" (xv). A central figure in the events leading up to the Seven Years' War, Washington shared the British desire to establish order on the American frontier. Britain's decisive victory over the French seemingly heralded a golden age of colonial

expansion, yet concerns about protecting and funding this new territorial empire led Whitehall to rein in the colonists. Washington shared the growing disaffection of other reluctant revolutionaries and answered the call to arms in 1775 when asked to take command of the Continental army. As American victory approached, Washington's mind dwelt ever more on the problems the West posed to the new nation and the uncounted opportunities it offered. The revolutionary settlement contained in the Constitution and the Northwest Ordinance, he felt, solved the twin problems of maintaining internal order and promoting commerce while allowing for an ever-expanding nation under the aegis of the federal government. As president Washington presided over a republican empire that cloaked expansion in the rationalism of rendering order from chaos.

Andrew Jackson, a patriarch of another stripe, helped forge an American empire by conquest at the chaotic fringes of the nation. With a personality cultured by the disorder and interpersonal violence of the old Southwest, Jackson came to embody the new American male: brash and protective of his reputation and his family interests. His campaigns against the Creeks, the British, and the Seminoles were as much about exorcising his patriarchal rage as about the interests of the United States. Jackson's military success cemented a new American expansionism in which offensive war in defense of or to extend American freedoms came to define republican military thought. To view this phenomenon from another perspective, the authors next address the Mexican experience of American expansion through Antonio López de Santa Anna. Like Jackson Santa Anna chose the military as a means of advancing himself. Driven by the need to get ahead, venal in the accumulation of property, and fiercely protective of his honor, Santa Anna ultimately rose to the presidency in 1833. Maintaining internal control, not expanding outward, obsessed Mexican leaders and Santa Anna perceived revolt in Texas as a threat to internal order that had to be put down swiftly. Defeat and the loss of Texas opened Mexicans' eyes to the rapacity of the American people, a realization made real as America flexed once more in the 1840s.

Anderson and Cayton characterize the Mexican-American War as another imperial endeavor that, like the Seven Years' War, spawned reform and revolution in its aftermath, and they explore these developments through Ulysses S. Grant. In retrospect Grant viewed the war as wicked, a naked conquest of territory in the interests of slavery that directly led to the Civil War. But he also believed in the inevitable expansion of American civilization, only preferring that it should be achieved by consensual commercial exchange between peoples. Still when war could not be avoided and when it was undertaken for a good cause, as in the defense of the Union in the Civil War, he felt it must be carried out in a businesslike fashion, forcefully and inexorably. Grant thus straddled cause and effect, the imperial war and the revolutionary resolution that saw the imposition of northern industrial and federal power on the states. As president he strove "to use the power of the national government to encourage democratic governments, political stability, and economic development" (306). Warfare should be a last resort to protect or liberate people and ease their embrace of political and commercial American values, be they Indian, Mexican, or other.

Grant's ideal was put into practice in the "*Age of Intervention* (1900 to the present)" (xv), when America intervened militarily around the globe in the guise of defending liberties abroad. The life of Douglas MacArthur exemplifies the hubris of American imperialism in this era. The Spanish-American War, in which he first served, laid bare the logical tension within American policy, in which the attempt to impose American-styled liberties met resistance from the liberated. Arrogance led to repeated American interventions throughout the Caribbean and Latin America in the war's aftermath, with national interest always

wrapped in the defense of liberty. Americans could better reconcile these ideals with their involvement in World War I, where their actions were largely unblighted by race. MacArthur made his name for military zeal in the Great War, then rose to the pinnacle of the military in the 1920s and 1930s. The certitude with which America pursued a master plan of perpetuating American liberty through just warfare and that he alone was the man destined to project American power worldwide drove MacArthur through the interwar years, his celebrated leadership in the Pacific during World War II, and his mercurial actions in the Korean War. MacArthur faded away just as his brand of racially inflected, paternalistic interventionism would implode in Southeast Asia.

The authors conclude the book with a curiously stunted look at the Vietnam and First Persian Gulf conflicts using Colin Powell as their focal point. Powell's experience in the Vietnam War led him not to question America's role as an interventionist power but to affirm the necessity of having clearly defined and morally defensible objectives before going to war so that the military, the government, and the people united in the effort. The "Powell Doctrine" (418) successfully guided America in the First Persian Gulf War, yet the failure to follow its precepts has left the United States aimlessly stranded in the deserts of Iraq today.

*The Dominion of War* offers much food for thought. The authors have achieved their goals of rearranging "the landscape of historical memory and meaning by emphasizing the importance of the wars Americans have fought less to preserve liberty than to extend the power of the United States *in the name of* liberty" (421). Some sections work better than others, and one could question the appropriateness of including Santa Anna and the Mexican Republic alone among American enemies. Yet the book not only interrogates the American past, it meditates on the soul of the Republic and, ultimately, intends to provoke its audience to consider "the distinctly American dilemma: how to exercise power legitimately and productively in a world made up of peoples who do not universally embrace individual freedom or affirm the desirability of egalitarian democratic governance" (424). I would say this problem is not unique to America, but it is nonetheless a compelling conundrum to ponder.