

grasp on its own parcel of earth and/or goods—was seen to free them from bias altogether and hence entitle them to true self-governance at both the individual and national level” (29).

These issues are important, but—as the above quotations show—Rust’s needlessly complicated writing can be seriously off-putting. Her lengthy analyses of Rowson’s novels, plays, and poems are often tough going, but they are nonetheless valuable for their thoroughness and their attention to lesser-known works. Rust’s discussion of these texts, however, focuses almost entirely on authorial intent rather than audience reception, aside from a detailed assessment of the views of some famous male commentators—including Rowson’s champion Mathew Carey and her chief critic William Cobbett, neither of whom recognized her as the consummate professional she clearly was.

In five chapters, Rust traces the evolution of Rowson’s public statements and stature through her published work, interweaving themes of feminine sacrifice, independence, and sexuality. Careful readers will discern several key points, the most important of which involves the seemingly dramatic contrast between Rowson’s early warning against female passivity and lack of agency in her first novel, *Charlotte Temple*, and her far more assertive prescription that women be educated for independence and self-governance in *Lucy Temple* (1828), her last book; *Lucy Temple* tells the story of Charlotte’s daughter, who lived chastely, self-sufficiently, respectably, and happily as a teacher and mentor to young women.

This evolution, Rust suggests, makes Rowson a consequential literary figure whose work connected eighteenth-century ideals of genteel womanhood to notions of virtuous femininity that animated women’s benevolence and reform movements by the antebellum era. *Prodigal Daughters* certainly demonstrates Rowson’s significance. Her life and work, however, still await a monograph that is as accessible and engaging as its extraordinary subject.

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Men of Letters in the Early Republic: Cultivating Forums of Citizenship. By CATHERINE O’DONNELL KAPLAN. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008. 256 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$24.95.)

In the last decade, historians have begun revising our understanding of Federalists. Whereas Jefferson’s opponents have often been depicted as out-of-touch cranks incapable of adapting to postrevolutionary society, now they appear in the literature as clever innovators who were intentionally engaged in the civic process. Catherine O’Donnell Kaplan contributes to this historiographical development with a sparkling account of various “men of letters.”

After an illuminating chapter on the cultural work of sensibility in colonial and revolutionary American society, the author delves into the operations of the Friendly Club and Elihu Hubbard Smith's magazine, the *Medical Repository*. According to Kaplan, the former served as a nonpartisan forum for discussing an array of philosophical and practical issues, while the latter afforded Smith "a tool for promoting moral and physical health" (99). Particularly striking in this regard is the contention that Federalists believed wholeheartedly in social progress, and the author goes so far as to suggest strong similarities between conservative legal scholar James Kent and the oft-cited Democratic Republican Tunis Wortman. While that linkage may be ever so slightly overdrawn, it nonetheless underscores Kaplan's larger point that numerous Federalists frequently maintained a vision of a world transformed. So invested was Smith in this vision that he actually penned a lengthy discussion of an imaginary western state called "Utopia."

Kaplan next turns to Joseph Dennie and his efforts as a newspaper and magazine editor and writer. According to the author, Dennie participated in Federalist partisanship not because he aspired to higher office or defined himself in terms of politics but because he believed he could use political commentary to advance his own goals as a literary entrepreneur. As a result, the anti-Jeffersonian diatribes appearing in the columns of Dennie's *Farmer's Weekly Museum* and the *Port Folio* ironically betray a "pointed insistence that something other than politics still mattered" (179). Dennie's conflicted relationship to partisanship in turn informed his adoption of neo-Augustan irony, wit, and mischief. Indeed, rather than carrying water for a particular party platform, the *Farmer's Weekly Museum* and the *Port Folio* sought to create a space wherein truly independent minds could simultaneously distance themselves from and engage the public events of the day.

The creators of the Boston Athenaeum and the *Monthly Anthology*, and *Boston Review* also occupy Kaplan's attention. In particular, the author shows how men like William Shaw Smith and Joseph Stevens Buckminster sought to create a "virtuous, harmonious community" through the instruments of "secular high culture" (190). Retreats into the world of literature were, in that sense, anything but ends in themselves. Rather, men of letters would "indirectly refine the nation" by applying to the American polity the literary lessons of sympathy and good taste (189).

This short review by no means does justice to the treasure trove of remarkable insights found in this book. Suffice it to say that Kaplan's brilliant work deserves a wide readership for the way in which it reveals how various Federalists invented a version of citizenship predicated on social and cultural rather than political bonds.

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