

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.

Nevertheless, while Dull may not be tearing down any legends, he still adds important elements to the historic Franklin. Franklin has been consistently portrayed in the literature as the ultimate political trimmer who was unwilling to get his hands dirty, an individual who felt more comfortable on the political sidelines and found being ruled by passion unacceptable. In Dull's book, by contrast, Franklin thrusts himself amid contentious political debates; he is passionate, often on the verge of anger; and he is unwilling to compromise his political principles, especially his belief in American self-government.

Dull shows this revolutionary Franklin at work in several different periods and places. Each chapter, starting with Franklin's rebellious youth in Boston and ending with his return to Philadelphia from France in 1785, smartly unravels the characteristics that Dull considers central to Franklin's "tougher side" and provides an explanation of how they shaped his role in the American Revolution. Dull quite rightly describes how Franklin's unwillingness to compromise his political ideals on his second mission to England between 1764 and 1775 gained him the enmity of "the wealthy and powerful of England" and resulted in the creation of a "zealous and angry Franklin" (17). Dull traces this passion throughout the book, showing how it fueled Franklin's dedication to the American cause. Franklin's devotion is most emphatically showcased by his service on numerous committees in the Continental Congress; he acted as president of Pennsylvania's Constitutional Convention, served as a member of Pennsylvania's Committee of Safety, and, most importantly, undertook a diplomatic mission to France from 1776 to 1785. Dull also shows the harsher side of Franklin's dedication to the Revolutionary cause by exploring his "rage at the British government and at the Loyalists," which included his own son (90).

Though there is not much that is new in this book regarding Franklin's role in the Revolution (which is not surprising given the sheer number of books and articles about him), Dull does manage to add to our understanding of what drove Franklin throughout the conflict. Nevertheless, one wishes that Dull could have given Franklin a bit more vivacity. Throughout the work, Dull uses the nouns "rage," "hatred," and "anger" to convey Franklin's passion, but Franklin still remains lifeless in this book, and Dull seems more concerned at times with the context and world surrounding Franklin than with the man himself. Rarely does Dull actually quote Franklin to demonstrate his zeal, and there is very little description of his rage or anger—only the assertion that it existed. This critique, however, in no way takes away from the strongest part of Dull's book: his ability to elegantly and concisely convey Franklin's role in the Revolution that is accessible to both the historian and the avid history reader. For this, Dull should be commended. This book would be an excellent primer for anyone interested in Franklin and the part he played in the American Revolution.

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