PARODY AND PASTICHE

IMAGES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN POPULAR CULTURE,
1765–1820

DISSERTATION

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INTRODUCTION

The American Revolution was a defining event in the history of the United States. Yet how do we interpret such an important milestone? John Adams struggled with the issue in his later life when he wrote to Jefferson, "What do we Mean by the Revolution? The War? That was no part of the Revolution. . . . The Revolution was in the Minds of the people and this was effected, from 1760 to 1775, . . . " What is often excluded from this famous quotation is Adams's assertion that his "Ideas may be peculiar, perhaps singular." John Adams understood the complexities involved in interpreting the Revolution and invited scholars of his time to investigate "By what means this great and important alteration in the religious, moral, political, and social character of the people" took place. Scholars have answered Adams's call for two centuries, attempting to understand the Revolution in a number of ways.

Discerning the meaning of the American Revolution for those who were living at the time is a complicated
task. Yet historians find clues to this mystery by examining pamphlets, sermons, and other literary works. One valuable source that is often overlooked by historians of the Revolution is the arts. Painters, dramatists, and musicians contributed to the political debate as the rebellion of the American colonies became the Revolution. Yet as historians attempted to meet Adams's challenge to discover the origins of the Revolution, the arts became secondary to political documents as a source of enlightenment.

While the Revolution held a variety of meanings for those who were involved, the individuals born after the event were the first to begin interpreting the Revolution for their nation. Some historians, such as George Bancroft, believed the American Revolution was the climax of history. In the twentieth century, Carl Becker acknowledged the power of abstract ideas, as well as the reality of class struggle. Louis Hartz, in the 1950's, and, more recently, John P. Diggins have stressed the influence of Lockean liberalism on Revolutionary leaders.\(^3\)

Other historians have deemphasized the primacy of class struggle and liberalism. Instead they have focused on the centrality of an inherited republican
ideology in Revolutionary America. Between the 1960's and 1980's this republican synthesis school, developed by Bernard Bailyn, Gordon Wood, and J.G.A. Pocock, among others, became the locus of debate concerning Revolutionary motivations in the colonies. While the republican synthesis found many supporters, others, such as Gary Nash, Eric Foner, and Marvin L. Michael Kay, believed that deep-rooted social and religious tensions would not disappear with Independence. For these social historians, the idea of interpreting the Revolution solely on the basis of elite ideology was unacceptable.

Like social historians, cultural historians have broadened the range of sources applicable to the study of the American Revolution by examining the rituals, literature, and icons of that period. Rhys Isaac, in researching his The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790, did not depend on the written record of his subjects. Instead, he examined the everyday customs and rituals of different people living in Virginia during this time. For Isaac, it was vital to "decipher important beliefs, values, and aspirations in a society where the religious institutions that had provided a focus for authority in the community were challenged
and ultimately overthrown." In studying the everyday lives of Virginians before and after the Revolution, Isaac found evidence of a number of rebellions against authority, struggles that were directed at the colonial elite rather than the British. He, like social historians, believed scholars spent far too much time concentrating on the upper classes. To understand the Revolution in Virginia, Isaac wished "to enter more deeply into the world of those whom historians have arrogantly called 'the inarticulate.'" For Rhys Isaac it was not enough to study the written pamphlets of the elite in order to understand the changes taking place in the late eighteenth century. By examining old problems in a new way, Isaac found anything but unity in Virginian society.6

Other historians have examined the arts in the colonies at the time of the American Revolution. Ken Silverman wrote an exhaustive study of American culture as it appeared between 1763 and 1783. He believed the budding of culture in this country is an important development that has been overshadowed by the revolution. According to Silverman, the two events went hand in hand. As Americans were fighting for
their political independence, they were also discovering the value of their own artistic works.7

Other cultural historians have discerned the importance of literary works in understanding the meaning of the American Revolution. By concentrating on what authors have written, these historians find evidence to support political and social historians. Yet they also find new sources for the American struggle and are able to examine how history itself has changed the meaning of the Revolution through time.

Jay Fliegelman, in his work Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800, expressed a tinge of boredom with the old republican/liberal debate over the Revolution. He believes it is necessary to understand "the larger cultural context of the American Revolution." It is not enough to argue over who transmitted enlightenment ideas to America; we must also understand the idea of authority in the colonies and the best way to do that, according to Fliegelman, is to consider the relationship between literary culture and the Revolution. The root of the revolution for Fliegelman is the question of authority and the effect this precept had on the people of the colonies. It was
patriarchal authority that the colonists were rebelling against and that rebellion took place in novels and other literary works. In his latest work, Fliegelman examined the change in American language and persuasion at the time of the Revolution. Rather than concentrating on the substance of the Declaration of Independence, Fliegleman studied the pauses that Jefferson incorporated into the work. He argued that the Declaration was "written to be read aloud" and this fact is important in interpreting the meaning of the document.

Another slant on the American Revolution comes from the work of Michael Kammen. In his piece on the American Revolution, Kammen concerned himself with the traditions of America. He did not dwell on the motivations of the participants in the rebellion. Instead he attempted to understand the meaning of the Revolution by comprehending its significance throughout American history. Kammen argued that the Revolution has had many faces. In the early years of the nation, the revolution was a good thing which brought prosperity and progress through a radical upheaval. After the terror of the Russian Revolution, however, Americans began to downplay the radicalism of their own
revolution. Now the revolution became a conservative movement. In other words, depending on how Americans view revolutions throughout the world, the American Revolution is either radical or conservative.¹⁰ Historians are influential in slanting the revolution, but Kammen also studied the rhetoric in literary works through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Through Kammen's work, the complexities of the American Revolution take on new meaning. It is no longer enough to understand ideologies or social movements. We must also understand how the revolution has appeared in our culture in order to understand the actual meaning of the struggle.¹¹ This creative interpretation of the past and how it is influenced by the present served as the inspiration for this project.

In a later work, Kammen continued his interesting study of American cultural history by focusing once again on the idea of tradition. Kammen tackled the problem of memory and also the complication of public amnesia on the part of the American people. "We arouse and arrange our memories to suit our psychic needs," argues Kammen. Through his work, traditions in the American past—and the ways in which Americans have reacted to them—add to the meaning of our history.¹²
Aside from these cultural historians, scholars of the American Revolution have neglected the creative arts. Kenneth Silverman is one of the few cultural historians to produce an integrated study of songs, plays, and paintings. Silverman, however, did not place the works of popular culture into the rhetorical tradition of the American Revolution. My goal is to show how the rhetoric of popular culture either mirrored or parodied the rhetoric expressed in political debate. My work will focus on four specific themes.

First, how did these artists depict the actors in the story of the revolution? While Americans were fighting the war with Britain, they also needed to find an identity. Part of that process involved discovering heroes and villains. What attributes did these people have? Who were the villains and heroes of the Revolution? Why were elite generals of the army more popular as heroes than common soldiers? Who were the greatest villains of all and why? All of the creative artists examined in this study agreed on the characteristics of heroes and villains. Heroes were selfless, willing to sacrifice everything for their country. Villains were greedy, wanting rewards for
their service. The painters, songwriters, and dramatists offered these heroes and villains as object lessons for the people of the new nation.

The second theme in this project concerns the images of women and minorities. What role were these people expected to play in the revolution and the formation of the new nation, if any? How were their images used to demonstrate correct behavior? Women appear quite frequently in the works of creative artists. They are most obvious in the plays and songs of the time. Women were expected to maintain order during chaos. These artists offered the image of virtuous women who could win the war by supporting their men, but also created women who were greedy and shallow in order to warn women to behave. As for other minorities, their appearances in the arts are few and far between. When African-Americans and Native Americans do appear, their images are stereotypical. By virtually ignoring the presence of these people, artists confirmed the fact that they should be excluded from the benefits of the Revolution.

Third, the popular culture of this period offered an arena for political debate within the community of the colonies. In many ways, the American Revolution
was a civil war. Historians agree that the colonists were not united over the rightness of the Revolution. How did the Tories living in America use the creative arts to express their views? How did they depict the Whigs in the colonies? What techniques did they use to discredit them? Were there any moderate voices in the colonies at the time? While some painters were sympathetic to the Tory cause, they did not express their political beliefs on canvas. As a result, the Loyalist voice is silent in painting. The artists were painting for a new American market; they offered glorious portraits of the new leadership in order to make a living. In drama and song, however, the Tory voice is loud and clear. These people were creative in answering the Whigs of the colonies point by point, often ridiculing the rebels by using their own rhetoric. One moderate playwright exposed the shallow fanaticism of the Whigs in the colonies by demonstrating the cheapness of words. While these voices were eventually silenced, their contribution to the political debate in the arts is intelligent and creative.

Finally, this work will concentrate on the theme of social control. Did these creative artists advocate
radical social change within the colonies? Did they challenge elitist power or did they support the social hierarchy that existed in the colonies? With the exception of musicians, these artists advocated a strict adherence to the social status quo. The painters offered heroes to the public who were of the upper classes. Dramatists and dialogue writers differed slightly in their methods, but never called for a social revolution of any kind. The plays imitated the rhetoric of the elites while dialogues offered lessons to the masses in proper living. Only in the songs do we see any democratic tendency. The soldiers of the Revolution ridiculed and even threatened their elite leaders. These soldiers were fighting the war and demanding a voice in the new nation. Sadly, these democratic voices were silenced once the war ended and creative artists worked to promote unity in the new nation.

In order to make sense of the different views expressed in these art works, this piece will refer to the political rhetoric of the revolution. In examining the interaction between popular culture and political tradition, I have drawn on the methodology of Henry Louis Gates. In his book, The Signifying Monkey Gates
examines black rhetoric as it developed, the influence of African monkey tales on African-American rhetoric and the place of black literature in rhetorical tradition. He discusses the ideas of parody and pastiche, placing black literature into its own overriding tradition. Gates encouraged the use of his method by other scholars, arguing that "all texts Signify upon other texts. . .Perhaps critics of other literatures will find this theory useful as they attempt to account for the configuration of the texts in their traditions." With this argument in mind, I will use this method to examine the meaning of the Revolution as it appeared in drama, music, and art. Some writers and creative artists of the revolutionary and Early National periods often imitated the political rhetoric of the patriots, but others used the rhetoric of the colonial leadership to ridicule the whigs. According to Gates, all texts build upon other texts and fit into literary traditions. In the context of that argument, the images of the Revolution which appear in popular culture are connected with a larger rhetorical tradition.13

Despite the various perspectives offered by these creative works, the picture of the Revolution which
emerges was not democratic nor was it terribly radical. The art and drama seldom offered any significant challenge to the standing social order. Only the songs offer any indication of restlessness on the part of the lower classes. Yet even this hint of discord in the colonies disappears by 1783 when the focus changes from revolution to unity under elite leadership. The Tories disappeared from the American community and the people of the new nation accepted the social hierarchy that had remained despite the chaos of war. It would not be fair to say that there was no shift in political tradition. The question is how did this shift manifest itself in social beliefs? In examining the works of playwrights, composers, and visual artists we can interpret the social attitudes of a people. We can also discover the meaning of the American Revolution to the generation of people who lived though it.
NOTES


7 See, for instance, Silverman's statement concerning the love for Washington and the ways in which that love was expressed. Ken Silverman, A Cultural History of The American Revolution (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976), 607.


10 An interesting example of this phenomenon is provided by Gordon Wood. In his latest work, Wood argues that the Revolution was a very radical event. While his argument is not convincing, the fact that he felt the need to write this work in our conservative political climate is fascinating. Gordon Wood, The Radicalism of The American Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

11 Kammen, A Season of Youth.

CHAPTER I
Painted Images

Of all the creative artists examined in this study, the painters are most closely tied to the elite. These artists depended on the patronage of the rich and famous in order to make a living by painting. While some of the artists were truly devoted to the cause of the American Revolution, others were interested in art for art's sake and were willing to paint the images that would bring them recognition. These men chose the American Revolution and its leaders for their subjects; these were the images their patrons desired to maintain.

There was a new love for classical art born among artists and their clients of the eighteenth century. By placing their subjects in the realm of the ancient world, these painters also created the myths of the American Revolution. They depicted military triumphs as well as defeats and focused on the individual sacrifices made by military officers. In addition, these artists diminished the aristocratic image of the American leadership by depicting their subjects in
austere clothing and Roman surroundings. This was the image that the elites wanted to convey. By complying to the leaders' wishes, these painters helped to affirm the social hierarchy in America, regardless of their own backgrounds and political convictions.

John Trumbull, Gilbert Stuart, John Singleton Copley and Charles Willson Peale had one man in common—Benjamin West. While West never painted any images of the Revolution or its leaders, his influence on those artists who did was tremendous. He was born on October 10, 1738 in Pennsylvania. West was a Quaker who believed that art was designed to teach. According to West, art was a tool that could be used to convey religious and moral teachings to the audience. Predictably, many of West's paintings are depictions of heroes, both sacred and secular, who serve as righteous examples. He painted the rejection of Jesus by the crowds of Jerusalem but also concentrated on the Nazarene's triumph in "The Ascension of Christ." West also believed that Socrates, who died for knowledge, and William Penn, who stood for peace, were worthy subjects for his art.
Benjamin West spent most of his life in London where several American students came to study with him. Although an American, his art received the respect of the British, which was a major triumph in the eighteenth century. He was a friend to the governing elite including King George III. That friendship placed West in a comfortable position for his work, but caused a bit of tension for him when the colonial rebellion began. According to Sidney Hart, West "Stood aloof from politics and enjoyed the patronage of George III." Yet he was a staunch supporter of the colonial cause in America. West decided it was prudent to keep his American patriotism to himself so that he might maintain his position in London. Interestingly enough, West was so intrigued by the American Revolution, he toyed with the idea of representing the event on canvas.

When the American colonies won their independence from Britain, West was overjoyed. He wrote to his former student, Charles Willson Peale, about a project he hoped to undertake. West wanted to paint the highlights of the American Revolution, to preserve the heroic acts of the colonists for future generations.
He asked Peale for his knowledge of the costumes worn by the American soldiers. After some thought on the subject, however, West decided the project would be a bad choice for him. If he wished to remain friendly with George III, he should not "publicly...represent the King's defeats." Therefore, he turned the project over to his student, John Trumbull. Considering Trumbull's involvement in the Revolution, West made the appropriate choice.

I.

The visual image we have of the American Revolution, in all its mythical glory, is largely the creation of John Trumbull. His historical series which decorates the rotunda of the national capitol, is a masterpiece, not so much for its artistic value as for its purpose. Trumbull was not only recording revolutionary events; he was offering his audience examples of patriotism and sacrifice. Historical accuracy was never Trumbull's concern. The meaning of history was far more important to him. Theodore Sizer called Trumbull "the chief visual recorder of the American Revolution." Yet he was more than that. His paintings do not simply provide a chronicle of the
Revolution. They demonstrate the ideology of the elite class from which he came.

John Trumbull's connection to the upper classes and his attitudes toward the Revolution are reflected in his Autobiography. Trumbull was not satisfied that he had received the respect he deserved from the Americans of his day. He believed that there was a certain "lack of understanding, a want of respect, on the part of the younger generation" concerning the men who established the nation. He wrote the narrative of his life because of real or perceived injuries to his character and because he wanted to remind Americans of his place in their history. As a result, the narrative is biased, as are all such works. Yet with the Autobiography, the reader can gain an understanding of Trumbull's priorities as well as his sensitivities.5

Trumbull was born in Lebanon, Connecticut in 1756 to Jonathan Trumbull, governor of the colony, and his wife. Early in his life, Trumbull damaged his left eye, causing near loss of sight in that eye. He was a fine student at Harvard and was the earliest college graduate in the colonies to become a professional painter.6
During the Revolutionary War, the Trumbull family served with distinction. John's brother, Joseph, was the first Commissary General of the Continental forces; John himself served as aide-de-camp to George Washington, a post he held for nineteen days. Trumbull felt unequal to the "elegant duties" attached to the position and was pleased when he was replaced. Still, Trumbull never failed to remind people that he had served in the post. He also served under General Horatio Gates and claimed that he was one of this general's favorites. Through his position as army officer and because of his prominent family, his list of acquaintances included Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, John Jay, James Madison, and James Monroe.

As a soldier in the continental army, Trumbull improved his skills as an artist by drawing the armament plans of the British in Boston before that army evacuated. He also gained an understanding of the horrors of war. Trumbull wrote that his sister became deranged and died after she saw the hardships of the continental army. In addition, Trumbull acknowledged what he termed the bravery of the common soldier. During the first months of the war, soldiers were given
a reward if they brought musket balls fired by the enemy to army headquarters. Having access to enemy musket ammunition allowed the continental army to determine the caliber of the British guns. Once fired, a ball would reechochet and continue to roll.

"Soldiers... would run and place a foot before it, to stop it, not aware that a heavy ball long retains sufficient impetus to overcome such an obstacle."

These men lost their feet "which were crushed by the weight of the rolling shot. The order was of course withdrawn, and they [the soldiers] were cautioned against touching a ball, until it was entirely at rest."9

After serving under General Gates and receiving the rank of colonel, Trumbull terminated his regular army service on February 22, 1777. He was insulted when he did not receive the proper commission from Congress for a job Gates had given him. The official acknowledgment of his new duties as deputy adjutant general was delayed by three months. As a result the sensitive Trumbull decided to resign. He explained his decision in a letter to James Lovell which he reprinted in his Autobiography:
When length of service, an unimpeached character, and a forwardness to serve in a quarter where success was despaired of, is rewarded by neglect, we have reason to complain. But... there was no occasion to add insult. I considered myself sufficiently affronted by being obliged to wait eight months for a commission. Congress needed not to wound my feelings further by sending me at length a commission dated three months later than the time of my entering upon the service for which it was given... From this day, therefore, I lay aside my cockade and sword, with the fixed determination never to resume them until I can do it with honor.10

Despite the injury to his honor Trumbull received from Congress, he joined the army once more in 1778. He volunteered his services to General Sullivan who was planning to recapture Rhode Island. When the plan failed, Trumbull left military service for good. At this point he decided to pursue his career in art. In 1778, Trumbull received permission from Lord George Germain, British Secretary of State, to enter England. He departed for London in 1780 so that he could study art with Benjamin West.11

While in England, Trumbull was the unfortunate victim of political maneuvering. When a group of loyalists received the news that Major John Andre had been hanged by the American Army, they reported to the office of the British Secretary of State. Trumbull was a dangerous man according to these loyalists. Since
someone should repay the British for what had happened to Andre, why not arrest a man who had served in the army and was now residing in London? To his surprise, Trumbull was arrested and held in prison for seven months. Through Benjamin West, King George reassured Trumbull that he would not be executed. Nevertheless, the artist had to leave Britain within thirty days of his release and not return until the war's end.12

After a brief stint in America, Trumbull returned to England in 1783. In 1786, he began the project for which he is best remembered.

Trumbull's "national history" series is an interesting array of tributes to Americans fighting for their liberty. In choosing his subjects, especially the deaths of General Warren and General Montgomery, Trumbull felt that he "should be paying a just tribute of gratitude to the memory of eminent men, who had given their lives for their country."13 By doing so, Trumbull hoped to win a new respect for artists in society. He confided to Thomas Jefferson his awareness of the frivolous nature of art as it was usually practiced. But

to preserve and diffuse the memory of the noblest series of actions which have ever presented
themselves in the history of man; to give to the present and the future sons of oppression and misfortune, such glorious lessons of their rights, and of the spirit with which they should assert and support them. . .were objects which gave a dignity to the profession, peculiar to my situation. 

This artist felt the need to recreate the highlights of the American Revolution and, in the process, to secure the memory of those elite men who deserved to be heroes. With this series Trumbull created a national mythology by making his heroes role models for his American audience.

Whenever possible, Trumbull painted his subjects from life, although he did have to use other methods. He used his memory, the children of subjects or the portraits of other painters, such as Charles Willson Peale, in order to recreate the likenesses of his subjects.

The first painting in the series is "The Battle of Bunkers Hill, Charlestown, Massachusetts, 17 June 1775." Trumbull witnessed this battle from across Boston Harbor. The focus of Trumbull's representation is the death of Boston patriot Joseph Warren. Whether Trumbull saw Warren fall from his vantage point is unknown. But the artist painted a moving death scene intended to teach his audience what sacrifice means.
The audience's eye is constantly drawn to the death of this Boston resistance leader by Trumbull's choice of lighting. Warren has commended his spirit to heaven. He is protected by an unnamed soldier and by Captain Thomas Knowlton of Connecticut, who aims his gun at the British soldiers. The British are barbaric; they have hungry looks on their faces as they attempt to bayonet the dying Warren. In this way, Trumbull drew a line between the virtuous deed of Warren—as well as of those who protect him—and the feral acts of the British. A British soldier, John Pitcairn, lays dying near the spot where Howe stands commanding his troops. This man's sacrifice, however, is secondary to Warren's. Warren gave his all in the fight; he was probably one of the last American's to leave the hill. He died in the retreat.15

The painting also depicts an African-American servant. We see the brutality of the British, the brave stand of the Americans, and Peter Salem, the black aid of Lieutenant Thomas Grosvenor, 3rd Connecticut Regiment, cowering in fear behind his master. Grosvenor does not look happy to be in Massachusetts at this given moment; perhaps he is
mourning the death of Warren. With Peter Salem, however, there is no doubt. Trumbull chose to depict Salem with absolute terror on his face. This is not surprising given Trumbull’s elitist background. What is surprising is that he placed Salem in the painting. This was Trumbull’s nod to the reality of American life. It is also possible that Trumbull did not like Grosvenor and took the opportunity to question his character. This man does not express the bravery that other Americans in the painting do. For whatever reason, these two figures appear in the painting, showing the only signs of fear and dependance among the American soldiers.\textsuperscript{16}

Technically, Bunker’s Hill was a defeat for the Americans. The Continental Army had to surrender the hill when they ran out of ammunition. In deaths and causalities, the British made a far greater sacrifice, climbing the hill three times into the midst of American fire. With this in mind, the question of Trumbull’s motives arises. Why did he choose Bunker’s Hill as an episode of American heroism in the Revolutionary War?
First, the massive loss of British manpower was an attractive result for the American side. The Continental Army had the satisfaction of showing the British that the colonists could stand their ground as long as they had to. In fact, Trumbull had hoped that the British were going to attack Dorchester Heights as well so that the Americans could "emulate, and... eclipse, the glories of Bunker's Hill."^17

Second, Trumbull knew that the loss at Bunker's Hill did not hurt the American cause. In the long run, the British would have to leave Boston because of the fortification of Dorchester Heights by George Washington and Henry Knox.

Finally, Trumbull wanted to paint Bunker's Hill in order to emphasize the ultimate gift of Joseph Warren to his country. Warren was an important leader in Boston. It is difficult to say what he would have contributed to the new republic had he lived. Such speculations were not important for Trumbull. The artist wanted to dramatize the death of a respected member of his class. In this painting, Warren symbolizes the virtuous citizenry that was vital for the survival of liberty. In Trumbull’s eyes, he was
not a common soldier; he was a gentleman who deserved to be glorified by the American people. Trumbull never stressed the contribution of the ordinary farmer-turned-soldier in his art. Instead, he concentrated on elites, men like Joseph Warren and General Richard Montgomery.

Leader of the American troops that attacked Quebec in 1775, Montgomery became an important figure for the colonial cause. Trumbull's painting in his honor—"The Death of General Montgomery in the Attack on Quebec, Canada on the Night of 31 December, 1775"—gave the American people another hero. The painting was done in the style of "The Death of General Wolfe" by Benjamin West. The sky is dark and wild, reflecting the chaos of battle. A Native American is present, a man identified by Sizer as "Colonel Joseph Lewis," Chief of the Oneida Indians. The presence of Lewis is symbolic of the American cause. Native Americans often symbolized America. It was only right that a Native American be involved in the action.18

At the center of the painting is General Richard Montgomery, who has suffered a fatal wound as have his two aids-de camp. The action has come to a halt as
Montgomery dies in classic pieta fashion. He is in the arms of Lieutenant Matthew Ogden, who is unconcerned by the battle around him. His only worry is his leader. A tight circle of soldiers surrounds Montgomery, standing in reverence as he gives his all for his country. Interestingly enough, no enemies appear. The flags are nondescript. Why would Trumbull choose this battle? The Canadian campaign was disastrous despite the heroic efforts of Montgomery and Benedict Arnold. It was always important for Trumbull to offer his audiences models of virtuous bravery, whether or not those men led their country to victory. Montgomery made a wonderful figure for mythology. He was not a fictional character, but a living person who answered his country's call and died in its service. Trumbull could not ask for better material as he reflected on the Revolution ten years after the fact. The American people needed to know that certain men were born to lead. Their willingness to die only increased their value to the cause. Yet soldiers were not the only heroes Trumbull chose to glorify.
Between the years 1786 and 1797, Trumbull painted "The Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776 at Philadelphia." To get the correct image of the room he consulted Thomas Jefferson who drew a rough diagram. Trumbull filled that room in the Pennsylvania State House with all of the Declaration's signers—including those who were not present when the document was presented by the Committee. Trumbull was interested in the moment; whether Benjamin Rush was there or not, for example, was immaterial. The presence or absence of certain figures did not change the significance of the event. Ten years after independence was declared, Trumbull wished to capture history on canvas. The accuracy of his history did not concern him.

The painting illuminates Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston, the Declaration committee. They pose at John Hancock's desk as Jefferson presents his document. The painting gives the impression that all men present sat in silent reverence as the Congress made history. We would like to believe that this was how the Declaration was received by the Congress. As we march by the document on display in the National Archives, we dare not speak
above a whisper. Yet we know the drama presented by Trumbull is faulty at best. The Declaration was not accepted as Jefferson wrote it. The document was signed over a period of several years, and a few men in the original Congress refused to acknowledge it. Among the latter, Trumbull included the most important adversary, John Dickinson, who did not sign the Declaration and who was not present when the vote on independence was taken.²¹

For Trumbull, however, these facts were secondary, if important at all. What he wished to depict was a Congress of worthy men, leading their country into a new adventure. These men realized the seriousness of their decision; they believed their dramatic step was the only solution for liberty. While they were not on the battlefield--few of these men ever would be--they too were willing to make sacrifices. They also deserved to be leaders of the new republic. There was, of course, one other natural leader who was not present in the Continental Congress. He was affecting events elsewhere and, in the end, he would be the best leader of all.
In "The Capture of the Hessians at Trenton, New Jersey, 26 December 1776," Trumbull gave his audience a glimpse of the greatness that was George Washington. This painting focuses on Washington astride his brown horse. All the other figures in the work look at the general in reverence, including Colonel Johann Gottlieb Rall of the Hessian troops, and Nathaniel Greene's horse. A dying man has strewn the flag he was carrying into Washington's path just as the people of Jerusalem paved Jesus' road with palm branches. The extent of Washington's graciousness is evident as he greets Colonel Rall, now a prisoner of war. Washington appears to give Rall a blessing. The enemy soldier is impressed and receives Washington with great respect. Washington is a leader in every sense of the word. He is in control of his men; his respect for the enemy leadership marks his grace in victory.

In his next work, Trumbull combined the greatness of Washington with the sacrifice of another American soldier. In "The Death of General Mercer at the Battle of Princeton, New Jersey, 3 January 1777," Trumbull offered to his public the loss of yet another American patriot. This is a savage scene; dying men are
everywhere. At the center of the painting is Mercer, leaning on his fallen horse. Yet as Mercer makes the great offering for freedom, Washington, who is just behind Mercer, continues to lead his troops in the battle. He calls his men forward into the chaos. General Washington is unshaken by the death around him. His jaw is set, his clothes unruffled, and his mind calm in the storm of battle.23

Trumbull also focused on a wonderful contrast in this painting. The audience can see the wildness in the eyes of the British soldiers. These men are mean; they are enjoying the carnage of war. On the other hand, the American soldiers are not frightened; these brave men raise their swords against the British brutes even as they die. They fight, but they do not revel in it as do the British. To the end, they serve their country without fear of death, leaving Washington to lead the remaining troops into future battles. This battle, the Battle of Princeton was a small victory for the American side.

The focal point of Trumbull's next historic scene was a victory of greater significance. But Washington was missing from the scene and that fact alone gives
the painting a very different feeling. "The Surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga, New York, 17 October 1777," is one of the latest paintings in the historical series. Trumbull started the work in 1816, one year after the War of 1812 ended. The painting glorified a moment in the Revolution, but none of the men involved were particularly praiseworthy in Trumbull's eyes. Gentleman Johnny surrenders to Horatio Gates. Burgoyne looks apologetic, which was not likely given his personality. All the same, he is humble before Gates, who has an angry look on his face. Washington's graciousness is absent in Gates and in Daniel Morgan, who refuses to look at Burgoyne even though the General is being presented to him. The other American soldiers have just scored a major victory, yet they are not celebrating. All of these factors—the anger of Gates, the arrogance of Morgan, the subdued attitude of the soldiers—could have reflected Trumbull's feelings about Gates. Even though Trumbull had worked closely with Gates during the war, it was Gates who led a cabal against Washington, offering himself as the new commander of the Continental Army. Trumbull's loyalty to Washington was evident in his portrayal of the
seething Gates. The painter probably knew that Gates had little to do with the surrender of Burgoyne. The work of Benedict Arnold and the poor planning of Burgoyne led to the American victory at Saratoga. However, no artist in his right mind would make a hero of Benedict Arnold who turned traitor.

Saratoga was a vital victory for the Americans, but the painting falls flat. The story of the Burgoyne campaign is fascinating, but for Trumbull, there was nothing in the surrender of the British general and his army that evoked strong feeling. Death is missing, as is George Washington. Trumbull did not dare praise Benedict Arnold, nor did he care to glorify Horatio Gates. The surrender of Burgoyne offered little to inspire the American people as far as Trumbull was concerned, but the major victory had to be included in the series. There were few American victories from which to choose and none so important as Saratoga.

Yorktown, on the other hand, offered the majesty of Washington and the final defeat of the British. In "The Surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia, 17 October 1781," the sky is not as chaotic as in Trumbull's other military paintings. Washington
is present, but he is not at the center of the action. He is off to the right looking perturbed at the latest slap from the British. General Cornwallis, the leader of the British in the South, would not surrender to a mere colonial and Washington would not accept the sword of Cornwallis's second in command. Washington's subordinate, Benjamin Lincoln, is therefore at the center of the painting. Three unidentified British soldiers in the picture look embarrassed to be present. Lincoln looks unenthusiastic. The American soldiers are not celebrating their victory. The surrender is solemn and the Continental Army on its best behavior. Trumbull placed himself in the painting even though he had resigned his commission earlier in the war.25

After Yorktown and the dramas of another British surrender, the enemies turned to peace. With peace, came yet another significant moment involving George Washington. Trumbull completed his National History series with an event equal in importance to victory, sacrifice and British surrenders. When the war was won by the Americans, General Washington—the man who could have been king—resigned his commission to the Congress of the United States. With "The
Resignation of General Washington, at Annapolis, Maryland 3 December 1783," Trumbull demonstrated his respect and support for the move of humility on Washington's part. While discussing the Capitol rotunda project with President Madison, Trumbull explained that the resignation of Washington was "one of the highest moral lessons ever given to the world."  In the painting, the general stands center stage, one level below the President of the Congress; Washington recognized his role in relation to the civil power. Martha Washington is in the room and is prepared to take the general-turned-farmer back to his quiet home. Other women are witnessing the selfless act of Washington. Once again, Washington is gracious and dignified. There is no more doubt on his face here than in battle. With this work, Washington's former aid-de-camp helped to create what Garry Wills has called "the American Cincinnatus." After an eight-year war, it is not terribly surprising that this soldier wanted to go home. Yet Trumbull and others like him turned this very human desire into an act of sacrifice on the part of Washington. He could have
taken the reins of government into his own hands. He returned instead to his plow.

There is little doubt that Washington had strong support from the citizens of the new nation in 1783. He could have had anything he wanted. What he coveted was his home. It could even be argued that Washington let the struggling republic down by not offering to serve in some capacity once the peace treaty had been signed. But nobody in Trumbull’s day, or today for that matter, would accept such an assertion.

Washington was already a fascinating mixture of man and myth. He knew what the county needed. The United States required a military leader who did not harbor any desire to conquer the world. Trumbull offered to the American people a transformed Washington. The Commander-in-Chief had become a civilian citizen. Trumbull believed the transformation worth recording.

Trumbull’s historical series is elitist. He never emphasized the role of the common artisan in the winning of the war, nor did he offer his audience the image of the yeoman farmer removing his gun from its place over the fireplace to meet the enemy in his own yard. Among soldiers of Trumbull’s station, the
militia was considered the weak link in the chain of the American army. They were the living symbols of democratic inclinations; Trumbull felt no need to glorify them. He focused on the fine example the elite leadership set for the common citizens of the new nation. Trumbull's paintings have a strong message of hierarchy, deference, and—therefore—social control. Theodore Sizer argued that Trumbull was "a traditionalist, in spite of being a revolutionist. He had fought for political freedom, not for social change." This argument is supported by the subjects Trumbull chose to paint.

It is not surprising that virtue would be a major focus for this man. The members of his class spoke often of sacrifice for the common good. Yet even though he painted examples of virtuous citizens, did he accept that role for himself? Did the idea of virtue shape Trumbull's actions in the revolution and the new nation? On the surface, it would appear so. But Trumbull was also the colonel who felt himself slighted by Congress. Afterward, he did not selflessly continue to serve his country. He resigned his commission and
took refuge in London. This was not the act of a man who practiced what he painted.

Trumbull's ties to the republican ideology spouted by the elites went as far as his bond to his market. Despite the idea of disinterestedness, Trumbull wanted recognition. Regardless of the call for sacrifice, he capitalized on the opportunity to paint moral examples. When he created the mythical images out of the realities of the Revolution, he gave the American elites what they wanted to see. To the rest of the public, Trumbull offered evidence that only the well-born, well-educated were able to lead and wise enough to know when to follow. With his art, this painter attempted to influence social structure. He asked the common citizen to respect the elite and to maintain the hierarchy of American society. Of all the Revolutionary artists, Trumbull was most closely tied to the interests of the elite. His colleagues in the art world were not so devoted to the upper class.

II.

Like John Trumbull, Charles Willson Peale wanted his art to serve a purpose. He "harnessed his art to social principles by insisting that his portraits of
Revolutionary heroes exercise a moral function within the new American society." But, politically, Peale was sympathetic to the democratic tendencies Trumbull wished to ignore. At the time of the American Revolution, "when Philadelphia was beset by a struggle for power between radical democrats and conservative business and professional leaders, Peale was emotionally drawn to the radical cause. . . . " After Peale's father died, Charles became familiar with poverty and debt. For this reason, he developed a connection with the less privileged in the colonies. Yet, when choosing subjects for his art, Peale painted the leaders of the Revolution. No matter where his sympathies lay, he, too, helped to uphold social control in the new nation. 

Charles Willson Peale had many different interests. For this reason, he has received little renown for his art among critics. Yet the few paintings Peale created of the Revolutionary leaders are among the most fascinating and the most life-like. He also created some wonderful propaganda pieces which demonstrate his creativity. Peale was devoted to the arts and believed that they would flourish in America.
Writing to Benjamin Franklin in 1771, Peale assured him that "the people here [in America] have a growing taste for the arts and are becoming more and more fond of encouraging their progress amongst them." He believed that the arts would find "an Assylum, [in America] when either oppression and tyranny shall perhaps banish them from seats where they now flourish---" Peale was repeating a popular belief that the "Arts delight to travel Westward," but he was also expressing his own devotion to the American cause. As soldier and politician, Peale offered his services to the new nation; as painter he catered to his elite market.

Peale was born in 1741 near Chestertown, Maryland. His father was a school teacher who died young, leaving his wife to support the children. She moved her family to Annapolis where she found work as a seamstress. Charles was trained in crafts. He too studied with Benjamin West in London, but was in America during the Revolutionary War. Peale was never a man to remain on the sidelines in a fight. He was a staunch supporter of the Antiproprietary Party in Maryland and while in London, would not "pull off his hat as the King passed by" in protest of the Townshend Acts.
Peale had no patience for those colonists who wanted to remain neutral in the fight against Britain. Writing to Benjamin West in 1775, Peale expressed his belief that few Tories would actually remain in the colonies. "[S]ome ask why they may not be left neuter, that they will not act against us, but I believe [it] is allmost [sic] a Settled point that those who do not enter [the] fight with us is [sic] against us."  

During the war, Charles and his family made their home in Philadelphia. As a Lieutenant in the Continental army, he participated in the Battles of Princeton and Trenton. When it became apparent that William Howe was approaching Philadelphia, Peale returned to that city in order to find a safe haven for his family. He was a prominent member of the Whig Society and therefore feared for his family's safety. Peale's boundless energy is evident in the description of his time spent in Philadelphia. While moving his family from place to place, he was also busy taking medicine to his brother-in-law and gathering information concerning the defense of the city. When he discovered that the Whigs had no ammunition, he rode to General Washington's camp, informed the commander of
the situation, and returned to Philadelphia carrying powder for those who wished to defend their city.\textsuperscript{38} Peale also carried his painting kit into battle and found the time to paint portraits.\textsuperscript{39}

Peale left his military life behind and became an active participant in Philadelphia politics. He was the agent for confiscated estates as well as chairman of the Constitutional Society. In addition, Peale used his artistic talents for "preparation of material . . . for use in Philadelphia's mass political demonstrations." He was so devoted to the Whig cause that he would not even consider buying a house from a Tory. Since he was frustrated by asking every homeowner what his politics were, he proposed that the colonists paint all Tory houses black. "I am well convinced that every welwisher[sic] to his country would willingly contribute towards paying the expense."\textsuperscript{40}

Once the war was over, Peale became instrumental in establishing cultural institutions in the new nation. He founded the Philadelphia Museum in 1786 and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1805. He
died in 1827, leaving artistic children and a legacy of various contributions.  

Peale's first work relating to the ideas of the American Revolution was a portrait of William Pitt, commissioned by Richard Henry Lee. He depicted Pitt as a Roman governor. To modern eyes, Pitt looks ridiculous with his long, bony legs protruding from a short toga. The painting approaches the genre of caricature. As James Flexner remarked, the painting is a "ridiculous combination of the high-flown neo-classical idiom and the crudely direct approach of American craftsmen." The work is full of the symbols of the times: Magna Carta; Lady Liberty; The American Indian; Hampden and Sidney. In fact, it is so symbolic that Peale had to write a massive description of the painting explaining its meaning. While Peale was attempting to satisfy his patron, Lee, by including all the correct props, the neo-classic style was not a genre that appealed to the artist. Rather than being the republican ideology transplanted to canvas, as Sidney Hart has argued, the painting is a poor attempt of an art student trying to please his teacher by doing what he has been taught. Peale's paintings of
the revolutionary leaders are far more indicative of his true style and purpose.

Peale's paintings of Washington and Jefferson distance him from other painters who stressed the virtuous citizen in their works. In 1779, Peale painted "George Washington at the Battle of Princeton." In this portrait, Washington does not feel the burden of battle. There is no cold reserve. He is in full uniform, but he leans casually on a cannon, feet crossed, his right hand resting on his hip. The general is oblivious to what is happening around him, concerned only about having his image preserved. He is well aware of who he is and he leans on the cannon to demonstrate his power. While this portrait is not the most complimentary, it is the most interesting. Peale did not present the American people with a stiff marble statue. In this portrait, Washington is very human. He is an individual who is confident in battle—even though he is not fighting at the moment.45

In 1791, Peale captured the humanity of Thomas Jefferson. There is a wonderful freedom in this painting. Jefferson's eyes are smiling; he appears to be looking at something or someone he loves. He wears
the vest and coat of a proper gentleman, but there is no wig. Jefferson appears to be standing in a breeze, giving him a wind-blown look. This is no stilted republican citizen. This is a man who was interested in everything, enjoying the freedom of his life.\textsuperscript{46}

In addition to his portraits, Peale kept the citizens of Philadelphia entertained through his transparent paintings displayed in his home's windows. He celebrated the surrender of Cornwallis in this way and the paintings were described in the Pennsylvania Packet. In his lower window, Peale placed a ship representative of Cornwallis which flew the flag of France: "emblematical...of the assistance of the fleet of our grat Ally." The writer went on to describe the rest of the display.

In the middle window, in the second story, the Portraits of our illustrious CHIEF and the Count ROCHAMBEAU, with rays of glory from them; over their heads, two Laurel Crowns, interlaced; and the whole incircled with palms and laurel branches--With this motto, "SHINE VALLIANT CHIEFS." And on the third story, in large letters, the words, "FOR OUR ALLIES, HUZZZA! HUZZZA! HUZZZA!"\textsuperscript{47}

Peale created other lavish displays, demonstrating his support of and devotion to the American cause. He
c
connected Benedict Arnold to the devil who prepared to
take the traitorous general to hell. In addition, Peale celebrated the arrival of George Washington to Philadelphia in December of 1781. The creative energies of this man were displayed for all citizens of Philadelphia to see.

These paintings by Peale mark his individuality. There is no ideological pattern in his works. They do not have the feel of propaganda. Yes, he was a patriot, but he believed in America for many reasons. He was fascinated by the new world’s natural history and hoped to interest other Americans as well. Other than Trumbull, Peale was the only painter who saw the Revolutionary war first hand and who wanted to preserve its leaders for the future. Unlike Trumbull he painted more than the image of his subjects. Peale’s works give a certain humanity to the revolutionary leaders, a trait that makes his portraits more interesting than those of other painters. Still, despite Peale’s radical leanings, he neglected to celebrate the contribution of the common people in the fight for independence. While his politics were democratic, his paintings were elitist. In the end, Peale’s image of the Revolution retained the call for social control.
III.

John Trumbull and Charles Willson Peale made their livings through their artwork. But both of these men also wanted their work to provide moral lessons to their audiences. They believed in the American Revolution for different reasons; Trumbull did not share Peale's enthusiasm for democracy. Yet both men seized the opportunity to devoted their work to the righteousness of the American leadership. For John Singleton Copley and Gilbert Stuart the purpose of art was quite different. Copley believed in art for art's sake; Stuart believed in prosperity. However, they also contributed to the theme of maintaining social status in America.

While there are only four John Singleton Copley paintings of interest to this project, this artist was part of the Revolutionary generation of painters. His personality is intriguing. We are not sure, but the consensus is that Copley was born near Boston on July 3, 1738. His father died when he was young; his mother operated a tobacco shop in Boston to support her young family.
Copley was a lonely person who was intense about art from a tender age. He was not pleased with the attitude of Americans toward the arts. He lamented that "was it not for preserving the resemblance of particular persons, painting would not be known in the place" and feared that he would be forced to "bury[ sic] all my improvements among people entirely destitute of all just Ideas of the Arts."49

Copley rarely painted the massive battle scenes so popular with other painters of the time. According to his biographer, James Thomas Flexner, Copley was not concerned with military prowess. "Neither interested nor impressed by men of physicalocation," Flexner argued, "Copley idealized sensitive, intellectual faces."50

While Copley’s sympathies were with the mob during the Stamp Act Riot of 1765, he abhorred the limits to his artistic freedom caused by the rising factionalism in Boston. "The party spirit is so high, that whatever compliments the Leaders of either party is looked on as a tassit [sic] disapprobation of those of the other."51 The budding artist desperately wanted to avoid "every imputation of party spirit, Political contests being
neither [sic] pleasing to an artist or Advantageous to the Art itself. Yet he found himself in the awkward position of negotiating for some merchants during the Tea Crisis. Copley spoke for his two brothers-in-law, Jonathan and Isaac Winslow Clark, at a meeting of the Sons of Liberty. In a letter dated December 1, 1773, he informed the Clark brothers of what he had said at that meeting.

I made use of every argument my thoughts could suggest to draw the people from their unfavorable opinion of you, and to convince them your opposition was neither the effect of obstinancy or unfriendliness to the community. . .I further observed you had shewn no disposition to bring the Teas into the Town, nor would you; But only must be excused from being the Active instruments in sending it back.

Copley assured the sons of Liberty that the Clarks would not interfere in any action they wished to take regarding the tea and he recommended to the brothers that they should avoid all contact with Governor Hutchinson until the problem was resolved. As a result of his actions on behalf of the Clarks, Copley was viewed with suspicion by the leadership of the rebellion in Boston. He left for Europe shortly after the Boston Tea Party.
While abroad, Copley heard about the events at Lexington and Concord in 1775. He was "exceedingly distressed to find there is no prospect of anything less distressing than a Civil War." Yet his fears were not confined to the prospect of a breach with Great Britain. Copley believed that America would be torn apart, "first by the quarrel with Great Britain till it is a distinct Government, and than with Civil discord till time has settled it into some permanent form of Government." Copley was afraid of anarchy. Although English denunciations of Americans transformed him into a patriot, he avoided the instability of his country and remained in England until his death in 1845.

The four portraits of Revolutionary figures done by Copley reinforce the argument made by Flexner concerning the artist's interests. None of the four are of a military leader or a militiaman. In fact, one is an intellectual, a woman who made her own contribution to the cause.

Copley's portrait of Bostonian Mercy Otis Warren, painted during the early years of the rebellion, is a beautiful painting of a remarkable woman. Copley presented Warren in luxurious dress. She was a
prominent woman in Boston; Copley presented her accordingly, draping her in satin and lace. Her face is gentle and sensitive. There is little evidence of her intellect or combative spirit that would tangle with the likes of John Adams. Instead, the image is of a demure woman who is offered to the audience in a fashion that befits her position in the community.56

One of the more interesting portraits by Copley is his representation of Paul Revere. Revere never became president; he never served with distinction in the military nor did he sign the Declaration of Independence. His famous ride through the Massachusetts countryside became legendary despite the fact that he did not complete his mission. What Copley gave us is the portrait of a master craftsman, a unique offering among the portraits of revolutionary heroes. Revere is seated with his chin in his hand. He is dressed casually and holds one of his famous silver tea pots in his other hand. The darkness which hides the left side of his face gives Revere a look of mystery mixed with innocence. This is not the portrait of a leader; this is a working man who takes great pride in his craft.57
Copley also painted a portrait of the man who financed the colonial rebellion in Massachusetts. John Hancock is known today for his impressive signature, but he was a prominent merchant in Boston who found himself in the same political company as Samuel Adams. What we find in the Copley painting is the successful business man. He dresses handsomely, though not ostentatiously. He has just looked up from his ledger where he has been figuring the business of the day. His station is obvious and he demands respect because of it. While he was famous in Boston and well-known to the British—there was a price on his head—he never became a mythical hero in the same way that other leaders did. In fact, none of Copley's subjects became role models for other Americans to emulate, at least not beyond the boundaries of New England.  

The last portrait of a revolutionary leader done by Copley is an image of a master politician, Samuel Adams. Adams's political career was driven by the idea that the ends justify the means. Copley captured his fiery disposition well. His eyes are bright and alert, his jaw set. There is the slightest suggestion of a Roman column in the background, but the focus is on
Adams. There are several documents on his desk, including the Massachusetts charter. He also holds a document rolled up in his right hand. There is a stubborn anger in Adams that Copley's sensitive work emphasized. The modern-day audience, viewing this painting can almost read the caption: "Go ahead, King George. Make my day!"

It is regrettable that Copley, like all of his fellow painters, travelled to London during the Revolution. He had little interest in the beliefs and rhetoric of the colonial leadership. He painted what he saw, preserving his subjects for the future. But he was not bound to the beliefs of Samuel Adams. The Christian Sparta meant nothing to him, nor did protests against the corruption of England. He clearly did not fear Britain and lived there most of his life. He was interested in art, only art. For Copley's colleague, Gilbert Stuart, art provided the path to prosperity and pleasure.

IV.

Like Copley, Gilbert Stuart did not view painting as an instrument for political moralizing. Any
connection Stuart felt with the revolutionary leadership arose from his need to satisfy his market. All artists of this time period depended on the patronage of the rich and prominent. Some of these painters had respect for their patrons. For Stuart, admiration for these prosperous men was secondary to his desire to live with the luxuries they enjoyed.

During the eighteenth century, portraiture was a popular art form. Gilbert Stuart was dedicated to the practice. The painter was born on December 3, 1755 in a Rhode Island snuff mill. His parents were impractical people who doted on him, even though his father was not well off. Stuart received little education and spent his boyhood playing pranks on unsuspecting adults. Yet he also developed a love for music and painting. He enjoyed playing musical duets with his sister and became Cosmo Alexander's art student at the age of fourteen. When his teacher returned to his native Scotland, Stuart accompanied him, hoping to make his mark in the art world.59

Alexander died in Glasgow, leaving Stuart destitute in a strange country. He had no means to make money. After several months of hunger and
poverty, he signed on to the crew of a ship sailing for Nova Scotia. When he finally reached Rhode Island, he refused to discuss his trip and never referred to his time in Glasgow.60

In 1774, Stuart moved to Boston. He was fortunate enough to gain a few commissions for portraits soon and forgot his days of poverty in Scotland. He "dashed off portraits, flirted with the ladies, taught himself to play musical instruments and tried his hand at composing." But the continuing tensions between Great Britain and her colonies caused Stuart personal distress as he watched his family and friends, all Tories, depart for Nova Scotia without him. When war broke out in 1775, he returned to Rhode Island and made plans to leave for London. Stuart felt no particular loyalty to Britain or to America.61 He went to London, hoping to find his friend Benjamin Waterhouse and a place in the art world. Unfortunately for Stuart, Waterhouse was in Edinburgh at Medical School. Once again Stuart was alone and destitute in a strange place. He eventually found a job as a church organist while his painting went neglected.62
At this point in his life, Stuart's emotions were fluctuating between extreme euphoria and deep depression. When he had money in his pockets, "he threw himself into dissipation" going on drinking binges. "After his money was gone, he borrowed, and when he found he could not pay he threw himself into a depression as extreme as his high spirits had been." These binges and emotional variations left Stuart in a poor position to concentrate on his painting. The turning point came when Benjamin West agreed to take him as a student.63

Becoming West's student was a difficult move for Stuart, for he was a fiercely independent man who vowed that he would "follow no master" in his painting. Yet he became refined in West's studio and his concentration returned to his art. He achieved fame with his portrait entitled "The Skater." Once he accomplished this, he worked diligently to forget that he had ever been poor. Stuart lived in splendor, dressed in the finest clothes and hired a fine French cook. Unfortunately, he spent his money faster that it came in. Stuart's life took on an interesting pattern. "One day he was dining with earls, dukes and princes,
the star of a brilliant solon. In twenty-four hours he was cracking jokes to his companions in debtors' prison." Despite his financial instability, he married a woman who shared his interest in music. They gave elaborate musical parties in their home which caused greater strain to Stuart's finances. He became so desperate for money, he took advantage of West and his wife. Stuart borrowed a painting of West he had done for Mrs. West, explaining that he wished to touch it up. Instead, he sold the painting because he needed the money. He owed 80 pounds for snuff alone. Finally, Stuart was forced to leave London in 1787 in order to escape his creditors.64

In Ireland, Stuart continued his spending patterns by giving elaborate dinner parties. He also bought a farm, but soon found himself in financial trouble once again. Stuart confided to a friend, however, that he knew a way out of his predicament.

The Irish had followed the Revolution closely. George Washington was a hero to the people of that country. When Stuart heard the name Washington, he was not filled with reverence. Stuart never expressed pleasure over the Revolution's success nor did he leave
any evidence that he respected Washington as a great leader. Instead, he saw dollar signs and was not afraid to admit it. Stuart told his friend that he planned to return to his homeland soon "to make a fortune by Washington alone." He was astute enough to know his market, even though he had left his native country twenty years earlier. Stuart believed that the American people wanted an icon; he was happy to oblige.

When Stuart returned to America in May of 1793, he knew he could not simply approach the Great Man and ask permission to make money from his likeness. He needed to establish his reputation with the elite of America, to win their confidence. He would have to paint the portrait of another member of the leadership to open the door to the president. He chose John Jay as his first vehicle. Stuart's portrait of the Chief Justice was his first important painting in America. Through Jay, Stuart reached the president. In 1795, Stuart was summoned to Philadelphia to paint the portrait of George Washington.

Despite Stuart's success with Washington and other leaders of the new republic, he was dissatisfied with life in Philadelphia. Stuart resented the attitude of
the "Federalist aristocracy" who "regarded painters as drones necessary to human vanity. . . but hardly admirable." Despite the demand for his paintings, he was never able to make the fortune he desired. Not only did he live beyond his means, but he also neglected to keep records. His lack of business sense doomed him to a life of debt as did his growing attachment to drink. In his later years, he often fell into lethargy and depression making it difficult for him to work. He died in Boston in 1828 at seventy-three years of age. While Stuart was not a millionaire, he died with the reputation of genius in his art.67

Reportedly, Gilbert Stuart was fascinated by the human face. He loved to capture what his subject was by placing him on canvas. These are the sentiments of an honest painter who is devoted to the art of portraiture. What is interesting about his portraits of the American elites, however, is the similar depiction of each. The figures are stiff, without human qualities save for the expression in their eyes. There is the occasional exception, but for the most part, Stuart was keenly aware of the image these men
wished to convey. And so he painted the virtuous servant of the country—time and time again. Their humanity was lost in the marble that surrounded them. But their reputations were in tact, ready to be preserved for future generations who would admire them for their selflessness.

In 1794, Stuart painted a portrait of John Jay, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Jay is clothed in the robes of his office, his left hand resting on a law book. We are led to believe that Jay did little else but study the laws of the land and he never removed his robes. There is a Roman column in the background, just to the right of Jay. His clear blue eyes are wide as if he is listening intently to a colleague. He is a servant of the people whose sole purpose in life is to protect the citizens from injustice. In this painting, Jay refers to the past precedents in the law book so that he may preserve liberty for present and future generations.

Even though Jay appears in splendid robes, the image of the altruistic citizen is obvious. By placing Jay in the uniform of his office, Stuart diminished the elitist role of the Jay family. The New York
aristocrat is not present in this painting. Instead, Jay is submerged in his roles of statesman and Chief Justice.  

Stuart painted the first of his Washington portraits in 1795. The painter was anxious to capture Washington on canvas, but found the process frustrating. Stuart liked to engage those who sat for him in conversation. He was an expert at making his subjects feel at ease. With Washington, however, Stuart failed. "Now sir," he told Washington, "you must let me forget that you are General Washington and that I am Stuart the painter." Coldly, Washington replied, "Mr. Stuart need never feel the need of forgetting who he is, or who General Washington is."  

Despite this rebuke, Stuart tried again and again to help the President relax. Nothing worked and despite the President's cold reserve, Stuart could not help making jokes about him. He was amused at the sight of Washington sitting for five artists at the same time as Charles Willson Peale's sons recreated the great man on canvas. Stuart joked to Mrs. Washington about the horrors her husband must be experiencing as he is besieged by painters.
Despite the praise given to Stuart's first portrait of Washington, the artist considered it a failure. He did not believe he captured Washington as he should have. This portrait was not of the great military leader. This is simply the picture of a thoughtful, introspective servant of the people. Washington is dressed simply in a black suit and white shirt. There are no props--no books or columns--to tell the story of this man. He fills the painting, emerging from a black background with a red glow surrounding him. The red glow emanates from Washington himself. He appears deep in thought. With this painting, Stuart offered to American citizens the greatness of the man. The image he created is of wisdom gained from years of service. Even though Washington's passions were strong, he did not succumb to them. They did not drive him. This man does nothing on impulse.

According to McLanathan, Stuart unknowingly created an icon. On the surface, this argument seems valid. Yet, if Stuart did not know he was creating an icon, or at least adding to the growing mythology surrounding Washington, how could he hope to make a
fortune? Stuart understood that new nations need symbols; they lack an identity and look to their leaders for validation. This artist was objective enough to see that the image of Washington could provide the emblem the new nation desired. This icon stood for wisdom, reserve, forethought, self-control. And it stood for the elite, the well-bred, the American aristocracy. No gentleman would ever let his emotions rule him, nor would he let his passions show.

The following year, 1796, Stuart painted another portrait of the president. It is known as the Athenaeum Washington. The artist purposely left it uncompleted. He wished to have a model from which he could create many replicas. Stuart apparently felt that, like God, Washington had to be everywhere, watching over his people.

In this portrait, it is evident that Washington's new teeth were giving him pain. It is possible, however, that there were other factors at work to make the face seem tired and overburdened. Washington looks exhausted and even a little bored. This is certainly understandable. 1796 was the eighth year of Washington's presidency. He was no longer unanimously
adored, if he ever truly was. The man was under attack from the Democratic-Republican press and he no longer wished to be a leader. This portrait is the likeness of Washington we see the most. For a people searching for a defining image, the weariness was not evident. George Washington never tired. That was the image that Stuart wished to create again and again; Washington, the man, without props. But in this same year—1796—Stuart did two similar paintings of Washington in which the president is encircled by other symbols of the American cause.

In the "Lansdowne" Washington, the audience has just entered the great man's chamber, complete with its Roman column in the background. There is also a table covered with a cloth. Fortunately for imagery's sake, the cloth has been lifted just enough to reveal the bald eagle carved into the table leg. Washington appears approachable in this painting. He has risen to meet his visitor and has his right hand extended in greeting. His left arm grasps his sword, a symbol of his military past. It is clear, however, that he has left the army behind, for he is dressed simply in a black suit and white shirt. He has left his seat of
power—a chair adorned with a circle of stars and stripes—to answer his people's questions and concerns.

Stuart painted a second version of this painting in the same year. The differences conveyed some interesting messages. First, Stuart changed the floor. In the earlier version, a rug covered the floor, giving the room a warm feeling. In the later version, the rug was removed. The floor is marble. Washington emerges from it as all good statues do.

Second, Washington's arm is not outstretched as in the earlier painting. Instead, his hand rests on a copy of the Constitution, lying on the table. The painting warns and reassures. Washington wanted the American people to understand that he would not always be with them to guide them through troubled and prosperous times. The Constitution, however, would remain. That document was more important than any leader. It was better for the American people to trust in their laws than in him.

Washington's eyes, too, convey this message. He has done his time in charge. Perhaps he was greeting John Adams, the new President. Washington indicates that he will leave the Constitution on the president's
desk so that Adams will have easy access to it. Whatever message this painting conveyed, the symbolism is overwhelming. Along with the Constitution, the ever-present Roman column, the chair and the eagle, there is a rainbow shining through the window. Stuart told his audience what they wanted to hear. Washington, great as he was, looked to the Constitution. Because of that fact, the future appeared to be bright.74

Gilbert Stuart himself had little in common with Washington. The president's prowess as a leader was not important to Stuart. His symbolic power, on the other hand, was vital to Stuart's success. If he could present the American public with the image of the perfect American, he would make his fortune. He invented his own Washington and reaped the benefits.

Several years later, in 1806, Stuart painted yet another portrait of Washington. This painting was commissioned for the Boston State House. Stuart needed a Boston theme. He painted the great hero standing on Dorchester Heights in 1776. The artist did not know Washington during the war years. The face in this portrait of a 1776 event is the face of the older
president. Stuart did this out of necessity, but the effect is interesting. Washington appears timeless—the same yesterday, today, and forever, just like every other immortal character.

The elder statesman's head rests on a strong soldier's body. He watches the action with confidence. This general knows he has won this particular fight. The British will evacuate the city. Since this painting was commissioned by Boston patrons, it was fitting that Stuart choose the only victory in that area in which Washington took part. None of the men who transported the cannons from Fort Ticonderoga to Dorchester Heights are present in the painting. The ingenuity of Henry Knox, the man in charge of that mission, was not rewarded by Stuart. Washington is the only man present. He did the work by some magical stroke of his hand. Now he can enjoy the results.75

The last two Stuart paintings of revolutionary leaders were done when the subjects had achieved the office of President. There are interesting differences between the paintings of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. In one sense, Stuart painted the virtuous citizen twice; both men are dressed simply in the basic
black of the selfless statesman. Yet the painting of John Adams was done without props. Adams emerges from a dark background. He is posed to speak. Considering John Adam's reputation for loquaciousness, Stuart captured his personality well. The artist painted a good portrait of the New Engander. But it seems Stuart believed Jefferson more thoughtful than Adams.  

The portrait of the quiet third president was painted between 1805 and 1807. Jefferson is seated in a dark room with the standard Roman column in the background. He has been writing. At this moment, Jefferson looks up to greet a visitor. While he is stiff and reserved as are all of Stuart's subjects, his face is more relaxed than Washington's. But Jefferson is another Southern aristocrat, dressed simply in black and white. Again, Stuart knew his market. The citizens of the young republic should not see their leaders dressed in luxurious, bright-colored clothes. Such clothing sent the wrong message to the middling- and poorer sorts who could not afford such things.

As much as Stuart captured the personality of each man, these leaders were not painted for who they were. They could not be themselves, warts and all. The
representation of the selfless leader, stiff and without human qualities, was the image these men presented to the people of the country. In this respect, they were no different than present-day politicians. Image is everything and Stuart understood that. His concern was not for the politics of the Revolution or the new nation. He was, however, able to transfer the rhetoric of the Revolutionary leadership onto canvas so that the living symbols of that time became part of the nation's mythology.

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The paintings of the revolutionary period displayed many popular characteristics of art during this period. The drama of the battle scene and the connection to classical art are two examples. Yet in examining the art of these painters in the Revolutionary generation, several questions remain. What did the American Revolution really mean to these men, if anything? Why did they represent it and its leaders in the ways they did? Why did they feel it necessary to create mythologies when the reality of the Revolution and its leaders was interesting enough?
Where were their true loyalties? How did they contribute to the creation of an American community founded on social hierarchy? These questions are complicated to answer and it is difficult to know exactly what motivated people in the past. The paintings of these men, however, offer some clues.

For Copley and Stuart, the Revolution was not an important event. Their main concern was their art. The British colonies were not the center of the creative world. But when the time came to offer an identity to the new republic, they, like Peale and Trumbull, were ready to oblige by telling the story of the fight for freedom. While Trumbull and Peale had more devotion to the American cause, all four artists told the revolutionary tale in the same way that the elites of the colonies did.

Yet while the leaders of the colonies were motivated by certain political traditions, these artists were not. If Trumbull had followed the example of the role models he painted, he may have remained in the army for the duration of the war. Instead, when he felt slighted, he left the struggle behind and went to London. Peale celebrated the accomplishments of the
elites, but his sympathies were with the poor. Copley struggled to remain aloof from the fight with little success. In the end, he chose art over his country. Stuart clearly had no attachment to the elite. He was not impressed by these men and even resented them for their wealth and snobbery. He simply saw an opportunity to benefit financially from the revolutionary leadership.

Yet when the rhetoric of the elites became the standard for the new republic and the leadership wished to present themselves to the common citizens in a way that imitated that discourse, the artists became propaganda geniuses. They created powerful images which conveyed the message of their patrons. The elites were in charge and they would make the new nation great by maintaining social control.
Notes


2 Flexner, 70.


6 Works, 1-2.

7 Trumbull, 22-23.

8 Ibid., 23; Works, 1.

9 Trumbull, 23; 18.

10 Ibid., 38-39.

11 Ibid., 46-47; 52-53.

12 Ibid., 69-72.

13 Ibid., 89.

14 Letter to Thomas Jefferson, June 11, 1789. Reprinted in Ibid., 159. This letter was in response to a letter
from Jefferson who had offered Trumbull a job as his private secretary. While honored, Trumbull felt the need to explain to Jefferson his reason's for rejecting the offer.


16 Works, Figure 145.

17 Trumbull, 24.

18 Works, Figure 152.

19 Ibid.

20 See Ibid., Figure 158.

21 See Jaffe, 116.

22 Works, Figure 164.

23 Ibid., Figure 169.

24 Ibid., Figure 184.

25 Ibid., Figure 195.

26 Trumbull, 258.

27 Works, Figure 203.


29 Works, 3.


31 Peale, xxvii.

32 Miller and Ward, 6.
33 CWP to Benjamin Franklin, April, 21, 1771. Reprinted in Peale, 99.


35 Miller and Ward, 4-5.


37 CWP to Benjamin West, August 31, 1775. Reprinted in Peale, 146.

38 Ibid., 207;242;243-246.

39 Miller and Ward, 5.

40 Peale, 282; 293.

41 Miller and Ward, 5-6.


43 Flexner, 187-188.


45 Richardson, Hindle, and Miller, 56.

46 Ibid., 191.

47 "Celebration of the Surrender of Cornwallis," described in Pennsylvania Packet, November 1, 1781 and reprinted in Peale, 361.

48 See Ibid., 354-355; 365-366.


50 Flexner, 106.
51 Copley, 98.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., 211-212.
54 Ibid., 212-213.
55 Ibid., 328-332.
58 Smith, Plate 7.
59 Flexner, 250-256.
60 Ibid., 255-256.
62 Flexner, 259-261.
63 Ibid., 262-264.
64 Ibid., 268; 272-273; 276-277.
65 McLanathan, 75.
66 Ibid., 81.
67 Flexner, 291; 293-294; Ibid., 148.
69 Flexner, 287.
70 Ibid., 289.
71 Ibid., 289.
72 National Gallery of Art, 76.
73 McLanathan, 83.
74 Both versions of the "Lansdowne" Washington appear in McLanathan.
75 This painting, too, appears in McLanathan.
76 See Ibid.
77 National Gallery of Art, 91.
CHAPTER II
"The Play's The Thing"

In his outstanding book on cultural hierarchy in America, Lawrence Levine argues "An age constructs, or reconstructs, the symbols of culture into something it can be comfortable with, something in which it can locate meaning." Even as the American rebellion was becoming the American Revolution, writers and composers were constructing their own meaning from the events they were witnessing. This is apparent in the plays that were written during and after the Revolution. These meanings vary according to the political stance taken by the playwright; that is to be expected. What is striking about these plays is not just the fact that so many of them imitate the political rhetoric of the time, but also the extent to which these playwrights argue for social control.

While Douglas McDermott argues that the social organization of the theatrical audience depended on what sort of social control they would accept, playwrights during the Revolutionary period were
interested in maintaining the status quo in society. Since so many of these plays were written to be read by individuals rather than performed before a collective audience, these artists were free from any angry crowds who might take offense at their sentiments.²

Maintaining social hierarchy did not necessarily mean retaining British rule, although for the Tory writers that was the plan. In fact, in the dramatic genre, the reader can see a microcosm of the civil war in America at this time. Yet, despite this debate within the American community, what so many of these playwrights were advocating was a society in which the upper classes had control and the lower classes knew their place, a society that looked much like the world with which they were comfortable. They presented their ideas in the form of propaganda, imitated or parodied the rhetoric of the political elite, focused on specific concerns through dialogues, placed the burden of maintaining order on women more than men, and largely ignored the role of African-Americans and Native Americans in their world.

At the time of the American Revolution, theater had a short history in the colonies. There were
theaters in Jamestown, Williamsburg, Charleston, and other major cities. However, audiences were rarely large enough for a company to remain in one place. Ticket prices could range from five to seven shillings for a box seat to two to three shillings for a gallery seat. Since the average artisan in Massachusetts earned 3 to 4.5 shillings per day and the average unskilled field worker took home 2 to 2.5 shilling per day, it is difficult to say how important a luxury like theater would be. It is safe to assume, however, that a theater company could not depend on a long term patronage in one area. Movement was important to their survival. Theatrical groups also faced the problem of respectability. Actors were not considered the best of people. The stereotypical actor was a man or woman of loose morals and questionable background. One company touring in America found an ingenious way to solve this particular problem. The Douglas company received a document called a "character" signed by the Governor's Council and "near one hundred of the principle gentlemen in Virginia." The document stated that the company had behaved "with prudence and discretion"
while in Virginia. This was a high recommendation to take to other colonies, especially New England.⁵

Despite the respectability of theater companies who performed Shakespeare for eager audiences, as tensions grew between Great Britain and her colonies, these actors faced another problem they could not overcome. Most of these actors were British and as anti-British sentiment grew, these artists were no longer welcome in the colonies. During the Stamp Act controversy in 1765, the Sons of Liberty in New York burnt the theater to the ground. David Douglas went so far as to rename his company The American Company, but it was clear to him by 1775 that he was no longer welcome in the North American colonies.⁶

While some prominent Americans such as George Washington loved the theater, others considered it a frivolous waste of money.⁷ Some colonists, especially those living in New England, considered theater to be immoral. Playwrights were also frustrated by a resolution presented to the First Continental Congress which discouraged "every species of extravagance and dissipation." This resolution was adopted by all the
colonies save New York and Georgia, making it difficult for aspiring playwrights to present their works. Still, writers who felt strongly enough to write plays presented their stories in pamphlet form to reading audiences throughout the colonies. It is difficult to determine just how effective these plays were in persuading people to accept the playwrights' various points of view. The uncertain impact of these plays does not by any means diminish their importance. They are worth study for their propaganda intent alone regardless of their dramatic quality. These plays provide fascinating clues to the issues that were uppermost in the minds of those who choose to write about them.

The Revolution was a propaganda war as is any war. The earliest plays dealing with the constitutional crisis which was to become the Revolution are propaganda plays written as the events were taking place. These plays are journalistic in nature, designed in part to report events as they happened. Yet the intense emotion apparent in these works makes
them argumentive rather than objective. Norman Philbrick contends "It is this involvement with the action, this direct contact with people caught in disaster, that gives these dramas a unique place in the propaganda war of the American Revolution."  

A limited number of these dramas were written after the Revolutionary war had ended. The need to persuade the American people to unite against the British had disappeared; the necessity for virtue and honor had not. Some of these plays also differ from the earlier works in that they were written to be produced on stage, but they still fit into the category of propaganda. Their intents are more subtle. However their messages are just as clear. The themes in these propaganda plays vary widely. Some of the topics are derived from the political rhetoric of the day; others revolve around issues that many patriots did not wish to acknowledge. Yet all of them provide powerful fuel for the propaganda fire burning during the war.  

The theme that is most common in these works is the crisis of virtue, a popular concern for the Whig leadership. The heroes of these plays are prepared to sacrifice all for their country's good and never put
their own interest above the cause. Virtue was a very popular issue for New Englander Mercy Otis Warren. Warren's brother, James Otis, was an early advocate for the liberty cause as was her husband, James Warren. She was strongly influenced by such sons of liberty as Samuel Adams and John Adams. Despite her gender, she never hesitated to express her views during the Revolution. Her plays were advertisements for virtuous citizens and jeremiads for those who allowed themselves to be blinded by greed and power.

In The Adulateur (1773), the hero, Brutus, is at odds with Rapatio, who represents Thomas Hutchinson, the unpopular governor of Massachusetts. These two men are the personifications of good and evil. Brutus, who is modeled after James Otis, despairs for his country, Upper Servia. In Act I, scene 1 he remembers his forefathers "who liv'd for freedom, and for freedom dy'd: who scorned to roll in affluence, if that state was sicken'd o'er with the dread name of slaves."10

The reference to forefathers who did not wish to be rich is an interesting manipulation of New England history. There is no particular evidence that the early Puritans had an aversion to wealth. In fact,
many of them were quite prosperous. Yet, now, during the crisis with Britain, it was important to reinvent the past in order to justify the present. Affluence, at least in the rhetoric, was out; sacrifice was in.

Brutus then prays for his country saying: "Teach us to act with firmness and with zeal:/ 'till happier prospects gild the gloomy waste./ While from our state shall future ages know, / Virtue and freedom are thy care below." When a young boy in the city is killed by soldiers in the street, Brutus is visited by Cassius' father's ghost (Samuel Adams's father) who encourages him to hold fast in his cause and the play ends with a speech from Brutus who calls his fellow countrymen to subject themselves to poverty in order to maintain the virtue that is their legacy.

Rapatio, on the other hand, is blatantly evil. He has betrayed his country and vows to see it bleed before he will tolerate the mob of patriots. He considers himself a friend of government which clearly makes him the villain of the piece. He is obsessed with power, declaring, "Know patriots this and tremble./ grief shall again its wonted seat resume,/ And piles of mangled corpses croud[sic] the tomb,/
Thro' all the wanton streets of pow'r I'll rove,/ And soar exulting like the bird of Jove, . . . "13 Such greed for power strikes a sharp contrast to Brutus, who sees through the gloom to a brighter day as long as the patriots remain virtuous.

This theme of virtue versus corruption continues throughout Warren's other plays as well. While the experts are not sure that The Blockheads was written by Warren, the attitudes expressed in the play are consistent with her beliefs expressed in her other works. Philbrick believes the play to be a "clever example of one phase of propaganda: to influence wavering colonists to recognize the perfidy of Albion and join the patriot cause."14 The play concerns the British troops and their sympathizers, but the theme of simple virtue runs throughout. One character, aptly named Surly laments that he would have been happier if he had not cringed to the powerful and had been content to live out his life on a farm.

Warren's plays contain the most obvious references to virtue. Yet other playwrights dealt with the same issue while raising other concerns. An interesting example appears in The Fall of British Tyranny or
American Liberty Triumphant. The author of this work is unknown, but his intent is to expose the Scottish plot to Americans. Lord Bute, who had a good deal of influence on George III, was to blame for the Revolution, according to the author. Even though Bute’s influence had, in fact, declined by 1763, many Americans did believe that the plot against America was Scottish. Norman Philbrick states this belief caused a great deal of suffering for the Scotch minority in America at the time. Lord Bute, who is named Paramount in the play, displays his lack of virtue while also uplifting his Native land:

I am unalterably determined at every hazard and at the risk of every consequence to compel the colonies to absolute submission, I’ll draw in treasure from every quarter, and Solomon-like, wallow in riches, and Scotland, my dear Scotland, shall be the paradise of the world.

For these playwrights, as well as for the political leaders who supplied the rhetoric for their works, there were no shades of gray when it came to the issue of virtue. Either a citizen was virtuous or he was not. If a people are not virtuous, willing to sacrifice all for their country, then they are corrupt. For the author of The Fall of British Tyranny, the British people were corrupt beyond hope.
This playwright lamented the fact that the British people had betrayed their own constitution. In Act II, scene 1, Lord Justice (The Earl of Camden) cries, "The Constitution, that admirable fabric, that work of ages, the envy of the world, is deflower'd indeed, and made to commit a rape upon her own body." The imagery of rape and lost virginity is striking. If Britain had become so corrupt that she would even deflower her own creation, it is not surprising that she would wage war on her own children or attempt to make them slaves. The utter evilness of the British in this play would make any patriotic audience cringe.

The theme of British corruption continues in Act III, where two shepherds appear, discussing the events of Lexington. The imagery changes with the setting. Roger, a simple American shepherd, describes the scene he observed in terms of his profession: "When they [the British] came to Lexington, where a flock of our innocent sheep and young lambs,... were feeding and sporting on the plain, these dogs of violence and repine with haughty stride advanc'd, and berated them in a new and unheard of language to us." In this scene, the author made use of two popular images to
which his audience could relate: the pastoral quality of the New World and the popular Christian theme of sacrifice. The innocent lambs, happily abiding in the idealistic world of rural America, follow the example of the Good Shepherd and never mummer a word, even while they are berated by the dogs who would destroy them. It is not enough to have simple virtue; that virtue must be accompanied by Christian humility. This theme, too, reappears later in the play.

The Christ image changes from sheep in the field to Ethan Allen, who has been captured by the British at Montreal. Believing that he is to die, he cries, "Farewell, my friends! to[sic] die with you is now my noblest claim, since to die for you was a choice deny'd." It is intriguing to think of Allen lamenting the fact that he could not lay down his life for his friends! Yet for this author the Revolution was a battle between Christian virtue and evil corruption.

Yet despite the extent of Britain's fall from grace, the writer of this play depicts the fight as a civil war. In Act III, scene 7, a woman laments "that brothers should with brothers war, and in intense
fierce opposition meet, to seek the blood of each other. . . ." Later, a citizen declares that Lord Boston (General Gage) "will now be called Cain." It is interesting that as late as 1776, when this play was written, this author viewed the war in these terms. British corruption aside, this fight was between people with a connection to one another; it was not a radical revolution designed to overthrow the order of the English universe.

In 1777, Hugh Henry Brackenridge wrote The Death of General Montgomery. In telling the story of Montgomery in Canada, Brackenridge uses the ghost of General Wolfe to connect the American cause with glorious deeds of the past. In an interesting scene Brackenridge argues that if General Wolfe were still alive at the time of the Revolution, he would have supported the American cause despite his British citizenship. Wolfe's ghost appears in the play and compares Great Britain to Medea, accusing the English of murdering her own children. By using the image of Wolfe, Brackenridge was able to justify the American fight; he gave it the sanction of a very popular hero.
Further evidence of Britain’s lack of virtue came in a 1778 comic opera called The Political Duenna. We do not know who authored this work, but the clever writer informs his audience that the play is performed "by the Servants of his Britannic Majesty." This is clearly not the case, for the work is a broad farce of these same servants. They are the living models of greed itself. Early in the play, this point is made clear by a character named MacBoot, "played" by Lord Bute. He states his philosophy quite succinctly when he declares, "Money is the Sine qua non of Government, and I think the man who serves his country without a view to his own interest, is a fool for his pains." Even Boreas who is "portrayed" by Lord North is obsessed with money. He finds himself lamenting the depletion of the treasury because of the payments made to the Hessians. It is ridiculous that precious money has been wasted on sour-crout, of all things. "I believe," he states, "in my conscience (I mean I would if I had any) that in that article, at least, the rogues of contractors found means to cheat the greater rogues who gave them the contract."
In the midst of all this comedy at the expense of the British, the Americans are indirectly praised and uplifted by Cain-Wood, who is "played" by Lord Munsford. He finds Boreas (Lord North) to be an absolute blockhead:

Now is his wise head full of imaginary ideas of subjugating the Americans: as if three millions of people, enthusiastic in the cause of liberty,. . . fighting for everything they hold dear to themselves and their posterity, could be conquered by any force that can be sent from this country.  

The nobility of the Americans is unmistakable. How can the British, who have shown themselves to be corrupt, greedy, and tyrannical possibly defeat such a virtuous people? Finally, the ridiculous behavior of his Majesty's servants does them in. They are all dismissed by the King, but MacBoot is determined to bounce back quickly. "I'll retire to the ancient Land of Tyranny," he declares, "and be a tyrant---as all my fathers were."

A little over a decade after the Constitution was signed, William Dunlap chose a Revolution subject for a tragedy written in five acts. Dunlap is considered to be the father of American Theater and from him we have an interesting piece entitled Andre. Spies and treachery were popular subjects for playwrights who
wished to recreate the Revolution. Yet in Andre, Dunlap presented a story that is not always in step with the images of the Revolution apparent in earlier plays.

First, there is no spectacular battle scenes in this version of Dunlap's work. In fact, in Act I, a soldier laments the darkness and despair of war. "In vain the enlighten'd friends of suffering man/ Point out, of war, the folly, guilt, and madness/ Still, age succeeds to age, and war to war;/And man the murderer marshalls out his hosts/ In all the gaiety of festive pomp," 26 This is a new dimension on the war itself. Yet there are other, more important ways in which Andre is unique.

Major John Andre was the British officer who conspired with Benedict Arnold to surrender West Point to the British. He was captured by the Americans and was sentenced hang as a spy. It would seem, however that there was some sympathy for Andre, at least on the part of Dunlap. "Brave," "Virtuous," and "honourable" are just some of the adjectives used to describe the character of Andre by those in the play who know him. One American officer, Bland, says that Andre saved his
life and dedicates himself to repaying Andre now that he is in trouble. Even the Commander (General Washington) admits that Andre is a good man. "I know the virtues of this man, and love them/ but the destiny of millions, millions/ yet unborn, depends upon the rigour/ of this moment." In response to this Bland accuses America of forgetting reverence for virtue and of placing Andre and Arnold in the same category of men. Later, when an older soldier tries to explain to Bland why his appeals for Andre's life are selfish, Bland replies: "Cold-blooded reasoners, such as thee, would blast/ All warm affection; asunder, sever/ Every social tie of humanized man." Dunlap was attacking the republican idea of placing the community's concerns above individual interests. It would also seem that the Americans no longer had a monopoly on virtue. The theme of integrity is discussed in reference to Bland's father, who is willing to be executed by the British in order to adhere to Washington's orders concerning Andre, but virtue is also an important trait of John Andre. In fact, in a later version of this play, retitled The Glory of Columbia, Her Yeomanry we see the actual act of treachery. Andre is depicted as a man
forced into deceit when things do not go as planned for his country. He has a definite zeal for serving his country and puts Britain above his own safety.\(^{29}\) Perhaps by 1798 and 1817, rhetoric concerning the need for American virtue was no longer important. Rhetoric concerning luxury was another matter.

The most famous early American play is The Contrast by Royall Tyler. While the play does not deal directly with the Revolution, the rhetoric Tyler uses is very Whig. In Act III of this play Colonel Manly makes a speech expressing his ideas concerning the emerging greatness of a country. "It must first become dissipated," he says; "Luxury is surely the bane of a nation." He goes on to say that the Grecian states were free and happy when the people "knew no other tools than the axe and the saw." It did not remain so, however. "When foreign gold, and still more pernicious, foreign luxury had crept among them, they sapped the vitals of their virtue."\(^{30}\) Even after the United States was founded, the people had to be warned against the lure of luxury. This was a consistent theme from Mercy Otis Warren to Royall Tyler.
The propaganda plays of the Revolution were designed to convince the American people to support the American cause. It was a just cause. Britain could no longer be trusted. Yet the situation in America was not so simple. The Patriots, who adopted the name Whig, debated with the Loyalists, or Tories, over the expediency of independence. In this debate, it was important to discredit one's opponents in any way possible. For one playwright, it was also important to warn against fanaticism in any cause. In The Double Conspiracy, on Treason Discovered, The American Roused in a Cure for the Spleen, and The Patriots, the reading audience was given the Whig, Tory, and Moderate views respectively. These three plays demonstrate the complexity of the revolutionary debate in the American community itself.

The Double Conspiracy, on Treason Discovered was written in 1783 by the poet John Trumbull, cousin to the famous painter of the same name. The play concerns the civil war in New York between Patriots and Loyalists near the end of the war. Frankly, a staunch Patriot, recites the Whig rhetoric well when he laments
the state of his people in New York. He is saddened by their attachment to British finery and cries, "The British Court were sensible that the reduction of this country, could not be effected, unless the morals of its inhabitants were first destroyed."32 One of Frankly's cohorts, aptly named Fearless, is ready to burn all storehouses to the ground, if necessary in order to save his fellow citizens from British luxury. Frankly, however, is ready to take a more moderate course in these matters. He does not wish the Patriots to become lawless in their cause. This message of corrupting luxury continues with those who oppose the patriot cause. In Act II, we meet the Gibbers, a loyalist family who is prepared to do anything to hold on to their property and ruin their fellow countrymen in the process. Interestingly enough, these people are the more fascinating characters in the piece. They are painted as despicable and hypocritical, but they are more human than Frankly, who is stiff and humorless. Mr. Gibber is dealing in counterfeit money in order to ruin continental currency and is encouraged by his wife, a shrew of a woman who never gives her family a moment's peace. Betty, the Gibber's daughter, is a
flirt who offers sexual favors to whoever wants them. She is not particular about their politics. One man of particular interest to her is a Loyalist spy who frequents the Gibber household. He lays out the diabolical plan of the British and their loyal subjects in America. "I would just observe here, that the Americans have yet to learn, that parting with staple commodities and specie, for foreign articles of Luxury,[sic] introduces a gay and gaudy poverty." The Americans must be taught this lesson by the Loyalists. "We can lull them asleep by our finery, and make them forget the great concerns of their country... It is the intention of his most gracious Majesty, not only to impoverish, but to depopulate the country, as fast as possible."33 Later in the play, when the Gibber's son is saved from being hanged by the Whig contingent, one Loyalist remarks on the foolishness of the patriots. "We made 'em believe the moon was made of green cheese, and they did our business for us, better than we cou'd have done it ourselves."34 In the end of course the Loyalists lose, as they are expected to. They are, after all, without scruples. The rhetoric of the Whigs proves true. Virtue wins out.
There were those, of course, who disagreed that the Patriots were virtuous at all. The Loyalists in America found themselves in a difficult position when the crisis between Britain and America emerged. They feared the destruction of their country under the leadership of such radicals as Samuel Adams. In the end, these Loyalists found themselves without a country. While they remained in the colonies, however, a few of them wrote pamphlet plays stating their arguments in a highly articulate way.

One of the best tools Tories had at their disposal was the rhetoric of the Whigs. In drama and music, Tories took the discourse of the political arena and turned it on its ear. These creative artists who feared disaster if the colonies broke from England wrote wonderful parodies, depicting the patriots as ridiculous figures, constantly blabbering about issues they did not understand.

The most cerebral Tory play written during the Revolution was The American Roused in a Cure for the Spleen. The play was written by Jonathan Sewall, a prominent lawyer and friend of John Adams. The action takes place in a tavern where several men are
discussing the situation in the colonies. Some characters are Loyalists, others lukewarm Patriots. Early in the play, a conservation between a minister and a barber displays an intriguing use of Patriot rhetoric. The minister states his belief that "if we mind everyone his own business, and leave the affairs of the state to the conduct of wiser heads, we shall soon be convinced that we are a happy people." The Barber (Trim) responses that by discussing affairs of state, he keeps his business thriving. People will listen while they wait for a shave:

I tell them how I would trim Lord North, and have the Lords and Commons, (excepting the dissentients) the East-India Company, Gov.[sic] Bernard, Gov.[sic] Hutchinson, etc. over head and ears in the suds, if I could get at them; and then I rattle away upon grievances, opposition, rebellion and so on, only for the innocent purpose of supporting the credit of my shop.35

He goes on to say that he does not understand all the talk of grievances any more than he understands the political disputes on the moon although both "savor strong of lunacy." Fill, a tavern keeper, agrees, saying that he is able to sell "a good mug of flip" by listening to the Whigs, but does not understand their frustrations.36
This interesting use of Patriot rhetoric is continued by the confusing ramblings of Puff, the Whig of the Group. One of his more articulate sentences finds him stumbling all over himself to make his point: "---that there is no difference between a Whig and a Tory---why what a dickens are we contending about, if so be as how this here was the case---" He is clearly an idiot until he is willing to listen and convert to the Tory side.\(^3\)

At this point in the play, the minister, Sharp, takes center stage to preach the Tory sermon. His arguments are rational and based on legal documents as well as simple common sense. The colonists, he says, are free; they may worship as they please, do as they wish, and are not overburdened by taxes. He calls America "a land flowing with milk and homey" in which the King had planted them. His fellow ministers who are siding with the Whigs are misleading their flocks. He claims it is a sin to pray for a redress of grievances after an act of "high-handed robbery, plunder and destruction of their neighbor's property [The Boston Tea Party]. . . ." Sharp continues his argument by stating that Parliament has long
established its power over the colonists according to a number of British statutes. He further claims that if the patriots do not wish to pay a tax on tea, they should refrain from buying it and he shows an incredible amount of tolerance for Catholics in discussing the Quebec Act.\textsuperscript{38}

By the end of the play, all of the men are of one mind and the warning to the colonists comes from Brim, a Quaker.

\textit{Treason is an odious crime in the sight of God and men; may we none of us listen to the suggestions of Satan, but may the candle of the Lord within, lighten our paths, and may the spirit lead us in the way of truth, and preserve us from all seditions, privy conspiracy and rebellion.}\textsuperscript{39}

This play offers a powerful argument against the views of the Patriots. Point by point, Sewall answered the Patriot grievances, even using their own rhetoric to ridicule them and question their motives. This rebellion, in Sewall's mind, was dangerous and irrational. To many who witnessed the events leading up to the Revolution, these arguments could be very convincing.

This intriguing use of Whig rhetoric continued in \textit{The Patriots}, a play written in 1777 by Robert Munford.
of Virginia. Munford was concerned with the fanatical turn the patriot cause had taken in Virginia. The Scots were being persecuted because of their actions as middlemen in the tobacco trade; Moderates were being badgered because they did not whole-heartedly follow the Patriot cause. To be a Moderate was to be a Tory according to the Committee of Observance in Virginia. Munford attacked these witch hunting tactics with a vengeance. This play, according to Philbrick "recognizes an ideological triangle rather than simply a dualistic conflict."40 The play goes far in refuting the idea of a united republican revolution and offers a fascinating use of radical Whig rhetoric as a weapon against its advocates.

The play opens with Trueman, a moderate who is suspected by the Committee, lamenting the road the patriots have taken. In true Whig fashion he discusses liberty, yet he is worried about those who do not understand its true meaning—-the Whigs themselves. "What a pity it is that all heads are not capable of receiving the benign influence of the principles of liberty—some are too weak to bear it, and become thoroughly intoxicated." He goes on to define the true
meaning of liberty by vowing "never may I signalize my attachment to liberty by persecuting innocent men, only because they differ in opinion with me." Later we observe the narrow views of the Patriot Committee of Observance when two Scotsmen are brought to the Committee's attention. One member of the committee, a man aptly named Strut tells the committee, "The nature of their offence... is, that they are Scotsmen;..." Yet one of the Scotsmen, McGripe asks for proof of his offence. He is told by yet another member of the committee, Brazen, "Proof, sir! We have proof enough. We suspect any Scotchman: Suspicion is proof, sir." This is not an attractive picture of the Patriots. Later, we meet an interesting character designed to teach us that talk is cheap. Tackabout uses Whig rhetoric to save his own skin and stay clear of all suspicion. His speech before the committee makes a fascinating point about rhetoric and true patriotism:

Where is the man that has done more than I have? I have damn'd the ministry, abus'd the king, vilified the parliament, and curs'd the Scotch. I have raised the people's suspicions against all moderate men; advised them to spurn at all government: I have cried down tories, cried up whigs, extolled Washington as a god, and call'd Howe a very devil. I have exclaimed against all taxes, advised the people to pay no debts; I have promised them success in war, a free trade, and
independent dominion. In short, I have inspired
them with the true patriotic fire, the spirit of
opposition; and yet you [the committee of
Observance] say it is expected I should do
something. 43

Later, Tackabout confides to Trueman that he talks to
the whigs "always in their own style, to avoid
suspicion." 44

Again, as in the Sewall piece, we see Whig
rhetoric used for less than noble purposes. Tackabout
represents those Whigs who talk a good game, but never
accomplish anything. Talk is indeed cheap and, for the
most part, ineffective. Furthermore, human beings have
always been guilty of telling certain circles what they
wish to hear. It is interesting to see this rhetoric
of the Whigs used to ridicule the patriotic leadership
while also making a serious point about hypocrisy and
fanaticism.

It is important to note as well that in The
Patriots, the Tories and the British have no monopoly
on corruption. The fear of such corruption did not
necessarily unite the colonies under the banner of on
overriding ideology. The image of the Revolution that
Munford presented is not necessarily a republican or a
liberal one.
Throughout this period, certain playwrights decided to focus on specific problems in order to instruct their reading audiences. The format they used was called the dialogue. By narrowing their attention to two or three characters, these writers could present some important moral lesson without resorting to spectacular scenes or plot development. Before the Revolution, David Douglas used the dialogue format as a means of circumventing the colonial laws against plays. While in Rhode Island, he advertised Shakespeare’s Othello as a "series of moral DIALOGUES." In his handbill for the play, Douglas described the different lessons the audience would learn from each character, including the injustice of misjudging someone because of his race and the importance of faithfulness in servants.45

For three writers of the Revolutionary period, the dialogue was the perfect vehicle for presenting their views to the public. Each of these pieces offered important lessons to its readers in a concise and uncomplicated way.
Following the meeting of the First Continental Congress in 1774, a woman known simply as "Mary V.V." wrote _A Dialogue Between A Southern Delegate, and His Spouse On His Return From the Grand Continental Congress_. Mary addressed her work to "the married ladies of America, By[sic] their most sincere, and Affectionate Friend." We know virtually nothing about this author; we only know that this Tory was concerned about the results of the First Continental Congress.

This play consists of the simple exchange between a delegate to the Congress and his wife, who holds him in contempt for attending. She is outraged and incredulous at the attitude of the Congress toward Parliament. This Tory believed that respect toward such a powerful body was wise. Yet "Instead of imploring their Justice, or Pity, you treat Parliament, like a Pack of Banditti: Instead of Addresses, framed on Truth, and on Reason, They breathe nothing, but Insult, Rebellion, and treason;" The Continental Association will be the ruin of the colonies because people will starve. "Could the Inquisition, Venice, Rome, or Japan, have devised, so horrid, so wicked a Plan?" she
asks. The answer is no and the Wife ends the play by saying, "Repent! or you are forever, forever undone."  

Following the war, Jabez Peck wanted to present history to the new nation. Columbia and Britannia was written in 1787 and concentrates on the female images used to represent Britain and America. The author carefully outlined his purpose to his reading audience. He was concerned that the Revolution would fade from the memories of the people. He believed forgetting the history of the Revolution would be a serious mistake. "Ought we not to esteem most sacredly that freedom and independence secur'd to us by the late important revolution?" Peck asked his audience. In order to keep the memory of the Revolution alive in the minds and hearts of his countrymen, Peck presented a series of dialogues between Britannia and Columbia, two characters who find events reeling out of their control.

The progression of this piece is interesting. It begins in 1763 with Columbia's celebration over the demise of the French. Her land is now at peace. "I hear the smiling fruitful fields resound, with loving herds, and joyful husbandmen." So here we have the
pastoral view of America once again. Yet soon, Columbia senses trouble from another source.

Britannia is warned by Scotos that "your colonies, which now Columbia holds/ And under specious show of loyalty pretends/ A strict attachment to Britannia,/ Are restless and rebellious, fond of change." Britannia, of course, takes action that leaves Columbia baffled. In Act III, the two characters confront one another:

Britannia: "Know, proud young dame----/That thou, thy subjects, life, and all thou hast is mine."

Columbia: "Am I not thine, by all the ties of nature?/ I am----Then do not treat me like a menial slave."

Later in the same act, the two icons must decide what actions they will take:

Columbia: "Oh, Heavens!--/ Is it then come to this!---Witness ye sacred Powers who rule the world/ And weigh the ponderous fate of nations,---/Columbia, ever has been loyal,----. . . I ask not gift or treasure from Britannia; I ask but freedom, liberty, and life."

Britannia: "My vet'ran troops, my awful navy soon/ shall speak to thee in thunder---. . . Submit thy life and liberty to me---/ It is my royal pleasure now to take them; . . ."

Columbia: "Know then for certain great Britannia/ that Columbia, never will resign/ Those sacred rights, deposited by Heaven,/ She cannot, dare not do it---"
Later in the play, Columbia is comforted by Fabius (George Washington) who reassures her that her cause is just and by Gallia (France) who has no ulterior motives. "Well I know your generous disposition/ I see the justice of your cause and feel/ Myself in duty bound, to lend assistance." By the end of the play, Britannia is beside herself. She asks her advisors to put an end to the bloodshed and the play ends with a renewed peace and love between Britannia and Columbia, a clear plea from Peck to his countrymen. Relations between Britain and her former colonies were shaky at best.

In this piece we find the familiar themes of liberty and slavery. Yet virtue and corruption are not discussed as often. The only reference to these themes comes in a lament over the treachery of Benedict Arnold. This is a subtle transformation, but it is an important one. What is most important in this dialogue is Peck's presentation of history though the use of icons. By using these images, Peck avoided the complication of introducing several historical actors into the plot.
In the drama of the revolutionary era, playwrights presented the Revolution as a moral war against a corrupt group of ministers and advisors to the King. Yet what of the King himself? In the political arena, views of the King varied. The colonial leadership never agreed on this point. Was the Revolution seen as a war against the monarch or was he considered immune to the greed and lust for power that had engulfed his trusted advisors? According to one author who is, unfortunately, unknown, the King was absolutely despicable. In _A Dialogue Between the Devil and George III, Tyrant of Britain_ written in 1782, Satan himself finds His Majesty quite distasteful.

What is fascinating from the beginning of this dialogue is the creation of these two characters, Satan and King George III. This playwright wanted to connect the King with the Devil himself in order to explain the evilness of Britain to his audience. Yet in developing his characters, Satan is the more resolute and interesting of the two. The writer did not concern himself with preaching about virtue or Christian humility. He dealt with two characters who were corrupt, greedy, and fascinating.
The Dialogue opens in 1760 when George III takes the throne of England. Immediately, the Devil tells George to be absolute and not at all dependent on the people. George is reminded that in this aspect, he has been taught well by Lords Bute and Mansfield. The Devil then mixes praise with admonition when he says, "I doubt not you will equal my ancient servants, Nero, Caligula, Borgia, Charles and others; but you must use great art lest a spirit of liberty should rise among the people and blast you." George promises the Devil that he will not fail. He will begin with his colonies and enslave them first before he works on England itself.52

As the piece progresses, the Devil loses patience with George. In 1776, he warns George that his acts of barbarity are wrong. They will unite the world against him. He must learn to be subtle in his evil and use great skill to fool his people. A year later, the Devil continues to lament that George is failing. "Neither generosity and benevolence to gratify your people, nor art and spirit enough to make yourself a tyrant---Poor dog! you'll [sic] be the scorn of the world, and the derision of hell."53
At this point in the dialogue the author offers some interesting moral lessons to his audience. Satan is chagrined to learn that the King does not know how to swear properly. He is not at all subtle enough in the practice and receives some amusing instruction from the Devil on the subject. The Devil reminds him (as the author reminds his readers) "that swearing is genuine criterion by which you may know my children— for altho' all my children don't swear, yet all swearers are my sons and daughters." Still later, The Devil is fed up with yet another immoral habit of the King's. In 1781, Satan cries out, "George, ye whoremonger, where are you? Your Kingdom totters while you are wenching." George's own lack of morality are costing him dearly and still the Devil does not hesitate to point out another threat.

Even the Devil is able to see the contrast between Britain's monarch and the nobility of the Americans. In 1781, he tells George to "Behold the rebel ADAMS [sic], he lifts his head above the clouds, turns Europe pale, and governs kings with a nod." John Adams will speak for the new world, asking for commerce and eternal peace. He was sent by "CONGRESS [sic] who call
the sun their elder brother." There is no rebel equal to this one. "Men will gaze at him in wonder, and adore the man who adores himself." While there is a slight jab at John Adams apparent here, the contrast between him and the king is striking. George, the corrupt monarch, will lose his kingdom to Adams, the noble commoner even though George claims to know his colonists well. "I know them root and branch, they're the old cursed Olivarian breed of king killers, whose ancestors fled from the axe and halter of my good progenitors the Stuarts." In the end there is no victory for the King. He is deserted by his ministers and by the Devil, who has had his fill.

The writer of this last piece saw the war not only as a Constitutional war or a war for political freedom, but as a war for morality. A virtuous people, if they wished to remain virtuous, had to break all ties with immortality of all kinds. Greed, lust for power, swearing, tyranny, sexual promiscuity were all sins of the British. While it is true that the British held no monopoly on these sins, the writer felt it necessary and expedient to point to these massive faults in order to persuade his readers not only of the Constitutional
need for the separation but of the moral obligation to it. America must be a free nation of good ladies and gentleman who mind their manners, obey the law, and live clean lives.

IV.

Another interesting aspect about these dramas is the presence of women and the roles they play in either maintaining social control or in destroying it completely by discouraging virtuous behavior from their husbands. It is important to analyze the women characters of this drama. How were women and their lives depicted in this drama? Did their lives change at all as a result of the Revolution? The image of women and their place in the American Revolution tells us much about the dispossessed in the emerging nation.

Almost without fail, women were present in the plays about the Revolution. They were integral parts of the plots no matter what the subject matter. Yet women characters were rarely actively involved in the action of the Revolution itself. Since these plays were not written in a vacuum, they can give us a good indication of what social attitudes were prevalent at
the time of the Revolution and shortly afterward. In the story of the Revolution presented by these plays, women had little to do with the emergence of the new nation and the changes to women's lives appear minimal. Whether or not this view reflected reality is not a debate this chapter will address. What is central here is the image these plays present.

Mercy Otis Warren often used women in her plays to make her arguments about virtue and corruption. Warren was an intelligent, articulate, and opinionated woman. Yet the women who appear in her plays rarely resemble her or her best friend, Abigail Adams. Warren's female characters fall into two general categories. They are either victims of Loyalist cruelty or they are greedy and manipulative creatures who are obsessed with luxury.

The best representative of the first category is Mrs. Sappling in *The Group*. Mr. Sappling is a friend of the British government in Boston who is determined that British troops will be quartered in his home despite his wife's protests. Sappling is concerned with his own fame and believes that his wife should be as well. He does not hesitate to state his plans for
his wife if she does not concur in his decision. "If she complains or murmurs at the plan, let her solicit charity abroad; let her go out and seek some pitying friend; to give her shelter from the wint'ry blast, disperse her children round the neighb'ring cots," yet another Tory elaborated on this misogyny: What's a woman's tears, or all the whinings of that trifling sex? I never felt one tender thought towards them. When young, indeed, I wedded nut brown Kate... But all I wish'd was to secure her dower. I broke her spirits when I'd won her purse; for which I'll give a recipe most sure to ev'ry hen peck'd husband round the board; if crabbed words or surly looks won't tame the haughty strew [sic], nor bend the stubborn mind, then the green Hick'ry, or the willow twig, will prove a curse for each rebellious dame who dare oppose her lord's superior will.

The only time Mrs. Sappling actually appears, she makes a speech lamenting Boston's situation and dramatically states that Columbia's dead are truly virtue's sons. While she represents those who regret what is happening in their country, she is not given any action in the plot, nor does she have any recourse against her husband, who clearly has no respect for her. While Warren seemed concerned with the treatment of women at the hands of Loyalists, this woman's speech is almost an afterthought used to present the patriotic message. Women characters had more active roles in Warren's
other plays, but the picture she painted of these women
is not an attractive one. Instead of being paragons of
virtue, they were the enemies of their country whose
actions provided a warning for Warren's reading
audience.

In such plays as The Blockheads and The Motley
Assembly, Warren presented her hatred for the attitudes
of the Loyalists by depicting greedy women interested
only in luxury and title. In The Blockheads the main
male character, Simple, is the character with scruples
and regrets. The British in Boston have not treated
the Loyalists with the respect Simple believes they
deserve. He is disillusioned with the British and with
their soldiers. Simple's daughter Tabitha, on the
other hand, is taken with the opportunities association
with a British soldier will open to her:

--Why should I deny myself the pleasures and
honors of this life, to please an old fool [her
father] that is just leaving of them.--The title
of lady is very agreeable; it is what many would
jump at;--such matches do not offer [sic] every
day, and I shall improve the time as dextrous as I
can.60

It is important to note that Tabitha's determination
has nothing to do with love; her motives are not so
noble. She wishes only to improve her lot in life with title and will even defy her father to do so.

Tabitha's mother, Simple's wife is no more noble than her daughter. Her concern is to keep her position in life. She is losing patience with her husband who voices his regret at being a friend to government. Even though Simple has lost his fortune, his wife will have her luxuries. She assures him that she will ask for her silk gowns and new caps. She reminds him that they have risen from the rank of farmer to the rank of gentle folk and she refuses to go back. She then gives a general jab to yeoman by stating "Come, my dear, rouse yourself, don't think about your fat farm, let it go, it is all dirty stuff, only fit for yankees." It is not until the very end of the play that Mrs. Simple shows any regret for her attitudes. She declares, "Modest! polite! genteel! Heavens what deceit,/ Dwells in the breasts of those I termed great! . . . One tear my injur'd country weep for me,/ And for that tear, may you be ever free." This final speech is given after the Simples arrive in Halifax and have suffered the humiliation of leaving their home. Warren's message to
her audience was a clear warning. Love of luxury and title will only lead to suffering.

It is fascinating that Warren singled out women to present her warning. It would seem that Warren believed women were peculiarly susceptible to the love of luxury. The women in The Motley Assembly spend the entire play regretting that the British have left Boston and taken their grand parties with them. These women represent everything that Warren hated about the Loyalists. They are gossips who are nostalgic for the old days of British occupation. They even lack the proper respect for George Washington who is "a very honest, good kind of a man" but "doubtless there are his equals;" 63 It is surprising that a woman as warm for the Cause of Liberty as Warren would not present to her audience the Patriot women of her acquaintance. The women who boycotted British goods, made homespun cloth, and ran their husband's farms and businesses during the war are nowhere to be seen. Yet Warren is not alone in her neglect of these active women.

The Tories and the Moderates, too, presented interesting depictions of women in their plays. While these women are outspoken in some cases, others are
only concerned with appearances. What they all have in common is a commitment to the standing social order and their place in it.

There is a definite emphasis on the superiority of women in *A Dialogue, Between a Southern Delegate, and His Spouse On His Return From the Grand Continental Congress*. Yet the wife who addresses her husband in harsh tones also acknowledges her place in society. The same woman who declares to her husband, "Wou'd instead of Delegates, they'd sent Delegates wives; Heavens! we cou'dn't have bungled it so for our Lives!" also states that she is "ever dispos'd, to do just as you [her husband] please; Sometimes, to be sure, it is not quite convenient, But since I swore t'obey, I'm always obedient; "64 It is interesting to see that a woman who is presented with such strong opinions and who appears to defy her husband's decision to go to the Congress still swears to stay in her place behind him.

The women in Robert Munford's play, *The Patriots*, offer an interesting array of female traits to the audience. There is Isabella, a young woman who is fascinated with military glory and who vows never to love a man "who knows nothing of war and Washington";
Mira, on the other hand, has less glamorous tastes, but her love-interest is suspected of being a Tory by the Committee of Observance. Finally, there is Melinda, an innocent poor girl who discovers at the end of the play that she comes from a wealthy family and can therefore marry the rich man she loves. There is nothing terribly complex or fascinating about any of these female characters and their activities are secondary to the main plot of the play. Isabella rejects the man she wanted because he refuses to fight. Mira ends up with the man she loves, but only after her father consents. Melinda, after a series of confusing revelations, also lives happily ever after. Yet these characters offer some interesting foreshadowing of how women are portrayed in later plays concerning the Revolution.

Mira, who is interested in a man named Trueman, is in love with this man's character and courage. Isabella, who is simply frivolous, lives in a simple world of outward glory. She is clearly without substance and even though she claims to be a strong Patriot, her Patriotism only runs as deep as her taste for glory. Melinda, who is basically fooled into
falling in love, deals with her newly found status with the ease of an innocent who accepts life as it is offered to her. Everyone finds a happy ending. No one upsets the social order and none of the women are particularly interested in the main plot of the play. Their concern over the Revolution is secondary at best.

Perhaps the most interesting woman character appears in John Trumbull's *The Double Conspiracy on Treason Discovered*. Mrs. Gibber is the wife of a Tory who has been working diligently to make money any way he can, hopefully at the expense of his fellow New York citizens. This woman, offering wifely support, encourages her husband to do all he can. She pushes him to deal in counterfeit bills in order to spoil the value of the continental dollar or "hurt the country some other way" so that they will not lose their farm. When the Gibber's son is caught spying by the Whig contingent and is sure to be hung, Mrs. Gibber has a change of heart: "'tis you [her husband] have bro't him to't! This is one of your plans: It's all turned out just as I told you;——I always tho't you'd get somebody hang'd afore you'd done:—— If you'd only minded me, ther'd ha' been no traiters [sic] among us, I warrant
This portrait of woman is very uncomplimentary; Mrs. Gibber’s final speech reinforces this picture. Here is a shrew of a woman who pushes and henpecks her husband to be a traitor and then fails to see her hand in the trouble her family faces. The Epilogue is worth quoting at length because of the attitude expressed by Trumbull through its irony:

We women still are clever folks/ Are always wise, and good and kind/ No mischief dwells within our mind;/ Think much, talk little, softly too,/ We tell no tales, are chaste and true:/ When an event has taken place, /We knew it well before it was./ And can declare, when things we see/ We told exactly how they’d be; We are like turtle doves, most harmless,/ Ne’er breed confusion in our fam’lies,/ Nor raise disorders in the state/ Nor vent our malice, spleen, or hate:/ Should you suppose’ twere otherwise,/ ’Tis a deception of your eyes.67

Anyone one who has sat through the barrage of abuse this woman has hurled during the play can see the irony of this speech. Trumbull presented us with a woman who is not only annoying, but hypocritical and completely unaware of her responsibility for what has happened to her. There is a clear warning here to women who would be good patriots. Speak softly, encourage husbands toward virtue and nobility, and avoid saying, "I told you so!" when they fail. In other words, Trumbull called women to be, above all, good republicans, to use
the terminology of the day. This message became more prevalent in plays of later years as the new nation emerged.

Women also play prominent roles in Dunlap's Andre. What is interesting about the women in this play is that they all appear as advocates for their men. There is Mrs. Bland whose husband will be killed by the British if Andre is executed. She pleads with Washington for her husband's life, but the General's mind is made up. Though she is saddened by his decision, she cannot resist the virtue of Washington and is resolved to accept his decision. What other choice does a good republican wife have? 68

The other woman who appears in this play is Andre's fiance, who bears the interesting name of Honora. Andre has been living under the illusion that she has married another man. Yet she appears out of nowhere, tells him that she is still free, and vows to save her man's life. She tells Andre that "Hope strengthens me;/ Nay, even solicitude supports me now;/ And when thou shalt be safe, thou wilt support me."69 Andre will support her even though she is an heiress and managed to get to America on her own! When she is
not successful she faints and is carried away to live with Mrs. Bland and become part of the Bland family.

These are the two virtuous women who appear in Andre. In the later version of this play, The Glory of Columbia Her Yeomanry, we meet the sister of a continental soldier. Sal is an interesting combination of an average woman (as Dunlap sees them) and Annie Oakley. When Sal wishes to visit her brother at his army camp and he tells her it is not a good idea, she answers,

"Well, brother must have his own way, but I have dreadful mind to see the officers and soldiers, and guns, and fortifications; and yet what has a woman to do with them? I don't know. I believe we have a natural propensity to be meddling with what don't belong to us."70

Here again we see a woman's fascination with war. Yet this same woman demonstrates her prowess with a musket when she saves her brother's life. Her brother is more than happy to acknowledge her deed, commenting that "She can pull a trigger with the best of us."71

Unfortunately, this woman has a very small part in the play and when the action returns to Andre's plight, she disappears from the work altogether.
In Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*, we see women who are very different from each other. This is so much the case that the title could refer to them. Even though this play does not directly deal with the Revolution, we must address the contrast between the three women characters. Letitia and Charlotte represent what Tyler must have considered the frivolous side of female nature. They live to please men, but do not care about those men's characters or virtues. They only care to please Man in general "for whom we dress, walk, dance, talk, lisp, languish, and smile." In discussing the engagement of one of her friends, Maria to Dimple, Letitia comments, "the contrast was so striking betwixt the good sense of her books and the flimsiness of her love-letters, that she discovered she had unthinkingly engaged her hand without her heart;" and this gossiping spirit continues with Charlotte who declares: "I take care never to report any thing of my acquaintance, especially if it is to their credit,--- discredit, I mean, until I have searched to the bottom of it." In contrast, we meet Maria who sums up the attitude of the young Republic toward women. She is the ideal woman: intelligent yet quiet; a seeker of
virtue. In one short speech, she voices the ideal for women in their society. "Reputation is the life of woman; yet courage to protect it is masculine and disgusting; and the only safe asylum a woman of delicacy can find is in the arms of a man of honour."73

Throughout all these plays, women have one thing in common. All of these works emphasize the importance of women knowing their proper place in society. Even the most outspoken of women swears to be obedient to her husband and the shrews that appear are clearly given to their audiences as warnings against upsetting the natural order of the world. Social order is a common theme from Mercy Otis Warren, who gives us examples of misled and victimized women, to Royall Tyler, who presents to us the ideal woman for the new republic. The turmoil of the Revolution can explain this emphasis on social order along with the representations of woman we see. Yet these plays do not deal in reality. The activities in which women did engage to further the cause for independence are nowhere to be seen nor is there any way to know that women heeded the warnings given them by these authors. What we can see by examining these plays is the burden
placed on women to maintain the social order even in the midst of mass chaos. Despite this huge responsibility, these playwrights did not see the American Revolution as a Revolution for women.

The plays do present us with these virtuous women, but more often than not, we see examples of what women should not be. This dichotomy between patriotic goddess and greedy shrew offers an interesting reflection on the perceived role of women. On the one hand, women were responsible for the virtue of their men, an idea often associated with republican ideology. Yet Rosemarie Zagarri believes this view of women was bigger than America and republicanism. According to Zagarri, women were considered vital to the civilizing process. This idea was born in the philosophy of writers in Scotland and England even before the American Revolution took place. According to these writers, "social evolution both benefitted females, by increasing their status, and depended on them, because women softened and refined men’s passion."74 There is no doubt that women did contribute to the cause of liberty and they did so in a variety of ways. Yet the question remains: Why are there so many examples of
women who had no interest in their higher calling? Further, why are the women who are greedy and shallow more interesting than the women of virtue? It is clear that Mercy Otis Warren found these superficial shrews more interesting. It is also true that Mrs. Gibber in Trumbull's play is more fascinating than is Maria in The Contrast. As much as we are called to shun the behavior of these less than virtuous women, we are amused by them. Even in today's entertainment the evil woman is far more interesting to audiences and readers. It has always been easier for people to relate to women who never reach the pedestal. We would much rather see two women involved in a cat fight on a soap opera than to watch them performing heroic deeds. Even women who are good or heroic often have a secret past or a fault that endangers their efforts. While the fatal flaw is essential to any hero, man or woman, the flaw of women is more likely to have some connection with a man.

Therefore, even though the virtuous patriot was the example for women during and after the revolution, writers presented their audiences with the more intriguing women who inevitably fell short of the
image. Only the extreme—goddess or shrew—was considered effective.

African-Americans and Native Americans are virtually absent from the plays concerning the Revolution. The one notable exception is the depiction of slaves in The Fall of British Tyranny Or American Liberty Triumphant. In Act IV of this play, a boatload of freed slaves appear, ready to surrender themselves to a British man-of-war off the coast of Virginia. They are called recruits of the Kidnapper who is Lord Dunmore. Dunmore was the Royal Governor of Virginia who was thrown out of the colony in 1775. He was so infuriated by this action that he vowed to attack Virginia and promised freedom to all slaves who came to him. In this act, we see the slaves freely coming to Dunmore and we are able to witness the reaction of the British sailors on the ship. One sailor remarks that they must have come from hell because "they’re as black as so many devils." Yet another sailor threatens to kill any "black regular" who comes anywhere near his hammock. And the cook refuses to prepare meals for the runaway slaves.
When the freed slaves actually talk in the play, they speak in unrecognizable English and appear to be incredibly naive, slow, and stupid. The sailors make comments about the size of their mouths and express serious doubts about their bravery. These same sailors are instructed to teach the blacks military exercises while at the same time they are told, "Set a guard over them every night, and take their arms from them, for who knows but they may cut our throats." With this one exception, African-Americans and Native Americans are not present in these plays.

What we see in these plays is a consistent imitation of the political rhetoric of the time. This pastiche is not always used in the same ways for the same reasons. Americans did not always agree on what the right political path should be. Nor did they always have a monopoly on virtue. Liberty was not always defined in the same way. In addition, the liberty of some Americans was more important than the oppression of others.

What is truly fascinating about the attitudes these plays present, however, is the difference in the
characters used to teach the lessons the authors were concerned about and the utter fear of luxury that consistently appears. The characters who are corrupt, misled, greedy, and without scruples are always the most interesting characters. They are real, human, with traits we all recognize. The virtuous characters, on the other hand, are stiff and boring, almost marble statues. It is difficult to present heroes to which people can relate. We often assume that heroes are superhuman. Yet it would seem that there was more fascination with those characters who could not live up to the rigors of a virtuous life. Warren rarely presents us with the patriots of her acquaintance. Instead she concentrates on the sinners. John Trumbull gives us an interesting, comical family who do not even attempt to be paragons of virtue, yet they are at the center of his play. Perhaps these people seemed freer and more content with their lives. They certainly did not deny themselves anything. These characters were not afraid of luxury, unlike the playwrights who created them.

Why was there such an obsession with luxury? The answer to this question goes beyond republican
politics. While these playwrights do imitate the rhetoric of the radical whigs, there is more to this talk of luxury than meets the eye. People attack what they fear the most and, sometimes, what they most envy. The politicians and writers who espoused the spurning of luxury were not without it themselves. Perhaps this obsession with luxury was born of the guilt these people felt for owning what they had.78 Yet it could also be possible that the rhetoric against luxury in this drama is born of a fear that these people will lose what they have, not just to the British but to the lower classes who were enthusiastic about a democratic revolution. It would be important to discourage these poor from getting out of control. After all, the mobs of Boston were quite successful at ransacking the homes of the rich governmental leaders during the Stamp Act riots. Once the British were gone, there were still plenty of wealthy people in the new nation. It was one thing to offer liberty to all white men; it was quite another to share affluence with them. Therefore, it would be important to persuade the poorer sorts that luxury was bad for them. It would destroy their spirit and rob them of their virtue and morality.
It can be argued, then, that these writers brilliantly imitated the political rhetoric of the Revolution. If this rhetoric was born of a republican ideology, that ideology was tied to a specific class of people. These playwrights saw no need to address the issues of the poor or the dispossessed. Women were instruments of social control. They were also ridiculed for their shallow behavior and rarely seen performing the brave tasks that women of the time were required to do. The condition of other minorities was not even worth acknowledging. It was best to pretend that African-Americans and Native Americans did not exist.

The meaning of the American Revolution for these playwrights revolved around the ideas of the rich, whether those writers were whigs or tories. The authors came down on the side of the social status quo. The fact that Mercy Otis Warren and Jonathan Sewall had this in common was not important. As the American Revolution progressed, those loyal to the king were excluded from the American community just as completely as were African-Americans and Native Americans.
NOTES


4 McDermott, 8.


6 McDermott, "The Theatre..." in Engle and Miller, 8-9.

7 In 1760, George Washington spent some 7 pounds on play tickets. Rankin, 90.


9 Philbrick, 2.


11 Ibid., 8.
12 Ibid., 32.
13 Ibid., 10; 24.
14 Philbrick, 137.
15 Ibid., 42–3.
16 Ibid., 71.
17 Ibid., 79.
18 Ibid., 96.
19 Ibid., 123.
20 Ibid., 104.
21 Hugh Henry Brackenridge, The Death of General Montgomery (1777) in Philbrick, 246.
23 Ibid., 19.
24 Ibid., 37.
25 Ibid., 44.
27 Ibid., 516.
28 Ibid., 535; 546.
31 According to Theodore Sizer, "there were 3 John Trumbulls, all contemporary and all residents of

32 John Trumbull, The Double Conspiracy, on Treason Discovered 1783, 7-8.

33 Ibid., 44-45; 50.

34 Ibid., 82.


36 Ibid., 7.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., 9-23.

39 Ibid., 32.

40 Philbrick, 257.

41 Robert Munford, The Patriots, 1777, in Philbrick, 268.

42 Ibid., 282-283.

43 Ibid., 286.

44 Ibid., 287.

45 Rankin, 94-95.

46 Philbrick, 33.

47 Mary V.V., A Dialogue, Between A Southern Delegate, and His Spouse On His Return From the grand Continental Congress in Philbrick,36;38.

48 Jabez Peck, Columbia and Britannia 1787, 4.

49 Ibid., 3.
50 Ibid., 13; 24; 25; 27; 28.
51 Ibid., 49.
52 A Dialogue Between The Devil And George III Tyrant of Britain, 1782, 3.
53 Ibid., 5.
54 Ibid., 8; 10.
55 Ibid., 11-12.
56 Ibid., 16.
57 Warren, The Group in Franklin, 15.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., 22.
61 Ibid., 159.
62 Ibid., 168.
64 Mary V. V. in Philbrick, 37.
66 Trumbull, 71.
67 Ibid., 86.
68 William Dunlap, Andre in Moses, 548.
69 Ibid., 553.
70 Dunlap, The Glory of Columbia Her Yeomanry, 7.
71 Ibid., 12.
72 Royall Tyler, The Contrast in Moses, 447; 449; 451.
73 Ibid., 453.


75 The Fall of British Tyranny in Philbrick, 51-2.

76 Ibid., 106; 108; 109.

77 Ibid., 111-112.

78 See, for instance, the portrait of Mercy Otis Warren by John Singleton Copley. She is dressed very formally in satin and lace. Why is she not in homespun, if this was the patriotic cloth to wear?
CHAPTER III

Singing The Revolution 1

Music has always been a powerful mode of communication. Through music, whether it be instrumental or vocal, human beings intensify their feelings of happiness, sadness, loss, betrayal, anger, jealousy, and patriotism. A simple tune can evoke memories of a time past and offer hope for an uncertain future.

Yet music has also been a convenient vehicle for political debate. Composers rarely remain neutral during a war or stand by passively when they perceive injustice. Musicians, like other artists, often find themselves in the middle of controversy because of a message they deliver through their work.

In the case of the American Revolution, music encompassed the colonists' progression from rebellion to independence. At the same time, music offered a vehicle for unhappy Tories and angry Englishmen who either wished to ridicule the rebels or condemn the poor leadership of Parliament.
According to Carolyn Rabson, editor of Songbook of the American Revolution, ballad singers in England had a long tradition of expressing political views on the streets. "Origins of the custom," Rabson writes, "can be found in the methods of itinerant ballad-singers who stood on London street corners, singing the latest news and gossip to well-know tunes and selling printed copies of the verses." In the colonies, political verses appeared in newspapers from New York to Georgia. The writers of these verses would sometimes offer their thoughts on what tune should accompany their works. Unfortunately, many of these creative poets wished to remain anonymous. There are notable exceptions to this rule; John Dickinson, Thomas Paine, and Joseph Warren all contributed to the debate in song. Yet for the most part, we know little about these verse writers. We do know that they felt strongly about their cause, whatever cause that might be. These songsters offered dramatic and comic insights concerning issues and events of their time as well as images of heroes, villains, women and minorities. Most importantly, they offered creative parody to the political debate within the colonies.
Yet unlike paintings and plays, these songs were created by elites and common folk alike. Songs offered the common soldier a vehicle to express his opinion. Unfortunately, by 1789, the creative voices of these common folk were silenced in favor of those who called for unity under an elite leadership.

I.

The revolutionary debate in song began long before most colonists believed they needed a revolution against their mother country. In 1765, with the passage of the Stamp Act, colonial songsters began to comment on British policy. They portrayed their rivals as evil men who were attempting to tax the colonists into submission. It was more than a question of money for these writers. There were other important issues at stake. Those issues varied from the corruption of the British government and the contrasting virtue of Americans—issues evident in the political rhetoric of the time—to differing definitions of liberty. Feelings of victimization at the hands of a dishonest English government led some creative souls to voice
their opinions in the newspapers, using the popular vehicle of song.

Peter St. John, a Connecticut school master, wrote "American Taxation." The song, printed in 1765, tells the story of British conspiracy against the colonies. Here, as in many pieces of the time, King George III is surrounded by evil advisors who are in league with Satan:

The cruel lords of Britain, who glory in their shame,
The project they have hit on they joyfully proclaim,
'Tis what they're striving after our rights to take away.
And rob us of our charter in North America.\(^3\)

This reference to "our charter" is an interesting ploy. Many battles between the King and the colonies before this time had resulted in revoked charters. The New England colonies especially had good reason to be fearful of losing them. While taxation and revoked charters were separate issues, Mr. St. John felt a need to connect past injustices with present ones. To do this effectively, St. John referred to the colonists' forefathers, who had fought for the right to live freely:
We are their bold descendants, For liberty we'll fight,
The claim to independence we challenge as our right,
'Tis what kind Heaven gave us, who can it take away--
O, Heaven sure will save us in North America.4

Another interesting image in this song involves the presentation of America as a land of wealthy people. The king's "cruel lords" tell him that the colonists are all well-to-do and that America flows with milk and honey.5 Beyond the biblical imagery is the presence of an idea that remains in European minds today; namely that all Americans are wealthy, living on their ranches and driving their expensive cars. This image remains a vital part of American popular culture. Yet the distribution of wealth in the colonies was quite uneven in 1765. Mr. St. John was well aware that most colonists were not wealthy and many were just getting by. The fact that the colonists were the least taxed people in the British Empire was beside the point.

As the controversy between the colonies and England intensified, interesting and creative commentary concerning taxation remained prevalent in songs of the time. By 1773, songwriters also had the
advantage of recreating one of the more popular events of pre-independence days.

It is amazing to think that a commodity as common as tea could provoke anger and inspire creativity. Yet this staple of British civilization became the thorn in the colonists' side. In an attempt to save the British East India Company, the British government reinforced a three pence tax on tea and cut out the colonial middlemen who had sold the tea to the colonists. This action outraged the Americans and made tea the center of the controversy between Britain and her colonies. Once again colonists began writing about the injustice of the British government. In Virginia, a young woman wrote "Virginia Banishing Tea." While she voiced love for the King and hatred for his evil advisors, she also blamed another monarch for the situation facing the colonists in 1773. Lord North, according to this woman, was simply continuing what "Henry" had begun. She traced the disregard for the "sacred rules of justice" back to a time before the colonies existed. Here again is a clear indication that while there was a good deal of anger against the British, there is a
sense of belonging for the colonists within the proud British tradition.6

One of the more creative events staged in response to British policy was the Boston Tea Party. Colonial songwriters were intrigued by this particular means of resistance. The Boston Tea Party was such a creative move of resistance that even a law-and-order man like John Adams praised the act. Song writers wasted no time telling the story of the "Mohawk Indians" and their strike against the British East India Company. One early piece, "The Destruction of the Tea," written anonymously, gave a serious narrative of the events and also pointed out sanction of the act from the higher force of Liberty and her friends:

O'er their heads aloft in mid-sky,  
Three bright angel forms were seen,  
This was Hampden, that was Sidney,  
With fair Liberty between.7

Later in verses seven and eight, the writer gave the result of the "Mohawk's" deed. According to the song, British rights had been saved on the tea ships that night. The British leaders were dreamers for thinking they could oppress Americans. The writer instructed ship captains to take their ships and get out of America. The use of the word "masters" to describe the
British governmental leaders implied that the captains were only slaves in the British attempt to "cheat the brave." The Americans were not the only people who were threatened with enslavement. The British government would use anyone at any time to demonstrate their power. They had to be shown that their scheme would not work.

While this song was a dramatic depiction of the December sixteenth events, later songwriters presented the events in other creative and even comic ways. One tea party song, written anonymously circa 1829, is the most comic. The "Boston Tea Tax Song" sends the reader/listener through a maze of twists and turns. It begins with an introduction of the singer who says that he "should have been a plaguey sight more finished man/If I'd been born in Boston town, But I warn't 'cause I'm a countryman." He then goes on to tell the tale.

And t'other day the Yankee folks were mad about the taxes; And so we went like Injuns dressed To split tea chests with axes; It was the year of Seventy-three, And we felt pretty gitty, The mayor he would have led the gang, But Boston warn't a city!

You see we Yankees didn't care A pin for wealth or booty,
And so in State street we agreed
We'd never pay the duty,
That is, in State Street, 'twould have been
But 'twas King Street they called it then,
and tax on tea, it was so bad,
The women wouldn't scald it there.

Then this clever songster takes a stab at the British
who were helpless to punish anyone involved in the Tea Party.

And then, you see, we were all found out,
A thing we hadn't dreaded.
The leaders were to London sent
And instantly beheaded
That is, I mean, they would have been,
If ever they'd been taken,
But the leaders they were never cotched,
And so they saved their bacon.10

The Boston Tea Party caught the imagination of the colonists and they celebrated its cleverness.

By 1774, however, the colonists, especially in Boston, were in serious trouble because of the "Mohawk" prank. The British government passed the Coercive Acts hoping to punish and subdue the colonists. However, the colonists' resolve to "be free" as they put it, was unshakable by 1774.

In that year, Joseph Warren, a leader of the resistance in Boston, wrote a song called "Free America." In it, Warren gave a warning to his fellow colonists in the fashion of the political Whig rhetoric
of the time. He referred to Athens as the "seat of science" and described the glories of Rome, but reminded his readers that that glory was long dead. Americans should not follow in the classical path by stooping to "lawless sway." It is interesting that a major leader of the Sons of Liberty, an organization known for sending mobs into the streets, could write about the dangers of lawlessness. Yet it was important for the colonists to have law and justice on their side as they believed they did. With right on their side, the colonists could do anything and, according to Warren, become a great nation. While many colonists were hesitant to speak in terms of independence, Warren was boldly thinking ahead:

Some future day shall crown us The masters of the rain,
Our fleets shall speak in thunder to England,
France and Spain;
And the nations over the ocean spread Shall tremble and obey,
The sons, the sons, the sons, the sons, of brave America.11

The dream that England, France and Spain would one day tremble at the might of America must have been an amusing thought for all three countries. In fact it is somewhat surprising that the Loyalists still in America did not respond to "Free America." Perhaps they felt
there was no need. After all, Warren also said that Americans would be the masters of nature itself. It was a dream of mythic proportions. It was also true that Warren did not speak for all in Massachusetts, let alone for all in the colonies.

Once fighting began, the themes apparent in revolutionary songs shifted. There was still an element of anger over taxation but, after the war began, the ineptitude of the King's advisors became secondary to the greed of British soldiers in America. With the arrival of Generals Clinton, Burgoyne, and Howe -- "The junto," according to the colonists -- taxation became a means of exploitation used by the soldiers. One song, written in New York in 1775, accused "the junto" of collecting taxes in order to bribe the colonists and their leaders at home. In the final verse of the song, the three evil generals plot to tax everything possible. They will tax the "sun's light" as well as the colonists' land and they'll do all this taxing by uniting "force and fraud." Then, quite merrily, they proclaim, "A-taxing we will go, we'll go; and a-taxing we will go."¹² It is almost
possible to see the three generals skipping about as they gleefully plot the downfall of the colonists.

Yet according to another song written to welcome the generals, the colonists were prepared to fight back against this perceived exploitation. In "Fish and Tea" the writer referred to taxation briefly. The main issue in the song was oppression in general. The British not only commanded the colonists to drink tea and pay the tax on it, but they also closed the Newfoundland fisheries to New England. It appeared to the colonists that Britain wished to take more than their money. In "Fish and Tea," all hope to reconcile their differences with Britain was lost. Despite the fact that certain members of Parliament supported the Americans, the chances of working with the Court of England were dim at best:

There's no knowing where this oppression will stop; Some say there's no cure but a capital chop. And that I believe each American's wish, Since you're drenched them with tea and deprived 'em of fish.13

The underlying theme of "Fish and Tea" is independence. That was the only way to fight a government that would even deprive its colonies of fish. The writer knew that independence meant war.
With the traditional reference to his forefathers, the writer committed Americans to the battle:

Then *freedom's* the word, both at home and abroad,
And damn every scabbard that hides a good sword!
Our forefathers gave us this freedom in hand,
And we'll die in defense of the rights of the land.  

Whether or not every American was ready for independence in 1775, the fighting had begun.

With war, the meaning of the rebellion took on a new urgency. Songwriters looked to the war itself for material. The patriots knew that their military situation was precarious, but they also realized that they only had to survive. With this in mind, a battle that ended in defeat for the Continental army became in actuality a victory for the cause.

For one particular patriot, the British victory at Bunker Hill was not as important as the American stand against the greatest army in the world. Glory does not always come from victory. The "Ballad of Bunker Hill" was a tribute to the underdog. In the first verse of the song, the writer portrayed the tension and excitement of the American army as they waited for the British to attack. According to the song, the British "dawdled and twadled," leaving the Americans impatient,
thinking that the battle would never begin. The end of
the battle was for this songwriter a perfectly
acceptable conclusion, that was in no way a reason for
shame on the part of the Americans:

But who shall declare the end of the affair,
At sundown there wasn't a man of us there;
We didn't depart till we'd given 'em some
We used up our powder and had to go home!15

Sometimes, this writer seemed to say, an army has to
accept its losses. The pride the patriots felt came
from the fact that the outnumbered Minutemen gave the
mighty British army "some." His assertion is correct
in view of the British losses in that battle. Bunker
Hill was a very costly victory for General Howe. The
writer tried to paint the patriot retreat as a plan
from the very beginning. Even defeat can mean victory,
depending on how it is portrayed. In 1775, all the
continental army had to do was to prove to the British
that they were not cowards. In the early days of the
war, before independence was at stake, that small piece
of honor was a strong morale booster for those fighting
the war.

After July 4, 1776, honor was not the only thing
worth fighting for. Independence had been declared; it
was up to the soldiers to win it from Britain. These
were the instructions given the soldiers by Dr. Jonathan M. Sewall of New Hampshire in his song, "Independence Day." It was no longer enough to make a stand against the British army. It was now imperative that the Continental army win the war. For Sewall, the soldiers had to fight for "liberty, property, ourselves, and our friends" as well as for independence. Sewall also pointed out in several different verses that George III was a tyrant and that the only being Americans would depend on now was God. For this dream to come true, the army had to fight and fight well:

Unto our brave Generals may Heaven give skill,
Our armies to guide, and the sword for to wield;
May their hands taught to war and their fingers to fight,
Be able to put British armies to flight.⁴

It would be some time after independence was declared before the Americans actually had a victory. Those victories were few and far between. But songwriters of this period were concentrating on far more than victory and defeat. Early in the war, they began looking for heroes to bolster morale and villains to condemn in one voice.
During and after the Revolutionary war, Americans had to identify heroes who could act as role models for all citizens and villains whose very existence evoked terror in the minds decent people. Writers on both sides of the revolutionary struggle—British and American, Whigs and Tories—were able to agree on the common attributes shared by heroes on the one hand and villains on the other. Heroes were reasonable and selfless. Their prowess allowed them to rise to the top. Villains, on the other hand, were unable to take a stand. Their cowardice was matched only by their greed. These extremes which defined hero and villain made both characters inhuman. Who these people were was never as important as the characteristics they represented. The tension between them resembled the struggle between good and evil, between God and Satan.

For songwriters searching for heroic figures, action spoke louder than words. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were not popular heroes for these artists. The musicians were especially fond of doers, whether they be on the field or behind enemy lines.
Most of the heroes made famous by song writers were military men who became noted for their daring feats. The songs written by revolutionary composers praised soldiers from all walks of life. In "The American Hero," written in 1775 by Nathaniel Miles and Andrew Law, the song writers celebrated the bravery of the American soldiers and their stand at Bunker Hill. In the first three verses, the American soldier challenged death and Mars, the god of war, to come after him. He affirmed that he would go wherever the "banners of the king of heaven" led. Then in verses five and six, the American hero explained why he was fighting.

Fame and dear freedom lure me on to battle
While a fell despot, grimmer than a death's head,
Stings me with serpents, stings me with serpents
Fiercer than Medussa's to the encounter.

Life for my country, the cause of freedom,
Is but a trifle for a worm to part with;
And if preserved, and if preserved
In so great a contest, life is redoubled.17

It is interesting to note the American hero's priorities. Fame came before freedom in his reason to fight. This song implied that common soldiers were looking for glory just as their elite commanders were.
Yet in the last verse, the soldier said he was nothing more than a worm who could easily sacrifice his pitiful life for his country. The song pointed out an interesting contrast. On the one hand, the song writer was glorifying the common American soldier, making him as much of a hero as Washington or Montgomery. On the other, he was maintaining the social status of these soldiers by referring to the self-denigrating phrase of "worm" so popular in Christian hymns. This is a fascinating mixture of glory and humility that is not found in songs about the elitist heroes of the war.

Henry Archer also wished to celebrate the common soldier in the Continental army. Even in this song designed to celebrate the average man, there is a careful social hierarchy.

Here’s to the squire that goes on parade,
Here’s to the citizen soldier,
Here’s to the merchant who fights for his trade,
Whom danger increasing makes bolder.

Chorus:
Let mirth appear, ev’ry heart cheer,
Here’s health and success to the bold volunteer.18

Archer was obviously including all American volunteers in his song. They were all citizen soldiers. Their motivations for fighting, however, varied. The squire
fought for glory; going on parade denoted fame and admiration from the people. The merchant, on the other hand, fought for trade. On the surface they all fought for their country. Yet they also wanted to protect their reputations and livelihoods.

By virtue of the way it was written, this song offered the American people a social order. Even in war, when every able-bodied man was involved, the ranking of society could not be ignored. After the squire and the merchant came the lawyer who changed "his gown for the ensign of war/ The cause of his country to plead sir." Finally, in verses three and four, Archer remembered the farmer.

Here's to the farmer who dares to advance,
To harvest of honor with pleasure,
Who bravely, with danger, will venture a chance,
A sword for his country to measure.

Here's to the soldier, though battered in wars,
And safe to his farmhouse retired,
When called by his country, ne'er thinks of his scars,
With ardor to join us inspired.19

This was Archer's nod to the average citizen. Yet he finished the song by reminding his audience who the real heroes should be.

Here's to the peer, first in senate and field,
Whose actions to titles add grace, sir,
Whose spirits undaunted would never yet yield, 
To a foe, to a pension or place, sir.  

It is not completely clear to whom Archer referred in this last verse. Americans did not indulge in titles. It is possible that Archer believed they should; he attended military school in England and was influenced by that culture. But who would be granted these titles? Not the farmers who had given their lives, left their farms, and sacrificed their businesses. The peers would be instead, those who were "first in Senate and field"—those men of the American aristocracy who serve in leadership capacities.  

In the musical arts, members of the upper class were celebrated more often than the common man. One such elite leader, General Montgomery, took on the role of savior. Montgomery's death on the Plains of Abraham in Canada made him the perfect hero for writers. "A Song on the Brave General Montgomery" written in Massachusetts in 1777, asked the soldiers of the American army to remember the gift of this general. 

Come soldiers all in chorus join, 
To pay the tribute at the shrine of brave Montgomery 
Which to the memory is due 
Of him who fought and died that you Might live and yet be free.
The reference to Christ is unmistakable. Montgomery laid down his life for his country. He was worthy of a shrine. In the remaining verses of the song, Montgomery flew to Canada on his mission and died where so many heroic figures had died before him.

To Montreal he [Montgomery] winged his way, Which seemed impatient to obey And opened wide its gates, Convinced no force could e'er repel Troops who had just behaved so well, Under so hard a fate.

With scarce one third part of his force Then to Quebec he bent his course, That grave of heroes slain; The pride of France, the great Montcalm, and Wolfe, the strength of Britain's arm, Both fell on Abraham's plain.

Having no less of fame required, There too Montgomery expired, with Cheeseman by his side Carleton, 'tis said, his corpse conveyed To south, in all the grand parade of military pride.²²

Other heroes captured the American imagination because of their escapades and personality rather than their deaths. One number celebrated the adventures of Francis Marion, popularly known as the Swamp Fox. This general was the thorn in Cornwallis's side. This American soldier and his men became legendary. One anonymous composer decided to immortalize him. In "Marion's Men," the author used the soldiers under
Marion to glorify the general. These soldiers sound much like Robin Hood's band of followers.

We follow where the Swamp Fox guides,
His friends and merry men are we,
And when the Tory Legions ride,
We burrow in the cypress trees.
the gloomy swamp land is our bed,
Our home is in the red deer's den,
Our roof, the treetop overhead,
For we are wild and hunted men.

Chorus:
We ride, we hide, we strike again,
for we are Marion's men.

The Swamp Fox and his men captured the imaginations of the American people. They were daring men who enjoyed inflicting terror on the Tory camps in the South. They also epitomized the pastoral idea of American life. Marion taught his men to be one with the earth, to live in the swamp like the Native Americans did. But unlike the Indians, Marion was not considered a savage; he was a brave man who did what was necessary to protect his country.

The man who would be a hero for the creative artist was the man who went to extremes in the risks he was willing to take. General "Mad" Anthony Wayne became popular because he never considered his own safety. His only concern was to fight. If he was a
little insane in the matter, it did not concern the people who made him a legend. Caution never won a soldier the title of hero. In the song "Mad Anthony Wayne" written by an aide to the general, we see a soldier who had fire in his eyes in more ways than one.

Was e'er a chief of his speech so brief, who utters his wishes so plain?
Ere he speaks a word the orders are heard From the eyes of Mad Anthony Wayne!
Aim! Fire! exclaim his eyes
Bang! Bang! each gun replies.
(Repeat last two lines).

Let them form their ranks in firm phalanx, it will melt at our rifle-ball rain,
Every shot must tell on a redcoat well, Or we anger Mad Anthony Wayne.
Tramp! Tramp! away they go,
Now retreats the beaten foe.
(Repeat last two lines).

If this general had fought for the British, he would have been considered a barbarian. His fighting style was savage, but he was on the side of right. Unlike the statesmen in Congress who talked a good deal, Wayne and Marion were able to accomplish the practical goals of war.

Spies were another category of hero and one spy in particular, because he gave his life, was granted a great deal of respect. Nathan Hale was a very popular figure during the Revolution and afterward. He became
a hero in much the same way as Joseph Warren and General Montgomery; he, too, made the supreme sacrifice for his country.

Hale went down in history after he volunteered to discover British troop movements in New York. He was apprehended on Long Island and executed by the British on September 22, 1776. The young spy became a martyr for the American cause and is best remembered for his famous last words. The image of the brave young man lamenting the fact that he had but one life to give attracted creative artists. His dying words exemplified the patriotic duty of each citizen.

The ballad entitled "Nathan Hale" captured the bravery and distress of this spy. The song was written shortly after his execution in 1776. The writer contrasted the valor and despair of Hale with the tyrannous spirit of the British soldiers who captured him.

The guards of the camp, on that dark dreary night, had a murderous will; had a murderous will. They took him and bore him afar from the shore, To a hut on the hill; to a hut on the hill.

No mother was there, nor a friend who could cheer, In that little stone cell, in that little stone cell, but he trusted in love from his father above,
In his heart all was well; in his heart all was well.\textsuperscript{26}

Here we have a picture of a young man who was at peace with himself even though he knew he would be executed. On the other end of the spectrum, we have the bloodthirsty guards who could not wait to see him hang. As a matter of course, a self-professed spy could expect to be executed. The American side would execute Major John Andre and that was not a popular decision. There was undoubtedly a soft spot among creative artists for certain spies. Hale, in fact, progressed into a Christ figure as this ballad continued.

\begin{quote}
They took him and bound him and bore him away,
 Down the hill's grassy side; down the hill's grassy side.
 'Twas there the base hirelings, in royal array,
 His cause did deride; his cause did deride.

Five minutes were given, short moments, no more,
 For him to repent; for him to repent;
 He prayed for his mother; he asked not another,
 To Heaven he went; to Heaven he went.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

The picture this songwriter offered his audience was of a brave but innocent savior who was despised and rejected by the evil enemy. His last thoughts were of his mother. Then he commended his spirit to heaven as all good martyrs do. Hale became a sacrificial lamb
for the American cause. That promoted him to the status of hero.

Of course, the ultimate hero was a man that Americans admired almost unanimously. George Washington, despite his many defeats and retreats in the field, was the perfect mixture of courage, discipline, honor, and aristocracy. He was attractive to dramatists, songwriters, and painters because of his self-control. Washington was the gentleman farmer who dropped everything to answer his country's call. He had more defeats than victories during the war; at the time, this fact caused some grumbling among other generals and Congressmen. Yet after the war, Washington was celebrated as a great military leader who was worthy of the adoration heaped upon him. To this day, we do not really know who Washington was. He has become a legend whose true nature is shrouded by his mythic character. According to Marshall Fishwick there "were and are" two Washingtons: the man and the myth. He argued, however, that the difference between these two figures is unimportant. Richard Slotkin would agree. The mass audience is not interesting in a "painful analysis" of an hero or of an heroic tale:
instead, they want "images and symbols that are the outer emblems of . . . collective mythology." When it concerns Washington, Americans use their hearts, not their heads, to reach their conclusions. After the war, when victory had been achieved, it became fashionable to heap Washington with adulation.

Once independence had been won, song writers openly compared Washington with the victory itself. In one 1783 song, "Thanksgiving Hymn," Washington was acknowledged as God's instrument on earth.

The Lord above, in tender love, Hath sav' d us from our foes;
Through Washington the thing is done.
The War is at a close.

We get an image through this hymn of God Almighty handing a sword to Washington and telling him to go save his people. The general was becoming heavenly; his human flaws were fading away. In fact, after Washington became president, he took the place of Mars. In "Hail godlike Washington," the general became a god.

Hail, godlike Washington, Fair freedom's chosen son,
Born to command;
While this great globe shall roll, Thy deeds from pole to pole,
Shall shake Columbia's soul with virtuous praise.
Millions unborn to save, Freedom to worlds he gave,
Liberty's Chief!
Terrific God of War, Seated in Vict'ry's car
Fame hails him from afar, Virginia's boast.  

This song, written by a Virginian, was by far the most extreme concerning Washington's immortal qualities. Even Joseph Hopkinson, writer of "Hail, Columbia" who recognized Washington as "the rock on which the storm will beat" did not go to the lengths this song writer did to promote the general. The composer of "Hail, godlike Washington" made the president into the god of war and the savior of the world. This is a fascinating combination. For a people who were opposed to a standing army, it seems strange that their salvation was in the hands of a warrior, a man who also apparently had power over the goddess of Liberty. Yet Washington was all things to all people. He was also born to command, according to this songwriter. If he became all of these different amazing entities, it was because he was destined to.

The status of Washington in the hearts and minds of the people is unquestionable.

Heroes are wonderful characters who inspire people with their acts and virtue. Yet history would be rather boring if only heroes existed. According to
Fishwick, villains are necessary to "provide history with tension." They must exist in order to create the drama of an historical event. They are the foil to the hero, attempting to obstruct his good deeds. The tension arises with the near success of the villain in his scheme. During the American Revolution, villains were portrayed as greedy cowards whose selfish ambitions caused them to abandon any sense of duty. They were Satan's playmates. For the American side, Benedict Arnold was the arch villain. The tragedy of this man would be beyond comprehension if he were a fictional character. He was a talented, daring general who fought bravely for the American cause. George Washington thought highly of him; he could have been a great hero of the American Revolution. Instead, Arnold "has the distinction of being the one villain of American history whose villainy is universally recognized and conceded." The reasons for his treason involved his feelings of neglect at the hands of Congress and his need for money. Yet it is also possible that Arnold did not wish to be one hero of many; he wanted to stand alone in history. Whatever the cause for his treachery, Commanger argued that we
must be grateful for Arnold and asked, "What, after all, would we do without him?" He was the perfect example of a man who provided that tension history needs.

Arnold's treason equated him with everything evil. He was Satan himself. Yet his accomplice, Major Andre, was an innocent victim. In fact, he approached the status of hero. What separated these two men in the eyes of creative artists was the greed expressed by Arnold. He was rewarded handsomely for his treachery. William Dunlap depicted the man drooling over the gold he would receive. Andre, on the other hand, was guilty only of zeal in serving his own country. According to Dunlap, Andre was forced into deceit when things did not go as planned. The British spy was an honorable man who should be pitied; Arnold was an evil person who should be condemned. The difference was greed.

Songwriters, too, emphasized the contrast between these two men. In two songs about different men involved in the capture of Andre and the search for Arnold respectively, composers reflected the feelings expressed by other artists concerning the co-conspirators. In "Brave Paulding and The spy," written
in 1783, the anonymous author of the piece contrasted the misfortune and bravery of Major Andre. After an exhaustive narrative telling of his capture, verses eleven and twelve recounted the hanging of Andre and the feelings that execution evoked.

Now Arnold to New York is gone, a-fighting for his king
And left poor Major Andre on the gallows for to swing;
When he was executed, he looked both meek and mild;
He looked upon the people and pleasantly he smiled.

It moved each eye with pity, caused every heart to bleed,
And everyone wished him released and Arnold in his stead.
He was a man of honor, in Britain he was born;
To die upon the gallows, most highly he did scorn.37

This writer not only honored Andre; he also made a point of reminding his audience that the major was British. As much as propaganda against the enemy may be warranted, this particular composer wanted to make it clear that there were some good men fighting for the British. Andre could be admired because he received no reward for his work and he, like other heroes of the Revolution, made the ultimate sacrifice for his country.
In a song entitled "Sergeant Champe" an anonymous composer told the story of John Champe, a man who attempted to capture Arnold. Champe pretended to desert to the British side and even accompanied Arnold to Virginia, but was never able to bring his man to justice. In the song written for Champe, the author told the story of this aborted capture. The song is detailed; it is twenty-seven verses long. Finally, in the last verse, the composer offered this simple conclusion.

Base Arnold’s head, by luck, was saved,
Poor André’s was gobbeted,
Arnold’s to blame for André’s fame,
And André’s to be pitied.

In four lines, then, this composer revealed the facts as he saw them. Not only was André a good man, but he was also an innocent victim. What he did in New York was beyond his own personal responsibility. Arnold, taking on the aspect of the Devil, led the weak André into crime.

Benedict Arnold is truly a tragic character. He had all the ingredients to make a fine hero. Arnold was a daring general whose adventures in Canada and Saratoga became famous. He was an intelligent,
charming member of the elite class. Yet what robbed him of heroic status was his greed and selfishness. Though he was wounded for his country, he was not willing to humble himself or die for it. In the end, his small rewards were not enough for him. He did not want the abstract gratitude of his country. Arnold wanted promotion, glory and— the ultimate destroyer— money. Like Satan, he wanted to grab power from his country and the best way he saw to do that was to betray the colonies to Britain for gold. He came very close to devastating the Revolution. Therefore his image offered in the creative arts was one of abject evil. There were no redeeming qualities in Benedict Arnold as far as these artists were concerned. In contrast to George Washington, the perfect hero, Arnold was the villain of all villains.

III.

Americans used many tools to justify their fight to themselves and to the world. Like all people embroiled in a revolution, they were desperate for success. They knew the importance of using every ideology and method at their disposal. Considering
that the privileges won by the Americans were not extended to women and minorities, one of the more radical techniques used by songwriters was the reinvention of female roles.

The images of women that appear in the music of the revolution are fewer than in the plays of the same period. However, there are some interesting ideas expressed about women by the writers of patriotic songs. Women were either allegorical symbols for the fighting colonies and their mother country or they were courageous, virtuous wives, mothers and girlfriends whose long-suffering loyalty to the American cause was worthy of praise.

For one Englishman, the use of women in an allegory on ungrateful children offered a fascinating look at the imperial problem. At the same time, this anonymous citizen of England described a fascinating generation gap between a mother and daughter. The song has a number of different titles. Irwin Silber, author of Songs of Independence, calls the song "The World Turned Upside Down or the Old Woman Taught Wisdom." Oscar Brand, on the other hand, claims that the title is "Goody Bull." While both titles are appropriate,
the first title—"the Old Woman Taught Wisdom"—is far more interesting. What sort of wisdom or insight did this woman receive?

According to the song, an old woman quarrels with her daughter. The older woman feels her daughter should "earn her own bread." As it turns out, the daughter is not at all happy with the idea:

In vain did the matron hold forth in the cause
That the young one was able; her duty, the laws;
Ingratitude vile, disobedience far worse;
But she might e'en as well sung psalms to a horse.40

Finally, after several verses, a farmer is introduced into the song as a mediator between mother and daughter. The mother humbles herself and is prepared to make up with her daughter, but her daughter is far from gracious:

'No thanks to you, mother', the daughter replied;
'But thanks to my friend here, I've humbled your pride;
Then pray leave off this nonsense, 'tis all a mere farce,
As I have carried by point, you may now kiss my arse.'41

The wisdom, then, that the Old Woman received through this incident is painful wisdom. A mother [England] cannot humble herself before a recalcitrant
child [the colonies]. She will only be spat upon. Despite the efforts of a well-meaning yeoman, a farmer with virtue to spare, Mother and Daughter will remain at odds.

The Americans, too, saw the value of using women to tell a story. "Revolutionary Tea," published in 1860 but believed by Silber to be much older, tells the tale of an old island queen and her daughter who lived in a new country. The island queen, Great Britain, far from being broke after all her colonial wars, is rich beyond comprehension! Yet she attempts to make more money by putting a tax on her daughter's tea. The daughter refuses the tea by dumping it into the tide. Then she tells her mother, "Your tea you may have when 'tis steeped enough/ But never a tax from me." The mother/daughter theme in this piece is fascinating. Historian Jay Fliegelman has argued that the American Revolution was a revolution against patriarchal authority. Yet instead of using the image of son against father, this songwriter chose women to demonstrate his generation gap. The idea of the Mother Country gave the debate a feminine emphasis. Further, in this particular song, women are not humble
and demure. The mother is greedy; the daughter is happily rebellious and resolute.

In addition to the imagery, the assertion that Britain is rich is contrary to the customary interpretation of Great Britain's wealth after the Seven Years War. But in order for the tea party to have even deeper meaning for the freedom fighters, the writer made Britain into a grasping old woman who was not content with her riches. In this way the writer could separate the greed of the British from the virtue of the Americans.

For men of the period, the call to virtue was spiritual in nature. It was important for men to be selfless and vigilant. These traits could be interpreted in any way men wished. But for women, the duties were very specific. Spurn your luxuries and give up your men to the cause of liberty.

In the song "To the Ladies" written anonymously, women were encouraged to support their country's struggle in the best way they could. Women were asked to cast aside any fears they had of being unattractive to gentlemen. They would be all the more beautiful without their fancy dress.
No more ribbons wear, nor in rick [sic] silks appear
Love your country much better than fine things,
Begin without passion, 'twill soon be the fashion
to grace your smooth locks with a twine string.

These do without fear, and to all you'll appear
Fair, charming, true, lovely and clever;
Though the times remain darkish, young men may be sparkish
And love you much stronger than ever. 44

As with the plays by Warren and others, we see in this song women's attachment to material things. Beauty was so important to them that they had to be reminded of the more significant matters at hand. Men, on the other hand, are never told to give up their luxuries; it was the job of women to make sure their men did these things. Women were the consumers. This fact gave them a power men did not possess.

For one composer, women answered the call to duty so well, that he considered them exceptional. According to the writer of "The Female Patriots," women were the very agents of heaven on earth, the angels of virtue who took first place in his heart's spotlight.

All hail, superior sex, exalted fair,
Mirrors of virtue Heaven's peculiar care,
Accept the tribute of our warmest praise,
The soldier's blessing and the patriot's bays.
No more sit weeping o'er the veteran band,
Those noble brave protectors of her land, For lo,
these sons her glorious work renew,
cheered by such gifts, and smiles, and prayers from you.

Yes, not ye sister angels of each state,
Who cause our hearts to glow with joy elate,
For fame's first plaudit we no more contest,
constrained to own it decks the female breast.

And so the future bards shall soar sublime,
And waft you glorious down the stream of time,
And freedom's ensign thus inscribed shall wave,
'The Patriot Females who their county save.'

The implication of this song is quite interesting.
Women were called "superior" because they smile at and pray for the soldiers in the Continental army. There is no mention in the song of the concrete contributions of women to the war effort. It did not matter to this songster that women boycotted British goods, spun their own cloth, or served as deputy husbands. The image of woman as a virtuous--almost holy--goddess was more interesting to him. Women had the wings of angels and were able to watch over the brave men who fought in the field. This job was enough to give women the status of savior.

For another composer, smiling and batting ones eyelashes constituted "The Public Spirit of the Women." This work, written by a "man in his seventies," is as nebulous in its description of women's work for the
cause as the previous song. Women only needed to beam in order to inspire and unite an entire nation.

Boy, fill me a bumper! as long as I live,
The patriot fair for my toast must I give,
Here’s a health to the sex of every degree,
Where sweetness and beauty with firmness agree.
Derry Down, down, hey derry down.

No more will I babble of times that are past,
my wish is, the present forever may last,
Already I see sulky George to despair,
Should he vanquish the men, to vanquish the fair.
Derry down, etc.

Could time be roll’d backward, and age become young,
My heart swell with ardor, my arm be new strung;
Under Washington’s banner I’d cheerfully fight,
Where the smiles of the fair with glory united.
Derry down, etc.

Fill a bumper again, boy, and let it go round,
For the waters of youth in claret are found;
The younkers shall know, I’ve the courage to dare
Drink as deep as the best to the patriot fair.
Derry down, etc.

This older gentleman, then, was not only thinking of his younger days (as much as he denied this, it is clear that he was longing for the time when he was able to court young women), but he was also promoting women to the status of goddess. His praise of women is extraordinary, but his description of their contributions is extremely vague.

In the creative mind of another composer, a woman’s contribution to the cause of the colonies was
quite clear. "Collinet and Phebe" was written at some point during the war, although we do not know when or by whom. In this duet of sorts, Collinet attempted to court Phebe. Yet Phebe, being the paragon of patriotism that women were called to be, felt uncomfortable with the situation even though she was interested in the handsome young man.

A blush O'erspread her cheek with red which half she turn'd aside;
With pleasing woes, her bosom rose, And thus the maid replied--
'Dear gentle youth, I know thy truth, And all thy arts to please;
But ah! is this a time for bliss, Or themes as soft as these?

While all around, we hear no sound But war's terrific strains!
The drum commands our arming bands, And chides each tardy swain.
Our country's call arouses all, who dare to be brave and free!
My love shall crown the youth alone, Who saves himself and me'

'Tis Done!' he cried, 'from thy dear side, Now quickly I'll be gone;
From love will I, to freedom fly, A slave to thee alone.
And when I come with laurels home, And all that freemen crave,
To crown my love, your smiles shall prove The fair reward the brave.'

The picture drawn by this song is fascinating. The ardent young man wished only to court this woman, but
she manipulated the situation in order to get him to do his duty. He virtually jumped to his feet and marched off to war so that he might please Phebe. The power of passion was considered a force women could use in order to get men to fight. While women had little power in this society, this composer believed that women could single-handedly form a militia and march it off to war if they would only be dedicated to the higher calling of their country.

In the music, then, we get a different image of women from that which appears in the plays. What we see in these songs is the civilizing effect of women, women refining their men so that they will go to war and kill each other. The harsh reality of women's lives during the war would confuse the issue too much. The image of a woman soiling her hands in the fields or risking her image in order to keep her husband's business solvent was unacceptable. Despite this limited assessment of women's contribution, they did have a definite role to play in the revolution. Other minorities in America were simply ridiculed, villainized, or used as propaganda against the Americans themselves.
The only appearance of an African-American in the music of the period came from an English writer. "Good Bye to America" was printed in England shortly after the Revolutionary war ended. The song reflected the use of slavery to condemn the Americans who screamed about liberty and is worth reprinting in its entirety.

Now, farewell, my Massa, My Missy, adieu
More blows and more stripes will I ne'er take from you,
or "Will you come hither" and "Thither you go,"
Or help make you rich by the sweat of my brow.

Farewell the mosquito, farewell the black fly,
And rattlesnake, too, who my sting me to die,
This negro go home to his old Galilee,
Before he consent to be nevermore free,

Den, hey, for old England, where liberty reigns,
Where negroes ain't beaten and loaded with chains,
And if I return to the life that I had,
You can put me in chains, cause I surely be mad.48

In this work, we hear the joyous farewell of an articulate slave who believed his life would be better with the English. This British writer gave more credit to a black than the Americans would, but his purpose was one of propaganda. Slavery was an embarrassment to Americans who fought for freedom; once that fight was over, it was important to make the American leadership look ridiculous by reminding them of their hypocrisy. The writer did this by emphasizing the slavery itself,
but he also created a slave who was not stupid or inarticulate. There are some stereotypes in this song; they do not, however, define this man who is leaving his bondage.

Native Americans appeared twice in the music of the Revolution. Predictably, they were depicted as brutal savages. They were also fighting for the British who were condemned as loudly as the Natives. Since the Americans failed to convince the Indians to remain neutral during the war, despite their diligent efforts, the rebel songwriters could attack the British by condemning their allies.

In "The Ballad of Jane McCrea" written by Henry William Herbert, we become witnesses to the tragic death of a Tory woman trapped by the chaos of war. As the song proceeds, the Indians appear and murder the defenseless maiden by mistake.

By the pine tree, near the spring, were armed men, alert at post,
While the early sun was low'ring, watching for the royal host,
Came a rifle's sudden crack and rose a wild and fearful yell,
Rushed the Indians from the brake and fled the guard or fought and fell

Then a frantic savage seized her by her long and flowing hair,
Bared the keen and deadly knife and whirl'd aloft
the tresses fair,
Yelled in triumph and retreated bearing off the
trophy dread,
Think of him sent them forth, and who received it
reaming red.49

This number painted a brutal picture, but for these
writers, the Native Americans and their British allies
were savages. In fact, in the other song written about
the Native Americans in the war, the Indians are
compared to insects. "For red men come in swarms, so
frontier men to arms," wrote the composer. These
Indians were "swarming" over the Canadian border in
order to "pillage and slaughter."50 The noble savage
is absent from these portraits; that image was no
longer useful. It became important at this time to
depersonalize the Native Americans in order for the new
nation to expand into their territories.

Women and minorities, while playing a small
symbolic role in the revolution, were not meant to
benefit from it. They were present on the continent;
Americans used them to prosper. But they had no place
in the political community that was created by the
revolution. Tories and poor whites found themselves
excluded as well. They, however, found a voice in song
that allowed them to contribute their creative
expressions to the debate over independence and democracy.

IV.

During the revolutionary period, parody and ridicule became popular tools for Whigs, Tories, and Englishmen. The rebellion and war provoked strong feelings on the topics of liberty, leadership, and independence. The war offered further ammunition to songwriters on both sides as the well-disciplined British army faced continental troops that had not been professionally trained. These writers used several different techniques in their songs. Some would borrow songs from the British and make them American. Others would use sarcasm and satire to demean the opposing side. Whatever method they used, these artists offered a most interesting array of songs to the political debate. The theme of liberty is a constant in revolutionary rhetoric. Scholars debate its meaning for politically aware colonists, but it is possible to trace the different levels of liberty through the metamorphosis of one song. "The Liberty Song" traces the slow progression from hesitant criticism to
resistance, from controversy to rebellion. The meaning of the colonists' fight becomes clearer with each version of the song.

"The Liberty Song" has an interesting tradition. The various writers of the verses suggested that the song be sung to a tune called "Hearts of Oak." This tune was written in 1759 to celebrate a British military triumph in Africa. The colonists took this tune and used it to demand their rights, initially as Englishmen and later as freeman. In this way, the colonists fit themselves into a courageous tradition while they turned British might on its head, renaming it "tyranny."

The first version of "The Liberty Song" was written in 1766. This version is rather mild, demanding the rights of Englishmen. The song affirmed a love for and loyalty to Britain:

Sure never was picture drawn more to the life,  
Or affectionate husband more fond of his wife,  
Than America copies and loves Britain's sons,  
Who conscious of freedom, are bold as great guns.  
Hearts of oak are we still For we're sons of those men,  
Who always are ready, Steady, boys steady,  
To fight for their freedom again and again  
To King George, as true subjects, we loyal bow down  
But we hope we may call Magna Charta our own,
Let the rest of the world slavish worship decree,
Great Britain has ordered her sons to be free.
Hearts of Oak, etc. \(^5\)

This early version of the song was written by a colonist who wished to be part of the English tradition. His reference to "Hearts of Oak" and Magna Charta connect him with his heritage. Yet there is a sense of disappointment in a later verse:

On our brow while we laurel-adorned Liberty wear,
What Englishmen aught, we Americans dare;
Though tempests and terrors around us we see,
Bribes nor fears can prevail o'er the hearts that are free. \(^5\)

The colonists would uphold British freedom as Britons themselves cannot. This was a popular idea among the revolutionary leadership. Britain was no longer able to guard liberty because she was too corrupt.

By 1768, "The Liberty Song" was slightly more rebellious. The 1768 version became popular with organizations such as the Sons of Liberty. John Dickinson, a Pennsylvania patriot who authored the "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania," sent his version of "The Liberty Song" to James Otis in Massachusetts. A few days after Otis received the first version, a second version arrived from Dickinson. He told Otis that he had been "too bold" in writing the first version. Otis made the changes Dickinson
requested before he published the song. The first verse of the song calls upon Americans to stand bravely for liberty:

Come join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
And rouse your bold hearts to fair Liberty's call;
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just claim
Or stain with dishonor America's name.
In freedom we're born, and in freedom we'll live,
Our purses are ready, Steady, friends, steady
Not as slaves, but as freemen our money we'll give. 54

In the chorus, the hearts of oak are gone. Freedom has replaced them. What concerned Dickinson here was the colonists' purses. The people of North America are "freemen" as Dickinson proclaimed. They will not give up their wealth to a tyrannous government. In later verses of the song, Dickinson continued to make money a prevailing issue. He wrote of the "sweet labor" of freemen and of the profit they should be allowed to enjoy. He warned that America would lose the sweetness of that labor "If Britons shall reap what Americans sow." Dickinson lamented that "placemen and pensioners" would appear to spend what Americans labor for and work would become drudgery.

In verse eight of his song, Dickinson appealed to the colonists' concern for posterity. He told his fellow patriots that they would be remembered with
"amaze and applause" for their courage in supporting their laws. He implied that to give in to Britain would only bring shame to the freemen and that is "more dreadful than pain." Finally, in order to smooth things over with the leaders of Britain, Dickinson offered this verse:

This bumper I crown for our sovereign's health,
And this for Britannia's glory and wealth.
That wealth and that glory immortal may be
If she is but just and we are but free.55

Despite this last verse, unconditional admiration and love for Britain had disappeared. Yet Dickinson did not directly address the popular justification for this—the corruption of the British government and the virtue of Americans. Instead of encouraging virtue through a lack of luxury, Dickinson was concerned the colonies would be robbed of their prosperity.

When Dickinson's version of "The Liberty Song" became popular, Loyalists responded. Parody was an effective tool for Patriots and Loyalists alike. Yet the Loyalists, who at this point were on the defensive, developed a talent for turning songs of patriotism into tools of ridicule. One of the Loyalists' favorite tactics involved emphasizing the "country bumpkin" stereotype of the colonists. This tactic, along with a
good dose of shame, set the tone for "Parody upon a Well-Known Liberty Song." The Loyalist writer of these verses began his song with a mix of ridicule and condemnation:

Come shake your dull noddles, ye pumpkins, and bawl,
And own that you're mad at fair Liberty's call;
No scandalous conduct can add to your shame,
Condemned to dishonor, inherit the fame.
In folly you're born, and in folly you'll live,
To madness still ready, and stupidly steady, Not as men but as monkeys the tokens you give.®

The anonymous writer of these Loyalist verses ingeniously continued his song by answering verse for verse John Dickinson's song. Instead of "Worthy forefathers," Satan himself is the patriot's "grandsire;" "The Tree their own hands had to Liberty reared" became "The Tree, which the Wisdom of justice hath reared." 57 The last comparison in and of itself offers an interesting difference in the interpretation of liberty. Is it created by individuals or by the precedent of justice? If the colonists were truly asking for the rights of Englishmen, then they had to believe that Magna Charta gave birth to liberty. By asserting instead that the Patriots' forefathers planted the Liberty Tree in America, how were they
interpreting liberty? What tradition were they following? This Loyalist writer intended to make the patriots into bumbling idiots who yelled about the rights of Englishmen, but who clearly did not understand where those rights came from.

The writer continued his parody by changing the verdict of future generations by suggesting that posterity will not praise the rebels for their stand against the British. Instead "all ages shall speak with contempt and amaze" about the "vilest banditti that swarmed in these days." The colonists would be seen as fools for yelling about the nonexistent plot to enslave them. The rebel colonists were not only criminals and scoundrels; they were idiots for letting their unfounded fears lead to rioting and chaos. They broke the King's peace for no good reason. Therefore, they would be punished:

Gulp down you last dram, for the gallows now groans,
And, over depressed, her lost empire bemoans;
While we quite transported and happy shall be,
From mobs, knaves and villains, protected and free.

The parody on the "Liberty song" was a strong statement against the colonists fears and concerns. Yet it also offered, in this last verse, a fear shared
by Loyalist and Patriots alike. The elite, no matter what their political leanings, had no taste for mobs. According to some patriot leaders the encouragement of mob riot was a dangerous gamble. By accusing the Patriots of inciting the "lower sorts" to riot, the Loyalists found an effective tool for gaining the support of the elites. Many prominent leaders on the Patriot side feared mobocracy as much as tyranny. There was never a strong common thread binding all the colonists fighting Britain. Many of the revolutionary elite had more in common with Loyalists than with the lower class Patriots, republican ideology aside.

Once this Loyalist parody of "The Liberty Song" appeared, the Patriots had no choice but to launch a counter attack. "The Massachusetts Liberty Song", written in November of 1768, was bolder than John Dickinson’s song. The colonists moved toward outright rebellion less than a year after Dickinson’s verses were written:

Come swallow your bumpers, ye tories and roar,
That the sons of fair Freedom are hampered once more;
But know that no cut-throats our spirits can tame,
Nor a host of oppressors shall smother the flame.
In freedom we’re born and like sons of the brave,
We’ll never surrender, but swear to defend her,
And scorn to survive if unable to save.
Later in this version of the song, the anonymous writer expressed the familiar theme of bad advisors and a good king. The true tyrants in 1768, were the "minions," "placemen," "pimps," and "pensioners." Yet the King would uphold and restore the rights of the victimized colonists. Then, in the last verse of the song, came a subtle yet clear call to arms, although the colonists' fight would be strictly defensive:

Then join hand in hand, brave Americans all!  
To be free is to live, to be slaves is to fall;  
Has the land such a dastard, as scorns not a lord,  
Who dreads not a fetter much more than a sword.60

So while there was still no clear independence movement evident in 1768, the colonists were developing a resistance in words. In one year, the various writers of The "Liberty Song" had been provoked to speak of arms and swords. While Dickinson spoke of dying with honor, he never implied that the colonists should fight the Mother Country. The idea was distasteful to him as was the idea of independence.61 But in 1768, Dickinson was not alone in his misgivings about the colonists' fight. It would take eight years and several more events to convince the more powerful colonists that independence was the only road for them.
Another patriot wrote a less threatening response to Britain's power using a popular British tune as his foundation. An anonymous New York colonist wrote "The American Rule Britannia" in 1774. Once again, the author had good reason for his anonymity. There were more Loyalists in New York than in Boston and it would have been dangerous to push creativity too far. This writer remained safely within the British Empire, never dreaming of independence. At the same time, he gently reminded the mother country that the colonists would not have their rights taken away from them. In the last two verses, the writer used the interesting tactic of reminding Britain what the colonies could do for the mother country. Great Britain was old while the colonies were young, energetic and able. Therefore the colonies would protect the Mother Country from all foes—as long as Britain would "Confide in Children— not in slaves." Beyond fighting, the colonies would labor for Britain with "cheerful heart" and as they labored, they would share their growth and strength with the feeble Mother Country. That way neither Britain nor her colonies would ever be enslaved.
This idea of shared labor between the colonies and their Mother country had nothing to do with the exploitive theory of mercantilism. In fact, the writer turns that theory on its head. Yes, the colonies and Britain needed each other, but the reasons for that need did not involve raw materials for British industry. Instead, the writer asserted that the colonies would labor for Britain because Britain could no longer provide for itself in any way. This theory of imperial relations, while sounding humble on the surface, gave the power to the colonists. Britain would be great only if it vigilantly guarded the colonists' liberty; it would be up to the colonists to handle that greedy, grasping creature, power. In this battle between power and liberty, the tables were turned and the result would be beneficial rather than harmful.

The debates and exaggerated images that were so evident in the songs of this time reflected the perceptions of the British and the colonists. With such rampant misunderstanding of motive and purpose, the attractiveness of parody intensified. Songwriters created pieces for political debate and for military
ridicule. As American Whigs and Tories continued to argue over what was best for their country, composers adapted British songs for their own purposes.

Two patriot verse writers believed that "God Save the King" needed serious revision. The first such alteration was "God Save America," written anonymously sometime after the French had entered the American fight. There are several interesting points to make about this song. In the first verse, the writer asked for an end to the war. He wished for a time when the "din of arms" and "war's alarms" would give way to "Heaven born peace." Then in the second and third verses of the song, the writer praised Washington, a living war hero, and Montgomery, a valiant warrior whose death at Quebec symbolized those who were willing to sacrifice everything for the American cause. So while the writer prayed for peace to save America, he also made warriors into heroes, believing that God should preserve them and that Americans should look to them for the virtue of the greatest sacrifice. To complicate matters further, this writer also asked God to "save the King," but the King he asked God to protect was the King of France. He even referred to
King Louis XVI as a "Guardian of Liberty." The Revolution for this writer was not against all monarchs everywhere; it was a limited revolution, overthrowing one tyrannical king. So the American Revolution should bring peace to America with the help of warriors and a monarch who only wanted revenge on England and who was, in truth, concerned about the precedent he was setting by helping the American colonies.63

The second parody on "God Save the King" expressed different concerns. In "God Save The Thirteen States," written in 1779, the writer, "a Dutch woman," emphasized unity. In the last verse of the song, the writer showed great anxiety over the lack of union among the States:

Oh, Lord! Thy gifts in store, We pray on congress pour,
to guide our States,
May Union bless our land, While we with heart and hand,
Our mutual rights defend, God save our States.64

So while the colonists were attempting to overthrow their Mother Country, a country that had become corrupt according to the political rhetoric of
the elites, the song writers overthrew the king with concerns that went beyond their own need for virtue through vigilance. They wanted peace, strong military leaders, aid from other monarchs who had the same power as George III, and, above all, unity.

While unity became a concern for some patriot songwriters, unity in England over the American war had never existed. During the early controversy, colonists were well aware of their friends in England. As the war began, however, Englishmen themselves ridiculed and condemned the leadership that had caused the problems in the first place. One song, obviously written anonymously, condemned the poor policies of the British government. In "A Dose for the Tories," this British writer made his stand and his solution to the problems crystal clear:

Come hither, brother tradesmen, And hear the news I bring;
'Tis of a Tory Ministry, A parliament and King,
And a-packing they must go, must go,
Or a -begging we shall go. . . .

Their [the colonists'] ports and harbors they've blocked up, And all their trade they stop,
So all the poor are left to starve, And we must shut up shop.
And a-packing, etc. . . .

Should they [the Tories] ignore our just request,
Genius of liberty,
Conduct such traitors to the block, A sacrifice to thee.
Then a-singing we will go, A-singing we will go,
A-singing we will go, go, go.
And a-singing we will go.

This is not an attractive picture of the British government. This writer, perhaps a merchant, has witnessed his government tell lies, starve the poor of America, stop British commerce, and enslave the colonies. By the end of the song, after listing the Tory offenses, it was not enough to send the leaders packing; they had to be executed. This writer was not alone in his harsh condemnation.

In 1778, "The Halcyon Days of Old England" appeared in the London Evening Post. This writer who wisely kept his identity to himself, skillfully used sarcasm to condemn the British leadership and its war. He wrote of the glory of the leaders who are "wise men—they say so themselves," and he then proceeded to trace the history of the war to date. He ridiculed a government that had spent millions of dollars to fight a war over a three pence tax on tea. This was an oversimplification, certainly, but the point was effective. Later in the song the writer asked on behalf of the army that the world not judge them harshly because their allies, the Indians were
"savagely scalping men, women, and boys!" The army's argument, according to this satirist, is that "The more they are scalped, the more they will love us!"

Furthermore, the country should not worry about losses of this war. The British would defeat the rebellious Americans "If we can find soldiers--and money to pay 'em!" Finally, the author prayed for peace, unity with America, and asked for the execution of the "authors of mischief."66

While this writer used sarcasm to make his point, he came to the same conclusion about what should be done with the British leadership as did the writer of "A Dose for Tories." These men had, apparently, ruined England and they should thus pay with their lives. If England had declined into corruption as the Whig politicians claimed, then the American Revolution marked the complete destruction of the nation.

The British were also quite creative in berating the colonial rebels. "The Whig" according to one composer, was nothing more than "a rebel by nature, a villain in grain" who cheated and lied to get his way. His only occupation was "ruining nations,/ Subverting of Crowns, and murdering Kings."67 This songwriter
placed the so-called American Whig in the tradition of Cromwell and his followers. The rebels were evil sons of the Devil who had no respect for the British nation, no matter what they might argue.

For American Tories, it was important to continue the tradition of ridicule. "The Congress" an undated and anonymous work, painted yet another derisive portrait of the rebels. In this song the Tory associated the rebels with another long British tradition: treason. He compared the members of Congress, "those hardy knaves and stupid fools" who are also "apish and pragmatic mules" with such famous traitors as Catiline, Cromwell and "Jack Cade." He too pleaded for peace; it was a common request. End the terrible war, he said, by executing Congress.68

One of the most clever works of a loyalist artist concerned the lack of conviction on the part of many Americans. "The American Vicar of Bray" was printed on June 30, 1779. The author is unknown, but the piece was a parody of an English song known simply as "The Vicar of Bray." The original song dealt with an English gentleman who shifted from Catholicism to Protestantism and back again, depending on the
religious climate of the times. The song was ideal for adaptation and was brilliantly transformed into a comical indictment of the American without true loyalty.

In the first verse of the song, the American Vicar told his audience that he was initially loyal to King George and the Church of England, for such loyalty was safe before the days of the Stamp Act. But once the Stamp Act was repealed, he began to cry that the King would make the colonies his slaves; he went with the popular flow and refused to be enslaved. The song then continued through the rebellion and Revolution.

Now all went smooth, as smooth could be,/ I strutted and looked big, sir.
And when they laid a tax on tea,/I was believed a whig sir.
I laughed at all the vain pretense/ of taxing at this distance,
and swore before I'd pay my pence,/ I'd make a firm resistance.

When the Congress gathered in Philadelphia, said the vicar, Britain would back down and all Englishmen, on both sides of the Atlantic could grow wealthy.

But Britain was not quickly scared/ She told another story,
When Independence was declared/ I figured as a Tory,
Declared it was rebellion base/ To take up arms--I cursed it,  
For faith, it seemed a settled case  
That we should soon be worsted.

The American Vicar remained loyal to King and Parliament while the war went well for the British. With the defeat of Burgoyne, however, he quickly affected a change of heart.

But poor Burgoyne announced my fate,/ the Whigs began to glory,  
I now bewailed my wretched state/ That e'er I was a Tory,  
By night the British left the shore/ Nor cared for friends a fig sir,  
I turned the cat in pan once more,/ And so became a whig, sir.

I called the army butch'ring dogs/ A bloody tyrant King, sir,  
The commons, Lords, a set of rogues/ That all deserved to swing, sir,  
Since fate has made us great and free,/ And Providence can't falter,  
So Cong. [sic: Congress] till death my king shall be,  
Unless the times shall alter.70

"The American Vicar of Bray" was masterful writing, designed to make any wavering American look ridiculous. Even more interesting than this loyalist's condemnation of the American villain is his use of the popular rhetoric. The man telling his story was quite comfortable shifting political views and was a genius at utilizing the discourse, including the broadly defined labels of Whig and Tory. This song questioned
the meaning of all the political rhetoric by using it derisively. The writer was able to construct a wonderful parody by using the buzz words of the times, a Tory weapon also used by Jonathan Sewall in The American Roused in a Cure for the Spleen. 

It is important to understand that as these Loyalists wrote their songs and thereby fought their own war, they too were fighting for their lives. These men were loyal to Britain, but their homes were in Massachusetts, New York, Virginia, and all the other colonies. While they ridiculed the rebels, they were also doing what they believed best for their country. Many Loyalists had already lost everything they owned because of their political beliefs. It was not healthy to be a Loyalist; they were on the wrong side of the Revolution. For them, the fight for liberty and freedom was a personal disaster. Once the patriots had won the war, these Loyalist voices were silenced. They were no longer members of the American community.

The use of parody was not confined to comment on the political arena. As the British and the colonials prepared themselves for confrontation, songs about soldiers leaving their families became popular. John
Tait, a judge in Edinburgh, Scotland wrote "The Banks of The Dee" in 1775. The song, which was popular on both sides of the Atlantic, told the typical story of a young woman who has been left behind by her lover. He had gone "to quell the proud rebels, for valiant is he;..." This sad song was irresistible to one colonist in particular, but not because he was touched by the story. Oliver Arnold, a relative of Benedict Arnold, did not believe that anyone should be sent to "quell" the colonists. Arnold took the song and recreated it as a tool of ridicule for the British soldiers as well as those loyal to them. The song has the simple title "The Banks of the Dee (parody):"

Twas winter and blue Tory noses were freezing,
As they marched o'er the land where they ought not to be,
The valiants complained at the fifes' cursed wheezing,
And wished they'd remained on the banks of the Dee.
Lead on, thou paid Captain! Tramp on, thou proud minions!
Thy ranks basest men, shall be strung like ripe onions,
For here thou hast found heads with warlike opinions
On shoulders of nobles who ne'er saw the Dee.

In this parody, the soldiers fighting for the British are paid, yet this reference goes beyond the mere idea of professional soldiering. The colonists are fighting
for the right; they are fighting for their homes and their lives. The British—as well as the Scots and anyone else the British government may hire—are fighting because they are paid to fight. The image of colonials fighting for honor and liberty is far more compelling than that of money-grubbing mercenaries.

From 1775 on, ridicule of the mighty British Army was a popular theme for the colonial song writers. After the disaster of Lexington and Concord, one Bostonian was especially vicious. "The Irishman's Epistle" appeared on a broadside after the Redcoats had returned to Boston:

By my faith, but I think you're all maker of bulls,
With your brains in your breeches, your arse in your skulls,
Get home with your muskets and put up your swords,
And look in your books for the meaning of words.
You see now, my honeys, how much you're mistaken,
For Concord by discord can never be beaten. . .

And what have you got now with all your designing,
But a town without victuals to sit down and dine in;
And to look on the ground like a parcel of noodles,
And sing, how the Yankees have beaten the doodles.
I'm sure if you're wise you'll make peace for a dinner,
For fighting and fasting will soon make you thinner.
This Irishman had a good deal of fun at British expense and was clever in his word games. In one instance he took a song of derision ("Yankee Doodle") and turned the meaning around. Now the British had to sing that the simple Yankees had humiliated the mighty British Redcoats. Similarly, the "fighting and fasting" mentioned in the last line would thin the British ranks as well as making the surviving soldiers less healthy.

Composers of the revolutionary generation spent their energies making fun of British soldiers and commanders. "The Old Soldiers of the King" was written after the battles of Trenton and Princeton. The British regulars became whining babies who maintained their superiority even after their defeat.

They [the rebels] fought so unfairly from back of the trees,  
If they'd only fought open we'd have beat them with ease,  
They can fight one another that way, if they please,  
But we don't have to stand for such tactics as these.

Chorus:  
We're the old soldiers of the King, And the King's own regulars.

We marched into Princeton with fifes and with drums,  
With muskets and cannons, with swords and with bombs.
This great expedition cost infinite sums,  
But some underpaid Doodles they cut us to crumbs.  
American composers were fond of using the derisive term "doodle" as much as possible. In this case, the composer used the term Americans had embraced as a tool of mockery. Yet is was not enough to attack the British regulars; the song continued by denouncing the English generals through their men. The soldiers contended that the generals had planned a surprise attack on the rebels, but the surprise turned out to be the defeat of the British. Finally, the soldiers defended their defeat.

'Tis true that we turned, but that shouldn't disgrace us,  
We did it to prove that the foe cound't face us,  
And they've nothing to boast, it's a very plain case,  
Though we lost in the fight, we came first in the race.  

Of all the British commanders, none was more popular to deride than either John Burgoyne or General Cornwallis. It was delightful for American artists to ridicule these proud men who fell to heavy defeat at the hands of the Continental army.
Burgoyne was ribbed in a number of verses. One small tune, popular in Vermont after Burgoyne's defeat, accused the British general of getting terribly lost.

In seventeen hundred and seventy-seven
General Burgoyne set out for Heaven,
But as the Yankees would rebel,
He missed his route and went to Hell.77

A more subtle condemnation of Burgoyne came from an anonymous writer who concentrated on Burgoyne's bravado before the campaign. In "The Fate of John Burgoyne," the audience was given a portrait of a man who was much too aware of his fame. The composer began his insult by calling General Burgoyne by the familiar "Jack," thereby showing an utter lack of respect. The song depicted Burgoyne working the crowd as he "smiled and bowed,/ To ev'ry blooming beauty." Burgoyne marched off to Canada to win a victory for Britain. Yet he finally realized that he was in trouble.

The sons of freedom gathered round,
His hostile bands confronted,
and when they'd fain have turned their back,
They found themselves surrounded!
In vain they fought, in vain they fled,
Their chief humane and tender,
To save the rest, soon thought it best
His forces to surrender.78
It is odd to see Burgoyne described as "humane and tender." It is possible that this writer was being sarcastic about Burgoyne's humanity. A man who marched to New York with such a massive entourage did not have his men's best interest at heart. But it is also possible that this songster did not see Burgoyne as the complete villain others did. There seems to be a certain admiration for this general's daring on the part of the composer. While Saratoga was an all-out victory for the American side, there was some sympathy for the man who planned the attack. The fact that the song was written anonymously may be an indication that the writer was afraid of the impression his sympathy would make on the American people.

For General Cornwallis, the more sympathetic of the two generals, there was no compassion whatsoever. After the Battle of Yorktown, the final major battle of the war, American songwriters took great delight in ridiculing Cornwallis. He was another villain made comical. Cornwallis was "Burgoyned" according to one creative composer. For another writer, the surrender of this British army was compared to a jig danced by the general and his men. In the last two verses of
"Cornwallis' Country Dance" we see the absurd sight of two armies prancing with one another.

Now hand in hand they [the American army] circle round,
This ever-dancing peer, sir;
Their gentle movement soon confound
The earl [Cornwallis] as they draw near, sir.

His music soon forgets to play,
His feet can no more move, sir,
And all his bands now curse the day
They jigged to our shore, sir.

Now tories all, what can ye say?
Come--is not this a griper,
that while your hopes are danced away,
'Tis you must pay the piper.9

This kind of derision at the expense of the enemy was not monopolized by the Americans. Observers and historians alike have emphasized the American fighting style during the Revolution ever since the war was fought. The fact that Washington wanted to train his men to fight like the British army and had some success at it has never been as interesting as the picture of Americans fighting from behind trees and stone walls. The picture of the British marching in their bright uniforms and making themselves sitting ducks for the flexible colonials is famous for its simplicity. In this image of the war, many people see a connection with the Natives of this continent as well as with
democracy. The American soldiers were not commissioned and trained like the British; they were not professional soldiers. This truth frustrated the Continental army's officers but is quite attractive to those historians and creative artists who wish to distinguish the Old World from the New. During the war, the British found a good deal of satisfaction in maligning the American fighting style. In a song called "The Rebels" one loyalist songwriter not only ridiculed America's tactics but also demeaned the class of men who were fighting the war.

The arch-rebels, barefooted tatterdemalions,
In baseness exceed all other rebellions,
   With their hunting-shirts and rifle-guns; . . .
With loud peale of laughter, your sides, sirs would crack,
To see General Convict and Colonel Shoe-Black, . . .
   See cobbler's and quacks, rebel priests and the like,
Pettifoggers and barbers, with sword and with pike,
   and strutting the standard of Satan beside,
and honest names using, their black deeds to hide,
   With their hunting-shirts and rifle guns.  

This sort of derision for the Americans and their cause was not uncommon. The fact that the Continental Army was full of unprofessional soldiers was strong ammunition for British satirists, but through the use
of the most popular camp song of the war, the Continental army embraced British derision.

During a war, music in the military serves several different functions. According to Raoul Camus, music serves as a morale booster as well as a conveyor of signals and orders. The musicians of an army could also provide entertainment for the troops. While Camus's study of military music is interesting, he does not discuss the use of the camp or marching song. By discussing fife and drum crops and the value of music to officers, Camus misses the contribution of the common soldier to the music of the army. The camp song is a valuable source for understanding the feelings of the soldier.

On the surface, marching songs seem obvious in their purpose. They are, quite often, songs that become famous and familiar because of their function. Yet marching songs or camp songs have an interesting tradition in the Revolutionary War. Frank Moore noted that "nearly every company had its 'smart one' or poet, who beguiled the weariness of the march or the encampment by his minstrelsy, grave or gay; . . ." Unlike other materials examined by historians, these
camp songs were not written by the elites of colonial society. They were written, instead, by average men such as farmers, laborers, and school masters who were fighting the war. What they have to say about this war indicates that different individuals developed various interpretations concerning the meaning of the American Revolution.

The most popular and famous marching tune of the Revolutionary period is "Yankee Doodle." The first known version of the song was written during the period of the French and Indian War. We do not know the origin of the familiar tune. Irwin Silber believes it may have been invented by an early American fiddler. What we do know is that the word "doodle" was a term of derision meaning "simpleton." According to legend, the British soldiers going to Lexington and Concord marched to this tune. It would seem that they wanted to ridicule the colonials through their music. One verse that appeared in this early version of "Yankee Doodle" spelled out their intention:

Yankee Doodle's come to town  
For to buy a firelock  
We will tar and feather him,  
And so we will John Hancock.
Despite the derision apparent in the song, the colonials adopted "Yankee Doodle" for their own purposes. Yet why adopt a song written by Tories and Redcoats rather than create a new tradition? Silber has an interesting explanation. He believes that revolutionaries need to "demystify" the symbols of an authority they used to revere. This need "gives rise to a cultural atmosphere of nonconformity and iconoclasm. . . ." In other words, the soldiers of the Continental army needed to recreate the tradition.

Even as they were claiming a British heritage, they were also proudly embracing its derision. This idea appears strange on the surface, even perverse. But Continental soldiers knew they were not proper English gentlemen; and, indeed, they no longer wanted to be. They also knew what separated them from the colonial leadership. Most of these men were the "middle" or "lower sorts" of colonial society. Yet they had as much devotion to their cause as anyone in the Continental Congress. They did not speak in terms of virtue and corruption or power versus liberty. They knew, however, that they were fighting for their land and their future. They had a revolution of their own
and if they were considered "simpletons" then they would make the most of it, even though it was not true.

The most famous version of "Yankee Doodle" was written by a Massachusetts Minuteman named Edward Bangs. Bangs was not a typical soldier. He was a sophomore at Harvard College in 1775 when he participated in the Battle of Lexington. Even though Bangs was attending college, his version of the song gives us an interesting perspective on how the common soldiers felt about their elite officers. In verses two and three of his song, Bangs gave the colonists a picture of the class differences in the army:

And there we see a thousand men
As rich as Squire David,
And what they wasted every day,
I wish it could be saved.

The 'lasses they eat every day
Would keep a house a winter
They have as much that I'll be bound
They eat it when they're mind to.

These verses lack references to liberty and a vigilant citizenry guarding it. Rather than the scorn of luxury, we see the wasteful officers enjoying their molasses and wasting other items.

Still, Bangs's version of "Yankee Doodle" is true to the soldiers' Revolution. Bangs wanted the
Revolution to have a far-reaching effect. His revolution is for the common people. Even Washington's selflessness and virtue were questioned by Bangs. Washington, referred to as "Captain Washington," was surrounded by people and had become "so tarnal proud/He will not ride without them." Washington is seen dressed to the nines, riding a fancy stallion. The portrait of Washington painted here is not of a god-like warrior, leading his countrymen into the fight. Rather it is a picture of a man who is conscious of his fame to the point that he cannot function without his entourage. He is also depicted as a man who wears his wealth, a man who must make his men aware of his privilege. How much respect such a man could muster from the average soldier is questionable. Still, Bangs's song was not designed to emphasize Mars, the god of war, in all his dramatics. It was a song for the morale of the common soldier who was not as rich as "Squire David," but who was fighting his own fight. If Washington was not a god, the world would not end.

Yet it was not the Patriot soldiers who had the most fun at Washington's expense. Shortly after Washington was appointed to be Commander-In-Chief of
the Continental troops, a New York Loyalist wrote "Adam's Fall (Or the trip to Cambridge)." In these verses, set to the tune of "Yankee Doodle," Washington was described as the leading rebel scamp who captured the imagination of all the other fools who called themselves patriots. After all, Adam's sin was foolishness, a foolishness that came with pride. Therefore it is not surprising to see Washington mounted on a donkey named Lily as if he is riding a noble steed:

When Congress sent great Washington
All clothed in power and breeches,
to meet old Britain's warlike sons
And make some rebel speeches.

Away from camp, 'bout three miles off,
From Lily he dismounted,
His sergeant brushed his sun-burnt wig,
While he the specie counted.

Any majesty Washington had is swept away by these verses. The artist continued to paint his ridiculous picture of the Hero Coming to the Rescue. By the end of the song, Washington's accomplishments were few. He had become the commander and comforter to "clowns," "women," and "darkeys." This Loyalist writer attempted to demystify the already potent myth of Washington and to ridicule the citizens of Massachusetts in order to
amuse his fellow Loyalists. This parody took the
derision embraced by the soldiers who sang "Yankee
Doodle," and broadened it to include the man in charge.

While the Loyalists were busy laughing at the
rebels, the rebel soldiers continued to amuse
themselves at the Loyalists' expense. "Song of The
Minuteman" was written in 1777 by a New Jersey farm boy
turned minuteman. While most of the song was a morale
booster that called the minutemen to fight bravely and
bring the Tories to their knees, the second verse
demonstrated an extremely interesting awareness of the
Americans' situation. Once again, the meaning of the
Revolution varied according to class and social
situation:

We have some noble congressmen elected for our
nurses,
And every jolly farmer will assist us with their
purses,
We let them stay at home, we say, enjoy their
wives with pleasure,
And we will go and fight our foes and save their
lives and treasure.

This soldier was well aware that he was doing the dirty
work for the elite of the colonies gathered in
Congress. His revolution was different from the
revolution written about by the upper crust of society.
For him, the fight was personal. His revolution was
about his life, his honor, and his glory. In the fifth verse of the song, he explained clearly what was at stake and then offered a solution:

   So let us not be dismayed although the Tories thunder,
   They only want to ruin us and live upon our plunder.
   Our cause is just, therefore we must withstand all their boodle,
   If they advance, we will make them dance the tune of Yankee Doodle.

This minuteman's revolution was about his livelihood. It was a fight against people he believed would ruin him. With the reference to Yankee Doodle, this soldier threw British derision into the faces of those who would dare cross him. What is more, this soldier was aware of the political rhetoric of the Revolution. He knew that their "cause is just," but in this particular case, there was little imitation of the rhetoric. Instead, he placed himself in the tradition of Yankee Doodle: a simple soldier fighting for his life. For one soldier near the end of the war, his fight was no laughing matter.

As we look back on the American Revolution, we remember the cleverness and flexible spirit of Washington. Most Americans on the patriot side during
the Revolution took pride in the Saratogas and the
Trentons of the war. Yet late in the war, many
soldiers under the command of George Washington were
becoming disillusioned. They were hungry, poorly
clothed, and disappointed that their needs were not
being met. On the other hand, they saw their officers
living in a certain amount of comfort. The Continental
Army was a microcosm of colonial society. In 1780 and
1781, the lower classes in the army revolted against
their upper class officers. Soldiers from
Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania mutinied
during these two years. One soldier who wished to make
his mutiny understood wrote a song to explain his
reasoning. "A New Song, Written by a Soldier" is full
of accusations concerning cheating and lying on the
part of the elites in charge of the fight for
independence:

And to you my lovely officers, a word I have to
say,
Before you go to battle, consider well I pray,
See how you kept our wages back, and robbed us of
our clothes,
That we so dearly paid for in hard fatiguing
blows....

And to you my lovely officers, those lines were
written for,
I'd have you to pray for a short and moderate war,
Pray for the strength of Sampson and great King David slight,
For there's scarcely one to twenty of you that's courage enough to fight.

This soldier has seen who was put at risk throughout the war. It was not the wealthy generals. In fact the generals were considered as dangerous as the enemy, according to this soldier. He claimed that the soldier who can escape his officers, his country, the enemy, and the devil, who is in league with all of them, has nothing more to fear. He singled out Washington as the only honest man in charge and consigned everyone else to hell. After several long years of war, it is not surprising that the soldiers became disillusioned. Many patriots had grown weary and were ready to see an end to the war. Beyond this fatigue, however, there is a clear feeling of victimization at the hands of the elite power structure of the colonies. The unifying force for Americans was supposed to be a fight against tyranny, but this soldier voiced a common concern. When would those wealthy people in charge at home share the wealth with those below them on the social scale? For this soldier in particular, Britain did not have a monopoly on corruption. It had become clear to him during the dark days of the war, that this revolution
was not intended for him unless he made sure that his voice was heard.

V.

Once the war had ended, the disrespectful songs of the common soldier gave way to songs that created biblical myths. "Ode to American Independence" was written in July of 1789 by Horatio Garnet and Daniel George. In the song, Heaven has decreed that America will be independent—and John Hancock has confirmed it with his signature. Washington has become "godlike" and has destroyed the haughty British; Horatio Gates has become the "Thunderbolt of War;" and as a result:

Now shall the useful arts of peace prevail
And commerce flourish, favored by each gale;
Discord forever cease, Let Liberty and Peace
And Justice reign. For Washington protects the scientific train.89

So now America could welcome commerce with other countries and could also be the seat of liberty, justice, and science. That is a good deal to expect from a young nation. Yet the war had proven to many Americans that they were capable of anything. The American Revolution was a confirmation that they had been right to fight and that God was on their side.
In 1765, the colonists were struggling to define their relationship with their mother country, as well as their rights under the laws of the empire. There was a good deal of anger over the Stamp Act, but there was also a sense of pride among the rebels that allowed them to voice their views. The central theme during this early resistance was liberty. Liberty was given to the colonists because they were Englishmen; England, after all, guarded liberty more effectively than any nation on earth. Yet what did liberty mean to the people who wrote and sang about it? For John Dickinson, it meant freedom for commerce and prosperity. For James Warren, liberty was the requirement for becoming a great nation. For countless anonymous writers, liberty was freedom from oppression, taxation, and slavery.

Yet all these writers found a way to fit themselves into the mighty British tradition. They used British tunes, British history, and British economic theory to prove their points. Many felt an
inexplicable connection to a king they had been taught to love. It was difficult to let go of that tradition. On the other hand, it was essential to understand that the same tradition they loved so much would keep them tied to a government that was unjust. During the early years of the Revolution, the colonists wanted to hold on to the tradition of "Great Britain and Liberty." They came to realize over time, that no matter how they defined liberty, they would be forced to choose between it and Great Britain. That realization did not come to all the Patriots at the same time. For some colonists, it would not come at all.

Once the war began, fighting for liberty was important in the songs of the patriots, but so was personal honor and the soldiers' realization that their lives were at stake for an independence that might not include them. Independence from Britain was central to the Revolution, of course. Yet the class differences apparent in the army led naturally to a different view of what independence would mean. At one point the idea of independence from Britain offered little comfort to soldiers in the army who felt themselves cheated while they did the dirty work of war.
Once independence was declared, unity, too, became important to songwriters of the revolutionary period. How that unity would be achieved and maintained was never discussed, but these writers knew that America had to be one nation. Otherwise the dream would die.

But why would these writers have to call for unity if the colonists were united anyway by the prevailing ideology of the radical Whigs? Tracing the American Revolution in song calls this notion into question. There are certainly references to liberty, power, virtue, and corruption evident in the work of these songwriters. Some writers even referred to the history of Greece and Rome. Yet some writers were also concerned about fish, commerce, misconceptions about colonial wealth, and lawless rioting in the streets. The political rhetoric of the Patriot elite is evident, but a cocky disrespect for Britain and her policies as well as the patriot elites was also apparent, a disrespect that often manifested itself in scatological terms. While the colonial elites were deliberating over constitutional meanings, other colonists were expressing their concerns over the practicalities of life. Even though these colonists could be creative
and comic, they were also ready to fight their own battles. The meaning of the Revolution changed from individual to individual, from class to class. Once the fighting had ended, one common thread was apparent for all patriots: the Revolution was a good thing that held the sanction of the goddess of liberty as well as that of God Himself.
NOTES

1 A word about sources. Songs concerning the Revolution appeared in colonial newspapers and broadsides. There numbers are massive. In the interest of brevity, I have chosen to survey those songs appearing in four separate collections. The editors of these collections had their own purposes for choosing the songs they did. Frank Moore edited the earliest of the collections, Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1855). Moore had one advantage over the other editors. He was able to talk to ageing soldiers who had fought in the Revolution. Those men were few in number by the time Moore gathered his material. Yet he discovered a devotion to the cause of the Revolution in these soldiers and wished to transfer that spirit to the written page. He did not believe that the writers of these songs and ballads wrote for fame but because they wished to share their opinion on the issues facing them. In fact, one former soldier told Moore that they wrote their songs "in a quiet way, just set their poetical lathes a-turning, and twisted out ballads and songs for the good of the common cause."(vi).

The next collection in time is Songs of '76: A Folksinger's History of the Revolution (New York: M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1972). The editor of this collection, Oscar Brand, is a folksinger from Manitoba, Canada. He speaks of his love for the Tory songs written by immigrants to Canada during the war. His passion for these songs gave him what he believes is a different perspective on history. He felt the emotions of historical actors; they were more human to him. Upon arriving in the United States, he was fascinated by the American side of the story. He began to read about the Revolution and shared with his audiences the tidbits of history he found so fascinating. He admitted that he might slight a significant battle in favor of a "minor skirmish" because those are the things that captured his imagination. His collection is very personal; singers, he said, "are partisan where a historian would be dispassionate." He sang the songs in the first person as they are written and encouraged
his readers to do the same. He compiled his collection so that other people could enjoy the songs he has come to love and experience the Revolution in a whole new way. "Because as far as I'm concerned, my Revolution beats them all" (xiii-xiv).

Irwin Silber edited his own collection of songs entitled Songs of Independence (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1973). In the preface to his work, Silber expressed a certain impatience with those who study human activity in any form. He argued that the people who wrote the songs in his collection did not live their lives "in those realms convenient to the disciplines of academe." Silber was further disturbed by the trend that has separated art from other human activity yet he was hopeful that that tendency would disappear. Therefore, in Silber's collection, we see a strong connection between the artist and his or her world. Silber has studied the Revolution through the eyes of composers and songsters of the time. He stated that he was dismayed by some of the things he discovered about his country in this way. But he was also proud of the spirit he felt in these songs. His hope in compiling his collection was to demonstrate "beyond any shadow of a doubt...that revolution is as American as cherry pie" (11-13).

Carolyn Rabson, editor of Songbook of The American Revolution (Peaks Island, Maine: NEO Press, 1974), designed her collection for performance. Throughout her introduction, she gave advice on accompaniment and, in the case of the hymns, choral arrangement. She also took the liberty to provide tunes for the verses whose original music is no longer known. Rabson felt the need, as well, to omit certain verses of songs because of space constraints or "indelicacy of content." As a musician, Rabson offered an explanation for the popularity of ballads and placed those of the Revolution into a British musical tradition which was political in nature. Ballad singers often criticized their government. It is not surprising that the Americans would address the important issues of the Revolution through song. While Rabson's censorship of some songs is frustrating, she did offer a format that allows performers to recreate these pieces in highly accurate ways (1-4).

The last three collections were written within four years of the Bicentennial Celebration of 1976. It was popular at this time to make the American
These three collections fit into the tradition of the Bicentennial Moment which appeared on television from 1974 to 1976. Yet these collections, along with that of Moore, offer a good selection of the songs written during this period. They are useful to historian, performer, or anyone interested in recapturing the spirit of the time. I have not analyzed here every song that was written about a certain issue or event. Like the editors of these collections, I have tried to offer a variety of views and song techniques pertaining to the issues these songwriters believed to be pressing.

2 Rabson, 1.
3 Silber, 36.
4 Ibid., 38.
5 Ibid., 37.
7 Silber, 52.
8 Ibid., 53.
9 Although this song was written after 1820, the closing date of this study, I have included it because it is within nine years of that date and because it offers a later interpretation of events during the Revolution.
10 Silber, 54.
11 Ibid., 57-58.
12 Ibid., 67.
13 Ibid., 68.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., 114.
16 Brand, 68.
17 Silber, 115-116.
18 Brand, 141.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., 140.
22 Silber, 118.
23 Ibid., 144.
24 Ibid., 100-101.
26 Silber, 98-99.
27 Ibid., 99.
29 Fishwick, 45.
30 Rabson, 76-77.
31 Silber, 184.
32 Ibid., 188.
33 Fishwick, 189-190.
34 Commanger, 745.
35 Ibid., 734.
36 See William Dunlap's Andre, 3; 10.

37 Silber, 106.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid., 110.

40 Ibid., 40.

41 Ibid., 41.

42 Ibid., 55-56.


44 Silber, 39.

45 Brand, 109.

46 Rabson, 17-18.

47 Ibid., 41.

48 Brand, 165.

49 Ibid., 97.

50 Ibid., 116.

51 Silber, 41.

52 Ibid., 42.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., 44.

55 Ibid., 45.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., 43; 46.
58 Ibid., 46.
59 Ibid., 47.
60 Ibid., 47-8.
62 Silber, 60.
63 Ibid., 81; Middlekauff, 403.
64 Silber, 82.
65 Ibid., 162-163.
66 Ibid., 167-168.
67 Rabson, 25.
68 Silber, 150-151.
69 Ibid., 156.
70 Ibid., 157-159.
71 See Chapter II on Drama.
72 Silber, 62.
73 Ibid., 62-63.
74 Ibid., 64-65.
75 Brand, 89.
76 Ibid.
77 Silber, 123.
78 Ibid., 127-128.
79 See Ibid., 137 for "Cornwallis Burgoyned"; 136.
80 Ibid., 51.


82 Moore, v-vi.

83 Silber, 75.

84 Ibid., 70.

85 Ibid., 40-41. This version of "Yankee Doodle" is entitled "The Yankee's Return From Camp."

86 Ibid., 79.

87 Ibid., 86.

88 Silber, 111-112.

89 Rabson, 91-92.
CONCLUSION

The arts are a rich resource long ignored by historians. Images in drama, music, and painting can be very powerful and when examined with care, they can tell us much about the perceptions or even the myths of a nationality. In the case of the American Revolution, the works creative artists offered to their audiences demonstrate the meaning of that pivotal event, at least for the creators. These artists, like their political counterparts, engaged in a fierce debate that ended only when the Revolution did.

One point on which the artists could agree concerned the characteristics of heroes and villains. The extreme nature of heroes and villains created by artists has become one object of comedy in the twentieth century. An image that instantly comes to mind is of Dudly Doright crying, "I'll save you, Nell!" once the dastardly deeds of Snidely Whiplash have been achieved. We laugh at the classic villain, stroking his moustache while lamenting, "Curses! Foiled again!" Yet even while we amuse ourselves with these images, the reality remains: We have purposely dehumanized our
heroes and villains so that we can no longer know them. They are so far beyond our comprehension that we no longer feel the need to emulate them.

From the elitist attitudes of John Trumbull to the democratic ideas of some songwriters, heroes and villains demonstrated the same attributes -- the heroes' selfless honor and the villain's greedy cowardice. In the case of heroes, mens' lives were reduced to the one or two daring acts they performed during the Revolution, making them the objects of anecdotes rather then men whose lives consisted of more than their deeds or sacrifices during the war. For other heroes, their deaths gave more meaning to their lives than anything they could have achieved after the war had ended. In the case of George Washington, we find a man so masked by perfection that he is unknowable. All of these heroes were meant to be examples for the citizens of the new nation. Yet how could anyone live up to these images? It was only through reverence that the common people could connect with these men. Therefore, the admiration for the upper class remained in tact. This result was satisfactory to the leaders of the new nation.
As for the villains of the Revolution, they were as unknowable as the heroes. It was important, especially in the case of Benedict Arnold, to strip the villain of any humanity whatsoever. Villains were cowards, sometimes greedy cowards, who did not know their place in the world. Such men were so closely associated with evil that they resembled the Devil himself and were to be spurned by the common people because they were selfish and unsure of the cause.

The heroes and villains chosen by creative artists dictated the meaning of the American Revolution. The yeoman farmer and the artisan of the city was asked to look to the generals, the elite officers of the war, for guidance, while at the same time, they were directed to avoid the pitfalls of wanting too much.

In other areas of revolutionary debate, the creative artists disagreed. This conflict took place on a number of different levels, but three of the more intriguing arguments surrounded the definition of the American community, the images of women and minorities, and the need for a social hierarchy.

Before the revolutionary conflict began, elites of the American colonies shared a common bond. They were
at the pinnacle of the social order. Yet with the advent of the American Revolution, a political conflict emerged involving citizens of the colonies on both sides. Those colonists who wished to remain in the English realm did not understand the grievances of those who did not.

Tories and Whigs in America transferred this debate to the arts in intriguing ways. In the realm of painting, the Tory voice is silent. While Stuart and Copley may have had Loyalist leanings, they did not demonstrate their political beliefs on canvas. Trumbull and Peale were staunch Whigs and used their talents to promote their political views.

It is only in drama and music that the Tories—and Moderates—had a voice. Jonathan Sewall and Robert Munford were articulate men who ridiculed the Whigs by using their own rhetoric. They, like the writer of "The American Vicar of Bray," understood the importance of political discourse. By manipulating the political rhetoric of the rebels, these artists attempted to disarm the Whigs and persuade the public that the colonial leadership was misguided. The Tories also created the ridiculous image of country bumkins
fighting the powerful British army. In this way, they could make the public understand that the war was a useless waste of time and energy. Finally, the Tories resorted to reason, addressing the Whig's grievances one by one. This was another tactic used by Jonathan Sewall, who was familiar with the Rebel argument against the British. Yet, in the end, the Patriots won the debate. Any voice that disagreed with the revolutionary cause was silenced.

Women and minorities had a place in the artistic works of the revolution. But the differences between genres is striking. The images of women and minorities that appear in the visual arts are devoid of personality. They are largely stereotypical. The noble savage and the frightened servant in Trumbull's work are examples. The women who appear in his "Resignation of General Washington" are not central to the piece. Martha Washington, the dutiful wife, will accompany her husband back to the private life of Mount Vernon. The other women look on in admiration. What contribution they may have made to the war effort is unknown. The images of women and minorities in Trumbull's work were secondary to the lessons he wished
to convey. Only in Copley's portrait of Mercy Otis Warren do we gain a sense of a woman's individual personality.

In drama and music, women are interesting and vital to the revolutionary cause, but only in the most traditional sense. The most fascinating female characters in drama are greedy gossips who are not interested in sacrificing anything. They want money, titles, and glory. In music women inspire their men or they represent the nations of Britain and America. In the case of African-Americans and Native Americans, the images remain stereotypical. When these images were useful to the plot in a play or song, they appeared. There was no question, however, that the benefits of the revolution did not extend to them.

Finally, in the case of social hierarchy, the images in the three genres studied here offer an array of views. Whether or not the painters were rich or of a prominent class of people, they all depicted the elite. The motivations of these painters did not cause them to question the status quo in their work. Stuart resented the new nation's aristocracy, but he was astute enough to know that they paid his fees. Peale's
political leanings were democratic, yet he never painted portraits of the artisans of Philadelphia. Trumbull would never dream of a society without social hierarchy and Copley took little interest in the social developments of the new nation. These painters, without exception, supported the status quo in their work.

Many of the dramatic works written during the revolutionary period were meant to be read, not seen. These plays and dialogues were available to anyone who could come by them. Yet the message in the plays differed slightly from that in the dialogues. The plays seem to address the elites by imitating their rhetoric. The playwrights offered confirmation of the proper leadership in the colonies or, as in the case of Jonathan Sewall and Robert Munford, appealed to educated colonists through careful analysis of the issues. They stressed the lesson of social order and they never supported a democratic agenda. If read by the masses, these plays would simply be another vehicle in which they were asked to respect their social betters.
The dialogues, on the other hand, offered the lessons of history and instructions on moral living. With the exception of the Tory dialogue, it is doubtful the elites of the new nation would be interested in these issues. According to the elites, it was the common people who needed to learn proper behavior. The elites would never admit that they had forgotten the importance of the Revolution. It was the masses who needed the history lesson. These dialogues, while written with the masses in mind, did not advocate a change in the arrangement of society. Their intent was not so broad.

It is only in the area of music that we see any challenge to the social authority of the time. Songs were available to anyone; many people wrote them. While James Warren and John Dickinson wrote of liberty and freedom, citizens soldiers in the army were questioning the authority of the elite officers through ridicule and angry threats of mutiny. These soldiers were well aware of their station in life, but they were not about to return to life as it had been before the war. As long as they were fighting for freedom, they might as well push for a voice in the new nation.
Unfortunately, once the war ended, the voices of these common soldiers and those who sympathized with them were silenced. This did not happen because of mass executions, but because the elites convinced the majority of the population that their agenda for American was the correct one. At a time when prominent men were experimenting with a new form of government, the society in which they lived remained the same. In the arts, the American Revolution did not support anarchy in any form. It called for social control.

The true nature of the American Revolution will fascinate historians for years to come. Whether the event was conservative or radical, based on ideology or class struggle, its importance for generations of Americans will never disappear. The American Revolution changes in the minds and hearts of the people just as surely as the political climate fluctuates. We may never remember the details of historians’ debates, but we will never forget the power of a Trumbull painting or the fun simplicity of "Yankee Doodle." For, in the final analysis, these images of the Revolution seem destined to outlast those of us who interpret them.
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