

Although each chapter tells a different story about a different place, Ingram's book succeeds very well in its overall objective of reorienting our perspective on frontier outposts. The uneasy symbiosis of military and native communities at these sites, the ways in which they cooperated in trade and survival, and the reasons why they fought and grew apart are expertly reconstructed in these pages.

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Culture and Liberty in the Age of the American Revolution. By MICHAL JAN ROZBICKI. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011. 288 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$35.)

Michal Jan Rozbicki has written an ambitious and intellectually rigorous book that challenges the historiographical and popular assumptions surrounding the concept of liberty before, during, and after the American Revolution. Readers seeking a conventional narrative history of the Revolution or a philosophical examination of liberal political thought are encouraged to look elsewhere. Instead, Rozbicki wants the reader to understand what liberty meant to Americans on the eve of their revolution. Embracing the tools of cultural analysis, including semiotics and poststructuralism, to uncover the cultural, social, and political constructs that created this ideal, Rozbicki concludes that eighteenth-century American liberty belonged to—and was jealously guarded by—the elite and the privileged. The more broadly based understanding of liberty came about reluctantly and symbolically as American elites elicited popular support to both legitimize their break from Britain and retain their social and political status. Having sold the promise of liberty as an essential element of the American Revolution, the ruling elite would struggle to contain its influence in the factional politics of the 1790s.

Rozbicki's book, part of the Jeffersonian America series from University of Virginia Press, unabashedly concerns itself with ideas, both historical and historiographical. First, it offers a detailed history and contextualization of the meanings and promises of eighteenth-century liberty as this idea evolved from its British origins through its application during the American Revolution. Aside from tracing the history of eighteenth-century liberty, Rozbicki's book does not offer a comprehensive historical account of Revolutionary society or politics. Secondly, Rozbicki boldly makes his mark on Revolutionary historiography, successfully challenging the ideological interpretations of Gordon Wood and Bernard Bailyn, who, he believes, mistakenly offer a modernist and essentialist understanding of Revolutionary liberty based in freedom and rights for all.

This book also embraces the methodological approaches found in the recent and growing literature exploring early American political culture, both at the

presidential and popular levels. Rozbicki, not one to shy away from a challenge, even attempts to reconcile the divide between the elites and the masses that has persisted in this literature. Instead, Rozbicki emerges as more of a neo-Beardian as he focuses on the ideas of the gentry and then exposes their self-interested use of “liberty” to maintain their privilege and status. With the exception of a few prominent “regular Joes” like Daniel Shays, “the people” in Rozbicki’s work remain an amorphous group compared with the better-documented elites.

Despite the rigor of Rozbicki’s ideas and the intensity of his historiographical discussion, *Culture and Liberty* presents these points clearly, in contrast to the dense prose and theoretical obfuscations that can frequently mar works on political philosophy. Although Rozbicki’s findings appear in book form, his discussion reads more like an extended, lively, and erudite conversation with a dream audience of scholars steeped in the vast literature Rozbicki engages. A general reader drawn to the phrase “American Revolution” in the book’s title would likely get lost amid the numerous historiographical and philosophical debates Rozbicki cites. My one criticism of this otherwise impressive book concerns its use of endnotes rather than footnotes. The work is clearly intended for an academic reader who would benefit from seeing the numerous historiographical and scholarly sources Rozbicki references and challenges. Such inconveniences aside, Rozbicki’s fresh insights on Revolutionary liberty are worthy of serious scholarly attention, a conversation that *Culture and Liberty in the Age of the American Revolution* begins.

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Benjamin Franklin and the American Revolution. By JONATHAN R. DULL.
(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010. 184 pp. Notes, index. \$14.95, paper.)

In this slim book, Jonathan R. Dull sets out to expose new dimensions to Benjamin Franklin and his role in the American Revolution. According to Dull, there is a “traditional picture of Franklin” as kindhearted and conciliatory that represents more a “person of legend” than a historical man (vii). This fabled image of Franklin, Dull believes, has concealed some less than endearing qualities. Franklin, Dull argues, was a revolutionary with a “tougher side” that encompassed his self-confidence, his “fanatical zeal,” his “hatred for George III,” and even his “vanity, pride, and ambition” (viii). This passionate, self-righteous revolutionary, Dull contends, is “not as lovable as the kindly and avuncular person of legend” (viii).

With all that historians have written about Franklin, it is questionable if this unhistorical man is still as prominent as Dull suggests. As recently as 2004, Gordon Wood and David Waldstreicher published books that presented an image of Franklin that was a far cry from the genial uncle figure of myth.