

## BOOK REVIEWS

Kate Haulman. *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011). Pp. 304. Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$37.80.

While fops and fribbles may have signified frivolity in eighteenth-century America, Kate Haulman demonstrates that historians need to recognize that such terms and the larger language of fashion carried powerful political weight. Haulman's meticulously argued book, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America*, places what she calls "sartorial struggles" (5) at the heart of political debates as well as the sorting out of social categories in the revolutionary era. Fashion created new distinctions of class, gender, race, and nation, serving as the meeting point of economy, politics, and society.

Haulman is clear to note that her study is not of clothes themselves, but of the discursive and performative aspects of fashion. Fashion, Haulman, explains "serves as a set of symbols" (3). The work is deeply informed by theorists in

anthropology, literature, and sociology, especially Pierre Bourdieu, but Haulman wisely relegates theoretical discussions to the footnotes. That theoretical underpinning opens new avenues of analysis for Haulman that push readers to take a more expansive view of what constitutes politics and how deeply culture and gender are implicated in political debates, no matter what the time period.

Of course, discourses can be slippery and mutable, and Haulman is careful to show that there was often disagreement about fashion and power. A particular article of clothing could signify different messages to different groups of people. In addition, the rhetoric of fashion's political implications often did not reflect the reality of people's consumer choices. This was certainly the case with nonconsumption and nonimportation, both of which Haulman treats with considerable nuance. She explains the contradictions in language and behavior by probing the way consumption reformed categories of gender and status, as well as tracing the divergence of popular opinion in fashion versus print. She makes clear that the movements to alter patterns of consumption ultimately reified rather than leveled social classes, and that there were quite mixed implications for women.

The book's six chapters follow a chronological progression divided into three sections. The first two chapters set out how fashion functioned in political ways in the first half of the eighteenth century in colonial America. The next two chapters trace how politics and fashion evolved in response to the imperial crisis, particularly through nonconsumption movements. The final section moves the story into the Revolutionary War and its aftermath in the 1780s. A short but powerful epilogue points ahead into the nineteenth century.

Haulman draws on quite a broad array of sources, enabling her to make connections between fashion in discourse as well as in daily practice. Her discussion of the European hairstyle for women called the high roll, for instance, includes evidence from satires in magazines, portraits, women's writings, and even a set of style cards from France. Well-known sources such as Chesterfield's *Letters* and John Dickinson's *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* are also mined for evidence in new and inventive ways. Nearly thirty illustrations offer visual reference points for Haulman's analysis, a welcome and unusual feature for a monograph of this length.

Haulman devotes considerable attention to Philadelphia, making it her focus in chapters 4 and 5. While the book looks at four port cities—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston—these places are used to extrapolate claims about Americans at large. When regional

differences do exist, Haulman is careful to point those out, but taken together, these differences suggest greater regional (not to mention urban versus rural) divides than Haulman acknowledges. Nonetheless, readers of this journal will be interested to see many familiar Philadelphia names in the impressive research Haulman did in that city's archives.

Readers should be sure not to miss the closing epilogue for the book, which ties fashion to race, the body, and citizenship in the 1790s and early 1800s in thoughtful and concise ways. While neither race nor the body is the focus of the book, there are times when further discussion of the body in particular would be helpful. I wanted to know more, for instance, about her claim that the hoop petticoat "bespoke women's control over their bodies" (53), or what it meant that the foppish "macaroni cut" (135) created narrow silhouettes for men. Overall, the question of the way fashion "makes" rather than simply reflects ideas about the body, race, class, or gender could be further probed. Haulman's work certainly paves the way for future studies of fashion in any era in this regard.

The book's historiographical significance reaches far beyond fashion, however. Specialists in material culture will find this book an excellent complement to Linda Baumgarten's *What Clothes Reveal*, as Haulman's arguments expand and complicate rather than contradict Baumgarten's study. It contributes to scholarship by historians such as T. H. Breen and Kariann Yokota on consumer choices as expressions of political belief in early America, as well as entering a growing conversation on political economy that situates international trade at the center of power struggles in the Atlantic world. In its broadest sense, Haulman's study is an exciting addition to a new wave of discussion, particularly among scholars of gender and culture, about the very meaning and scope of politics and how to write a new sort of political and cultural history.

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Mark Jacob and Stephen H. Case. *Treacherous Beauty: Peggy Shippen, the Woman behind Benedict Arnold's Plot to Betray America* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2012). Pp. 288. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$24.94.

Some sixty years ago popular historical writer James T. Flexner published *The Traitor and the Spy: Benedict Arnold and John André* (1953, with a slightly