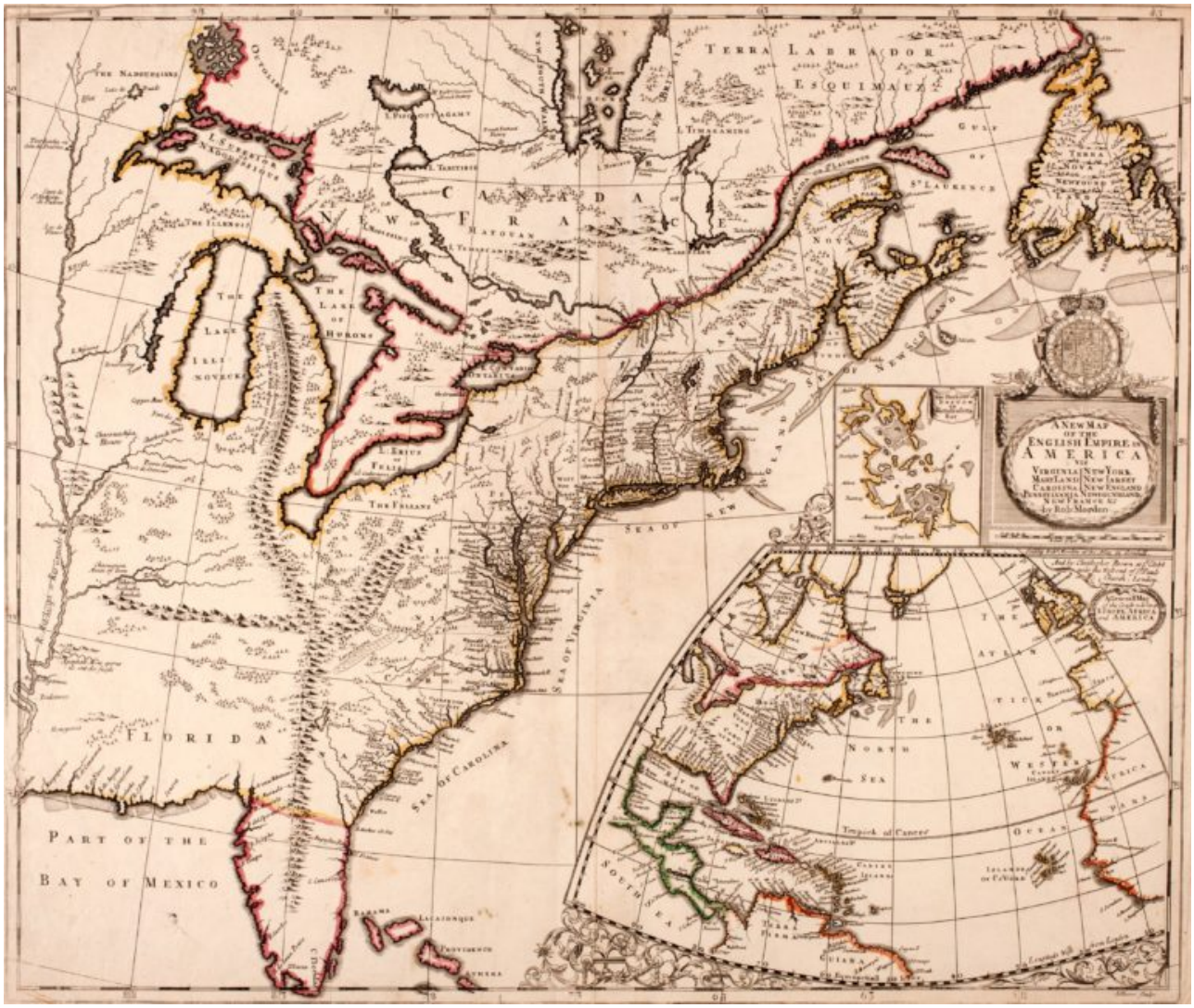
# A Voice Inside My Own




*Anne was oppressed and it is difficult for me to write her. I don't want to oppress her further and when I write her I feel sometimes her pressing back on me and this awareness of pressure is important if I want to write Anne because finding her Spirit or Soule among the words that she inhabits. She inhabits the words that are her speaking.*

I desire to speake one word befor you proceed:

What law have I broken?

What breach of law is that

to speak what they would have me to speak

I speak not of

expressinge any Unsatisfaction

I must keep my conscience.

I desire to hear God speak

I desire to speak to our teacher.

Now if you do condemn me for speaking what in my conscience I know to be truth

speake playnelye whether you thinke

I must either speak false or true in my answer.

I desire you to speake

to that place

the meanness of the place

I came first to fall into

my Imprisonment

I fear I shall not remember it whan you have done.

If one shall come unto me in private, and desire me seriously

comes to me in a way of friendship privately

come in the flesh

open it unto me

I will willingly submit

what rule have I to put them away?

the elder women should instruct the younger

in a way of friendship

I then entertain the saints

I entertain them that fear

I entertain them, as they have dishonoured their parents I do

Do you think it not lawful for me to teach women?

If one shall come unto me

a friend came unto me

I had set my hand

I had not my hand

held them unlawful

held before as you

In what faction have I joined with them?

did I entertain them against any act

What breach of law is that Sir?

I hear no things laid to my charge

I did not come hither to answer to questions of that sort.

*If I sound repetitive I’m repeating Anne. Anne repeating words repeated in text*

*before as “proceedings” or transcripts in copied forms and reprinted in books and taken and retaken down, especially in the case of the trial “before the Church in Boston” because the text that is still here as a Body is a copy made by Ezra Stiles. This was then copied and put in books but those people who copied were not good spellers. Copies are a spell bound in text.*

*So I’m again copying here and maybe I’m a better speller but if you copy someone’s mistakes doesn’t that mean you made a mistake? I don’t want to make a mistake. I don’t want an* Argumentum ad nauseum *because that is an argument based on the fallacy that just because something is repeated makes it right. I don’t want Anne to just repeat. I want Anne to reappear.*

conscience, Sir.

An oath Sir Sir, but
Sir prove it
when they preach
breach of law
is that
law is that Sir?
No Sir,
Prove this
then Sir
You know
Sir
Name one
Sir.
what he doth declare though he doth not
know himself
in regard of
myself I could,
pray Sir
That’s matter of
conscience,
No Sir
I do not
believe
that
Ey Sir Ey Sir
Yes Sir.

I do fear the

matter of conscience,

as they do

If it please you by authority to put it down I will freely let you for I am subject to your authority.

*What I can't name often lives at the back of my mouth in Spirit and it's distracting to me because I can't deal with not saying what I want to say. When I can't say it makes me stop.*

*Writing is different I have a dictionary and a thesaurus and I can get lost in meaning and connections between words but saying is different. If I stop there is a time expectation and this makes me anxious so even more I can't speak and the words' Body is lost and Spirit is lost and Soule is lost and the words get swallowed up. So if there's a passage of time where someone is quiet for a hundred years is a lot of words getting swallowed up and lost and how many survive. If there's almost four hundred years words swallowed. Not tinny satellite delay. Not musty book delay. Not can't say not wasn't said not thought better about. Words taken away. Like the Bodies and Soules, the Bodies lying in the Grave rising agayne gives me the creeps resurrection words. Saying words that have a history carries that history carries the anxious expectation out of the Grave where it was lost. Now the word reaches and touches my ears unwarmly brutish. I am not familiar. I sit down and word by word come together.*

*Redemption is not Resurrection. Reread is not Rewrite is not Respeak. Speaking is never vayne conversation because it is Speaking and not Respeaking even if its Body dies not the Soule or the Spirit. Certain things go on living whether or not they're written and whether they're spoken they stay with you. Their Body dies but tell me their Soule dies.*

the Body that dyes shall rise agayne

but what Body shall rise

prove that both soule and body are saved?

I am redeemed

inquire for Light

in private.

in the sight of God

Though I never doubted that

the Soule was Imortall yet …

did not come to

inquire for Light

see fadeth away like a Beast.

in the sight of God

And I see more Light a greate deal by

God indeed,

it is cleare to me or God by him hath given me Light.

I doe thanke God that I better see

for I never kept my Judgment from him.

I think the soule to be nothing but Light.

Yes I doe, takinge Soule

for Light

returned to God indeed, but the Soule dyes

The Spirit is immortall indeed

but prove that the Soule is.

the Soule dyes

the spirit that God gives returnes

returnes to God that gave it.

Castinge the soule into Hell

there was none with me but myself

I took Soule for Life.

I thank the Lord I have Light

*It’s important to speak about God when you’re speaking about Anne. The magistrates deciding Anne’s sentence thought Anne said God spoke to her, but they did not believe God spoke to her. I don’t mean they didn’t believe in God because they did. Maybe they were frightened of believing God spoke to Anne. Frightened of believing God was that sort of God that could speak to Anne. Anne is speaking to me and I’m trying to write Anne but it is difficult.*

answer me this

to prevent such aspersions

Being much troubled to see the falseness

I came afterwards to the window

wherein he shewed me the sitting of the judgment and the standing of all high and low

he showes that he dyes

he hath let me see which was the clear

But now having seen him which is invisible

I do not remember that I looked upon

writings you should see

though there be a sufficient number of witnesses

Shew me whear thear is any

answer before you

let me see

It is more than I know.

I desire you to answer

proves it that speakes soe.

*If there was witchcraft involved recall those and the witchcraft inside Soules. It must be that sort of witchcraft if we can say one atom acts and another atom miles miles away they act that is empathy which is witchcraft. These are Soules how they have a connection to being so it is a connection to everything which you cannot waste.*

*Do not be afraid of when they tell you it is witchcraft I would tell you, Anne. Witchcraft is the Soule in aggression in assertion also it is in passion. The Soule messy risks obedience and if you wait the interpretation drags you under in its husbandry. Cleanly speech falls under the heading of prophesy and is not subject to control. If you choose in your speech this arrangement reaches more easily and acts and connects to speech more these parts of speech you hardly control like predicate and deixis. Anne is here. I hear her.*

So to me by an immediate revelation.

the voice of Moses

said

bring proof of these things

the voice of John Baptist

said

I find things not to be as hath been alledged

the voice of antichrist

said

but that is to be proved first.

Do you think it not lawful

and why

this is a free will offering

if you do condemn me for speaking

for I am subject to your authority.

for all those voices are spoken of in scripture

those voices are

of my own heart

those voices are

Obliterated }

what hath bine spokin

it shall rise,

but what Body shall rise,

if he be not united to our fleshly Bodies, than those Bodies cannot rise.

held them

fleshly Bodies

have I joined with them?

whan I sayd I had pleaded for them as much as others

I ment only in seekinge Comfort from them.

**Statement of poetic research**

I will admit first of all that the word “statement” makes me uneasy. It is more comfortable for me to ask questions and give examples than to make a statement. In the work presented here, which uses as its source-text the transcriptions of the court and church trials of Anne Hutchinson, questions are the starting point for my text. Questions are the nature of research.

But I believe a lot was asked of her. I was first provided the transcripts of the trials in a graduate course on the history of secularization that used questions around this text and its context as a starting point. Anne Hutchinson was considered a heretic by those who were questioning her in the trials, by both the city and church officials—though that is a difficult distinction to make of the highly orthodox early Bostonians. It is interesting to me that, as an unorthodox woman in the midst of a generation seen as an important seed of American democracy, she causes so much trouble—both for the orthodox establishment of the Bay colony and for our own founding myths. Anne Hutchinson was a religious dissident and was punished for it. What I couldn’t help gathering from the transcripts was that, while she was answering the questions of the magistrates, frequently being coy, her own questions were never answered. This is what spurred me to re-take her words, to find the questions I hear her asking and bring them back into conversation.

This work is a combination of my text and Anne Hutchinson’s. My own writing is part empathetic response to the difficulties I heard in her voice, as her beliefs and womanhood were dissected, and part meditation on her own, and the

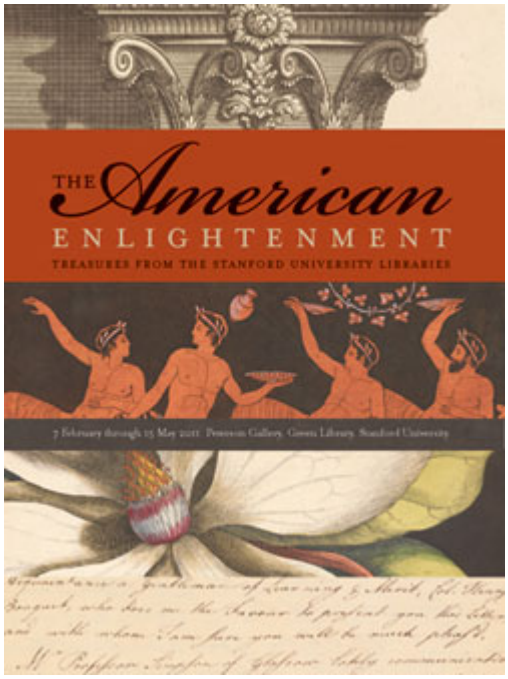
transcripts', place in America's history. Each verse line of Hutchinson's text in the work is a line reproduced from the transcription; my intention is to preserve her diction and her concerns. There are questions even here, however. Is a transcription an authored work? If the words are being spoken, is the voice then the author or is it the person who attempts to set the voice on paper—is Anne Hutchinson the author of these transcripts? Is authoring a form of creating or one of capturing? Conversely, is re-contextualizing also a re-authorizing? Giving in to various kinds of authority over the text allows it to be opened in different ways. Certain frames are required for the presentation of a text. My own authority here, my taking, hampers how you read Anne Hutchinson's words. Yet, in the case of my authority as a reader, she calls out to me to want her voice to be captured, at the very least in how her words and faith can speak out from the page. In this sense, we can be subject to her authority if we allow ourselves to listen.

If a person can be said, at all, to be alive today when they have passed away long ago, it would seem to be in her voice, speaking in her words that were once "taken down," written. Just as the soul is often said to reside someplace in the body that is non-physical and non-anatomical, though usually somewhere in the chest, so too the voice arises seemingly miraculously from the same chest, perhaps even from the same source. The written word, in turn, emulates this voice, allowing it to live timelessly, albeit in a bound format. Thus, I am interested in unbinding Anne Hutchinson's voice from the trials, from the magistrates' questions, from transcription.

As I have grown more familiar with Anne Hutchinson, the historical person, and her life before and after the trials, the more she speaks to me as "Anne" through the words she has chosen, the words that have been taken. I cannot be sure if she has revealed her voice to me the way she felt revealed to by her God, but I do feel a scary closeness to her, a spooky action-at-a-distance, like her words are somehow also mine but separated, by time. When I read the transcripts, in my voice, when I read her words, they came out from my body. Something was being transmitted, so I felt I must take it down.

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# Enlightenment in the Margins




Caroline Winterer describes America as “a vast Enlightenment laboratory” but one cannot easily imagine Winterer’s exuberant, capacious and eclectic American Enlightenment locked away behind laboratory doors. This Enlightenment may indeed have been a laboratory experiment, but it was also a classroom lesson, a fashion show, a gardening experiment and a backcountry adventure. Winterer is the first historian in a generation to take a real shot at interpreting the American Enlightenment. The collection of “books published by Americans, books owned by Americans, and books about America” that she recently exhibited at the Stanford University Library seems to suggest new solutions to the American Enlightenment’s two central problems: one, whether there was there anything fundamentally American about it; and two, whether the American Enlightenment was really anything more than a sideshow to the main (i.e. European) production.

The first problem, the Americanness of the American Enlightenment, became visible in the mid-1970s, when historians last made a major effort to describe the movement. Most 1970s scholars conceived of the Enlightenment as an intellectual project, and they struggled to identify anything uniquely American about it. Henry May made what was probably the bravest effort by dividing the American Enlightenment into four phases: the Moderate, the Skeptical, the Revolutionary and the Didactic. Ultimately, though, this schema seemed to raise more questions than it answered.

Here is an Enlightenment in which there is no gulf between ideas and practices.

Winterer, sensibly, sidesteps the problem of the American Enlightenment’s intellectual essence, choosing instead to characterize the Enlightenment as a set of projects and encounters in American settings. The most literal encounters on display in the exhibition are those described in the journals of

Lewis and Clark, which describe a physical journey across the continent. But as Winterer demonstrates, Americans worked in many other ways to locate their continent within a larger mental and physical world. Noah Webster's *American Spelling Book* contains a lengthy list of city and country names from around the globe. American pupils practiced their spelling by copying the tidy columns of names ("Ex e ter, Mer ri mak, Hat te ras, In di a…"). As they did so, they brought the New World in line, literally, with the Old.

Many books in the exhibition are drawn from the Founder-centric collection of the late Stanford Professor Jay Fliegelman, which has never before been exhibited to the public; the broad scope of the material (combined with other Stanford holdings) allows the Founders to play a variety of roles in the exhibition. A letter in which Benjamin Franklin describes his experiments with conductivity practically sizzles with scientific curiosity. By contrast, two books belonging to John Hancock are presented, unapologetically, as Americana: the viewer is invited to admire how Hancock's signature evolved from modest origins into the "flamboyant" autograph that graced the Declaration of Independence. The crown jewel of the Fliegelman collection is a copy of *Paradise Lost* signed by Thomas Jefferson (once) and by James Madison (five times!). The viewer must decide for herself whether this was a complex act of appropriation or whether Madison was simply testing his pen.

Since the advent of cultural history, scholars of the Enlightenment have drawn attention to the pathways and practices through which Enlightenment ideas operated in the world, and Winterer offers several lovely examples. A copy of John Newton's evangelical *Olney Hymns* has been dog-eared by its anonymous owner to Newton's most famous hymn, "Amazing Grace." The hymnbook, Winterer notes, has been "loved nearly to death," its tattered binding reinforced with strips of gingham cloth. Here is an Enlightenment in which there is no gulf between ideas and practices. Quite the contrary—it was through routine practices like singing and sewing that Americans demonstrated their commitment to evangelical ideas.

Exhibit cases devoted to architecture, fashion and style emphasize the ways in which Americans made the Enlightenment manifest in their homes and on their bodies. Noting that Jefferson called Monticello his "essay in architecture," Winterer shows us some of that essay's sources, such as Andrea Palladio's handsome *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura.* Less majestic but equally compelling is the 1809 issue of Rudolph Ackerman's *Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions, and Politics*, which invited Americans and Britons to express the spirit of improvement by upholstering their furniture in bright pink fabric with polka dots.

On the whole, this exhibit sets out to complement earlier scholarship rather than to upend it. Winterer finds space for ideas *and* practices, for august Founders *and*anonymous readers. As a result, the exhibit is rather eclectic. Its nineteen exhibit cases are not organized hierarchically, and they do not need to be viewed in any particular order. It is worth noting that this approach

stands in rather stark contrast to the ultra-formal categorization scheme used by Thomas Jefferson to organize his own library. Where Jefferson imagined an orderly universe of information that one might hope to master, Winterer's approach helps us understand the Enlightenment as the messy work in progress that it really was.

Only on rare occasions does the exhibition's cheery accessibility seem to obscure something significant about the Enlightenment in America and beyond. Consider, for example, a copy of Charles Rollins' *History of the Arts and Sciences of the Ancients*, which has been opened to an illustration of a Roman castle under siege. The castle's defenders have attached a fearsome-looking pincer to a sort of crane, and they have used this contraption to pluck an ascending enemy off a castle wall. Winterer, noting that the castle looks far more medieval than Roman, describes the scene as "charmingly anachronistic." However, I found the image more ghastly than charming. The unarmed man dangles helplessly in the pincers as the defenders of the castle prepare to drop him to his death. Charles Rollins comments blandly, "Many may imagine this [crane] a very mysterious machine, but the plate sufficiently shows that nothing is less so." In other words, he expected his readers to muse about how such a device might be built. Enlightenment thinkers were not just interested in improving the condition of mankind. They were also extremely interested in discovering better ways to kill each other.

The American habit of writing in books is such a persistent motif in this exhibition that we come to sense that something important must be at stake. Some inscriptions seem to represent American claims to knowledge: the apparently possessive Oliver Ellsworth signed one book "Oliver Ellsworth's," adding on the next page, for good measure, "Oliver Ellsworth his property." In other cases, writing in books could be a part of auto-didacticism. New York lawyer James Kent, for example, wrote lengthy notes to himself in his copy of the proceedings of New York's constitutional convention. Writing in books could also be a way of educating someone else, as we see in the case of Charles Thomson, who annotated his *own* translation of the Bible for the benefit of his niece. Inscription could even be an act of political defiance, as when Henry Laurens, denied pen and ink as a prisoner in the Tower of London, somehow managed to sign his name in a rat-bitten copy of a radical political tract, *The Judgment of Whole Kings and Nations*.

But did all this scribbling amount to anything? Here I return to the second question I raised earlier: whether the American Enlightenment was anything more than a sideshow to the main European event. Even devoted Americanists must admit that America's direct contributions to Enlightenment libraries were relatively meager. The arts and letters of the American colonies paled in comparison to those of France; American print output was dwarfed by that of London. American knowledge was built on European foundations, and American discoveries were rapidly assimilated into European knowledge projects. All told, it would be very easy to categorize the American Enlightenment as marginal.

Thus Winterer makes an important move when she shows us how much was going on in the margins of Enlightenment books. Americans writing in the literal margins of European books come to represent Americans acting in the figurative margins of the European Enlightenment. After showing us how lively these margins really were, Winterer seems to suggest that the margins were, in fact, critical to the core Enlightenment project—that is, that Enlightenment knowledge as a whole was a hybrid production in which printed text and handwritten marginalia were both essential. Seen in this light, America's importance is in no way diminished by its marginality.

Perhaps the clearest example of America's centrality-through-marginality is an exhibit case in which Winterer has placed a Philadelphia copy of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* side by side with a copy from London. The nervous London printer has omitted a particularly seditious phrase—("the royal brute of Britain")—from the text, but an unknown reader has inscribed the missing words with a pen. Here the traditional flow of knowledge has been reversed: an important text from America has been brought to England for inspection. Even more interestingly, these two copies of *Common Sense* show how Enlightenment knowledge circulated not only within printed texts but around them, alongside them and in their margins. The handwritten comment amplifies the power of the printed text; "the royal brute of Britain" seems far more provocative in manuscript than it would have seemed in print.

Stanford University, a tech-happy campus where a lot of people are thinking very hard about how to transmit knowledge, is a perfect host for this exhibition. The library's Digital Libraries Systems and Services Group has created lovely pigment print reproductions of fragile plates such as those in Mark Catesby's *Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*. Both bright and subtle, these images replicate the originals faithfully while embodying the kind of progress that Enlightenment thinkers celebrated. Better yet, the tech team has made the entire exhibition available online and viewers are encouraged to download its high-resolution, public-domain images for classroom use.

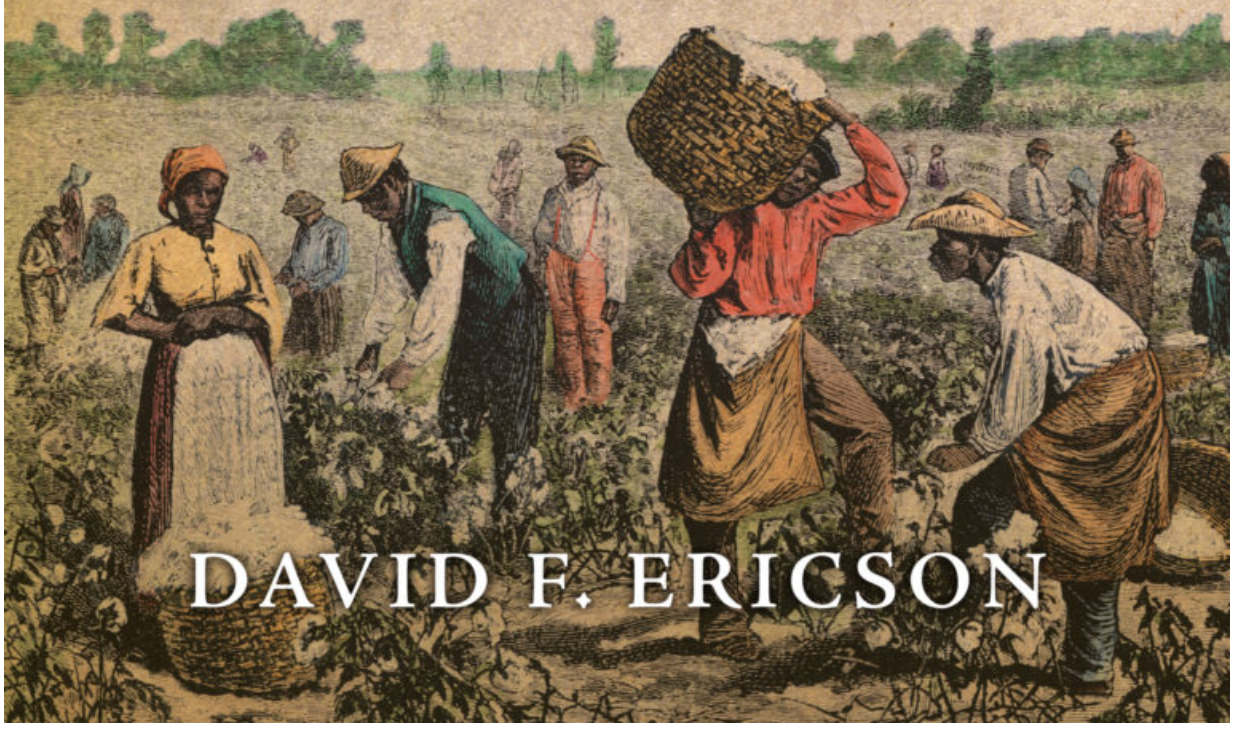
**About the Exhibition:** "The American Enlightenment: Treasures from the Stanford University Library" ran at Stanford University's Green Library between February 7 and July 15, 2011. A printed exhibition catalogue can be purchased through the Stanford Library. The online version of the exhibition will remain available indefinitely.

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# Slavery and the State

# SLAVERY
## IN THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC

### DEVELOPING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, 1791–1861

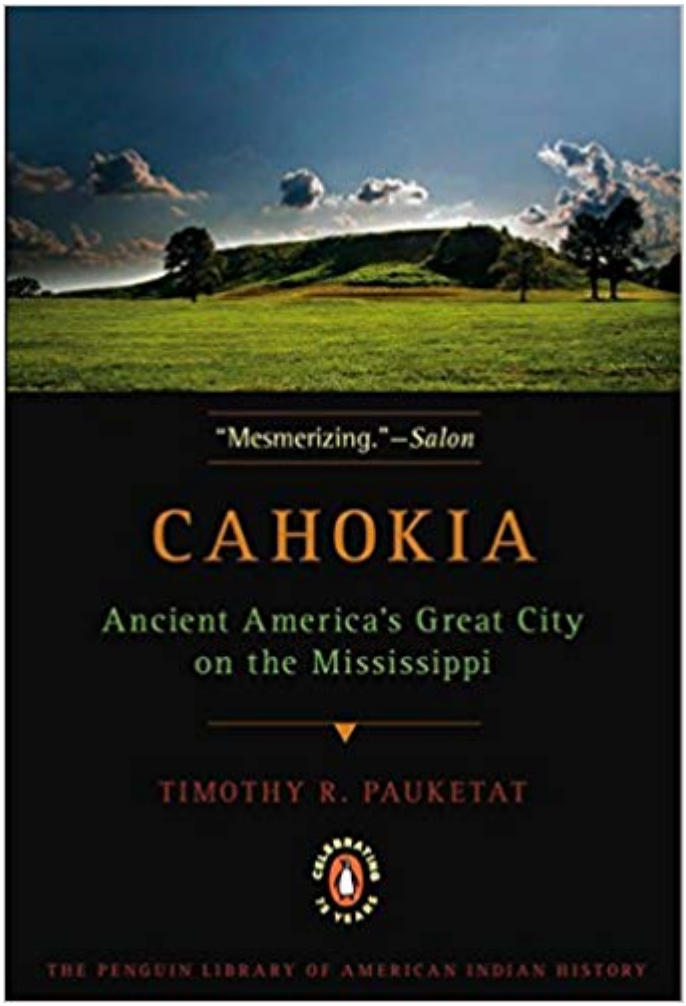


DAVID F. ERICSON

Rented slaves built federal forts, roads, and the United States Capitol. Sometimes they served as soldiers and sailors.

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## North America’s “Big Bang”




On July 4, 1054, Chinese astronomers noted a “guest star” in the constellation Taurus. They had actually witnessed a supernova, whose remnants today constitute the crab nebula. For twenty-three days, a perceptive observer would have seen this guest star during the day or night. The supernova remained bright in the night sky for the next two years. The indigenous inhabitants of North America, many of them avid sky-watchers, likely pondered the significance of this new visitor. Perhaps not coincidentally, around this time at a spot east of present-day St. Louis, Native North Americans replaced a small village with the greatest city north of Mexico, known today as Cahokia (named after a later group of the Illini). In *Cahokia: Ancient America’s Great City on the Mississippi*, archaeologist Timothy Pauketat sees Cahokia as North America’s “big bang,” an abruptly appearing city that served as the hub of what became

known as Mississippian culture, spread up and down the great river by its residents and their descendants. Balancing speculation and empirical findings, he intertwines three stories: the story of Cahokia itself, its near destruction by modern developers, and its rescue by twentieth-century archaeologists.

Full of impressive research, Cahokia also contains fascinating questions and avenues of future exploration.

Drawing upon recent work in archaeology, Pauketat makes a strong case that Cahokia's construction required thousands of laborers and reflected the designs of a stratified society. The city contained more than one hundred and twenty earthwork pyramids, often described as "mounds." At Cahokia's heart stood the pyramid now called "Monks Mounds," with a volume of 25 million cubic feet. In front of Monks Mound, Cahokians carefully leveled a fifty-acre plaza. Pauketat notes that laborers built this grand plaza in one massive public works project, leading him to hypothesize that Cahokia housed approximately 10,000 residents, with another 20,000 to 30,000 in the surrounding hinterland of smaller communities and farms.

Cahokian elites commanded authority through large feasts and rituals, which sometimes involved human sacrifice. These rituals have left a compelling mystery in their wake. "Mound 72," for instance, contained two elite men and evidence of accompanying executions. Cahokians buried these men with two bundles of arrows: light tipped arrows aligned with the summer solstice sunset; dark tipped arrows pointed toward the winter solstice sunset. In an intriguing interpretation, Pauketat connects these elites to later Ho-Chunk sagas of a mythical hero named Red Horn and, more broadly, twin stories found throughout native North America. These stories focused on themes of duality and balance between male and female, good and evil, and upper and lower worlds. The arrows likely represented similar themes: "They simultaneously referred to the passing of a day, the seasons of a year, and the forces of light and dark, day and night, and life and death" (83). Perhaps these two men were unifiers. This interpretation, simultaneously speculative but also well informed, demonstrates how scholars can imagine a distant world that left no written history.

European and European-American writers have long been fascinated by stories of human sacrifice in Native North America, but Pauketat shows equal interest in the lives of Cahokia's farmers. A day's walk from Cahokia, archaeologists discovered perhaps the most telling of these agricultural sites. Here, the farmers' housing and pottery styles differed from Cahokia, suggesting an immigrant population. Examining their waste, archaeologists conclude that the immigrants ate too little protein and far too much corn (perhaps these people were more like contemporary Americans that we usually assume). These people "had experienced the closest thing to a peasant lifestyle that had ever existed in pre-Columbian North America" (123). At Cahokia, then, Native farmers may have migrated from afar to their own frontier, where they experienced hardships, and eventually moved on to try their luck elsewhere. Less dramatic than human sacrifice, the prospect of poor farmers supporting Cahokia is, in

its own subtle way, equally revelatory.

Full of impressive research, Cahokia also contains fascinating questions and avenues of future exploration. With the exception of an obsidian stone found in Oklahoma, no trade goods link Mesoamerica with Cahokia. Yet the two regions contain intriguing similarities in their mythology and artwork. Both Mississippian and Mesoamerican myths contain stories of heroic twins. Mississippian artwork also shared important traits with Mexican works: “goggle eyes, distorted noses, and (via historical accounts) hints of fangs” (147). Some illustrations or photographs would have helped readers see these connections, Cahokia’s imprint on the landscape, and its complex culture. Pauketat’s previous academic synthesis, *Ancient Cahokia and the Mississippians*, contains striking photographs of Mississippian artifacts, but unfortunately, Cahokia’s only illustration depicts a modest home which fails to capture the grandeur of the city.

Pauketat tells a story of a landscape lost—or nearly lost—as much as it was discovered. Unique in scale, Cahokia’s treatment by European-Americans was actually rather typical. Creating a new nation involved destroying the landscape and history of old nations. Some European-Americans saw ancient Indian works as remnants of a great civilization, one far too advanced to have been created by Indians. They invented theories of a lost race, or imagined that medieval Europeans somehow built the pyramids. Others, perhaps the majority of Americans, cared little for the Native landscape. Prior to the Civil War, locals destroyed twenty-five mounds in St. Louis as generations of plowing destroyed artifacts and ruined the original designs of earthworks at Cahokia and elsewhere. Through physical destruction and cultural myopia, Americans spun a tale of their nation as an untouched wilderness—a view still fundamental to popular interpretations of the United States’ past. In the twentieth century, a steam shovel leveled the second largest mound and the federal government decided to build a freeway through parts of Cahokia. Archaeologists scrambled to salvage what they could, but they were helpless as construction crews destroyed other unstudied sections of the settlement. One resident even decided to put in a swimming pool at the base of the great pyramid (it has since been filled). Pauketat notes that in the end nine of the ten largest pyramids had considerable damage. Today, visitors can see the core of what remains of Cahokia in the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site.

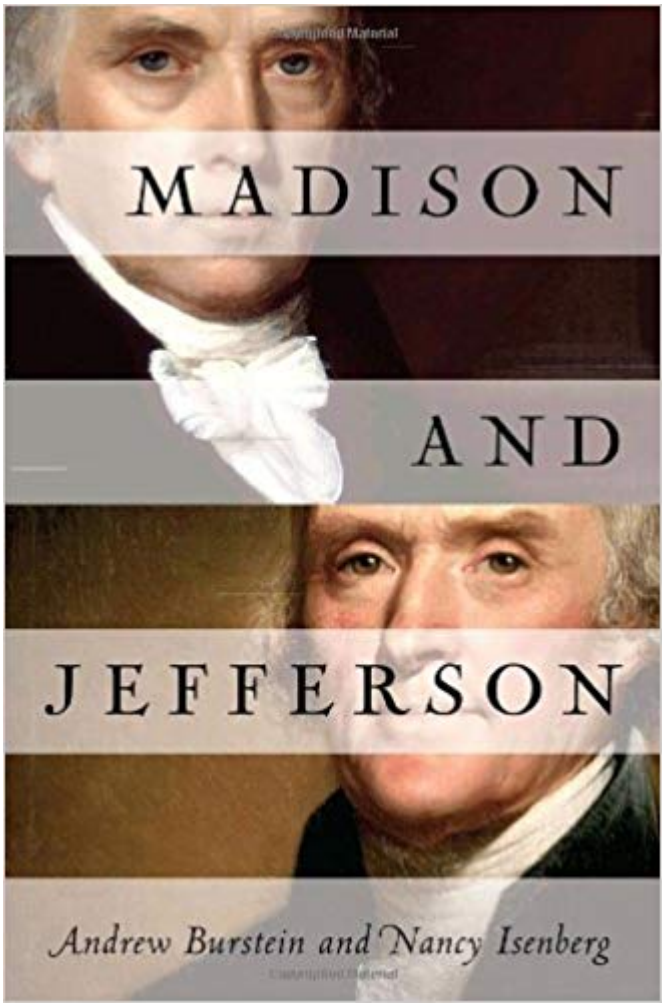
Cahokia’s legacy for Native North America becomes murkier in the penultimate chapter, where Pauketat notes that Cahokia left “an almost nonexistent cultural memory” (160). Unlike other great cities, such as Teotihuacán in Mexico, no known oral traditions relate epics of Cahokia. Following such careful reconstruction of such a large city’s history and its sprawling cultural reach, this silence is difficult to fathom. Pauketat speculates that during the city’s late twelfth-century decline “people were seeking to escape Cahokia, and their desire to forget it—and create a more perfect, communal post-Cahokian society—were all part of starting over” (160). Archaeologists have speculated that the city’s living conditions were poor, or that its collapse was too

violent to merit remembering. However, earlier in the book, Pauketat relates that Revolutionary War general George Rodgers Clark had spoken to Illini Indians, who claimed mounds south of Cahokia were “the works of their forefathers,” and had been “formerly as numerous as the trees in the woods” (27). This claim suggests some memory remained. Perhaps scholars will someday uncover additional evidence that connects “historic” Indians and their memories with Cahokia and America’s ancient landscape.

Pauketat places Cahokia at the foundation of subsequent plains and woodland Indian history, but general readers may need additional guidance to ponder the city’s legacy. Pauketat’s view of Cahokia’s legacy relies upon his understanding of Cahokia as a large city, capable of projecting military and cultural power across the plains and woodlands. He speculates that Cahokians sustained a “Pax Cahokiana,” and without the city’s military power the plains descended into violence, detected by archaeologists (168). Moreover, because the subsequent plains and woodlands Indians drew upon a Cahokian cultural legacy, the city “also affected the shape and direction of European colonization and, later, America’s westward expansion” (38-39). Pauketat briefly notes that during the early nineteenth century, the Osage, possible descendants of Cahokians, temporarily obstructed Thomas Jefferson’s commercial goals within the Louisiana Purchase. He adds that the Pawnee, another possible nation of Cahokian descendants, “held key portions of the Missouri and remained loyal allies of Spain into the American period, forcing drawn-out negotiations by United States Indian agents” (169). These examples aside, much of Cahokia’s lasting significance remains implied.

Perhaps Cahokia’s greatest legacy was its collapse, an ending that remains largely unexplained. Pauketat sees Cahokia as “pre-Columbian America’s experiment in civilization,” an experiment but not a precedent (169). Following Cahokia’s collapse, north of Mexico, Native North America trended toward less hierarchal societies. Unlike the Spanish conquistadors in Mexico and South America, European colonizers encountered no centralized powers in the future United States, at least nothing comparable to the empires of the Aztecs or Incas. Navigating the diverse political landscape of North America required complex diplomatic maneuvering for Europeans and Indians alike, as indicated by Pauketat’s mention of the Pawnee. Culturally diverse populations, America’s Indian nations nevertheless shared some broad commonalities, suggested by the mythology and artwork Pauketat documents. This common ground enabled the formation of new societies and political alliances, a process in progress after Cahokia’s collapse and quickened by the arrival of Europeans, their warfare, and deadly pathogens. Cahokia is an important reminder of this interconnected, deep and dynamic history, which was well underway long before contact with Europeans.

# An Enduring Partnership




Andrew Burstein and Nancy Isenberg have written a monumental work, detailing the lives of two men—James Madison and Thomas Jefferson—whose careers are inextricably intertwined with one another and with the birth of the American Republic. *Madison and Jefferson* analyzes the separate experiences and achievements of both its subjects as well as the personal and political partnership the two maintained throughout their long and fruitful lives. Mildly revisionist, the book reminds readers that Madison and Jefferson were not the revered icons that history has too often made of them. They were politicians, flesh and blood men who fought to turn their vision of the new nation into a reality. Indeed, neither would have recognized themselves in the pages of either their most admiring hagiographers or their most vicious debunkers. Jefferson was not hailed as the author of the Declaration of Independence for decades. When he did begin to emphasize his authorship of the document, nearly a quarter of a century after he wrote it, he did so for political reasons. Madison was not, as most people—even historians—assume, the diminutive second fiddle to the eloquent Jefferson. Nor was he merely "the father of the Constitution" or the author of the "brilliant" Federalist papers. Indeed, he would often flee from the implications of both documents.

Burstein and Isenberg are determined to give Madison his due, to bring him out of the shadows where he has largely remained over the years.

We first meet Madison and Jefferson as provincial men on a provincial stage. They were both talented to be sure—but at the time they seemed to be no more talented than many of their friends and neighbors. They were "prominent but not heralded" (6). After all, Virginia had more than its share of bright and ambitious men who would lend their pens, their tongues, and occasionally their bodies, to the cause of American independence.

We encounter them, as well, before they knew each other. Even when they finally did meet, when Jefferson was governor of Virginia and Madison was one of his most influential advisors, neither "could have predicted that their intimacy … would have long-lasting implications" (63). Still, from the beginning, the two worked well together. Both were thinkers; both were practical politicians. If Jefferson was more inclined to abstractions, he was also a shrewd political animal. If Madison was more inclined to search for practical solutions to practical problems without trying to fit those solutions into a pre-conceived category, he was as much a child of the Enlightenment as Jefferson.

Burstein and Isenberg are determined to give Madison his due, to bring him out of the shadows where he has largely remained over the years. They point out that as late as 1789 Madison had a greater national reputation than Jefferson, and until 1800, Madison, not Jefferson, was at the center of national politics, a "one man political force" and the leader of the opposition to the Federalist agenda (291). It was Madison who talked Jefferson out of retirement in 1800. Often as not, Madison acted as Jefferson's "campaign manager" (350) and his "handler" (319). Even after Jefferson's death, Madison continued to shape his friend's legacy, somewhat disingenuously claiming, for instance, that Jefferson would have abhorred John C. Calhoun's "nullification" policy and that the Kentucky Resolutions were designed to keep the union together rather than to destroy it.

Nevertheless, the authors concede that even in these two men's own lifetimes, Jefferson seemed to attract more attention, more personal loyalty, and more enemies than Madison. Early on in Madison's presidency, most observers assumed that "the retired president was still calling the shots." They did not seem to recognize that "Madison scripted Jefferson's political ascendancy in the 1780s and 1790s." But they did know that it was Jefferson who operated on a grander scale. It was he, more than Madison, "who conceived and built the Virginia Dynasty of presidents" (478).

*Madison and Jefferson* is a big—but never tedious—book, chock full of fascinating insights. While it is impossible to do justice to its authors' mastery of the details, a few points stand out. Especially important is the commitment that both men shared to their native state; they always "acted out of an attachment to Virginia as much as a desire to defend the Union" (620). If both men eventually played their role on a national stage, neither shed the

provincialism they had imbibed in their youth. Indeed, the entire book seems to call into question any notion that the "united" States existed at this time. Jefferson, in particular, found that his "Virginia interest prevailed over the unifying interest" (371). But Madison also saw national affairs through a provincial lens. He attended the Constitutional Convention "as a Virginia partisan" and his arguments there and for the rest of his life never strayed far from a perspective that Virginians would find acceptable (165).

If Madison and Jefferson were both loyal to the land of their birth, they were also zealous proponents of American empire. They saw westward expansion as essential to national greatness, and as a way to fend off British meddling in American affairs. Above all, they saw it as a way to extend and reflect Virginia's interests and character, as they acted upon their "southern-directed lust for land" (442). Theirs would be a nation whose power and material well-being rested on an agrarian culture. It would, moreover, be a slave-based society. The Louisiana Purchase was obviously a central component of the Jefferson-Madison vision. But their ambitions were much more far flung. Jefferson championed a "manly" defense of American honor in Tripoli. Both men set their eyes, not only on Canada and Louisiana, but on Cuba and the Floridas. Clearly, "manifest destiny" was not a product of the mid-nineteenth century.

Finally, Burstein and Isenberg do a fine job of tracing Jefferson and Madison's changing views of the Constitution. Neither—but especially Jefferson—was quite comfortable with the Constitution and thus neither was a proponent of "original intent." Far from being the document's author, Madison left Philadelphia as a "frustrated composer whose grand symphony has been left unfinished" (150). And he, more than Jefferson, constantly altered his interpretation of the Constitution. Both men's views were hardened by their opposition to Alexander Hamilton. Indeed, Hamilton's views moved the two closer together, making their own differences seem less important. Their distrust of England and their sense that the Treasury Secretary was creating an economy based on the British model, serving the interests of bankers and merchants, fed their fears. Moreover, they were convinced that Hamilton was tipping the balance of power toward an executive whose influence might lead to the creation of an American monarchy.

The value of this book is obvious. Its lucid prose will be easy for the non-specialist to appreciate, yet it has plenty to attract professional historians. Its command of the intricacies of the new nation's economy and its foreign policy is formidable. Organized as a straightforward, chronological narrative, it often hops from one subject to another and back again. In the middle of an analysis of the challenges Madison faced as a war time president, for instance, comes a seemingly unrelated discussion of Jefferson's and Madison's views on race. And then we return to a discussion of the war (532-536).

But while it is occasionally disconcerting, this approach helps readers see events unfold as Madison and Jefferson might have experienced them. These men were living in the moment; they were wrestling with a wide array of practical issues that arose on a daily basis. Although their response to those issues

might be shaped by an overall perspective, in the real world they had to deal with problems as they happened. This book discusses the past as people actually encountered it, reminding us that for contemporaries, the world appeared to be little more than a series of contingencies.

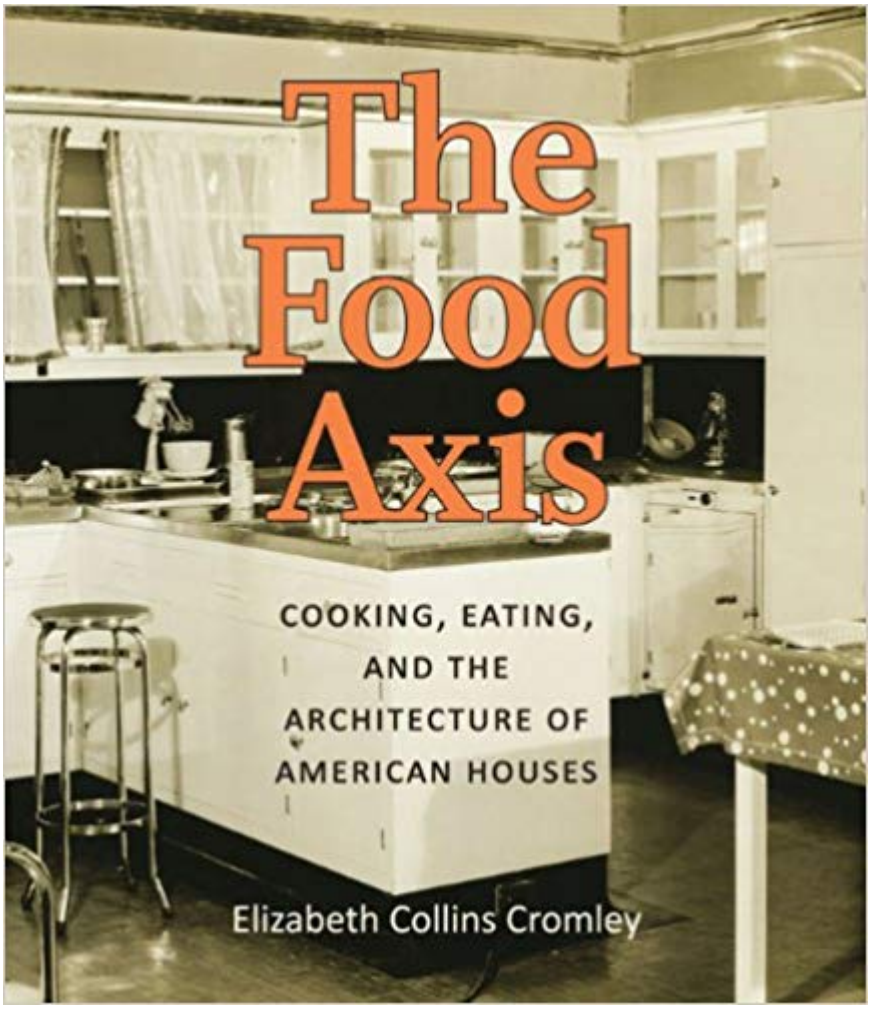
Some readers will be disappointed by the short shrift this book gives to Jefferson's relationship with Sally Hemings. We actually hear more about Maria Cosway than we do about Hemings. This omission is due in part to the fact that the book is completely source-driven, and for obvious reasons Jefferson did not discuss his relationship with his slave. Moreover, Winthrop Jordan and Annette Gordon-Reed have already provided brilliant analyses of Jefferson's relationship with Hemings. Still, the authors' astute observations about Jefferson's views of race and gender do beg for some analysis, or at least an acknowledgement of the contradictions with which Jefferson lived.

Generally speaking, Burstein and Isenberg are remarkably even-handed, striving not to favor one man over the other. Still, it is hard to shake the feeling that Madison often emerges as the better of the two men, the more sympathetic, the more open minded, especially where matters of race are an issue. On occasion, the authors appear to adopt the prejudices of their own subjects. Thus, Hamilton was a self-aggrandizing meddler who was not a "team player" and "did not understand boundaries" (267). Patrick Henry was a "militant" and a "sensation-causing oracle" whose intellect was superficial at best (15).

This is a book about two men—at times it seems as though these are parallel biographies of men whose lives periodically intersected. It is also a "life and times" book, and on more than one occasion the "lives" seem to take a back seat to the "times." Above all, it is the story of a partnership, one that stood the test of time, one that both Jefferson and Madison deeply valued. Neither man, Burstein and Isenberg argue, would have been the same without the other.

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# Of Food and Space




This book has many virtues. A chronological look at the architectural implications of food preparation and consumption in America from the seventeenth century to the present, it draws on an extensive secondary literature to tell the history of what the author calls the “food axis” in America. This term embraces the spaces beyond the household kitchen—including dining rooms, patios, orchards, summer kitchens, milkhouses and smoke houses—that were used in provisioning the household. Understanding the kitchen as but one part of a larger, spatial food system is an important aspect of the book’s ambition and achievement. It is a building-type study with a difference.

The author intends to remediate the “conventional history of residential architecture” with its emphasis on grand structures and moments of origin by focusing on one aspect of the plan and by interjecting greater attention to issues such as gender, class, and linguistic terminology, and by using information on more modest structures and “downstream” histories of adapted structures.

The secondary literature the author favors is that written by the members of the Vernacular Architectural Forum, a respected sub-group of architectural historians who focus on the built environment in North America and who are particularly enthusiastic about hands-on diligent study of extant pre-modern

structures. Cromley's book draws together aspects of the fieldwork and archival research of these scholars to create a narrative about the architectural facets of food use over the past four centuries in parts of what is now the United States, an important and useful project.

Written in straightforward prose, *The Food Axis* is neither jargoned nor poetic. It reads very much like a collection of lectures to undergraduates, and I anticipate that that will be the book's primary audience. It is, above all, descriptive. One thing happens after another; the evidence proffered takes the form of small vignettes of individual houses at the particularized level of the plan.

The author intends to remediate the "conventional history of residential architecture" with its emphasis on grand structures and moments of origin by focusing on one aspect of the plan and by interjecting greater attention to issues such as gender, class, and linguistic terminology, and by using information on more modest structures and "downstream" histories of adapted structures (5). The "conventional history" of domestic space invoked here is a rather artificial straw man, or perhaps a remembered one of the generation of our grandfathers. Certainly it is difficult to think of a recently published target for her critique and correction. That being said, it is also true that no recent work specifically addresses the spaces associated with food, and in this, *The Food Axis* is original in concept and execution.

*The Food Axis* describes multiple homes drawn from studies of mostly East Coast structures. The thesis that threads through the book is straightforward: in the seventeenth century, food production, preparation, and consumption was informal, taking place in multi-function spaces; in the eighteenth century, more specialization occurs, with the advent of "refinement" or "gentility" (92); in the nineteenth century, more formality occurs; in the early twentieth century, efficiency occurs; and in the late twentieth century, salutary informality reemerges. There is nothing surprising about this overarching argument. The author presumes that function is the key element in the food axis, that form (as in the plan) is its most visible expression, and that foodways express social relations and technological developments in a direct manner. Similarly the motives for human action are straightforward (for instance, "to impress guests" [42]). Because of these presumptions about function and motivation, we particularly miss the kinds of multi-dimensional thinking that occur in the paradigm-breaking article by folklorist Robert St. George, "To Set Thine House in Order," from the exhibition catalogue, *New England Begins,* and in the work of anthropologists who attend to food, especially Mary Douglas. For these scholars, foodways and food spaces express complicated and interesting cultural presumptions about important non-food issues. Similarly, *The Food Axis* does not give us the rich material-based social history we find concerning the history of textiles in America in historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's *Age of Homespun*, for instance, a perspective that would pique the interest of historians in this dimension of material culture. For undergraduates in architectural history, however, the overall

message of change from informal (simple) to formal (complex) to informal (simple with the help of complex technology) is probably a useful armature. Many scholars reading for themselves, however, will hope for something more. As one might expect from such an overall argument, the conclusions of each chapter and of the book as a whole are very terse.

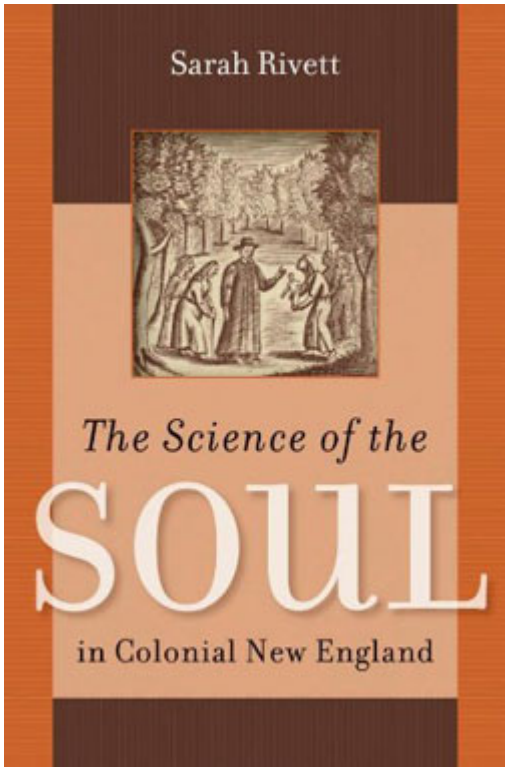
In a few instances, smart broad statements draw us out of the microcosm-sequence of the developmental argument. For instance, the author remarks, “The smaller the house, the larger percent of interior space an interior kitchen occupied” (54). This point is not pursued here but it may prompt others to test and expand on this provocative observation in terms of various social classes in various eras.

The sixth chapter, which brings the study up to the present, seems much more informal than its predecessors. Drawn in a rather ad hoc way from popular culture sources, this chapter is much less fieldwork- and archive-based than the earlier chapters that consolidate studies of other architectural historians. This is not to say this chapter is less authoritative, just that it is based more on the prescriptive-descriptive world of journalism than the others. It therefore seems to present the middle class (and middle class aspirations) as normative.

Overall, this is a solid book, one that tells a narrative not easily found elsewhere. *The Food Axis* is both an innovative departure in the field of architectural history and a timely offering in the growing academic field of food studies.

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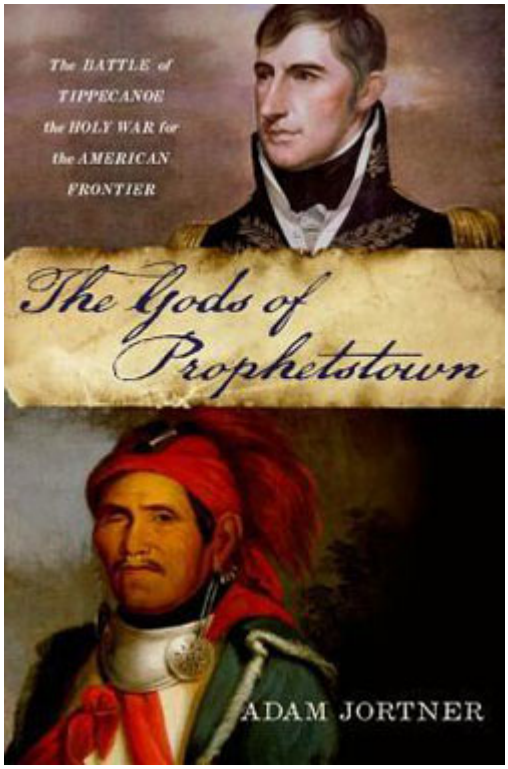
# Experiments with God




If a decade ago some folks were wondering why we had stopped taking religion seriously as a legitimate academic topic, today many are taking religion seriously enough to be willing to tip one of the sacred cows of Enlightenment modernity itself: that cow being, of course, secularism's sense of its total victory.

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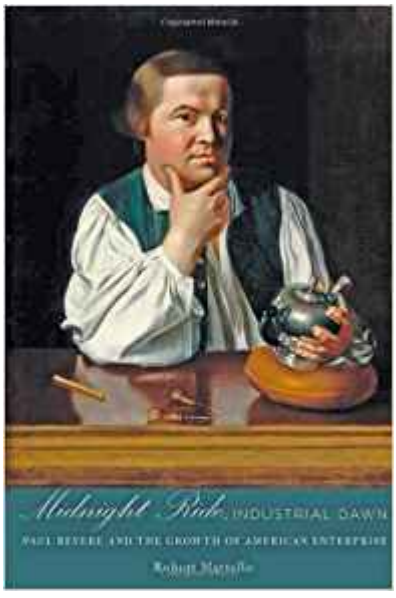
## Deist Holy War?




If Jortner's point is to regain the contingency, and peel away the sense of inevitability of American expansion, he leaves the reader with no real explanation for the course of events.

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## Our Capitalistic Founder




Paul Revere was the only major patriot who was also a founder—literally. He

started a successful iron foundry in 1788, and remains the patriot most associated with industrial capitalism and free enterprise. Yet with one important exception, the midnight rider has been overlooked in the recent mania for the founders, an omission that *Midnight Ride, Industrial Dawn* seeks to remedy.

Robert Martello's well-researched and interesting new study focuses on Revere's business and technological practices, mostly eschewing his wartime experiences. His portrait of Revere nicely harmonizes with the one drawn by David Hackett Fischer in his classic *Paul Revere's Ride*, a book that Martello almost entirely ignores. Still, despite his focus on Revere's post-Revolutionary business ventures, Martello could easily have begun his book just as Fischer did with the Texas adage describing Paul Revere as "the yankee who had to go for help."

Revere, like European proto-industrialists, represents a transitional phase between the world of the artisan and industrial capitalism.

Fischer used this epigram to emphasize that Revere was not a lone ranger by any stretch of the imagination, but was instead just one important part of a large community of patriots. Martello makes a parallel argument about Revere the entrepreneur, placing him within an "allied network of innovators, politicians, and influential people who worked together to pool their expertise and solve common problems" (62).

The first third of this book, dealing with Revere's early life and career, drags a bit. Based mostly on secondary sources, it covers well worn ground. Like Fischer, Martello focuses on Revere's status anxieties as a successful artisan craving acceptance from upper class merchant founding fathers and on his uncanny ability to forge personal connections that contributed to his wartime and business successes.

Martello's account really comes alive when he begins relying more heavily on the extensive Revere Family Papers for the period beginning around 1790. Despite never achieving the level of social respectability he longed for, Revere became very rich as a bell and cannon founder and the first American to produce copper sheeting for ships during his post-war career.

Martello uses the concept of proto-industrialization as his theoretical framework for discussing Revere's career, arguing that Revere, like European proto-industrialists, represents a transitional phase between the world of the artisan and industrial capitalism. However, this is proto-industrialism with a twist. Martello argues that American proto-industrialism occurred not in agricultural settings (as in Europe) but within the "early manufacturing community" (8), which included artisans, capitalists, hewers of raw materials, consumers, and government officials. As Martello examines Revere's career, he focuses on changes in capital production, technology, labor, and the environment.

As an artisan, Revere never had the sort of access to capital that was

available to early manufacturers who came from more mercantile backgrounds. His solution was to use the social capital he built up during the war years to secure government contracts. It is astounding how Revere was able to capitalize on his connections throughout his career by landing government contracts for cannon and copper sheeting, procuring a loan from the naval department to help him develop his copper rolling mill, convincing government officials to help him collect used copper, and pushing (unsuccessfully) for tariff protection. Indeed, while Revere may well be a founding father of modern capitalism, some free enterprise promoters would, no doubt, be troubled by such frequent reliance on government largesse.

Revere also adopted modern techniques and technologies, everything from double-entry bookkeeping to mechanical copper rolling, although he never quite attained the industrialists' goal of full standardization. In the case of copper rolling, he became a bold technological pirate who sent his son to England to memorize the state-of-the art equipment employed there. Usually, though, Revere's activities were less dramatic. He was a supreme networker who shared ideas with a broad circle of techies, ranging from fellow manufacturers to government officials to important scientists. Martello suggests that his connections with one such British scientist helped to feed his continual desire for social status. This propensity to share information resembles the behavior of machinists recently described by David R. Meyer in *Networked Machinists* and, as Martello points out, it seems far removed from Revere's artisan heritage in which practitioners sought to protect the secrets and mystery of their craft.

Revere's use of labor clearly fit the proto-industrial framework. Having moved away from the formal apprenticeships and journeyman labor of the artisan shop, Revere's operation nevertheless remained relatively small scale (with perhaps 10 to 20 employees at most) and workers maintained close personal ties to their boss. Martello's discussion of the environmental effects of Revere's business is suggestive, if a bit thin, focusing on riparian disputes and on fuel procurement. He concludes that Revere "increasingly acted in a capitalist-industrialist manner, treating the environment as a commodity and limitation" (151).

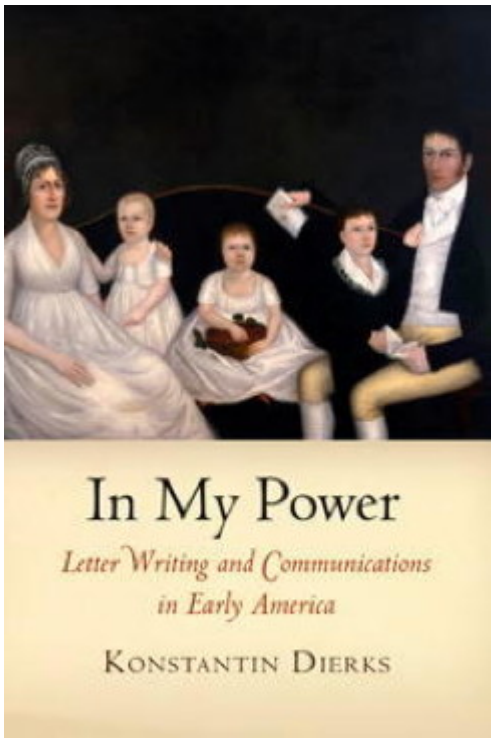
For all its divergences from traditional accounts of the founders, like most other founding father biographies, this one ultimately casts its subject in a heroic mold. Martello resists portraying Revere as a modern-day self-interested capitalist working his government connections for all they are worth, preferring to accept Revere's more patriotic self image. Martello's Revere saw himself as an industrial hero for bringing English copper rolling technology to America, fulfilling in that process his earlier ambitions to be venerated as a social leader. Revere "could accurately consider himself the founder of what we now call a national industry as others followed in his footsteps, sought his advice, built upon his achievements, and continued his work" (343).

While Martello occasionally intimates that Revere was typical of artisan-manufacturers of his age, he provides little evidence, and Revere's remarkable

career seems to belie such suggestions. Nevertheless, whether Revere was representative or *sui generis* in his technological adventurousness, his hard-headed business savvy, his gregarious social networking, and his knack for getting government support make for fascinating reading, and Martello's account of Revere's life is a welcome addition to the literature on American industry and on the founding fathers.

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# What we talk about when we talk about letters




"We Used to Wait," the second single from Arcade Fire's *The Suburbs* (2010), begins like most of the songs on the record—with a lamentation. The speaker distills his experience of suburban or exurban disaffection into a considerably less abstract set of images: "I used to write / I used to write letters / I used to sign my name / I used to sleep at night / Before the flashing light settled deep in my brain." The line between the better past and the bitter present registers as an epistolary problem: before, there were letters and signatures—markers of an active self recording its own presence, leaving material traces of social relations—now, without the writing of letters, there is only sleeplessness and impotence. The flashing light is imperial, too much for the speaker to handle: the space of the suburb (in all of its ideological complexity) has separated him from the life he had and the future he had imagined. As the song progresses, though, there's a critical shift. In spite of

the helplessness, the “wilderness downtown,” the structural impossibility of living in the post-modern age, the speaker finds defiance: “I’m gonna write / A letter to my true love / I’m gonna sign my name / Like a patient on a table / I wanna walk again / Gonna move through the pain.” Letter writing becomes the first stage of a larger awakening—the speaker’s recuperation of his will, of his sense that the external forces aligned against him (here rendered as injury or disease) may be countered effectively. As a concrete assertion of the self and its relations to others—the “I” and the “true love”—the logic of the letter works against the logic of social and cultural alienation.

Ultimately, [Dierks] argues that the production and circulation of letters become a way of articulating individual agency against a backdrop of massive social change.

As it happens, this relationship between the letter and the empowered self that Arcade Fire describes has a long history. In his closely argued, deeply researched, and unfailingly engaging *In My Power*, Konstantin Dierks takes on the personal side of the burgeoning documentary culture of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century anglophone Atlantic. Amassing and interpreting a remarkably broad archive of correspondence (by merchants and diplomats, housewives and frontiersmen, children and generals) Dierks finds in the material and rhetorical practices of letter writing new ways of understanding the relationship between Enlightenment-era Britons and the ideologies that structured their lives. Ultimately, he argues that the production and circulation of letters become a way of articulating individual agency against a backdrop of massive social change.

Dierks opens with the question of empire in the seventeenth century. At a moment in which instantaneous communication across long distances was unimaginable, letters form critical links between far-flung possessions and the metropole. From the colonies comes news of geographical exploration, territorial expansion, and intercultural relations; from the mother country come statements about governmental policy, commercial practice, and the disposition of resources. Even beyond the flows of information that such letters contain, Dierks argues, the mere fact that these pieces of marked paper could be conveyed over such long distances and through so many stages argued for imperial plausibility; without a communications infrastructure (including paper mills, post-roads, packet boats, and postmasters) and a steady flow of letters through it, the “fantastic leap of the imagination” (51) required to see diverse colonies as part of an integrating whole would have been impossible. In other words, letters and the cultural systems developed to produce and distribute them are critical to the consolidation and maintenance of Britain’s imperial ambitions. They are also signally important to the psychology of individual empire-builders—receiving and bearing letters from the imperial center, those on the expansionary front-lines are invested with the power of the mother country; receiving and bearing letters from the expansionary front-lines, those in the mother country are empowered by proofs of their ability to promote nationalist action at a distance.

This empowerment-by-letter works for mercantile concerns and migrating families as well. In his second, third, and fourth chapters, Dierks shows how letters construct business and social relations among the scattering peoples of the Atlantic world. For the merchant, letters contain critical data—about orders to place, prices to be asked and paid, new markets to consider, competitors to watch, and so forth—but also make reputations. Reliability and regularity in writing correlate neatly with trustworthiness in everything else: a good correspondent is a good man to do to business with. Dierks persuasively links this epistolary meritocracy with new ideas about the self; the routinization and standardization of business writing practice allows for an opening of the middle class—a route to material success for the modestly born. Manuals like Daniel Defoe's *The Complete English Tradesman* (second ed., 1727) make the tricks of trade (including the composition of proper commercial correspondence) available even to those without prior connections; young men who might have previously been destined for localized manual labor could learn the adaptable and remunerative skills necessary for global business and earn something like an independence. With this potential for advancement, though, comes anxiety about failure. What Dierks calls the "fraught imperatives of personal agency" in a documentary culture—"the tasks of investment, discipline, internalization, duty, and complaisance" (143)—in turn help to explain what we have come to think of as the "consumer revolution" of the eighteenth century. The more fluid the class dynamic, the more important the purchase and deployment of the material trappings of comfort become—the rise of letter writing and the rise of conspicuous consumption go hand in hand.

Class mobility and geographic mobility, of course, are two sides of the same coin: with the expansion of territory and the expansion of commercial interests to serve (and exploit) that territory comes emigration and the fracturing of kin groups. Sons and daughters leave home to seek their fortunes, then write back with news—about health, about letters received and sent, about everyday affairs. Again, the actual content of the correspondence is less important than the system that supports and conveys it: as proof of continuing personal relationships and identifications (as a Briton, as a member of a family), the regular exchange of letters posits stability in an unstable world. (Arcade Fire registers this too: "It may seem strange / How we used to wait for letters to arrive / But what's stranger still / Is how something so small can keep you alive.") More than this: as Dierks puts it, letter writing was also a form of existential order-making; it allowed an expressive medium for "description, explanation, desire, and aspiration—every intangible realm of meaning that underlay the taking of goal-oriented action in the world, whether felling trees, harvesting crops, stitching shoes, selling fabrics, whipping a slave, or killing an 'Indian.' Letter-writing helped turn all those actions into a struggle to make meaning out of the confusion of circumstance and change, dislocation and determination" (115).

An essential part of the colonizing process, correspondence is also instrumental in empowering the anti-colonial resistance of the second half of the eighteenth century. In the American Revolution, Dierks argues, "[l]etters

did not cause anything in a reductive sense, but they were part of everything" (191). For the pre-Revolutionary moment, that means the interception and publication of Loyalist communiqués, the formation of Committees of Correspondence (in charge of orchestrating anti-government protests across geographical space), the building of a pro-colonial postal system to carry their messages. After Lexington and Concord, "part of everything" indicates the importance of sustained efforts to disrupt the British military post and the building of elaborate systems of messengers and cut-outs to convey written orders from Washington to his commanders in the field. Dierks is also admirably attentive to those disempowered by revolution—loyalists, foot soldiers and their spouses—and to the ways that their own correspondence affirms some manner of personal control over and against the situations in which they found themselves.

The final chapter of *In My Power* takes the problem of disempowerment even further, comparing the "universalist" rhetoric of middle-class agency (in which success is open, "without social limit" [236], to anyone who can acquire certain standardized literacy skills) with the exclusionary realities of eighteenth-century America. It charts what Dierks calls an "epistolary divide" between the haves and have-nots: as "writing literacy and letter writing became a baseline skill for participating in a modern commercial economy," those people who remain largely unlettered—whites of the lower sort, Indians, free and enslaved blacks—are deemed unfit for anything other than menial labor. This in turn "silently and effectively compromised what was understood as a rising political impulse to democracy" in the post-Revolutionary period; "[t]he formal structures of government may have been given the appearance of egalitarianism, but the informal mechanisms of governance remained fundamentally elitist" (237). Such marginalized people work to subvert and exploit these cultural assumptions whenever and wherever they can—literate slaves would forge travel passes, for example; Phillis Wheatley writes epistolary protest poems addressed to colonial officials—but the epistolary divide is an essential (and lasting) barrier to full citizenship. Put another way, the unstated corollary to white middle-class literary empowerment is a race- and class-based disempowerment; the "universalist" possibility of personal agency is in many ways a useful cover for an increasingly asymmetrical power dynamic in the culture.

With this acknowledgment of the ways in which the textually mediated fantasy of liberal subjectivity fails—or papers over socially unethical behavior—Dierks's conclusion moves usefully beyond history into polemic. The book's final rhetorical questions—"What…if evil comes not only from the logic of racism and violence, but also from myopia and foreclosure, a failure to recognize the power embedded in material structures and the divide entrenched in cultural imaginaries, and a failure to imagine any human connection across that divide?"—are both spot-on and utterly deserving of non-rhetorical answers. Not coincidentally, the end of "We Used to Wait" provides one response worth considering. The last lines perform the joy of collective, connective action; they move beyond the subject empowered by writing to conjure a subject empowered by an ecstatic merge with a democratic crowd. "We used to wait for

[those letters to arrive] / Now we scream and sing the chorus again / We used to wait for it / Now we scream and sing the chorus again.” Screaming and singing together is certainly not enough to undo the problems of what Dierks calls the “dark side of history”—but it could well be a start.