

In McConville's view, then, the Revolution was in part an unintended consequence of the strength of the colonists' attachment to the monarch.

McConville's compelling account of the "rise and fall of royal America" raises some questions. Although he offers convincing evidence for the salience of this royalist political culture, his account of its subversive side, as well as his acknowledgement that it lacked a supporting social structure and sufficiently strong institutions, can be interpreted as evidence that these colonial societies were, in the long run, inhospitable to monarchy. In addition, it is not clear how the loyalists fit into McConville's explanation of the origins of the revolution. If they were shaped by the same royalist political culture as the revolutionaries, why did they remain loyal to *both* the king and Parliament, instead of embracing the solely personal tie to the monarch that, McConville argues, eventually led the majority of colonists to turn against the king? Such criticisms aside, this innovative and thought-provoking book should be required reading for all those with an interest in the British Atlantic world. It will surely be central to any future discussions of early American politics, religion, popular culture, and the coming of the Revolution.

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Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution. By EDWARD LARKIN. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. x, 205 pp. Notes, works cited, index. \$65.00.)

One need only walk the streets of Philadelphia to gain a sense of Thomas Paine's status as one of the key founders of the American republic. There are three "monuments" to the revolutionary author in Center City: the first, a standard-issue placard at the site of the print shop of Robert Bell, the first printer of *Common Sense*; a second, the adjacent green street sign for Thomas Paine Place, signaling a block-long alley tucked politely off the beaten tourist path; and a third, the Thomas Paine Plaza near City Hall, which boasts a statue of Benjamin Franklin (not Paine) and a tribute to board games. In a city rich with veneration for a pantheon of founders, Paine is but a vague recollection.

Thomas Paine is most often forgotten because he is most often misunderstood. Paine's legacy has been clouded for two centuries by the polarities of smear campaigns and hagiographies. Only in the last few decades have scholars begun to take a balanced view of Paine, and a recent spate of books and articles on his tempestuous career and powerful pen bode well for a fuller understanding of this intriguing individual.

Among the best of these recent works, Edward Larkin's literary study of Paine's prose is a much-needed complement to the political, historical, and philo-

sophical emphases of other books and articles. Larkin reconstructs the significance of Paine's editorship of the *Pennsylvania Magazine* as a touchstone for the idea of an inclusive American public. Elucidating Paine's critique of the circumscribed American public sphere, Larkin addresses Paine's penchant for ad hominem attacks through an explication of the Silas Deane Affair and the excoriating "Letter to George Washington." Paine's "Letter to the Abbé Raynal" is treated convincingly as both literary criticism and the surprise fruition of Paine's scheme to publish a history of the American Revolution. Larkin is wide-ranging in his reading and analysis; he weaves his argument from most of Paine's major works and a delightful number of lesser-known pieces. This is a complete treatment of Paine that deftly handles the career of a revolutionary author from its nascence through the vicissitudes of partisan history.

My only reservation about Larkin's text comes in my favorite chapter, "The Science of Revolution." I am grateful to Larkin for being one of the first scholars to point out the deep significance of science as a mode of thinking and of figural representation in Paine's writing. Larkin is correct to focus on the abundance of evidence for his thesis in *The Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason*, but his account leads one to believe that Paine "got science" only during his iron bridge escapades of the 1780s. In fact, Paine first developed an interest in politics as a result of the popular Newtonianism he imbibed in London prior to arriving in America. Paine's first letter from America, written to Benjamin Franklin in London in early 1775, is one example among many. In the letter Paine neglected political matters in favor of an analysis of the quality of air and the causes of disease aboard sailing vessels, as well as a self-conscious commentary on a scientific dialogue between Franklin and Joseph Priestley. Larkin's argument in this chapter would have been even more convincing if he had incorporated scientific material from the ample storehouse in earlier works such as *Common Sense* and *The American Crisis* papers. This is surely a minor point of contention given the broad scope of Larkin's book. In sum, *Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution* is a stellar contribution to our understanding of Paine's career as a master craftsman of words.

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British Supporters of the American Revolution, 1775–1783: The Role of the "Middling-level" Activists. By SHELDON S. COHEN. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2004. xvi, 181 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$75.)

At the outbreak of the American Revolution, individuals throughout the British Empire were faced with an important, and often complicated, decision: what side would they take in that conflict and how would they act on that stance.