leaders at these institutions bitterly debated the nature of rhetorical education. Often involving religious or partisan conflicts, such curricular debates indicated, most importantly, the widely differing opinions about the nature of government and particularly the changing meaning of the American college, as large numbers of merchants’ sons now entered school to acquire the social and verbal polish promised by a college education. Using subtlety and rich archival evidence, *Rhetoric and the Republic*’s chapters on rhetorical education are especially valuable because there are no comparable works that discuss these shifts. Particularly interesting is Longaker’s analysis of the rhetorician John Witherspoon’s career at the College of New Jersey and his even greater prominence as a politician and participant in conflicts between Old and New Side Presbyterianism.

Longaker concludes by arguing that the subsequent romanticization of republican rhetoric began with Thomas Jefferson, whose famous “We are all republicans—we are all federalists” inaugural speech in 1800 sought to mobilize republicanism as the rhetorical glue that bound the nation together. This move was one of the first moments in which leaders portrayed republicanism as a source of political ideals that transcended partisan conflicts. But *Rhetoric and the Republic* demonstrates that this brief—and relatively late—moment of nonpartisan republicanism should not outweigh the vitriol of earlier partisan and sectarian battles. These conflicts usefully display to readers the intersections among political philosophy, political conflicts, and rhetorical education and innovation.

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*The Slave Ship*, Marcus Rediker’s newest book, is a grand achievement, a richly textured study that looks at slavery from “a different vantage, from the decks of a slave ship” (p. 11). Employing diaries, letters, published accounts, legal documents, abolitionist literature, a variety of images, and many other sources, including the work of scholars of slavery and the slave trade such as Emma Christopher, Philip Curtin, Joseph Miller, Robert Harms, Stephanie Smallwood,
David Eltis, Eric Robert Taylor, Vincent Brown, and others, Rediker is able to focus on a neglected aspect of slavery—the initial voyage across the Atlantic Ocean.

Rediker brings the power and horror of the slave ship vividly to life in a way that allows readers to imagine what it must have been like for the millions of people whose lives crossed during the fateful voyages of the Middle Passage. As he demonstrates, the slave ship was more than just a conveyance device; it was a floating prison, a factory, and a “machine of terror,” designed to turn resisting captives into terrorized slaves. By the time slaves arrived in the Americas, they had been psychologically and physically transformed and commodified yet had also developed new identities that focused on community and resistance.

The slave ship—itself a form of technology—was packed with mechanisms of terror and coercion. There was the barricado, or fortified barricade, separating the slave berths from the rest of the ship, the blunderbusses and cannons permanently fixed toward the slaves when they were above decks, the netting along the sides of the ship to prevent suicides, the extra decks built with small gratings for air circulation, and the shackles, chains, iron collars, thumbscrews, speculum oris (a force-feeding device), cat-o’-nine-tails, and other instruments of torture. The unusually large and heavily armed crews deliberately fed oceangoing sharks to induce them to pursue the ships.

One of the unusual features of Rediker’s book is its exploration, from multiple perspectives, of the many life experiences associated with the slave ship: Rediker’s mini-biographies depict individuals from all stations in life. There are the international capitalists who developed the trade and reaped the greatest profits; merchants in Europe, America, and Africa; ships’ captains, officers, and common sailors; African officials and commoners; enslaved African women, men, and children; and abolitionists, most notably Thomas Clarkson, who strove to familiarize himself with the reality of the slave ships. The Slave Ship contains the stories of many nameless individuals who survived as well as accounts of those who did not, those who resisted, and those who submitted.

Slaving trips were unlike other international voyages of the time. Although ships’ captains of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were normally strict and brutal, the captains of slave ships were exceptionally so, to both crew and slaves. Describing the atrocities and incredible cruelties that even the more moderate sailing masters, such as John Newton, writer of the hymn “Amazing Grace,” inflicted, Rediker details the captain’s role as an architect of terror. Slaver
captains were the ultimate authority onboard ship and yet continuously felt the need to avert rebellion by both sailors and slaves. Thus the captain was not only a supervisor but also a jailor and a tyrant. Many were exceptionally savage and sadistic men, even by contemporary norms; one captain relished having “a Hell of my own” (p. 188). Becoming progressively more brutal as they neared the African coast, captains meted out exemplary violence to quiet both crew and slaves.

Sensitively exploring the conflicts and coalitions that arose during the voyage across the Atlantic, Rediker portrays sailors, who both participated in and sometimes resisted the violence intrinsic to the system, as both victims of and complicit in the brutality of the trade. Officers, who received a share of the profits, usually had an interest in the success of the endeavor and could be relied on to support the captain. Yet the crew, who often returned home disabled and in debt—if they returned at all—were constantly mutinous and had to be tamed by a regime of terror. These common sailors, Rediker argues, participated in a set of overlapping relationships, negotiating an uneasy coexistence between their membership in a maritime proletariat, a community of shipmates opposed to the officers, and their transformation, when the ship reached Africa, to “white men,” when fear created a new racial identity.

The slaves themselves fought desperately against their enslavers. Rediker demonstrates the extreme difficulty of slave uprisings—beginning with the need to escape from restraints, to obtaining weapons, and then acquiring the knowledge of how to sail the ship. Surviving slaves created a new Atlantic identity forged in their common experience of suffering and rebellion. By the time they arrived in the western Atlantic, the slaves regarded each other as shipmates and kin. Most poignantly, it was the slaves who, taking in diseased and broken-down sailors when no one else would care for them, retained “the most generous and inclusive conception of humanity” (p. 355).

This vivid and in-depth analysis of life aboard the slavers owes much to Rediker’s extensive knowledge of maritime history and his comprehensive efforts to survey the full range of experiences onboard the slaving vessels. The Slave Ship would be especially suitable for those seeking a greater understanding of the history and the human drama of the Middle Passage as well as for a reading assignment in undergraduate classrooms.

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Before reviewing John Grenier’s The Far Reaches of Empire, I have a preference to state: I wish that instead of critiquing a published book I were commenting on a manuscript at its peer-assessment stage. Then I could offer detailed comments directly to the author regarding certain errors and maybe even persuade him to consider broadening his focus. That, however, is not the situation.

In his new study, Grenier gives an account of the hostility, suspicion, and outright warfare that existed in Nova Scotia between 1710 and 1760 among the French, British, Acadians, Mi’kmaq, and New Englanders. It is a time period and subject area other scholars—notably Geoffrey Plank, Elizabeth Mancke, John Mack Faragher, John Reid, Naomi Griffiths, and William Wicken, each with a particular angle—have explored in recent years. Primarily discussing mainland Nova Scotia, Grenier mostly explains events through British and Anglo-American eyes. For me, such a tight focus is unfortunate, and I have more to say about this later.

The main strength of The Far Reaches of Empire is Grenier’s light touch with the material he highlights. He often makes very good use of quotable primary material and is clearly an accomplished writer of historical narratives. The book, which hits its stride in chapters five and six, also contains a number of good maps, although in a few cases settlements are not placed in the correct spots.

Mine may be a minority opinion, but right from the opening pages, I felt that this work struck much the same tone as histories written fifty or more years ago. Early on, Grenier writes that the third focus of his study is on the "machinations of French officials, military officers, and Catholic priests who intrigued to use both the Acadians and the Indians against the British" (p. 4; emphasis mine). I had hoped he was kidding, but apparently not, for that sentence pretty well sums up the interpretation used throughout the entire account. To give another example, Grenier depicts Abbé Le Loutre as the mastermind of French and Acadian resistance to British advances into new regions during the early 1750s, labeling this phase of the conflict “Father Le Loutre’s War.” To be sure, Le Loutre was a key figure, but...