

7. Two Artists Portray Different Ideals of Women in the New Republic

Woman Constricted

Nice



"Keep Within the Compass," sepia engraving, c. 1785-1805, Henry Francis Dupont Winterthur Museum.

Woman as Republican Emblem



Gr. symbol
for victory

G. Washington

Lady
Liberty

Flag = 13 colonies in
stars & stripes.

The Republic
defeated the
crown

Liberty and Washington, unknown artist (c. 1800-1810). Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, New York.

A strange fallacy seems to have crept into the manner of thinking and reasoning upon the subject. Imagination appears to have been unusually busy concerning it. An incorporation seems to have been regarded as some great, independent, substantive thing—as a political end of peculiar magnitude and moment; whereas it is truly to be considered as a *quality, capacity, or mean* to an end. . . .

To this mode of reasoning respecting the right of employing all the means requisite to the execution of the specified powers of the Government, it is objected that none but *necessary* and proper means are to be employed, and the Secretary of State maintains, that no means are to be considered as *necessary*, but those without which the grant of the power would be *nugatory*. Nay so far does he go in his restrictive interpretation of the word, as even to make the case of *necessity* which shall warrant the constitutional exercise of the power to depend on casual and temporary circumstances, an idea which alone refutes the construction. . . .

It is essential to the being of the National government, that so erroneous a conception of the meaning of the word *necessary*, should be exploded.

It is certain, that neither the grammatical, nor popular sense of the term requires that construction. According to both, *necessary* often means no more than *needful, requisite, incidental, useful, or conducive to*. It is a common mode of expression to say, that it is *necessary* for a government or a person to do this or that thing, when nothing more is intended or understood, than that the interests of the government or person require, or will be promoted, by the doing of this or that thing. The imagination can be at no loss for exemplifications of the use of the word in this sense.

And it is the true one in which it is to be understood as used in the constitution. The whole turn of the clause containing it, indicates, that it was the intent of the convention, by that clause to give a liberal latitude to the exercise of the specified powers. The expressions have peculiar comprehensiveness. They are—“to make *all laws, necessary and proper for carrying into execution* the foregoing powers and *all other powers* vested by the constitution in the *government* of the United States, or in any *department or officer* thereof.” To understand the word as the Secretary of State does, would be to depart from its obvious and popular sense, and to give it a *restrictive* operation; an idea never before entertained. It would be to give it the same force as if the word *absolutely* or *indispensably* had been prefixed to it.

3. The Democratic-Republican Societies Oppose Federal Policy, 1793, 1794

*Democratic Society of Pennsylvania, Principles, Articles, and Regulations,
Agreed upon, Drawn, and Adopted, May 30, 1793–July 31, 1794*

The rights of man, the genuine objects of Society, and the legitimate principles of Government, have been clearly developed by the successive Revolutions of America and France. Those events have withdrawn the veil which concealed the dignity and the happiness of the human race, and have taught us, no longer dazzled with

adventitious splendor, or awed by antiquated usurpation, to erect the Temple of LIBERTY on the ruins of *Palaces* and *Thrones*.

At this propitious period, when the nature of Freedom and Equality is thus practically displayed, and when their value, (best understood by those, who have paid the price of acquiring them) is universally acknowledged, the patriotic mind will naturally be solicitous [sic], by every proper precaution, to preserve and perpetuate the Blessings which Providence hath bestowed upon our Country: For, in reviewing the history of Nations, we find occasion to lament, that the vigilance of the People has been too easily absorbed in victory; and that the prize which has been achieved by the wisdom and valor of one generation, has too often been lost by the ignorance and supineness of another.

With a view, therefore, to cultivate the just knowledge of rational Liberty, to facilitate the enjoyment and exercise of our civil Rights, and to transmit, unimpaired, to posterity, the glorious inheritance of a *free Republican Government*, the Democratic SOCIETY of Pennsylvania is constituted and established. Unfettered by *religious* or *national* distinctions, unbiassed by party and unmoved by ambition, this Institution embraces the interest and invites the support of every virtuous citizen. The public good is indeed its sole object, . . .

Civic Festival
on y^e 1st of May 1794

The Democratic Society of Pennsylvania, at their meeting in the city of Philadelphia on the 24th of April, 1794, Resolved unanimously That they would commemorate the successes of their Republican French Brethern in a Civic Festival on the first day of May 1794; and that to this Festival they would invite their Sister Society the German Republican, and all other citizens who harmonized with them in sentiment. . . .

On the first day of May, agreeably to the aforesaid Resolution of the Democratic Society, about Eight hundred citizens assembled at the County Seat of citⁿ Israel Israel, now called Democratic Hall, on the Passyunk Road. . . .

The Flags of the Sister Republics marked and ornamented the seat of festivity. [The following toasts were drunk.]

1 *A Revolutionary Tribunal in Great Britain*:—May it give lessons of liberty to her King, examples of Justice to her Ministry, and honesty to her corrupt Legislature . . .

2 *The Fair Daughters of America & France*:—May they ever possess virtue to attract merit, and sense to reward it.

3 *The Democratic and Republic Societies of the United States*:—May they preserve and disseminate their principles, undaunted by the frowns of powers, uncontaminated by the luxury of aristocracy, till the Rights of Man shall become the Supreme Law of every land, and their separate Fraternities be absorbed, in One Great Democratic Society, comprehending the Human Race. . . .

May every Free Nation consider a public debt as a public curse; and may the man who would assert a contrary opinion be considered as an enemy to his Country. . . .

Thursday, July 31st 1794

The Society met in Special Meeting, at the University, pursuant to a public notification for that purpose. . . .

Citⁿ Leib offered a set of Resolutions against such opposition to the Excise or any other law of the land, as is not warranted by the Constitution of the U.S. . . .

Resolved, as the opinion of this Society, that in a Democracy, a majority ought in all cases to govern; and that where a Constitution exists, which emanated from the People, the remedies pointed out by it against unjust and oppressive laws and bad measures, ought to be resorted to; and that every other appeal but to the Constitution itself, except in cases of extremity, is improper & dangerous.

Resolved, as the opinion of this Society, that altho' we conceive Excise systems to be oppressive, hostile to the liberties of this Country, and a nursery of vice and sycophancy; we, notwithstanding, highly disapprove of every opposition to them, not warranted by that frame of Government, which has received the sanction of the People of the United States.

Resolved, that we will use our utmost efforts to effect a repeal of the Excise-laws by Constitutional means; that we will, at all times, make legal opposition to every measure which shall endanger the freedom of our Country;—but that we will bear testimony against every unconstitutional attempt to prevent the execution of any law sanctioned by the majority of the people.

*The Democratic Society of the City of New-York,
Address to the Republican Citizens of the United States, May 1794*

Republican Friends and Fellow-Citizens! . . .

[W]e firmly deny, that either the principles, regulations, or practice of this society, or any of the others alluded to, as far as our knowledge and judgment extends, can justify, in the smallest degree, any accusation made against them, or us, as sowers of civil discord or sedition, or as promoters of feuds and broils in the community: But that, on the contrary, we most sincerely wish for a union of sentiment throughout the nation, on the *real principles of the constitution, and original intention of the revolution*, and for a perfect and uninterrupted peace with all nations, upon safe and honourable terms. . . .

Yes, Fellow-Citizens, we take a pleasure in avowing to you, that we are lovers of the French nation, that we esteem their cause as our own, and that we are the enemies, the avowed enemies, of him or those who dare to infringe upon the holy law of *Liberty*, the sacred *Rights of Man*, by declaring, that we ought to be strictly neutral, either in thought or speech, between a nation fighting for the dearest, the undeniable, the invaluable Rights of human nature, and another nation, or nations, wickedly, but hitherto (we thank God) vainly endeavouring to oppose her in such a virtuous, such a glorious struggle. . . . [A] very important advantage to be derived from the institutions of societies similar to ours, is the promotion of useful knowledge, and the dissemination of political information. . . .

[I]t is in republican governments—governments instituted upon the only just and solid principle, to promote the universal good and welfare of the people, and not to

From Democratic Society of the City of New York, circular, "At a Meeting of the Democratic Society of the City of New-York, on Wednesday, the 28th of May, 1794," New-York Historical Society.

further th
which poi
that it bec
perfect kn

Fellow C

Whe
can peop
and look
the deep
of the U
the char
enemies

Dur
power g
In a ma
tion. In
reason a
fostered
the will
and vio

It is
were pr
ience w
content
longer
prosect
associa
a belie
self-cro
part of
countie
from th
ther de
ment.
delinq
N
armed

further the wicked designs and crafty intentions of men in power—governments in which political as well as civil liberty has established its salutary and happy seat . . . that it becomes a duty more particularly incumbent upon individuals, to acquire a perfect knowledge of the government and political institutions of their country. . . .

4. President George Washington Attacks “Certain Self-Created Societies” over the Whiskey Rebellion, 1794

Fellow Citizens of the Senate and of the House of Representatives: . . .

When we call to mind the gracious indulgence of Heaven by which the American people became a nation; when we survey the general prosperity of our country, and look forward to the riches, power, and happiness to which it seems destined with the deepest regret do I announce to you that during your recess some of the citizens of the United States have been found capable of insurrection. It is due, however, to the character of our Government and to its stability, which can not be shaken by the enemies of order, freely to unfold the course of this event.

During the session of the year 1790 it was expedient to exercise the legislative power granted by the Constitution of the United States “to lay and collect excises.” In a majority of the States scarcely an objection was heard to this mode of taxation. In some, indeed, alarms were at first conceived, until they were banished by reason and patriotism. In the four western counties of Pennsylvania a prejudice, fostered and embittered by the artifice of men who labored for an ascendancy over the will of others by the guidance of their passions, produced symptoms of riot and violence.

It is well known that Congress did not hesitate to examine the complaints which were presented, and to relieve them as far as justice dictated or general convenience would permit. But the impression which this moderation made on the discontented did not correspond with what it deserved. The arts of delusion were no longer confined to the efforts of designing individuals. The very forbearance to press prosecutions was misinterpreted into a fear of urging the execution of the laws, and associations of men began to denounce threats against the officers employed. From a belief that by a more formal concert their operation might be defeated, certain self-created societies assumed the tone of condemnation. Hence, while the greater part of Pennsylvania itself were conforming themselves to the acts of excise, a few counties were resolved to frustrate them. It is now perceived that every expectation from the tenderness which had been hitherto pursued was unavailing, and that further delay could only create an opinion of impotency or irresolution in the Government. Legal process was therefore delivered to the marshal against the rioters and delinquent distillers.

No sooner was he understood to be engaged in this duty than the vengeance of armed men was aimed at his person and the person and property of the inspector

From “Sixth Annual Address” (1794), in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (Washington, DC: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1910), vol. 1, pp. 154–64.

of the revenue. They fired upon the marshal, arrested him, and detained him for some time as a prisoner. He was obliged, by the jeopardy of his life, to renounce the service of other process on the west side of the Allegheny Mountain, and a deputation was afterwards sent to him to demand a surrender of that which he had served. A numerous body repeatedly attacked the house of the inspector, seized his papers of office, and finally destroyed by fire his buildings and whatsoever they contained. Both of these officers, from a just regard to their safety, fled to the seat of Government, it being avowed that the motives to such outrages were to compel the resignation of the inspector, to withstand by force of arms the authority of the United States, and thereby to extort a repeal of the laws of excise and an alteration in the conduct of Government. . . .

5. An Anonymous Poet Protests the Jay Treaty, 1795

A Poem on Jay's Treaty

*the Jay Treaty: b/w
U.S. + G.B. that averted
war due to left over
issues from Am. Rev.*

Ye Patriots true, that's brave and bold,
That stood "the times that try'd the soul;"
That guarded well the public weal,
Once more to you we now appeal—
Is't Britain's pow'r—or is it gold?
Are we conquer'd? or are we sold?
Must we submit, or war, the fate?
Or caught like fish, with gold for bait?
Shameful tho't! we hear you say,
That ruinous Treaty, signed by Jay,
Is fraught with evils, not a few;
Disgraceful to our country too.
Rouse! then ye brave, 'ere 'tis too late,
And give it, its deserved fate.
Our ~~Nabobs~~ they may prate and say,
'Tis a rabble—and only *they*,
That blames our well-beloved Jay. . . .

*person of wealth
& prominent*

6. Thomas Jefferson Describes the

"Aristocratical Party," 1796

Letter to Philip Mazzei, April 24, 1796

. . . The aspect of our politics has wonderfully changed since you left us. In place of that noble love of liberty and republican government which carried us triumphantly through the war, an Anglican monarchical aristocratical party has sprung up, whose

From "A Poem on Jay's Treaty," in Anonymous, *An Emetic for Aristocrats! Or, A Chapter Respecting Governor John Jay and His Treaty* (Boston: n.p., 1795), 19-23.

From Thomas Jefferson to Phillip Mazzei, April 24, 1796, in Julian P. Boyd et al., eds., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950-), vol. 29, pp. 73-88.

avowed object is to draw over us the substance, as they have already done the forms, of the British government. The main body of our citizens, however, remain true to their republican principles; the whole landed interest is republican, and so is a great mass of talents. Against us are the Executive, the Judiciary, two out of three branches of the Legislature, all the officers of the government, all who want to be officers, all timid men who prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty, British merchants and Americans trading on British capital, speculators and holders in the banks and public funds, a contrivance invented for the purposes of corruption, and for assimilating us in all things to the rotten as well as the sound parts of the English model. It would give you a fever were I to name to you the apostates who have gone over to these heresies, men who were Samsons in the field and Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot England. In short, we are likely to preserve the liberty we have obtained only by unremitting labors and perils. But we shall preserve it; and our mass of weight and wealth on the good side is so great, as to leave no danger that force will ever be attempted against us. We have only to awake and snap the Lilliputian cords with which they have been entangling us during the first sleep which succeeded our labors. . . .

7. President Washington Bids Farewell to His Countrymen, 1796

The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so, for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad, of your safety, of your prosperity, of that very liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee that from different causes and from different quarters much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth. . . .

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our union it occurs as matter of serious concern that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by *geographical* discriminations—*Northern* and *Southern*, *Atlantic* and *Western*—whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence within particular districts is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You can not shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heartburnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection. . . .

All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction; to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community, and, according to the alternate triumphs of

From "Farewell Address" (1796), in James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (Washington, DC: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1910), vol. 1, pp. 205–16.

different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans, digested by common counsels and modified by mutual interests.

However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things to become potent engines by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people, and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.

> As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is to use it as sparingly as possible, avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it; avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertions in time of peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burthen which we ourselves ought to bear. . . .

> Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct. . . .

In the execution of such a plan nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded, and that in place of them just and amicable feelings toward all should be cultivated. . . .

[The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little *political* connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.]

Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the cause of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise to us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities. . . .

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far, I mean, as we are not at liberty to do it; for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But in my opinion it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.

Good

⌘ E S S A Y S

How can we explain the intense political conflicts of the 1790s? Were they, as an earlier generation of historians posited, a result of the perennial clash between agrarian democracy and urban capitalism? Did the ideas of politics and social order embodied in the fights over finance, foreign policy, and civil liberties defy simple social explanations? Or were concerns about the preservation of slavery and southern power the hidden force driving the Republican opposition, its national leadership dominated by southern slaveholders like Jefferson and Madison?

The political culture that energized the new republic in the 1790s was an extension of developments that occurred during the Revolution itself. In the first essay David Waldstreicher of Temple University examines how political rituals of the Revolution eked out a space for both nationalism and partisanship that laid the groundwork for future groups like the Democratic-Republican societies.

#2 James E. Lewis Jr., who teaches at Kalamazoo College, sees the partisan battles primarily in ideological terms, pitting the friends of order and hierarchy against the friends of liberty and equality. By focusing on the frenzy that led directly to the election of 1800, Lewis reveals the fragility of the new nation's political institutions and shows that both the Jeffersonians and Federalists were driven to more extreme apprehensions than most historians have assumed. Writing in a very different key, John Ashworth of the #3 University of Nottingham criticizes interpretations that fail to describe the parties as diverse coalitions, emphasizes the sectional character of the division, and suggests that what he calls the Jeffersonians' "populism" was ironically bound up inextricably with the institution of slavery.

Public Celebrations, Print Culture, and American Nationalism

DAVID WALDSTREICHER

partisanship and
nationalism carved
out.

Despite all the recent attention to public ritual and performance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the role of celebratory activities in the revolutionary era—indeed, their crucial part in the invention of American nationhood—has been largely neglected. This is somewhat surprising, especially when we consider that students of the American Revolution have long appreciated the political importance of rituals for the prerevolutionary colonial resistance movement of the 1760s and early 1770s. What is lacking in the historiography of the Revolution is not an appreciation of festivity as a site of local political action, of conflict and consensus. It is rather an understanding of the relationship between local street theater and the nation: a relationship that came into being through the mediation of print.

#1 . . . I argue that American nationalism emerged from the conjunction of local celebrations and their reproduction in the press. As the very practices of nationalism, those celebrations and publications drew upon the politicized rituals that Britons had been employing for more than a century. The mobilization of citizens to celebrate

"Rites of Rebellion, Rites of Assent: Celebrations, Print Culture, and the Origins of American Nationalism," *Journal of American History*, 82, 1995, pp. 35–61. Copyright © Organization of American Historians. <http://www.oah.org>. Reprinted with permission.

patriotic occasions, with the reprinting of accounts of these events, gave the abstractions of nationalist ideology a practical sense.

As they developed after 1776, these rites of celebration, publication, and republication resolved certain problems of the American revolutionary struggle. Celebrations and printed accounts of them embodied and mobilized a nationalist ideology, an ideology that made consensus the basis of patriotism. Indeed, by fostering an idea of the nation as extralocal community and by giving ordinary people the opportunity for local expression of national feeling, this reciprocal dynamic of celebrations and print literally and figuratively papered over the disturbing class resentments (expressed in the antiaristocratic language of the Revolution) that had energized much of the populace in the first place. By the 1790s those resentments would reemerge in festive culture, in nationalist celebrations where they were recast into national, partisan political divisions. Yet during the war years, past and present divisions between plebeians and elites were absorbed by the direct link between "the people" and the nation whose independence they repeatedly celebrated. The local came to represent the national while the present gave proof, not of the past, but of the future. Diffused by print, the unruly rites of rebellion could serve as ruling rites of assent. . . .

Celebrations were not afterthoughts to independence, nor were they mere symbolizations of accumulated oedipal anxieties. They were anticipated, deliberate, necessary responses to the Declaration of Independence. By the summer of 1776, independence had been in the air for at least a year, and the Continental Congress had already declared a national fast day, July 20, 1775. Yet on sending out the printed declaration, the Congress did not recommend fasting, mourning, bell ringing, or any other observance. Congress would not—could not—order the nation to celebrate its own birth. Its members acted upon the assumption that the new nation could not exist until the people spontaneously celebrated its existence, and until evidence of this nationwide celebration appeared in print.

The Declaration of Independence signaled the ultimate rejection of England: it thrust all grievances onto the person of the king. Consequently, its public proclamation set off public vilifications of the king's body. New Yorkers tore down the equestrian statue of George III and hacked it to pieces; in other places the monarch's picture and royal arms were ceremoniously burned. Many scholars, most notably Winthrop Jordan, have observed in these king-killing rituals ("the symbolic transfer of sovereign power from the king to the people of the American republic.") Yet these founding rituals drew less on some "prehistoric human past" of ritual murder than on a quite historic recent past of British monarchical political culture. Moreover, this king killing was not only a murder: it was also a *funeral*. Like the corpse of Liberty after the Stamp Act, George III was "laid prostrate in the dirt," his remains set afire. In Savannah he "was interred before the Court House." With their town lit up at night in honor of the occasion, Baltimoreans saw "the effigy of our Late King . . . carted through the Town, and committed to the flames, amidst the acclamations of many hundreds—the just reward of a tyrant." Only "the people" presided at such rites. At Huntington, Long Island, they took down the old liberty pole (topped with a flag dedicated to liberty and George III) and used the materials to fashion an effigy. This mock king sported a wooden broadsword, a blackened face "like *Dunmore's* [slave] Virginia regiment," and feathers, "like *Carleton* and *Johnson's* savages." Fully identified with the Black and Indian allies his generals

Losing their
English
names.

had enlisted to fight the Americans, wrapped in the union jack, he was hung, exploded, and burned.

Whether the deceased arrived dead or was killed on the spot, this was no ordinary funeral: it inverted and transformed the king's birthday celebration. The two most often mentioned aspects of this independence day—the bonfires and the bells—had been centerpieces of those festivals. Unlike the Stamp Act funerals, which had also turned funeral into festival, jubilation at the declaration rites was immediate and continuous, not deferred until the resurrection of the past. Thus the preservation of birthday cheer at a funeral without solemnity: this death meant eternal life, the life of a new nation and its people. A few days after New Yorkers toppled the equestrian statue of George III—built in gratitude for the repeal of the Stamp Act—a correspondent expressed no doubt as to the place of the event in history.

The fourth instant was rendered remarkable by the most important event that ever happened to the *American* colonies, an event which will doubtless be celebrated through a long succession of future ages, by anniversary commemorations, and be considered as a grand era in the history of the *American* states.

Nationhood could not fail to occur if left to the *people* who had demonstrated their assent. Even if in the present there were still thirteen "colonies," in the future there would be independent "states." Instead of toasting the king, Patriots in Boston drank "prosperity and perpetuity to the U.S.A." New York seized the ultimate royal (once heavenly) prerogative, declaring a jubilee—a "general jail delivery, with respect of Debtors."

The declaration spoke for the people, or at least for their representatives. But the newspaper texts spoke as well, in response to the people's ritualized demonstration of their assent. Critics who rightly point out the performative nature of "declaring independence" and who stress the declaration as the defining moment of the American polity still often underestimate the mutually defining character of rhetoric and ritual, and their joining in print, during the era of the American "founding." In one sense, there was and is a homology, or structural parallel, between rhetoric and ritual. (Rhetoric) works like ritual in that it persuades through invocation of reliable, repeated movements. (Ritual) like rhetoric, brings us into communion with the performer and the performance. Given this structural parallel, it might be enough to consider all of the Patriots' actions as rhetorical, using the literary critics' model of the text, or to talk of all their words as ritual, employing the tools of anthropologists.

To do so, however, would conflate and thus obscure the special conditions that enabled this moment in history: the interplay of rhetoric and ritual, of oratory, street theater, and print. I would suggest that if the rituals of national birth ratify the act of declaring independence, the printed descriptions of those rituals also had a crucial, and not merely a supplemental, role. They too confirmed "the people" as the authors of independence, if not of "the Declaration of Independence." To understand these links it is necessary to see newspaper accounts of celebrations less as objective reportage than as pieces of rhetoric: a genre designed to define what it ostensibly describes. These printed accounts played a crucial role in a celebratory political culture: the role of enacting American belonging, of fulfilling the prophecies of independence. Reporting celebrations, they inspired new ones and thus new reports of celebrations.

The generic newspaper accounts of the response to the declaration always stress the voluble and visible assent of the people. At Easton, Pennsylvania, on July 8, the “great number of spectators” who heard the declaration “gave their hearty assent with three loud huzzahs, and cried out, ‘May *God* long preserve and unite the Free and Independent States of *America*.’” The people of Trenton, New Jersey, responded to the declaration “with a loud acclamation.” The sounds and sights, as reported, confirmed the cross-class unity of the day. In Providence, Rhode Island, “The Declaration was received with joy and applause by all ranks.” The Committee of Safety in Halifax County, North Carolina, asked both “freeholders and Inhabitants” to attend their public reading. This was not to be taken for granted. The shadow of the unruly crowd hung over these ritual and rhetorical demonstrations of the new order. The writer of an account of the celebration in Richmond, Virginia, expressed relief: “Although there were near 1000 people present, the whole was conducted with the utmost decorum; and the satisfaction visible in every countenance sufficiently evinces their determination to support [independence] with their lives and fortunes.” In Boston, Massachusetts, “undissembled festivity cheered and brightened every face.” By contrast, pictures of the king and Tories were everywhere taken down: their faces were not to be seen.

These rhetorical appeals to sight, to the sensory experience of seeing, can be interpreted as one of the ways in which the newspapers successfully bridged street theater and the act of reading (itself a visual experience). In this respect, printed accounts acted nationally as the personal display of sentiment—the huzzah, the toast, the beaming countenance—acted locally: both taught patriotic feeling and action even while demonstrating that such virtue already predominated across class boundaries in those places where “joy and festivity pervaded all ranks of people.” Readers as far away as Philadelphia learned that in Savannah, “a great number of people than ever appeared on any occasion before, in this province” came out to witness the symbolic funeral of George III. The corollary, invoked explicitly in this case, was that America would be great among the nations.

Reports of celebrations elsewhere demonstrated the simultaneity of national action and the pervasiveness of national sentiments. *The Virginia Gazette* of Williamsburg went to the trouble of reproducing accounts of the declaration celebrations from New York City and from Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey, while the *Norwich Packet* in Connecticut relayed an account that came all the way from Williamsburg, Virginia. This pattern continued during the war years. A Charleston paper carried an account of the Philadelphia Fourth of July celebration of 1779—five weeks later. The *Pennsylvania Journal* of Philadelphia reprinted descriptions of the Fourth of July from distant Richmond as well as nearby Trenton. The printed description of local display was thus the perfect way to spread nationalism. The same vehicle that reported the local and present-oriented recent past could make the extralocal future self-evident.

Unfortunately for the Patriots, nationalist celebrations and publications alone could not win the war for independence, much less guarantee present unity and future glory. Charles Royster rightly observes that “many revolutionaries tried to win independence by declaring it over and over. In the search for signs of grace, they often convinced themselves, for a while, that words were works.” They probably did so because the decade’s worth of politicized celebration and printed commentary

that had characterized the resistance movement made it seem as if street theater and printed words did combine to form the most effective of political works. This is why the ardent celebrating continued, and even escalated, after July 4, 1776. Having affirmed the righteousness of their revolution by their manner of receiving the good news, Patriots linked an increasingly interregional war effort to their local experiences by holding "continental" fasts and thanksgivings, by celebrating anniversaries of war victories and independence, and by mourning defeats and heroic deaths. The Declaration of Independence celebrations and the Fourth of July anniversaries that came to follow them annually were only models for the national celebrations that filled the war years with sets of thirteen gunshots and lists of thirteen toasts. More important than the speed with which the Fourth of July celebration spread, or even the local variations in the celebrations (if these were recoverable), is the generic quality of the commentary on the celebrations: the vagueness—the intentional obscurity—of the printed reports. The summation of the report on the July 4, 1777, celebration in Philadelphia proved to be typical in its guarantees: "Every thing was conducted with the greatest order and decorum, and the face of joy and gladness was universal." The overwhelming intent of these rites was unity. As a result, the achievement of sameness in these rites—such as the ubiquitous use of the number thirteen, one for each state—proved that national unity existed. And the generic descriptions that so frustrate the scholar looking for regional variation or local detail were chosen deliberately, for the same reason.

In a hundred birthdays and funeral rites, the Patriots built an experiential and a discursive basis for the belief that "the nation" exists and can be spoken of, that there is a national mind that thinks, and a national character with a virtuous heart. *Interesting.* Massachusetts Patriots took the lead in turning local episodes into occasions for revolutionary—and by extension national—memory. Since 1770 they had marked the Boston Massacre with dirges and orations on the dangers to liberty posed by a standing (British) army. The Sons of Liberty in Boston and elsewhere kept up the Stamp Act holidays of August 14 and March 18. The encounter at Lexington was only the first battle to be commemorated annually. In June 1777 the Palmetto Society of Charleston, South Carolina, established itself to commemorate the June 28, 1776, victory at nearby Sullivan's Island. After bell ringing in the morning, a church service and oration in honor of the militia, and intermittent gun blasts by the boats in the harbor, three hundred Charlestonians headed to the fort for a dinner party. Two other groups dined together (one at the local liberty tree), and fireworks closed the festivities. Likewise, as early as 1778 and 1779 the inhabitants of Bennington, Vermont, and Saratoga, New York, sponsored civic feasts and orations that underscored the national significance of their local victories. Local attachments were no prerequisite, though—American patriots as far away as St. Croix in the West Indies celebrated the anniversary of Lexington.

More common, especially as the Continental army fared better, were the spontaneous rejoicings when news arrived of a Patriot victory. All of Cambridge, Massachusetts, was illuminated the evening word came of Gen. John Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga in October 1777. In reports of such festivity, correspondents stressed the immediacy of popular demonstration. Even more than the judicious preservation of anniversaries, spontaneous joy revealed cross-class unity in the Continental cause. On June 25, 1779, a citizen of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, received a personal

letter from Gen. Horatio Gates, who wrote, "I do most heartily congratulate you upon the *Success* of our *Arms* in South Carolina, which I think finishes the British Empire in AMERICA." "Immediately," the account reads, bells began to ring, and continued to ring all day, interspersed with the firings of cannon. This particular description, from the perspective of a gentleman, reveals the dependence of planned festivals on the more spontaneous (and inclusive) demonstrations of assent. Only *after* describing the immediate revelation of patriotic joy does the author go on to describe the gathering at the state house of the "most respectable gentlemen . . . whose smiling countenances evidenced the sincerity of their Hearts." The toasts these worthies offered were not solely for their own consumption; described as public, they were "accompanied with three Huzzas in and out of Doors." The subjects of the report are unquestionably members of the upper classes, but their sincere displays of patriotic emotion are ratified by the populace at large.

Who were the possessors and performers of political virtue? Did the people "out of doors" have it—or merely recognize it when they saw it? Despite a consensus that the people were the source of political legitimacy, the character and limits of popular action remained unresolved. Two years earlier in Portsmouth, on the first anniversary of the Fourth of July, a Captain Thompson had somehow succeeded in getting "all the friends of American independency" on board his docked Continental ship. But then who were the "large concourse of people" on the wharf who vociferously approved the thirteen guns fired? Likewise, if ritual dinners occurred during daylight hours, the citizens appeared to ratify the sentiments of the toast givers by participating in illuminations and fireworks at night. In revolutionary rhetoric and practice there remained a vagueness, an indeterminacy about who were "the people" and who were "the citizens," or true political actors. This contradiction would plague republican ideology for many years to come.

Different definitions both of "the people" and of citizenship coexisted uneasily within the revolutionary alliance. Rituals and published descriptions of rituals often expressed uncertainties about whether all the "people" were "citizens" even while they served as the potential sites for resolving the question. Early Fourth of July celebrations were attempts to (re)establish an organic link between elite and populace, ratifying both popular sovereignty and the most tasteful displays of patriotic affiliation. They did this by deferring controversial questions of political participation and local control in favor of self-evident displays of national unity. The thirteen toasts generally offered—one for every state in the new union—not only spread revolutionary ideology; they also naturalized *national* pride. Rather than moving organically from local to national identifications, the toasts moved from the national back to the local, making the local part of, or evidence for, the greater national entity. Invariably, the first toasts lauded "The United States," "The Congress," the Continental army, George Washington, the holiday itself—all *national* institutions. Only afterward did they (sometimes) move on to praise "the State of New Jersey," the "brave militia," or "our officers and privates" who fought at the battle of Monmouth Courthouse. In the story told by these toasts, the original source of joy is always national. Local luminaries and events prove virtues epitomized by attachment to the glory of America.

The muster of the militia on the Fourth of July, the new national holiday, provided a particularly appropriate way to ratify local leadership while nationalizing

popular sovereignty. On the morning of Independence Day, 1779, in Boston, the militia paraded and performed a mock engagement before "a vast concourse of spectators." Afterward, one hundred Patriots ate under a tent on the Common. Again attendance and display prove the constancy of revolutionary sentiments.

The spirit of the people never appeared at once more elated and firm than upon this happy occasion: An unaffected joy was diffused thro' the countenances of the generality of the citizens—intermix'd with such composure and decency as afforded a most agreeable indication of their entire satisfaction in this glorious revolution, and that the true republican principles were not only well understood but highly relish'd.

The "generality" of citizens not only comprehend republicanism but show joy on their faces and "decency" in demeanor—a remarkable statement of optimism in so large and troubled a city as revolutionary Boston. Coming at a time of military setbacks, when the sustaining virtues of the populace seemed doubtful, rhetoric here functioned as self-fulfilling prophecy, in that its local details, such as the smiling faces, were meant to inspire what they described. Virtue is apparent in the response to nationalist ritual; thus virtuous patriots would be citizens devoted to the needs of the nation.

Another way to ensure that celebration served virtue was to follow the dicta of republican simplicity. Sometimes this was a matter of necessity. As secretary of the Philadelphia Council shortly after the British evacuation in 1778, Timothy Matlack made it publicly known that "because of the heat and 'scarcity' of candles, and other considerations," the council suggested that residents forbear from Fourth of July illuminations. A citizen of Newport, Rhode Island, reported in 1780 the thirteen gun blasts fired by the French ships in the harbor, combined "with other such demonstrations of joy as the embarrassed circumstances of the town would admit." Controversy attended the question whether the Continental Congress should sponsor fireworks and festivities. William Henry Drayton urged the measure; his fellow South Carolinian Henry Laurens argued that such "fooleries" had brought down the republics of ancient Greece. For the most part, leaders resolved this problem by imagining their holidays to be sacred—and thus solemn. A gentleman in Newburyport, Massachusetts, wrote that the Fourth of July anniversary spurred his town to comply with state requests and send more men off to battle. After an oration, fifty-nine were chosen to march off in the morning; local men of property showed their zeal by pledging to make good on the soldiers' pay. This was evidence of true virtue and he rejoiced: "Plato thanked heavens he was born in the age of Socrates: I give thanks that I was born an American; that I lived in the hour of the separation of America from Britain, and that I have seen the exertions of my country in the cause of freedom, that rival the boasted patriotism of antiquity."

Yet the mythic "patriotism of antiquity" was not the only kind that helped achieve American independence, and some early skeptics underscored this by reminding others of the time-tested relationship of celebration to crowd action and drink. After the first Fourth of July, Continental Congress member William Williams of Connecticut wrote home to Jonathan Trumbull, "Yesterday was in my opinion poorly spent in celebrating the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. . . . a great expenditure of liquor, powder etc. took up the Day and of candles thro the City good part of the night." He added, "I suppose and I conclude much Tory unilluminated

glass will want replacing." A broadside circulated in Philadelphia after the victory at Yorktown pleaded that

those Citizens, who choose to ILLUMINATE on the GLORIOUS OCCASION, will do it this evening at Six, and extinguish the lights at Nine o'clock. Decorum and harmony are earnestly recommended to every Citizen and a general discountenance to the least appearance of riot.

Patriot leaders wanted order, but they needed popular celebration and its impolite reversals. Such expressions of praise and insult remained the main mode of distinguishing Whig from Tory, a distinction that itself rested on the Whig assertion of the people's authority. At Princeton in 1778, the inhabitants were said to have found particular pleasure in firing the thirteen cannon, "being some of the brass field-pieces taken from General Burgoyne, *one* of the three *conquerors of America*." Three years after the Treaty of Paris ended the war for independence, in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, one could still find "Colonel JOHN BULL . . . unanimously placed on the wheatsack."

This celebratory mode is captured in a 1776 "new favorite song at the American Camp." Sung to the tune of the "British Grenadiers," it inverts all things British, truly turning the world upside down.

Your dark unfathom'd Councils, our weakest Hands defeat,
Our Children rout your Armies, our Boats destroy your Fleet;
And to complete the dire Disgrace, cooped up within a Town,
You live the scorn of all our Host, the Slaves of WASHINGTON.

Great Heaven! is this the Nation, whose thundering Arms were hurl'd,
Thro Europe, Africa, India; whose Navy rul'd the World;
The lustre of your former Deeds, whole Ages of Renown,
Lost in a moment, or transferred to us and WASHINGTON.

The British past has passed from relevance. Pausing for a moment to assure the listener that freedom—not mere glory—inspires the American, the song concludes:

Proud France should view with Terror, and haughty Spain should fear,
While every warlike Nation would court Alliance here.
And ———, his minions trembling, dismounted from his T———,
Pay homage to *AMERICA* and glorious WASHINGTON.

This is the heady, king-killing optimism of 1776; yet with the French alliance, international recognition reinforced these boastful wishes. As William Stinchcombe and Beverly Orlove Held have shown, elaborate celebrations of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, the birthday of King Louis, and the birth of the dauphin helped to prove Americans' sincere loyalty to their new ally and to define American national identity against a common enemy. Celebrating the alliance at Washington's camp, "through the whole, there was a remarkable style of looks and behavior, undebauched by British manners or British entertainments." The French ministry in America did its part by sponsoring orations and festivities on the Fourth of July as well as on French red-letter days. Though it required considerable ideological agility to explain how the popish French monarchy could truly rejoice at the spectacle of the republican United States (and vice versa), the symbolic and actual presence of the French

at these celebrations helped to keep the focus national and to fix the burden of opprobrium on the common enemy, England.

French support also reinforced a key idea in the development of American nationalism: that the United States was at the center of a "world stage," acting out God's plan. Here national celebration became the site of that peculiar mixing—or perhaps we should say remixing—of Patriot politics and millennial thought. Millennial thought in this context did not require (though it often included) belief in the coming of God's rule on earth; rather, political millennialism was characterized by an overriding confidence in the future. "I congratulate you on your glorious prospects," said David Ramsay in one of the first Fourth of July orations to be published.

When I anticipate in imagination the future glory of my country, and the illustrious figure it will soon make on the theater of the world, my heart distends with generous pride for being an American. What a situation for empire! . . . Our independence will redeem one quarter of the globe from tyranny and oppression, and consecrate it as the chosen seat of Truth, Justice, Freedom, Learning, and Religion.

In newspapers, such sentimental paeans to the American future are often juxtaposed with mock funerary announcements like "Old England's Last Will."

Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and others have shown how nineteenth-century Europeans invented traditions to fit new national mythologies. But the American revolutionaries already had a tradition: an English tradition of revelry and rights that independence had rendered suddenly problematic. For the American patriots after 1776, then, the more unprecedented everything appeared, the better. Appropriating the oldest English commemorative rituals and rhetorics, celebrants of the nation during the war struggled to keep the character of a "first celebration" by always celebrating the future—a strategy that helped deflect the difficulties of a less than perfect present. "A second celebration already has the character of a reification," Paul Ricoeur tells us; communities usually celebrate the past in order to legitimate the present. Through their celebrations of each remarkable revolutionary event, American nationalists repeatedly enacted the "founding." In the present there was an army to support and the class-based cultural rifts separating decorous diners from riotous revelers. In the future there was unanimity, prosperity, nationhood—and none of these problems. Thus the problems of the present were incidental, local, passing, past.

Political Crisis and the "Revolution" of 1800

JAMES E. LEWIS, JR.

Writing to the Virginia jurist and essayist Spencer Roane in September 1819, Thomas Jefferson described his election to the presidency as "the revolution of 1800." It was, in Jefferson's view, "as real a revolution in the principles of our government as that of 1776 was in its form." He considered it revolutionary even though it had been effected not "by the sword . . . but by the (rational and peaceable instrument of reform) REFORM

Horn, James J., Jan Ellen Lewis, and Peter S. Onuf, eds., *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and the New Republic*, pp. 3–29. © 2002. University of Virginia Press. Reprinted by permission.

the suffrage of the people." In juxtaposing these two "revolutions," Jefferson also united them; the "revolution of 1800," in his view, redeemed and extended the Revolution of 1776. Still, his dichotomies—1800 vs. 1776, principles vs. form, suffrage vs. sword—suggest the breadth of Jefferson's definition of "revolution." They also obscure the complexities and potentialities of the election of 1800, when a revolution in "form" effected by the "sword" seemed to many a real possibility. . . .

[The election of 1800 capped a period of intense partisan rivalry in the United States. The Quasi-War with France, the Alien and Sedition Acts, the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, the expansion of the army, Fries' Rebellion, and countless other developments fueled a sense of crisis in the United States that lasted the entirety of Adams's presidency. The leaders of each party proposed dramatically different responses to each of these developments. Throughout this crisis, party conflict remained at a fever pitch, with effects that extended from Congress and the executive offices to the press, the dueling ground, the meeting hall, the tavern, and the street. Party rivalries did not just affect politics. They also strained and distorted business and social relationships.

In this superheated atmosphere, the election of 1800 assumed tremendous importance. Since each side believed that the other would destroy the nation if it controlled the executive branch, a revolutionary result seemed possible, even likely, even if the election itself proceeded in an unrevolutionary manner. Many Federalists worried that a victorious Jefferson would fritter away federal power, stir up class resentment, and bring about an alliance with France and a war against Great Britain. Robert Goodloe Harper warned that if the Federalists lost the election, they might "live to see our country mourn, in blood & ashes, over the consequences." The rumors that reached Jefferson in early 1800 said that the Federalist "eastern states would . . . throw things into confusion, and break the Union" if a Republican won the election. At the same time, many Republicans feared that four more years of Federalist rule would lead to a consolidated nation, a monarchical government, and a return—in form, if not in name—to British subjugation. Virginia governor James Monroe considered a Republican victory essential to "secure to us forever those liberties that were acquired by our revolution [and] which ought never to have been put in danger." If the Republicans lost, Hamilton warned, Virginia would "resort to the employment of physical force" to gain power.

Both Federalists and Republicans expressed doubts that there would even be an election in the two or three years before the electors finally cast their votes in December 1800. Outraged by the Republican response to the Quasi-War, the expanded army, and the Alien and Sedition Acts, Federalists calculated that their opponents might destroy the government before the election could take place. Writing from Europe in June 1798, for example, John Quincy Adams passed along a French report "that the *friends of liberty* in the United States. . . . [would] probably not wait for the next election, but in the mean time [would] destroy the fatal influence of the President and Senate *by a Revolution.*" Both Theodore Sedgwick and Fisher Ames warned that the Republicans in the large mid-Atlantic states would attempt a military takeover once they finished "render[ing their] militia[s] as formidable as possible, and supply[ing their] arsenals & magazines." "It is obvious to me," Ames explained in early 1800, "that all other modes of decision will be spurned as soon as the antis [the Republicans] think they have force on their side." Another prospect

The imp.
of the
election.

that worried Federalists during the months before the election was Republican disunionism. Virginia Republicans, in particular, emerged as committed secessionists in Federalist correspondence. A rumor that William Branch Giles, a former Virginia congressman, had "expressly [stated] that he desired that the Union of the States might be severed" even crossed the Atlantic in both directions. It traveled from Philadelphia to London in a private letter from the secretary of state to the minister to Great Britain and returned from Berlin to Philadelphia in a letter from John Quincy Adams to his mother.

Republicans similarly questioned whether the election would even occur. When the Federalists were at their strongest and the Republicans at their weakest, leading Republicans feared that their opponents would use their position to transform the government. In October 1798 Jefferson predicted a succession of steps by which the Federalists would establish a government that was both monarchical and aristocratic. If the public tolerated the Alien and Sedition Acts, he warned, "we shall immediately see attempted another act of Congress, declaring that the President shall continue in office during life." Additional acts would complete "the transfer of the succession to his heirs, and the establishment of the Senate for life." . . . [By early 1800 it seemed possible that the Federalists would try to seize power permanently before they lost it in the election.] The enemies of our Constitution [the Federalists] are preparing a fearful operation," Jefferson wrote his son-in-law in February. Chaotic conditions throughout the country, and especially in Pennsylvania, appeared "too likely to bring things to the situation they wish, when our Bonaparte [Alexander Hamilton], surrounded by his comrades in arms, may step in to give us political salvation in his way." . . .

The election of 1800 played out across a period of months, with the electors chosen through different means and at different times in the sixteen states. Some of these elections favored the Republicans; others favored the Federalists. Until the end, the final outcome remained in doubt. By late November both sides recognized that everything depended on the South Carolina legislature's choice of electors in early December, just one day before the electors were to cast their ballots in every state. Even those familiar with the state's politics, much less the many interested outsiders, found it difficult to predict how it would vote. As the Connecticut Federalist Oliver Wolcott recognized, South Carolina's votes were "claimed, and expected by both parties." Insiders asserted confidently, and contradictorily, that its votes would be for Jefferson and Burr, for Adams and Pinckney, and even for Pinckney and Jefferson. The legislators believed that they would decide the election, but they could not have known just how close the votes would be in the other states (sixty-five each for Jefferson, Burr, and Adams and sixty-four for Pinckney). Ultimately the Republicans managed to fill all eight of the state's electoral college seats with men who were pledged to cast one ballot for Jefferson and one for Burr. "Our Country is yet safe," Peter Freneau, the Republican editor of the *Charleston City Gazette*, announced as soon as the electors were chosen.

But Freneau began his celebration too soon. Even though the electoral votes would not be opened and counted until 11 February 1801, it became clear within a couple of weeks of the voting that both Jefferson and Burr would have seventy-three votes and that the House would have to choose between them. As late as 15 December,

outcome

Jefferson still believed that one or more electors from Tennessee, South Carolina, or Georgia had withheld their second ballots from Burr in order to prevent a tie. Just a few days later, however, enough information had reached Washington to dispel this hope. By 19 December Jefferson saw no grounds for doubting "that there [would] be an absolute parity between the two republican candidates." This result, he informed Madison, had "produced great dismay & gloom on the republican gentlemen here, and equal exultation in the federalists." The problem was that, while the Republicans dominated eight of the sixteen state delegations in the House, they needed a majority to decide the outcome. Of the remaining eight states, the Federalists held six and two were evenly divided. One of the Republicans who experienced "dismay & gloom" because of this unexpected result was Virginia congressman John Dawson. Writing to Madison, Dawson lamented the defect in the Constitution that had made possible this outcome. In despair, he wondered: "who is to be president? In short, what is to become of our government?"

The final state of the election of 1800 can be divided into two phases. The first began in mid-December 1800, when it became apparent that Jefferson and Burr had defeated Adams and Pinckney but had tied each other, and lasted until mid-February 1801. The second phase consisted of the actual balloting in the House from 11 February to 17 February. Different options and different dangers emerged in each phase. But, throughout, the election seemed likely to become a "revolution in form," as one side or the other or both considered extraconstitutional means to produce a desired outcome or prevent a dreaded result.

In the first phase, the Federalists enjoyed a wide range of options, since the election could not be decided without them. One obvious course was to acquiesce in the popular will by voting for Jefferson as president and Burr as vice president; there were Federalists, in and out of government, who supported this course. Another constitutional option was to vote for Burr as president, counting on some Republican congressmen to vote for their second choice. Finally, the Federalists might feign support for Burr in order to pressure Jefferson into pledges about principles, policies, and patronage. It was this approach that Hamilton, who considered "Burr the most unfit man in the U.S. for the office of President," urged in a series of letters to various Federalist congressmen. Massachusetts's Fisher Ames also advocated the tactic of supporting Burr long enough to secure from Jefferson some sign that he would "not countenance democratic amendmts., dependence on France, a wrangle or war with G. Britain, plunder of the banks and [their] friends, or Madison's empiricism in regard to trade & navy."

The Federalists did not limit themselves to constitutional measures, at least not indisputably constitutional measures, as they weighed their options during the first phase of the crisis, however. Some insisted that if no president was elected by the time that Adams's administration ended on 4 March 1801, the rules of succession would take effect, placing executive power in the hands of the president pro tempore of the Senate or, if none had been chosen, the Speaker of the House. Since the Federalists held a majority in both houses, either of these individuals would almost certainly have been members of their party. . . .

[T]he Republicans either learned of or surmised every tactic that was considered by the Federalists; they imagined many more. It occurred to them almost immediately that the Federalists might try to obstruct a decision in order to transfer executive

power to someone of their own choosing. As early as 15 December Jefferson had already heard, and was already spreading, a rumor that the Federalists intended to "let the government devolve on a President of the Senate." Over the next few weeks the Republican rumor mill added the chief justice, the secretary of state, and the Speaker of the House to the list of Federalists to whom power might be committed "by a legislative act." The very thought "of creating a president by Act of Congress," as Pennsylvania's John Beckley put it, struck most Republicans as unconstitutional and unrepresentative. "Any Law empowering any Person to exercise the Presidency," Samuel Smith insisted, would be viewed "as an Usurpation." That the Federalists might defeat an election without any definite sense of the consequences of their actions also terrified Republicans. To Jefferson, "prevent[ing] an election altogether" seemed certain to produce "a suspension of the federal government, for want of a head." This course, he informed one correspondent, would "[open] to us an abyss, at which every sincere patriot must shudder."

Republican fears clearly exceeded Federalist plans. Many leading Republicans worried, for example, that the Federalists intended, by preventing a choice between Jefferson and Burr, to force an entirely new election. It seemed so obvious that such a course could only lead to a second Republican victory that Albert Gallatin wondered: "what interest can the Federalists have in defeating an election?" His answer—that "they mean to usurp government"—was far more revolutionary than anything Federalists in Washington ever discussed, as far as the existing evidence shows. . . .

Republicans hoped that they could defeat Federalist plans—constitutional and unconstitutional—through constitutional means. Reasonably confident that eight state delegations would vote for Jefferson as president and Burr as vice president, they trusted that the moderate Federalists in the Maryland, Delaware, or Vermont delegations would provide the decisive ninth state. . . .

[But] the correspondence of leading Republicans demonstrates that they were [also] willing to take unconstitutional steps, if needed, to foil the unconstitutional designs of the Federalists. . . .

Albert Gallatin, a leading House Republican . . . drafted his own "plan," which Jefferson apparently approved. In an undated memorandum of late January or early February, Gallatin examined the possible Federalist goals and weighed the various Republican options. He enumerated three Federalist "objects"—electing Burr, forcing a new election, and "assum[ing] executive power during *interregnum*." The first could "be defeated by our own firmness," the second by the Republican-dominated House that would meet in December and would have to certify the results of any election. What worried Gallatin most was an unconstitutional assumption of power by the Federalists. Such a course would place the party and the nation in a difficult position. Either of the extreme options—"total submission to usurpation on their part or . . . usurpation on our part"—could have alarming results. He preferred a middle course, treating the nine months until the next congressional session as an "interregnum" in which "the several Republican States [would] act either separately or jointly, according to circumstances." In this period the Republican states would oppose new acts "flowing immediately from the person who shall have usurped," but accept and uphold those "which [were] not immediately connected with Presidential powers." This solution seemed safer than Madison's. To Gallatin, "the dangers of civil war, of the dissolution of the Union, [and] of the stab given to our republican

institutions by any assumption of power on [the Republicans'] part not strictly justified by the forms of our Constitution, [were] the greatest" threats. A partial and temporary acquiescence involved less risk than assuming power "by a joint act of the two candidates." . . .

In the view of some Federalists, the acceptable outcomes of the election had shrunk to electing Burr or going without a president. Writing to his wife after sixteen ballots, Griswold expressed this determination very simply: "I am willing to put the Constitution, Government, and everything which belongs to it upon the issue of this business, and if our opponents will not take Burr, they shall take nobody." Many of the New England Federalists in Congress insisted to the very end of the crisis that they would "go without a Constitution and take the risk of a Civil War" rather than elect Jefferson. Republicans actually worried less about the Federalists abandoning the Constitution and more about their effecting some form of usurpation. They saw indications that the Federalists intended to revive the scheme of transferring power to the president pro tempore of the Senate. This goal could no longer be accomplished through legislation. But the Federalists could block an election through the end of the session and then rely on the existing rules of succession. Republicans found confirmation for their fears when Adams called a special session of the Senate for 4 March. This session was ostensibly necessary to confirm the new president's cabinet appointments, but Republicans recognized that most of the senators would be Federalists and that, with Jefferson's term as vice president ended, they could not be prevented from choosing a Federalist president pro tempore to be an interim president.

A commitment to thwarting unconstitutional usurpation by the Federalists led the Republicans to consider unconstitutional, or at least extra-constitutional, measures of their own. In Virginia and Pennsylvania the governors took preliminary steps toward readying their militias to descend on Washington. Precisely what they did, or were prepared to do, remains unclear, in part because key documents were deliberately destroyed. . . . Jefferson also credited another extra-constitutional measure that was apparently discussed by the Republicans during the House vote—the idea of a constitutional "Convention to reorganize & amend the government." . . .

Although neither the preparations of the Pennsylvania and Virginia militias nor the prospect of a constitutional convention appear to have had the impact that Jefferson attributed to them, the possibility that the election of 1800 would devolve into a "revolution in form" certainly hastened the ultimate resolution of the crisis. After six days of voting and thirty-five ballots, Bayard—a Federalist and the only representative from Delaware—promised an end to the deadlock when he declared that he would abandon Burr and support Jefferson. Bayard broke with his party in part because he had concluded that Burr could not be elected and in part because he believed that Jefferson had pledged himself on a few key policies. But it is also clear that he feared what might happen if there was no election by the House. As he informed the governor of Delaware, he did not back down "till it was admitted on all hands that we must risk the Constitution and a civil war or take Mr. Jefferson." Along with the Federalist congressmen from Vermont, Maryland, and South Carolina, Bayard devised a plan in which two states that had previously voted for Burr would cast blank ballots and two states that had previously been divided would vote for Jefferson. On 17 February, on the thirty-sixth ballot, they put this plan into

action, with the result that ten states voted for Jefferson, four states continued to vote for Burr, and two states did not vote.

The most significant factor in keeping the election of 1800 from taking a revolutionary turn or producing a revolutionary result was the commitment of enough men in each party to the Constitution and the Union. During the crisis over the Quasi-War and the Alien and Sedition Acts, this commitment led Republicans such as Jefferson and Madison to counter disunionist extremists in their own party, in part by pointing to the potential of the approaching election to dispel "the reign of witches." The same commitment weighed heavily on Gallatin's mind as he drafted the blueprint for a restrained and cautious Republican response to the threat of Federalist usurpation in January 1801. And it produced the final resolution to the stalemate in the House. A number of Federalist congressmen began the balloting committed, as one explained, "to mak[ing] a choice, and to acced[ing] to the election of Mr. Jefferson, rather than expos[ing] the nation to the mischiefs which might result from leaving the government without a head." Bayard, who ultimately broke the deadlock, stated flatly that he did so because he was "perfectly resolved not to risk the constitution or a civil war." Men of both parties trusted, correctly as it happened, in what Gallatin described as a general "love of union and order" to preserve the Constitution. . . .

Writing to the English liberal Joseph Priestley just weeks after his election to the presidency, Jefferson downplayed the recent "storm." "I have been, above all things, solaced by the prospect which opened on us, in the event of a non-election of a President," Jefferson reflected. "In [that] case, the federal government would have been in the situation of a clock or watch run down." The solution was simple, in Jefferson's thinking. A convention "would have been on the ground in eight weeks, would have repaired the Constitution where it was defective, and wound it up again." For Jefferson, it was the transfer of executive dominance from the Federalists to the Republicans that was truly revolutionary. But, for us, it is the things that might have happened but did not, and the solutions that might have been attempted but were not, that seem much more revolutionary. A "revolution in form"—whether disunion or a military takeover or usurpation or a new constitutional convention—appeared much more probable to Jefferson and his contemporaries than most accounts would suggest.

Slavery, Democracy, and the Jeffersonians

JOHN ASHWORTH

Contrary to the impression presented by many of the recent works on Republican ideology, the party that raised Jefferson to the Presidency was far from uniform in its beliefs and principles. . . . Recent scholarship has emphasized the ideological distance between the two major parties, but it has given too little attention to the divisions within them and especially within the Republican party. Yet, as Richard Ellis had shown, serious differences of opinion were visible in the Republican party from its very inception (although their practical importance was relatively slight

Thesis:

Republicanism
or Democracy leads to
having slavery

From John Ashworth, "The Jeffersonians: Classical Republicans or Liberal Capitalists?," *Journal of American Studies*, 18 (1984), 425-35. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.

so long as the party was in opposition and faced with a powerful enemy). Their presence is enough to create doubts about the possibility of some of the generalizations which historians are now offering. As Ellis has pointed out, the Madisonian (moderate) wing of the party must be clearly distinguished from that represented by John Taylor of Caroline. Jefferson himself was in many respects midway between the two but it is as yet unclear how widespread and popular the specific ideas and beliefs expressed by each of these Virginians were within the party. In short we do not yet know where the party's ideological centre of gravity lay, even in Philadelphia, the federal capital, let alone within each of the states. We need to know how typical a Jeffersonian Jefferson was. . . .

This need for qualification is apparent when we consider the extent to which the Republicans espoused what Joyce Appleby terms "the principle of hope." In her view the Jeffersonians were hopeful and optimistic about the future; the Federalists, as befitted classical republicans, were not. But this is problematic. . . .

When we turn to the partisans of the 1790s, simple generalizations are still more difficult. Even the apparently uncontentious association of Federalism with pessimism can be seriously challenged. . . . [A]s John Zvesper points out in his excellent study of Federalist and Republican ideology, the Federalists in the late 1780s and early '90s were both confident and optimistic. It is true that this confidence was swiftly dissipated when the Republican challenge was mounted but this is still enough to place a question mark against Appleby's assertion. When we consider the Republicans the problem is still more complex. Undoubtedly Appleby's interpretation fits Thomas Jefferson himself, and fits him well. Jefferson's optimism does differentiate him from many classical republicans and Appleby has justly re-emphasized this. But as far as Madison is concerned her conclusions are far less satisfactory. For Drew McCoy has shown conclusively that Madison expected the United States to develop, as Britain had done, a surplus population of landless poor. This was a prospect which was most unwelcome and disturbing to him. But he believed that at best the nation could only postpone its degeneration. In McCoy's words, "Madison's republic was in a race against time."

It is none the less possible that Madison here was at odds with his fellow Republicans. John Taylor's view was rather different. Essentially Taylor was hopeful about American society and the American economy but with the strict proviso that the government be conducted according to sound principles. His opinion as to the likelihood of this varied over time; in general he was neither confident nor despairing. Further research may well show that this attitude was the norm within the party as a whole. . . .

As many scholars have pointed out, the historiography of the early Republicans has suffered from a major defect. Whilst many works have focussed upon ideologies and the minority of the citizens who wrote as committed partisans, others have concentrated upon the broader changes that were taking place in American society and in the American economy at this time. Each of these schools has enormously advanced our understanding of the history of these years; the problem, however, is to reconcile their separate findings. . . . Is it possible to suggest an alternative?

Clearly any such hypothesis must be highly tentative; the present state of knowledge simply will not support any firm generalizations. Yet it is surely of interest that the Republicans drew a disproportionate amount of support from the South. In the

Historians:
Appleby,
Zvesper,
McCoy

Madison's
View

words of Richard Buel "the essential division" in politics was "between a Republican South and a Federalist New England," with the middle Atlantic states divided. There were of course exceptions but the South undoubtedly provided the Republicans with disproportionate electoral support and with the great majority of their national leaders and spokesmen. In addition to the three Presidents of the Virginia dynasty, men like John Taylor, John Randolph and Nathaniel Macon were all Southerners. In this connection it is instructive to consider what would have happened to American politics from the 1790s if there had been no states south of the Mason-Dixon line. Historians would then doubtless have recorded the successful attempt of the Federalist elite to impose a republican but avowedly anti-democratic political system upon the nation. After the turbulence which often accompanies war a regime more akin to that of the British would have emerged. But in actuality the Republican party upset all this. Nothing is more striking in retrospect than the willingness of Republican leaders to take their case to the people. Jefferson himself always insisted that the Republicans "cherished" the people while the Federalists feared or despised them. In 1787, at a time when the Federalists (as they would become) were fearful of social unrest and political upheaval, Jefferson asserted that "a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the natural." Buel attributes this populism to the greater security which the Southerners enjoyed in their leadership roles. Ironically, "aristocratic" Southern leaders, perhaps because of the greater economic homogeneity of the South, could embrace democracy in the confident belief that their own positions would be safe.

Buel's explanation is a perceptive one. Did Southern leadership give encouragement and organizational support to the northern Republicans? Did it make their views more popular and more respectable? As yet our knowledge is not sufficient to allow a firm answer to these questions. If they can be answered in the affirmative, however, it is difficult not to be reminded of Edmund Morgan's brilliant argument in his book *American Slavery, American Freedom*. Here Morgan claimed that it was in large part slavery which enabled Americans to embrace republicanism. Slavery created a "sense of common identity" among whites and altered the relationship between elites and masses. Because the slaveholders lived off the sweated labour of blacks the poorer whites were their allies rather than their antagonists. Similarly the main threat to republicanism, the fear of levelling if the poorer classes could vote, was much diminished if not entirely removed. As Morgan puts it: "Aristocrats could more safely preach equality in a slave society than in a free one" since slaves would never be permitted to form levelling mobs. The labour force in Virginia "was composed mainly of slaves"; this was a major structural influence upon Virginian society and it paved the way for Jefferson's celebrated eulogy of the yeoman farmer.

Morgan argues that slavery propelled Virginians and perhaps other Americans towards republicanism. His book is concerned primarily with the period up to and including the Declaration of Independence. Critics may reply that other nations before and since have embraced republicanism without slavery and that not all slave societies have generated republican sentiment. It is thus difficult to argue that slavery is either a necessary or a sufficient condition for republicanism. But is it not possible that Morgan's insights apply with greater force to the democratization of the republic in the half century or so after the adoption of the Federal constitution? For at this time the United States managed this remarkable transformation without any

wow

Good +
wow!!slavery
wow!!

VA

a criticism
for Morgan

hmmmm... major political or social upheaval. [The importance of Jeffersonian ideology, the role of Southern leaders and the importance of Southern voters in the Republican and Jacksonian Democratic parties are all so evident as to require little comment. In the 1790s the Republicans began to popularize American politics; historians need to ask what the precise function of American slavery was in this process.]

⌘ FURTHER READING

- Henry Ammon, *The Genet Mission* (1973).
 Lance Banning, *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: The Evolution of a Party Ideology* (1978).
 Ruth Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756–1800* (1986).
 Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (2004).
 Jerald Combs, *The Jay Treaty: Political Battleground of the Founding Fathers* (1970).
 Noble Cunningham, *The Jeffersonian Republicans: The Formation of Party Organization, 1789–1801* (1957).
 Alexander De Conde, *The Quasi-War: The Politics and Diplomacy of the Undeclared War with France, 1791–1801* (1966).
 Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788–1800* (2003).
 Joseph Ellis, *Passionate Sage: The Character and Life of John Adams* (1993).
 ———, *His Excellency: George Washington* (2004).
 John Ferling, *John Adams: A Life* (1992).
 ———, *Adams v. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800* (2004).
 Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (1976).
 Richard Kohn, *Eagle and Sword: The Federalists and the Creation of the Military Establishment in America, 1783–1802* (1973).
 Stephen G. Kurtz, *The Presidency of John Adams: The Collapse of Federalism, 1795–1800* (1957).
 Edmund S. Morgan, *The Genius of George Washington* (1980).
 John R. Nelson, *Liberty and Property: Political Economy and Policymaking in the New Nation, 1789–1812* (1987).
 Thomas R. Pangle, *The Origins of Modern Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American Founders and the Philosophy of Locke* (1983).
 Jeffrey L. Pasley, "The Tyranny of Printers": *Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (2001).
 James Roger Sharp, *American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis* (1993).
 Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution* (1986).
 James Morton Smith, *Freedom's Fetters: The Alien and Sedition Laws and American Civil Liberties* (1956).
 William Stinchcombe, *The XYZ Affair* (1981).
 Alfred F. Young, *The Democratic Republicans of New York: The Origins, 1763–1797* (1966).
 John Zvesper, *Political Philosophy and Rhetoric: A Study of the Origins of American Political Parties* (1977).