

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

SILVER BREATHED UPON THE STAGE: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AS DRAMA
AND MYTHOLOGY

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Introduction

When the Russian diplomat, Pavel Petrovich Svinin, made his three year tour of the United States, starting in 1811, he made the observation that, “[e]very American considers it his sacred duty to have a likeness of Washington in his home, just as we have images of God’s saints.” In the same vein, Gustave de Beaumont, who visited America with de Tocqueville, noted that, “Washington, in America, is not a man but a god.”¹ This glorification of Washington was not a new phenomenon when these gentlemen toured the United States. In 1800, only a year after his death, for example, George Washington was made the subject of a portrait, done by the American artist, David Edwin, copied from an original lithograph created by Rembrandt Peale. The piece portrayed Washington ascending to Heaven upon a cloud, with his home, Mount Vernon, below him. An angel hovers above the deceased general and president, crowning Washington with a laurel crown. Edwin’s piece certainly falls within the parameters of de Beaumont’s observation but Edwin’s portrait cuts deeper than a simple deification. Within the artwork, elements from different traditions coexist. On the one hand, the idea of ascension, in addition to the cloud and the angel, brought to mind the idea of the Ascension of Christ; on the other hand, the crowning with a laurel crown, the symbol of victory in ancient Greece and Rome, hearkened back to the classical past.

¹ Adam Greenhalgh, “Not a Man but a God:’ The Apotheosis of Gilbert Stuart’s Athenaeum Portrait of George Washington.” In *Wintherthur Portfolio* 41, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 285. Accessed July 5, 2016.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/523020>



Figure 1: Apotheosis of Washington by David Edwin, after Rembrandt Peale. Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery..
http://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.77.108

Edwin's portrait of Washington encapsulates one of the trademarks of the American Revolution and much of American history in general—the ability to weave together differing strands of traditions and thought into a cohesive tapestry. Patrick Henry, for example, when he delivered his “Liberty or Death” speech to the House of Burgesses in 1775, incorporated Christianity, the Classical tradition and Whig political thought. The Christian influence came from Henry using the book of Jeremiah as the foundation of his speech; in addition, some who heard him deliver his speech compared him to St. Paul preaching to the Athenians. On the other hand, the classical influence showed itself clearly as when , for example, Henry delivered the most famous line of the speech—“Give me liberty, or give me death!”—which was a line taken from Joseph Addison’s play, *Cato*, which dramatized the story of Cato of Utica, the man who stood against the tyranny of Caesar. The strains of Whig thought were made known when Henry declared to the delegates assembled that the only light which guided his feet in the tumultuous

days of 1775, was that of experience. This same weaving of different traditions to create an entirely new cloth was witnessed after Henry's speech as well, such as in Henry St. George Tucker's reaction to Henry's oration, in which several time periods, peoples and histories were combined in his description of Henry delivering his famous speech.

The genesis of inspiration for this research came in two separate waves. The first inspiration came after I read a description of Harry Jaffa's *Crisis of the House Divided*, in which the author contended that Jaffa had interpreted the famous Lincoln/Douglas debates as a Socratic dialogue. The second came from an idle thought that passed my mind over Thanksgiving of 2014: Why was it that so many of the founders and revolutionaries had taken as pseudonyms the names of famous Greeks and Romans? Could it be that, in some fashion, they were engaging in some form of historical drama, in which they took on, not only the names of the classical heroes, but their roles as well? It soon became apparent, however, that other, more knowledgeable persons had already argued, quite persuasively, that this was the case. Eran Shalev is, undoubtedly, one of the foremost experts in the field of the revolutionaries using classical history. His article, "Ancient Masks, American Fathers: Classical pseudonyms during the American Revolution and Early Republic (2003)," describes in detail and explains to what purposes and why the revolutionaries, as well as the Americans of the early republic, used classical pseudonyms. An expansion of this article took the form of a book, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores: Historical Imagination and the Creation of the American Republic* (2009). In addition to discussing the phenomenon of pseudonyms, Shalev, in his book, analyzed the special place which ancient, republican Rome had in the hearts of Americans, especially when it came to the vocabulary of the Revolution and the understanding of time and history which the colonists possessed. In the same vein, is Carl J. Richards book, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece,*

Rome and the American Enlightenment (1994). Although not as detailed as Shalev's book in its depth, Richards gave a fascinating overview of how the classics influenced the founders thinking, in the models they took, both individually and as modes of government, their education and their philosophy. Richard M. Gummere's *The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition* (1963), laid the foundation for Richard and Shalev by detailing how the classical tradition was present from the beginning of the colonies, emphasizing, for example, how the original colonists of Massachusetts and Virginia brought the classical tradition with them from England, as well as how the colonists' educational system incorporated the classics into their curriculum.

Shalev's book and his article made it clear that the Founders had, indeed, "acted" upon the stage of history and had taken roles from the past, either by their own hand, by the words of others, or a combination of both. The more I read, however, the more it became clear to me that the classical past was not the only influence that had tugged at the hearts and minds of the revolutionaries. There was too, for example, their Christianity. Daniel L. Dreisbach and Mark L. Hall's edited work, *Faith and the Founders of the American Republic* (2014), was very influential in this regard. Three chapters of the book were especially helpful in understanding the role of Christianity. Darren Staloff, in "Deism and the Founders," demonstrated that, despite assertions to the contrary, deism was never that firmly entrenched in American society and that deism itself was an elastic word that had several different definitions. Mark L. Hall's "Vindicia Contra Tyrannos: The Influence of the Reformed Tradition in the American Founding" proved the great influence which Calvinism exerted upon the founders and their ideas about government and politics. "The Bible and the Political Culture of the American Founding," by Daniel L. Dreisbach, illustrated how prominent the Bible was within colonial society before, during, and

after the revolution and how the founders incorporated biblical thought into their ideas. Perhaps one of the biggest influence—especially in some quarters—of Biblical thought in America was the idea of Hebraic republicanism, the idea that the Bible contained the blueprints for the best republican government, namely, ancient Israel, which was the best government the world had ever seen because its structure had been overseen by God Himself. Nathan R. Perl-Rosenthal's, “The ‘Divine Right of Republics’: Hebraic Republicanism and the Debate over Kingless Government in Revolutionary America” (2009) as well as Eran Shalev's “‘A Perfect Republic’: The Mosaic Constitution in Revolutionary New England, 1755-1788” (2009), both charted out this new strand of republicanism.

In addition to their being influenced by the classics and by their Christian religion, the founders were also inspired by the Whig thinkers of England. These writer, which included, for example, Algernon Sydney, John Trenchard, and Thomas Gordon, wrote and argued for republican government, liberty and an end to corruption in England. Trevor Colbourn's, *The Lamp of Experience: Whig History and the Intellectual Origins of the American Revolution* (1965), Bernard Bailyn's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1967), and Lee Ward's *The Politics of Liberty in England and Revolutionary America* (2004), all demonstrated how Whig thought permeated the colonies and how it was utilized in the revolution.

The question as to whether the founders had taken on the “roles” of the past seemed certain. But another question replaced that: How did all the different influences and ideologies fit together into a cohesive whole? Many previous researchers seemed to take one of two paths: they either ignored all influences except the one they championed, as Bailyn ignored the classical influences to concentrate upon the Whig tradition in the colonies; or, as James McLachlan asserted, there was no connection at all between the different influences. The founders had,

basically, cherry-picked what they desired from each tradition and then had stitched them together. The first response seemed unworkable; the second seemed to assume that these flawed but brilliant and good men had simply lived an intellectual life full of inconsistencies and contradictions from the different pulls and tides of the various influences. While this was certainly possible, as individuals are capable of holding world-views that possess blatant contradictions, I felt that this conclusion could not be made lightly. Another explanation presented itself, however: mythology.

Mythology allowed all the differing elements which resided in the colonies and which influenced the founders to come together in a harmonious thread. It can accomplish this because mythology, properly understood, is not simple fiction, or make-believe, but poetry that tells the truth, simply from a different vantage point. G.K. Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man* (1993), J.R.R. Tolkien's "On Fairy Stories," (1939) and C.S. Lewis's "Myth became Fact," (1970) all explained and defended this stance on myth admirably. Other works which were indispensable to understanding mythology and the characteristics which unite the different mythologies from the world were: Lewis Spence's *Introduction to Mythology* (1994); Martin S. Day's *The Many Meanings of Myth* (1984); and, Harry A. Murray's edited work, *Myth and Mythologies* (1960).

In attempting to show that mythology was the means by which the founders united the threads of the different traditions, I have constructed upon what was already built. In chapter one, for example, the intellectual world of the founders is laid out and the three different influences—the Classical, Christianity and the Whig—are discussed and set within their place. In chapter two, the uses to which the founders put these influences, typically the classical, is analyzed; especially prominent uses such as the taking of the names of classical heroes for pseudonyms, or typological connections between individuals of the present and the past are placed front and

center. To demonstrate how the founders were able to utilize the past in such a way, their understanding of time and history is also discussed. Chapter three begins by illustrating that though the classical past was used heavily, other influences such as Christianity, were used in the same way. The question is then raised as to how the different traditions were woven together. Mythology is posited as an explanation and the rest of chapter three is devoted to mythology and how it can be seen as answering the question.

The question, “Who am I?” is common to both individuals and nations. History gives a portion of the answer since individuals and nations are, in large part, products of the past. They—individuals and nations— are also products of free will. The American revolution, as the origin of our country is, therefore, an era which needs to be rightly understood in order that Americans may have a correct idea of where they came and, thus, who they are. It is hoped that this research may add something of substance to the conversation that has continued for almost the entire life of our country.

Chapter One

The Founders and Their World

“Having been initiated, in youth, in the doctrines of civil liberty, as they were taught by such men as Plato, Demosthenes, Cicero and other renowned persons among the ancients; and such as Sidney and Milton, Locke and Hoardley among the moderns; I liked them; they seemed rational.”

Rev. Jonathan Mayhew

In March of 1775, Patrick Henry addressed the Virginia House of Burgesses in what would later be known as the “Liberty or Death” speech. Thundering at the delegates assembled, Henry made one of the most passionate cases for independence that had ever been made. Declaring that the only light which he possessed for guidance was “the lamp of experience,” Henry reminded the delegates of the mischief and wrongs which the British ministry had enacted against the colonies for the last ten years. Begging the men assembled in the House not to allow themselves to “be betrayed with a kiss,” Henry asked what grounds there were for any hope of reconciliation with England. “Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation?” Henry queried, rhetorically. The answer, of course, was no: England meant to subdue the colonies by force; argument, the weapon by which the colonies had attempted remittance for the wrongs done against them, had proved to be of no use. The only course left was “An appeal to arms and the God of Hosts,” for while men could shout for peace, Henry ominously declared that there was no peace; peace, indeed, could only be “purchased at the price of chains and slavery.”²

²Patrick Henry, “Liberty or Death.” Accessed March 9, 2016. <http://www.patrickhenrycenter.com/Speeches.aspx>

Henry's speech was recognized as pivotal even by his contemporaries. One such man, Colonel Edward Carrington, even stated that he wished to be buried on the spot where he heard Henry deliver the speech, which was outside the Henrico church where the House of Burgesses had gathered.³ What is fascinating, however, are the different influences which Henry's speech incorporated. One tradition which Henry incorporated into his speech was Christianity. The "Liberty or Death" speech used the book of Jeremiah as a foundation; his question to the body's president, asking, "Are we disposed to be of the number of those who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not..." and his assertion that though men may call for peace there is no peace, are direct allusions to the Book of Jeremiah and enabled the words of the prophet, spoken thousands of years earlier to the Jews, to be of contemporary use to Virginians in 1775. Much like Henry's contemporaries, the Jews of Jeremiah's time faced a crisis with the threat of Babylon hanging above them like the sword of Damocles and the prophet foretold disaster unless the people returned to God. But, the ecclesiastical men of the time assured the people of Judah that there was peace, when there was, in fact, none to be had. In the same way, by elucidating Jeremiah, Henry was able to draw a parallel between Virginia and ancient Judah and, just as the Judeans had been destroyed and taken into captivity by Babylon, unless Virginians changed their ways and actually used their eyes for seeing and their ears for hearing, putting to use the "lamp of experience" of which Henry spoke, Virginia would suffer the same fate as Judah.⁴ This almost prophetic influence was so pronounced that even some of Henry's compatriots compared Henry to biblical figures. Edmund Randolph, for example, said that Henry was like St. Paul preaching

³ Charles L. Cohen, "The 'Liberty or Death' Speech: A Note on Religion and Revolutionary Rhetoric." In *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 38, no 4 (October 1981): 702. Accessed November 13, 2015.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable1918911>

⁴ Cohen, "The 'Liberty or Death' Speech," 706, 707.

conversion to the Athenians.⁵ Even Henry's oratory style—Independent of the substance of the speech itself—demonstrated itself to be influenced by religious sources, in this case the Great Awakening. Starting in 1745, when Henry was nine years old, the great evangelist, George Whitefield, arrived in Hanover, Virginia and Henry and his mother attended his revivals; three years later, Samuel Davies, another Awakening preacher arrived and, again, Henry accompanied his mother to the revivals. Davies was the preacher who possessed such oratory skill that he could make his listeners shiver when he said the word “cold” or sweat when he uttered the word “hot.” From listening to Davies’s sermons and then repeating the sermons back to his mother on their trips back home, Henry developed a speaking style that was recognized for its evangelical flavor.⁶

However, the evangelical Christian tradition was not the only influence that influenced Henry's speech before the House of Burgesses. The other striking influence on the speech was the classical tradition. While Henry certainly used paraphrases from the Bible and biblical imagery, he also did the same in regards to the classics, or, perhaps better described, the neo-classical. The most famous line of the speech—“Give me liberty, or give me death!”—was actually a paraphrase of Joseph Addison's famous play, *Cato*, which told the story of the Roman patriot, Marcus Porcius Cato, who sacrificed his life in order to prevent Julius Caesar from becoming the ruler of Rome. Not only that but Edmund Randolph, not content in merely comparing Henry to St. Paul, a few lines later in his *History of Virginia* (in which he spoke of Henry's speech) called Henry Demosthenes, the Athenian statesman and orator from the fourth

⁵ Eran Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores: Historical Imagination and the Creation of the American Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 143.

⁶ *Patrick Henry: Voice of Liberty*, produced by Rhys Thomas (New York, NY: A&E Television Networks, 1995). Accessed November 4, 2015. <http://search.alexanderstreet.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ahiv/view/work/455687>

century BC.⁷ However, even more strident than the comparison that Randolph made between Henry and Demosthenes, was the comparison that Judge St. George Tucker made in regards to Patrick Henry. Describing the scene after listening to Henry's speech, Tucker said,

Imagine to yourself, this sentence delivered with all the calm dignity of Cato of Utica—imagine to yourself the Roman senate assembled in the capitol when it was entered by the profane Gauls, who, at first, were awed by their presence, as if they had entered an assembly of Gods!—imagine that you heard that Cato addressing such a senate—imagine that you saw the handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's palace—imagine you heard a voice as from heaven uttering the words: '*We must fight,*' as the doom of fate, and you may have some idea of the speaker, the assembly to whom he addressed himself, and the auditory, of which I was one.⁸

Similarly to what Randolph did, comparing Henry with an ancient Greek statesman, Tucker equated the Virginian orator with another hero from the Classical era—a Roman, in this case—and equated the House of Burgesses with the ancient Roman senate, thereby actually turning the House and its stars into their classical equivalents.

What Henry's "Liberty or Death" speech vibrantly illustrates is that there were several traditions which helped to mold and influence the world in which the men who perpetuated the American revolution lived. In many instances, these traditions or influences had been present within the colonies from practically the very beginning. Three of the most important influences within colonial America that helped shaped it and its inhabitants were the Classical tradition, the Christian tradition and the Whig tradition.

⁷ Shalev, *Rome Reborn*, 145.

⁸ Henry St. George Tucker, "Patrick Henry and St. George Tucker." In *University of Pennsylvania Law Review and American Law Register* Vol. 67, No. 1 (Jan., 1919), 72. Accessed March 6, 2016.
http://www.jstor.org/stable/3314457?seq=4#page_scan_tab_contents

The Classical Tradition

The Classics were an integral part of the education system within the colonies. For the longest time after the British began to colonize the Atlantic seaboard of the New World, there were a minuscule number of centers for learning; from 1636 to 1746 there were only three universities, spread between Massachusetts, Connecticut and Virginia. Between 1746 and 1776, however, there has a boom, of sorts (what the Reverend Ezra Stiles termed “college enthusiasm”), in the realm of higher education, as six additional universities were founded within this period.⁹ One of the common threads which ran through these universities, in spite of geographical differences, was the emphasis which they placed on classical learning. All of the curriculum of the colonial universities expected, for example, students to be able to read Cicero’s orations, Vergil’s *Aeneid*, Sallust, or Caesar as well as Greek writers such as Isocrates and the Greek Testament.¹⁰

The foundations for this classical education were actually laid out in the student’s early life, in the grammar schools which dotted the colonies. The curriculum of these grammar schools lasted for seven years, in which time the students were prepared for university through the study of Aesop’s *Fables*, Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, Horace, Homer and the like.¹¹ What this program of events created, was a population of schoolchildren and future colonials who were utterly immersed in the works of the classical world. As stated, the grammar schools lasted for seven years and many children began attending the schools at a very young age. Josiah Quincy, for

⁹ James McLachlan, “Classical Names, American Identities: Some Notes on College Students and the Classical Tradition in the 1770s,” in *Classical Traditions in Early America*, ed. John W. Eadie (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1976), 84-85.

¹⁰ Meyer Reinhold, *Classica Americana: The Greek and Roman Heritage in the United States* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 28.

¹¹ Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, 26.

example, began attending grammar school when he was six years old.¹² Not only the time spent in the school but the time spent in studying the classics marinated the heads of the young boys within the walls of the classroom. One lad, Jonathan Homer, entered the Boston Grammar School when he was seven and studied Latin from eight o'clock to eleven in the mornings and then again from one o'clock in the afternoon until dark. In this way, he was able to enter college at the age of fourteen "equal in Latin and Greek to the best in the Senior class." This was common; in 1710, a boy who had reached the seventh year of the grammar school was reading Cicero, Justinian, the Greek and Latin Testaments, Isocrates, Homer, Horace, Hesiod, Vergil, Juvenal and was also translating the Psalms into Latin verses. As such, it was perfectly logical for the entrance exams at universities to require students to give "a rational account of the Greek and Latin grammars," as well as read three of Cicero's orations, three books of the *Aeneid*, and translate the first ten chapters of the Gospel of St. John into Latin, as John Jay was required to do when he entered King's College in 1760.¹³

The classical atmosphere went beyond the classroom, however, at least at the university level. University students formed clubs for themselves at the various universities: for example, the Linonian Society and the Brothers in Unitey were at Yale while the American Whig and the Cliosophic Society resided at the College of New Jersey.¹⁴ What makes the existence of these societies fascinating, however, is the fact that the students who were initiated into them often took on classical names as pseudonyms for themselves in the parameters of the club. Sixty-seven of the first one hundred twenty-three names of the Cliosophic Society still exist and of those

¹² Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 16.

¹³ Richard M. Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 58, 57, 56.

¹⁴ Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 23.

sixty-seven names, roughly half (thirty-one) of the pseudonyms chosen were classical names. John Noel of Georgia, for example, took on the name of Brutus at his initiation while the future Revolutionary general, Lighthorse Harry Lee assumed for himself the name of Hannibal. This was not mere child's play either. This initiation into the society was equivalent to the introducing the new member into the "mythical history of the tribe [in which] the initiated learns the deeds of the Supernatural Beings who...established the present human condition and all the religious, social and cultural institutions of the tribe." In the case of the college students, these "Supernatural Beings" were the historical figures from the classical past who were "the perfect Models of Antiquity."¹⁵

Not only were the Classics read in the grammar schools and the universities but the classical languages were studied diligently as well. As mentioned previously, school children and university students were taught and expected to be able to translate both Greek and Latin. This, too, had a very solid presence in the colonies. One of the very first Latin teachers in the city of Philadelphia may have been Christopher Taylor who opened a Latin school on Tinicam Island on the Delaware early in 1684. Five years later, in 1689, the Friends Public school was created. By 1740, the Latin School in Philadelphia was regarded as a "classical institution" in which the children of merchants and the "middling class" were equipped "with the grace of a literary education."¹⁶ This love for the classical languages and the importance placed upon them was not limited to the Middle Colonies. In the South, for example, the classics were seen as important for education; when Thomas Jefferson was planning the curriculum for his University of Virginia, he approved of entrance exams which required a student to read "with facility" Vergil, Horace,

¹⁵ McLachlan, "Classical Names, American Identities," 89, 88.

¹⁶ Edwin L. Wolf, "The Classical languages in Colonial Philadelphia," in *Classical Traditions in Early America*, ed. John W. Eadie (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1976), 54.

Homer, and Xenophon as well as the ability to translate a page of English into Latin on sight as well as show a proficiency in Euclid's geometry.¹⁷ John Adams, one of the brightest lights of New England, often expressed his enthusiasm for the learning of the classical languages. In a letter written to Abigail in 1774, Adams lamented his idleness, exclaiming that, "(m)y Time might have been improved to some Purpose, in mowing Grass, raking Hay, or hoeing Corn, weeding Carrots, picking or shelling Peas. Much better should I have been employed in schooling my Children, in teaching them to write, cypher, Latin, French, English and Greek." Whatever idleness might have plagued Adams—either in reality or only in his mind—his children's classical education and their mastery of the classical languages was not allowed to stand still. In another letter written to his wife in 1780, when Adams was living in Amsterdam as the American minister to the Netherlands, Adams told Abigail that the two boys (John Quincy and Charles) were "at an excellent Latin school..."¹⁸

Grammar schools and universities were not the only means by which men of America were able to bask in the glow of the classics. Libraries were also a prominent means through which the Classics were read and appreciated. It must first be remembered that the early Americans were avid readers¹⁹ and that the literacy levels could actually be quite high; certain well settled areas of the colonies possessed literacy rates of ninety percent.²⁰ A letter that Thomas Jefferson penned to St. John de Crèvecœur in 1787 helps captures the avidness to read.

¹⁷ Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind*, 57.

¹⁸ John Adams to Abigail Adams, July 1, 1774. The Massachusetts Historical Society. Accessed March 2, 2016. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/doc?id=L17740701ja&hi=1&query=Latin&tag=text&archive=all&rc=11&start=10&numRecs=35>

John Adams to Abigail Adams, September 25, 1780. The Massachusetts Historical Society. Accessed March 2, 2016. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/doc?id=L17800925ja&hi=1&query=Latin&tag=text&archive=all&rc=1&start=0&numRecs=35>

¹⁹ Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, 29.

²⁰ Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind*, 62.

In the letter, Jefferson complains to Crèvecoeur that the English are attempting to rob Americans “of another of our inventions,” specifically, the making of a wheel’s circumference from a single piece. Jefferson recounts that when the invention was described in Philadelphia, “the idea of its being a new discovery was laughed at” because everyone in Philadelphia had seen every New Jersey farmer mount his cart with such wheels, which they accomplished by cutting down saplings and bending them into circles. Jefferson went on to tell Crèvecoeur that the Jersey farmers had, most likely, received the idea from reading Homer since, “ours are the only farmers who can read Homer; because too, the Jersey practice is precisely that stated by Homer...”²¹ This love for reading led to the creation of multiple libraries throughout the colonies, all of which contained the Classics. Nor were all of these libraries paltry affairs; the Harvard University library, for example, possessed three thousand volumes between 1732 and 1735 while the Library Company of Philadelphia held 375 books by 1741. As time passed on, there was also a trend that occurred within the libraries. At first, most of the books which the libraries possessed dealt with religious and theological matters but, beginning in 1730, a secularization began. Books on ancient history, antiques, and ancient authors became more and more common.²² In addition to public libraries, there were also private libraries, owned and grown by individuals. Many of these private library owners possessed books on the Classics and read them religiously. William Byrd of Westover, Virginia, possessed 3600 volumes in his library²³ which included many volumes of classics. From 1709 to 1712, Byrd recorded daily in his diary that he studied

²¹ Thomas Jefferson to St. John de Crèvecoeur, January 15, 1787. In *Thomas Jefferson Writings* (New York: Penguin Books, USA, 1984), 878.

²² Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, 28-29.

²³ Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, 28.

Greek and Latin works from the books in his library.²⁴ Byrd was not an anomaly in colonial Virginia society. He actually represented a sentiment that grew within the planter class which held that a gentleman and a scholar should respect the classics and that his personal library should reflect that respect. Because of this sentiment, the number of classical volumes within the confines of private libraries grew extensively. As a means of contrast: in 1635, the Reverend John Goodborne arrived in Virginia from England; he brought with him a personal book collection comprising 157 books, twenty-seven of which were written by the classical Greek and Roman authors. When Byrd wrote in his diary that he was studying the classics in his library between 1709 and 1712, three hundred of his 3600 books were classical texts and commentaries.²⁵ This growth in the number of classical books does not mean that everyone in the colonies was proficient in the ancient languages, despite the dedication to their study found in the grammar schools and universities. The library of John Smith of Virginia, for example, contained English and French translations of Plato, Cicero, Seneca, and Epictetus.²⁶ It should not be thought, however, that there was an inconsistency in the use of translations. It must be remembered that when individuals such as Matthew Prior spoke against translations of the classics in 1685, it was not the translations per se that Prior and others of his persuasion were assailing; rather it was the lack of fidelity in the translations as well as the lack of style of which they complained which diluted the power and beauty of the original works.²⁷

Libraries and translations were not the only avenues by which the classics made their presence known in America. Commonplace books, for example, often displayed a significant

²⁴ Louis B. Wright, "The Classical Tradition in Colonial Virginia." In *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* Vol. 33 (1939): 85. Accessed March 1, 2016.

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/stable/24296526?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&&searchUri=%>

²⁵ Wright, "The Classical Tradition," 88, 87, 93.

²⁶ Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind*, 11.

²⁷ Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, 30-31.

classical strain. These were blank books in which men could copy excerpts from literature which they found most interesting.²⁸ The commonplace book of John Adams, for example, possessed a significant amount of classical texts. Kept between 1755 and 1756, Adams's commonplace book contains an anonymous Greek "Ode to Health," followed by Adams' translation of the ode into English; the book also contains an excerpt from Sallust's *Cataline's War* in Latin. These two copies take up the first twenty-three pages of the commonplace book and after these copies/translations, Adams copied shorter Latin excerpts all, apparently, from Sallust.²⁹ Thomas Jefferson, with whom Adams is often paired, also kept a commonplace book in which he copied excerpts from his favorite poets, dramatists and writers; between 1758 and 1773, forty percent of the excerpts inserted into his book, Jefferson took from classical works.³⁰

Almanacs were also another source in which the Classics resided. Almanacs first appeared in the colonies in New England; in fact, the first forty-one issues were edited by Harvard graduates. These almanacs were almost little compendiums of knowledge, containing brief histories, as of the Roman Empire, as well as what might be termed classical literary license; Pluvius i.e., Jupiter (the Roman god of the heavens) was described in the almanacs as bringing the rains while the god Apollo was said to marry "Faire Tellus" i.e., the earth. The writings of actual figures from the classical world, such as Ovid, Vergil, Cato, Cicero and Seneca, were often drawn upon in the pages of the almanacs, sometimes for very specific purposes; Manilius's *Astronomica*, for example, was used to speak of the signs of the zodiac while Pliny's explanation for rainbows were discussed. Almanacs also utilized the classics to

²⁸ Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 24-25.

²⁹ "Literary Commonplace Books, 1755—1756." The National Archives, Founders Online. Accessed March 4, 2016. <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-01-02-0004>

³⁰ Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 26.

speak about contemporary events that did not deal with seasonal or meteorological matters. An almanac from 1676, which was printed during King Philip's War, concluded with the cry, *Dabit Deus his quoque finem*: “Even to those suffering, God will put an end,” which was a pagan litany that was used often by the early settlers.³¹

The grammar schools, universities, libraries, commonplace books, and almanacs, all of these elements helped to produce a “general air” of classicalism in the colonies that went far beyond the parameters of the “official” organs of the classics. Certain common words, for example, had their origins in the classical world and required a deeper understanding to grasp them completely. One example of this is Joshua Scottow who, in 1694, penned his *Narrative of the Planting of the Massachusetts Colony*. In this work, Scottow at one point spilled some ink on the witch craze which had gripped New England, saying, “Our sweet scent is gone, we smell rank of hellbore, hellbane, and poisonful hemlock, as if we were laid out to be the American Anticyra.”³² Readers familiar with Horace and Juvenal would have understood the reference.³³ Other words, however, could be generally understood more easily. One such word was *lustre*, which referred to the five year period in the Roman calendar, or *symbolize*, which, as used by the ancient authors Terence and Plautus, meant to pay one’s dues.³⁴ The great figures from the classical world were also widely hailed as models by the general society, as well as by the students in the different university clubs. In New England, for example, Cicero was often taken as the preeminent role model, with lawyers, merchants, ministers and the other educated

³¹ Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind*, 5-6.

³² Joshua Scottow, *A narrative of the planting of the Massachusetts colony anno 1628*, pg. 49-50. America's Historical Imprints. Accessed March 9, 2016. http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAIX&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=Y64X5CSYMTQ1NzcxNTc1MC43MDA0MjY6MToxMzo

³³ Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind*, 12. Horace and Juvenal both speak of Anticyra, which was an ancient Greek city in Phocis which is now present day Antikyra, as well as the different herbs which Scottow mentions, such as hellebore. See Horace's *On the Art of Poetry* and Juvenal's *Satire XIII*.

³⁴ Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind*, 12.

members of New England society, often claiming Cicero as their patron. These men, but particularly lawyers, praised the ancient Roman for his oratory skills and looked to his example especially if desires to change the world were held.³⁵ One specific New Englander who was particularly entranced with the idea of Cicero was John Adams. Adams first met the figure of Cicero at school and he kept the Roman orator as his model after his school days. He called the “old Roman authors” his “constant companions” during the two years that he studied law under James Putnam. The very fact that he was pursuing an occupation in a field that had been trod by such luminaries as Demosthenes and Cicero and others of “immortal fame” filled him with exuberance. He also resolved to take on Cicero as his model in the law. In 1758, Adams copied a passage of Cicero’s *De Oratore* in his diary, which suggests that Adams took Cicero as a patron, of sorts, not merely for his professional career but also for his whole life since the passage was written in his personal diary and not in a letter or the like.³⁶ In the South, Thomas Jefferson sometimes compared himself to the Roman hero Cincinnatus, the Roman patriarch and farmer who was called to lead Rome as dictator to save the city and then, rather than holding on to power, relinquished it and returned to his farm. While not as overt in his choice of model as Adams was with Cicero, Jefferson often implied the parallels between himself and Cincinnatus. When he was away from his beloved Monticello, Jefferson often expressed in his letters a desire to return to his farm and when he was able to return, his writings often took on a Horatian flavor, reveling in the countryside and the freedom from duties of state. Significantly as well, Jefferson,

³⁵ Stephen Botein, “Cicero as Role Model for Early American Lawyers: A Case Study in Classical ‘Influence’.” In *The Classical Journal* Vol. 73, no. 4 (April-May 1978): 314, 315. Accessed April 14, 2015.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3297106>

³⁶ The passage, in English, declares, “Go forward therefore, my young friend, in your present course, and bend your energies to that study which engages you, that so it may be in your power to become a glory to yourselves, a source of service to your friends, and profitable members of the Republic.” James M. Farrell, “‘Syren Tully’ and the Young John Adams.” In *The Classical Journal* Vol. 87, no. 4 (April-May 1992): 377, 378, 379. See also John Adams, letter to John Wentworth, October-November 1758. The Massachusetts Historical Society. Accessed March 1, 2016.
<http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/doc?id=D0&hi=1&query=Cicero&tag=text&archive=diary&rec=2&s>

in his notebook, copied Horace's Second Epode, leaving out the parts of the poem that were inapplicable to Virginia, transforming the ancient poet into an American Roman of sorts.³⁷

This blanket, as it were, of the classics that spread itself over the colonies was literally everywhere. The Reverend Thomas Hooker of Connecticut, for example, once wondered how it was that men and women who did not know their ABCs could yet still possess minds that understood Latin, Greek and Hebrew. At a council meeting in Virginia in 1625, men often chastised each other for speaking bad Latin and in 1634, in a disagreement between council member Samuel Matthews and Governor Harvey, Matthew "lashed off the heads of certain tall weeds," an expression that Livy used in his telling of the story of Tarquin cutting off poppy heads, i.e., neutralizing prominent opponents. This same expression was used in 1768 by a Captain Phips of New England and John Adams used it again in his *Discourses on Davila* when he spoke of the French Revolution.³⁸

Due to the prominence of the classics and their wide-spread use and familiarity, it is not at all surprising that they were employed once the American Revolution began. One of the themes found in the Classics which the colonists recognized and which they clutched to was the "legacy of liberty," which was particularly seen in the works of Sallust, Tacitus, Virgil, Plutarch, and Cicero. This legacy was also seen in episodes from ancient history, such as Cicero opposing the ascension of Caesar with his voice, Cato the Younger opposing him with arms and Brutus finally laying down the threat of the dictator with the blade of his knife. One specific example demonstrates this "legacy of liberty" as well as the colonists' desire to preserve and to own it. Josiah Quincy's will stipulated that his son should receive the works of the Roman historian,

³⁷ Louis B. Wright, "Thomas Jefferson and the Classics." In *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* Vol. 87, no. 3 (July 14, 1943): 227. Accessed March 4, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/984869>

³⁸ Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind*, 4, 8-9.

Tacitus, that his father owned, as well as the works of John Locke and Algernon Sydney in order that his son would be well versed in the legacy of liberty.³⁹ The Reverend Jonathan Mayhew, in a Thanksgiving sermon in which he also spoke of the repeal of the Stamp Act, noted the debt he owed to the ancients in his understanding of “civil liberty,” saying, “Having been initiated, in youth, in the doctrines of civil liberty, as they were taught by such men as Plato, Demosthenes, Cicero and other renowned persons among the ancients; and such as Sidney and Milton, Locke and Hoardley among the moderns; I liked them; they seemed rational.”⁴⁰ This “legacy of liberty” was seen to be especially needed after the French and Indian War when it seemed that Parliament meant to establish a tyranny over the colonies with the passage of such bills as the Stamp Act and the Tea Act. In light of such dangerous moves on the initiation of Parliament, the warnings and actions of the ancients struck the “paranoid” colonists as increasingly apropos.⁴¹

The literature of the revolution took advantage of the “legacy of liberty” found in the classics and made references to a host of classical authors such as Homer, Dio, Cicero, Strabo, Cato and Aristotle.⁴² Ancient models were also used as a reference point for events that were taking place between the colonies and Great Britain. Josiah Quincy, who bequeathed to his son

³⁹ Stanley M. Burstein, “The Classics and the American Republic.” In *The History Teacher* Vol. 30, no. 1 (November 1996): 34. Accessed March 4, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/494218> Also Charles F. Mullett, “Classical Influences on the American Revolution.” In *The Classical Journal* Vol. 35 no. 2 (November 1939): 104. Accessed March 3, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3291341>

⁴⁰ Jonathan Mayhew, *The Snare Broken: A thanksgiving-discourse, preached at the desire of the West Church in Boston, N.E. Friday May 23, 1766. Occasioned by the repeal of the stamp-act*, pg. 43. America’s Historical Imprints. Accessed March 8, 2016. http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_action=doc&p_theme=eai&p_product=EAIX&p_docref=v2%3A0F2B1FCB879B099B@EAIX-0

⁴¹ For the reaction of the colonists towards the various acts Parliament passed in order to raise revenues from the colonies after the French and Indian War, see Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause*, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), particularly Chapters 4-9. For an explanation on the “paranoid” style in the colonies as well as a history of the Anglo “paranoid tradition” in the eighteenth century, see Gordon S. Wood, “Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century.” In *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 39, no. 3 (July 1982): 401-441. Accessed November 9, 2015.

http://www.jstor.org/stable/1919580?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

⁴² Mullett, “Classical Influences,” 93.

his books so that the young man would grow in the spirit of liberty, made many such allusions in his *Observations on the Boston Port Bill*. In the pamphlet, Quincy several times drew parallels between events that had occurred in ancient Rome and the actions which Great Britain was taking against the colonies. For example, Quincy used the example of the Decemviri, the council of ten men who were forced to abdicate their power after becoming tyrannical, to contrast with Britain, declaring that even they had not been as tyrannical as Parliament in passing the Boston Port Bill (by which Boston was effectively isolated from the rest of the colonies until the tea destroyed in the Boston Tea Party was compensated) inasmuch as even the Decemviri had not declared for itself the power of passing laws by its own authority. Later, Quincy even asked if Britain was not to America what Caesar had been to Rome since both were destroying the liberty which both had enjoyed. Quincy also brought Plutarch into his argument, using the ancient historian and biographer as an authority for what power and passion will do to men in authority. Even the cover of the pamphlet harked to the classics, featuring a quote from Lucan, the Roman poet who was forced to commit suicide after joining a failed plot to assassinate Nero (placing him firmly in the “legacy of liberty”).⁴³ The uses of the classics did not stop with references to them and using them as parallels; often times, the classics were also used for the authorship of the revolutionary literature in the form of pseudonyms. Pseudonyms, which had been made popular by the British Whig writers of the seventeenth century, could be the actual names of men from the ancient world, such as “Cato” and “Brutus”; however, classical pseudonyms could also be *augural* names, which divided into three different classes: the name of a classical virtue, a summarization of the message of the pamphlet itself (such as the name

⁴³ Josiah Quincy, *Observations on the act of Parliament commonly called the Boston Port-Bill; with thoughts on civil society and standing armies*, pg. 36, 57, 7, 12. America's Historical Imprints. Accessed March 6, 2016. http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAI&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=Y58M4FYLMTQ1Nzc5NTY3MS4xNTc5NTg6MToxMzoy

Benevolus, used at the end of a text condemning poverty), and a name that alluded to a position that had been in the ancient government, such as *The Censor*.⁴⁴ There were several examples this use of the classics during the revolution; Thomas Paine, for instance, used the name “*Atlanticus*” for some of his publications (such as his song “The Liberty Tree” which was published in 1775 in the July issue of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*) in order to demonstrate the universality of his message⁴⁵ while a “*Philo Publicus*” wrote in Boston in 1764 and “*Spartacus*” twelve years later in 1776. Even John Adams’s *Novanglus Letters* belong in this category, as “*Novanglus*” was the Latinization of “New England.”⁴⁶ The Classics were used to such an extent that in 1775, Dr. Joseph Warren dressed in a Roman toga when he gave a commencement in honor of the Boston Massacre.⁴⁷

Why were the classics such a powerful, respected and widespread tradition in the colonies and the revolution? The answer, in large part, was virtue. The very goal of education was seen to be the acquisition of virtue, which, at the time of the revolution, was understood particularly in its civic and public function.⁴⁸ However, although virtue may have been seen especially in its civic function, this does not mean that virtue simply meant good citizenship for the men of the revolution. In the eighteenth century, for example, there were eight different ways in which the word “liberty” could be used, but only one of them was related to the individualistic nature of liberty modern society often takes today. The men and women of the revolution were

⁴⁴ Eran Shalev, “Ancient Masks, American Fathers: Classical Pseudonyms during the American Revolution and Early Republic.” In *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 23, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 154. Accessed April 9, 2015.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3125034>

⁴⁵ Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind*, 13.

⁴⁶ Shalev, “Ancient Masks,” 156, 157, 163.

⁴⁷ See Shalev, *Rome Reborn*, Chapter 4.

⁴⁸ Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, 142-143.

more likely to see liberty as meaning the freedom to do what was morally right⁴⁹ and, as such, virtue would seem to have to encompass more than simply public behavior. Virtue was necessary for good and self-government; one of the common complaints leveled against Britain was that through luxury and power, her virtue had been eroded and she had become corrupt, which was also seen in the gradually *ad hominem* attacks leveled against British officials, comparing them to Caesar and Nero, comparisons which, at last, reached George III himself.⁵⁰ Samuel Adams made this point quite overt in a letter he wrote to John Scollay when he said, “The Roman Empire, says the Historian, MUST have sunk, though the Goths had not invaded it. Why? Because the Roman Virtue was sunk.”⁵¹ The classics, on the other hand, were a remedy to keep virtue installed in individuals. John Adams, for instance, stated that the Roman author, Terence, was “remarkable for good morals, good taste, and good Latin.”⁵² In his diary in 1759, Adams also privately wrote,

Roman, grecian, french, English Treatises of natural, civil, common, Statute Law. Aim at an exact Knowledge of the Nature, End, and Means of Government.

Compare the different forms of it with each other and each of them with their Effects on public and private Happiness. Study Seneca, Cicero, and all other good moral Writers.⁵³

⁴⁹ Mark David Hall, “Did America have a Christian Founding?” The Heritage Foundation. Accessed November 2, 2015. <http://report.heritage.org/hl1186>

⁵⁰ Shalev, *Rome Reborn*, 59-61, 64-69.

⁵¹ Samuel Adams to John Scollay, April 30, 1776. The Federalist Papers Project. Accessed March 9, 2016. <http://www.thefederalistpapers.org/founders/samuel-adams/samuel-adams-to-john-scollay-april-30-1776>

⁵² David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 259.

⁵³ John Adams, Diaries, Tuesday, January 1759. The Massachusetts Historical Society. Accessed March 8, 2016. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/doc?id=D2&hi=1&query=Cicero&tag=text&archive=diary&rec=7&tart=0&numRecs=7>

It was the moral world of the classics that appealed to the colonists because the world of the ancients was familiar to their own world; the ancients were agrarian, frugal, eloquent, and believed in honor, the rule of law and virtue.⁵⁴

The Religious Tradition

Contrary to what many modern scholars hold, there was a very strong religious, i.e., Christian tradition in the American colonies from the beginning. It is not true, however, as some others would have it, that every single revolutionary and/or founding father was an evangelical/orthodox Christian. The truth lies somewhere between the two stances. Many of the documents drawn up at the very beginning of the colonial period make reference to God and even cite religious reasons as to why the colonists travelled to the New World in the first place. The Mayflower Compact, for example, stated that the Pilgrims, “in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid...” and that the entire purpose of creating this new “civil Body Politick” had been “for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith...,” as well as the honor of James I.⁵⁵ Eight years later, John Winthrop expressed much the same sentiment as the Pilgrims had in his *Reasons for the Plantation in New England*, citing not only the glory of God as the motivation for the Puritan experiment but also the corruption of English society, especially in regards to religion and education.⁵⁶ The 1610

⁵⁴ Henry Steele Commager, “The American Enlightenment and the Ancient World.” In *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* Vol. 83 (1971): 10. Accessed January 19, 2016.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25080703>

⁵⁵ The Mayflower Compact, accessed November 3, 2014, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/mayflower.asp

⁵⁶ John Winthrop, *Reasons for the Plantation in New England*. The Winthrop Society. November 3, 2014, http://www.winthropsociety.com/doc_reasons.php

Virginia legal code stated that, “Whereas his Majesty, like himself a most zealous prince, has in his own realms a principle care of true religion and reverence to God and has always strictly commanded his generals and governors, with all his forces wheresoever to let their ways be, like his ends, for the glory of God...”⁵⁷ This religious emphasis and atmosphere continued in the colonies. This was especially seen in the French and Indian War when the French were described, especially by the colonial clergy, as the ultimate bogeyman. If victorious, “cruel Papists would quickly fill the British colonies, seize our Estates, abuse our wives and daughters and barbarously murder us; as they have done the like in France and Ireland,” the reverend Thomas Prince warned his congregation. The French Catholics were said to be the allies of his Satanic Majesty himself, commissioned to subjugate God’s people in New England causing the reverend Nathaniel Appleton to exclaim, when he learned of France’s defeat, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!”⁵⁸ The reason for this religiously fueled animosity was due, not only to the colonists’ Protestantism but also to their understanding of the role of the church in America. Many believed that the American colonies were the chosen spaces in which God would renew the Church. Joshua Scottow, in his *Narrative of the Planting of the Massachusetts Colony*, states that Massachusetts was not formed in the usual ways—princes, lotteries, lords, or the like—but was due to God Himself; Scottow indeed says that the colonists were led to the colony by the Holy Spirit. Additionally, at the end of his history, Scottow leaves his readers with a final reminder: Massachusetts is a plantation not of trade, but of religion, where purity of doctrine, worship and discipline may be carried out.⁵⁹ Years later, in 1775, the Reverend Samuel Sherwood preached on Revelation 12:14-17 to the people of Norfolk, Connecticut; in his

⁵⁷ Hall, “Did America Have a Christian Foundation?” 5.

⁵⁸ Nathan O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 38, 39, 42.

⁵⁹ Scottow, *Narrative of the Planting of the Massachusetts Colony*, 6-7, 70.

sermon, Sherwood told his congregation that the woman fleeing into the wilderness to escape from the dragon was running to safety. In his interpretation, the woman was the church, which God, in His goodness led to the New World in order to keep her safe and to allow her to prosper.⁶⁰ This idea of America being the new “chosen land” and Americans being the new “chosen people” was also displayed visually during the early days of the revolution when Congress debated on the design for the seal of the new country; Benjamin Franklin suggested that the seal depict the Egyptians being drowned in the Red Sea after the Israelites had crossed on dry land while Jefferson moved for a combination of the children of Israel and the Hengist-Horsa invasion of England.⁶¹

When the revolution began, the Christian tradition became a tremendous influence and help. In fact, two incidents which helped drive colonists to revolution had to do with religious issues. In New England, colonists had feared the official establishment of the Anglican Church over the colonies and the appointment of a bishop over them. For individuals belonging to Protestant sects, many of whom had come to America to escape from the Church of England, such a prospect had the distinct flavor of tyranny. The activities of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, as well as the actions of some Anglican clergy in America—such as the Reverend East Aphorp of Cambridge, who, as one example, suggested that Harvard introduce Anglican services into its commencement ceremonies and add Anglicans to its board of overseers—infuriated people and caused suspicion to swell within themselves.⁶² An event that

⁶⁰ Stein, Stephen J. “An Apocalyptic Rationale for the American Revolution.” In *Early American Literature* Vol. 9, no. 3 (Winter 1975): 215. Accessed November 7, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25070679>

⁶¹ Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind*, 14-15. Hengist and Horsa were brothers and chieftains of Jutland (modern southern Denmark and northern Germany) who, at the invitation of King Vortigern, led the first Saxon bands into ancient England. Although Vortigern invited the brothers in to protect England from the Picts and other enemies, Hengist and Horsa eventually expelled the Britons from Kent and established a Saxon kingdom.

⁶² Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause*, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 216-218.

spread fear and anger beyond New England was the Quebec Act which actually allowed the Catholic population of Quebec to freely practice their faith. As Catholicism was seen as the Devil's religion and, therefore, it was seen as the government's duty to suppress it for the common good, the colonists saw the Quebec Act as simply another threat from England, against themselves and their liberties; even the Continental Congress mirrored this belief, declaring that the Quebec Act was "dangerous in an extreme degree to the Protestant religion and to the civil rights and liberties of all America." Alexander Hamilton also maintained in the New York newspapers in 1775 that the Quebec Act held danger to all Englishmen and Protestants inasmuch the Act made Catholicism the established church of Quebec and that through this Act, the British ministry had found the perfect means to steal power for themselves.⁶³

There were several other ways that the Christian tradition also played a role in the revolution. One was the Calvinistic tradition. Although there were numerous Christian denominations in the colonies, Calvinism was the dominant religious framework; three-fourths of the colonists adhered to it and New England was seen as its intellectual hub which spread Calvinism to the rest of the colonies, through such organs as the New England Primer.⁶⁴ The creators of the Calvinistic theology, such as Calvin, Knox, and its apostles, such as John Winthrop, were seen by their adherents as part of a "reformed tradition." Calvin, with his beliefs in *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*, actually led to wide spread literacy and brought about vast

⁶³ Brandi H. Marchant, "Defined By What We are Not: The Role of Anti-Catholicism in Forging an American Identity." Masters thesis, Liberty University, 2012, 34. Alexander Hamilton, "On the Quebec Act, No. II." June 22, 1775. Online Library of Liberty. Accessed February 29, 2016. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/hamilton-the-revolutionary-writings-ofalexander-hamilton> For a more complete study of the role of anti-Catholicism in helping to bring about the revolution, see Marchant, Chapter 1, "Sharing in 'the same fair inheritance': Anti-Catholicism in the English Colonial Experience."

⁶⁴ Mark David Hall, "Vindicia Contra Tyrannos: The Influence of the Reformed Tradition in the American Founding," in *Faith and the Founders of the American Republic*, ed. Daniel L. Dreisbach and Mark David Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 35.

numbers of Bibles being printed in the vernacular, all of which fed a desire in people for self-government. This desire was especially prominent in the cases of the Separatists and the Puritans. Because God was the Sovereign of all Creation, the Calvinists understood the need for creating Christian institutions but they were not theocrats. Calvinists understood that the church and the state were separate spheres and that while each could and should complement the other, neither one could dominate the other. This Calvinist tradition influenced the revolution because the revolutionaries read not only the classics but also the founders of the Calvinist tradition. John Winthrop, president of Princeton and signer of the Declaration, for example, owned Calvin's *Institutes*, as well as *Rights of Magistrates* by Theodor Beza, the French disciple of Calvin, and *The Law of Scottish Kingship* by George Buchanan, a major figure in the Scottish Reformation, whose ideas were often credited for the overthrow of James VII. Winthrop, however, was a minister; it would not be as surprising to learn that his collection held the works of the reformers. The reformers' works, however, were not limited to the clergy. John Adams, for example, said that John Poynet's *Short Treatise on Politike Power*, contained "all the principles of liberty, which were afterwards dilated on by Sidney and Locke." Later in his life, in a letter to F.C. Schaeffer, Adams wrote,

I love & revere the memories of Huss Wickliff Luther Calvin Zwinglius Melancton and all the other reformers;—how muchsoever I may differ from them all in many theological metaphysical & philosophical points. As you justly observe, without their great exertions & severe sufferings the U.S.A had never existed.⁶⁵

John's cousin, Samuel Adams, thirty-six years before independence was declared, championed the Calvinist tradition of self-government in his masters thesis, that it was lawful to resist the

⁶⁵ Hall, "Vindicia, Contra Tyrannos," 44. John Adams to F.C. Schaeffer, November 25, 1821. Accessed March 1, 2016. National Archives, Founders Online. <http://founders.archives.gov/?q=Recipient%3A%22Schaeffer%2C%20F.%20C.%22&s=1111311111&r=3>

“Supreme Magistrate” if there was no other means of preserving the Commonwealth, this before John Locke’s *Second Treatise* had become as popular as it was destined to in the colonies. This Calvinist tradition continued to be expressed in various organs. The Declaration of Rights, which were passed by the Continental Congress in October, 1774, said that,

(T)he act passed the same session for establishing the Roman Catholic Religion in the province of Quebec, abolishing the equitable system of English laws, and erecting a tyranny there, to the great danger, from so great a dissimilarity of Religion, law, and government, of the neighboring British colonies by the assistance of whose blood and treasure the said country was conquered from France.⁶⁶

The Declaration of Independence, written and passed two years later, also carried the Calvinistic tradition; the preamble, declaring that “all men are created equal,” that all governments receive their power from the consent of the governed and that the governed have the power and right to replace the forms of government when tyranny takes hold of the old institutions and forms, dovetailed well with the Calvinist tradition of self-government and resistance to tyranny.

Although Jefferson, the primary author of the Declaration, read Locke, many of the other delegates at the Congress had not and, by Jefferson’s own account, he was not attempting to discover “new principles” but only to express the general sentiments of the colonists, many of whom, again, had read the Reformers and were Calvinists themselves.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Declaration of Rights and Grievances. First Continental Congress, October 1774. US Constitution.net. Accessed March 2, 2016. <http://www.usconstitution.net/intol.html>

⁶⁷ Hall, “*Vindicia, Contra Tyrannos*,” 49-50. The Declaration of Rights, October 1774. U.S. Constitution Online. Accessed March 2, 2016. <http://www.usconstitution.net/intol.html> It should be noted, however, that there was a republican strain inherent in Christianity from the very beginning. For example, the early Church was seen as a republic, of sorts, inasmuch as it was open to all individuals, regardless of class, ethnicity, or sex. Also, the Church was concerned with public virtue (as well as with the virtue of the individual) as a republic should be; and, some of the organizational structures of the Church were also republican, such as bishops being elected by presbyters and with the consensus of the neighboring bishops. See Antony Black, “Christianity and Republicanism: from St. Cyprian to Rousseau.” In *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91 no. 3 (September 1997): 648-649. Accessed November 7, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2952080>

The Bible was another strong influence in America. The Bible was the most accessible book in the colonies in the late eighteenth century and, as such, it was read by most and, more importantly, shaped the language, education, law, politics and letters of the time. The Bible so permeated the early American society that when it was used in the areas listed above, the writers and speakers often were on “auto-pilot” and simply quoted the Bible without reference to the particular book, chapter and verse they were referring to. George Washington was a master of this practice; his letters often possessed Biblical references, such as to “forbidden fruit,” [Genesis 3], “like sheep to the Slaughter,” [Psalm 4:22, Acts 8:32], “sleep with my fathers,” [Deuteronomy 31:16, I Kings 1:21], and “separating the Wheat from the tares,” [Matthew 18:6, Luke 17:2, Mark 9:42]. In one letter to his “adopted son,” the Marquis de Lafayette penned in 1785, Washington made seven references to the Scriptures in one sentence; some of these references included “the first and greatest commandment,” [Matthew 22:38], “*Increase and Multiply,*” [Genesis 1:22, 28], “the Land of Promise,” [Exodus 12:25], “the roads will be made easy,” [Isaiah 40:3].⁶⁸ Many of the men of the revolution had nothing but praise for the Holy Scriptures; for example, John Dickenson declared that the Bible “had done more good than all the books in the world.” John Jay stated that “(t)he Bible is the best of all Books, for it is the word of God,” while Roger Sherman, in a confession of faith, said that the Old and New Testaments were “a revelation from God, and a complete rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.”⁶⁹ Even revolutionaries who were not orthodox in their faith, of whatever denomination, regarded the Bible with reverence. John Adams serves as an example of this. Adams expressed disbelief in the Incarnation and the Trinity, writing to John Quincy Adams in

⁶⁸ Daniel L. Dreisbach, “The Bible and the Political Culture of the American Founding,” in *Faith and the Founders of the American Republic*, ed. Daniel L. Dreisbach and Mark David Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 147, 154-155.

⁶⁹ Dreisbach, “The Bible and the Political Culture of the Founding of America,” 149.

1816, “An incarnate God!!! An eternal, Self-existent, omnipotent omnipresent omniscient Author of this Stupendous Universe, Suffering on a Cross!!! My Soul Starts with horror, at the Idea, and it has Stupified the Christian World. It has been the Source of almost all the Corruptions of Christianity.”⁷⁰ And, yet, the elder Adams had deep respect for the Bible. In his diary, in 1756, Adams hypothesized what would happen if a nation took the Bible as its sole law book. He concluded that,

Every member would be obliged in Conscience to temperance and frugality and industry, to justice and kindness and Charity towards his fellow men, and to Piety and Love, and reverence towards almighty God. In this Commonwealth, no man would impair his health by Gluttony, drunkenness, or Lust—no man would sacrifice his most precious time to cards, or any other trifling and mean amusement—no man would steal or lie or any way defraud his neighbour, but would live in peace and good will with all men—no man would blaspheme his maker or profane his Worship...⁷¹

Years later, in 1807, Adams maintained his high opinion of the Bible, writing to Benjamin Rush that, “(t)he Bible contains the most profound Philosophy, the most perfect Morality, and the most refined Policy, that ever was conceived upon Earth. It is the most Republican Book in the World, and therefore I will still revere it.”⁷² The Bible was so widely respected and pervasive in the colonies that it was referenced more than any other work in the literature of the revolution,

⁷⁰ John Adams to John Quincy Adams, March 28, 1816. National Archives, Founders Online. Accessed February 28, 2016. <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-03-02-3058>

⁷¹ John Adams, Diary, February 22, 1756. The Massachusetts Historical Society. Accessed February 28, 2016. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/doc?id=D1&hi=1&query=Bible&tag=text&archive=diary&rec=6&start=0&numRecs=8>

⁷² John Adams to Benjamin Rush, February 2, 1807. National Archives, Founders Online. Accessed February 28, 2016. <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-5166>

trumping the Enlightenment thinkers, the Whig writers, the British Common Law and even the classics.⁷³

Yet another way by which the Christian religion had an influence upon America and the revolution was Hebraic republicanism. Hebraic republicanism—the idea that the Bible gave the blueprints for the ancient republic of the Israelites—originated in Europe in the seventeenth century when the Reformation brought the Bible to a wider audience. At the time, the Old Testament came to be seen more and more as not only the Old Law but as a political constitution which God wrote for the ancient Israelites.⁷⁴ At the same time, thoughts on government were also changing. Prior to the seventeenth century, thinkers had believed that republican government was legitimate but, they believed, so were monarchy and aristocracy. With the coming and the rise of Hebraic republicanism, however, republican governments came to be seen as the only legitimate form of government. This new idea regarding government rose, especially in England, perhaps in part due to the identification of England as a “second Israel,” a claim that first appeared in 1563.⁷⁵ John Milton, best known as the author of *Paradise Lost*, attempted to justify England’s kingless government after the execution of Charles I through the use of Hebraic republicanism, arguing that it was a form of idolatry to ask for a king, coming to this conclusion by interpreting Deuteronomy 17 and I Samuel 8 in the tradition of the *Devarim Rabbah* a compendium of classical Midrashim (rabbinic exegetical commentary) which claimed that

⁷³ Donald S. Lutz, “The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth Century American Political Thought.” In *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 78, no. 1 (March 1984): 192. Accessed June 30, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1961257>

⁷⁴ Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 3, 16-17.

⁷⁵ Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 23, 24, 20-21. Also. Eran Shalev, “‘A Perfect Republic’: The Mosaic Constitution in Revolutionary New England, 1755-1788.” In *The New England Quarterly* Vol. 82, no. 2 (June 2009): 238. Accessed November 7, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25652007>

monarchy itself was a sin since it is tantamount to idolatry as one is bowing to earthly kings instead of to God. Milton then continued to argue that Israel was not a unique case but that God could be made the sole sovereign in any commonwealth, and that He had to be if His kingdom was the only truly good and just one.⁷⁶ Other English writers continued to use Hebraic republicanism. Algernon Sydney, for example, using Milton as a starting point, declared that monarchy was a rejection of God, while James Harrington and John Locke both singled out the Hebrew republic as an ideal form of government.⁷⁷ Hebraic republicanism also found a footing in the colonies. Perhaps the most famous use of Hebraic republicanism was Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*. Paine set many of his arguments squarely within the tradition of Hebraic republicanism, arguing that the idea of kingship itself, and the idea of hereditary succession in the kingship are not only ridiculous but have brought the world only death and destruction. The ultimate reason for this is based on the Bible; Paine, arguing in the usual mold of the Hebraic republicans, contended that kingship was invalid because it was intrinsically hateful to God.⁷⁸ Many others also utilized this tradition of republican thought for the arguments of the revolution, particularly pastors and especially in New England. Samuel Langdon, for example, in 1775, offered a sermon in which he elaborated on the form and function of the Hebrew constitution, calling it a "perfect republic" and declaring that God had only given the Israelites a king as punishment for their "folly." Israel was seen as the "perfect republic" due to the fact, not only that it was a mixed government but also because it was the only one that had been divinely

⁷⁶ Nathan R. Perl-Rosenthal, "The 'Divine Right of Republics': Hebraic Republicanism and the Debate over Kingless Government in Revolutionary America." In *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 66, no. 3 (July 2009): 540. Accessed November 7, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40467522> Also, Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 35, 37, 38-39.

⁷⁷ Perl-Rosenthal, "The 'Divine Right of Republics,'" 540; Shalev, "'A Perfect Republic,'" 242.

⁷⁸ Perl-Rosenthal, "The 'Divine Right of Republics.'" 550, 551.

ordained by heaven.⁷⁹ Even before the revolution was truly underway, Hebraic republicanism was an influence in the colonies; in his sermon, *The Snare Broken*, speaking of the rescinding of the Stamp Act, Jonathan Mayhew cited not only the ancient and Whig writers for his conclusion that “freedom was a great blessing,” but also the fact that God had punished the Israelites with a king because they “had not sense and virtue enough to like a free common-wealth, and to have himself as their king.”⁸⁰

The Whig Tradition

Another tradition that exercised influence on the colonies was the Whig tradition that originated in England. The Whigs had a long tradition in England, starting with Robert Filmer’s attacks on Catholic natural law theory in the early days of the seventeenth century with the publication of his *Patriarcha*.⁸¹ The real beginnings of clearly identifiable Whiggery, however, came with the publication of Algernon Sydney’s *Discourses* after the Restoration, when he argued against the mixed regime theory of the moderate Whigs, instead contending for his belief that sovereignty resided in popular bodies that possessed rotating members and frequent elections. Another feature of Sydney’s political philosophy was his defense of natural rights and natural liberty; he argued that the fact that almost all men, whether Catholic or Protestant, believed in natural liberty demonstrated that the idea of natural liberty was an *a priori* one that men could not deny without denying their own nature. Sydney also stressed the importance of virtue in republican society. He also declared that natural rights were the underlying premise of the origins and ends of government.⁸² John Locke was another prominent Whig writer; his *Two*

⁷⁹ Shalev, “A Perfect Republic,” 247, 246.

⁸⁰ Mayhew, *The Snare Broken*, 43.

⁸¹ Lee Ward, *The Politics of Liberty in England and Revolutionary America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 23-24.

⁸² Ward, *The Politics of Liberty*, 156, 160, 164-165, 173.

Treaties on Government made the individual's natural rights the underpinning of his entire political philosophy for, contra the Catholic natural law theorists such as Bellarmine and Suárez, who stated that punishment for violations of the natural law could only, legitimately, come from established political authority, Locke instead insisted that this right resided in each individual while in the state of nature; the government's right to punish such infractions only came through the individual's right.⁸³

Americans in the colonies were greatly taken with the Whig tradition and with the Whig writers. It may be remembered that among the influences which Jonathan Mayhew cited in his sermon, *The Snare Broken*, Sydney, Milton and Locke are credited for their appreciation of freedom. Other Whig influences as well included Grotius and Pufendorf, Francis Bacon, Matthew Hale, and John Holt, though influence did not mean that the same conclusions would be reached. James Otis and his nemesis, Governor Thomas Hutchinson of Massachusetts, both read Coke but each drew vastly different lessons from the English lawyer,⁸⁴ one remaining loyal to England, the other becoming one of the earliest patriots. One of the greatest Whig influences in America, however, was *Cato's Letters*, a series of essays which were written by John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, at first, in reaction to the South Sea Bubble collapse, but which later became a wider defense of radical Whig theory of government and liberty.⁸⁵ A brief look at the some of the letters demonstrates the influence which they had on the colonies. For example, the fifteenth letter gave a vigorous defense of freedom of speech, saying that free speech was essential to free government and that tyrants will often subvert freedom of speech in order to

⁸³ Ward, *The Politics of Liberty*, 228.

⁸⁴ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 27, 30-31.

⁸⁵ Ward, *The Politics of Liberty*, 288.

subvert free government, proof of which, the letter says, can be found in the actions of Charles I, who attempted to “forbid the people to talk of Parliaments.” “Cato” then went on actually to contrast the actions of Charles with the actions of several of Rome’s greatest heroes, saying that, “Horatius, Valerius, Cincinnatus, and other virtuous and undersigning magistrates of the Roman commonwealth, had nothing to fear from liberty of speech.”⁸⁶ In the fifty-ninth letter, Trenchard and Gordon made a defense of liberty in general, declaring that “All men are born free; liberty is a gift which they receive from God himself...” and that the right of the rulers in government stem from the natural rights of the individuals and that, in fact, the people must be the judge of their rulers to see that they have acted justly.⁸⁷ What Trenchard and Gordon actually accomplished, and successfully so, was a fusion of Lockean liberalism, especially in regards to natural rights (such as free speech) and republicanism, with Sydney’s ideas.⁸⁸ This Whig influence is seen in the American literature, such as in James Otis’ *The Rights of British Colonies Asserted and Proved*, which he wrote in 1764. In it, Otis took Locke as gospel using the Lockean concepts of natural right, liberty and the formation of government to argue that Parliament had no power to tax the colonies. In addition, Otis argued that the Glorious Revolution of 1688 proved Locke correct, that individuals could change their form of government when those forms no longer secured the people’s safety and happiness. Since this was a natural right, the American colonists possessed it just as legitimately as their English brethren.⁸⁹

The Whig tradition dealt not only with political theory but with history as well; historians of the ancient world, such as Walter Moyle’s *Tracts* on Greek and Roman commonwealths, and

⁸⁶ *Cato’s Letters*, Letter 15, in *Cato’s Letters* Volume One, ed. Ronald Hamowy (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995), 110-111.

⁸⁷ *Cato’s Letters*, Letter 59, 406-407.

⁸⁸ Ward, *The Politics of Liberty*, 290-291, 295-296, 301.

⁸⁹ Ward, *The Politics of Liberty*, 332, 334-335, 339.

Edward Montagu's *Rise and Fall of Antient Republicks* contributed to Whig historical theory. For them, the Anglo-Saxons had been the possessors of a Utopia—frugal and virtuous farmers who made their own laws and elected their own officials. These practices, they had carried with them to England, though they had only taken those practices which would be of use to them in England. This “Saxon utopia” was destroyed by the Norman invasion and the story of liberty on the island was often seen as the struggle to regain those ancient rights and liberties; in this light, the Magna Carta became of supreme importance to the writers of the Whig tradition as it dealt a blow to the Norman autocracy.⁹⁰ This belief was even present in the political Whig writers. Sydney, for example, drew attention to the fact that the Saxons, the “lovers of liberty,” had participated in their general councils, demonstrating their legislative power and that the kings of the Saxons had come from these councils and assemblies of the people.⁹¹

Conclusions

America was a land filled with different intellectual traditions but, rather than acting in opposition to each other, these traditions were actually melded by the colonists into a unified whole. As Mayhew's sermon and Patrick Henry's speech seem to indicate, the colonists could, and did, draw from the different intellectual traditions which were available to them and did not see themselves as bound to one particular strand of thought at a time. As such, the men of the revolution cannot be pegged into one tradition or another—one to the classics, another to the Whig tradition, another to the Christian, religious tradition. This also seems impossible to do as the very traditions which informed the colonists often were not “pure” themselves. As has been

⁹⁰ Trevor Colbourn, *The Lamp of Experience: Whig History and the Intellectual Origins of the American Revolution*. Online Library of Liberty. Accessed March 3, 2016. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/674>

⁹¹ Ward, *The Politics of Liberty*, 183.

seen, some of the Whig writers, such as Trenchard and Gordon in *Cato's Letters*, drew heavily upon the classics, and while classical republicanism and Hebraic republicanism were distinct, both could exist together. That the colonists and revolutionaries were part of the “tradition of liberty” seems a more apt description than the more narrow categories of classic, religious or Whig.

Chapter Two

The Mantle of the Past

“The History of Greece should be to our countrymen what is called in many families on the Continent, a boudoir, an octagonal apartment in a house, with a full-length mirror on every side...”

John Adams

Eighteen days before Patrick Henry gave his “Liberty or Death” speech before the House of Burgesses in Virginia, approximately four hundred seventy-five miles to the north, another drama was played out. March 5th, 1775 marked the fifth anniversary of the Boston Massacre, and, as was customary, a memorial was held in remembrance of the Bostonians who had died in 1770. In 1775, the individual chosen to give the oration was Dr. Joseph Warren. Warren was a young patriot—he was not quite thirty-four when he gave his oration for the Massacre’s fifth anniversary—who had been a protégé of Samuel Adams. Warren had taken part in resistance to the British from the very beginning, writing a letter in the *Boston Gazette* that attacked Massachusetts’ former Governor Francis Bernard for his enforcement of the Stamp Act. In 1774, Warren had also been the author of the Suffolk Resolves, which had condemned the Intolerable Acts in no uncertain terms, calling the different acts “murderous” and urging resistance in the form of economic warfare against England, including withholding taxes from the Crown and refusing to trade with England and other parts of the Empire, such as Ireland and the West Indies.⁹² Warren’s speech to Boston on the fifth of March, 1775, gave a very good synopsis of the position which Boston and the people of America, in general, faced. Warren reminded his listeners that “personal liberty is the natural right of every man” and that it had been for that

⁹² Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause*, 168, 252.

reason that the forefathers of the people of Boston had risked all rather than wear “the yoke of despotism” in a place where, through their industry and perseverance, the soil rewarded them with good harvests. After defending the New World, Warren said that the British who, until this time had ignored the colonists, allowing them to conduct their own business for the most part, saw the wealth and success of the colonies. At first, the relation between the mother country and her colonies had been good and reciprocal; England saw her trade extend and her wealth increase while the colonists, thought themselves free and secure and were happy to purchase British goods, inasmuch as they knew that by this trade they helped to make the empire great. But, “some demon in an evil hour” had placed the idea in the head of some British minister that the property of the colonists should be transferred to England. But, every man had a natural right to keep what he had earned, and the British had no right to what they did not own and could not take. Warren then spoke of the Massacre itself, whose “discontented ghosts with hollow groans appear to solemnize the fifth of March,” and he reminded the people of the wounds which the British—the colonists own countrymen—had inflicted. And yet, even as Warren warned that the freedoms for which their forefathers had come needed to be defended at all costs, since submitting to the shackles of tyranny would be an insult to the God Who made all men free, the people of Boston could not seek revenge.⁹³ What made Warren’s speech so memorable however, and what allowed it to survive in memory when the likes of John Hancock had also been called upon to deliver the annual oration, was that Warren wore a Roman toga during his oration.

⁹³ Dr. Joseph Warren, *An oration; delivered March sixth, 1775. At the request of the inhabitants of the town of Boston; to commemorate the bloody tragedy of the fifth of March, 1770.* America’s Historical Imprints. Accessed March 29, 2016. http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAI&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=P48E4ANFMTQ1OTYzMzE4Mi44MDA5ODY6MTozMzo

Far from being a gimmick or simple costume, Warren's toga actually served a serious purpose when he stood at the pulpit of the Old South church in Boston to deliver his commemoration of the Massacre. The Roman toga stood for the freedom, simplicity and the honesty of the old Roman Republic, inasmuch as it had been, at that time, the dress of the freeborn man.⁹⁴ This link to the classical past was reinforced by the manner in which Warren gave his address. An observer of the oration, known only as "A Spectator" wrote that in addition to the "Ciceronian toga," Warren also possessed a "Demosthenian pose." This double association for Warren, to Cicero and to Demosthenes, possessed two levels of meanings. In the first place, and on the surface, the gesture associated Warren with the two men from the classical past, both of whom were regarded as the finest orators of their respected cultures, Demosthenes for Athens and Cicero for Rome. Both, also, were admired for their stalwart defense of liberty in the face of tyranny. Demosthenes had spoken out against Philip of Macedonia when the latter had begun his mission to expand the power of Macedonia. Indeed, Demosthenes would later commit suicide rather than be captured by the Macedonians when Alexander's successor, Antipater, tried to have him arrested to prevent him from leading an Athenian revolt. Cicero, for his part, had, of course, spoken out against Cataline, the self-interested, corrupt senator, and, later against Caesar, the dictator of Rome. There was, however, another level to the association linking Warren to these figures: by associating the young doctor with Cicero and Demosthenes, Warren became a direct successor, as it were, to these men. In the classical past, Demosthenes had been one of the inspirations for Cicero and, now, Warren, by his garment and his pose, took his place as their successor, raising his voice, as they had, against tyranny.⁹⁵ A little over three months later, on

⁹⁴ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 115.

⁹⁵ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 125. It must be admitted that it is entirely possible that Warren never actually wore a toga while speaking in the Old South Church. The reason for the hesitancy, as Shalev himself notes, is that "A Spectator" seems to be the only witness who stated that Warren wore such a garment at that time. But

June 17th, Warren would use more than his voice to oppose the tyranny of Britain; he died while fighting in the battle of Bunker Hill.

Warren was not odd because he chose to identify himself with the heroes of the classical past; such thinking and such associations were common in colonial and revolutionary America. Examples abound but one in particular concerns William Pitt the Elder. Pitt, a member of Parliament, was actually one of the champions of the American colonies, speaking out against the Stamp Act. When the Act was finally revoked, a young artist, Charles Wilson Peale, was commissioned to paint a portrait of Pitt on behalf of the “Gentlemen of Westmoreland,” the one hundred fifteen Virginians under the leadership of Richard Henry Lee who had signed the Leedstown Resolution. When the portrait arrived in Chantilly, Virginia in 1769, the Gentlemen discovered that Peale had portrayed Pitt as a Roman senator within the setting of old Rome.⁹⁶ Draped in the tunic and cloak of a Roman senator, and sporting the footwear of a Roman as well,

“A Spectator” was probably a Tory, since there were times when he condescendingly dismissed the Bostonians gathered to remember the Massacre and *Rivington’s Gazette*, the paper in which “A Spectator” published his account, was a Tory newspaper published in New York. For a deeper discussion on whether Warren actually wore a toga for his oration or whether he could have worn such a toga, see Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 126-127.

⁹⁶ “William Pitt.” Westmoreland County Museum. Accessed March 29, 2016. <http://westmorelandcountymuseum.org/2013/05/06/william-pitt/>



Figure 2: William Pitt by Charles Wilson Peale. The Annapolis Complex Collection.

http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/stagsere/se1/se14/000027/htm/hesitant_revolut/msa/speccol/sc1500/sc1545/e_catalog_2002/1113research.html

Peale also established Pitt's credentials as a friend of liberty by some of the other iconography that surrounded the statesman: the fire upon the Roman altar, on which rests a laurel crown—an alter adorned by the busts of Algernon Sydney and Richard Hampden, both of them English Whigs. The statue of "British Liberty" bears the liberty cap upon her pole and the Stamp Act bill lies beneath her feet, to which Pitt is pointing with his right hand, while, in the other, he holds the Magna Carta.⁹⁷ Almost a decade later, Josiah Quincy again used the classics to describe Pitt. Quincy, who had travelled to England to plead the colonists' cause, was able to see and hear the elder

statesman rise and come to the defense of the colonies; Quincy said that Pitt was "-like an old Roman senator, rising with the dignity of age, yet speaking with the fire of youth. The illustrious

⁹⁷ Charles Coleman Sellers, "Virginia's Great Allegory of William Pitt." In *The William and Mary Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (January 1952), 58. Accessed April 3, 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1925236?seq=5#page_scan_tab_contents
The "liberty cap" was also a symbol of freedom from the Roman days, as it was a Phrygian cap, which was a headpiece worn by former slaves after their masters had granted them their freedom, upon which they became citizens of the Roman Empire. See Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 117. Although no mention is made of it, it is possible that the fire upon the altar also serves a dual, symbolic purpose: firstly, it is probably a manifestation of the "sacred fire of liberty," as George Washington termed it in his First Inaugural Address; it is also possible that the fire may represent the holy fire of Vesta, which burned perpetually in the temple of Vesta, in Rome itself, and which was tended by the Vestal Virgins who, in this way, also tended to the entire body politic.

sage stretched forth his hand with the decent solemnity of Paul, and rising with his subject, he smote his breast with the energy and grace of Demosthenes.”⁹⁸

While heroes were equated with the heroes of the past, the villains of the time were also made into the villains of the past. In fact, it was the association of British officials with the classical villains that not only acted as a barometer for American independence but also helped to encourage it. This can be seen in the natural progression of these comparisons, which only worsened as the crisis in England grew. At first, British officials, such as Massachusetts governor Thomas Hutchinson, were seen as the villains, determined to bring tyranny to America but the colonists still felt loyalty to George III as their sovereign. It was only as the crisis grew and, later, when it became irredeemable, that George was seen as being Nero, one of the worst criminals and tyrants which had ever set foot upon the stage of history.⁹⁹ This strong conflation of the present with the classical past was made possible, in large part, because of the ideas of time and history which the colonists held.

Time and History

During the eighteenth century, time was being rethought. Prior to this period, it had been understood in a very religious light, but due to the scientific conquest of the world by Isaac Newton and the field of physics, time acquired a more secular connotation. In this way, the “Creation” of the world, which at one point had been calculated to a precise date by theologians and philosophers through the use of the Bible, was increasingly pushed back into an obscure past. In the same way, humanity’s future, which had in the past been tied to God, was now secularized in a way that emphasized its temporal, rather than eternal, aspect. Newton’s influence

⁹⁸ Mullet, “Classical Influences on the American Revolution,” 103.

⁹⁹ More will be said about this further in the chapter.

secularized eternity itself; whereas before, God was seen to reside “above” time, now, God was merely always present in the flow of time. This was the key to the new idea of time as formulated by Newton: time, in his definition, was that which “of itself, and from its own nature, flows equably without relation to anything external.” Time thus became “absolute, true, and mathematical.”¹⁰⁰ Although Newton may have declared that time was now absolute and true, his and the world’s reimagining of the concept actually led to a split in time, in that two different types of time came to be understood. The first was universal, or rational, time. Rational time was the seamless and mathematical flow of time; in accordance with Newtonian physics’ tendency to secularize the world, rational time took the place of the afterlife which had been universally believed in Christendom prior to the seventeenth century. More than that, however, rational time was also understood to be a facet of reason. The invention of the clock and the pocket watch also played a role in the period’s understanding of rational time. Before these inventions, time had often been audible, inasmuch as people heard the passing of time through the ringing of the hours by the bells of the towns. With the advent of the clock and pocket watch, however, individuals could actually *see* the passing of time. This led to a greater appreciation of time because its passing could now be witnessed. This new development led to a further change in attitude regarding time in general. Time became a precious commodity as the emphasis shifted from the qualification of rational time to the quantification of rational time. This shift came about because, with the ability to actually measure the passing of time visually and by one’s own senses, rational time was more strongly regarded as a secularized eternity, where each

¹⁰⁰ Hannah Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson, Time and History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 21, 22.

relentlessly, passing hour was as precious as the one that had come before and the one that was in the future.¹⁰¹

Opposite rational time was common, or sentimental, time that actually began to be “developed,” as it were, in the second half of the eighteenth century as men became more disillusioned with the possibilities of rational time, as well as becoming more aware of the dangers which this species of time possessed. The novel, *Tristram Shandy*, a nine volume affair written by Laurence Sterne and released between 1759 and 1776, gave a grisly picture of a man completely obsessed with rational time. Walter Shandy, the father of the protagonist, Tristram, lives his life by rational time and becomes enslaved to it, Tristram saying that his father’s performance of his “marital duties” is not spared the precise timing and calculation with which he governs the rest of his life. The unnatural behavior demonstrated in some of the novel’s characters led Sterne and other thinkers of the Enlightenment to believe that there was another sort of time, one that was not universal or lineal and not as concerned with the unalterable laws of nature. This new time came to be understood as sentimental time which focused instead on *vanitas*, the individual’s perceptions, feelings and actions that were structured by the aesthetic experience of the moment rather than the scientific groundings of the laws of nature.¹⁰² Because of the slowness of human perceptions, however, the subject who immerses himself in sentimental time tries to cling to the present that is already transforming into the past. Sentimental time questioned not only if future plans could ever be made but it also postulated that each moment was unique and that when it was gone, it was gone forever.¹⁰³ Besides the switch in emphasis and focus, this made sentimental time the opposite of rational time as well,

¹⁰¹ Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson, Time and History*, 29-30, 32, 36, 43, 44.

¹⁰² Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson, Time and History*, 74, 75.

¹⁰³ Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson, Time and History*, 82, 83.

since the former taught that each moment was unique whereas the latter declared that while each moment might be precious from a rational outlook—an individual's span on earth was finite—each moment was identical to all others, all moments flowing from the same linear span of time. Thomas Jefferson provides two sterling examples from his life, one of sentimental time and the other of the interplay between rational and sentimental time. After the death of his wife, Martha, Jefferson kept a locket of her hair as well as a piece of paper upon which Martha had started to write out some lines from the novel *Tristram Shandy*; the hair and her writing on the paper helped keep Martha "physically" in Jefferson's life while the lines she wrote from the novel actually "extended" the moment which she and Jefferson had shared over the book.¹⁰⁴

The example which demonstrated the interplay between the different kinds of Time as well as the tension between the two, was the letter that Jefferson wrote in 1786 to Maria Cosway. The wife of English artist, Richard Cosway, Maria was also an artist, as well as beautiful and intelligent. Though seventeen years Jefferson's junior when the two of them met in Paris in August of 1786, there was undoubtedly an infatuation, at the very least on Jefferson's part. Yet the romance ended, brought about by a sprained wrist on Jefferson's part that kept him confined to his house in Paris until October, by which point Maria and her husband had returned home to London.¹⁰⁵ Jefferson, his ardor probably cooled, wrote Maria his letter to her, famous for its possessing the memorable and lengthy discussion between Jefferson's head and his heart, with his head representing rationality and, therefore, operating within rational time and the heart, or sentiment, operating, of course, in sentimental time. The letter begins with the head and the heart discussing their positions after the departure of the Cosways from Paris. The heart is in a state of

¹⁰⁴ Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson, Time and History*, 80.

¹⁰⁵ McCullough, *John Adams*, 369-370.

utter turmoil; the head remarks that even though both of them knew the night before that Maria was leaving Paris in the morning, “This was enough to throw you into agonies. All night you tossed us from one side of the bed to the other. No sleep, no rest.” The head continued, berating the heart for dwelling on what had been and thus incapable of learning any lessons for the future, telling the heart, “I remind you of the follies of the first day, intending to deduce from thence some useful lessons for you, but instead of listening to these, you kindle at the recollection, you retrace the whole series with a fondness which shews you want nothing but the opportunity to act over again.”¹⁰⁶

Rather than risk the chance of being dragged into the sorrows and miseries of other people, one of the lessons which the head relays to the heart is that “To avoid those eternal distresses, to which you are forever exposing us, you must learn to look forward before you take a step which may interest our peace. Everything in this world is a matter of calculation.” Rationality is the watchword of the head and is the only method by which one should act and live in the world, if one wishes to have some semblance of peace and happiness. The heart, on the other hand, as its function implies, lives upon and only for sentiment. This tendency runs throughout the entire letter, as the heart is unable to logically answer any questions which the head poses to it; at one point, for example, the heart sees nothing impossible in the Cosways coming to America and when the head asks the heart to “put this possibility to the test” the heart cannot argue intelligently on the subject, saying that America is the finest place on earth to be and that the Cosways are sensible people who may very well recognize the greatness of America. In other words, wishful thinking is the engine upon which the heart runs. Throughout the letter, this tendency is made again and again as the heart is more than willing to simply relive the past

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Jefferson, letter to Maria Cosway, October 12, 1786. In *Thomas Jefferson Writings*. 868-874.

rather than plan or look ahead at the future, even a future that is more optimistic and personable than the one which is advocated by the head. However, the heart is able to check the head at the end of the dialogue. After the head's soliloquy on reason as the only means of living, the heart answers that while nature may have given the head the field of science, to the heart, she gave morals. Thus, "in denying to you the feelings of sympathy, of benevolence, of gratitude, of justice, of love, of friendship, she has exclud ed you from their control...Morals are too essential to the happiness of man to be risked on the uncertain combinations of the head." The warning and disdain are quite clear: when relying solely on rationality, an individual becomes something less than a man.

These new and different ideas of time and the different divisions which were made within the sphere of Time itself, led to different ideas of history. At the time of the American revolution, there were, broadly speaking, three different conceptions, or theories of history. The first one took its genesis from the Great Awakening. For the thinkers and theologians of the Awakening, history was a line that extended from the point when God created the world to that future point when Christ would reappear in the Second Coming in all His glory. The second was, in accordance with the new Newtonian ideas of time, a secularized version of the Great Awakening's understanding of history which was propelled by the idea of progress in the realm of rational time. The third was the cyclical understanding of history which acted as a mediator between the two other understandings.¹⁰⁷

The cyclical understanding of history truly arrived in America thanks to the Great Awakening, specifically through the "conservative" reaction which the Awakening brought

¹⁰⁷ Stow Persons, "The Cyclical Theory of History in the Eighteenth Century." In *American Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (Summer 1954), 148-149.

about in reaction to itself.¹⁰⁸ Ministers such as Charles Chauncy, John Thomson and Alexander Gordon feared that social chaos would descend upon their communities and churches due to the Awakening unleashing the emotions of the populaces.¹⁰⁹ The example of Samuel Davis, the Awakening preacher who possessed such powers of eloquence that he was capable of making his listeners shiver or sweat whenever he pronounced the words “hot” and “cold” was, more than likely, what the non-Awakening preachers and leaders had in mind when they feared that the Awakening was unleashing emotions that could not be controlled. The only sure guide, these men said, and the only true means of attaining life in the afterlife was through reason. Chauncy, for example, believed that the Spirit operated on reason itself to bring about a change of temperament as well as a chain which was wrapped around the emotions; the passions, or emotions, were kept in check through the mind’s new understanding of the truth. For Chauncy and the rest of the “Old Lights” who opposed the Awakening, subjective impressions were not means by which an individual could access the free grace which Christ had earned for mankind. In trying to stoke the emotions, the preachers of the Awakening and the people who followed it were not using their reason, which meant that they were acting in spiritual matters while unenlightened and that, for the Old Lights, was precisely the problem and why they opposed the Awakening.¹¹⁰ History entered the picture in opposition to the Awakening because, being in

¹⁰⁸ A note must be said regarding the use of the word “conservative” especially in the context given. The use of the word here, in this context, is inappropriate since it gives the distinct impression that conservatism is simply the attempt or mindset to preserve the status quo. This understanding and use of the word in this meaning is not accurate; Russell Kirk, for example, stated that conservatism must, indeed, change with the times. The only questions to be asked in regard to change is how much change should be tried at any one block of time and for what reasons. See, for example, Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind* (2008) and *The Politics of Prudence* (1993). The historical field, however, may not be aware of this tenent of conservatism (at least of the traditionalist stripe) as many historians seem to use this word inappropriately in their work. A new description should be used for occasions such as the above and, although it is not my purpose here to solve this problem, a note concerning the inaccuracy was needed.

¹⁰⁹ Persons, “The Cyclical Theory of History,” 150.

¹¹⁰ Persons, “The Cyclical Theory of History,” 150-151.

conflict with the movement, the Old Lights could not subscribe to its linear theory of history, nor, in the same vein, did they think that the Awakening was the herald of the Second Coming. In response, the opponents of the Awakening came to the conclusion that, rather than being linear, as rational time was, history was propelled by the dynamics of universal, unalterable, moral law, which turned it into an endless circular motion. History, therefore, resembled the cycle of life in an organism.¹¹¹

The cyclical version of history was also quite prominent in the colonial South. In the South, the cyclical understanding of history was a means of understanding the dynamics of civilizations—civilizations were born, they rose to glory and peaked, after which they declined and fell. Looking through history, the “cyclical historians” saw luxury as one of the prominent causes of a civilization’s collapse. Luxury was the reason why Britain had become corrupt and tyrannical; the very success of the British empire and the wealth and power which had followed that success had transformed Britain from a source of liberty to a source of tyranny. Luxury also explained why England was seen to be in decline while America’s fortunes were still seen to be on the rise, since America, as a younger civilization than Britain, had not become corrupted as a result of the success given by the rise to glory. The contrast made between the citizen-soldiers of America and the professional soldiery of Britain was one way the colonists demonstrated this difference. The professional soldier was part of a standing army and the standing army was a vivid sign of corruption and one which implicated the people in the corruption of their rulers. As such, the professional soldier was seen as a man who killed for money, and so, preferred long and easy wars for his own gain. The citizen-soldier, on the other hand, was a paragon of virtue. He fought for freedom and, as such, he fought with a valor that the professional soldier lacked.

¹¹¹ Persons, “The Cyclical Theory of History,” 151-152.

As Congress explained in February of 1776, “...they [the American soldiers] have not the Advantages arising from Experience and Discipline: But...native Courage, warmed with Patriotism, is sufficient to counterbalance these Advantages.” On the other hand, and more troublesome for the “cyclical historians,” the cyclical theory of history also meant that eventually America, too, would become corrupt and decline and fall.¹¹²

Many people in the colonial South articulated this cyclical theory of history. One of these was George Mason of Virginia. In his “Remarks on Independent Elections,” which he delivered in April of 1775 and which dealt with the county militias—which were independent of the royal governor’s control—and the militiamen’s ability to elect their officers, Mason brought in the cyclical view of history, declaring that civilizations began their decline when the powers started not returning to the “body of the people” from which their authority originally came. Then, after this has happened, the “inevitable destruction of the state follows: ‘(t)hen down the precipice of time it goes, And sinks in moments, which in ages rose.’” Mason continued by saying, “The history of all nations who have had liberty and lost it, puts these facts beyond doubt. We have great cause to fear that this crisis is approaching in our mother country. Her constitution has strong symptoms of decay. It is our duty by every means in our power to prevent the like here.” Mason brings the lessons of Rome into contemporary use for his contemporaries, reminding them that as long as the Roman Commonwealth “preserved its vigour, new consuls were annually elected, new levies made, and new officers appointed...” but that after these practices had been discarded, the Roman soldiers no longer saw themselves as the soldiers of the Republic but as the soldiers of “Marius or of Sylla, of Pompey or of Caesar, of Marc Antony or of

¹¹² Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 75, 76-80. Also, Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 35, 46, 28.

Octavius.”¹¹³ The next month, in May, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and the *Virginia Gazette* published a speech which William Moore Smith delivered before the Continental Congress. Smith, like Mason, reminded the delegates that ancient Rome had risen to “the summit of human glory, and fell again, low as the dust of the earth . . . trampled under the feet of barbarian swarms.” The reason for this reversal of fortune had been because

Virtue and honor . . . ceased to distinguished her; that superior genius, and enthusiastic love of liberty which raised her to eminence . . . changed their complexion to rapine and oppression . . . that independent spirit which could derive all the substantial comforts of life from a few acres of ground, degenerated into a capaciousness which whole provinces could not satisfy; generals and commanders were not called from a handy education in the camp or at the plough but from brothels, and all the effeminate senses of voluptuousness and vice.¹¹⁴

On the other hand, the idea that history was an extended line that continued on, found its niche in the New England colonies. In point of fact, if one articulated the cyclical version of history in the New England colonies, the odds were good that the person articulating the theory was a loyalist, as the cyclical theory of History was not expressed by the northern Patriots.¹¹⁵ One reason for this was the remaining influences of Puritanism in New England. The Puritans had seen themselves as the final form of the church and America herself as the place that God had ordained to be the sanctuary. Samuel Sherwood, preaching in Norfolk, Connecticut in 1776, identified the woman who fled to the wilderness from the great dragon in the book of Revelation as the church, and the wilderness as America. The wilderness, Sherwood preached, had become

¹¹³ George Mason, *Remarks on the Annual Elections for the Fairfax Independence Company*. April, 1775. Gunston Hall Library. Accessed March 29, 2016.

http://www.gunstonhall.org/library/archives/manuscripts/independent_elections.html

¹¹⁴ Quoted in Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 77.

¹¹⁵ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 85.

an actual paradise, a rose that had blossomed and the land of Canaan for the church.¹¹⁶ There was, however, another reason for this preference for the linear rather than the cyclical version of history. The linear version of history meant that the seeds of America's destruction were not already planted inside of her. One New Englander who articulated this more optimistic view of history was Jonathan Austin, who followed Joseph Warren in giving the oration for the Boston Massacre memorial in 1778. Austin told his audience that, “[s]peculative writers may, indeed, tell us, that the seeds of dissolution exist in every body politic...”. However, he personally found the Latin motto, *nil desperandum pro republica*—do not despair for the state—as a much more optimistic philosophy since an overview of history (by which he meant the histories of Greece and Rome) illustrated that republics only crumbled when vice had permeated the societies, and this only occurred when the citizens no longer fought for their republics but were replaced by professional soldiery.¹¹⁷

Within these different ideas of time and the differing theories of history lay another concept, that of the *translatio imperii*, the idea or belief that empire—the source of culture, power, arts and sciences—moved from East to West. This idea had first been expressed in the time of the ancient Romans, appearing in the works of Vergil and Seneca, for instance, and it had survived through the early Christian and medieval period. The secularization of the seventeenth century, however, injured this notion. This was especially evident in the Italian city states of the

¹¹⁶ Samuel Sherwood, *The church's flight into the wilderness: an address on the times. Containing some very interesting and important observations on Scripture prophecies: shewing, that sundry of them plainly relate to Great-Britain, and the American colonies; and are fulfilling in the present day.* January 17, 1776. America's Historical Imprints. Accessed February 27, 2016. http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_action=doc&p_theme=eai&p_product=EAIX&p_docref=v2%3A0F2B1FCB879B099B@EAIX

¹¹⁷ Jonathan William Austin, *An oration, delivered March 5th, 1778, at the request of the inhabitants of the town of Boston: to commemorate the bloody tragedy of the fifth of March, 1770.* America's Historical Imprints. Accessed March 28, 2016. http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAIX&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=S47B46LBMTQ1OTg4NTMwOC4yMTQ4MTToxOjEzOjlw

late Renaissance that were, at the time, attempting to free themselves from the jurisdiction of the Holy Roman Empire¹¹⁸ which, because of the ascension of the modern nation-state, was already losing its significance as the *Weltchristentum*, or Christian Commonwealth,¹¹⁹ which it had been seen as in the Middle Ages. In order to escape the jurisdiction of the Empire, the Italian city states articulated the “decline and fall” theory as a replacement for the *translatio imperii*, which stated that all civilizations declined and fell after rising to the pinnacle of their glory. The weakening belief in a personal God acting in history also led to the weakening of the *translatio imperii*. Machiavelli, for example, said that the master mechanism of history was the interplay between human actions and *necessità* (or Fate). This in itself also fueled the new idea of decline and fall; Machiavelli said that a republic was best ruled by the leader who possessed *virtù*, the ability to act in a timely fashion with courage, energy and intelligence. Regardless of how much *virtù* a leader possessed, however, Fate would eventually cast him down.¹²⁰ The idea of the *translatio imperii* was battered even more in the eighteenth century. Due to the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, by the time of the Enlightenment, reason had been redefined. The scientific revolution characterized reason as Cartesian—using *a priori* knowledge and ideas, an individual would be able to deduce from these first principles the truth of any matter. The “science of deduction” had to remain a strong and inflexible train in order for the conclusions reached at the end to be guaranteed truth. Newton, however, displaced Descartes. In his “Rules for Philosophizing,” Newton rejected deduction and made use, instead, of analysis. Unlike deduction, wherein the reasoning individual moved from first principles to conclusions,

¹¹⁸ Ernst Breisbach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*, third edition (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), 159.

¹¹⁹ Jan Willem Schulte Noordholt, *The Myth of the West: America as the Last Empire* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 8.

¹²⁰ Breisbach, *Historiography*, 158.

analysis (what we would call induction today) worked in the opposite way, starting with gathered data and moving from there toward the first principles that dictated why phenomena occurred in the manner observed. The end goal of Newtonian analysis was to establish universal law and order in the natural world.¹²¹ The men of the Enlightenment proceeded to apply Newtonian induction across the spectrum of thought, and, like a ripple, this application of induction brought about dire changes in the way that the Enlightenment viewed the world. In metaphysics, for example, man could no longer say with certainty that there were unalterable, philosophical truths that encompassed the world. Instead, in the words of Voltaire, analysis—which was the definition of reason throughout the eighteenth century—made man the equivalent of a blind man who was now to make a judgment about color; analysis was the staff which nature had given man in order to help him in his mental work.¹²² Because of this new way of thinking, history was also viewed quite differently by the Enlightenment thinkers. The historical markers and assumptions that had been made before—such as the incarnation, birth and resurrection of Christ, i.e., sacred history, and the very workings of God in history—became increasingly passé.¹²³ As a result, the Enlightenment thinkers disregarded, in many ways, the *translatio imperii*. Montesquieu, for example, saw history not as ruled by an overarching hand of Providence, but by the mixture of fate and Chance. Underlying the flow of history, Montesquieu saw what he termed “general causes” that shaped the direction in which societies moved. Added to this was chance, made possible by free human will; an example of this was Caesar falling love

¹²¹ Ernst Cassier, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), 8, 9.

¹²² J.G.A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion: The Enlightenment of the Edward Gibbon*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 56-57.

¹²³ Breisbach, *Historiography*, 199.

with Cleopatra, which allowed the drama that led to the primacy of Rome over Egypt and the Near East.¹²⁴

The idea of the *translatio imperii* did have a resurgence in America, however. In a letter written in January, 1776, General Nathanael Greene wrote, “Heaven has decreed that tottering empire [Britain] to irreverent ruin, and, thanks to God, since Providence has so determined it, America must raise an empire of permanent duration, supported upon the grand pillars of truth, freedom, and religion, based upon justice, and defended by her own patriotick sons.”¹²⁵ What helped the colonists resurrect the idea was the *religious* atmosphere that permeated the colonies; the *translation imperii* had always been more vigorous when the idea of a personal, sovereign God who acted in history was prominent. That the colonists took the mantle of empire for themselves, helping them incorporate themselves and America into the path of the *translatio imperii* as can be seen from Greene’s letter. And, since “empire” did not designate a particular species of geopolitical entity, but instead was an *idea* based upon a spiritual or judicial foundation,¹²⁶ it was perfectly appropriate for the colonists to take this step.

Putting on the Past

These ideas and theories concerning time and history were important to the colonists because history itself was seen as being incredibly important, not merely for academic conjecture

¹²⁴ David Carrithers, “Montesquieu’s Philosophy of History”. In *Journal of the History of Ideas* 47, no. 1 (January-March 1986): 65, 67. Accessed December 10, 2015.

[http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/stable/2709595?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=\(%22Montesquieu's%22\)&searchText=Philosophy&searchText=of&searchText=History\)&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoAdvan](http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/stable/2709595?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=(%22Montesquieu's%22)&searchText=Philosophy&searchText=of&searchText=History)&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoAdvan)

¹²⁵ Nathaniel Greene as quoted in David McCullough, *1776* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2005), 68.

¹²⁶ Alain de Benoist, “The Idea of Empire.” 3. Accessed November 30, 2015.

www.gornahoor.net/library/IdeaOfEmpire.pdf

and discussion, but for simple daily living. History was seen as philosophy acted out upon the stage of the world, as Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke stated in his 1752 work, *Letters on the Uses of History*.¹²⁷ John Adams, in his work, *Defense of the Constitutions*, articulated this same belief, writing:

The History of Greece should be to our countrymen what is called in many families on the Continent, a boudoir, an octagonal apartment in a house, with a full-length mirror on every side, and another in the ceiling. The use of it is, when any of the young ladies, or young gentlemen if you will, are at any time a little out of humour, they may retire to a place where, in whatever direction they turn their eyes, they see their own faces and figures multiplied without end. By thus beholding their own beautiful persons, and seeing, at the same time, the deformity brought upon them by their anger, they may recover their tempers and their charms altogether.¹²⁸

That history was philosophy acted out in the world—or, a mirror, as Adams put it—was a vital concept inasmuch as this was a means by which virtue could be taught and passed down to succeeding generations. David Hume, the most recognizable incarnation of the Scottish Enlightenment, made this case, arguing that history could act as a teacher because of universal human nature that tied all individuals, past, present, and future together:

[T]here is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and...human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions: The same events follow from the same causes. Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit; these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all actions and enterprises, which have ever been observed among mankind. Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the GREEKS and ROMANS? Study well the temper and actions of the FRENCH and ENGLISH.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Spahn, Thomas Jefferson, *Time and History*, 107.

¹²⁸ John Adams, *Defense of the Constitutions* in *The Works of John Adams*, Vol. IV. (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1851). Online Library of Liberty. Accessed March 25, 2016. http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2102#Adams_1431-04_1306

¹²⁹ David Hume, *Essays Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1777). Online Library of Liberty. Accessed April 1, 2016. http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/341#Hume_0222_188

It was the close relation which the classical past and virtue possessed that made the revolutionaries see the history of Greece and Rome as the mirrors which could be used to implant virtue in the people. John Adams told his son John Quincy that he would find wisdom and virtue in the company of the classic authors.¹³⁰ This symbiosis between the classics and virtue was made because the colonists and others of the eighteenth century saw the classics as a depository of wisdom and virtue, as John Adams said to John Quincy. This was one of the reasons why Plutarch, for example, was so admired and read in the colonies; his biographies preserved the deeds of the Greeks and Romans and allowed their virtues to be passed down through time and taken as models for the contemporary generation. In this case, the testimony of Plutarch actually strengthened this belief, inasmuch as he himself said that in the process of gathering the stories of his subjects, he himself had become motivated to follow their examples.¹³¹

Why was there such an emphasis placed upon virtue at the time of the revolution? The answer was that virtue was seen to be the necessary ingredient in order to keep republican government viable. In his Farwell Address, George Washington laid this belief in black and white, declaring,

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports... Let it simply be asked: Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice?... It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government.¹³²

¹³⁰ Meyer, *Classica Americana*, 147.

¹³¹ Meyer, *Classica Americana*, 152, 150.

¹³² George Washington, "Washington's Farewell Address, 1796." The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy. Accessed April 1, 2016. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp

In the same vein, John Adams took the opportunity of his Inaugural Address to deliver the same message and warning to his countrymen. Adams said that, “[t]he existence of such a government as ours for any length of time is a full proof of a general dissemination of knowledge and virtue throughout the whole body of the people.”¹³³ If knowledge and virtue ever failed to disseminate among the people, Adams predicted that dark days would lie in wait for the American people and the republic, saying that, “[a]varice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”¹³⁴ The insistence upon the absolute necessity of virtue was fueled by the lessons which history—in both its cyclical and linear forms—provided. Vice and luxury were seen to have been the death knells for past civilizations, thus, the only hope for America was to attempt to ensure that the people would not forget that virtue was the only true defense against the collapse of republican self-government.

Due to the ideas of the nature of history (particularly the cyclical theory) and of time, the revolutionaries were actually able to actually draw upon the past in their struggle with England. One of the ways in which the past was used and utilized was through the use of pseudonyms. As mentioned in chapter one, pseudonyms were popular in revolutionary America, a popularity which had been passed down to the colonies through the Whig tradition in England, the most famous of which was “Cato,” the author of *Cato’s Letters*. In America, the pseudonym was the

¹³³ John Adams, “Inaugural Address of John Adams.” The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy. Accessed April 1, 2016. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/adams.asp

¹³⁴ John Adams, “To the Officers of the First Brigade of the Third Division of the Militia of Massachusetts.” In *The Works of John Adams, Vol. IX* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1856). Online Library of Liberty. Accessed April 1, 2016. http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2107#lf1431-09_head_222

most common classical symbol. Samuel Adams, for example, signed pamphlets with the names “Sincerus” and “Cedunt Arm a Togae”¹³⁵ while, as mentioned before, John Adams signed himself as “Novanglus,” a name which literally meant “New England,” in his essay debate with “Massachusettensis.” A common theme that these three examples from the Adams cousins shared was that none of these pseudonyms were actual Greek or Latin names; instead, they were *augural* names.¹³⁶ Actual names came to prominence only with the debate over the Constitution in 1788.

In the case of real names being used as pseudonyms, there were still what might be termed “fake names.” Some examples of these included “Veritas Politica,” “Vox Populi,” “Honoriūs”, and “Poplicola.” But there were many more pseudonyms used that made use of real Greek and Latin names. John Dickinson and Alexander Hanson, both of them Federalists, used the names of Fabius and Aristedes, respectively.¹³⁷ On the other side of the debate, the Anti-Federalists also utilized pseudonyms, using the names of such famous Romans as Brutus and Cato and Agrippa.¹³⁸ The greatest user of pseudonyms, however, was undoubtedly Alexander Hamilton. Every new occasion which prompted Hamilton to take up his pen and make his case before the public, was an occasion for a new pseudonym to be used. For example, in a 1784 letter written to the New York state legislature, Hamilton chose the name “Phocian” as the *nom de plume* of the letter; in his 1792 attacks on Jefferson’s fiscal policies, Hamilton wrote under the

¹³⁵ Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 39.

¹³⁶ See chapter one.

¹³⁷ Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 40.

¹³⁸ “Timeline of the Essential Anti-Federalists.” Federalist-Antifederalists Debate. Accessed April 3, 2016. <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/fed-antifed/timeline-essantifed/>

names of both Catullus and Metellus. And, in 1794, to make public his unwavering opposition to the Whiskey Rebellion, Hamilton chose as his pseudonym the name of Tully.¹³⁹

Between the era of the revolution and the time of the constitutional debate, a sure change can be observed. On the surface, it is true that many of the pseudonyms shifted from being augural to being actual names. On a deeper level, the pseudonyms, instead of being simply a rhetorical flourish added to the end of a pamphlet or letter, became, instead, a clue furnished to understand the point of the text, a vehicle in which could be housed in shorthand the message of the author.¹⁴⁰ This can be seen more clearly by comparing different examples from the two different camps. *Cato's Letters*, for example, were so named after Cato of Utica, one of the men who fought against Julius Caesar's rise to power and who committed suicide rather than surrender to Caesar, making him a beloved figure from Roman history in the Whig tradition; appropriately then, the letters deal with the theme of liberty in the broad sense. In letter fifty-nine, for example, "Cato" demonstrates that liberty is a good for all men, saying that all men are born free, a condition which, he claims, is a gift from God himself.¹⁴¹ In letter sixty-two, "Cato" gave a philosophical discourse on the nature of liberty, which he defined as the power of every man to control his own actions as well as the right of a man to the fruit of his own labor so long as he caused no harm to any other individual; the need to protect these facets of liberty was the reason for the existence of government.¹⁴² In the same letter, "Cato" said that "true and impartial liberty" also meant the "right of every man to pursue the natural, reasonable, and religious dictates of his own mind." Political liberty, "Cato" also said, was the mean that stood between

¹³⁹ Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 40-41.

¹⁴⁰ Shalev, "Ancient Masks, American Fathers," 157.

¹⁴¹ *Cato's Letters*, Letter 59, 406.

¹⁴² *Cato's Letters*, Letter 62, 427.

“natural and absolute liberty, which might otherwise grow licentious” and tyranny, which was the complete restraint upon natural liberty.¹⁴³ Finally, in letter sixty-three, “Cato” maintained that every good thing in the world is produced by liberty.¹⁴⁴ Another example of this kind of pseudonym is the *Novanglus Letters* of John Adams. While the letters were signed with an augural pseudonym, it was only the signature name that connected the letters to the classical past. There were some more references—implicit as they were—to classical antiquity. For example, Adams did sprinkle the letters with some Latin phrases; in the first letter, *Rem ipsam dic, mitte male loqui* (Tell me the thing itself and put on afterward to speak evil) and *A Deo hominis est indita naturae* (Man is endowed with the nature of God) both are seen. Adams, in much the same vein as “Cato,” also declares that liberty is a natural principle for man, much as gravity is also a natural principle; moreover, these natural principles of liberty are the principles of the greatest minds of history, such as Aristotle, Plato, Livy, Harrington, Sydney, and Locke. In this way, Adams, as Novanglus, is able to set Massachusettensis as the villain of their *tête à tête* since, as Adams says, Massachusettensis, is opposed to these principles of liberty. Furthermore, Adams took these natural principles of liberty and made a connection between them in the respective contexts of Roman and European history.¹⁴⁵ Adams’ purpose here, and of the *Novanglus Letters* in general, was to reveal the plot of the Tories to enslave America. While the pseudonym “Cato” was an actual Roman name and “Novanglus” was an augural name, both shared a common characteristic—neither pseudonym was integral to the meaning of the texts in which they were used: Cato was a fighter for liberty in Roman history, while “Cato” simply

¹⁴³ *Cato’s Letters*, Letter 62, 429.

¹⁴⁴ *Cato’s Letters*, Letter 63, 435.

¹⁴⁵ John Adams, “Novanglus; or, A History of the Dispute with America, from Its Origin, in 1754, to the Present Time Addressed to the Inhabitants of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay.” No. I. In *The Revolutionary Writings of John Adams* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000). Online Library of Liberty. Accessed March 23, 2016. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/adams-revolutionary-writings>

spoke of the general principles of liberty and its goodness in the letters; “Novanglus” was a Romanesque name that would allow the public to make the connection between the themes brought out in the letters and classical history. In fact, by their use of classical pseudonyms the authors of these series, and others like them, probably made use of the “cultural code” of the classics in which, when discussing themes of corruption, liberty and tyranny, their readers would automatically associate these contemporary works with the history of the classical past.¹⁴⁶

In the constitutional debate and afterwards, pseudonyms morphed from a more ornamental nature into being persons whom the authors of the texts actually chose to become, in a sense. This can clearly be seen in many of the pseudonyms which Alexander Hamilton chose for his pamphlets. In his 1784 pamphlet to the New York legislature, which was debating what was to be done with the confiscated property of Tories, Hamilton chose the pseudonym “Phocion” because the fourth century BC Athenian general was famous for his magnanimity which was demonstrated in the benevolent treatment he showed his prisoners and in the fact that he even forgave his personal enemies. Hamilton, both through the text and the pseudonym that he chose, was telling the New York legislature to be generous to the Tories. Likewise, when Hamilton signed his writings condemning the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794 with the name “Tully,” (which was another name for the famous Roman philosopher and orator, Marcus Tullius Cicero), Hamilton was taking on the cloak of Cicero, especially in regard to Cicero’s opposition to the scheming senator, Cataline, when Rome had been in danger of collapsing due to the inequality of wealth. Hamilton also took on the cloak of Tully when he mirrored, in the letter, Cicero’s call for the harsh punishment of conspirators.¹⁴⁷ In the same way, when Hamilton used the names

¹⁴⁶ McLachlan, “Classical Names, American Identities.” 83.

¹⁴⁷ “A Note on Certain of Hamilton’s Pseudonyms.” In *The William and Mary Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (April 1955): 284. Accessed March 25, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1920509>

Catullus and Metellus for his 1792 attacks on Jefferson's fiscal policies, he chose these two names for two specific reasons. In the first place, he showed himself to be like them. Catullus was a Roman who was loved by nobles and commoners alike, and who desired the glory of Rome above and beyond his own glory, while Metellus was a man of "true virtue." By this means, Hamilton was able to implicitly declare that he was also a man of virtue who spoke out of his love for his country and who possessed the support of all Americans, whatever their place on the social and economic scales. Secondly, by choosing these names in particular, Hamilton was able to slyly attack Jefferson. Catullus and Metellus are two figures from Rome's history that are featured in Plutarch's biography of Caius Marius and were his opponents; in fact, these pamphlets written by Hamilton against Jefferson represent the only time that Hamilton chose as pseudonyms the names of secondary characters, as it were, in Plutarch's *Lives*. Caius Marius was described by Plutarch as being a demagogue as well as one of the men responsible for preparing the way for Caesar. By taking these names for himself, Hamilton not only associated himself with Catullus and Metellus and their virtues and strengths, but implicitly identified Jefferson as the demagogue Marius.¹⁴⁸ What this demonstrates is that the pseudonyms chosen were no longer used only to provide a link to classical history, but specifically for a purpose that played an integral part of the meaning of the text itself.

It can be furthered argued that many of the names chosen as pseudonyms were chosen also with the author's intention of, in some sense, *becoming* that figure from the past. As briefly discussed in chapter one, colleges prior to the Revolution, were often houses to secret student societies and these societies often conferred upon their members new aliases or pseudonyms by

¹⁴⁸ Mackurbin T. Owens Jr, "A Further Note on Certain of Hamilton's Pseudonyms: The 'Love of Fame' and the Use of Plutarch." In *Journal of the Early Republic* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 280-282. Accessed March 25, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3123148>

which they were to be known by the society; and, often the expectation among the members of the society was that the new initiate would conform to that new name and identity. For example, when the Cliosophic Society of the College of New Jersey bequeathed the name “Cyrus,” the general described in Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, to a new initiate by the name of Aaron Burr, the Society was expressing the expectation that young Burr would become an embryo of the actual Cyrus. This did not mean that members had to correlate their behavior exactly in order to fit within their new identity. In other words, it was not necessary for the member named “Brutus” actually to kill Caesar or a man identified as Caesar. Rather, the resemblance was to be seen in broad brush strokes; Burr accomplished this through an essay he presented to the Society entitled, “On the Passions,” that was a carefully balanced working of reason and passion in the human character.¹⁴⁹ This link between the living member of the society and the figure from the past was further strengthened—and even made possible—through the use of sentimental time. When an initiate was ushered into the society, the usual laws of time—rational time—were stopped, and the initiate entered what has been termed the “womb of time,” in which figures from the past could speak to each other and interact, much as in Dante’s *Inferno*. Within the confines of the society, enshrouded in sentimental time, “Quintilian” could speak with “Socrates” and “Brutus” with “Zeno” and “Seneca” with “Shakespeare.” This understanding is reinforced when the testimony of an initiate from the 1830s is taken into account; the student described his initiation where he “remember[ed] the gorgons, the mysteries, the shapes most dire, painted on the walls as we were taken up the staircase...I felt very much like the hero of the Mantuan bard, *Obstupui, Steteruntque comae, et vox faucibus haesit* (I was amazed, my hair stood up, and the voice choked in my throat).” The entire purpose of the ceremony was to retreat

¹⁴⁹ McLachlan, “Classical names, American Identities,” 91, 92.

into the past through sentimental time and since the “Supernatural Beings” of whom the members learned were historical and not mythological, they became, in a sense, “Cyrus,” “Tully,” and “Brutus.”¹⁵⁰

As has already been shown through some of the pseudonyms which Hamilton took upon himself at the end of the eighteenth century, this “becoming” a figure from the past through the taking of names and the employment of sentimental time was not restricted to the secret, college societies. Entire arguments enacted by the “same” performers could be resurrected from the past and placed within eighteenth century America. One example of this phenomenon came from the Constitutional debate and began when “Cato” published an article arguing against New York’s ratification of the Constitution on September 27, 1787. On October 2, “Caesar” replied back to “Cato’s” original article, in which numerous classical allusions were made, such as “Cato” being called an ally of Pompey as well as “this prudent Censor” and “demagogue,” both of which were true though derogatory descriptions of the real Cato. “Cato” responded by saying that “Caesar” objected to free speech and argument, just as Julius Caesar had objected to them in the waning days of the Roman republic. A week later, “Brutus” spoke in the New York papers for the first time; he sided completely with “Cato” and during January of 1788, accused “Caesar” of making Rome an “absolute despotism.” “Mark Antony” then appeared and accused “Brutus” of insincerity in his patriotism, quoting Antony’s speech in Shakespeare’s play, *Julius Caesar*, “For Brutus is an honorable man; so are they all honorable men,” which served as an ironic denigration of Brutus.¹⁵¹ “Cato,” “Caesar,” “Brutus,” and “Mark Antony” were not simply fighting over whether New York should ratify the Constitution; they were also resurrecting the

¹⁵⁰ McLachlan, “Classical Names, American Identities,” 93, 87-88.

¹⁵¹ Shalev, “Ancient Masks, American Fathers,” 165-167.

ancient and personal battles in which their historical counterparts had engaged in antiquity. This was seen in the fact that all the warriors of this paper fight chose their *noms de plumes*, as well as the personal barbs they exchanged, for specific reasons, such as “Cato” accusing Caesar—and thereby “Caesar”—of establishing a tyranny in once-free Rome. This taking on of mantles and personas of the past was not limited to the public arena either; private persons also engaged in it. Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren, for example, took on classical names for their correspondence with each other. Mercy Warren took the name “Marcia” and Abigail the name “Portia.” These were not simply nicknames that the two friends chose for each other from a book of classical history. Warren took the name “Marcia” because it allowed her to claim a “republican pedigree” without compromising her Christian faith. Several “Marcias” existed in classical history, hence, the choice of that name, may have been deliberate on Warren’s part, since without a specific historical anchor in the name, she had more flexibility in her actions than by mirroring and conforming to any one historical personage. If, as has been suggested, Warren took the name “Marcia” at least partially from Marcia, wife of Cato the Younger and Marcia the Younger, the daughter of Cato, this allowed Warren to model herself after Cato but still retain her womanliness as well as insulate herself from the highest standards of Stoicism, which Warren later decided was irreconcilable with her Christian faith.¹⁵² Abigail, on the other hand, chose as her *nom de plume* “Portia” because that heroine was the wife of Brutus, the slayer of Caesar the tyrant, as well as a daughter of Cato the Younger. Just as the historical Portia had wounded herself in the thigh to prove herself worthy of being trusted with her husband’s deliberations which, in turn, gave Brutus the courage to kill Caesar, so did Abigail act as more

¹⁵² Philip Hicks, “Portia and Marcia: Female Political Identity and the Historical Imagination, 1770-1800.” In *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 62, no.2 (April 2005): 290, 285, 288. Accessed January 19, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3491602>

than simply a “lover” to her husband, John. She not only kept his secrets and became a sounding board for his ideas and thoughts, but when Adams was forced to leave their home in Braintree, Massachusetts to attend to the business of the revolution, business that would keep him away from home for the majority of nine years, several of which were spent across the Atlantic in Europe, Abigail bore these trials with stoical virtue, imagining herself contributing in this way to John’s success in defeating George III.¹⁵³

This assuming of historical identities was also reversed—individuals were assigned identities from the past. While seemingly trivial, these designations were, like the pseudonyms that men and women took, far from being trivial; on occasion, they could help propel the colonies to revolution. The assigning of Nero as an identity provides an example of this. When the relationship between the colonies and Britain began to deteriorate, the colonists oftentimes were usually very careful to not compare King George to Nero. The Connecticut Resolves of 1765, for example, while taking umbrage at the Stamp Act, still publicly recognized George as the lawful king of Great Britain and declared the people of Connecticut to be his loyal subjects. Similarly, when Arthur Lee wrote the *Monitor Letters* in 1767, the king was still the “most gracious Sovereign” while Parliament was seen to be the true originator of America’s woes. The policies of Britain were even compared to the tyrants of the classical world, such as when Samuel Adams compared the Stamp Act to the sword of Nero after it was repealed. As time went on and relations between the mother country and the colonies continued to collapse, British officials were sometimes assigned the identities of the classical tyrants, such as when Samuel Adams and Mercy Otis Warren compared Governor Thomas Hutchinson of Massachusetts to

¹⁵³ Hicks, “Portia and Marcia,” 281.

Nero.¹⁵⁴ Even as late as 1775, when the Second Continental Congress approved the Olive Branch Petition, George III was at least referred to as the “most gracious Sovereign” and the colonists were referred to as the king’s “faithful subjects” and the entire blame for the troubles between the colonies and Britain, including the battles of Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill, was placed upon the king’s ministers.¹⁵⁵ When the king declared the colonies to be in a state of rebellion in the fall of 1775, however, many in the colonies came to see George as the architect of tyranny, as Jefferson did in the Declaration of Independence. The first recorded time that an American associated King George with Nero was the American poet, Philip Freneau, in his poem “American Independent,” which was published in 1778. The poem represented a complete revolt against any semblance of loyalty, not only to Britain but to monarchy in general. Freneau declared that the apologists for monarchy cited David and Solomon as examples of the good that kings had wrought in the past, whereas he, Freneau, declared that, “*(k)ings are the choicest curse that man e'er knew!*” To support this assertion, Freneau denounced George III in verse:

Hail, worthy Britain!—How enlarg'd your fame;/How great your glory,
terrible your name, /”Queen of the isles, and empress of the main,” —
/Heaven grant you all these mighty things again;/But first insure the
gaping crowd below/That you less cruel, and more just may grow:/If fate,
vindictive for the sins of man,/Had favour shown to your infernal
plan,/How would your nation have exulted here,/And scorn'd the widow's
sigh, the orphan's tear! /How had your prince, of all bad men the
worst,/Laid worth and virtue prostrate in the dust!/A second Sawney had
he shown to-day,/A world subdued, and murder but his play./How had that
prince, contemning right or law,/Glutted with blood his foul, voracious
maw:/In him we see the depths of baseness join'd,/Whate'er disgrac'd the
dregs of human kind;/Cain, Nimrod, Nero—fiends in human guise,/Herod,

¹⁵⁴ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 57, 59, 64-67.

¹⁵⁵ “The Olive Branch Petition.” America’s Homepage: Historic Documents of the United States. Accessed April 19, 2016. http://ahp.gatech.edu/olive_branch_1775.html

Domitian—these in judgement rise,/And, envious of his deeds, I hear them say/None but a GEORGE could be more vile than they.¹⁵⁶

In the same vein, in 1782, an anonymous writer in Boston penned a play entitled, “A Dialogue between the Devil and George III, tyrant of Britain” which, as the title implies, recorded a conversation between the Devil and George III who, in his very first line of dialogue, identifies himself as the Devil’s servant. The Devil then tells George, “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 your great designs, as happened to my faithful servant *Charles*.” To this, George replies, “I can soon make myself as absolute as any tyrant that ever stept,” telling the Devil that his goal would be accomplished by enslaving the colonies and then enslaving the rest of Britain through, “places, pensions, titles and bribes...”¹⁵⁷

This association of contemporary personages and events with the past was not confined to individuals and names; the entire scene, as it were, could be superimposed upon the past. Mercy Otis Warren accomplished this in her 1773 play, *The Adulateur: A Tragedy*, by playing with space and time. In the first place, Warren states on the title page of the play that the play is currently being performed in “Upper Servia.” Upper Servia, as the play demonstrates to the audience, is under the rule of a tyrannical ruler, Rapatio, who, declares that he and his cronies will deprive the people of Upper Servia of “the choicest of their rights.”¹⁵⁸ Rapatio and his ilk are

¹⁵⁶ Philip Freneau, “American Independent.” In *Poems Relating to the American Revolution*. American Verse Project. 44-45. Accessed April 15, 2016.

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/amverse/BAD9545.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

¹⁵⁷ “A Dialogue between the Devil and George III, tyrant of Britain.” Evans Early American Imprint Collection. Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/evans/N13861.0001.001/1:2?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>

¹⁵⁸ Mercy Otis Warren, *The Adulateur: A Tragedy*. America’s Historical Imprints. 9. Accessed March 16, 2016. http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAI&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=K62I61GYMTQ3MDc2OTA5MS40NDlyNjk6MToxMjoy

opposed by a group of men, identified as the “patriots.” Brutus is their leader, and among their number is Cassius, Junius, and Marcus, all Roman names, and, most revealing, in the case of Junius and Marcus, were the other names of Brutus, whose full name was Marcus Junius Brutus. What is more, the patriots of Upper Servia speak as Romans. Junius says that though his hand trembles with age, he will still strike the tyrant from his throne, a clear, mirrored image of Brutus and Caesar from classical history.¹⁵⁹ Later in the play, Brutus declares to the assembled patriots that if they fail in their attempt to dispose of the tyrant, at least they will “fall for virtue” stating that their ancestors had arrived at the shores of Upper Servia in order to obtain freedom.¹⁶⁰

Warren employed time and space as literary tools in *The Adulateur* because the play was a slightly fictionalized version of Massachusetts under British rule, personified by Governor Hutchinson. Rapatio is clearly intended to be Hutchinson,¹⁶¹ and so the patriots were the patriots of Massachusetts, particularly Boston, as Brutus, the leader of the patriots, was intended to be Mercy’s brother, James Otis, who, at the time, was the leader of the Sons of Liberty. What Warren accomplished with her play then was the juxtaposition of space and time, transplanting ancient Rome and the struggle for liberty that had taken place there between the Roman patriots and the forces of tyranny personified in Caesar, to Boston of 1773 where the same struggle was being played out. The similarities were strengthened in the background; towards the end of the play, Rapatio, the mirror of Governor Hutchinson, compares himself to Caesar, declaring that he towers above the Roman tyrant¹⁶² while Brutus’s declaration that the ancestors of the patriots had come in order to enjoy freedom, mirrored John Adams’s assertion that the Puritans had

¹⁵⁹ Warren, *The Adulateur*, 7.

¹⁶⁰ Warren, *The Adulateur*, 17.

¹⁶¹ Edmund M. Hayes, “Mercy Otis Warren: The Defeat.” In *The New England Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (September 1976): 440. Accessed March 25, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/364683>

¹⁶² Warren, *The Adulateur*, 25.

journeyed and colonized New England to possess what he termed “universal liberty.”¹⁶³ Warren did much the same thing in her history of the American revolution, *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution*. Regarding individuals, Warren often either gave them a classical veneer or she forthrightly associated them with a figure from antiquity. In describing her brother, James Otis, and General Charles Lee, the former strategy was used. Regarding Otis, Warren described her brother as possessing “patriotism marked with the disinterestedness of the Spartan,”¹⁶⁴ while General Lee was said to have “emulated the heroes of antiquity in the field, while in private life he sunk into the vulgarity of a clown.”¹⁶⁵ George Washington, on the other hand, was associated with the Roman hero, Fabius, in terms of his caution and with Caesar in regards to his energy.¹⁶⁶ Much as with her plays, Warren did not limit herself to individuals; events and entire bodies are given a classical association. In this light, Benedict Arnold’s march into Canada is compared to Hannibal’s daring march to Rome, while the Continental Congress itself was described as “the *Amphyctions* of the western world, convened by the free suffrages of twelve colonies, met at the time proposed, on the fourth of September, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four”¹⁶⁷—the *Amphyctions* being the ancient league of Greek cities before the rise of the *polis* system. In this way, the past was superimposed upon the present and the rhythms of history repeated themselves.

¹⁶³ John Adams, *Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law*. In *The Revolutionary Writings of John Adams* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000). Online Library of Liberty. Accessed November 5, 2015.

http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/592#Adams_0284_100

¹⁶⁴ Mercy Otis Warren, *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution* Vol. I. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1994. Online Library of Liberty. Accessed April 1, 2016.

http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/815#Warren_0025-01_306

¹⁶⁵ Warren, *History*, http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/815#Warren_0025-01_648

¹⁶⁶ Warren, *History*, http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/815#Warren_0025-01_551

¹⁶⁷ Warren, *History*, http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/815#Warren_0025-01_600,
http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/815#Warren_0025-01_411

In addition to the employment of pseudonyms and the superimposing of the past upon the present, there was another method used by the colonists to tie the present to the past, that of typology. This device actually linked persons and places (the type) with their equivalents in the past (the antetype).¹⁶⁸ Typology was able to perform this feat because it was rooted in history, while metaphor and allegory were seen to be seated in the imagination.¹⁶⁹ Although some might believe that typology was a Puritan invention and exercise, this tool was actually practiced in the early days of the Christian Church. Within the early Church, typology was seen in the entirety of Scripture but especially in the book of Hebrews, since the author used it to argue that the men and institutions of the Old Testament had been excelled and abolished by the New Covenant. The authors of all the books of the New Testament viewed the Old Testament in the light of history, and thus they used typology, as the ideal historical tool since it was rooted in history itself.¹⁷⁰ Biblical typology was first challenged by Origen, who argued that there were three senses of the Scriptures: the literal sense, the moral understanding and the spiritual understanding. Because the literal was the least important sense and the spiritual was the most important, allegory replaced typology as the prime means of reading the Bible. Origen did not stop using typology all-together, but he did argue that types had been done away with due to Christ's coming to earth. Allegorical understanding was used from St. Augustine to St. Thomas Aquinas.¹⁷¹ Typology resurfaced with the Reformation. Luther maintained that the literal sense and the spiritual sense were equivalent and Calvin would have been unable to form his theology without typology.¹⁷² From the Reformation, the Puritans took this tool to the New World. The

¹⁶⁸ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 92.

¹⁶⁹ Thomas M. Davis, "The Traditions of Puritan Typology," in *Typology and Early American Literature*, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Boston: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), 21.

¹⁷⁰ Davis, "Traditions of Puritan Typology," 11-12, 17.

¹⁷¹ Davis, "Traditions of Puritan Typology," 18, 19, 21.

¹⁷² Davis, "Traditions of Puritan Typology," 28, 35, 38.

Puritans believed that God had chosen them to be his synecdoches in history because their religious experience convinced them that Christ dwelled among them.¹⁷³ One man who was firmly convinced of this fact was William Bradford, who was convinced that Plymouth was the New Jerusalem. In *Of Plymouth Plantation*, Bradford linked the entire Puritan experiment with the sacrifice of Christ; the voyage from Holland to Massachusetts was compared to Christ's crucifixion and resurrection since, like Christ, the Puritans were betrayed, persecuted and imprisoned but, by the grace of God, still arrived in the New World. This typological interpretation continued; whether it was droughts ended by providential rains, or starvation defeated by the sudden arrival of supply ships, Bradford connected events to the Crucifixion and Resurrection.¹⁷⁴ Cotton Mather did the same in his 1702 *Magnolia Christi Americana*, an ecclesiastical history of New England which included, in the style of Plutarch, biographies of the leading people of New England. Mather emphasized that New England was the earthly fulfillment of God's plan for salvation. Although he did not specifically make the connection between Israel and New England, Mather did use biblical types as examples so that typological parallels could be made between the two.¹⁷⁵ This typology was able to work in Puritan New England because of how history was viewed. Bradford believed that history would be fulfilled in another state of being; it did not simply "happen" but was present in and through the colonists and, though they were not the ultimate synecdoches, they were integral parts of the bridge spanning from Abraham to the New Jerusalem.¹⁷⁶ Mather saw history working in the same way

¹⁷³ Jesper Rosenmeier, "'With My Owne Eyes': William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*," in *Typology and Early American Literature*, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Boston: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), 86.

¹⁷⁴ Rosenmeier, "'With My Owne Eyes,'" 93, 96, 95.

¹⁷⁵ Mason I Lowance, Jr., "Cotton Mather's *Magnalia* and the Metaphors of Biblical History," in *Typology and Early American Literature*, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Boston: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), 142-143.

¹⁷⁶ Rosenmeier, "'With My Owne Eyes,'" 85.

as Scriptures; History was manifested through the lives of people, and Scripture was manifested through the lives of God's saints.¹⁷⁷

Typology was not confined to broad history either, but permeated New England's very atmosphere. One example that demonstrates this is Peter Bulkeley's elegy to Thomas Hooker which said, "To sinners stout he was a son of dreadful thunder./When all strong oaks of Bashan us'd to quake.../He clave the rocks, they melted into tears." In this elegy, the "son of thunder" is a figure of Christ while the "oaks of Bashan" are enemy territory, the area which the Israelites had to pass on the way to the Promised Land. Similarly, "the rock he clave" is a typology of Christ's blood via Moses and baptism and the tears shed by Hooker evoke the weeping of Jeremiah, Christ's entrance to Jerusalem, and his suffering in the Garden.¹⁷⁸ Typology did not stay within the parameters of religion, broad history or specific occasions, however, but soon extended far beyond New England. The Yankee heirs of the Puritans were not confined in the manner that their ancestors had been; the Enlightenment allowed the Protestant identity to become less defined and more vague, less an actual substance and more a matter of image and symbol. The result of this was that less attention was paid to the Bible, which had provided the wellspring of typological types, and, instead, focused upon the experience of being in America itself.¹⁷⁹ With the ascension of Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakening, typology burst through the doors that had been containing it within New England; Edwards in particular accomplished this by expanding the Puritans' "tribal genetics" so that salvation was no longer confined to the New England "theocracy" but was enlarged to become a genealogy of the

¹⁷⁷ Lowance, "Cotton Mather," 147.

¹⁷⁸ Sacvan Bercovitch, "Typology in Puritan New England: The William-Cotton Controversy Reassessed." In *American Quarterly* 19, no. 2, Part I (Summer 1967): 170. Accessed March 25, 2016.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2710784>

¹⁷⁹ Sacvan Bercovitch, "The Typology of America's Missions." In *American Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1978): 136. Accessed April 10, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2712320>

American church. In other words, Edwards made the Puritans not simply the ancestors of New Englanders but of all Americans. And, when it came to the revolution, the cause was not Protestantism per se but American independence.¹⁸⁰ This freeing of typological thinking and the sea of classicalism that Americans swam in, made the classical world very easy to typologize, especially since the “book of nature,” which included history—philosophy in action—was seen as being very easy to access and render to typological thinking.¹⁸¹

Much as with pseudonyms and associations, individuals were typologized using figures from the past. Again, it should be noted that unlike the former, typology actually pulled heavily from history; for example, after the battle of Yorktown, General Nathaniel Greene was compared to Scipio Africanus for, just as the Roman general had fought the Carthaginians in Africa, rather than in Italy, Greene, “as if divinely taught,” challenged Cornwallis not in Virginia but further south. In this system, Greene fulfilled and deepened the meaning of Scipio so that, together, the two generals enhanced and fortified each other’s meaning.¹⁸² Of all the participants of the revolution, George Washington was the man who was most typologized, particularly with the Roman Cincinnatus. Cincinnatus was a Roman patrician who was overcome with misfortune when his son, Caesu, fled Rome before facing trial for charges of corruption; Cincinnatus was forced to pay his son’s bail and was left almost completely destitute and forced to scratch a living from his farm. When the Aequi, a neighboring people and Rome’s enemy, entrapped the Roman army and the consul Minucius in the Alban Hills, the Romans begged Cincinnatus to become dictator and lead the city to victory. Although the dictator’s term of power was for six months, after defeating the Aequi and saving the city and the army, Cincinnatus returned to his

¹⁸⁰ Bercovitch, “Typology of America’s Missions,” 142, 149.

¹⁸¹ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 91.

¹⁸² Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 93.

farm, having been dictator for sixteen days.¹⁸³ Many of Washington's contemporaries recognized the fulfillment of Cincinnatus—the man who placed virtue, honor, and duty above self-gain—in Washington's figure. The reverend Charles Henry Wharton, in 1778, composed *A Poetical Epistle to Washington* in which Washington was typologized to Cincinnatus; the link that both men shared, in Wharton's view, was that, just as Lady Liberty had summoned Cincinnatus from his farm to defend Rome, so had she called Washington "to the glorious strife" and bade him to "quit the peaceful walks of life." Wharton, even though writing his epistle in 1778, foresaw, as it were, Washington's relinquishment of power, saying that after Washington secured freedom for America, he would return to Mount Vernon, where he would "plan his Country's bliss and pow'r"¹⁸⁴ just as the Roman general had done after his duty had been completed. Philip Freneau made the same link between Washington and Cincinnatus in his poem, "Occasioned by General Washington's Arrival in Philadelphia, On His Way to His Residence in Virginia," writing:

O Washington!—thrice glorious name,/What due rewards can man decree—
/Empires are far below thy aim,/And scepters have no charms for thee;/*Virtue*
alone has thy regard,/And she must be thy great reward./Encircled by extorted
power,/Monarchs must envy thy Retreat,/Who cast, in some ill fated hour,/Their
country's freedom at their feet;/'Twas thine to act a nobler part/For injur'd
Freedom had thy heart.¹⁸⁵

Freneau's typological references to Washington were more subtle than Wharton's; rather than explicitly making a typological connection between the general and Cincinnatus, Freneau alluded to the connection by saying that Washington's reward was found in virtue and that power was of

¹⁸³ Austin Washington, *The Education of George Washington* (Regnery History: Washington DC, 2014), 256-257, 258-259.

¹⁸⁴ Charles Henry Wharton, *A Poetical Epistle to George Washington, Esq* (Boston: A. Williams and Co., 1881), 10, 9, 16. Internet Archives. Accessed May 15, 2016.

<https://archive.org/stream/poeticalepistlet00whar#page/n9/mode/2up>

¹⁸⁵ Philip Freneau, "Occasioned by General Washington's Arrival in Philadelphia On His Way to His Residence in Virginia." Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/occasioned-general-washingtons-arrival-philadelphia-his-way-his-residence-virginia>

no interest to him, just as Cincinnatus had freely given up his power after his duty had been performed and Rome was once again safe and a harbor of liberty. This connection would, most likely, have even been stronger in Freneau's mind at the time of the poem's construction since it was written as Washington was returning to Virginia, soon after he had resigned his commission from the army and had taken on the role of a private citizen again. Washington himself recognized and strengthened the typological connection between himself and Cincinnatus and actively took on the role of the famous Roman. Washington seems to have understood the paradox about power: that it grows the more that it is trimmed back and willingly given up. Washington realized that willingly giving up his power at the conclusion of the revolution was far more important to the budding republic than any military victory that he could have won because for the republican experiment to succeed, the military arm of the republic could not become supreme and, more to the point, one man could not become supreme. America, Washington knew, did not need a dictator; what it needed was a symbol of stability and, in a time when there was no real flag, no constitution and no tradition of unity among the former colonies, Washington knew that he was that symbol of unity.¹⁸⁶ In fact, when the New York legislature asked that Washington "perform the duties of his high office, and readily lay down his power when the general weal require it," Washington replied, "When we assumed the Soldier, we did not lay down the Citizen." It was when the role of the soldier was laid down that the legend of Cincinnatus was reborn, and Washington, himself, actively took on this role. As evidence for this claim, there is Washington's theatrical sense of timing. After quelling a mutiny within the army, Washington sent out a circular to the different governors that would become known as his "legacy" in which he resigned his commission from the army. Gary Wills argues that "the

¹⁸⁶ Gary Wills, *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment* (Garden City: Doubleday Books, 1984), 23, xxiv.

timing...was important. It should not be issued till victory was assured... But Washington waited [until the signing of the treaty and departure of the British, otherwise or his actual resignation] message might be overlooked." As such, Washington sent out his "legacy" in June, 1783 when his message and action of relinquishing power would be seen and understood by the people.¹⁸⁷ Perhaps one of the most striking visual typological connections between the two generals was the statue that was commissioned by the Virginia General Assembly in 1784 by French sculptor, Jean-Antoine Houdon, and delivered in 1796. Unlike Horatio Greenough's 1832 marble portrayal of Washington which depicted him in an actual toga, Houdon portrayed Washington as a modern Cincinnatus: the former general is dressed in the clothes typical for an eighteenth century gentleman of means, complete with a cane. Behind Washington stands a classical pillar, upon which is flung his war cloak and sword, while behind the pillar sits a plow. The message is clear—Washington the soldier has returned to the soil as Washington the farmer and citizen.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Wills, *Cincinnatus*, 13, 10. See also "Circular letter from His Excellency George Washington, commander in chief of the armies of the United States of America." America's Historical Imprints. Accessed April 23, 2015.

http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAI&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=E66N50XLMTQzMDA5NzUxNi4yNzk1ODc6MToxMzoy

¹⁸⁸ Maurice D. McInnis, "George Washington: Cincinnatus or Marcus Aurelius?" in *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World and Early America*, ed. Peter S. Onuf and Nicholas P. Cole (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 2011), 151.



Figure 3: Washington as Cincinnatus by Jean-Antoine Houdon. Library of Virginia.

http://edu.lva.virginia.gov/online_classroom/shaping_the_constitution/doc/washington

Much as with the pseudonyms, typology was not limited to individuals; events and locations could also be seen as fulfilling places and events from the past. At the start of 1776, for example, William Smith gave an oration before the Congress in honor of General Richard Montgomery, the conqueror of Montreal, who had fallen in the American attempt to seize Quebec. Smith weaved in numerous allusions to the classical world, in the first place,

drawing a direct link between his eulogy of the hero, Montgomery, and the practices of antiquity, noting that while the Egyptians were the first ones to revere their dead and heroes, it was the Greeks and the Romans who excelled at this practice. Furthermore, Smith also brought up the figure of Cincinnatus, remarking that the British scorned the idea of an American patriot who was a general “from the plough.”¹⁸⁹ Benedict’s Arnold’s entire march into Canada, however, was typologized into Hannibal’s march to Rome. Smith says that, “[e]ven the march of Hannibal, so much celebrated in history (allowing for the disparity of numbers) has nothing in it of the superior merit to the march of Arnold; and in many circumstances there is a most striking similitude.” Some of these similarities included Hannibal having to cross the Rhone, while Arnold was forced to cross the Kennebeck; both, after crossing their respective rivers, found their way blocked by mountains; and both were attacked and lost approximately one third of their armies at the foot of the mountains.¹⁹⁰ Hugh Henry Brackenridge did much the same thing when he penned a play about the Battle of Bunker Hill in 1778. Immediately prior to the battle, Gardiner, one of the American officers, tells his men that if they are charged by the British, then they will bravely die, “[l]ike those three hundred Thermopylae.” This connection between the Spartans and the Americans is strengthened a few pages later when Dr. Warren (he of the Ciceronian toga) says that the British soldiers at the base of the hill are “in a firm phalanx” thereby reinforcing the typology between the two forces and the ancient types.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ William Smith, *An Oration in Memory of General Montgomery and of the Officers and Soldiers Who Fell with Him, December 31, 1775*. Internet Archives. 2-3, 12. Accessed April 8, 2016.

https://archive.org/stream/orationinmemoryo00smi_0#page/12/mode/2up

¹⁹⁰ Smith, *An Oration in Memory of General Montgomery*, 30-31.

¹⁹¹ Hugh Henry Brackenridge, “The Battle of Bunker Hill,” in *Gazette Publications*. Internet Archives. (Alexander and Phillips, 1806), 290, 294. Accessed April 8, 2016.

<https://archive.org/stream/gazettepublicati00brac#page/n7/mode/2up>

Due to the ideas of time and history that were prevalent in the eighteenth century, the revolutionaries and Americans were able to take up for themselves the mantle of the past, both allegorically and typologically. Regardless of the method used, this understanding and use of history allowed the Americans to, in a sense, become the past, which was important for their fight against Britain and in the years following the victory at Yorktown.

Chapter Three

The Garment of the Present

“Imagination is the organ of understanding.”

C.S. Lewis

Thaddeus Fiske entered his pulpit in the Second Church of Cambridge, Massachusetts, on December 29, 1799 to perform a disheartening task. Using Deuteronomy, chapter thirty-four, verse eight—“And the children of Israel wept for Moses on the fields of Moab”—as his anchor, Fiske preached a eulogy in *memorium* of General George Washington, who had died fifteen days previously. In his eulogy, Fiske first gave an overview of the life of Moses. He told his parish that Moses had been the instrument, chosen by God, for the deliverance of God’s people, Israel. But, Fiske was quick to point out, Moses was more than that, for as general, politician, or lawgiver, Moses had no equal, claiming, “[w]ith the enemies, they were called to encounter; in their unparalleled journey through the dreary desert; and in the administration of their laws and government, Moses was at their head.” What was more, Moses was not some brilliant despot who had lorded his power over the Israelites, but had, instead, shared with the people in everything, sorrowful and joyful, good and bad. And, when his time had come, Moses took the occasion to leave the Israelites with “some important councils and instructions for their future conduct” so that God would continue to bless them; after which, he climbed Mount Moab and died.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Thaddeus Fiske. *A sermon, delivered Dec. 29, 1799. At the Second Parish in Cambridge, being the Lord's Day, immediately following the melancholy intelligence of the death of General George Washington, late president of the United States of America.* America's Historical Imprints. 7-8. Accessed May 24, 2016. http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAI&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=G5BM52RLMTQ2NjAzODE2NC43MDA0MDg6MToxMz

After giving this overview of Moses, Fiske turned his attention to Washington. Both figures, Fiske said, bore striking similarities with each other. Just as Moses, the fame of Israel, was called by God to deliver Israel, so was Washington, the fame of America, called to deliver America from the clutches of the British.¹⁹³ Fiske made clear that “extraordinary talents, profound penetrations, distinguished improvements, wealth, honor, power, or the glory of conquest,” were not the ingredients that made a great man. The true test of greatness was in the animating principles and motives that made a man act. As Moses had fought and worked and suffered for the release and the blessing of his people, Washington had done the same. The greatest example of this fact was in Washington’s surrender of power. Fiske declared that some individuals placed themselves at the heads of revolutions so as to become rulers themselves; these men were lacking religion, patriotism and humanity. But in giving up his power as the commander of the American army—the Cincinnatus moment—Washington proved himself to be the superior of such men as Alexander the Great and Pompey.¹⁹⁴ In addition, Fiske noted that there was a true correlation between Moses’s last address to Israel and Washington’s Farewell Address, for just as Moses had left his people with his sage and fatherly advice, Washington had done the same, bequeathing to Americans “such councils and advice, as cannot be read too often, nor treasured up and practiced with too much care.” Quoting Hebrews, chapter eleven, Fiske told his parishioners that, in this way, Washington though dead, was still alive.¹⁹⁵

Fiske was not the only minister who eulogized President Washington, nor was he the only one who compared him with Moses. On January 28, 1800, John Frederick Ernst also used Deuteronomy, this time the fifth verse of chapter thirty-four, as the anchor for his eulogy to the

¹⁹³ Fiske, *A sermon*, 9.

¹⁹⁴ Fiske, *A sermon*, 12-13.

¹⁹⁵ Fiske, *A sermon*, 17.

deceased founder. In the first place, Ernst stated, much as Fiske had, that God had used Washington as His medium, through which He bestowed His blessings upon America; Washington, in fact, was a “star of the first magnitude” which outshone the “Sages, Legislators and Heroes” from all other ages.¹⁹⁶ Ernst then asked a rhetorical question: Could not the eulogy bestowed upon Moses be transposed to Washington? Could not what the Bible said concerning Moses—“And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses”—be said about the dead patriot? Ernst’s answer was yes: Washington, the servant of God, was unique and irreplaceable, just as Moses had been to the Israelites. In fact, Ernst continued, the ways in which Moses and Washington were similar were so numerous that they could be divided into two different camps: remote analogy and proximate analogy. As regarding the former class, Ernst pointed out that Moses was born in the most fertile region of Egypt, of a noble lineage and educated in the court of the Egyptians, wherein he received knowledge of the all the arts and sciences as well as knowledge of the Supreme Being. Washington, in the same way, was born in Virginia, “well known for its profusion and wealth, from a respectable parentage” and was also educated so that he received knowledge of both the advantages and disadvantages of the colonial situation, which prepared him to be the warrior and statesman that America would need, and more importantly, Washington received knowledge of his faith. Also in the category of remote analogy, was how both men began their path to being the deliverers of their people; Ernst stated that just as Moses had killed the Egyptian when he was forty years old, so Washington fought in the Ohio valley

¹⁹⁶ John Frederick Ernst. *A sermon, delivered before the civil and military officers, the members of Franklin and St. Paul's Lodges, and a large and respectable number of the citizens of Montgomery County, and others, in the church at Fort Plain, on January 28th, 1800. In consequence of the death of Lieutenant General George Washington.* America's Historical Imprints. 3. Accessed May 24, 2016.

http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAIX&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=G5BM52RLMTQ2NjAzODE2NC43MDA0MDg6MToxMz

during the French and Indian War.¹⁹⁷ The correlation between the two men, therefore, did not have to be a direct, one-to-one similarity. As to the proximate analogy between Washington and Moses, Ernst claimed that this stemmed from their faith in God. Moses's faith made him not only faithful to God, but also meek as well as disinterested and integral. In the same way, Ernst argued, the strengths of Washington's character—his justice and humanity, his mercy and humility, temperance and charity—came from his Christian faith. And, just as Moses' deliverance of Israel was rooted in his faith in God, so was Washington's deliverance of America also rooted in his faith in the Lord.¹⁹⁸

Similarly to Fiske and Ernst, David Barnes also gave a eulogy in Washington's memory on February 22, 1800, the day assigned by Congress to commemorate his life; and, just as Fiske and Ernst had identified Washington with Moses, Barnes did the same in his eulogy. Barnes began his eulogy by stating that he would compare the most famous man of the West—Washington—with the most famous man of the East—Moses. In this way, Barnes used his *eulogia* as a point-by-point comparison between Moses and Washington. For example, Barnes pointed out that Moses and Washington were men of great modesty, both initially turning down the positions of leadership they were offered due to their humility which made both believe themselves unequal to the tasks set before them.¹⁹⁹ In the same way, both were courageous. Moses never allowed his fortitude to forsake him though the situation was often set against him, and Washington, in like manner, “had perfect command of himself,” never allowing himself to flee when “duty called him to pursue,” nor leaving the field as long as any hope of victory

¹⁹⁷ Ernst, *A sermon*, 5-7.

¹⁹⁸ Ernst, *A sermon*, 8-12.

¹⁹⁹ David Barnes, *Discourse delivered at South Parish in Scituate, February 22, 1800. The day assigned by Congress, to mourn the decease and venerate the virtues of General George Washington*. America's Historical Imprints. 4-5. Accessed May 24, 2016. http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAIX&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=L5DT53EMMTQ2NjA5MTI1NC40Mzk0OTE6MToxMzoy

remained. Barnes went on to assert that if it had not been for the qualities of Moses that Washington possessed in his soul, America would have been in danger of becoming like the “Grecian states, who waged perpetual war with each other,” after the “rod that had been held over us was removed.” Just as Moses had been as great a lawgiver as he was a warrior, so was Washington first in peace in the councils of state as he had been first in war on the field. Not only that, but in some instances Barnes implied that Washington was Moses’s superior. Moses, for example, only had to follow the commands of God which were given to him by God Himself; Washington, on the other hand, was required to stay mentally on high alert from the beginning of the revolution to its close; for even when he received orders, Washington had to use his judgment in case circumstances made following those orders impractical or disastrous. In the same way, while Moses had miracles to aid him, as well as command over the elements, Washington lacked this assistance.²⁰⁰

Even when eulogies in Washington’s honor did not explicitly reference the connection between Moses and the dead president, still the link was there, in an implicit fashion. This was the case in Bishop John Carroll’s eulogy to Washington, delivered also on February 22, 1800. Carroll only made one direct reference between Washington and Moses, calling to his parishioners’ minds that Washington had beheld the country in his retirement at Mount Vernon as the “Jewish legislator from the summit of Mount Phasga.” But the spirit of Moses in Washington permeated Carroll’s sermon, especially in regard to Washington’s virtues which Carroll claimed and did appropriate from the eighth chapter of the book of Wisdom. For example, it is because of wisdom that Washington bore the respect of the people, young and old, won success on the battlefield and, thereby, became the terror of kings. In fact, Carroll makes it

²⁰⁰ Barnes, *Discourse*, 11, 13-15.

clear that Washington's success in war and in statecraft came from his "conferences with wisdom." Wisdom had also been responsible for Washington's Christian religion.²⁰¹

This conflation of Moses and Washington was not an isolated incident, nor was it a means to simply pay homage to the father of America. At the very beginning of the revolution, many had seen the parallels between throwing off the scepter of Britain and the rescue of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Some patriots regarded the tyranny of Britain as a greater bondage than that which the Israelites had suffered in Egypt, while after the revolution many saw it as the deliverance from a second Egypt, with the Fourth of July marked as the day on which the Israelites came out of Egypt.²⁰² In the case of Washington and biblical figures, Moses was not the only one equated with the general and president. Various individuals, for example, compared Washington to David, Noah, Elijah, Hezekiah and Zerubbabel.²⁰³ The general was also compared with the Moses's lieutenant, Joshua, which was most grandly done in Timothy Dwight's poem, *The Conquest of Canaan*. Dwight, a Congregationalist minister, began work on this epic before the commencement of the revolution, with the first draft completed by 1776. Different drafts were written by Dwight, sometimes as a result of experiences that he gained. For example, after Congress approved him to serve as the chaplain to Samuel Parsons' Connecticut Brigade, Dwight began adding the panegyrics to the various heroes of the revolution. *The Conquest of Canaan* was the first American epic poem when it was finally published in 1785 and, as such, received high praise from some quarters. John Adams declared that, excepting

²⁰¹ John Carroll, *A discourse on General Washington; delivered in the Catholic Church of St. Peter, in Baltimore--Feb. 22d 1800.* America's Historical Imprints. 22-23, 5. Accessed May 24, 2016.

http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAIX&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=L5DT53EMMTQ2NjA5MTI1NC40Mzk0OTE6MToxMzoy

²⁰² Robert P. Hay, "George Washington, American Moses." In *American Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1969): 781-782. Accessed May 24, 2016.

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/stable/2711609?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=ge>

²⁰³ Wills, *Cincinnatus*, 28.

Paradise Lost, *The Conquest of Canaan* was the greatest work conducted in any modern language.²⁰⁴ The hero, ultimately, in the epic is Joshua, to whom a more than passing resemblance to Washington is made, ‘His form [Joshua’s], majestic, seem’d by God designed/The glorious mansion of so vast a mind./An awful grandeur in his countenance sate,/Calm wisdom round him cast a solemn state.’ Furthermore, the point in the epic where Joshua loses his temper with Ardan, can be seen as a parallel to the time when Washington lost his temper at the Battle of Monmouth.²⁰⁵

It is true that when readers of the epic made the connection between the Joshua in the poem and Washington, Dwight indignantly denied this connection. In a letter written to Noah Webster in 1788, Dwight asked how Joshua in *The Conquest of Canaan* could possibly be Washington as work on the poem had begun before the revolution and that the conquest of a country, which was the topic of his entire epic, could not stand for the defense of another country, which was the goal of the revolution.²⁰⁶ However, it does appear as if Dwight did at least somewhat intend Joshua in his epic to be seen as Washington. In the first place, the Israelites of *The Conquest of Canaan* were clearly intended to be understood as Americans. This was made most apparent in Book I when Joshua and Hanniel, who was taken to be General Charles Lee, Washington’s rival for the office of commander-in-chief, engaged in debate, which was intended to mimic the debate that took place within America directly prior to the revolution.

²⁰⁴ Kenneth Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976), 500, 503.

²⁰⁵ Timothy Dwight, *The Conquest of Canaan*. America’s Historical Imprints. 134. Accessed June 2, 2016. http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAI&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=F4CG4BTCMTQ3MDc3NDQ1MC44NTIwMDQ6MToxMjWills,Cincinnatus,28,29.

²⁰⁶ Theodore A. Zunder, “Noah Webster and *The Conquest of Canaan*.” In *American Literature* 1, no. 2 (May 1929): 201. Accessed June 10, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/stable/2919909?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=>

Hanniel, a Tory from the Old Testament, made the case for monarchy, the advantages of which were found in the royal trappings that advanced prestige and in the tribute that must be paid to the crown for protection from other nations. Joshua, the Whig, countered that whatever benefits monarchy might bring, history has shown the weakness of such a system, in addition to which, the “[p]lain, generous manners” and “vigorous minds to freedom” of the Israelites/Americans made the idea of monarchy revolting.²⁰⁷ In this setting, it is not difficult to see that the hero of the epic, Joshua, was supposed to be seen as the hero of the revolution, Washington, in spite of Dwight’s insistence to the contrary.

Dwight did seem to have Washington in mind when he wrote his epic. For instance, when Dwight sought Washington’s patronage when the epic was finally ready to be published, the author changed the title of his work to *The Conquest of Canaan by Joshua*, implying that the connection was in Dwight’s mind. This connection would have followed an American tradition going back to the Puritan settlers, who had likened such heroes as John Winthrop to Joshua. In time, many leaders that were seen as sufficiently courageous were likened to Joshua, as Ezra Stiles did with Washington, calling him the American Joshua.²⁰⁸ This makes sense as other heroes of the revolution were placed within the *Conquest of Canaan*; Nathan Hale, for instance was placed among the Israelites:

Thus, while fond Virtue wish’d in vain to save,/Hale, bright and generous,
found a hapless grave./With genius’ living flame his bosom glow’d,/And
science charmed him to her sweet abode./In worth’s fair path his feet
adventur’d far,/The pride of peace, the rising grace of war./In duty firm, in
danger calm as even,/To friends unchanging and sincere to heaven./How
short his course, the prize how early won,/While weeping friendship
mourns her favorite gone.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution*, 502. Wills, *Cincinnatus*, 29-30.

²⁰⁸ Kenneth Silverman, *Timothy Dwight* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1969), 31, 32.

²⁰⁹ Dwight, *The Conquest of Canaan*, 3.

In addition, ancient Israelites are made into Hale, as when Uzal dies in the eighth book of the epic, he speaks as Hale spoke before the latter's death: "My nation own'd my life, and now demands my death."²¹⁰ And even if no exact parallel was intended by Dwight, the Joshua of the epic was seen in the same light as contemporaries saw Washington, the folk hero who was destined with his noble character and commanding presence to win his people freedom.²¹¹ Contemporaries of Washington even compared themselves to biblical figures; John Adams, in a letter to Abigail dated May 17, 1776, after telling Abigail that "Mr. Duffil...[ran] a Parrallell between the Case of Israel and that of America, and between the Conduct of Pharaoh and that of George," in Congress, said:

Is it not a Saying of Moses, who am I, that I should go in and out before this great People? When I consider the great Events which are passed, and those greater which are rapidly advancing, and that I may have been instrumental of touching some Springs, and turning some small Wheels, which have had and will have such Effects, I feel an Awe upon my Mind, which is not easily described.²¹²

What this demonstrates is that the classical typology and allusions were not the only ones being made in America at this time, in spite of the frequency in which they were made. The connections which were made between Washington and Moses, especially the ones made by Fiske, Ernst and Barnes are clear examples of typology, inasmuch as these connections achieved the goal of typology, which was to "establish a connection between two historical events or persons, the first of which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second

²¹⁰ Wills, *Cincinnatus*, 29.

²¹¹ Silverman, *Timothy Dwight*, 33.

²¹² John Adams to Abigail Adams, May 17, 1776. The Massachusetts Historical Society. Accessed June 11, 2016. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/doc?id=L17760517ja&hi=1&query=pharaoh&tag=text&archive=let>

encompasses or fulfills the first.”²¹³ The connection made between Washington and Joshua, as well as that made by John Adams between himself and Moses might be better seen as metaphor, more similar perhaps to the use of classical pseudonyms. What this means is that the revolutionaries and the founders cannot be placed within tight parameters, unable to breathe fully as they did in life. Unfortunately, that is what it seems to have happened. Bernard Bailyn, for example, opined that the classical uses and allusions that the revolutionaries and the founders made were mere “window dressing” for the letters and pamphlets that were penned at the time. All the classics did was contribute a vocabulary of liberty and not much else.²¹⁴ Since Bailyn, that opinion has been demonstrated to be false.²¹⁵ And yet, the habit of placing the founders and revolutionaries within narrow boxes, continues. Charles L. Cohen, for example, brought to light all of the biblical and religious language present in Patrick Henry’s “Give Me Liberty” speech, but failed to make reference to the classical allusions that were also there. Eran Shalev, in mentioning this point, took the opposite approach, speaking of the classical allusions in Henry’s speech but glossing over the biblical ones.²¹⁶ Instead, there must be a way in which the different influences can be seen to fit together into a single tapestry.

There are some, however, who actually make this claim, viz., that the different strands of influence cannot be fitted together into a comprehensive whole. Referring to the taking of identities by college men, James McLachlan notes that while many chose classical pseudonyms, other students did not, so that “Edmund Burke” could be seen speaking with “John Wilkes.” For McLachlan, this means that “it would be absurd to claim that all these elements had been

²¹³ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 93.

²¹⁴ Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, 25-26.

²¹⁵ For a concise overview of the philosophical and governmental influences which the classics brought to the Founding generation, see Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, Chapter 3, 4, and 6.

²¹⁶ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 142.

shuffled together to form a new and coherent system.”²¹⁷ And yet, it seems as if this diagnosis is incorrect and that the men of the revolution did intertwine the different influences and traditions together. For example, in a letter penned to John Scollay at the end of 1780, Samuel Adams wrote, “I love the People of Boston. I once thought, that City would be the *Christian Sparta*...Sidney tells us, there are times when People are not worth saving. Meaning, when they have lost their Virtue.”²¹⁸ In this statement, can be seen the weaving together of the classical, Whig and biblical traditions; the classical and the biblical were intertwined in the idea of Boston being a Christian Sparta, a town, in other words, that would exemplify the best qualities of the old Greek city-state, such as industry, frugality, and martial courage, while at the same time, tempered and perfected by the Word of God. The Whig tradition was added to the thread in Adams’s reference to Algernon Sydney, one of the first, prominent Whig figures of England.

The same intertwining is seen in Hugh Henry Brackenridge’s play commemorating the Battle of Bunker Hill. It has already been discussed how Brackenridge typologized the Americans on the Hill as the three hundred Spartans at Thermopylae; there were other allusions, classical and Whiggish, such as when Joseph Warren in his death throes announced that he was ready to ascend to the “saints” of liberty, of which he mentioned “Great Brutus, Hampden, Sydney and the rest,/Of old or modern memory, who liv’d/ A mound to tyrants...”. The American patriots of the play, however, also spoke often times in religious terms. At the start of the play, for example, Warren compared the future battle which the Americans would give to the British as the angel of God destroying Sennacherib and his Assyrian army and that just as the “God of battles” had aided the Israelites, so He would aid the Americans. Gardiner agreed,

²¹⁷ McLachlan, “Classical Names, American Identities,” 93.

²¹⁸ Samuel Adams to John Scollay, December 30, 1780. The Founder’s Constitution, University of Chicago. Accessed June 11, 2016. <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch18s14.html>

saying that the Americans “combat in the cause of God.” Warren, when dying and preparing to enter into the company of lovers of liberty, ancient and contemporary, declared that “now to God, I offer up my soul.” At the end of the fourth act, Gardiner rallied and encouraged the men on the hill, telling them that God was on their side.²¹⁹ Brackenridge thus not only saw and portrayed the Americans as Greek soldiers but as Christian Spartans, much in the same way that Samuel Adams hoped that Boston would become a city in which classical and biblical virtues thrived and flourished.

Given this type of evidence, it seems that there are only two possibilities: Either there was no attempt to bring these different influences together and these disparate traditions mingled freely but independently in the milieu of the revolution, or the people of the day did have a way of bringing them together into a single tapestry. Due to the education and acute intellect that many of the founders and revolutionaries possessed, it seems much more likely that the latter occurred. The question then becomes: In what manner were the different traditions able to be brought together? The different types of republicanism that were recognized at the time—classical, Hebraic and Whig—might lead one to believe that the idea of “republicanism” was the unifying force that united the different strands together. This theory, unfortunately, does not withstand scrutiny, especially in light of the fact that “republicanism,” and the paradigm that it presents, collapses because the more features of the revolution it is called upon to explain, the less it is able to do so.²²⁰ A much better explanation seems to lie in mythology.

²¹⁹ Brackenridge, *Bunker Hill*, 284, 285, 296, 299.

²²⁰ For a synopsis of the paradigm of republicanism including its fall from grace in historiography, see Daniel T. Rodgers, “Republicanism: the Career of a Concept,” in *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (June 1992): 11-38. Accessed November 13, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2078466>

In order to understand how mythology can be used as the explanation of the weaving together of the different influential traditions that were utilized by the revolutionaries and the founders, the first question that must be asked is: What, exactly, is mythology? Today, when the word is spoken, what is more often than not thought of are the different myths of the ancient civilizations, the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Norse, or Meso-American peoples. The commonly-held perception of mythology is that of a fictional story chronicling events that could never happen, created by people from the ancient past. Technically, however, there is a wide variety of explanations as to what actually constitutes a myth and mythology in general, most of which are irreconcilable.²²¹ This fact can be seen from the different schools of thought that have arisen in an attempt to explain the phenomena of mythology. For example, some, such as the fourth century BC Greek, Euhemerus, and the eighteenth century French clergyman-historian Abbé Antoine Banier, believed that mythology was simply history in disguise; the gods of the myths were men grown into divine figures following the passing of time and the retelling of their deeds. In the nineteenth century especially, however, different schools of mythology arose. Max Müller, for instance, initiated the philological school, which stated that myths were a “disease of thought” since, in Müller’s mind, “language is determined by thought [and] thought is determined by language.” Sir E.B. Taylor, on the other hand, founded the anthropological school which declared that myths evolved along with men and civilizations and that comparisons between the “savage” and “civilized” myths of a particular people, as well as comparisons of the mythologies of different people, can shine light upon the development of the particular people and the meaning of the myths in general. William Robertson Smith took as his line of thought that mythologies functioned in ancient societies as substitutes for religious dogma and that

²²¹ Martin S. Day, *The Many Meanings of Myth* (New York: University Press of America, 1984), 2.

dogma evolved from mythologies.²²² The least common denominator that all of these schools and theories of mythology share is that all agree and acknowledge that mythology is non-rational, either sub-rational, and thereby below reason, or supra-rational, and therefore, above and beyond reason.²²³ There is, as always, more to mythology than what is accounted for by the different schools that have attempted to explain the origin of myths. The word “mythology” comes from two separate Greek words: *mythos* and *logos*. *Mythos*, in ancient Greek, meant word or speech, while *logos* meant story or tale. Thus, the compound word “mythology” means the “speech of the story,” or, in other words, the story of the story.²²⁴ Mythology can, therefore, be seen as the meaning behind a story or a narrative.

The question still remains: How could the weaving together of the different influences by the revolutionaries and the founders be considered as mythology? In the first place, it must be understood that, contrary to common understanding, mythologies are not simply made-up stories created by ancient civilizations. The truth is that all times, all places and all peoples require mythology. This is because mythology is the means by which one attempts to make the world intelligible to oneself. Mythology is the paradigm that allows a person to make philosophical sense of the events that surround him. These events do not have to be grand or existential, such as a war or another species of disaster; the paradigm of mythology is just as necessary for the events of ordinary life. In this way, mythology is necessary for any system of belief.²²⁵ This can rightly be called “ideological myth” or “moral myth” inasmuch as by it, man can either weave order into the world when it appears to be filled with chaos or imbed philosophical and/or moral

²²² Lewis Spence, *Introduction to Mythology* (London: Senate Publications, 1994), 42, 45, 47, 55, 51, 61.

²²³ Day, *Many Meanings of Myth*, 2-3.

²²⁴ Harry Levin, “Some Meanings of Myth,” in *Myth and Mythmaking*, ed. Henry A. Murray (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), 103-104.

²²⁵ Mark Schorer, “The Necessity of Myth,” in *Myth and Mythologies*, ed. Henry A. Murray (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), 355, 356.

tenets into his mythology. Mythology thereby acts as an ark for the perpetuation of the ideas or morals.²²⁶ Mythology is also the raw material of literature itself, the story itself. Mythology is the reason why the human mind is particularly receptive to certain ideas and images—what might be defined by the Jungian term “archetypes.” In this way, mythology is the weaving together of the world one wants see and live in, rather than the world that actually is.²²⁷

Some of these mythological images or archetypes are ones that have achieved universal status, being present in minds and stories across the spectrum of time and geography. One of them is *the hero*. In many of the myths that have survived to the present day, the hero is distinguished, born of noble or royal stock and oftentimes separated from his noble or royal family and aided in his quest by animals or common men. Then, when the time is right, he returns to claim what is rightly his. There are even specific hero stories that deal with the adventures of the hero and his eventual achievements of extraordinary deeds.²²⁸ An excellent example of the hero is Odysseus. The son of King Laertes and, himself, the king of Ithaca, Odysseus is separated from his family for twenty years and faces many dangers from monsters and gods until he returns to Ithaca and reclaims his throne and his family. Another common motif and image from mythology is the slaying of the monster.²²⁹ Herakles’s slaying the Hydra or the Nemean Lion, or St. George killing the dragon are excellent examples of this theme in mythologies. Though not a concrete image like the hero or slaying the monster, another element of mythology is symbolism. Today, the words “emblem” and “symbol” are used as synonyms but, in actuality, there is a great deal of difference between the two. An emblem is a sign that

²²⁶ Day, *Many Meanings of Myth*, 9, 7.

²²⁷ Levin, “Some Meanings of Myth,” 111, 110.

²²⁸ Clyde Kluckhohn, “Recurrent Themes in Myths and Mythmaking,” in *Myths and Mythmaking*, ed. Henry A. Murray (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), 56-57.

²²⁹ Kluckhohn, “Recurrent Themes in Myths and Mythmaking,” 51.

stands as an identification mark for something concrete, as a flag stands for a country; a symbol, on the other hand, stands for a spiritual reality.²³⁰

It is true that many of the images that are present in mythology are nowhere to be seen in the revolution or founding; indeed, some of them would have been appalling to the founders' sense of morality, such as the theme/image of incest; others, such as a flood acting as a means of divine punishment or castration, would have had no place in the specific events in which the founders and the revolutionaries found themselves.²³¹ There are others, however, that easily correlate. The hero is a particularly relevant case. The typologizing of George Washington—whether classically in the forms of Cincinnatus or Fabius, or biblically in the mold of Moses or Joshua—made Washington the hero of the revolution and the rescuer of America. The heroic characteristics of Washington went so far as to impinge upon the divine. As the nineteenth century began, the recently departed first president was compared to the works of God as described by Milton, while Charles Love's *Poem on the Death of General George Washington* had God Himself explain the role that Washington had played in the saving of America, to which the angels sang, "Glory to God...prepare ye—prepare ye—for WASHINGTON/A Place—a Wreath—a Crown."²³² This image of the hero was also taken by others upon themselves, such as when John Adams took the figure of Moses or of Cicero for himself and it was also conferred upon others. After the surrender of General Cornwallis at Yorktown, one celebrant typologized General Nathaniel Greene to the Roman general, Scipio Africanus, saying, "The Roman Scipio, instead of opposing the Carthaginians in Italy, fought them in Africa: General Greene, as if divinely taught that the earl Cornwallis's ruin should crown the glory of Washington, instead of

²³⁰ Day, *Many Meanings of Myth*, 11.

²³¹ Kluckhohn, "Recurrent Themes in Myths and Mythmaking," 50, 52.

²³² George F. Sensabaugh, *Milton in Early America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 253, 277.

opposing him in Virginia, pushed his conquest to the south.”²³³ During Washington’s first term as president, Alexander Hamilton wrote a letter to Gouvernor Morris in which Hamilton’s design is expressed in ciphers, with most of the members of the newly created federal government being identified as heroes or other figures of the classical past. Washington, for example, was dubbed “Scavola,” after Gaius Mucius Scaevola, the Roman youth who attempted to assassinate the king of Clusium when the latter attacked Rome; when he was captured, Scavola openly admitted to his attempt to kill the king and then thrust his right hand into a sacrificial fire to demonstrate his willingness to die for Rome. Vice president John Adams was given the pseudonym of “Brutus” and Hamilton’s nemesis, Thomas Jefferson, was referred to as “Scipio.” For himself, Hamilton chose the pseudonym, “Paulus,” perhaps after the Roman general, Lucius Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus, the conqueror of Macedon and a scholar.²³⁴ Writing to Philip Mazzei in 1796, Thomas Jefferson asserted that certain men had once been the equal of biblical heroes, saying, “It would give you a fever were I to name to you the apostates who have gone over to these heresies, men who were Sam[p]sons in the field and Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot England.”²³⁵ Even common men could be cast as heroes. William Tudor recorded a nameless mechanic as a Roman when the latter, in 1774, expressed his desire to live in the forest like a wild animal rather than submit to British tyranny. In the same way, American soldiers were said, by none other than George Washington, to operate from the same motives that had motivated the ancient Roman soldiers.²³⁶

²³³ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 93.

²³⁴ Alexander Hamilton to Gouvernor Morris, June 22, 1792. National Archives Founders Online. Accessed May 20, 2016. <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-11-02-0456>

²³⁵ Thomas Jefferson to Philip Mazzei, April 24, 1796. In *Thomas Jefferson Writings* (New York: Penguin Books, USA, 1984), 1037.

²³⁶ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 17, 20.

The image of the slaying of the monster was also present during the revolution and the founding. Although this might seem out of place at first glance, the necessity of defeating British tyranny can be seen as fitting this image. Again, it must be remembered that England's image in the colonies gradually changed after the French and Indian War. During and immediately after that war, many in the colonies looked at Britain as Roman-like, if not a new Rome in and of herself. For example, Jonathan Mayhew and Thomas Foxcroft both compared the war to the Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage, identifying that latter with the French colonies in America, thereby assinging to Britain the role of republican Rome. After victory was attained by Britain, the comparisons continued. Nathaniel Evan's poem, *Ode on the Late Glorious Success of His Majesty's Arms*, made Britain into a latter day Rome, declaring, ““Well doth Britannia take the noble ways / Which ancient Rome victoriously pursu'd, / At home her People's peerless Worth to raise, / While by her Arms abroad the Foe's subdu'd.”²³⁷ As time went on, however, and as Britain began to tax the colonies, this era of good will towards the mother country swiftly changed. As discussed previously,²³⁸ with the Stamp Act and subsequent actions of the British government, the colonists saw this as a progression of tyranny, which was reflected by the mythic identity of the tyrant in the narrative; at first, it was the Parliament as well as royal officials in the colonies who were compared to the great tyrants of the past, such as Nero. Eventually, it was George III who was made into the modern day Nero, as demonstrated in such works such as “A Dialogue between the Devil and George III, tyrant of Britain” as well as Patrick Henry’s “Treason Speech,” in which he declared before the House of Burgesses that “Caesar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell and George the Third — ...may profit by

²³⁷ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 47, 48.

²³⁸ See Chapter Two.

their example. If this be treason, make the most of it.²³⁹ When religious language was used in place of classical allusions, the tyranny of Britain was even likened to the dragon from the book of Revelations, which chased the Woman (a symbol of the church) into the desert.²⁴⁰ This perception of tyranny was understood by the patriots as having to be fought. Washington, in his letter to General “Gentleman Johnny” Burgoyne in 1777, declared that “[t]he associated armies in America act from the noblest motives, liberty.”²⁴¹ Thomas Jefferson expressed the same sentiment when, in the Declaration of Independence, after listing the crimes of George III, wrote, “[a] Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.”²⁴² Jefferson’s goal in penning the Declaration was to make the case for American independence to the world and he was able to accomplish that by demonstrating that what Americans were fighting against was tyranny, the monster that had to be slain.

Symbols, expressing a spiritual or metaphysical connection, were also replete in the revolution. The abundance of pseudonyms used during the revolution and the early republic period exemplify the symbolism used. By the use of the pseudonyms, the authors of the letters and pamphlets, as has already been discussed, sought to create or draw attention to links they saw between themselves and the figures or virtues that they took as their pseudonyms.

Mythology possesses and demonstrates the same process of “becoming,” as when a match

²³⁹ Patrick Henry’s “Treason Speech. United States History. Accessed June 6, 2016. <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1266.html>

²⁴⁰ Samuel Sherwood, *The church's flight into the wilderness: an address on the times. Containing some very interesting and important observations on Scripture prophecies: shewing, that sundry of them plainly relate to Great-Britain, and the American colonies; and are fulfilling in the present day.* Stephen J. Stein, “An Apocalyptic Rationale for the American Revolution.” In Early American Literature 9, no. 3 (Winter 1975): 212, 214, 215, 219, 220.

²⁴¹ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 20.

²⁴² Thomas Jefferson, the Declaration of Independence. National Archives Charters of Freedom. Accessed January 28, 2016. http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html

becomes a witch in a child's game or a dancer takes on a mask to become a spirit or a god.²⁴³

The national seal, discussed by Congress, serves as another example. Benjamin Franklin proposed that the national seal of the new nation depict the Egyptians being drowned in the Red Sea at the end of the Israelites' exodus. Thomas Jefferson proposed that the seal portray the Cloud of God leading the Israelites to the Promised Land. John Adams went with classical allusions, rather than biblical ones, and proposed the choice of Herakles between Virtue and Vice.²⁴⁴ In every case, the goal was to express a spiritual or metaphysical connection between the new nation and the events or peoples that were represented on the seals.²⁴⁵



Figure 4: Franklin's Design for the National Seal.. Wikimedia Commons.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Great_Seal_of_the_United_States#/media/File:FirstCommitteeGreatSealReverseLosingDrawing.jpg

²⁴³ Joseph Campbell, "The Historical Development of Mythology." In Joseph Campbell, "The Historical Development of Mythology." In *Myth and Mythmaking*, ed. Henry A. Murray (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 34.

²⁴⁴ Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition*, 13-14.

²⁴⁵ For Adams's and Jefferson's plans for the national seal, see Jonathan Mulinix, "Rejected Designs for the Great Seal of the United States." Accessed August 11, 2016. <http://mentalfloss.com/article/30912/rejected-designs-great-seal-united-states>.

Other symbols were used in the period. For example, after Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown, the artist Charles Wilson Peale created the main attraction for the visiting General Washington in November of 1781. Besides transparencies—paintings on varnished cloth or paper that were illuminated by lanterns from behind—which included portraits of Washington, the French general Rochambeau, and the fighting of the French armies at Yorktown, Peale included, specifically for Washington's arrival, a Temple of Independence, around which were pillars upon which were painted allegories of the virtues, such as Justice, Hope, Industry, Agriculture, Commerce, and Arts. Peale also painted an illuminated, life-sized portrait of the Genius of America, a female garbed in white with a purple girdle, upon which was the word VIRTUE

and a fillet with the word PERSEVERENCE. In this attire, the Genius of America trampled down Discord.²⁴⁶ The portrait of Thomas Jefferson painted by the Pole Tadeusz Kosciusk, serves as another example of symbol.

²⁴⁶ Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution*, 412-413.



Figure 5: Thomas Jefferson by Tadeusz Kosciusko. Free Historical Stock Photos.
http://www.historicalstockphotos.com/details/photo/611_thomas_jefferson_wearing_a_laurel_wreath.html

Jefferson, even though he at first believed that idea of portraying himself and his contemporaries in classical garb was “ridiculous,”²⁴⁷ did allow himself to be Silverman, portrayed with a laurel wreath crown. The symbol of the crown stretched back centuries. In the culture of ancient Greece, it stood for athletic victory. For the Romans, who took the wreath from the Greeks, it stood for peace, eternity and victory, as well as the supreme ruler, with the goddess Victory often being depicted at the crowning of emperors and gods, thereby cementing the wreath’s symbolism of triumph and power. The crown depicted on Jefferson’s brow seems also to be of the Delphic

²⁴⁷ Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson, Time and History*, 146.

type, as opposed to the Cyprian type, as can be determined from the red fruit within the leaves.

The Delphic crown was bestowed upon generals on their triumphant return to Rome.²⁴⁸ Although the closest Jefferson ever came to the role of general was when he served as Virginia's governor during the revolution, the Delphic laurel crown that Kosciusko portrayed Jefferson with, stood as a symbol of Jefferson's success, as the American *philosophe* second only to Benjamin Franklin, against the forces of tyranny and ignorance.

There is another way in which it can be seen that mythology provided the means used to weave the different traditions together. Mythology does not only have to deal with events that supposedly occurred in the past. It can also deal with the future, in a prophetic or eschatological vein. Some of the great partakers of prophetic myths were the prophets of the Old Testament, such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel and David; even authors such as Ray Bradbury, whose science fiction paints future worlds, can be considered as operating under the paradigm of prophetic myth.²⁴⁹ This element of mythology is present in America. This was often expressed by the belief that America was specially chosen by God, as expressed, for example, by Roger Sherwood, when he told his congregants that America was the wilderness prepared for the church by God for its survival. America, in other words, was an ideal, the fulfillment of what men had longed for; as John Adams said in his *Dissertation on the Feudal and Canon Law*, the Puritan settlers had come, not simply for religious liberty but for political liberty as well. This idea that America was a fulfillment was ingrained deeply into the minds of the colonists, especially the patriots; Samuel Adams's hope that Boston could have been the Christian Sparta, as well as the claims that

²⁴⁸ Dragana Rogić, "Wreath—Its Use and Meaning in Ancient Visual Culture." In *Journal of the Center for Empirical Researches on Religion* 10 no. 18 (December 2012): 343. Accessed March 20, 2016.

https://www.academia.edu/3604218/WREATH_ITS_USE_AND_MEANING_IN_ANCIENT_VISUAL_CULTURE

²⁴⁹ Day, *The Many Meanings of Myth*, 25.

Washington not only was the equal of Moses but, in some ways, his superior, are demonstrations of this belief. America and her people were not simply the equal of the ancient world—classical or biblical—but were destined to surpass the ancient world. This same belief was expressed in numerous pieces of literature. For example, in “A Dialogue from the Year of Independence,” Narvon, the American character, told his French counterpart “[s]ee empires first in eastern regions rise; arts, science, freedom and religion there, first spread and flourish— see them bend their way, and flow advance to these far western climes.” Narvon continued by saying that, “from ev’ry province, by the gen’ral voice / Of all the land, a senate [shall] constitute, As wise, as great, as prudent as august, As Rome, when mistress of the universe, Or Athens, when her pride was in it’s bloom, Or Britain, e’er she fell, could ever boast.” What was more, in America, every man was a Cato and a Socrates, which allowed Narvon to see “a grand republic rise and rule; extend her limits to the ambient seas...”²⁵⁰ This taking upon herself the mantle of Rome by patriots, on its own, can be seen as mythology inasmuch as there was already a mythology based upon the immortal city. With the rise of the power of Russia, Russians crafted a link between themselves and old Rome. Philotheus of Pskov wrote to Czar Vassily III that:

The church of the Old Rome fell because of the Apollinarian heresy; the gates of the church of the Second Rome, Constantinople, have been hewn down by the axes of the infidel Turks; but the present church of the Third, New Rome, of thy sovereign Empire...shines in the universe...All the empires of the Orthodox Christian Faith have come together in thy single Empire...two Romes have fallen, but the Thirds stands, and a Fourth shall never be.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores*, 33.

²⁵¹ Robert Lee Wolff, “The Three Romes: Migration of an Ideology and the Making of an Autocrat.” In *Myths and Mythmaking*, ed. Henry A. Murray (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 174.

The American patriots, seeing themselves and their homeland as the refuge of Christianity and the home of liberty, made the metaphysical connection between themselves and Rome, thus incorporating themselves into a mythology extant since the end of the Middle Ages.

Even if it is accepted that the revolutionaries and the Founding Fathers used mythology to weave the different traditions in America into a strong rope, there still seems to be a problem. Mythology, after all, is fictional and non-rational. In asserting that they used mythology, one would appear to be saying, in some fashion, that the revolutionaries and the founders, lied either to themselves, to posterity, or both. One is left with a picture of the founder and revolutionaries, not as heroes, not even as fundamentally good or noble men who tried their best at the tasks given them, but of a Beardian²⁵² nature, seeking only their own good and self-aggrandizement. This, though, is to look at mythology incorrectly, for even though it is fictional and non-rational, this does not mean that it is not true.

One of the first individuals to express this fact was the English author and apologist, Gilbert Keith Chesterton. Chesterton, in his book *The Everlasting Man*, made the observation that mythology, being a production of man's imagination is, therefore, properly, understood, a work of art.²⁵³ As art, mythology is a means of seeing the world with new eyes. An example that he gives is the figure of Father Christmas (Santa Claus); Chesterton says, "Father Christmas is not an allegory of snow and holly; he is not merely the stuff called snow afterwards artificially given human form, like a snow man. He is something that gives a new meaning to the white world and the evergreens; so that snow itself seems to be warm rather than cold." In other words,

²⁵² Charles Beard was an American historian of the early twentieth century who maintained that the founding fathers and the framers acted out of their own selfish, economic interests, a theory he advanced in such works as *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1913).

²⁵³ G.K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 101.

the one who truly creates or believes in mythology, and thus, art, knows that there are transcendental truths that exist and, furthermore, believes that a mere mortal can come into contact with these truths.²⁵⁴ Chesterton elaborated on this idea in speaking of the pagan myths. Taking them to be poetry, which is a type of art, Chesterton said that the old myths allowed the pagan peoples to see and to touch real metaphysical truths such as beauty and terror.²⁵⁵ In this way, mythology is not fiction at all but is very real and true.

A scholar who took up this idea of true myths and elaborated more upon what Chesterton had started was the English scholar and author, J.R.R. Tolkien. In a paper presented at the University of St. Andrew in 1939, entitled, “On Fairy Stories,” Tolkien expanded upon Chesterton’s initial ideas. Tolkien declared that mythology was not a “disease” of the mind at all, as some had suggested, but was instead the means by which men actually become “sub-creators.”²⁵⁶ To Tolkien’s mind, therefore, mythology was a natural habit of man. This was so because, reiterating Chesterton’s points, Tolkien argued that the human mind is capable of forming images of things that are not actually there, but man’s imagination is not simply the ability to make images in the mind; it possesses a deeper, richer dimension. Imagination, Tolkien says, is the potential to create art and it is art that allows man to become a sub-creator, one who partakes of the likeness of God within himself (the *Imago Dei*) and thus allows that likeness to shine forth upon the world.²⁵⁷ Tolkien went further than that, however, and made an exceedingly bold claim; namely, that mythology is more real than some things in the actual physical world. This belief comes from the way in which Tolkien viewed mythology and how he saw the

²⁵⁴ Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*, 104-105.

²⁵⁵ Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*, 108.

²⁵⁶ J.R.R. Tolkien, “On Fairy Stories.” 3-4, 9. Accessed May 26, 2016.

http://www.rivendellcommunity.org/Formation/Tolkien_On_Fairy_Stories.pdf

²⁵⁷ Tolkien, “On Fairy Stories,” 5-6.

teleology of mythology. For Tolkien, mythology was a means of escaping the confines of the physical world: as Tolkien said, “Why should a man be scorned if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home? Or if, when he cannot do so, he thinks and talks about other topics than jailers and prison-walls? The world outside has not become less real because the prisoner cannot see it.” In critiquing the critics who objected to the use of the word “escape” in this way, Tolkien suggested that the critics were mistaking escape with desertion.²⁵⁸ Mythology provides a means of escaping the physical world through creating a secondary world into “which both designer and spectator can enter, to the satisfaction of their senses while they are inside; but in its purity it is artistic in desire and purpose.” This creation of a secondary world through the art of imagination explains why fantastic things can and do occur within these worlds created by what Tolkien termed “enchantment.” It is because of these elements of mythology and art in imagination that Tolkien declared that the secondary worlds of mythology can be more real than the physical world. As Tolkien explained, “The maddest castle that ever came out of a giant’s bag in a wild Gaelic story is not only much less ugly than a robot-factory, it is also (to use a very modern phrase) ‘in a very real sense’ a great deal more real.” The reason for this fact was because in the secondary world of mythology, evil was evil and good was good; one immersing himself in mythology could not think of the evil ogre’s castle as anything but ugly and evil while a house built for a good purpose, such as an inn, could not be thought of as anything other than beautiful. It was for this reason that Tolkien declared that the ogre’s castle and the good inn were, in this way, more real than street lamps.²⁵⁹ Tolkien’s reasoning flowed from his belief that the modern world had profaned the natural mystery, beauty and sacramentality of creation and, in addition, perverted man’s ability to see these qualities within creation. It was these qualities—

²⁵⁸ Tolkien, “On Fairy Stories,” 11.

²⁵⁹ Tolkien, “On Fairy Stories,” 8, 12, 11.

these metaphysical realities—that, for Tolkien, were more real than the real things that populated the physical world. Mythology, in this way, could offer a “sudden glimpse of Truth,” and reveal what life was *supposed* to be. This was why on the tombstones that he had made for himself and his wife, Edith, Tolkien commissioned that the names on the stones be “Lúthien” for his wife and “Beren” for himself. In Tolkien’s Middle Earth mythology, Lúthien was the elven maiden who surrendered her immortality to spend a “heavenly” eternity with her husband, Beren. In this way, Tolkien saw Edith both in historical terms and in mythological terms.²⁶⁰ Tolkien saw his wife both as she was in history, and how she was really meant to be in mythology.

The integral need of art for mythology may seem nonsensical at first since, it might be asked, why is art needed for mythology? The answer is because we cannot “see” the metaphysical truths that are revealed via mythology without art. This, in turn, is because art is physical and is thus perceptible through our five senses. Thomas Aquinas argued that knowledge was gathered through the perception of the five senses. But metaphysical truths are imperceptible to the senses. To gain understanding and knowledge of them, therefore, it is necessary for the imperceptible to be made perceptible. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to acquire a “third eye” or an “eye of the heart.”²⁶¹ This was the point that C.S. Lewis made in regards to mythology. Lewis, as Tolkien had done previously, made the observation that mythology is not confined to the past but can be created in the present.²⁶² But, what is even more important is that mythology is the “eye of the heart.” Lewis said that it was in mythology that man came the closest to touching what was not touchable. Lewis illustrated the dilemma in this way:

²⁶⁰ Bradley J. Birzer, *J.R.R. Tolkien’s Sanctifying Myth* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2003), 23-24.

²⁶¹ Roger Peck, “C.S. Lewis and Tolkien on Myth and Knowledge.” In *Faith* 43 no. 2 (March and April 2011), 12. Accessed February 7, 2016. <http://www.faith.org.uk/article/march-april-2011-cs-lewis-and-tolkien-on-myth-and-knowledge>

²⁶² C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 42.

You cannot study pleasure in the moment of the nuptial embrace, nor repentance while repenting, nor analyze the nature of humor while roaring with laughter. But when else can you really know these things? "If only my toothache would stop, I could write another chapter about pain." But once it stops, what do I know about pain?

Myth was the "partial answer" to this quandary of understanding those abstractions which, of and by themselves, would otherwise, remain unknowable to our intellects.²⁶³ Mythology, in this way was an umbilical cord that connected man with the imperceptible, the metaphysical. The example that Lewis provided as support of this assertion was the British monarchy. Lewis acknowledged that it would be much more rational if the monarchy were simply abolished. "But how if," Lewis asked, "by doing so, you leave out the one element in our state which matters most? How if the monarchy is the channel through which all the vital elements of citizenship loyalty, the consecration of secular life, the hierarchical principle, splendor, ceremony, continuity-still trickle down to irrigate the dust bowl of modern economic statecraft?"²⁶⁴ It was the monarchy, Lewis declared, that made manifest all of the imperceptible things that not only made life bearable but also possible.

From what has been discussed, it appears that mythology is a suitable answer to the question as to how the revolutionaries and the founders tied the different branches of republicanism, as well as their Christianity, into a single bundle of sticks strong enough to aid them in the revolution. The use of several of the images found in mythologies as well as the use of symbols in the iconography of the revolution and early life of the country, creates a strong parallel between conventional mythology and the revolution. It is true that the myths created by

²⁶³ C.S. Lewis, "Myth as Fact." 3. Accessed May 27, 2016. katrinageiger.weebly.com/.../myth_became_fact-god_in_the_dock.doc

²⁶⁴ Lewis, "Myth as Fact." 2.

the founders and the revolutionaries did not deal with monsters as conventionally imagined—such as hydras, giants and spirits—nor did they deal with gods or demi-gods possessing fantastic powers. But, as Tolkien and Lewis pointed out, mythology can be created in contemporary times and it is art and imagination that grasps at metaphysical truths, and not simply cold, hard logic. At times, this creation was made quite evident. Henry St. George Tucker, in describing Patrick Henry before the House of Burgesses remarked:

Imagine to yourself, this sentence delivered with all the calm dignity of Cato of Utica—imagine to yourself the Roman senate assembled in the capitol when it was entered by the profane Gauls, who, at first, were awed by their presence, as if they had entered an assembly of Gods!—imagine that you heard that Cato addressing such a senate—imagine that you saw the handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar’s palace—imagine you heard a voice as from heaven uttering the words: ‘*We must fight,*’ as the doom of fate, and you may have some idea of the speaker, the assembly to whom he addressed himself, and the auditory, of which I was one.²⁶⁵

Tucker, in this description, combined several peoples and places and times together: Cato of Utica lived from 95 BC to 46 BC, while the Gauls sacked Rome in 390 BC; furthermore, the civilization of Rome was conflated by Tucker with Belshazzar, from the book of Daniel. In this case, historical accuracy was not the goal; instead, Tucker was painting a picture or a poem, as it were, in which the images he plucked from history and weaved together into a new story, served to illustrate the courage, nobility and virtue of Patrick Henry, as well as the foes that he and all Americans faced, and the inevitability of the conflict at hand—as inevitable as the judgement of God. Nor was this the only example of mythological creation. John Trumbull’s depiction of Washington resigning his military commission, for example, depicted Martha Washington as

²⁶⁵ Henry St. George Tucker, “Patrick Henry and St. George Tucker.” 72.

²⁶⁴ Wills, *Cincinnatus*, 14

present at Congress when Washington resigned, as well as James Madison, the former to illustrate the private felicity of the general and the latter so that all four future presidents from Virginia would be in the same place at the same time. Neither Mrs. Washington nor Madison were actually present at the event, however.²⁶⁶



Figure 6: General George Washington Resigning His Commission by John Trumbull. Wikimedia Commons. Notice Martha Washington in the upper right balcony as well as Madison in the background. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr-USCapitol-General_George_Washington_Resigning_His_Commission.jpg

Trumbull created mythology again in his portrayal of the Declaration of Independence; his goal, here, was the preservation of the images of the founders. To accomplish this, he excluded those for whom no authoritative image could be found or created, and he included delegates who were not in attendance at the time of the event. In all, forty-seven individuals (forty-two of the fifty-six signers and five other patriots) are depicted, all painted from life or life portraits. Some of the

²⁶⁶ Wills, *Cincinnatus*, 14.

room's features, such as the number and placement of doors and windows do not correspond to historical fact. Trumbull also gave the room more elegant furniture, covered the windows with heavy draperies rather than venetian blinds, and decorated the room's rear wall with captured British military flags, believing that spoils such as this probably would have been displayed there.²⁶⁷



Figure 7: *Declaration of Independence* by John Trumbull. Wikimedia Commons.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/John_Trumbull#/media/File:Declaration_independence.jpg

The question still remains: Did the revolutionaries and the founders actively create a mythology? Explicitly, the answer is No. However, with their understanding of time and history, as well as their insistence that they were creating something that not only had existed in the past, but was new (the new empire, blending classical virtues and Christianity), it seems that the founders and the revolutionaries knew that they were creating a narrative, and that they formed a link in a

²⁶⁷ Declaration of Independence. Architecture of the Capitol. Accessed November 5, 2016.
<http://www.aoc.gov/art/historic-rotunda-paintings/declaration-independence>

chain that stretched back to the ancient world. Even if the founders and the revolutionaries did not have a solid idea that they were creating mythology, they were, in the words of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, building better than they knew.

Conclusion

Visitors to the Capitol in Washington, D.C. today can behold an awesome sight when they turn their eyes upward to the Capitol's rotunda. There, painted on the underside of the great dome, is Constantino Brumidi's painting, "The Apotheosis of Washington." Revealed for the first time in January of 1866, Brumidi's work was immediately showered with praise for its grandeur and artistry.



Figure 8: Brumidi's *Apotheosis of George Washington*. Wikimedia Commons.
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Apotheosis_of_Washington_at_147_years_old_\(8364483057\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Apotheosis_of_Washington_at_147_years_old_(8364483057).jpg)

A series of allegories, the painting depicted the gods of old aiding and influencing America's greatest children and America herself. For example, Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom,

was shown offering her aid to Benjamin Franklin and Robert Fulton, while the god Mercury was depicted giving gold to Robert Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and one of the great financiers of the revolution. The Roman goddesses of agriculture—Ceres (grain crops), Flora (flowers and spring), and Pomona (fruit and nut trees)—gave their assistance to America, portrayed as a woman sporting a liberty cap, as she drives a new reaper to gather the year's crop of grain. At the bottom center of the painting, Freedom, with her sword, shield and the eagle, tramples upon her enemies. Overlooking these scenes is a circle of fifteen figures; the thirteen women forming the majority of the circle represent the thirteen original United States; the other two women are the incarnations of Liberty and Victory. And, seated in the center of these incarnations and presiding over this entire cosmos, sits George Washington, arrayed in his military uniform, his left hand holding a sword while his right arm gestures downward and to his side.²⁶⁸ Washington and the physical representations of the original colonies and Liberty and Victory, sit above a rainbow, a symbol of divine promise, as taken from the conclusion of the story of Noah in the book of Genesis. Washington is no longer the American Cincinnatus, Fabius, or Moses; he is the being who rules, Zeus-like, over the American Olympus.

Brumidi was not the first to portray a “deification” of Washington. One of the first such portrayals was John James Barralet’s “Apotheosis of Washington,” an engraving that Barralet unveiled in 1802, three years after the former president’s death. In his “Apotheosis,” Barralet wove both Christian and classical elements together to create a mythology of Washington’s death. The sleeping figures of Liberty and the Indian (representing the New World) situated in front of Washington’s sarcophagus, as well as Washington being raised by Immortality and

²⁶⁸ Kent Ahrens, “Constantino Brumidi’s ‘Apotheosis of Washington’ in the Rotunda of the United States Capitol.” In *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington , D.C.* Vol. 49 (Washington, D.C.: Historical Society of Washington, D.C., 1973/1974), 203. Accessed July 5, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40067741>

Father Time, were reminiscent of depictions of both the Resurrection and the baroque paintings of the Assumption of Mary; the portrayals of the three theological virtues—Faith, Hope, and Charity—to the left of Washington’s sarcophagus, reinforced the Christian imagery. On the other hand, portrayals of Liberty reached back to the time when the Romans had placed her images on coins, while Father Time was composed of a conglomeration of the Greek *Kairos* (Time) and *Kronos* (Saturn). At the same time, Barralet was forced to add new iconography to his Apotheosis in regards to Washington who had no predecessors in classical or Christian art. Barralet, therefore, added the square of the Freemasons as well as the badge of the Society of Cincinnatus to his engraving.²⁶⁹ By combining classical, Christian, and contemporary symbols into his engraving, Barralet was, in effect, advancing the mythology created in the revolution. Washington, in his art, became not only the American Cincinnatus and Moses, but also the patron saint of America, assumed bodily and with glory into paradise.

The mythology created in the revolution continued throughout America’s history. In 1840, Horatio Greenough carved a statue of the first president. Casting subtlety aside, Greenough portrayed Washington as a full-fledged Roman senator, complete with toga and sandals, surrendering his sword to the people he had served. Greenough’s statue incorporated two distinct themes. The surrendering of the sword brought to mind, again, that Washington was the American Cincinnatus. This was reinforced by the words written by the poet, Richard Henry Wilde, a close friend of Greenough and who, upon seeing the statue, wrote:

Such was the Man!—Simple—Austere—Sublime—/By every fortune tried—in all unmoved—/Hero—Sage—Patriot—great without crime/Who conquered freedom for the land he loved;—/And for himself—took nothing—but a Name/That none till then—& no ne since has won:/Does

²⁶⁹ Phoebe Lloyd Jacobs, “John James Barralet and the Apotheosis of George Washington.” In *Winterthur Portfolio* Vol. 12 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 125, 123-124. Accessed July 5, 2016.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1180583>

not the very marble speak his name?/Who dare thus point to Heaven but
WASHINGTON²⁷⁰



Figure 9: John James Barralet's *Apotheosis of Washington*. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005683606/>.

²⁷⁰ Nathalia Wright, "Richard Henry Wright on Greenough's Washington." In *American Literature* 27, no. 4 (January 1956): 557. Accesed July 5, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2922341>

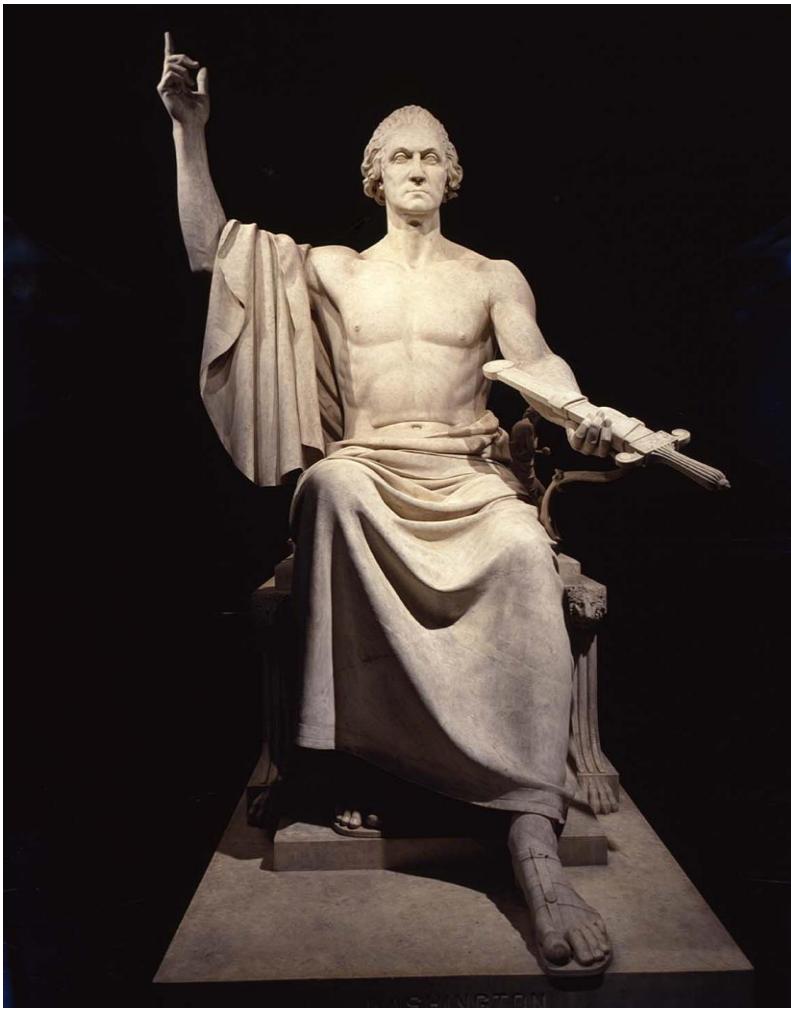


Figure 10: Horatio Greenough's George Washington. Smithsonian American Art

Museum, Renwick Gallery..

<http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=9575>

In addition to Cincinnatus, and the humility, patriotism, and virtue that this typological connection conveyed, Greenough's statue incorporated elements of deification as well. This was accomplished through the pose of the statue of Washington mimicking that of Zeus in Elean by Phidias, destroyed but remembered in the coins of Elis, on which were stamped images of the statue, as well as Pausanias's description of the statue in his *Description of Greece*.²⁷¹ Greenough seemed to be saying that by living the Cincinnatian model, Washington, in death, was elevated to

²⁷¹ Gary Wills, "Washington's Citizen Virtue: Greenough and Houdon." In *Critical Inquiry* 10, no. 3 (March 1984): 420-421. Accessed July 5, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343301>

the status of a god. This was the same approach that Brumidi took in his Apotheosis in the Capitol's Rotunda. In 1859, Brumidi painted an oil canvas that served as the genesis of his Apotheosis, though there were some distinct differences. In the oil canvas, Liberty and Victory simply held between them a portrait of Washington, an artistic method in classical art where an honored dead was represented as a painted image. This is supported by architectural elements or allegorical figures. In the rotunda, however, Brumidi showed Washington himself, modeled after Greenough's statue.²⁷² Rather than depicting the late president as dead but honored, Brumidi portrayed Washington as alive and covered in glory in his American Olympus. Such mythologizing continued with the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. The martyred Great Emancipator was portrayed as ascending to heaven and being embraced by Washington in Paradise, with Washington crowning his protégé with a laurel crown of victory. The mythology created for Washington persisted into the twentieth century. When plans were being made for the bicentennial celebration of Washington's birthday in 1932, discussion ensued as to what piece of art would be the standard bearer of the festivities. The commission decided on Jean-Antoine Houdon's bust of the first president, justifying this decision by explaining that Houdon's busts were the closest to capturing what Washington had actually looked like in his life. When revealed to the public, however, the commission discovered that the people did not care for

²⁷² Ahrens, "Constantino Brumidi's 'Apotheosis of Washington,'" 196, 198, 205.

Houdon's bust to be the face of the bicentennial celebration inasmuch as the bust was “[n]ot our George Washington.”²⁷³

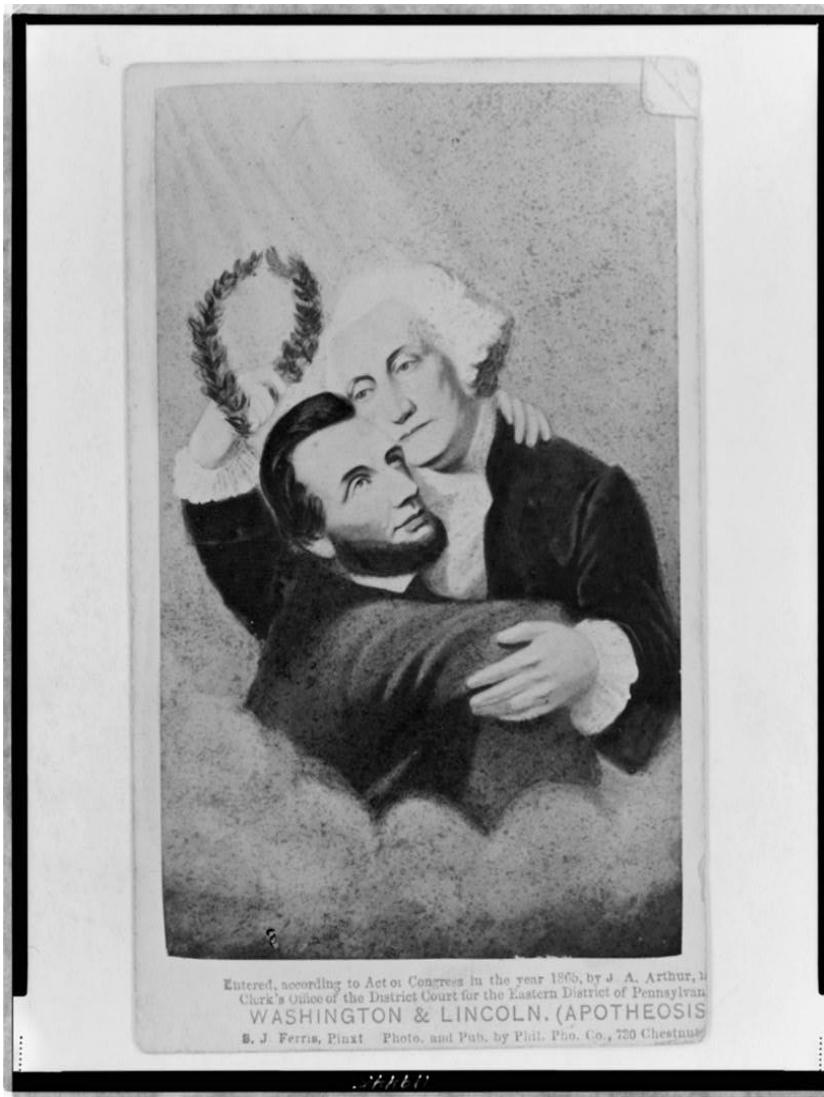


Figure 11: Washington and Lincoln (Apotheosis). Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/98506771/>

What these pieces of art from different periods of American history illustrate is that mythology is present in every generation and that the founders were not anomalies when they

²⁷³ Adam Greenhalgh, “‘Not a Man but a God’: The Apotheosis of Gilbert Stuart’s Athenaem Portrait of George Washington.” In *Winterthur Portfolio*, 41, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 203. Accessed July 5, 2016.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/523020>

created their mythology of the revolution. The American colonies, prior to that time, were seed beds wherein different ideas and traditions co-existed side by side, often-times within the same individuals. The colonists were steeped in the classics, learning Latin and Greek in grammar school and college, reading the works of the classical authors, as well as learning to admire and imitate the heroes of the classical past, all of which brought about an atmosphere in which the classics, and the “legacy of liberty” that they preserved, became fuel for the revolution. At the same time, Christianity exerted just as strong an influence in the thirteen colonies. Contrary to the modern fabrication, deism, while certainly existing in the colonies, was not a dominant force, either in the ranks of the “common people” or in the hearts of the generally more educated founders and leaders of the revolution. Stretching back to the Mayflower Compact and the motives of the Puritan fathers for establishing Massachusetts Bay, the Christian religion struck deep roots in American soil. The Calvinistic tradition and the Bible exerted as much respect and authority as the classical learning that many Americans absorbed and helped the Americans justify the revolution. Christianity also gave Hebraic republicanism to the colonists, which also helped them to justify their revolt against a corrupt and tyrannical monarchy so as to establish a republic in the same vein as ancient Israel. Finally, the Whig tradition, brought over from England, deposited rich ideas as to the nature of liberty, the natural law and natural rights in the colonists.

All of these influences and traditions were used by the colonists during the Revolution. Classical allusion and typology were employed in order to associate and connect individual patriots, as well as entire battles and events, to the heroes and events of the classical past; George Washington was seen as the American Cincinnatus while the Battle of Bunker Hill was seen as a reflection of the Battle of Thermopylae. By doing this, the revolutionaries were able to link

themselves with the “legacy of liberty” that was seen to course through the works, beliefs and events of the classical past. This same process, however, was also at work with Christianity in relation to the patriots, with Washington also being typologized as various heroes from the Bible, such as Moses and Joshua.

Inasmuch as it does not seem that the founders merely threw different elements of different traditions together in a haphazard manner, it is necessary to ask how the different elements worked together at the time of the revolution and the making of the United States. This question becomes especially pertinent when it comes to Samuel Adams’s idea of Boston as a “Christian Sparta,” or Henry St. George Tucker’s combining of historical periods and people and classical and biblical history, to paint a verbal picture of Patrick Henry’s speech before the House of Burgesses in 1755. Mythology is a satisfying answer to these questions. Mythology, understood as the truthful and poetical means by which people make the world and its events intelligible, provides the glue by which the different traditions and influences could have been woven together by the revolutionaries to create a cohesive narrative that made the purpose of the revolution and America clear. This understanding also explains why mythology continued throughout American history: Mythology is the means by which people, regardless of time and generation, understand the world around them. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Washington was not only typologically connected to Cincinnatus, as he had been since the revolution, but also, subtly, to Zeus. Washington truly became the first in war, the first in peace, and the first in the hearts of his countrymen, as Americans eagerly saw Washington as not only the father of the country but also, in a sense, its deity, or, perhaps, more accurately, America’s patron saint who, upon the command of God, watched over America, the country for which he had sacrificed so much. This need for mythology was also demonstrated in the bicentennial

festivities of 1932; rather than have Houdon's realistic bust as the face of the celebration, the more idealized portrait of Washington, painted by Gilbert Sullivan, was chosen instead because Americans of the twentieth century saw Gilbert's idealized Washington as "their Washington" rather than the realistic portrayal of the first president.

C.S. Lewis once stated that "Reason is the natural organ of truth, but imagination is the organ of meaning."²⁷⁴ With mythology, the founding fathers of America created true meaning from their different traditions. Americans continued that process throughout the country's history, breathing silver upon the stage of world.

²⁷⁴ C.S. Lewis, "Bluspels and Flalansferes: A Semantic Nightmare." In *Rehabilitations and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 10. Accessed August 10, 2016. <http://pseudograph.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CSL-Bluspels-and-Flalansferes.pdf>.

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