The Radicalism of the American Revolution Study Guide

The Radicalism of the American Revolution by Gordon S. Wood

BOOKRAGS

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Plot Summary

The Radicalism of the American Revolution examines why, within the three-quarters of a century, American colonists threw off millennia-old social patterns and became the most democratic people in the world.

In the 18th-century English-speaking world, monarchy links everyone upwardly and downwardly in gradations of freedom and servility. Hierarchical inequality assigns everyone a place and connects them vertically, superior to some and subservient to others. All men are not created equal. Poverty is virtuous for common folk, because it keeps them industrious, while aristocrats live on "unearned income," accept the obligation of public service, and treat inferiors and subordinates like children. Diffuse and delicate webs of paternalistic obligation link people reciprocally and complementarily. Subjects are expected both to look upward for benefits and to please superiors. Royal patronage is still powerful enough in America to cause exasperation and anxiety in the colonies, but "corruption" enters the political lexicon, and much of the political squabbling centers on the social and moral respectability of leaders.

Social equality primes monarchical America for republicanism. With increased migration, social bonds break down. Farm families take part in "proto-industrialization" to raise their living standards. Society seems less ordained by God and more man-made and increasingly arbitrary. By adopting enlightened standards of paternalism, rulers of all sorts are collaborating in the weakening of their authority. As the genteel become preoccupied with the meaning of parentage, the new meanings translate to all power relationships, and rebellion becomes the fault of the unloving, uncaring ruler. The idea of contract next colors the parent-child relationship, and the mother country-colony relationship is seen to rest on policy, not nature. In 1763, the British government taxes the colonists, who have not been prepared by the harmony achieved between centralized and local authorities in Britain. The colonists scream "corruption." The revolutionaries' goal is to destroy the "secret bonds of society:" family, blood and personal influence. They wanted to substitute self-love, which creates benevolence, which creates private happiness. Man's natural tendencies have only to be freed of civil impediments in order for society to prosper. Leaders early on grow concerned the people will not be virtuous, trusting and unselfish enough to realize the utopian goals. Expectations of better living standards breed competition and individualism rather than benevolence and selflessness.

Enfeebled by republicanism, the traditional social structure bursts, and equality proves far more revolutionary than the founders expect. Still, they plan a new federal government to be a "disinterested and dispassionate umpire." It proves too much, and political parties form, exercise iron discipline and bind members to them through patronage. The Jacksonian revolution legitimizes, restrains and controls democracy. It reconciles Americans to it, while infusing more elements of monarchy than the Federalists dared try. Jackson introduces the "spoils system," along with safeguards to counter corruption. Protecting private property and minority rights is the great problem of democratic politics. Ordinary Americans grow absorbed in the individual pursuit of

money. Voluntary associations fill the social void. The rationalism and skepticism most revolutionaries share are swept away in the "Second Great Awakening," but religion fails to bring social adhesion. Pecuniary ties join family, law and associations as ligatures of society. Labor becomes a commodity to be bought and sold. "Middling sorts" gain a moral hegemony over society by absorbing the gentility of the aristocracy and the work of the working class. Democratic society is not what the revolutionary leaders want or expect, but their revolution has succeeded too well. The founders are elevated into mythic figures, but their views give way to a new generation's own experience.

Part 1, Chapter 1

Part 1, Chapter 1 Summary and Analysis

Although the mid-18th century is a time of massive social change, the past remains tenacious. American colonists are Englishmen, sharing the assumption that order and stability in society stem from monarchy. The king is *pater familias*, and his subjects are dependent beings, lacking autonomy and easily cowed. Still, the Western world views Englishmen as innately insubordinate, insolent, and unwilling to be governed. The colonists share these traits, but are more traditional than those back home. They feel more closely tied to the crown than to fellow colonies, and share the manners, morals and amusements of the mother country on a humbler scale.

Englishmen of every social stratum pride themselves on being freemen with rights and liberties no one else on earth enjoys. Their understanding of monarchy is much different from their European contemporaries and their own ancestors before the Glorious Revolution of 1688. They suffer no arbitrary tyranny, are represented in the House of Commons, and enjoy a constitution dedicated to liberty, a principle Englishmen celebrate as no people ever has. Englishmen see their crude John Bull character as superior to the foppish French, and Americans are simply exaggerated Englishmen. From England, the colonists appear a bit too egalitarian and successful in handling religious diversity.

Farmers on both sides of the Atlantic brag of independence and contrast themselves to the cringing peasants of France. Americans tend to own their land, while Britons are tenants. Neither suffers the strict barriers that set regular Europeans apart from the aristocracy. They intermingle with and imitate their social betters and, to Europeans, appear infected with republicanism. Europeans see the British monarchy as scarcely monarchical, but Americans are enthusiastic about it, perhaps because they are removed from its effects. They know about pomp and ceremony from their newspapers, see royal arms and emblems displayed on public buildings, and observe the increasing affectations of royal governors and judges, intended to awe them and dignify the dispensing of justice. The colonists grumble and try to evade imperial regulations, but for the most part comply. When Anglo-French warfare resumes in the 1750s, colonists supply unprecedented manpower and resources.

Religion bolsters monarchical authority and order, because it is through revelation and magic that ordinary people understand and manipulate the world. European-style centralized state-supported churches expand dramatically in the colonies in the first third of the 18th century. Coercive clerical power increases, new parishes form, buildings and ceremonies grow more elaborate, and the unchurched are better controlled. All sects advocate honoring and revering those in authority. Anglicans do the most to extend the crown's Christian authority, but even the Puritans drop their exclusivity and localism. Mid-century, Anglicans hold far more public offices than their numbers in society warrant.

Monarchy presumes a "long train of dependence" (Hume) with everyone linked upwardly and downwardly in gradations of freedom and servility. Hierarchical inequality is inevitable and seen as something positive, because everyone in his or her sphere has a useful place and contributes to the whole. No one is independent. One can advance and prosper only at someone else's expense. Mobility depends on possessing and demonstrating qualifications for the new rank. The norm, however, is to settle into the relations and dependencies proper to one's born station. Everyone belongs somewhere and "strangers" are ejected. Colonial society lacks the fine calibrations of British society, but hierarchical "rules of precedency" can be seen everywhere, in the military, colleges, and church pews. One's title is virtually part of one's name, zealously guarded and carrying subtle shades of differentiation.

Colonial America lacks any sense of broad horizontal solidarity of occupation that is the modern bases of "class," and wealth is more equally distributed than it will be in the 19th century. People think of themselves as "bred" for their occupations, both laborers and those who train for and "profess" medicine, law and divinity. Many gentlemen are called planters or farmers, but do not personally till the land. Merchants are respectable, but not genteel. Only those engaged in overseas commerce have any opportunity to gather wealth. Small-scale merchants and shopkeepers endlessly scramble for business. Artisans and mechanics comprise a third of the urban male population and run the gamut from poor to rich. Many progress from apprentice to journeyman to master, but never transcend the middling social status of the mass of laborers. The "meaner sort" at the bottom of society lack land, trading goods, and skills of any sort. Individuals connect vertically rather than horizontally, superior to some and subservient to others.

Part 1, "Monarchy" examines what the American Revolution will sweep away. The king is the fountainhead from which everything flows downward, and the institution is examined in five ways. Chapter 1, "Hierarchy," prepares the thesis that Englishmen in the mid-18th century relate to one another vertically, more so than horizontally. One naturally has superiors and inferiors and deals with each simultaneously and appropriately. No characters are developed in this chapter, although a few famous people are quoted, some because they are noted authorities prior to the Revolution and some because their pre-revolutionary pronouncements contrast so radically change their ideas during and after the breakaway.

Part 1, Chapter 2

Part 1, Chapter 2 Summary and Analysis

The ancient social cleavage between the few (gentlemen/ patricians) and the many (commoners/ plebeians) exists in America. In the southern colonies, the aristocracy comprises 4-5% of the population. In the North, it approaches 10%. By birth and fortune, they are expected to govern the rest. By colonial times, gentlemen form a middle rank between nobles and commoners. With the aristocracy not defined and locked by law as in France, England allows social mobility, as noble titles are lost to all but the eldest son.

All men are patently not created equal. Birth and parentage matter greatly, as does wealth; but a rich person devoid of manners, taste, and character is not a gentleman. Gentlemen must be noticed living grandly and free from all material and intellectual want. At mid-century, many revolutionary leaders are stereotyping and deriding the masses' intelligence, outlook, virtue, spirituality, and morality, and admitting they need monarchial control. Common people recognize and act out their inferiority with no feeling of shame, because this is the natural order of things. Casting off this attitude is one of the most radical changes affected by the Revolution.

Physical labor separates patricians and plebeians. Poverty is virtuous for common folk because it keeps them industrious. They do not to need "luxuries" and are expected to be frugal. The gentry's virtue comes from consuming enough to keep the poor employed. Aristocrats live on "unearned income" derived from the wise management of their estates. While commercial profiteering is greedy and ungenteel, rents and loans are acceptable and lucrative. Trade, particularly retail trade, is inconsistent with aristocracy. To be considered a gentleman, a rich trader must retire, and even Benjamin Franklin follows this path. Still, merely refraining from manual labor does not make one genteel. One must have a reputation fellow aristocrats can acknowledge. Gentlemen guard their own reputations jealously and battle enemies by impugning theirs. War is exalted, because it offers opportunities for fame. Dueling is the ultimate means of defending one's honor. Contracts and oaths are beneath gentlemen, whose words are their bonds, so surely that armies "parole" captured enemy officers while imprisoning enlistees.

The clarity of gentlemen's social superiority over the rest of society in the 18th century permits later generations with unbecoming familiarity. A sense of hierarchy allows common folk to accept humiliation voluntarily and aristocrats to be praised for condescension. The larger the social gap, the more often familiarity is practiced. The aristocracy expects and even condones wild revels and bloody street fights among unsophisticated commoners.

Chapter 2, "Patricians and Plebeians," continues examining the vertical component, showing that because Colonial America lacks a top-level aristocracy, more stock is

placed on entering and remaining in the rank of gentleman. A feel for the kind of society that will be swept away is forming. At this point, it is hard to see how all men will be ever be thought to be created equal. Everyone accepts as God-given the status quo.

Part 1, Chapter 3

Part 1, Chapter 3 Summary and Analysis

Gentlemen treat inferiors and subordinates like children, and all superiors, magistrates and masters are to be honored as "fathers." The household has one head, the patriarch, who provides for the members' wants and deals with the world on everyone's behalf. Intermarriage and inbreeding are commonplace among the gentry, forming close webs in villages, counties and whole colonies. Land is plentiful enough until 1750, allowing fathers to provide for more than their eldest son, who is often bound to care for aged kinfolk, siblings and widows. Adult children often remain dependent well into middle-age. Fathers threaten disinheritance to control them.

As much as half of all colonial Americans are legally unfree. The least free are the African slaves condemned to lifelong, hereditary servitude. Many Europeans cross the Atlantic as "Redemptionists," intending to pay their passage by selling their services. Even genteel parents indenture their adolescent children as apprentices for them to master a skill and learn discipline. As in England, these arrangements stipulate the period of indenture. Domestic servants are ubiquitous on both sides of the Atlantic, but are treated in America more harshly, brutally and humiliatingly than in England. There, they are hired, short-term labor, moving around easily and often while acquiring wealth. In America, their contracts are longer, and their only protection is their inherent value. Value dictates laws to restrict their movement, because servants are property bought, sold, rented and seized in precisely the same way African slaves are. Aside from a few Quakers, no one attacks or defends any form of dependency, which also includes a rising number of tenant farmers.

Freedom and dependency are "opposite and irreconcilable terms." All dependents; including, women, servants, apprentices, tenants and minors are legally non-persons and ineligible to vote.

Chapter 3, "Patriarchal Dependence," demonstrates that Colonial America is controlled by male heads of households, who alone have legal status. Beyond the biological family, households include servants, slaves and tenants, for whose care the patriarch is responsible, for whom he speaks, and to whom complete obedience is owed. Intermarriage is common, creating networks with political implications as revolution approaches. Wood suggests that black slavery is simply one form of dependency, admittedly more abject than others, and thus unremarkable. There is a hint of the passion for abolition that will arise fitfully as independence from Britain comes to be debated, but the stage is clearly set for the peculiar institution to be set judiciously aside for later generations to face.

Part 1, Chapter 4

Part 1, Chapter 4 Summary and Analysis

Hierarchical societies produce diffuse and delicate webs of paternalistic obligation in which each link is personal, relative, reciprocal and complementary. Most often the "connections" or "interests" are euphemistically called "friendships," Relationships are more important in far-flung America than in Britain, because there are no other institutions for social organization. Even Philadelphia, by far the largest colonial city, is, by English standards, just an overgrown village. Manufacturing, which is burgeoning in England, is non-existent in America. Over half of Britons have left the farm, while 95% of colonials work the land.

In small-scale society, privacy is unknown. Living quarters are crowded, and everyone is everyone else's keeper, reporting adultery, wife beating, and other violations of accepted norms. Personal reputations matter greatly. Slander and defamation are never trivial matters, but can result in criminal or civil prosecution. People are expected to know their business partners through letters of introduction. Strangers and unattached persons are subjected to intense questioning. Newspapers publish minute descriptions of runaways, so all can be vigilant.

People ask about events, not in terms of how they happen, but who does them. Officials attend personally to the tiniest details and are held personally responsible for all outcomes. Provincial governments and assemblies are miniscule. Even the meanest person can gain access to the governor. Local government is even more personal and familiar. Public business is an extension of private relationships. Conflicts, like the one between Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson and James Otis, blend personal and public feelings. Otis gains vengeance by finding a public issue to embarrass his opponent. In South Carolina, a personal confrontation with two royal officials, converts Henry Laurens from a defender of the Stamp Act into a radical proponent of Americans distancing themselves from the Mother Country. Merchants routinely mix public and private money funds, soldiers sue their captains for back pay, magistrates live off the fines they levy, and governors personally to supply troops.

In general, colonials lag behind the financial and commercial revolution transforming Britain. Overseas trade outstrips the "inland trade," because the "Collective Body of the People" still matters more than the individual. The paper currency required by inland trade is beginning to appear, but the certificates are backed by nothing more than the governments' promise to accept them as taxes at a future date. When artisans, tradesmen and shopkeepers try to market to the highest bidder, they are soon starved back to catering to patrons. Barter prevails, with the value of labor and goods being calculated and recorded as credits and debits in ledgers that are balanced over the course of years, but lending money at interest is important. It allows merchants and artisans to afford to join the gentry more quickly than by doing their normal business, and is more lucrative for planters than the sale of crops. The "monied Gentry" find

money lending befits their dignity, carries minimal risk, and is socially responsible. As an added benefit, creditors enjoy clients' gratitude and respect, which adds to their own influence and power. The Chesapeake planters become America's greatest aristocrats by serving as commercial middlemen, protectors, creditors and counselors. They are "friends" of lesser farmers.

The respected neighborhood gentry administer justice. Local needs and collective memory carry more weight than English legal practices and precedents in courts that often deal with debt resolution. Cheating and deception are punished more severely than acts of violence, and offenders are lectured and disciplined like wayward children. Criminals receive their punishment, corporal and capital, in public. This will make them feel shame for their actions.

The rulers and the ruled are sharply distinguished. Men, like William Allen of Pennsylvania, gain public office by cultivating a chain of interest that extends upward and downward. Once in office, they wield patronage in order to dominate affairs further. Paternalism and patronage are essential for the colonies to function. The provincial armies of the 1750s are feudal organizations, where officers receive a rank commensurate with the number of troops they can recruit. Education and books count less than a patronage for succeeding in law, surveying and politics. Marriage could entirely change one's fate. Merit is not discounted; rather it is what attracts the ever-searching and discerning eye of patrons sometimes willing to help a young man advance. Among those rescued from obscurity are Edmund Pendleton, Alexander Hamilton and Benedict Arnold. Benefactors feel the rescuing of genius adds to their credit. Gentlemen cooperate to send two promising painters to study art in Europe.

Some humbly born men succeed on their own (John Paul Jones), but as a rule, ambition and ability are not enough. Modern Americans think of Benjamin Franklin as the model of a commoner who makes it spectacularly on his own, but that is not how his contemporaries see him. Franklin enjoys a series of patrons and understands that this is how the system works. Believing that England is more open to upward mobility, he concentrates his efforts there. Only in the 1760s, when he has risen as high as the British establishment will allow him, despite his fame as a scientist, does Franklin begin to consider himself an American. His *Autobiography* deals with failure and disappointment, and 19th-century readers turn him into an icon of the self-made man that wins a revolution that sweeps away the old patronage-based society.

Chapter 4, "Patronage," reinforces the role of gentlemen in a pre-modern society and economy. The primitive state of the colonies, in all areas relative to the Mother Country, is emphasized by showing the success of patrons in restricting such innovations as the free marketing of goods and services. Borrowing always creates dependency. In the absence of institutional lenders, the rich and powerful secure the loyalties of their debtors. Treating the debtors with paternal goodness increases the upward bond. Mention is made of the political value of the relationship, but a full discussion is left to the final chapter of Part 1. Patronage is shown advancing many of the great names of the Revolution. Its depreciation after the uprising is centered on the reinvention of Benjamin Franklin as Poor Richard.

Part 1, Chapter 5

Part 1, Chapter 5 Summary and Analysis

When Benjamin Franklin responds to his being named Deputy Postmaster General of North America by appointing all his friends and relatives to various positions, he is confirming that patronage is the lifeblood of the English monarch. It forms the "great Chain of political Self-Interest." It consists of offices and honors that flow downward from the "Head & Fountain," which stand for the king. Subjects are expected both to look upward for benefits and to please superiors. Many underestimate royal influence in the colonies. They cite a paucity of political, ecclesiastical, and military benefices available for assignment; usurpation of some royal prerogatives by provincial and local authorities in the first half of the 18th century, and various divisions and competitions at work. However, royal patronage is still powerful enough to cause exasperation and anxiety in the colonies. The chain is still intact, and the personal interest of officials is still inseparable from those of the crown and dependent upon it. A man like Henry McCulloh shows how friends and agents can receive offices, privileges and wealth through someone close to the throne and exceed the power of the actual governor. American local officials are more dependent on royal favor than counterparts in England. Plus, the royal governors who name them enjoy and exercise great influence.

Americans eagerly solicit even the most inconsequential offices and do whatever is needed to obtain their desires, and the pettiness of the process turns revolutionaries bitter in 1776. "Corruption" begins to enter the political lexicon. It is now difficult to understand how people put up with it as long as they did. In fact, opponents of royal authority are so preoccupied with constitutional minutiae that the moral question does not come up. There is still a widespread sense that traditional patronage is justifiable, because government is an extension of the royal household and exists only to preserve the peace and adjudicate disputes. There are no legislative programs. In a paternalistic society, the courts tend to many "administrative" activities. Only those wealthy enough not to have to earn a living are free to give their time gratis to society. Government entices private citizens to fulfill public goals and sanctions those who fail to perform their public duties. Governments shift the cost of most public action to private sources, delegating and externalizing the cost of actions.

In such a system, those free of the need to work for a living owe service to society commensurate with their wealth and rank. The king owes the most and is responsible for the entire realm. One must already be proven worthy and independent in order to be named to high office, which is conceived of as a sacrifice or burden. Offices for which few clamber have incentives attached, sometime lucrative, which still preserve the ideal of getting things done without incurring direct public expense. Office holders receive honors and titles, partly in order to inspire the respect and obedience of common folk. Many incumbents look upon their offices as hereditary property and resign in favor of their sons.

The social respectability of the office holder is critical to his success. Commoners are too busy to give time to society, and lack the power, connections, and social capacity for commanding allegiance and deference. One cannot enforce the law, unless one is personally respected. Businessmen must retire before they can be considered for high public office. As he rises in fame, Franklin understands he is not a gentleman and refrains from pretending to be. Offered a colonelcy, he declines, saying he is unfit for the station. A year later, he decides he has built up sufficient fortune to retire from printing and become a gentleman. He takes up gentleman-like philosophical studies and amusements. He immediately accepts the military rank, so enthusiastically, that he commissions a portrait that later, as a patriot, he finds embarrassing.

Person and office cannot be separated in the traditional monarchical world. Much of the reason for political squabbling in 18th-century America centers upon the social and moral respectability of leaders. Officials wrap themselves in the sacred mantle of God and readily invoke the common law of seditious libel on anyone who opposes them. Care must be taken to distinguish policy from personality in issuing criticism, and full names are not spelled out, lest it be interpreted as contempt. Crown and colonist blame each other for putting the wrong sort of people into office, and the Revolution can be seen as a battle over who should rule in America.

Political parties do not emerge until politics cease to be simply a contest among prominent families and the "interests" they control. In close elections, candidates work to rally the electorate, but the common people are apathetic about anything beyond local wrangling. Even if they were inclined to accept the demands of government service, common folk lack the power to challenge the elites. No one uses property and patronage to create political dependencies better than John Hancock, who spends his entire inheritance and becomes the single most popular and powerful figure in Massachusetts's politics in the last quarter of the 18th century. In Tidewater Virginia and the Connecticut River valley, the gentry enjoys a self-intensifying cycle of personal, social and economic power increase its political power, which enables them to exert more economic power and social influence. Virginia Anglicans become local vestrymen to add the aura of religion to their reputation. Everywhere, those in a position to do so do "favors" for the less fortunate, in clear expectation of support at election time.

Even the recurrent mobbing and rioting that mark Anglo-American society point to acceptance of paternalism. Those made to feel inferior release pent-up hostility by ritually attacking effigies, rather than those who clog the wheels of government and frustrate them. At times, the crowds support the economic status quo against the innovations of unscrupulous shopkeepers and middlemen. The mobs are tightly focused "thunder gusts" that do more good than harm. Even during the stamp act riots of the 1760s, the mobs do not run amok. Thomas Hutchinson invites rioters into his house, talks to them person-to-person, and they depart with cheers and well wishes to him and his wife.

Government is still primarily a matter of face-to-face relations among gentlemen. They write one another extensively when separated, and their public essays are so filled with esoteric allusions, that it is clear they are intended for fellow gentlemen exclusively.

They are circumspect, cautious and calculating about their real feelings towards potential patrons. Flattery, fawning and role-playing are key political tools. This will repulse the next generation.

Chapter 5, "Political Authority," completes Woods' summary of conditions in pre-revolutionary America, showing how the hierarchical, patrician, patriarchal, and patronage aspects form the political system against which patriots will revolt. One has to have free time and a blameless reputation to be fit to rule in a system that trickles power down from above. Politics is largely a matter of a few families in each area vying with one another for power, calling in the "favors" they have done for their dependents. Part 1 is in many respects a straw soldier set up to be slashed down in Part 2, which clarifies how monarchy had been significantly diluted by 1776, making the revolution inevitable and more radical than a simple change in government at the top.

Part 2, Chapter 6

Part 2, Chapter 6 Summary and Analysis

Across the Western world in the 18th century, republican principles are eating away at and desacralizing monarchial society. The ideas and values of republicanism are not incompatible with monarchial institutions, nor are they seditious, for few think such principles could work in a large nation. Proponents form a radical counterculture that wants to enlighten and improve monarchy and reorganize society. Some contrast monarchists, who love peace and order, with Republicans, who love liberty and independence, but most people see a blend. David Hume sees republicanism as perfecting monarchy, which is already a system superior to the despotism of barbarians because of the stability and orderliness it brings.

Montesquieu's influential *Spirit of Laws* (1748) dissects monarchies and republics and suggests most contemporary governments are a mixture. England to Montesquieu is a republic disguised as a monarchy. The man-made dynastic changes of 1688 and 1714 and rationalizing of religion have weakened the monarchical mystique, and Parliament had tied the king's hands financially. Kings George I and II care little about popular opinion. They enjoy little respect, leaving the British king the ultimate disinterested republican leader, the "sovereign umpire" of a realm that is more commonwealth than monarchy. Radicals hold the people have a right to establish a republic if they wish, but the spirit and morality of republicanism are not seen as politically subversive. Republicanism is never a besieged, underground ideology. Many nobles, the original "radical chic," support its efforts to transform monarchy.

Republicanism is the ideology of the Enlightenment. People are fascinated with the golden age of Roman literature, which speaks to the 18th century about political and social ideals. The term might be pejorative, but the substance of republicanism infiltrates thinking. A literature of social criticism steeped in classical republican values arises after 1688. Rome affords Englishmen perspective from which to criticize contemporary luxury, selfishness and corruption. All great 18th-century English writers champion republicanism. "Augustus" means "tyrant;" Cicero and Cato are heroes. Integrity, virtue and disinterestedness lie necessarily at the center of public life. Classic republican ideals establish the foundation for liberal arts education and political debate in the English-speaking world.

Public morality is classical morality. It is unthinkable for anyone to hold office for the purpose of self-aggrandizement. Man, by nature, is a political being and must participate in self-government to enjoy political liberty, which in turn provides the means for enjoying private rights. Devoted to the commonweal, men of genius and leisure are obligated to serve the state, to sacrifice their private interests. Disinterestedness (i.e., "civic virtue") places an enormous burden on individuals. Lacking social adhesives; such as, dependence, subservience and ultimately fear, republics are more fragile and more subject to corruption than monarchies. Therefore, they require special care in

staffing. Only individuals free of all ties to and interests in the marketplace are qualified to be citizens, and the ungenteel are unfit to act as impartial umpires in government. Wealthy merchants are seen as inevitably motivated by avarice and too occupied with their businesses to attend to public offices. Lawyers, doctors and clergymen are a separate group, with lawyers enjoying a reputation for petit larceny. That leaves only the landed gentry available for leadership.

There exists a general suspicion of extraordinary men, who historically have been guilty for all the wars and tyrannies. Franklin identifies the love of power and money as the central political problems of his time, and there is debate over whether the two can coexist in a single individual. There is no disagreement, however, over the need for constant vigilance over rulers who, in turn, see plots and conspiracies against themselves everywhere. There is a sense that as rulers become virtuous and republicanized, the people can relax and grow more trusting. Legal documents may be able to secure the people's right to participate in government. However, for government to be good and liberty preserved, men of character and disinterest must wield power.

Part 2, "Republicanism," Chapter 6, "The Republicanization of Monarchy," begins developing the idea that values from the golden age of Rome have, since at least 1688, been transforming the monarchical values and structures sketched in Part 1. Republicanism, as the ideology of the Enlightenment, is discussed as a means of improving monarchy rather than replacing it. By the mid-18th century, it has permeated society and politics. The next few chapters describe particular ways in which this has occurred and draw out the ramifications for the revolution of 1776.

Part 2, Chapter 7

Part 2, Chapter 7 Summary and Analysis

Republicanizing monarchy goes further in the American colonies than anywhere in the English-speaking world. The colonists fail to understand how radical their thinking is, because republicanism has become part of the culture on both sides of the Atlantic, and resisting tyranny is what good Englishmen do. Americans magnify English qualities and carry them to excesses.

Many non-English immigrants feel no attachment to the monarchy. Scotch-Irish and Irish immigrants have grievances against the regime they fled. Many stern, sober New Englanders cling ritualistically to their Puritan heritage of defiance. Southerners most emulate English ways. George III is too far away to be seen as any more than a good fellow, while his appointed governors are too petty to enhance royal dignity. The harmony achieved between centralized and local authorities in Britain in 1688 is absent in America, making it difficult for colonists to accept the intrusion of royal authority in when it is imposed in 1763.

In Britain, the Anglican Church is a bureaucratic arm of the crown; but in America, it has no bishop to face dissenters everywhere. America knows no hierarchy of eminence among clergy, and their congregations appoint all, which renders them dependent. This is symptomatic of the weakness, incompleteness, shallowness and stunted ness of American society. Even the grandest American estates, like those of Charles Carroll and George Washington, are minuscule by contemporary British standards. Major merchants are dwarfed by their British counterparts by over ten to one. The wealthiest colonists strain to imitate the English style of living, but the results are paltry. American gentry never manage to dominate the economy, religion or politics as in Europe. The masses retain a hand in naming military officers and clergymen, and local elections often engage a broad electorate.

The American aristocracy is often hard pressed to remain free from the marketplace. Landlords cannot preempt their tenants' produce, and rental income is often unreliable. Landlords function as speculators and must offer advantageous terms simply to keep their property from being useless wilderness. Tenants, who immigrate to own land, move constantly until they achieve this and, thereby, become true Americans. Renters are hard to find and keep, and landlords grow apt to demand payment of debts and to evict scofflaws. Such actions further erode paternalistic bonds. American aristocrats do not spend as lavishly on building and maintaining their estates. When they do, they often import luxuries rather than developing bonds by ordering from local artisans.

In the South, slaves support the plantations, making networks of influence unnecessary. This slave economy helps the great planters most nearly reach the ideal of gentlemen, free and independent to practice republican stewardship, Many serve selflessly in the

courts, vestries, assemblies and other offices. Many, however, must run taverns for cash on the side or actively administer their estates when overseers prove incompetent.

American aristocrats question entail and primogeniture when eldest sons wipe out entire fortunes. They are more aware than the British of social mobility upward and downward. By mid-century, Southern planters owe much to British creditors, are being hounded for repayment, and begin attending to commercial matters. Though living on the edge of bankruptcy, they try to keep up appearances, and many are relieved when importing British luxuries is banned in the 1760s-70s, because it provides a means of saving face while cutting back. Elsewhere, elites never came close to the English model. North Carolina's ruling group is the poorest, most vulnerable and confused.

The American social hierarchy is less porous than mythology holds, but claiming the rank of gentleman is still easier than in England. One can easily call oneself a doctor or lawyer. In Massachusetts, many militia officers are manual laborers. American tradesmen and farmers are intelligent enough to pass as gentlemen. Enjoying sponsorship, Franklin mingles with gentlemen easily, but is relegated to steerage when sailing to England in 1724, until a Delaware Supreme Court justice recognizes him and invites him to the gentlemen's cabin. Franklin knows it is best to keep to one's allotted rank, until one has acquired enough wealth to retire from business. Other rich commoners are less wise. In port cities, some "merchant princes" are able to imitate the lifestyle of the lesser gentry in England. However, they know they are not real aristocrats and do not ignore their businesses. Most are new to the wholesale trade, having started out as artisans, shopkeepers and smugglers. Many young Englishmen migrate to the colonies, where it is cheaper to become a merchant, but riskier, with one in three slipping into bankruptcy. Most American merchants are middlemen for the farmers upon whose "surpluses" they depend. Most have to handle the full spectrum of mercantile activities rather than specializing in import, export, etc. Most are flexible, risk-taking personalities uninterested in public service.

Educated, well-connected professionals and gentlemen of independent fortune exist in the northern colonies, but never in sufficient numbers. Colonial assemblies seat many retailers, illiterate husbandmen, and other non-genteel types. Wealthy members must often absent themselves to attend to business. Where the ruling families are entrenched (Virginia and New Hampshire), politics is stable; elsewhere it is contentious and bitterly competitive. The strength of royal authority in a given colony has almost no correlation with political stability.

American society also lacks the mass of destitute people found at the bottom of most European societies. Perhaps as high as 10% of the American population are poor, primarily new immigrants living temporarily in port cities. Compare this with half the population in England. England has no black slaves but does have a huge number of landless poor. Three-quarters of English farmland is held by gentry, who lease it to tenants. By contrast, most American farmers own their own land, which gives them a feeling of equality. Those without property are recent immigrants or young men awaiting their inheritance. Freehold tenure holds no sense of subordination or dependence.

Social equality primes monarchical America for republicanism. Compared to Britain, America is underdeveloped commercially, largely agricultural and rural, and has fewer opportunities to substitute impersonal market exchanges for social relationships. The gentry have ambitions, but little means to reach them. America's capacity for binding people together is fragile.

Chapter 7, "A Truncated Society," contends flat American society creates conditions conducive to republicanism. The rich are not rich enough to control society in the ways outlined in Part 1, and non-genteel have to be accepted into legislatures. The poor are neither poor enough nor numerous enough to breed violence, However, Part 1 suggests clashes over class lie far in the future even in England. Most people own land and feel equal to everyone else. How this situation leaves colonial society vulnerable to challenge is considered in the next chapter.

Part 2, Chapter 8

Part 2, Chapter 8 Summary and Analysis

Towards the middle of the 18th century, the stratification of colonial society is increasing, but democratic forces are against its solidifying. Contemporaries are unaware of structural shifts in how problems are resolved. America's population is doubling every 20 years, faster than anywhere in the Western world. There are high birth rates, low death rates and a flood of immigrants from the British Isles and Germany. People begin escaping the original narrow strip of settlement along the Atlantic for opportunity and freedom inland. They move as never before. Old towns' lose populations and replace them with new ones. New towns are formed to provide services to migrants. The British victory over France in 1759-63 opens 500 million acres to speculators and settlers. Farmers follow the hunters and explorers down river valleys until the western territory is encircled. New England farmers give up looking for opportunity and strike out north and westward. So many Connecticut farmers move into Pennsylvania, that Connecticut attempts to annex the territory and a nasty war results. As more people demand land, prices skyrocket. Speculation infects all levels of society as never before. Family farms, once thought of as patrimonies, are treated as commodities.

With detachment from place, the traditional sense of community is lost. Legislatures fail to keep up with the population expansion. Americans, who have historically enjoyed direct and equal representation, grow angry as ratios of citizens to representatives increase. Extended lines of kinship fray and snap as young people migrate, each move becoming easier than the last. Everyone wants to sell high in one place and buy cheap elsewhere. Debtors and other transients increase dramatically, many flooding into cities ill-equipped to handle them. Massachusetts, in 1750, is forced to regulate "houses of industry." New England's "warning-out" laws, instituted to limit community liability for vagrants who remain in a town long enough to qualify for welfare, have first to be liberalized and by the 1790s, abandoned. Free migration within a state becomes legal.

The social bonds broken by such movement cannot easily be re-created. New counties like Lunnenburg, VA, go through many justices of the peace, because there is no unchallengeable authority; officials are hardly genteel as in the older Tidewater counties. The church is destabilized. Visitors to the fast-growing Carolina backcountry find no semblance of society. Charles Woodmason, a hard-headed itinerant Anglican minister, leaves a diary about the destitute, shameless, illiterate, irreligious "Wild Woods." It is a formless world, more primitive than Indian society, having no normal social relations and no benevolence. There's nothing to bring it together. The Carolinas are an extreme case, but Americans' monarchical bonds are fragile to begin with. Freedom of movement demands people innovate.

The backward colonial economy is experiencing exhilarating and alarming change, as well. Networks of towns develop to move produce from hinterlands to market. Baltimore, Norfolk and Alexandria bloom as ports overnight. During the war against France, small

farmers realize "surpluses" can be sold to British troops and the profits used to buy "luxury" goods. People are motivated to work harder, and a revolution begins in habits of consumption. A weak social hierarchy encourages "emulative spending," which serves to blur distinctions of rank even more. Social conservatives, including clergymen, condemn the trend. Some sumptuary laws are even proposed to keep people in their place. However, most realize the old view, that people labor only out of necessity and poverty, is fallacious. Instead, people labor to get ahead. Imports from Britain skyrocket, and petty shopkeepers and traders get involved. This movement is to the chagrin of established merchants, who form primitive chambers of commerce to keep the upstarts in line. Patronage in the port cities grows weaker.

Inland trade expands as upwards of a third of the farming population becomes involved in "proto-industrialization," devoting part of their time to manufacturing and entrepreneurship to raise their living standards. Americans produce enormous quantities of homespun cloth, and in 1775, small traders and artisans form the "United Company for Promoting American Manufacturers." Goods and services begin to be exchanged locally and between colonies, yet no one knows how to handle the social problems this creates. Everyone wants to profit and borrowing increases dramatically, not through the old "book debts," but as formal, interest-bearing instruments of credit. Mobility has broken the bonds of trust and requires legal contracts. As credit ceases to be considered a form of charity, businessmen demand debtors honor their contracts, imprison delinquents, squeeze their concealed assets and expect relatives and friends to bail them out. Liberal, entrepreneurial Rhode Island's treatment of insolvent debtors is more liberal and modern than contemporary British practice. Inland trade demands paper money, which earlier is used only as a wartime expediency. It appeals to entrepreneurs and retailers and, not surprisingly, flourishes in Rhode Island but fails in Massachusetts, where gentry creditors and overseas merchants remain too strong for land-banks to work. Parliament restricts the use of paper money in 1751 and 1764, but colonies continue to issue it as legal tender, even when they are unable to uphold its value.

The Chesapeake Bay tobacco trade is the most conservative part of the colonial economy, but is revolutionized when Scottish merchant houses begin buying outright the small planters' crops, rather than taking them on consignment. They supplant the great planters as middlemen and have no designs on political power. New farmers are allowed into the region, crops diversify, and the bonds of patronage weaken. Elections become markedly more contested, and newspapers warn of bribery and vote-seeking. Established planters withdraw from public life, rather than adjust to "men who aim at power without merit." Evangelicals and other Protestants make inroads into Church of England membership, and the gentry blame the clergy for laxity. The clergy blame the vestries for not offering them enough support, and the authority of both diminishes.

Throughout the colonies, the religious upheavals, later called the "Great Awakening," are occurring as people try to adjust to disturbing changes in their social relationships. Supernatural religion is still the chief means by which most people explain their world. When revivalist preachers tell them to trust only their own private judgment, the

deferential faith and obedience on which monarchy rests are challenged as never before.

Chapter 8, "Loosening the Bands of Society," shows common folk awakening to the potential a vast continent offers them. They must also grapple with everything mobility unexpectedly brings: Family ties are broken; strangers are everywhere; there are no leisured aristocrats to govern; and defaulting on a loan can land one in prison. People realize that if they work hard, they can buy things earlier restricted to their betters. Poverty is no longer virtuous. Freed of personal bonds, commerce flourishes, and everyone wants a piece of the action. Even non-Anglican preachers contribute to the breakdown of the order on which monarchy is built.

Part 2, Chapter 9

Part 2, Chapter 9 Summary and Analysis

By the early 1770s, society seems less ordained by God and more man-made and increasingly arbitrary. By adopting new enlightened standards of paternalism, rulers of all sorts are collaborating in the weakening of their authority. Unlike rulers elsewhere, English rulers cannot use compulsion, but must be liberal and enlightened to gain the natural affection and respect of dependents. In the colonies, these efforts are met with fear and resentment, and the refusal to meet traditional obligations.

In hindsight, John Adams identifies the source of revolution in the systematic dissolution of family authority. By 1750, few fathers dare deal with their households as arbitrarily as a century earlier. Married American women have more legal rights than their British counterparts, particularly in the initiation of divorce. Sons and daughters are leaving home more readily and demanding choice in potential spouses. Premarital pregnancy is used to force the point by up to a third of the couples. The family core of father, mother and children grows distinct from the household. Affection becomes more binding than dependency. Children are sentimentalized. The individual desires of children outweigh concerns of family lineage.

In the 18th century, the genteel are preoccupied with what it means to be a parent. It is no longer simply a biological fact; it is a cultural responsibility. A profound revolution against patriarchy takes place in an erratic dispute over John Locke's view that children's minds are a blank slate, which parents must fill. Locke argues fear and brutality cannot bring benevolent results; reason and affection must be cultivated with all dependents. Most authors advocate walking a middle line between arbitrariness and permissiveness. The vast literature confuses enlightened parents and fills them with anxiety. Colonel Landon Carter of Virginia, a prominent, well-educated planter and politician, leaves a remarkable diary that shows the plight of those determined to improve themselves and do right through their lives. His sons are impudent and disrespectful, and his grandson completely insufferable. Carter feels he is no longer master in his home. He tries both reasoning and threats, but fails to stand his ground. He is anxious the slaves are not submissive. As a justice in the county court, Carter is disrespected by attorneys. He tries to act authoritatively but only looks ridiculous. In the end, to avoid conflict, he can only retreat to his room and pout. Carter exaggerates but does not distort the confusions that fill society in 1775. Outside observers say colonial children are unruly and disobedient, a result of the confusion affecting all relationships between superiors and subordinates.

The installation of the Hanoverian monarchy has rendered arguments for hereditary succession and absolute patriarchism moot, but the analogy between family and government has not yet been broken. Locke seeks to destroy it by showing the Fifth Commandment refers only to natural fatherhood and cannot be extended to matters that rest on trust or consent. The patriarchal imagery has staying power, because it is so

natural. As parents accept they are limited monarchs in their families, it is easily translated to the government and other power relationships. Rulers grow confused by a culture that stresses subjects' rights and liberties over their obligation to obey.

Even God cannot act absolutely or arbitrarily. Like any parent, he must persuade people to follow him and earn their love and respect. Christ and the New Testament replace the Puritan emphasis on the Old Testament Jehovah, while Deists like Jefferson and Franklin would retain nothing from Christianity except the Sermon on the Mount. The arguments against coercion in parenting are carried over into religious debates about the value of hell.

Like parents, all authorities are now responsible for the behavior of those they rule. Rebellion is the fault of the ruler, who is not loving or caring enough. If British subjects, long used to respecting and obeying authority, rise in opposition, it shows a real and important injury has been done to them. "Waves do not rise till the Wind blows." During the imperial crisis, the new attitudes have so firmly taken hold that Tories whine pathetically about childlike "ingratitude" and beg for respect. Thomas Hutchinson, the royal governor of Massachusetts Bay at the time of the Tea Party, is saddened and stunned to be vilified and have his effigy burned, since he considers himself a "father of his people." Even political foes concede he is unselfish, public-spirited, caring, tolerant and generous. He has read Locke and is no Tory at heart. He urges moderation on both colonists and crown and seeks a middle path. He does not understand these niceties undercut his authority at a time when authority is no longer seen as flowing from above.

As traditional contracts give way to commercial contracts struck between equal and mistrustful parties, the parent-child relationship becomes colored by this understanding. Puritans, with their long tradition of covenants, are more liable than other religious groups to view contractually choosing spouses and pastors and recognizing a "natural right" to dissolve these relationships. During the Seven Years' War of the 1750s, New England militiamen refuse to integrate with British regulars, because their contract does not specify this. Amazingly, to the British, their officers agree. Any time the contracts are violated, the militiamen feel free to mutiny or desert, en masse. New Englanders show little awe for their officers. They serve loyally, only because their voluntary contracts specify that. Allegiance is a business arrangement, a coincidence of interests.

In the decades leading up to the Revolution, American literature is filled with powerful and suggestive parent-child imagery describing the imperial relationship. Whigs argue Britain is an unnatural parent, cruel and unfeeling in its treatment of her children. Tories accuse colonists of being insolent and ungrateful brats. Everything collapses into a family squabble. Whigs can invoke the latest enlightened thinking about parents of unruly children having only themselves to blame. However, rebellion against one's parents is still so terrifying that they inevitably shift to the less emotionally charged contractual argument. The people's rights are as ancient and important as the crown's. English history shows government is the result of a series of negotiated contracts. Thus, Whigs portray themselves not as rebellious children, but the victims of broken agreements in which allegiance and protection are the considerations. They argue the bargain has been struck between and is binding upon both king and colonists. They

demand Parliament is no party to the transaction. Some Whigs claim elective magistrates can be "fathers" to the people just as readily as hereditary rulers. Allegiance becomes indistinguishable from consent. If considerations are not fulfilled, the contract can be voided. Natural paternal and filial feelings are excluded from the business talk. The relationship between mother country and colony rests on policy, not nature.

Franklin dares go beyond what most Whigs dare in public by likening government to a clearly man-made contrivance. Rulers, he suggests, are "Directors" hired to carry out corporate wishes. Government, concedes the Tory Jonathan Sewell, is an artificial state of preeminence and subordination that must be voluntary.

Most colonists are reluctant to reach the awesome conclusion to the Whig arguments. Can the people obey a government stripped of the supernatural, emotion and dignity? Must the new rulers be great men, or can they be equal with the ruled? Suggestions begin thrown about, but familial imagery cannot easily be shaken off. In 1776, Thomas Paine rejects "ancient prejudices" that support hereditary monarchy, but in 1777 can find no better image for the colonists than youths come of age: One cannot remain a boy one's whole life.

Chapter 9, "Enlightened Paternalism," examines how the evolving ways in which the father's role in the family and the king's in society interact. New educational theories emphasize the father's responsibility for equipping his children for good behavior. If the children turn out brats, he has no one else to blame. Applied to the growing political rift, this is still uncomfortably personal, so the growing tendency to view the parent-child relationship as contractual removes much of the emotionalism from the growing split. Paternalism becomes so enlightened that it surrenders the field of battle.

Part 2, Chapter 10

Part 2, Chapter 10 Summary and Analysis

The Revolution brings to the surface the republican tendencies in American life and offers an opportunity for a broad abolition of monarchy. Subjects become citizens, who are generally more prosperous than anyone on earth. This makes them jealous of and nervous about the liberty that makes this possible. Inequality is growing, but it is pervasive equality that sparks instability, even in South Carolina, the colony with the greatest discrepancy between rich and poor. Ordinary people prospering through hard labor can scarcely believe what is happening. Equality does not mean everyone is the same, but that ordinary people are closer in prosperity to those above them and feel free from aristocratic patronage and control. They speak vehemently about risking all to save their precarious country. Particularly in the Deep South, aristocrats who have experienced a rapid ascendancy, join in this sensitivity. Britain's mercantile restrictions could threaten hard-earned wealth. The inequality and harshness of servitude and slavery raise fears the feudal world could return. In a society experiencing an immense shift away from hierarchical ordering, suspicions and apprehensions about the course of the future run high.

Ordinary people are participating in electoral politics, and the number of contested elections rises markedly. Gentry, bewildered that politics has ceased to be a squabble among them, are forced to use Whig rhetoric courts popular support for their own purposes. Old-style appeals over the heads of royal governors to interests in England lose effect. Crown officials and other conservatives work hard to control "democratic" elements, limit assembly meetings and veto legislation. They look for ways to strengthen colonial governments and toy with introducing a stabilizing titled nobility. Most, however, rely on traditional methods of manipulating important men to counter Whig and republican propaganda.

In 1763, the British government taxes the colonists. The colonists respond emotionally to what they see as the same kind of assault on liberty as King George III is making on Parliament and the Constitution. Americans see "corruption" everywhere and draw a bead on pockets of royal influence, where strangers ignorant of the interests and law of the colony are dumped by the crown and keep distinguished Americans from governing. By using the language of the radical Whig opposition to attack abuse of family influence and patronage, the revolutionaries are tearing at social, as well as political bonds. The antagonists are patriots versus courtiers, courtiers being imposed artificially from above and offering favors. Patriots love their country, are independent of all connections, and rise from below through talent.

Loyalists to the crown comprise 20% of white Americans. Many well-to-do merchants and landowners at the height of power and patronage, flee at a rate six times greater than ymigrys from the later French Revolution. Their removal disrupts American society more than their 80,000 numbers suggest. Connections and interests collapse as the

great families of New York, Pennsylvania and elsewhere depart. Massachusetts' banishment act of 1778 sends away the wealthiest families and leaves their ambitious replacements open to resentment and challenge. Post-revolutionary society organizes on new republican terms, but the links are thinner, more precarious, less emotional, and more calculating than those before. The revolutionaries set out idealistically to purge all forms of patronage. Tidewater planters not connected with the crown unite to protect their interests and are attacked as corrupt by patriots. Virginia disfranchises the landless as likely to back their patrons; a republic must be built on property, because property insulates a man against outside pressure and dependence. Dependence suffocates virtue and encourages ambition and is assaulted rigorously. Every American must be independent.

John Adams states starkly, "There are but two *sorts* of men in the world, freemen and slaves." All the delicate distinctions and dependencies of monarchical society collapse. Merit replaces facility for fawning as the basis for office holding. The poor and humble will not rule, but their able sons will receive a liberal education at Harvard or Princeton, become gentlemen, and become eligible for high political office. Drawn from obscurity, they will compete and emulate to become dazzling "illustrious characters," forming what Jefferson calls a "natural aristocracy." No longer will the "republic of letters" be the only means for Republicans to gain recognition. As the revolutionaries seem so aristocratic to us today, it is hard to appreciate the resentment they feel towards hereditary aristocracy, until one recalls it had been behind the unresponsive regimes that had oppressed them. New constitutions deride the idea of hereditary office and forbid the practice. At the Constitutional Convention in 1787 John Mason brings up the question of the "superior classes" becoming indifferent to the rights of the "lowest classes," but then says in a commercial nation the children and grandchildren of the illustrious can easily fall into obscurity.

The power of lineage fascinates all the founding fathers. Jefferson demands the "aristocracy of wealth" be destroyed to open the way for an aristocracy of virtue and talent, a prime example of which he considers himself. Franklin's autobiography shows bitterness at how primogeniture hindered him and leaves his posterity what his ancestors left him, not a shilling. Primogeniture and entail are abolished by the states because they increase contention and injustice, and marriage ties grow more important than blood kinship, allowing widows to receive portions of estates outright, rather than for their lifetimes. This allows them to alienate inherited land or pass it to children from a second marriage. Women gain the right to hold property, divorce, make contracts, and do business in their husbands' absence. Conservatives balk at "loosening the bands of society," but republican changes in the family accelerate.

Servitude begins to be seen as anomalous and anachronistic. In Philadelphia, the rate of servitude declines from 40-50% at mid-century to 13% in 1775, and to 2% in 1800. Indentured servitude virtually disappears. Hired domestic servants become hard to find and control. Foreigners are astonished that, in, America it is considered sinful and shameful to be treated as a servant. Organizations form in several cities to help diehard aristocrats retain servants, resulting in the establishment of hotels and boardinghouses. Apprentices become trainees in business. Master craftsmen hire labor and organize

their shops for sales. Cash wages replace paternalistic relationships, and wages facilitate job-hopping. Employers and employees see themselves as having different interests. Craft organizations begin forming and ban the bosses. Employee strikes occur. Black slavery, taken for granted for over a century, is overlooked in all the high-blown talk about liberty. However, the world's first anti-slavery society forms in Philadelphia in 1775, and the "peculiar institution" is recognized as an anomaly. Defenders must turn to racial and anthropological theories to justify preventing blacks from bettering themselves by their labor. Abolition in the North and Civil War become inevitable.

Overnight government ceases to be depicted in familial terms. Popular consent replaces heredity as the justification for authority in all three branches of government. Public and private spheres are separated. State legislatures, now sovereign embodiments of the people, are charged with promoting the public interest over the many private interests in society. Enlisting private wealth and energy to accomplish public goals becomes suspect, and licenses, privileges and monopolies are banned. Governments draw up plans to improve services and hire staffs to execute them. Eminent domain grows common, provided the seizures serve public purposes. Presumed state governments can do anything the public entrusts them to do.Conflicts with popular rights become inevitable and must be dealt with. Some hold that with the collapse of crown powers, there is no need to distinguish positive and negative liberty. It becomes, in fact, the great dilemma of America's constitutional democracy.

Chapter 10, "Revolution," shows how all the latent assumptions of republicanism come to the surface and are put into effect. America is too equal for the kind of class conflict the next two centuries will suffer, and Wood several times reminds readers it is hard to get into the revolutionaries' mindset. At base, too many people have too much to lose by a return to Old World ways as the monarchy seems wish. Government is a nexus for applying anti-paternalistic principles, but the whole of society is, in fact, shaken as republicanism is released.

Part 2, Chapter 11

Part 2, Chapter 11 Summary and Analysis

The first step in constructing a new republican society is enlightening the people. Love and gratitude must replace fear and favor as social adhesives. The hardheaded and practical revolutionary leaders' vision is breathtaking and utopian. They are optimistic, forward-looking and convinced the future is in their hands. Republican laws can create, nurture and motivate "habitual virtue." Formal schooling has its place, but many means, literary and symbolic, are used to create new attitudes and remake culture. Astonishingly, these obscure provincials see themselves as a vanguard for the Western world. Natural science is flourishing, religion is being tempered, tyranny is being thrown off, and new governments are being formed.

Enlightenment calls for decreasing pain and making life easier and more comfortable, materially and morally. Americans feel they are more civilized and humane than the British, because they have adopted peaceful, benevolent republican governments. Cruel and unusual punishments give way to measures that effect penitence in criminals. Politeness, manners, courtesy, amenity and civility are fostered as concrete means of advancing civilization. The lexicographers distinguish "civilization" (the opposite of barbarity) from "civility" (politeness and refinement). Freed from family ties and ostentation, gentility means reason, toleration, honesty, virtue and candor. Gentlemen are cosmopolitan, rising above prejudice, parochialism, and religious enthusiasm. These qualities define the results of a liberal arts education, which the 18th century bequeathed to the English-speaking world.

Like the Scots, whose society they resemble, the colonists are eager to create a new kind of aristocracy based on behavior and learning. It is misleading to label this a "middle-class" ideology, because men like Jefferson and Adams are very much aware of being aristocrats, raised from modest origins by determination. High standards matter to them. Many leaders are the first in their families to attend college. Those who don't live similarly make up for it by intensive self-cultivation. The revolutionaries know things their fathers do not and are anxious to distance themselves from their pasts. No generation in American history has been as self-conscious about the moral and social values needed for public leadership.

Washington's Enlightenment centers on civility, and colleagues are struck by how his life is fastidious, cautious, correct, formal and self-conscious. He is conscious of his defective education, which leaves him punctilious and literal-minded. Like Washington, Franklin never attends college, but is dedicated to joining the cosmopolitan literati; he uses his talents to become the equal of any gentleman in the world, and stresses aristocratic values precisely because of his mean origins. James Otis, Sr., is held back from cracking the topmost levels of Massachusetts society by a scornful Governor Hutchinson, and this so enrages his son, James, Jr., that he spends a lifetime bettering Hutchinson and proving that he is not unlettered and grasping like his father.

John Adams remains a wide-eyed country boy after finishing Harvard and setting up a legal office in Boston; moving on the fringes of genteel society. Adams simultaneously envies and despises the world of wealth, and hates pomp, formality and hiding behind one's ancestors

Jonathan Mayhew becomes pastor of Boston's preeminent Congregationalist parish, where he enjoys high social life and condemns fellow ministers' inferior education; preaching so passionately against Anglicanism, his followers are bewildered. William Paterson is born in Ireland, learns at Princeton how to be a true gentleman but crusades against manners he finds effeminate or dissolute; scorning things in which he cannot fully participate, like the world of the true blue aristocracy. Paterson yearns for a world where talent, learning and virtue matter.

Jefferson, the revolutionary leader most taken with the new enlightened gentility, is born wealthy but not genteel and is the first in his family to attend college. In college and law school, Jefferson acquires the tastes and refinements of the larger world and gains a reputation as musician, draftsman, astronomer, geometer, physicist, jurist and statesman. He fills his life with the latest in English and European fashion.

Nathaniel Greene, son of a Rhode Island Quaker, works harder than most at becoming a gentleman. He overcomes paternal superstition and prejudice against books, but is always aware he lacks a liberal education. His goal is to let virtue perfect his soul.

The Revolution becomes a test of Americans' capacity for virtue. Revolutionaries go to great lengths to create classical personae for themselves. James Warren delivers his Boston Massacre oration in a toga. John Adams yearns, like Cicero, to rise from obscurity and have his worth recognized. No one better fulfills classical republican values than Samuel Adams, a Harvard-educated gentleman who utterly devotes himself to public service. He lives in conspicuous poverty and cares so little about fame, he does not keep copies of his letters. He despises genealogy and patronage.

As a group, the revolutionaries believe they are recovering antique virtue. Thus, Washington is the perfect Cincinnatus, who retires after winning victory in war. Washington knows how contemporaries will interpret his stunning decision to surrender his sword in 1783 and retire to Mount Vernon. This is unprecedented in modern times, and inspires awe even in George III. It had been widely believed Washington could be king or dictator had he wished, since only Franklin rivals his fame. Washington knows he is extraordinary and is not ashamed of this. He is sensitive to criticism and judges his actions by what people might think. This is shown in his reaction to the Order of Cincinnati, Virginia's gift of stock shares, and his invitation to the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Will he be seen as violating his 1783 pledge? If it fails, will people suspect he wants to lead a military takeover? Advisors convince him to surrender to the mercy of events, his presence gives the convention prestige, and his backing of the Constitution is key to its ratification. Afterwards, Washington believes he can retire to Mount Vernon, but everyone expects him to be the first President. He worries again about 1783, and accepts only after Hamilton convinces him it is a greater hazard to his fame to decline.

The revolutionaries behave according to republican values. Merchants and lawyers have a hard time justifying their virtue and disinterestedness. Hancock squanders fortune and business precisely to be seen as eligible for a public career. Henry Laurens curtails his business to invest in making his son the ideal young republican gentleman. Robert Morris retains his business, uses personal resources to aid the revolutionary cause, and is criticized for his "exertions." He sends his sons abroad to prepare for public service, and is so drawn to the public arena; he shifts his capital into respectable speculation and becomes a conspicuous aristocrat. In 1789, he attains the U.S. senator, where he is anxious to appear disinterested in commerce. He disregards money so well; he ends in debtors' prison.

Chapter 11, "Enlightenment," posits that the revolutionaries' first task is to educate Americans live in a republican environment. Gentility is redefined as a matter of attainment, rather than inheritance, and becomes a vital part of the founders' lives. There is no sense that the hoi polloi should rule without delivering themselves from barbarity. The lion's share of the chapter is devoted to sketching how leading revolutionaries conform themselves to the classical tradition.

Part 2, Chapter 12

Part 2, Chapter 12 Summary and Analysis

The revolutionaries have no desire to replace one class with another. Their goal is to destroy the "secret bonds of society," family, blood, and personal influence. They wish to substitute republican adhesives. Committees and congresses rework the structures of society from the bottom up, while mobs drag anyone suspected of living off royal patronage to intricate, intimidating interrogations aimed at making them recant and swear new oaths of fidelity. Oath taking remains as important as under the old regime, because the patriots realize they are doing precisely what the Tories charge. They're dissolving society on the pretext of virtue and creating new attachments to the "body of the people." Elaborate ceremonies underline the solemnity of what is happening.

Lacking the concept of nationalism to bind society, the 18th century turns vertical personal bonds horizontally, man-to-man. Natural affinities of love and benevolence are less demanding than classical republican virtue, which history shows to demand Roman and Spartan farmers perpetually are soldiers. The revolutionaries want something anyone can practice, and they hit upon politeness ("the natural and graceful expression of the social virtues"). Citizens simply agree to get along for the sake of peace and prosperity. The martial, masculine virtues of antiquity give way to soft, feminine virtue.

Modern virtue flows from one's participation in society rather than government, which is seen as a source of evil. Society promotes happiness positively by uniting affections, while government does so negatively by refraining vices. Polite social intercourse is more than mere scaffolding for government. Some suggest commerce plays a vital role in creating a "chain of confidence and friendship throughout the world." Looking forward with optimism, rather than backward with nostalgia, helps reconcile classical republicanism with modernity and lays the foundations for 19th-century reform movements. Even cool minds, like young John Quincy Adams, imagine a blissful new world, free of violent passions, superstition and barbarism, and bound together by commerce. This is not a utopian fantasy but an enlightened conclusion from science. Christian love is secularized into a hidden moral force like Newton's gravity. Writers of every genre are excitedly exploring and promoting the natural ways people relate to one another.

At the base of moral science lies self-love, which creates benevolence, which creates private happiness. Man is formed instinctively for social life, and benevolence spreads outwardly in concentric, albeit weakening, circles from family units to churches, states and nations, until the community of mankind is united in peace and harmony. Man's natural tendencies have only to be freed of civil impediments in order for society to prosper. America seems poised for such republican affection because feudal distinctions are unknown. Patriots are those who live for others, rejecting parochialism, bigotry and narrowness, just as liberal education proposes. Republicanism and cosmopolitanism are thus united.

Cosmopolitanism is one of the great ideals of the Enlightenment. Washington looks to a "great republic of humanity at large." Artists and scientists are viewed as a supranational "republic of letters," and British and American forces both exempt and protect them from the prosecution of the war. The many state histories written after the war transcend localism. Americans pride themselves on hospitality and treatment of strangers, and feel a special duty to eradicate national prejudices and make all humanity members of one extensive family. This is best embodied in Freemasonry, whose importance in the American Revolution cannot be exaggerated. The first Grand Lodge forms in London in 1717, and Masonry comes to the colonies by the 1730s. By mid-century, there are dozens and many revolutionary leaders are members. The Revolution disrupts the organization but revitalizes the movement. Membership explodes, reaching into isolated areas and transforming the social landscape of the early Republic. Masonry provides a surrogate religion for those suspicious of traditional Christianity. Real worth, personal merit, and brotherly affection and sincerity bind masons together, which is vital in a society torn apart

Republicanized gentlemen must be compassionate. Where inferiority is not denied outright, it is sentimentalized. "Friendship" becomes a euphemism for every personal interaction as old-style patron-client relationships are smothered in benevolence. Gratitude is the republican response to benevolence (substituting for deference). The greatest vice is showing ingratitude. Americans will for years be uneasy with the inequality inherent in this construct and other attempts to reconcile republicanism with hierarchy, and soon republicanism will be struggling to survive.

Chapter 12, "Benevolence," deals with how the revolutionaries first respond to what they have wrought in tearing down paternalism. The standards of classical republicanism are too strenuous to work in America, and benevolence, which flows from self-love and makes possible private happiness, seems to fit the bill. Everyone should just nice to one another. This feeling flows outward to embrace the entire world, which is being explained scientifically and girded commercially. Freemasonry offers an "artificial consanguinity" to members, assuring them there will always be someone there benevolently to help in time of need.

Part 3, Chapter 13

Part 3, Chapter 13 Summary and Analysis

Leaders grow concerned early on that the people will not be virtuous, trusting and unselfish enough to realize the utopian goals set before them. State legislators show tendencies towards exploiting power. Expectations of better living standards breed competition and individualism rather than benevolence and selflessness. The Constitution of 1787 responds to social developments unleashed by the Revolution and attempts to mitigate the effects institutionally. No one in 1776 foresees America becoming the most egalitarian, materialistic, individualistic, and evangelical Christian society in history. However, well before 1810, most Americans are celebrating democracy. Fisher Ames sees democracy as an extension of republicanism but distant from the Revolution's aims. Some conservatives blame the influence of the French Revolution, but only if one measures radicalism by bloodshed could the American Revolution be considered conservative.

Democracy means more than broader suffrage and competitive politics. It brings an explosion of entrepreneurial energy, religious passion and pecuniary desires. Enfeebled by republicanism, the traditional social structure bursts like a dam, and equality proves far more revolutionary than the founders had expected. While the revolutionaries had deemed ordinary folk capable of electing sound governments, they believe equal opportunity will incite genius to action and destroy kinship and patronage as sources of leadership. They do not see the general equality of property-holding that makes the revolution possible being extended radically to mean no one is better than anyone else. All culture is fabricated. All distinctions are artificial. Some dissent on hierarchical, racial, sexual or theological grounds, but amazingly most educated Americans believe with Locke that all men are born equal. Only the environment working on their senses makes them different. John Adams believes in truly great men and hopes to be numbered among them, but his sufferings at the hands of Boston's so-called great enables him to identify emotionally with common folk. Genius is a continuum and the great are products of circumstance (Caesar would not be remembered had he been born and bred an Eskimo). In the 1780s, common humanity and benevolence are radical ideas.

The American revolutionaries posit sympathy as a moral gyroscope to counteract the most frightening aspects of Lockean sensationalism and keep individuals level in a chaotic world. Common sense makes one able to manage his own affairs and answer for his deeds to his fellow men. All men have a disposition for good and natural affinity for others, and this is the source of radical democratic equality. No longer is it acceptable to speak of "the better sort," and displays of superiority disappear. The Order of the Cincinnati is bitterly opposed as a precursor to hereditary military nobility. Equality becomes a rallying cry as ordinary folk feel deprived by gentlemen and are determined not to allow them to gain ascendancy. The idea of patriots versus courtiers gives way to the theory of democrats versus aristocrats. Nathaniel Chipman graduates from Yale so filled with ambition, he moves to the wilderness of Vermont where a lack of attorneys

will most easily bring him the high office that is his due. Matthew Lyon, leader of the Vermont assembly, who has risen from indentured servitude to the pinnacle of wealth in New England but resents being made to feel intellectually inferior, treats Chipman as a haughty aristocrat. The revolutionaries had not anticipated money would grow more important than mind.

Part 3, "Democracy," examines the evolution of republicanism into a more radical view of society and government. Chapter 13, "Equality," examines the explosion of energies in the 1780s that cast doubts on the founders' retaining a natural aristocracy to rule the masses. Money comes to challenge the mind as the prime determiner of power as the "upper classes," like the generation newly gentrified by education, carefully drop all sign of ostentation.

Part 3, Chapter 14

Part 3, Chapter 14 Summary and Analysis

In the 18th century, democracy is a technical term for government by the people, but this is impossible in a large community. Americans search for ways to overcome the problem. Mob actions during the imperial crisis are not symptoms of democracy, but proof society is organized paternalistically. The Stamp Act spawns the first nonreligious public pressure groups, and in the 1770s, artisans put up slates of candidates and win elections on the grounds the gentry cannot adequately represent their interests. Other groups, occupational, religious and ethnic, follow suit, beginning the march towards modern American politics: Consciously oriented towards pluralism, ethnicity and interest groups. "Actual representation" goes back to the beginnings of American history and proves a powerful idea as people increasingly mistrust one another. As early as the 1760s, self-interest is becoming the principle of all human actions, and the right of every man to hold office is openly proclaimed. Even the most whiggish gentry cannot allow participation in government by people lacking the leisure to learn anything but their trade. Republican thinking holds the common man's interestedness in business is an impediment. Only as artisans prove invaluable during the Revolutionary War do agricultural, commercial and economic elements join together clamoring for help and protection. Then, Americans cease using "interest" as a collective singular.

The long, demanding war has a profound effect on American society and economy. American, British and French forces place an enormous burden on farmers and manufacturers. Some $400-$500 million in paper money is issued and stimulates inland trade as never before. Debts are incurred as common people, believing the future will be better than the present, eagerly purchase "luxury goods." Farmers work hard to produce "surpluses," whose sale raises their standard of living. They are so chagrined when imports of "pleasures and diversions" dry up that they curtail their labor and surpluses decline. Their expectations have been heightened and foiled, and they ignore exhortations to virtue and patriotism. After the war, government and military purchasing is curtailed and farmers and traders, burdened with debt and swollen inventories, demand protection from private creditors and the printing of more paper money. People had enjoyed wartime buying and selling and want to resume it. The capacity of internal trade to generate real riches is reevaluated and takes precedence over external commerce. Popularly elected state legislatures are forced to deal with business interests, and the genteel revolutionary leaders watch with trepidation this first threatening glimpse of a scrambling business society dominated by the licentiousness of ordinary working people.

Enlarged state legislatures are filled with men of humbler rural origins and less education than the old colonial assemblies. Open electioneering increases dramatically, and more than half of the seats change hands annually. A spirit of locality is overcoming aggregate interests. The parochialism, horse-trading and pork barreling, we take for granted today, inspire anger. Voters back candidates who share their interests and

expect them to coax and flatter their colleagues into doing what the home base wants. The gentry are concerned paper money will break the social order by defrauding the gentry. The founders realize Americans are not sufficiently virtuous and selfless to surrender willingly some of their private interests to the public interest and reluctantly retreat from idealism. Younger leaders, like James Madison, propose regulating the various and interfering interests at the national level. Still believing in virtuous politics, they plan the new federal government as a "disinterested and dispassionate umpire" entrusted to a few office-holders drawn from the classically educated and financially disinterested gentry. Madison expects the new national government to play the suprapolitical role ideally played in the British Empire by the king. It must prevent any part of society from invading the rights of another and be sufficiently controlled itself not to set up any interest adverse to those of the whole society.

Opponents of the Constitution in 1787-88 charge it is a ploy by the wellborn few to oppress plebeians. Anti-Federalists say the elite have particular interests to promote and cannot sympathize with the wants of the people. The crucial moment in the debate occurs when the Pennsylvania assembly considers rechartering the Bank of North America. William Findley, a backcountry legislator, opens his argument by charging the wealthy Robert Morris and his allies are directors or stockholders of the bank and thus cannot be neutral umpires. There is nothing improper in their advocacy of rechartering, provided they are above-board about it. This is a radically new idea, challenging the classical tradition and setting forth a rationale for competitive democratic politics.

The debates over the Constitution unwittingly call into question all the revolutionaries' conceptions of society. Anti-Federalists hold American society can be neither hierarchical nor homogenous as Republicans wish. It is pluralistic, diverse and fragmented. Every segment can insure its interests only by placing a just proportion of their best-informed members in the legislature. In hopes of obtaining the best men in the state rather than having to accept rural bumpkins, Federalists in Pennsylvania propose electing congressmen at large rather than by district. Germans, who constitute a third of the population, back all three Germans running on either party ticket. Writers grow anxious that the Scotch and Irish will follow suit.

In the 1790s, Federalists, alarmed at the "amazing violence & turbulence of the democratic spirit" and Americans' lack of expected wisdom and virtue, look for a "common directing power" to regulate trade and other private interests in ways the impotent confederation of separate states cannot. Opposing Jefferson's view that the best government is the least government, the Federalists advocate a strong, consolidated and prosperous "fiscal-military" state on the English pattern, run by the best men in society. To accomplish this, Hamilton sets out deliberately to "corrupt" American society by tying commercial interests to the government to create hierarchies of interest and dependency to glue society together. Federalists fill courts and offices with important, respectable local figures, exploit the Treasury Department's potential for patronage, and manage debt through the Bank of the United States to bind individuals to the government. By 1793, most states have "friends of the government" groups working, in Jefferson's eyes, to bring Americans back towards the monarchy they repudiated in 1776.

Hamilton will later be defensive about using debt and other financial issues to strengthen the national government, However, he does subscribe to the notion self-interest is the best tool for statesmen to use in getting a free people to agree with government policies. Appealing only to holders of proprietary wealth rather than the multiplying, dynamic commercial interests emerging in society, he unwitting sends them to the Republican opposition. Many Federalists exploit public connections. Several members of the First Congress are too preoccupied by private affairs to participate in the great debate over the assumption of state debts. While Hamilton, Washington and a handful of cosmopolitan gentlemen remain virtuous, most office holders aspire to live grandly as gentlemen. Many go bankrupt, further weakening confidence in aristocracy and opening a way for less-educated, less well-bred Republicans to enter government and business. Lacking capital and experience, these men are not inclined to disinterest. John Adams is labeled a crypto-monarchist for maintaining an independent, disinterested executive ought to stand above the legislative branch to balance the interests of society. Calls in the Senate for an expression of gratitude to France for its contribution to American independence are shouted down, because nations like people are held to be motivated only by self-interest.

In South Carolina, eastern slave owning planters fear their interests will be swamped in a legislature newly-filled with representatives of backcountry farmers who lack slaves. Timothy Ford argues the eastern planters represent a particularly important interest that deserves protection against the majority. In New York, Chancellor James Kent and his allies during the 1820-21 convention call to revise the state constitution. Kent proposes a "moral and independent test of character" for electors to the state senate as protection against the rabble, and have to settle for a Jeffersonian requirement of land-owning, which will give senators a "farming interest." This demonstrates a shift in the understanding of real property. The argument real property guarantees a person's autonomy by its permanency and insulates him from external influence and corruption gives way to the view everyone can acquire it by labor and skill. Since this process being dynamic and unpredictable, it is less important than goodness of mind and heart. The Declaration of Independence guarantees life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, but not property. America is based on the association of human beings not on a partnership founded on property. By 1820, the old-fashioned aristocracy is dead, and the Federalists have failed to understand the new society they live in.

Chapter 14, "Interests," shows how public interest (singular) gives way to private interests (plural), and how the new federal government is constituted to regulate the inevitable conflicts that arise. The revolutionaries' utopian view that the people will voluntarily sacrifice for the common good is spectacularly proved hopeless. It is realized that the best chance for good government is getting the best spokesmen for varied interests elected into a body too elevated to be swayed by local concerns and pressures. Jefferson champions limited government, while Hamilton envisions the U.S. becoming a great power. He uses the time-tested but discredited method of monarchy, or patronage, to recreate the social bonds weakened by the republican experiment. Unfortunately for the Federalists, he patronizes those with proprietary wealth and overlooks the rising tide of self-made men who join Jefferson's Republican Party. Thesis, antithesis, synthesis is at work as theory gives way to practicality.

Part 3, Chapter 15

Part 3, Chapter 15 Summary and Analysis

Already powerless and anachronistic in the north by the 18th century, the gentry are attacked by an unlikely critic, Abraham Bishop of Connecticut. The Yale-trained Republican lawyer returns from a tour of Europe to oppose ratifying the Constitution, and turns his polemics on monarchy. The Federalists' projects have left them open to charges of influence peddling and building "a British funding system, Americanized." Better than his contemporaries, Bishop realizes most people consider culture a "mere human invention," and sets out to deconstruct culture so ordinary people will demand to take over their own interests.

Men of elevated birth and talents continue to exert immense influence over the people and intend to lead them down the garden path to monarchy by making them again feel inferior and humiliated. Precisely because they are extraordinary, these men are dangerous and unnecessary for republican government. The "base-born," who support the government financially, have every right to know what they are doing and vote them out of office. Bishop rankles his hearers by describing the lifestyle of the rich. He asks how they can possibly share their interests. Looking after their own interests, the Federalists are spending $42,000 a day of the taxpayers' money, creating national greatness that can only result in war that ordinary people will pay for in blood and treasure. Privateers bleed so admirals can gain fame. This is the most outlandish assault on aristocracy in years, but there is a relentless flow of criticism in print and speeches across the north. It turns artisans, traders and businessmen to thoughts of revenge, and they refuse any longer to defer to political leadership other than their own. In 1797, George Warner organizes the disaffected into Democratic-Republican societies that become the core of the northern Republican Party. They demand the judges, lawyers, generals, colonels and other designing men be turned out of office. Even Jefferson's "natural aristocracy" is unbearable in democratic America.

Most critics of aristocracy take a different tack from Bishop. Rather than point out the differences between gentry and common folk, they emphasize the similarities and deny leisure has any inherent value for society. They build up the value and dignity of labor, which aristocrats traditionally hold in contempt. The labor required to produce or improve property is more important than the wealth and authority that go with it. By the 1820s, no one in the north dares claim publicly not to work for a living. A sectional split begins with the south, where slavery continues to support the aristocratic leisure. There is a precursor to the attack on idleness in Charleston mechanics' sarcastic response to William Henry Drayton's dismissal of their right to participate in government, because they lack a liberal arts education. Drayton has only inherited a fortune and is unqualified to perform any of the activities on which society depends. The genteel scoff at such claims. However, gradually, labor turns into a universal badge of honor. Productive labor is identified with republicanism and idleness with monarchy. Jeffersonian Republicans, like Matthew Lyon, show voters how those of "ease & rest" gain office by flattery and

promises or by threatening their welfare. Thus they manage government, law, newspapers, banks and colleges, all to strengthen their own party.

Gentlemen lump together everyone who works for a living, and indeed, Walter Brewster, a struggling shoemaker, and Christopher Leffingwell, a well-to-do manufacturer, share a common resentment against those who humiliate them. They join the Republicans. Wealth does not yet separate the working class. Even slaveholding aristocrats feel compelled to identify with hard work and productive labor far more than the northern Federalists. In 1790, John Adams poses the question; who shall work? Adams clings to the proposition that the few must have leisure for study. However, most people, including Benjamin Rush, hold all men and women must work. The idea that those who do not work can legislate for others is derided, even in South Carolina.

Early in the 19th century, those who perform useful work well gain fame. Biographer Parson Weems makes Franklin into a workingman's hero, although he never worked a day after age 42 and adopted genteel values. He also celebrates Washington's work as a mechanic. A would-be aristocrat, Edward Everett, pleads with workingmen's parties that great men throughout history have all been "hard workers," because work is in man's nature. The eminent lawyer in full practice has no more leisure than a mechanic, and other professionals are occupied with the duties of life no less than those who work with their hands. With audacious ease, Everett collapses all the classical divisions into a single category of honest worker, united "into one interest." Foreign visitors remark on how ancient differences are blurred in America by making work respectable. Tocqueville is astonished Americans work specifically to gain money, and it is considered honorable. Public servants; including, the President, are salaried. This helps the people overcome the European view that work is degrading. Not surprisingly, socialism will have a hard time getting started in a society leveled by the requirement everyone have an occupation. Class distinctions will be introduced later, but at this point, every free American works for a living and is to this extent equal.

Chapter 15, "The Assault on Aristocracy," shows how Americans early in the 19th century turn leisure, a virtue of used to better oneself. As a result, society falls into idleness, an unconscionable vice, which the weakened aristocracy hastens to avoid. Americans are equal, because they all work for a living. The emerging partisan spirit, so inimical to the founders, sparks the attack on idleness, as Jeffersonian Republicans seek to unseat the Federalists who control the government until 1801. Then, the movement then takes on the spirit of a principled revival.

Part 3, Chapter 16

Part 3, Chapter 16 Summary and Analysis

The American gentry are not strong enough at the outset of the Revolution to bear the burden of disinterested service in the army or Congress. Periodic retirement to recoup one's fortune is commonplace. From 1776 onwards, legislators urge republican governments to pay salaries - and to increase them regularly. The radical Pennsylvania constitution of 1776 abolishes all potentially corrupting "offices of profit" in favor of "reasonable compensation" for all public servants. Washington refuses a salary as commander-in-chief, and Jefferson holds fast to Roman principle. Others, principally Federalists, lacking Jefferson's wealth and Washington's scruples, must press for adequate pay. Govenor Morris, in 1778, questions whether even the wealthy should be required to sacrifice their family's subsistence for the public good. John Adams calls for all public officials to be paid and criticizes Pennsylvania's decision, saying patronage and abuse rather than profit are evil. The alternative is a monopoly of the rich, and consequent despotism. The reliance on virtuous leaders, Adams says, is wrong. There are not enough to go around, and disinterest can be counterfeited. Adams is furious at Washington's refusing a salary, since it can only mean he expects gratitude, which has often served the cause of despotism in the world. Adams also suspects Washington's high-profile retirement is self-serving and would be unnecessary had he accepted a salary like other generals. No one then would suspect he wants to become king. Public officials should make a living just like everyone else.

Salaries for public officials are no more demeaning than for clergy or teachers, argues James Lovell in 1781. However, in 1787, Franklin calls for the executive branch to serve gratis, arguing salaries will attract the wrong sort of men and sow seeds of contention, faction and tumult. He is certain America has enough disinterested men available. Colleagues are embarrassed, knowing the rich old man is right, but they cannot serve without compensation. They table the motion with due respect. Two rich Carolinians oppose salaries for senators on the same ground but are defeated. The Convention provides compensation for all federal officials in amounts to be decided by Congress. The First Congress sets these easily in 1787 for everyone but its own members. Some senators feel they should receive more than representatives, in order to induce them not to retire. Concerns are voiced about the high cost of living in New York, and there is rancor over the propriety of wrangling over money. In the end, everyone receives $6 per day, which is far too little to satisfy would-be gentry. Oliver Wolcott calls for offices to command market prices for the talents demanded. By the mid-1790s, the government has trouble filling the highest posts. In 1795, the cabinet loses two secretaries over money. By the beginning of the 19th century, people realize foolish economizing on salaries is harming the public interest.

Office holding ceases to be a burden on the wealthy and becomes a source of wealth and authority. Findley's Anti-Federalist approach dominates 19th-century practice if not rhetoric: elected officials are expected to bring their constituents' particular interests

(and their own) into the workings of government. Partisanship and parties become legitimate activities. In 1806, Benjamin Latrobe declares universal manhood suffrage is resulting in actual and practical democracy. People naturally distrust people of great talent and vote in ordinary people. In Philadelphia, the distinction between gentlemen and others has nearly disappeared. Everyone is a rival in the pursuit of riches, and it does not matter how they are attained.

Governing such a society is beyond the power of any neutral umpire. Jefferson proposes everyone seek his own good in his own way, and the government stay out of the mix. This would mean the end of classical republicanism and the advent of liberal democracy. The relationship between public and private spheres must shift. The government, Latrobe observes, has no hand in the rapid improvement that occurs in agriculture, mechanics and manufacturing. Except during electioneering and bickering, one hardly knows there is a government. Nevertheless, competition for office is very fierce, because office holders control so much of private life. Holders see nothing wrong with using their office to get government contracts for themselves. The progress of avarice and self-interest discourages one Federalist, who sees public offices being treated as private property, graded according to how much corrupt influence they afford.

Most politicians are not so flagrantly self-serving, but their behavior during campaigns does little to make people believe otherwise. The result is the formation of political parties manned by professionals charged with recruiting leaders, mobilizing voters, winning elections and competing with other parties. The Democratic-Republican parties that emerge in some northern states in the 1810s differ from the Federalists and Republicans of the 1790s, which do not recognize each other's legitimacy and are not designed to be permanent. Both are filled with notables who decry the existence of a party spirit and are organized from the top down. The Federalists consider themselves a natural gentry rather than a party, and the Republicans accept the title only in order to counter the monarchical tyranny of the Federalists, who cease to exist after the War of 1812.

James Monroe's "Era of Good Feeling" is free of hateful party spirit. None of the founding fathers think permanent party strife is good, and Madison holds parties are not necessary for a free government. Younger politicians, like Martin Van Buren, differ. Van Buren is the first modern professional politician to win the presidency, and does so without any of the usual claims to fame. He is the "little magician" who builds the best, most organized political party in the country, drawing together isolated individuals into meaningful communities where only party loyalty and devotion to its cause matter. Parties exist only to win, exercise iron discipline and reward members to bind them by patronage. Hamilton and the Federalists in the 1790s use limited patronage. Jefferson does so only enough to pacify his supporters, and under his Republican successors a permanent officialdom develops. John Quincy Adams, in 1825, faces hostile bureaucrats and is unwilling to use patronage for political purposes. Younger politicians are amazed at populist attempts to make all local offices electoral, with Van Buren pointing out appointive positions are rare and patronage ought not to be completely cut away because of the bonds it creates. He sees value in having remote regions not beyond influence. Patriotism is insufficient binding; influence is needed.

This prepares for the Jacksonian revolution, which does not create democracy, but legitimizes, restrains, controls it and reconciles Americans to it while infusing more elements of monarchy than the Federalists dared try. Jackson institutes the "spoils system" of systematic patronage, rewarding members of his victorious party. The party thus creates networks of influence, which help bind the country. Officeholders are not socially visible and respectable men. They include narrow-minded businessmen, a few wealthy, idealistic converts from Federalism, and ambitious entrepreneurial go-getters, wealthy but ungenteel. Every one of them is loyal to the Jackson cause. Anyone in the party can serve in any office. Soon, however, "rotation in office" becomes a cover for radical changes in the nature of office holding. No one is above anyone else, except in the power defined by law. Individuals are appointed and removed at will without damaging the integrity of government, because they are rationalized, depersonalized, organized by function, defined by rules and regulations, and paid set salaries. Safeguards are introduced to counter corruption, like bookkeeping, receipts and crosschecking. Government becomes efficient because rules and regulations supplant character. Jacksonians accept the reality that most officeholders will be "interested" men who cannot be trusted to behave virtuously and so must be regulated.

Chapter 16, "Democratic Officeholding," rapidly follows the overturn of the revolutionary leaders' views on office holding and patronage as reality clashes with idealism. First to go is the 2,000-year-old tradition of sacrificial service by aristocrats; few can afford this in America. The Federalists, who first attain power in the U.S., use limited patronage to rebuild the links in society lost during the war and Confederation. Jefferson, ever the idealist and wealthy enough to realize it, wants to return to the classical republican values of elite leaders and limits demands to replace Federalist incumbents with Republicans to the minimum his followers will allow. A succession of Republican administrations allows a bureaucracy to set in. Another idealist, John Quincy Adams, refuses to throw them out of office, even when they oppose his programs. Van Buren uses patronage to bind office holders to his party in the monarchical fashion, and Jackson establishes pure democracy by making anyone loyal to him eligible for any office. He puts in place the administrative structures needed in a no longer personal hierarchy.

Part 3, Chapter 17

Part 3, Chapter 17 Summary and Analysis

The half-century following the Revolution sees people flying apart as leaders tell them each is his own master in all respects. Murder, suicide and mobbing are commonplace. Men, women and even children consume hard liquor at a rate greater than anywhere in Europe. It's cheaper to distill grain than to ship it to market. By 1800, rowdiness, strikes and racial and ethnic conflict grow among unconnected and anonymous lowly people filled with class resentment. Urban society seems heterogeneous, insatiable for animal gratification, weak and deprave. New York City hires watchmen at double the rate the population is growing, and there are calls for creating a professional police force. People are so competitive, Elkanah Watson introduces the county fair to release farmers' envy and competitiveness, knowing the gentry's "practical" scientific societies will not work. Americans want independence, first from Britain, then state from state, then people from government, and lastly one from the other.

The 18th century combination of population growth, movement and commercial expansion lies behind the 19th-century disruptions. Although people limit family size after 1800 to maximize their prosperity, the population still grows by 37% per decade, twice the European rate. Some 70% are under 25, and young people tend to move about rapidly. Kentucky, with virtually no white settlers before the Revolution, has 220,000 by 1800. New York's population quadruples; Tennessee grows by over ten times. In 32 years, Ohio goes from wilderness to over 500,000 people. In a single generation, Americans occupy more territory than during the 150 years of colonial existence. In 1820, the U.S. doubles in size by adding Louisiana and Florida and consists of 22 states with over 9.5 million people. Spectacular growth and movement further weaken social organization and intensify popular feelings of equality. The normal progress of settlement from barbarian to civilization, ignorance to knowledge, and rudeness to refinement is reversed in America. The spreading population outgrows its institutions.

There is still little urbanization or industrialization, particularly in comparison with Britain. Transportation remains difficult and slow. Economic data around the turn of the 19th century are few, fragmentary and open to misinterpretation. Nearly 75% of Americans versus 36% of Britons are farmers; only 5-7% of the American population is urban versus fully a third of Britons. The countryside's commercialization, however, requires American farmers learn to read and write at rates higher than anywhere in the Western world. By the 1780s, people realize reliance on import-export and political obstacles erected by independent states are holding back a nation of vast lands, seacoasts and inland navigation. Rural America turns to part-time household manufacturing. By 1810, 90% of the $42 million textile production comes from a workforce of women and children. The desire to buy consumer goods inspires industriousness, and the fear of "luxury" dies away. Prosperity comes to be considered good for people. Internal trade drives improvement of the infrastructure, and the nation is bound together.

Article I, Section 10, of the Constitution prohibits the states from emitting bills of credit, but needing paper currency, people press state legislatures. In 1790-1800, 25 banks are created by the states, growing to 62 by 1810 and over 300 by 1820. They serve not only the government and merchants, but also anyone wanting easy, long-term credit. The charter of the Farmers and Mechanics Bank of Philadelphia, in 1809, creates a precedent by stipulating a majority of the directors must be drawn from these professions. By 1815, over 200 banks are issuing $90 million in promissory notes backed by only $17 million in specie. Jefferson and Adams agree this can only lead to swindling, but in fact, paper currency unleashes entrepreneurial energy, and the U.S. surpasses the world in banking.

Democratically elected State legislatures, unwilling to raise taxes, revert to traditional patterns of exploiting private wealth for public purposes. Private associations are chartered to meet banking, transportation, insurance, education and other needs. In colonial days, franchising helped limit absolute power. Now that the people rule, some critics see grants running contrary to equal and common liberty. Legislators cannot resist the popular clamoring for corporate privileges, and many are busy bettering their own interests by subscribing to the charters they vote upon. In the end, the new corporations are quite different from their monarchical predecessors, being neither exclusive monopolies nor public entities. Some 1,800 corporate charters are granted 1800-17. When the states, led by New York in 1811, dispense with the case-by-case chartering procedure by establishing general incorporation laws, corporations multiply. West of the Appalachian Mountains, Republican belief that government should limit itself to public activity, few purely private corporations are chartered.

Charter becomes distinguished from law, and protecting private property and minority rights from the interests of the government becomes the great problem of democratic politics. In the 1790s, judges continue to be part of the government, with Supreme Court justices performing diplomatic missions openly politicks for the Federalist cause. In the 1800s, a truly independent judiciary emerges, and as arbiters, judges need a specialized education. Populist radicals argue against letting the law become a professional mystery, but "due process of law" is restricted to the actions of judges referring to "fixed principles" of law, distinct from legislatures incapable of solving the people's problems. Courts protect the private rights of individuals, mediating and balancing their claims, rather like an umpire.

Chapter 17, "A World Within Themselves," looks at the demographic and economic conditions that require the weak Articles of Confederation to give way to a strong federal government under the Constitution in 1783. The rationale for printed currency, previously discussed, is developed in the context of a rush to charter banks. This leads to the chartering of other private institutions to advance the public interest as in the colonial era. It's different, however, because they are non-exclusive. Competition wins out, but creates situations requiring impartial umpires. The revolutionaries had thought popularly elected legislatures could play this role, but ambition and greed are too great, and an "independent judiciary" emerges to take up the role. Wood sites as the era's most significant development the courts shedding every trace of classical aristocracy, and the legal profession taking control of democracy.

Part 3, Chapter 18

Part 3, Chapter 18 Summary and Analysis

Ordinary Americans grow absorbed in the individual pursuit of money. English travelers are amazed to see Americans sell landed estates to become "businessmen." Wanting to profit from their discoveries, poor inventors resist enlightened calls to limit patents by arguing the public will be enriched even if they enrich themselves. Jefferson's "Revolution of 1800" dismantles the national government, and some Americans look to war as a means of purging Americans of greed and purifying the political atmosphere. The War of 1812 instead aggravates the problem by increasing home manufacturing and concentration on domestic markets. Society deals more honestly with commercialism, and moral hand wringing over it diminishes.

Voluntary associations of all sorts fill the void. Many lack the personal involvement that marks earlier movements and become strictly fiduciary. Many see Christianity as the best way to tie Americans together, and resist the concepts of liberty of conscience and separation of church and state. The rationalism and skepticism most revolutionaries feel is swept away in the "Second Great Awakening." The Enlightenment ends as the Republic becomes democratized and evangelized, but the desired social adhesion fails. Modern denominationalism sets in, with bodies fighting over doctrines, assaulting one another's meeting houses, competing for members, fragmenting ever more finely and becoming socially homogeneous. The identification of religion and society, always weak in America, finally dissolves, and moral societies arise to oppose the licentiousness of the day by persuasion or by force of law. The sprawling cities need more than moral societies to watch over and intimidate people. Relief societies, hospitals, free schools, prisons and savings banks proliferate to improve lives. As middling people replace the paternalistic gentry at the head of these philanthropic endeavors, gratitude is not expected of recipients but concrete change in their criminal or profligate behavior. Moralism aside, they appeal to self-interest to make people save money by founding the first savings bank in 1819.

Lacking an Old World tribal identity and ties of blood, Americans rally around the Revolution as the symbol of their unity. Some emphasize the Constitution, which the Revolution creates, and its guarantee of freedom and equality, but many, inevitably, look to the bottom line. It's the ability to make money and pursue happiness.

Interest is all that Americans have in common. They govern themselves and develop habits of self-control only to advance their own interests. They are proud of moneymaking, because it is egalitarian and democratic. Ordinary working people consider themselves the most useful and honest part of society. Pecuniary ties join family, law and associations to advance the arts and sciences as pillars binding society together. Governments are called upon to sponsor and incorporate joint-stock companies, or "minor republics" to carry on all sorts of entrepreneurial endeavors. Every town needs banks and insurance companies, and government should charter them and

then leave their operation alone. Commerce and business are "golden chains" harmonizing and enlarging society, spawning useful arts and science, generating fortune and fame. Merchants are scrupulous about their reputations for honesty, and the European stigma is overcome. Commerce is identified with society.

Paper money becomes more important and exerts a democratizing effect by eliminating the need for personal trust in commercial exchanges, liberates sellers from dependencies, and stimulates the ambition to get ahead. Labor becomes a commodity to be bought and sold. Wealth becomes more unequally distributed than before the Revolution, but people feel themselves more equal, for other age-old instruments of humiliation are far more mortifying. The "self-made man" is celebrated, abandoning colonial America's reticence about revealing one's humble origins giving way to the "nouveaux riches," boasting and downplaying any help they receive along the way. The ability to make money is the only democratic way of distinguishing between people. The term "gentleman" no longer implies privilege, and the distinction between them and commoners blurs. "Honor" is restricted to the Masonic societies increasingly made up of artisans and other "middling" sorts and, outside the south, is attacked as monarchical, militaristic, and unequal. Honor's ultimate protector, dueling, is already under attack when Aaron Burr kills Hamilton in 1804, and perishes of its own inertia when non-gentry dare to appropriate it.

In 1828, Noah Webster adds to his dictionary definition of "gentleman" the stipulation they can be involved in any occupation. Embarrassed by having to work for money, Hamilton and Burr consider themselves gentlemen who occasionally practice law. John Quincy Adams sees legal studies as a minor component of genteel learning. Jefferson sees law as useful to himself and the public, but is hardly a modern practitioner. Early in the 19th century, however, the profession is transformed. Lawyers become working men like everyone else and serve as agents for competing economic interests, but insist they are not themselves a specific interest. It becomes difficult even for lawyers to keep their distinctiveness in mind when everyone claims to be a gentleman.

Chapter 18, "The Celebration of Commerce," examines how religion experiences a surprising rebirth after the Revolution, but feuding denominations prevent its providing the new glue needed by a democratic society. Evangelicals turn to cudgeling good behavior through moral societies and more extensive social efforts in the cities. The Revolution is idealized as a binding medium, but people emphasize different aspects. Only in self-interest do they find common ground, and commerce becomes the stuff of society. The "self-made man" becomes an ideal, no longer having any pejorative sense. "Gentleman" and "honor" blur as common people adopt manners previously closed to them.

Part 3, Chapter 19

Part 3, Chapter 19 Summary and Analysis

In the early 19th century "middling sorts" gain a moral hegemony over society by absorbing the gentility of the aristocracy and the work of the working class. The middling do not so much repudiate the Enlightenment, as they popularize and vulgarize it. They value education in useful areas of life. The modern distinction between high and popular culture develops, but the blurring of distinctions between gentlemen and non-gentlemen prevents the formation of a rival culture.

The struggle of individuals to achieve respectability enters America's folklore through Franklin's *Autobiography* and countless tales of youthful development. One of the most fascinating is James Guild's quest for money and gentility that proves elusive and then disappointing. In the end, he settles success and respectability as a portrait painter, catering to upwardly mobile customers. The gentry feel compelled to reach down and embrace the populace, a reversal of Jefferson's efforts to improve the aesthetics of his countrymen. Literati and artists are encouraged to join this crusade, but the sentiments are popularized and coarsened into sermon digests and ubiquitous etiquette books helping mobile people know how to behave. "Manners" are taught in school. "Virtue" and "temperance" lose their republican loftiness and are reduced to regulating base behavior. The prime benefit of republican government is seen as its being cheap, which teaches frugality and temperance, and wards off jealousy and hatred.

Women benefit from pressures making delicacy, love, decency and fashion into public virtues. Women are held to civilize their husbands and sons, and thus require a liberal arts education even more than men. One cannot pass on what one has not acquired. Benjamin Hawkins teaches Creek and Cherokee Indian women to spin and weave for profit. When boys and old men join in, the male aversion to labor breaks down. Women amass sufficient wealth to force husbands into helping. This speaks less to the Indian civilization than to white views on prosperity.

America has become a restless colossus, fascinated with its own expansion, thoroughly commercialized, egalitarian, competitive, and out of control. Promoting self-interest does not result in anarchy, however, because everyone's success depends on everyone else's. Every exchange between people contributes to a harmony that speakers and writers laud. Public happiness is the aggregate of individuals' happiness. The power of genius and greatness of soul no longer matters and the mass of intellectual, moral and physical powers emerge under a secularized "providence" that equates to "progress." The assault on elite opinion and the celebration of ordinary common judgment reaches the point that truth and knowledge as absolutes are rejected. Ordinary Americans are left easy prey to hucksters, but are unwilling to defer to anyone else's views. The Sedition Act of 1798 makes the nature of truth a public issues, and Federalists are dumbfounded and fearful of the moral outcome when Republicans demand even the "false, scandalous and malicious" be permitted as monuments to freedom. Ordinary

people, now having unprecedented access to newspapers, become obsessed with a statistics-based "public opinion." They trust it, because (ostensibly) no one controls it. It is assumed people voluntarily agreeing to do something produce better results than government undertaking it. Democracy is lauded for creating a "choral harmony of the whole."

Democratic society is not what the revolutionary leaders want or expect, but most put a good face on their disillusion. Hamilton says simply, "this American world was not made for me." Even optimistic Jefferson hates seeing people regress into superstition and bigotry. America's revolution has succeeded too well and produces results that cannot, as in France, be fixed. Beneficiaries can understand the apprehensions of the founders, who have been turned into mythic figures. Already in 1820, however, Van Buren states their views must give way to a new generation's own experience.

Chapter 19, "Middle-Class Order," shows how the skeleton gentry and flourishing working class merge in America in mores and behavior while drawing apart in actual wealth. Popular opinion determines everything, because it is presumed to be free of external control. The revolutionaries are shown despairing over what has become of their efforts, base democracy having destroyed high-minded republicanism as surely as republicanism laid low monarchy. The next generation duly canonizes the founders and looks to experience to guide them into the future.

Characters

Benjamin Franklin

George Washington

Thomas Jefferson

John Adams

John Quincy Adams

Samuel Adams

William Findley

Nathaniel Greene

James Guild

Alexander Hamilton

John Hancock

Thomas Hutchinson

Andrew Jackson

Jonathan Mayhew

Robert Morris

James Otis

William Paterson

Martin Van Buren

Objects/Places

The Constitutional Convention

The Constitutional Convention is the body convened in 1783 to consider means of overcoming the weakness in the Articles of Confederation, which originally governed post-colonial American life. It meets in Philadelphia under the presidency of George Washington, who questions whether he should even attend, after having sworn never to return to public life after relinquishing command of the Continental Army. The kingly presidency is adopted on the assumption Washington will assume it.

The Declaration of Independence

The Declaration, composed primarily by Thomas Jefferson in 1776, puts forth the reasons why the United States must separate from Britain. The key theme, "all men are created equal," has been proclaimed for at least a decade in the colonies.

The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment is an umbrella term for the European intellectual movement dedicated to eliminating barbarism in such areas as religion, education and criminology, while promoting all the attributes of gentility. The American revolutionaries are all children of the Enlightenment.

Federalists

Federalists are advocates for a strong central government, as embodied in the Constitution of 1783. Alexander Hamilton is shown as their leader. The first two Presidents, Washington and Adams, are also Federalists, in principle, if not accepting the party label. The *Federalist Papers,* a series of tracts on government by Madison, Hamilton and others, are mentioned in passing.

The Glorious Revolution

The Glorious Revolution is a series of events of 1688 and 1714 that establish a limited monarchy in Great Britain, with Parliament sharing authority.

The Imperial Crisis

The Crisis arises between colonists and the British crown after Parliament imposes taxes to sponsor North American campaigns in the worldwide Thirty Years War. It sets

the revolutionaries to thinking about rights and obligations later used during polemics over the Boston Tea Party and lead up to the Declaration of Independence.

The Judiciary

Under monarchy and in the early republican days, the Judiciary continues to be drawn from the gentry and to exercise extra-judicial government powers. In the 19th century, as hopes fade the legislative branch can serve as an impartial "umpire" between rival factions, an "independent judiciary" develops. It's limited to this function alone, is increasingly staffed by professionally trained men, and based on common law and legislation rather than local custom and expediency.

Monarchy

Monarchy is a system of government that posits all authority in one man or "monarch," who rules through a hierarchical structure using dependence and patronage to control the masses.

Noblesse oblige

Under monarchy, the aristocracy undertakes no physical work in order to prepare itself intellectually to serve society by accepting public office. Republicans inherit the idea, modifying the practice only by substituting an "aristocracy of merit" for one of inheritance. Democrats reject the idea entirely, demanding that anyone be able to hold any office for which he is qualified. The extinction of *noblesse oblige* is one of the founding revolutionaries' greatest disappointments.

Patronage

One of the primary bonds holding monarchical society together is patronage. Putting inferiors in debt to superiors makes them also loyal politically. Republicans condemn the practice as corruption and strive to ban it from American government. Hamilton and the Federalists, however, see a continuing value in binding businessmen to the fortunes of government, and resume the practice hesitantly. Only in the second American generation, under Andrew Jackson, will patronage based on loyalty to the victorious party, become a mainstay of the political system.

Republicans

Also called "Anti-Federalists" for their efforts to create a strong central government in the 1780s, the Republicans are led by Thomas Jefferson and triumphing in the election of 1800. (James Madison's partnership with Jefferson is glossed over in this book.) Republicans accept more readily than Federalists the charge they are a "party," but should not be confused with the Republic-Democratic Parties that form in the second

American generation, dedicated to the modern political goal of winning elections and rewarding loyalty.

The West

After the Revolution, Americans begin flocking to the cheap, abundant lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. Their flight helps sever the already weakening bonds of kinship that bind society. The freewheeling spirit of the West accentuates the love of freedom and dislike of authority that marks all English-speaking people, and 19th-century society is further leveled. Acquisition of Louisiana and Florida doubles the original size of the country and gives Americans visions of a grand future.

Themes

Authority

In the English-speaking world prior to the 18th century, all authority rests in the divinely anointed monarch (the "single principle"), to whom every subject, noble or common, owes allegiance and to whom he dispenses privileges. Everyone in society is under someone's direct authority and owes him allegiance and receives in return privileges. There are multiple deep hierarchies of ecclesiastical and civil authorities. At the base of the pyramid, fathers have absolute authority over wives, children and extended households; including, servants and slaves.

After Parliament kills a tyrant king (Charles "the Martyr" in 1649) and brings in a new dynasty in the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and 1714, absolute divine right becomes an indefensible theory, and in some minds the king is reduced to the function of the ultimate disinterested leader or "sovereign umpire" of a realm that is more commonwealth than monarchy. Radicals hold the people possess the authority to establish a republic if they wish, because their rights are as ancient as the king's.

In the American colonies, royal governors are often men of little stature and inspiring little confidence. The overall social structure is remarkably flat, weakening authority. When Parliament asserts its authority to tax the colonies, patriots object that an illegal third party has broken the original covenant, and look to the classical tradition for guidance, ignoring Caesar and the Roman Empire in favor of the Republic. Declaring and winning independence, the founders clothe inoffensive elements of the old system with republican ideas, giving authority to the enlightened representatives of the people. This, however, evolves into full-blown democracy, the polar opposite of monarchy. All authority is vested in individuals, who voluntarily agree to cooperate with others to achieve common goals.

Labor

The necessity to labor, in order to live, is the stark separating line between gentry and commoners in the monarchical system, and evolves into a badge of honor that no one in a democracy dares avoid. Gentlemen inherit proprietary wealth and sustain themselves and their households by such means as renting properties that take no time to administer. Gentlemen's role is to use their free time to become cultured and volunteer their time, sacrificially, for the benefit of society by accepting public office. Those who labor are assumed to do so because of poverty; without the threat of starvation, they would not exert themselves. Thus, for the poor, labor is virtuous. For their betters, it can only interrupt their higher duties. The aristocracy consumes products and services conspicuously in order to generate more work for the poor.

Under republicanism, this system begins to break down, and it disappears completely in democracy. The opportunity to make a profit on the sale of materiel needed by the three armies contending in North America inspires farmers and artisans to work harder, to have a greater surplus for sail. With the income, they purchase luxury items previous reserved for the aristocracy. When luxuries dry up, workers cut back their hours. They lack any inspiration to labor harder. With the introduction of paper currency, buying and selling become easier, and farm families enter the world of commerce part-time. Democracy strips away aristocracy's pretensions and labor becomes noble because everyone works for a living.

Knowledge

Under the hierarchical system, only the aristocracy has access to education and the fount of knowledge made available by the Renaissance. It is their duty to master literature, history, the arts, and law in order first to benefit them and secondarily to share their knowledge with society by volunteering for public office. Law, medicine and religion are areas of specialized knowledge that gentlemen can "profess" without dirtying themselves by taking part in commercial activities. Training in even these areas produces no systematic knowledge. The knowledge needed for laborers to produce the goods and services upon which the aristocracy depends is denigrated.

Republicans, children of the Enlightenment, advocate the principles of a liberal arts education, but continue to feel only the few can benefit from them. Those who gain knowledge are still obligated to sacrifice their free time and fortunes to serve in public office. Some Republicans even see danger in having too many people learning more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. Their fears are in a sense realized, because as republicanism evolves into democracy, aristocratic knowledge is dismissed as dilettantism and the practical knowledge of the trades is exalted as the only socially relevant kind of knowledge. In 1798, the Sedition Laws raise a major epistemological question, with Federalists shocked that the Republicans would defend the spreading of clear untruth in order to defend absolute liberty. In the court of public opinion, which gains ascendancy in the early 19th century, those void of knowledge are equal to those having acquired vast specialized knowledge. Only in the field of law is professionalism practiced.

Style

Point of View

The Radicalism of the American Revolution is historian Gordon S. Woods' reflections on how the American Revolution radically transforms the world they are born into and set it on the path to becoming the society we today take for granted. The story, told in the third person, past tense, betrays its origins as the February 1986 Anson G. Phelps Lectures, which he delivered at New York University and through a fellowship has enlarged into this published version. As an experienced professor of history, Woods is acutely aware that the myth that later generations have erected around the founders makes it difficult for us to appreciate how radical their thought is. Thus, he takes pains to point out items we are likely to underestimate.

Setting

The Radicalism of the American Revolution is a book about ideas and movements and actually "sets" few scenes are beyond the big picture of the English-speaking world ca. 1750-1825. It analyzes the society that makes necessary the American colonies' break from England in 1776 and the aftermaths of victory in the following generation. Woods wanders backward, as needed, to set briefly the medieval roots of 18th-century British life and the classical roots of republicanism as filtered through the Enlightenment, but concentrates on characterizing British America from the mid18th century through the Declaration of Independence. He then glosses over the war years, except to suggest their economic significance in the postwar years, and deals with the need for a strengthening of government in 1783 without examining in any detail the Constitution or the Philadelphia convention. The latter part of the study looks at the westward expansion to the Mississippi early in the 19th century, comparing conditions in England and Europe.

Language and Meaning

The Radicalism of the American Revolution is a scholarly tome written in solid, flowing academic prose. There are a few extended quotations from source materials and a liberal sprinkling of in-line quotes that help capture the spirit of the times. They are, of course, rendered in the formal British of the day, many in the phonetic spelling of the unlettered. No literary devices are used in this straightforward text. Assuming readers will lack the sophistication to understand the revolutionaries' frequent allusions to antiquity, Woods explains them. He sometimes assumes readers will be familiar with the names and events in 18th and early 19th century political history, philosophy and literature (as befits the book's origins as a college lecture, see above). However, he still gets his point across to those with a more modest background.

Structure

The Radicalism of the American Revolution consists of a preface, introduction, and three major topical sections. The structures, understandings, and importance of "Monarchy" in the English-speaking world are covered in five chapters, creating the straw soldier the revolutionaries will strike down in Part 2, "Republicanism." In its seven chapters, Woods demonstrates how the revolutionaries interweave with the surviving monarchical structures republican values drawn from antiquity through the Enlightenment to create the immediate postwar society. Finally, Part 3, "Democracy," shows in seven chapters how the republican spirit develops into more populist radical structures the revolutionaries could not anticipate and live long enough to decry. Parts 2 and 3 are, in effect, studies in the life cycles of the themes developed in Part 1. There follow extensive endnotes, almost exclusively bibliographic in nature, and an index.

Quotes

"They boasted of their paternalism, declaring, as the wealthy Charles Carroll of Annapolis did in 1759, 'how commendable it is for a gentleman of independent means ... to be able to advise his friends, relations, and neighbors of all sorts.' These great Chesapeake planters had the wealth and, more important, the influence to make themselves the strongest aristocracy America has ever had." Part 1, Chapter 4, pg. 71.

"We are too apt to think of social mobility in eighteenth-century America in terms of the career of Benjamin Franklin, printer. But Franklin's career was extraordinary, to say the least, and in his lifetime in America he was rarely celebrated as the common man who had made good. In fact, at every crucial point in Franklin's meteoric rise it was not simply his hard work, brilliance, and character that moved him upward; most important was his ability to attract the attention of an influential patron." Part 1, Chapter 4, pg. 76.

"Republicanism did not belong only to the margins, to the extreme right or left, of English political life. Monarchical and republican values existed side by side in the culture, and many good monarchists and many good English tories adopted republican ideals and principles without realizing the long-run political implications of what they were doing. Although they seldom mentioned the term, educated people of varying political persuasions celebrated republicanism for its spirit, its morality, its freedom, its sense of friendship and duty, and its vision of society. Republicanism as a set of values and a form of life was much too pervasive, comprehensive, and involved with being liberal and enlightened to be seen as subversive or as anti-monarchical." Part 2, Chapter 6, pg. 99.

"The whigs, of course, invoked the latest, most enlightened thinking about the parent-child relationship: that parents with unruly children had only themselves to blame. But for children and subordinates to disobey their fathers and masters in this still traditional world was so terrifying and unnatural that whigs inevitably resorted to the image of a contract in order to explain the imperial relationship and to justify their sense of equality and their rebelliousness." Part 2, Chapter 9, pg. 165.

"They knew the lot of ordinary people elsewhere, and they knew especially the lot of white and black dependents in their own society, and thus they could readily respond to images of being driven 'like draft oxen,' of being 'made to serve as bond servants,' or of foolishly sitting 'quietly in expectation of a m[aste]r's promise for the recovery of [their] liberty.' The immense changes occurring everywhere in their personal and social relationships - the loosening and severing of the hierarchical ties of kinship and patronage that were carrying them into modernity - only increased their suspicions and apprehensions. For they could not know what direction the future was taking." Part 2, Chapter 10, pg. 173.

"The settlement of America, said John Adams in 1765, was 'the opening of a grand scene and design in Providence for the illumination of the ignorant, and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth.' The Revolution was

simply the climax of this great historic drama. Enlightenment was spreading everywhere in the Western world, and nowhere more promisingly than in America. It is an astonishing claim: that these obscure provinces only recently rescued from wilderness, surrounded by 'savages,' and perched precariously on the very edges of Christendom, should presume to be in the vanguard of the Enlightenment was enough to boggle the mind." Part 2, Chapter 11, pg. 191.

"The revolutionary generation was the most cosmopolitan of any in American history. The revolutionary leaders never intended to make a national revolution in any modern sense. They were patriots, to be sure, but they were not obsessed, as were later generations, with the unique character of America or with separating America from the course of Western civilization. As yet there was no sense that loyalty to one's state or country was incompatible with such cosmopolitanism." Part 2, Chapter 12, pg. 222.

"The federal Constitution of 1787 was in part a response to these popular social developments, an attempt to mitigate their effects by new institutional arrangements. The Constitution, the new federal government, and the development of independent judiciaries and judicial review were certainly meant to temper popular majoritarianism, but no constitution, no institutional arrangements, no judicial prohibitions could have restrained the popular social forces unleashed by the Revolution. They swept over even the extended and elevated structure of the new federal government and transformed the society and culture in ways that no one in 1776 could have predicted." Part 3, Chapter 13, pg. 230.

"The problem with America, complained Samuel Mitchell of New York in 1800, was that everybody wanted independence: first independence from Great Britain, then independence of the states from each other, then independence of the people from government, and 'lastly, the members of society be equally independent of each other.' In the western frontier areas society seemed especially weak and thin." Part 3, Chapter 17, pg. 308.

"Once it was finally realized that the desire of ordinary people to buy such consumer goods, and not their poverty or frugality as used to be thought, was the principle source of their industriousness and their productivity, then the fear of 'luxury' that had bedeviled the eighteenth century died away. It no longer made any sense to say, as John Adams archaically said in 1814, that 'human nature, in no form of it, ever could bear Prosperity.' Prosperity was now thought to be good for people; it was their 'desire of gain, beyond the supply of the mere necessities of life,' that stimulated enterprise and created this prosperity." Part 3, Chapter 17, pg. 315.

"Throughout the period many religious groups resisted the disintegrative effects of the Enlightenment belief in liberty of conscience and separation of church and state and urged the Republic to recognize its basis in Christianity by allowing chaplains in the Congress, proclaiming days of fasting and prayer, and by ending mail delivery on the Sabbath." Part 3, Chapter 18, pg. 331.

"But in America, in the North at least, already it seemed as if the so-called middle class was all there was. Middling sorts in America appropriated the principal virtues of the two extremes and drained the vitality fro both the aristocracy and the working class. By absorbing the gentility of the aristocracy and the work of the working class, the middling sorts gained a powerful moral hegemony over the whole society." Part 3, Chapter 19, pg. 347.

Topics for Discussion

How does the Enlightenment literature about parenting affect the Revolution?

How do Republicans draw from Roman antiquity?

How does the opening of the West affect republican government?

How could Jefferson omit an explicit condemnation of slavery from the Declaration of Independence?

What weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation does the Constitution overcome?

How do Federalists' and Republicans' views of man differ?

Could monarchy have been saved in America? Explain the conditions and ramifications.

What elements in the American Revolution are more radical than the French Revolution?

Why are the founders disappointed with the fruit of their works in their final years?