2007

Indian Woman and Revolutionary Men: Representing the Body Politic in the Satirical Prints of the American Revolution

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https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-wx0g-fw90

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Indian Woman and Revolutionary Men: Representing the Body Politic in the Satirical Prints of the American Revolution

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A thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts

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The College of William and Mary
August, 2007
This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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This thesis explores the rhetorical function of satirical prints during the American Revolution. America was symbolized as an Indian woman throughout the conflict between Britain and the colonies. What that symbol meant depended on the viewer's location and political loyalties.

In the first chapter, English prints using the image of the Indian woman are reexamined from both the Whig and Tory perspectives. The Indian woman was figured as the daughter of classically-inspired Britannia, and the breakdown of relations between England and the colonies was interpreted as a breakdown of family relations between a mother and a daughter. Gender, race, and sexuality were employed in the prints to champion or deride America and her cations. These prints participated in the contentious discourses surrounding liberty, virtue, and licentiousness - gender, race, and sexuality were used not only to symbolize the American body politic but liberty herself.

The second chapter shifts the focus of analysis to self-representation by the colonies. Colonial printmakers continued to use the Indian woman as a symbol for their nascent nation. As the Revolution erupted however, this once benign symbol became politicized - the Indian woman began to represent the white men at the helm of the Revolution. In this disconnect between genders and races, the Indian woman represented the Other, the conceptual opposite of colonial men. This separation between image and antecedent did not harm the Americans' identification with the symbol of the Indian woman. In fact, by appropriating the image of the Indian woman, colonial men were able to understand and politicize their position as the victims of tyrannical power.
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INTRODUCTION

Nature and culture class as Amerigo Vespucci approaches the reclining figure of a nude Indian woman (Figure i.i). Brandishing a flag and a compass, symbols of the European state and of the rational mind, Vespucci represents progress. Surrounded by the Edenic world in which her tribesmen roast up human limbs, the nameless woman is surprised by the appearance of the intruder. This female figure embodies the natural world of the past, a world to be exploited and improved by culture and man. In this meeting of opposites, he is Europe and she is America.

Throughout the age of discovery and especially during the eighteenth century, European and Euro-American mapmakers, printers, and engravers depicted America as an Indian woman. She was the fourth in a quartet of women used to depict the four continents – Europe, Asia, Africa, and America – as Europeans spread their imperial wings. The Indian woman represented not just the American land but the people of that land. To European men, the Indian woman was an Other; she was a strange, exotic, and barbaric being prominent in the Enlightenment imagination. As a symbol of the foreign New World, the Indian woman epitomized everything that European men were not – she was

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nature to their culture, woman to their man, tawny to their white, lasciviousness to their control, heathen to their Christian. Yet despite opposing racial, cultural, and gender identities, the image of the Indian began to represent the European (and especially British) colonists of America, not only American natives or lands.3

In this thesis, I will explore the use of the image of the Indian woman at what some have considered the apex of the Enlightenment – the American Revolution. During the Revolution, both American and English artists used the Indian woman in political pictorial imagery, especially in the growing art of satirical prints. Visual satire, in the form of caricature or political cartoons, arose in Britain in the early part of the eighteenth century and exploded during the American Revolution as a means of political communication. The British were already experienced creators and consumers of satire – Jonathan Swift and other writers had provided an acerbic edge to the Glorious Revolution. But this early British satire took strictly textual form; visual satire, in the form of political prints, did not arise until the reign of George I. Prints were immediate (an incisive print could be produced much faster than well-crafted text) and their mass production made them readily available. Satirical prints were a newly powerful influence on and reflection of popular opinion and political culture in the mid-eighteenth century.

Within this new art form, the Indian woman became a central figure in both the representation of the rebellious colonists by the English and in the

3 Following Robert F. Berkhofer, I use the term “Native American” to refer to the actual native peoples of the Americas, and I use the term “Indian” to refer to European and Euro-American representations of Native American people. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), xvii.
colonists' own self-representation. Because both English and colonial artists used it, the image of the Indian woman was not just a visual depiction of Anglo-American colonials, but a crucial site for the development of a specific American national identity. But there is the rub. In a republican schema, the nascent American identity was composed of independence and virtue, concepts that by their nature implied white masculinity. No matter how radical the Revolution may have been, it sought neither universal suffrage nor the end of slavery nor the end of imperialism – neither women nor Native Americans (much less enslaved Africans, male or female) were full citizens in the newly independent nation.

How could, and to what purpose did, the image of an Indian woman represent the white male revolutionaries? Printmakers deliberately employed the revolutionaries' gender and racial opposite as a symbol in order to comment on the revolutionary cause in gendered and racial terms. Furthermore, printmakers on both sides of the Atlantic used sexual rhetoric – ideas about sexuality, morality, and virtue – to oppose or promote the revolutionary cause.

This thesis is a rhetorical study of the visual culture of the period of the American Revolution from the Stamp Act crisis to the Peace of Paris. Its chapters do not provide a linear narrative of the role of print culture during the Revolution. Instead, they focus on the rhetoric of individual prints – on how satirical prints' political messages were constructed using ideas of gender, race, and sexuality. Those ideas combined to form the basis for three of the most contentious debates of the eighteenth century: the character of liberty, the nature of the state, and the constitution of the body politic. Historians have examined these debates in their
textual forms – political treatises, sermons, and pamphlets found their heyday in the 1770’s. It is my contention that in satirical prints, these ideas were also debated pictorially and symbolically. Therefore, this thesis explores an art historical topic – visual print culture – using cultural and intellectual historical methods.

Because of its focus on the gender, race, and sexual politics of the visual culture of the Revolution, this thesis fits into and draws upon a number of historiographical trends. First and foremost is the history of the American Revolution. The writers of the republican synthesis, including Bernard Bailyn and Gordon Wood, have been a dominant voice in the historiography of the Revolution for the past thirty years. This intellectual history explored the ideas and ideologies that fed into the rhetoric of the Revolution, focusing on the revolutionaries’ Whig heritage. Their exploration of many revolutionary concepts, from republicanism to liberty to independence, forms much of the background for my understanding of the meanings of the Revolution.

Nevertheless, my work departs from the republican synthesis in some major ways. First, the major texts of the republican synthesis were written before an attention to and understanding of race, gender, and sexuality were understood to be crucial and necessary to any historical undertaking. Too often, intellectual historians have glossed over the gendered language (and imagery) of the Revolution; worse yet, historians have taken that language for granted, extolling the masculine virtues of the Americans as they escaped the effeminate, degrading
clutches of Britain’s monarchy. Second, the republican synthesis has focused overwhelmingly on textual evidence – it is, after all, classic intellectual history. I focus instead on pictures as the base of evidence for my claims.

Because of the omission of race and gender and of non-textual evidence from the republican synthesis, women’s histories and cultural histories of the Revolution have been invaluable resources. This thesis focuses on how women were viewed and how gender was understood during the Revolution; the social world described by historians such as Linda K. Kerber and Mary Beth Norton provides a framework for my ideas. I adopt women’s historians’ major tool of analysis – gender – along with race and sexuality to analyze the pictorial evidence of the Revolution.

If women’s history has provided the social backdrop for this work, cultural histories of the Revolution have provided models for my research and analysis. The works of Jay Fliegelman, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, and Anne Fairfax Withington have demonstrated varied ways of approaching evidence, whether textual and visual print culture (Fliegelman), government documents (Smith-Rosenberg), or public events such as the theatre or funerals (Withington).

Besides types of evidence women’s and cultural historians have examined the

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meanings of revolutionary concepts, such as virtue, liberty, and independence. Many have explained how gender and race served to define these concepts, a technique I use with satirical prints. A central assumption here is that satirical prints, and visual culture in general, participate pictorially in defining such concepts. While pamphleteers described concepts with words, printmakers defined them with pictures.

Significantly, in virtually all of the examples described above, pictures are used illustratively, without exploring their full evidentiary potential. In his article, “Seeing the Past,” Roy Porter called for a more critical, engaged approach to the study of visual culture:

How...should the historian approach these prints?...[We] can “deconstruct” cartoons; we can refuse to take their explicit subject at face value, but rather explore the silent sign-systems they express, linking political power to age, gender, rank and family. Prints take to us in many different languages. Their range of meanings has hardly begun to be explored.

Porter urges historians to refuse to see pictures as merely reflective of their culture, but instead to understand them as actively participating in the major political and cultural debates of their time. Two major works on the satirical prints of the American Revolution have begun to do this. Lester C. Olson and Sheryl Win Yant Tremblay have provided interlocking perspectives on satirical prints. Olson’s work explicates the varying symbols used for America during the Revolution, from animals to children to the Indian woman. Tremblay focuses on the British side of the same question, exploring the ways that Britain was

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portrayed. This thesis's major departure from these two works is in the prominence given to the larger political culture. Olson and Tremblay both provide insightful analyses of the meanings of the prints, but they make only limited attempts to explain the role those meanings played in revolutionary culture.

By focusing on the role of gender, race, and sexuality in the visual language of satirical prints, this thesis attempts to place satirical prints within their culture. Gender, race, and sexuality are crucial concepts in the construction of ideologies and identities — their presence in these prints indicates that the satires operate in much the same way. Satirical prints of the revolutionary era used gender, race, and sexuality to explicitly address the concept of the body politic — who it included, what it meant, and how it should be represented. The same is true of the concepts of liberty and virtue. Since gender, race, and sexuality were crucial in the defining of the body politic, liberty, and virtue, they are essential to our present understanding of those concepts and how they operated within the revolutionary culture at large.

Another central topic within this thesis (especially the second chapter) is the idea of the Enlightenment Other — that being who embodied simultaneously everything the European man thought he was not and everything he wished he was. The Indian woman was the gender, racial, and sexual opposite of the white men at the helm of the Revolution, and yet she embodied liberty and the entire American nation. Printmakers literalized the idea of the body politic by

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portraying individual nations as individual bodies (much as the Indian woman symbolized America). In an unexpected twist of gender, race, and sexual identification, the idealized qualities of the Indian woman Other came to represent the nascent American nation.

But what place did these prints have in revolutionary political culture? Printmakers, like printers, were involved in an Atlantic communication network indicative of the culture of mass production – prints were created, copied, traded, and revised. But precisely because the prints were mass-produced, it is difficult to establish how many copies of them existed, or who actually saw them. Records of selling or ownership of prints are sparse – satirical prints were technically libelous, treasonable materials. The prints’ illicitness may have added to their mystique in the rebellious colonies; copies of prints have been found all along the eastern seaboard. Historians of print culture and the emerging eighteenth-century public sphere have argued that the quantification of individual prints is less necessary than understanding them as artifacts of the public sphere. As Michael Warner argues:

The “public” in this sense [the large audience for mass-produced print culture, who understand themselves to be part of an innumerable consuming public] has no empirical existence and cannot be objectified. When we understand images and texts as public, we do not gesture to a statistically measurable series of others. We make a necessarily imaginary reference to the public as opposed to other individuals.

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11 Peter D.G. Thomas notes that, for a variety of reasons, printmakers, unlike satirical writers, were rarely prosecuted for libel or slander. Peter David Garner Thomas, *The American Revolution*, The English Satirical Print, 1600-1832 (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1986), 12.

Therefore, the audience for the satirical prints of the Revolution must be seen as part of an emerging imagined community of other consumers of print.

Nevertheless, there are some things we can infer about the audience for satirical prints. Just because prints were visual rather than textual, one must not assume that they appealed to the illiterate masses. On the contrary, prints consisted of very complicated sign systems and heavy blocks of text. The audience was meant to meditate upon satirical prints; once can imagine the prints functioning much as a political pamphlet did. Their price seems to indicate an elite audience as well: prints were sold on single sheets at a price of about sixpence a sheet or two shillings for colored prints.13 Prints were sometimes included in magazines, especially in London, where print culture was more developed than in the colonies. Because of their prohibitive price, prints were often displayed in public areas. An eighteenth-century Frenchman who resided in the colonies, Pierre Eugène Du Simitière, wrote that The Repeal (Figure i.ii) “was put up at the coffee house there the day the news arrived of the Stamp-act being repealed.”14 Because of their high price and public viewership, it is very difficult to determine prints’ popularity. Some prints had a large and enthusiastic audience: The Repeal sold out in three days and was soon pirated by other printers.15 On the other hand, Yankee Doodles Intrenchments Near Boston 1776 (Figure i.iii), which may be one of the only surviving American loyalist satirical

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prints, had a much smaller press run. Whether colonists bought prints for their private perusal or tavern keepers posted controversial or titillating political images in their public rooms, satirical prints conveyed specific, though complicated, meanings.

In this thesis, I will not focus on the material reality of the prints; instead, I aim to move from that material reality toward a conceptual understanding of the prints' elements and meanings. Satirical printmakers on both sides of the Atlantic were active participants in the definition of revolutionary ideas. They did so by providing a physical form to abstract ideas: for example, liberty, in the venue of prints, because a bare-breasted classical goddess. Satirical prints were also sites for defining emerging national identities, as nations and bodies politic were represented by idealized human bodies. This approach is much different from the "illustrative" model used by many historians, in which pictures simply illustrate the author's points. Here, the prints are the point; they are the primary evidence, the texts being deconstructed, and the sources of ideas about the Revolution.

This active understanding of satirical prints' function during the American Revolution continues throughout the rest of this thesis. America was symbolized as an Indian woman throughout the conflict between Britain and the colonies. What that symbol meant depended on one's location and political loyalties. In the first chapter, I examine English prints using the image of the Indian woman from both the Whig and the Tory perspectives. The Indian woman was figured as the daughter of classically-inspired Britannia, and the breakdown of relations between

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England and the colonies was interpreted in the prints as the breakdown of family relations between a mother and a daughter. Discourses of gender, race, and sexuality were employed in the prints to champion or deride America and her actions. Ultimately, the prints participate as well in the contentious discourses surrounding liberty, virtue, and licentiousness. Gender, race, and sexuality were used to symbolize not only the American body politic but liberty herself.

The second chapter shifts the focus of analysis to self-representation of the colonies. Colonial printmakers continued to use the Indian woman as a symbol for their birthplace. As the Revolution erupted, however, this once-benign symbol became politicized; the Indian woman began to represent the white men at the helm of the Revolution. In this disconnect between genders and races, the Indian woman represented the Other, the opposite of the colonial men. This separation between image and antecedent did not harm the Americans’ identification with the symbol of the Indian woman. In fact, by appropriating the image of the Indian woman, colonial men were able to understand and politicize their position in the new nation.
CHAPTER I
MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, AND LIBERTY

How were Englishmen to understand the rift that had sprung up between themselves and their colonial counterparts in the 1770s? The subjects of the British crown, they well understood, were the most free, most liberty-loving people in the world. Yet in the North American colonies, formerly loyal British subjects were claiming that British rule was the stuff of slavery, not freedom. In England, both supporters and opponents of the colonial cause called upon a familiar topic – the family – to understand the nature of these hostilities. Englishmen across the political spectrum tried to explain the actions of their colonial cousins by comparing affairs of state to relationships within the family. The conflict between Britain and the colonies, according to this logic, was understood as a fight between a mother, Britannia, and her daughter, America.

In satirical prints ranging from *The Deplorable State of America, or Sc[ottis]h Government* in 1765, to *The Reconciliation between Britannia and her daughter America*, in 1782, and beyond, printmakers pondered, allegorized, and burlesqued the once affectionate but newly violent relationship between Britannia and her American daughter. To these printmakers, the filial metaphor of mother Britannia and daughter America was a popular and effective way of picturing the revolutionary conflict. The relationship between mother and daughter was an
especially versatile metaphor, because it included "every nuance of affection, alienation, parricide, and reconciliation."\textsuperscript{17} Britain was depicted as variously as a dictatorial, vulnerable, affectionate, or contemptuous mother figure. To complete the metaphor, the colonies were figured as Britain's female child - sometimes headstrong and violent, and sometimes honorable and autonomous - seeking independence from her parent.

This chapter explores the ways that English satirical printmakers during the American Revolution exploited filial metaphors in pictorial representations of the colonies. Prints combined the filial metaphor with gender and racial ideologies in order to deride or champion the colonies. Printmakers on both sides of the political spectrum augmented the filial metaphor by depicting Britannia or the colonies in an explicitly sexualized manner. Printmakers used gendered racial, and sexual ideologies not only to place blame on one or the other side in the war, but also to accuse either side of abusing cherished British liberties. The specific use of the filial metaphor, the operation of gender, racial, or sexual imagery, or the forwarding of ideas about liberty depended on the printmaker's own political loyalties within the British political system.

Eighteenth-century British imperial politics were a complicated, fragmented system of multiple factions and alliances. The moderately conservative Tories and their radical opposition, the Whigs, stood on opposing sides of the colonial conflict.\textsuperscript{18} A third, Conservative, group, was even more right

\textsuperscript{17} E. McClung Fleming, "The American Image as Indian Princess," 75.
\textsuperscript{18} Peter D. G. Thomas has asserted that the British satirical print was, by its very nature, an anti-government form of print culture. As this chapter will make clear, the presence of Tory prints during the American Revolution belies this thesis. Thomas, \textit{The American Revolution}, 12.
wing than the Tories. Conservatives were outspoken supporters of the crown, and therefore the harshest critics of the revolutionary cause. While Conservative propagandists were influential in eighteenth-century Britain, they did not appear to create prints using the filial metaphor. Therefore, in this chapter, the complex system of English political factions has been reduced to include only Tories and Whigs.

Both Tories and Whigs upheld the strength and balance of the English constitution as a model of effective state organization for the world. Tories supported the growth of crown and ministerial power under the auspices of the balanced English constitution and a hierarchical political and social order. By contrast, the radical Whig faction had since the seventeenth century opposed what they saw as a manipulative alliance between the king and his ministers. Less influential than they had been since the Glorious Revolution, the Whigs favored a more democratic, or at least less conspiratorial, government than did the Tories. The debate between these two political factions crystallized during the conflict with the colonies, beginning with the Stamp Act crisis in 1765.

The American Revolution occurred during a rebirth of Whig enthusiasm in opposition to the Tories. Tories interpreted Parliament’s taxation of the colonies as the justifiable actions of the second estate, whereas Whigs perceived it as a conspiracy of the inner circles of British government. As the Revolution continued and became more violent, Whig support of and Tory opposition to the colonies grew. Although Whigs eventually became less ardent in their

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endorsement of the colonies’ actions as they realized what damage colonial independence would inflict upon the British Empire, they were the colonies’ strongest champions at home.

On both sides of the political spectrum political theorists used familial metaphors to explain the broad formation and preservation of states. Most notably, they drew on seventeenth-century political philosophers Robert Filmer and John Locke, who used the familial metaphor to explain the formation of the English state. Locke, whose own political theories would become cornerstones of the Enlightenment, directly opposed Filmer’s equation of the state to an authoritarian patriarchal family. Tories accepted the more traditional Filmerian understanding of the family and the state, while Whigs were ardent supporters of their radical forebear, John Locke. This familial logic was flexible — Tory and Whig observers of the American Revolution translated the controversies between the colonies and England into the same familial terms that Filmer and Locke had forwarded. This conscious translation of Filmerian and Lockean political philosophy to a new political context makes it pertinent here.

In *Patriarcha*, first written between 1620 and the English Civil War but not published until 1680, Sir Robert Filmer presented a theory of government intended to counter the growing popularity of natural rights and social contract theories promoted by Thomas Hobbes and others. In the Filmerian model, the king is a father who rules the people by influence and domination: “If we compare the natural duties of a father with those of a king, we find them to be all
one, without any difference at all but only the latitude or extent of them."\textsuperscript{20} The government is positioned over the people, who, as children, are required by duty to submit. Filmer envisioned government as an authoritarian system made strong by the natural obedience of people to their king, who was presumed to be descended from Adam, the first father. Therefore, Filmer argued, patriarchal subjugation was divinely inspired: "And this subjection of children [to their parents] is the only fountain of all regal authority, by the ordination of God himself."\textsuperscript{21} When translated to England's relationship with the colonies, England became the authoritarian father who ruled over the ostensibly obedient colonies. This ideal relationship was made stronger because it was based in the laws of nature and of God, not the laws of man: the Filmerian model, "in effect, bound the colonies more securely to their parent than could either the rule of force or civil law."\textsuperscript{22}

In his \textit{First Treatise of Government}, John Locke's major opposition to Filmer and the patriarchal metaphor, Locke figured the state as marriage rather than parentage.\textsuperscript{23} The people join together in a voluntary contract based in mutual affection in order to create the state. Thereafter, the state is empowered by the consent of the people, not by the authoritarian nature of its position. To Locke, nature was a place of perfection and liberty; government intervened, by way of the social contract, to organize and ally the people with each other. The role of

\textsuperscript{21} Filmer, \textit{Patriarcha}, 7.
\textsuperscript{22} Fliegelman, \textit{Prodigals and Pilgrims}, 94.
government was to promote peace while securing and protecting liberty. In this way, Locke replaced submission with consent and authoritarianism with affection. Since the marriage relationship, while based in mutual love, is really just a contract, the people and the state were bonded in a legal, not a natural, relationship.

But seventeenth- and eighteenth-century marriage was not a contract between equals; once the wife entered the relationship with her husband, she was required to obey him. Nevertheless, a wife was allowed (on very rare occasions) legal recourse against a husband who abused or abandoned her. Even Locke himself had hinted that since marriage was a relationship based on a contract, the contract could be considered null and void if broken.\(^{24}\) This idea had great impact as the colonies accused England of abuse and abandonment, and therefore declared the contract between then invalid.\(^{25}\)

The conflict between Britain and her colonies compacted two centuries of debate over the nature of state power, and focused those theories on a new question: how could England justify her power over her colonies? The transition from a Filmerian to a Lockean conception of the family and of government was of utmost importance in the revolutionary repudiation of monarchy. The formation of the American republic required a monumental shift from understanding government as an authoritarian father over the people to comprehending government as the forming of voluntary, marriage-like union by the people.\(^{26}\)

\(^{26}\) Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims*, chap. 5, 123-54.
These changing ideas about government and empire are represented in satirical prints by the relationship between the mother, Britannia, and her daughter, the colonies. Because Britannia was a mother figure, she embodied both the authoritative parental power of the Filmerian system and the affectionate voluntarism of the Lockean system. The colonies, then, were portrayed either as a disobedient daughter, in the Tory case, or as a rightfully independent child, in the Whig case. A gender analysis of both the patriarchal and the marriage metaphor shows how both Tories and Whigs adopted the image of the filial relationship during the American Revolution.

Britannia was a useful image to Tories, who portrayed her as a loving mother whose children, the colonies, refused to obey her. Parental power in a Filmerian system resided in the father, not the mother. While Filmer imagined power inherited by son from father according to biblical laws of primogeniture, he asserted that, insofar as a mother is a representative of her husband’s power, children must obey both of their parents. Where Filmerian patriarchy idealized fathers as authoritarian disciplinarians, it construed mothers as affectionate, if disempowered, caretakers.\(^{27}\) By using a feminine image – and thus an embodiment of Britain that in eighteenth-century gendered terms could only be seen as gentle – Tories ensured that their audience would not think that Britannia had abused her natural authority. Instead, Tory printmakers presented the relationship between Britannia and her daughter as a natural one mauled by the unnatural parricidal urges of the colonies. Therefore, by embodying Britain as Mother Britannia, Tory printmakers portrayed Britannia as a mother figure.

\(^{27}\) Lewis, “Motherhood,” 145-46.
deserving only obedience and gratitude – certainly not violence – from her children. The colonies, depicted as the Indian daughter of Britannia, are shown attacking their mother, using unjust or ridiculous forms of political organization, or simply failing to obey or show the proper deference to Britain’s authority. In prints such as *The Parricide, A Sketch of Modern Patriotism* (1776), *Britania and her daughter, a Song* (1780), and *The Ballance of Power* (1781), printmakers focused on an America led by her passions to break the natural bonds between herself and her mother, Britannia.

Radical Whig printmakers adopted the imagery of a filial family feud because they too were able to manipulate the image of Britannia as a mother. Whig printmakers presented Britannia as a parent, but they accused her of exercising unnatural authority and acting outside of her contractual power. Whigs figured Britannia as violently overstepping the bounds of her maternal position, rather than fostering proper affection with her child. By continuing to figure Britain as a mother figure, the Whigs made patently gendered critique – an authoritarian Britannia could not possibly act within the bounds of her position as a mother. In prints such as *The Able Doctor* (1774), *The Female Combatants* (1776), and others, Britannia was derided as having abused her power over the colonies, while Britannia’s daughter America was praised for her strength and chastity. An Indian woman, depicting the colonies in these prints, bravely leads colonial militias, displays chastity and intellect, or exhibits a motherly temperament herself. At the core of this critique of Britannia was a call for a marriage-based model, in which, because of the mutual bonds of affection, no
party would abuse its power and become such an authoritarian, gender-bending parent.

Continuing the motif of the four continents, virtually all of the prints using the filial metaphor depicted the American colonies as a young Indian woman. Whereas both the honoring and chastising of Britannia were based on gender conventions, both the idealization and demonization of America were based on gender and racial ideology. The racial distinction between the parent and child was employed for very distinct purposed by revolutionary-era printmakers, depending on their political loyalties. The convention was carried on in the political prints in order to continue to make racialized political statements about the colonies and their relationship to Europe.\(^2\) The American Indian had been alternately praised as the “noble savage” for her liberty, frugality, and virtue or condemned as the “ignoble savage” for her libertinism, deviance, and violence.

Tory prints applied the image of the ignoble savage the four continents potif to show the “natural” subordination of the colonies. To Tories, the filial metaphor of mother and daughter subordinated the colonies under Britannia by natural law, while the image of the ignoble savage racially subordinated the colonies under white Europe. In this light, the Indian fundamentally lacked the civilization or morality of white Europe, and was therefore portrayed as violent, anarchical, or sexually deviant.\(^2\) While the racial difference between Britannia and her daughter may seem to imply a fundamental split between the two, in this

\(^2\)Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham has called this invasion of racial ideology into other discourses the “metalanguage of race.” Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “African American Women’s History and the Metalanguage of Race,” Signs 17:21 (1992), 251-274.

\(^2\) Berkhofer, The White Man’s Indian, 26-28.
Tory context, the racial distinction emphasized the need for English control over what they saw as the unpredictable, morally unsound, politically incapable colonies.

Many Tory prints exploited the idea of the ignoble savage, including *The Parricide, A Sketch of Modern Patriotism*, published anonymously on May 1, 1776, in the *Westminster Magazine* of London (Figure 1.1). America, surrounded by a group of British ministers and egged on by Lord Wilkes, the colonists' radical Whig hero, bears an axe and dagger, tramples the British shield, and attacks Britannia.\(^3\) Britannia is defenseless against the parricide, as Lord Camden, another Parliamentary radical, holds back the British lion from protecting her.\(^3\) The actions of Camden and the calm self-assurance of the other ministers reveal the men's complicity in the unforgivable act of killing Britannia. The matricidal evil of the crime is intensified by the second shield in the foreground of the print, picturing a mother griffin (a symbol of Britain) nurturing her young.

Meanwhile, a bizarre, nearly naked figure seems to conjure up the scene with the torches that she waves. Her image hearkens to many traditions: the classical (and fearsome) Medusan hair, the dark skin of the African, and the savage behavior attributed by Europeans to both Africans and Indians. This savage incites America to commit her crime against nature and authority. The

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\(^3\) While Cresswell interprets Camden as "directing" the Lion to attack Britannia, I am more inclined to follow Lester Olson's argument that Lord Camden keeps the Lion from protecting Britannia. This print places the blame squarely on the shoulders of America - while the ministers observe without helping Britannia, they do not participate in the attack. This interpretation heightens Britannia's vulnerability to the "parricide" of the title. Cresswell, *The American Revolution*, 290; Olson, *Emblems of American Community*, 153.
masculinized female directs the more civilized America’s – clearly, the print avers, the colonies are as savage, heathen, and uncontrollable as this frightening character. Yet by representing such savagery in a body separate from that of the colonies, the print tempers its attack on the colonies: if only Britannia could gain control again, the colonies would be recivilized and reinstated in the Empire. America violently acts outside of the bounds of her feminine role, within which she should be demure and gentle. By acting in such a masculine and barbaric manner, she takes on the feral identity of the ignoble savage. Even worse, by conspiring to murder her own mother, America defies the laws of nature. Thus, there is a tension in this portrayal of the Indian image of the colonies – she is at once the embodiment of uncivilized nature, and yet she breaks nature’s own laws.

In contrast to Tory printmakers, Whig printmakers adopted the image of the noble savage. Like the Tories, Whigs used an Indian woman to represent the colonies, but instead of emphasizing the Indian’s violence or barbarity, they focused on her purity in the state of nature. Where the Tory Indian defied the laws of nature, the Whig Indian symbolized the essences of man and liberty in their purest, most natural form. Within the colonies, the Indian came to embody a particular form of self-representation, but for Whigs and radicals generally, the Indian was the ultimate symbol of nature, perfection, and liberty.

Revolutionary-era Whig prints, such as the 1783 print, The Tea-Tax Tempest, or Old Time with his Magick-Lantern, make clear the Whigs’ high opinion of the noble savage and of the American cause (Figure 1.2). The Tea-Tax Tempest is a modification of an earlier Dutch print by Carl Guttenberg, The Tea-
Tax Tempest, or the Anglo-American Revolution, which was printed in Parish in 1778. The English version displays Europe’s view of the American Revolution, in which the cause of the conflict is an exploding pot of tea, brewed on a fire of blazing stamped paper. Here, the Indian woman is clearly the virtuous guardian of liberty – she rescues the liberty cap from the “Little Hot Spit Fire,” even as she leads the American troops, or “Congress men” to battle against the cowardly British troops. In this print, though, the Indian woman’s actions are limited by a gendered understanding of women’s natural dependence. The Indian woman is not autonomous – a male version of America views the scene from the foreground. Both the Indian woman and her independence – and thus the independence of the colonies themselves are projected by Time from his magic lantern. Gender ideology mitigated the Whig’s ability to imagine America as an independent woman or an independent nation, even as late as 1783.

As these political prints by Tories and Whigs demonstrate, opposing political stances called for contrasting representations of the Indian woman. Tory prints focused on the Indian woman’s violence and savagery. Conversely, Whig prints imagined the Indian woman as living in a perfect state of nature, in which she enjoyed and protected man’s liberties. The contested meaning of the Indian could seem to lessen her utility as a daughter image, especially if seen as the ignoble savage of Tory imaginings. On the contrary, the use of the image of the Indian woman allowed printmakers to emphasize both her similarity to Britannia,

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her mother, as well as her foreignness as a non-European. In this way, the colonies’ simultaneous similarity to England and their foreignness are depicted.

As Lester Olson argues, the use of the mother-child metaphor amounted to the pictorial subordination of the colonies to Britain. Tory prints, which emphasized the need for obedience by America, place the colonies in a position lower than the mother country. Even Whigs, not wishing to see the colonies leave the Empire, continued to subordinate the colonies in their prints. Nevertheless, the Whigs were more likely to applaud colonial protest and rebellion against Britannia than the Tories were. Yet Olson’s argument may be too simplistic. Printers using the filial metaphor judged not only the colonies’ acceptance of their subordination, but also their morality.

That morality was defined by sexuality, which provided a third language, along with gender and race, for pictorially judging Britannia or the Indian woman. It is clear that printmakers used gender and racial codes to condemn their opponents or exalt themselves. Printmakers used sexuality in a similar manner. Ideas about sexuality – especially virtue – were a crucial component of republican ideology. As Ruth Bloch argues, the American Revolution involved a crucial shift in ideas about virtue. Republicanism idealized public virtue, the consummate quality of the disinterested, independent man who acted for the good of the whole of society. Later liberal though posited that virtue was a more private, feminine quality, embodied by piety and domesticity. Eighteenth-century satirical prints make it clear, though, that a feminized conception of

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private virtue circulated long before the shift from republicanism to democratic liberalism. In Tory prints, feminine, private virtue was exemplified by decorum, sexual chastity, and willingness to accept one’s place in a hierarchy. Whig prints also enforced a conception of virtue that included protecting one’s own sexual chastity.

Political prints made literal the idea of the body politic in order to capitalize on the distinction between public and private virtue. By reducing the entire body politic of both nations to these metaphorical feminine bodies, printmakers were able to translate personal feminine virtue into public masculine virtue. For example, a privately virtuous Britannia symbolized the publicly virtuous British Empire, just as a privately virtuous Indian woman symbolized the public virtue of the emerging American republic. When criticizing either nation, a printmaker merely had to call into question the personal morality of the nation’s symbol in order to attack that nation’s public vice.

These ideas about sexuality and virtue combined with racial and gender ideologies to support or criticize the colonies or Britannia. The use of sexuality as a political code is clear in the Tory print, *When fell Debate & Civil Wars shall cease* (Figure 1.3). It appeared as the frontispiece for the January 1775 issue of the *London Magazine*. The print places Britannia and her Indian daughter, America, in an idealized classical garden below the Temple of Commerce. This natural, timeless landscape is the setting for the natural, timeless relationship between Britannia and her daughter – or at least the relationship that the printmaker would like to see restored. In that relationship, America is
subordinated visually and racially under Britannia, who chastely holds the hand of a classical goddess. Peace is portrayed here because America has returned to her duty, both in terms of her obedience to her mother and her sexuality (for, while scantily clad, she lounges demurely and placidly). According to this print, peace could only reign if America accepts her subordination as a model of chastity, as a racial other, and as an obedient daughter; sexuality, race, and gender combine to define the exact character of America’s subordination to Britannia.

By emphasizing America’s subordination and obedience to Britannia, this Tory print clearly continues the rhetoric of the Filmerian ideal of the family and government while subtly defining it in sexual terms. According to Filmerian logic, sexual chastity and obedience to one’s parents are parallel concepts. Disobedience would mark the child as licentious and unworthy of the parents’ affection. Britannia, as in other Tory prints, is pictured as chaste; much like the Virgin Mary, there was no other way for Tories to imagine the mother country. The importance of personal feminine virtue to Filmerian philosophy and Tory politics is clearly pictured in *When fell Debate* by the Indian woman’s simultaneous demure attitude and her acceptance of Britannia’s superiority.

The rhetoric of sexual virtue in *When fell Debate* is slightly confused, but not made incomprehensible, by the Indian woman’s lack of dress. The racial implications of America’s mode of dress emphasize her subordination – as the less civilized daughter of Britannia, America dutifully accepts her mother’s authority and influence. Here, racial and sexual ideologies appear to clash, but they ultimately support each other. Further, by not succumbing to the near nudity
of America, the bared breasts of Britannia and the goddess symbolize liberty and maternal virtue, rather than sexual immorality. The appropriately naked and subordinated Indian is also an appropriately chaste and obedient daughter. Ultimately, the Tories’ perception of the American daughter’s personal virtue paralleled their idea of the colonies’ subordination. In Tory logic, a personally virtuous Indian signified a publicly virtuous America who would obediently submit to British rule.

Whig printmakers also made claims about America’s chastity, and thus her public virtue. In 1778, Matthew Darly printed two rebuses that satirized Britain’s inability to settle its differences with America (Figure 1.4). Darly’s first rebus takes the form of a letter from Britannia to her daughter, America. In it, Britannia criticizes America for her “headstrong backwardness” in giving her hand in marriage to “a base & two-faced Frenchman.” Britannia notifies America that she is sending over five commissioners to negotiate a belated peace. In exchange Britannia requests that America “be a good girl” by halting the colonial armies. While it would seem that America is bearing the brunt of this satire, the joke is on Britannia, who is less rebuked by the prints than made to look foolish. America had already allied with France – the commissioners were on a hopeless mission. These quasi-ministerial men were to be soundly chastised in the second rebus, which aims its satirical venom at Britannia’s political servants.

The second rebus is a reply from America, figured as an Indian woman, to her “mistaken mother.” America is suspicious that Britannia’s letter is a ruse: “You silly old woman,” America writes, “that you have sent a dove to us is very
plain to draw our attention from our real interests.” Britannia’s five “puppets” are chided as being foppish fools who will “have the fatigue of returning back after bobbing his coat and dirtying those red heel shoes.” Foppishness, akin to decadence, can be seen in this context as Britain’s own licentiousness (though, notably, that licentiousness is separated from Britannia herself — the Whigs were critical of British policy, but not unpatriotic). America’s insolent tone illustrates the Whigs’ lack of trust in the actions of the British government.

Darly used Lockean concepts and sexual codes to illustrate his points, especially concerning America’s alliance with France. America’s actions are portrayed as the legal right of any independent child. “I am at age to know my own interests,” states America. Therefore, America’s alliance with France, because it is figured as a marriage, had the legality — and the morality — of any marriage contract. Britannia’s actions, on the other hand, are seen as a misguided attempt to amass power outside of her contractual rights. For example, in the second rebus, America’s army will not stand down because she is protecting herself from the invasive British forces. Britannia is told, “if you are wise follow your own advice...[and]...take home your ships [and] soldiers.” Where America’s actions are legal and chaste, Britain’s illegal army and the five “pretty” commissioners are accused of contract breaking and foppishness.

In the Whigs’ Lockean conception of state formation, contract and affection replaced authority and obedience. In a Lockean system, public virtue sustained disinterested affection between independent men and upheld the social contract. In Whig prints, Britannia’s public virtue was questioned because she
broke her contractual obligations to the colonies. In the context of the two
rebuses, as well as in other satirical prints, public virtue is translated into private
virtue: Britain’s commissioners are accused of material decadence, the subtext of
which is foppishness and licentiousness. America’s sexual behavior, on the other
hand, exists within the confines of contractual relationships based on mutual
affection – America’s alliance with France is metaphorically transfigured into a
voluntary, legal marriage embarked upon by the now-adult child.

By comparing the alliance between America and France to a marriage
contract, Whig printmakers simultaneously emphasized the mutual affection
between the nations and the inability for such a contract to make America truly
independent. If the rebuses are read in terms of eighteenth-century gender
conventions, a figurative “marriage” to France would provide America with very
little change in her status as a nation. America would be no more independent
when allied to France than she had been when ruled by Britain. During the
eighteenth century, women, unlike men, had no possibility, outside of
widowhood, for independence. As children, daughters were dependent on their
fathers; as adults, wives were dependent on their husbands.  
35 Therefore, in
eighteenth-century marriages, women traded in one master for another. The
marriage between America and France, while emphasizing their mutuality, did
little in the eyes of English Whigs to make America independent – in fact, Whigs
feared that America would be more oppressed by France than she had been by
England.

35 The legal status of the *feme covert* (as opposed to the independent – i.e., widowed – *feme sole*)
has been thoroughly explicated by women’s historians. Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 150.
While Darly’s two rebuses characterize America’s relationship with France as a legally sanctioned marriage contract, this would not be the predominant characterization of the alliance. Even in Whig portrayals, support of France is uncommon. More often, Whigs portrayed France and other nations much as they did British ministers: other nations were seen as rapacious meddlers, and even as the agitators of Britannia’s cruel actions against her colonies. As early as 1768, with *The Political Register*’s anonymous *Companion* to Benjamin Franklin’s *Magna Britannia — Her Colonies Reduced*, France and Spain are seen as the beneficiaries of British ministers’ evil plots (Figure 1.5). In *Its Companion*, blame for the colonial conflict is placed on Britannia, as she raises her spear to attack America. America runs into the arms of the duplicitous and power-hungry France, who cries, “Now me vill be de grande Monarque indeed! Me vill be King of de whole world begar.” Lord Bute, exposing Britannia’s backside, guides Spain to attack her with his sword: “Now I show you her Weakness you may strike Home.” (The pornographic meanings of Britannia’s “Weakness” and Spain’s phallic sword are obvious.) Meanwhile, a Dutch burgher makes off with Britain’s trade.

Another aptly titled Whig print, *Bunker’s Hill, or the Blessed Effects of Family Quarrels* (1775), indicts France and Spain for meddling in the conflict (Figure 1.6). France, who appears to have America on a leash, spears the British shield. Spain does even harsher damage, plunging a blade into Britannia’s back. The print makes the gendered assumption that the women’s heightened emotional
state keeps them from understanding the consequences of their actions. These men, designating European nations," argues Lester Olson, "took advantage of the conflict between the women, who seemed either too preoccupied with each other or too foolish to recognize the serious danger that their personal squabble posed for both of them." Neither America nor Britannia is to blame for the conflict in this interpretation. Instead, the British ministry and the devil, observing from the clouds, as well as the other European nations, are faulted for instigating the violent matricide/infanticide.

In a classic Whig criticism of ministerial power, both *Its Companion* and *Bunker's Hill* evoke international hostilities to condemn the British ministers for failing to protect Britannia. As the war continued, and America allied with the same nations that had been blamed for the conflict in the first place, America’s relationship with France and Spain was seen as suspect. The Whig interpretation – that France and Spain were merely opportunistic meddlers in an internal British conflict – was no longer convincing. Tory printmakers believed that France and Spain, unjustly and amorally allied with America, were profiting from a newly international conflict for which America was to blame.

In *Britania and Her Daughter, A Song*, a 1780 Tory etching, the sexual connotations of the international alliance were made explicit (Figure 1.7). In the

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36 Another later print, *The Reconciliation between Britannia and her daughter America* (1782), capitalizes on the same idea of Britannia and America being irrationally wrapped up in their emotions, but to different effect. As peace became imminent, Whigs feared that America would concede too much to Britain. In this print, America foolishly runs toward her mother, arms outstretched, crying, “Dear Mama say no more about it.” Britannia bears the English shield, which now reads, “George for Ever.” The mother accepts her daughter, saying, “Be a good Girl and give me a Buss.” The French and Spanish, who hold America back from the embrace, halt this undesirable peace.

print, an authoritative Britannia in the Filmerian mode commands America to
“return to your duty, and let me punish those empty Boasters, those base Villains
[France and Spain].” France and Spain’s transgressions are clear: Spain would
have America “wear a Spanish Padlock” as a sort of chastity belt (or a way to
tame the feral Indian woman?), and France not only wishes to steal America from
her mother, but to make Britannia their servant as well. As the violent ignoble
savage, America’s own brutal goal is unambiguous. America, France and Spain
are “now Arm’d and seek [Britannia’s] Life.” Capitalizing on the Indian
woman’s racial identity, the print emphasizes that America’ savagery is the cause
of her matricidal intentions.

Along with racial ideology, sexuality is a major code by which the print
judges the colonies. The song accompanying Britania and Her Daughter alludes
that the alliance between America, France and Spain is really nothing but a sort of
political ménage-à –trois. Rather than comparing the alliance to a legal marriage,
as Darly did in his two rebuses, this printer characterized the relationship between
America, France, and Spain as illicit, adulterous, and even bigamous. The
language of the song is rife with sexual innuendoes and double entendres. After
America leaves her mother to live with her “Paramour,” she finds that her French
lover is not “sufficiently stout.” He goes to Spain to borrow funds and to invite
the “am’rous” Spain “to come in for a slice.” America is a very willing party in
this affair: “...now on my Lovers so much do I doat / That we’r Arm’d and I’ll
help ‘em to cut your old throat.” Note that America helps the other nations attack
Britannia – this is a long-running battle that she has opted to join. Sexuality is the
code by which *Britania and Her Daughter* makes its denunciation of the alliance. By joining in a sexual union with France and Spain, America is led to join in their attack against Britannia. Sexual immorality leads America down a slippery slope to violence and matricide.

*The Ballance of Power*, published in 1781, begins where *Britania and Her Daughter* leaves off (Figure 1.8). America has fully entered in her liaison with Britain's rivals (which here also includes the Dutch), but has realized the folly of her actions. The print portrays the American Revolution as a context between the noble Britannia and the foolhardy alliance of America, France, Spain, and the Netherlands. The necessary outcome of the conflict, according to the printmaker, is obvious: Britannia, donning the costume of Minerva and bearing the "Sword of Justice," tips the "Ballance of Power" in her favor. This battle is not only a clash between nations but a fight of perfect justice against foolhardy duplicity.

*The Ballance of Power* subtly uses gender and racial ideology and sexual morality to prove that Britannia outweighs her opponents. In this Tory print, Britannia is praised as a mighty, authoritative mother figure: "No one injures me with impunity." This intrepid, commanding figure stands in sharp contrast to the emotional, violent Britannia of Whig prints. Britannia's strength of character is set in opposition to the greed and impotence of other European nations. Britannia also morally surpasses America, who is accused of being an under-appreciative daughter: "My ingratitude is justly punished," America moans. America is too

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38 It was very common for printmakers to portray Britannia as taking on the strength, military prowess, and justice of Minerva.
foolish, too inexperienced, to handle the responsibilities of adulthood or independence. America’s identity as an Indian woman underscores this point. In eighteenth-century Tory logic, neither a woman nor an Indian could be considered able to be independent: the woman was a *feme covert* in the marriage institution, and the Indians were subjected to imperial conquest. Furthermore, neither women nor Indians were valued for their intellect: as the poem accompanying the print reads, “America, dup’d by a treacherous train, / Now finds she’s a Tool both to France and to Spain...” The sexual relationship that America had been so eager to enter into in *Britania and Her Daughter* will be her downfall.

By focusing on the supposedly sexual relationship between America and her allies, these prints combined gender, racial, and sexual codes in their depictions. Tory and Whig printmakers adopted opposing political theories to describe the relationship between the colonies and England. Tories favored an authoritarian, Filmerian model of government, while Whigs adopted a contractual Lockean model. In satirical prints, these political models were made manifest in the disintegrating relationship between mother Britannia and her daughter America, who was represented by an Indian woman. Depending on their political motives, printmakers exploited gender, racial, and sexual ideologies to support or indict Britannia or the Indian woman. What was the political aim of these gendered, racialized, and sexualized depictions? Besides merely denouncing their enemies, both Tory and Whig printmakers participated in the contentious eighteenth-century discourse on liberty. Here again, printmakers would use ideas
about gender, race, and sexuality to persuade others and to satirize those who disagreed with them.

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The eighteenth-century discourse on liberty was indeed contentious; it became central to the conflict between the American colonies and England. “Liberty,” writes John Phillip Reid, “may well have been the most trenchant word in the eighteenth-century English language.”39 Despite this discord, both Tories and Whigs agreed on some of liberty’s defining characteristics. Liberty was generally represented as female. It was believed that liberty, when abused, became licentiousness or anarchy. Despite this relative unanimity, Tories and Whigs disagreed about the major political issue that surrounded liberty: who could rightfully claim and protect it. Tories believed that England, which was long known as the protector of liberty, should continue in that role. Since the Stamp Act crisis, however, Whigs distrusted England and looked across the Atlantic to America to find the new defender of liberty. Tories and Whigs accused each other of abusing liberty and falling into licentiousness and anarchy in order to claim that they themselves were the true protectors of liberty.

It was commonly believed amongst British subjects that in no other nation but England did the people enjoy such freedom and plenty. Yet British liberty was not the equivalent of freedom. The more conservative elements of British society (such as the Tories) believed that “the British people possessed as much

liberty as was consistent with the preservation of order." The Whig opposition came into existence precisely to argue against this concept. To Whigs, liberty was a fragile thing, vulnerable to attack, especially from the corruption of ministerial government. "What gave transcendent importance to the aggressiveness of power was the fact that its natural prey, its necessary victim, was liberty, or law, or right." It was much more important to the Whigs to limit the administration’s power than to limit the people’s liberty.

There was a clear correlation between liberty’s weakness and vulnerability and the fact that liberty was always represented as a woman. "Whether a child or a friend, liberty was always female...possessing both feminine weakness...and feminine fortitude – a fighter against tyranny and arbitrary government." Liberty was seen as weak, considered a possession, and connected to virtue – all of which were, in eighteenth-century parlance, feminine qualities. Liberty was a possession, a prize claimed by England with the signing of the Magna Carta or by America with the conquering of the wilderness. This characterization is strikingly similar to the concept of coverture, by which all of a wife’s property – and thus her independence – was claimed by her husband.

In order to separate liberty from dangerous licentiousness or anarchy, liberty was coupled with the increasingly feminized conception of virtue. Liberty was often defined in the negative: “Liberty...[was] the victim and very antithesis of despotism. Yet the people, like the rulers, could abuse their power; such a

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40 Dickenson, The Politics of the People, 162.
42 Reid, The Concept of Liberty, 13.
43 Reid, The Concept of Liberty, 25.
perversion of liberty was called licentiousness or anarchy.\textsuperscript{45} Only in a virtuous
republic could liberty be justly and truly enjoyed. If virtue and liberty were so
closely related, then licentiousness and anarchy can be seen as the loss of virtue.
Licentiousness was the private abuse of liberty and the direct opposite of public
virtue. In other words, licentiousness was synonymous with sexual immorality or
libertinism.

The feminization of liberty would be clearly expressed in English political
prints during the American Revolution. Liberty was visually figured as a bare-
breasted classical goddess carrying a liberty pole and wearing a Phrygian cap, or
"liberty cap." Throughout Whig and Tory political prints, Britannia and America
take on qualities of classical Liberty. On the one hand, in \textit{When fell Debate and
civil Wars shall cease} and \textit{The Parricide, A Sketch of Modern Patriotism},
Britannia is depicted as bare-breasted Liberty. On the other hand, in \textit{The Tea-Tax
Tempest, or Old Time with his Magick-Lantern}, America plucks the liberty cap
from a pile of flaming stamped paper.

Much as the feminization of liberty was depicted in the satirical prints
discussed earlier, the connection between liberty and virtue would find its
expression in prints. In Tory prints, such as \textit{The Parricide} and \textit{Britannia and Her
Daughter}, America is depicted as violently disobeying her mother and lustfully
cavorting with France and Spain. Within the context of liberty, such lack of
virtue can only be described as licentiousness. Where Tories accused America of
licentiousness, Whigs accused Britannia or anarchy. Therefore, Britannia’s attack

\textsuperscript{45} Wood, \textit{Creation of the American Republic}, 23.
on her daughter in *Bunkers Hill, or the Blessed Effects of Family Quarrels* can be explained as anarchy, or willfully acting outside the law.

Britannia and the Indian woman represented the entire body politic of their respective nations. Therefore, the picturing of the women’s abuse of personal liberty (in other words, the women’s licentiousness) is a synecdoche for the abuse of civil liberty in the nation (or anarchy). Tory prints used gender, racial, and sexual codes to accuse the Indian woman of crimes ranging from adultery to matricide. Within the concept of liberty, this violent and sexual behavior is the very definition of licentiousness. By portraying America as licentious, Tories accused the colonies of abusing liberty and fostering anarchy in the Empire.

*News from America, or the Patriots in the Dumps*, a 1776 anonymous Tory print, shows America’s sexual degradation and her licentiousness, connecting them to the colonies’ abuse of liberty (Figure 1.9). In the print, and exultant George III (in a rare appearance in a print) reads a dispatch from General Howe, which announced his victory at Long Island.46 America is depicted as bare-breasted Liberty, dejectedly holding a liberty cap. This is not Liberty triumphant – instead, America lies disheveled at the king’s feet, embarrassed by her loss. By emphasizing America’ degradation, the printmaker equates the loss of the military battle to the loss of sexual chastity. America’s bared breasts and degraded condition are akin to the character of a prostitute – the ultimate licentious woman.47 The print’s depiction of America clearly echoes the classic

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46 Ironically, before printing of this satire could be halted, Howe would lose Long Island. Dolmetsch, *Rebellion and Reconciliation*, 89.
depiction of Liberty. By portraying America/Liberty as wounded and sexually degraded, the print accuses the colonies of licentiousness, thereby accusing them of failing to properly protect or of abusing liberty.

Other Tory prints indict America for abusing British liberties. As in prints that use the filial metaphor, America was often shown ruthlessly attacking her mother, Britannia. Because an Indian woman symbolizes America, the attack was racially interpreted as cruel savagery. By licentiously attacking her mother, America shows herself to be unfit for independence and unable to properly protect liberty. Similarly, in prints that show America participating in an unseemly sexual affair with France or Spain, America is assumed to be sexually licentious, and, again, unable to protect liberty. Whether America is portrayed as violently or sexually licentious, Britannia is accepted as the proper and legitimate embodiments of liberty.

Tory satirists critiqued more than just America’s alliances with France and Spain or her abstract refusal to be subordinated to England. Philip Dawe’s mezzotint, *A Society of Patriotic Ladies at Edenton in North Carolina* (1778), questions America’s very right to a political voice in the Empire (Figure 1.10). The print depicts a 1774 meeting of fifty-one North Carolina women. At the meeting, the “patriotic ladies” agreed to support the public good by complying with the moral code passed by the first Continental Congress. At this significant event, American women, for the first time, took on a formal political role:

The Edenton statement marked an important turning point in American women’s political perceptions, signaling the start of a process through
which they would eventually come to regard themselves as participants in the polity rather than as females with purely private concerns.48

_A Society of Patriotic Ladies_ satirizes this momentous political event in gendered terms, capitalizing on the remarkable nature of the women’s political participation to formulate its attack. Dawe focused on the ladies’ sexual immorality while chiding their attempt at political action. These women are studies in excess. They are clearly more interested in flirting with suitors, slurping from punchbowls, and dominating their fellow signers than in revolutionary politics. Contrary to the reality of the event, these women appear to adhere to the Nonimportation Acts only under duress — two women in the background are pressured to give up their tea, and the coquette at the table may be following the political whims of her beau. In the excitement, the women have forgotten their primary, maternal duties — a child is abandoned under the table, where he is licked by a urinating dog. In fact, none of these women embody the feminine ideal; they are variously flirtatious, domineering, idiotic, irresponsible, or ugly. Thus, Dawe made a two-fold indictment of the event: not only do these women have the gall to participate in politics, but they are the worst kinds of women.

Dawe’s major accusation against these Patriotic Ladies was that they are sexually immoral abusers of liberty. The action of the print circulates around the amorous central couple. The older women look on sternly, but the viewer must wonder whether they are jealous of the flirtatious girl’s beauty; the leader of the group aims her gavel at the beau’s wandering hands. Even the principal political

48 Norton, _Liberty’s Daughters_, 161.
action of the troupe – signing the agreement to boycott English goods – is sexualized by the image of the gracelessly hunched woman displayed her rump as she signs the agreement.

*A Society of Patriotic Ladies* must be seen not only as a mockery of women’s participation in politics but as a critique of all colonial political action. To Dawe, they are prurient, irresponsible, and politically ridiculous. But the satire’s success rests on the viewer’s willingness to connect these ridiculous ladies’ behavior to the actions of another colonial patriotic society, the Continental congress. The North Carolina women’s behavior marks them as licentious. By demanding a political role unsuited to them, the North Carolina women make a mockery of liberty and fall into licentiousness. Just as the ladies’ actions are scandalous, so are the Congress’s. The Congress’s political power is stolen, illegal, and therefore licentious. These colonial politicians, whether in Philadelphia or in Edenton, are no protectors of liberty.

If *A Society of Patriotic Ladies* used sexual signs to satirize the colonies’ political actions, then *The Takeing of Miss Mud I’land* (1777) belittles their military actions in similar terms (Figure 1.11). The military was the exclusive domain of men, abstractly charged with protecting the liberty of the people from outside attack. *The Takeing of Miss Mid I’land* celebrates the victory of the English fleet over Fort Mifflin, Pennsylvania, at Mud Island, on October 25, 1777. The print, in a distinctly Bahktinian reversal, uses a woman to represent the colonial army. Since this woman symbolizes the military, America is truly a world turned upside-down: the grotesque Miss Mud I’land, wearing the standards

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of both the English and the American armies in her bouffant hair, lewdly straddles a detonating cannon. From head to toe, Miss Mid I’land exhibit perfidy and sexual depravity. By displaying tow flags in her hair, this American libertine may be attempting to disguise herself as a loyal British woman. More likely, the tow banners represent the Tories’ conception of America’s rightful place – the Americans are seen as British subjects (even in 1777). Miss Mud I’land’s lavish wig and extravagant hair decorations seem to denote an upper-class woman, but it is more likely, considering her vulgar posture and bare breasts, that they are the coif of a prostitute or sexual libertine.

The satire in Miss Mud I’land operates in extremely sexual terms. Even the title – conflating the “taking” of territory with the sexual “taking” of a woman’s body – connotes sexual libertinism. But this is a bizarre sexuality indeed. Miss Mud I’land, with one cannon between her legs and another in her hand, is a doubly phallused monster. Her facial features are masculine and grotesque. The use of the grotesque in political prints is common: note the similarity of Miss Mud I’land’s face to the face of the woman holding the gavel in A Society of Patriotic Ladies at Edenton in North Carolina. Miss Mud I’land, like the ladies at Edenton, has presumed to take on masculine qualities. Where the ladies at Edenton took on a political identity, Miss Mud I’land takes on a military identity, and even goes so far as to exhibit an ersatz phallus or two.

If she were a more virtuous woman, Miss Mud I’land’s bare breasts would connect her to classical Liberty. Because of her grotesque and hermaphroditic sexualization, though, she can only represent licentiousness. Ultimately, The

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50 Olson, Emblems of American Community, 68.
Takeing of Miss Mud I’land is a critique of the colonies – surely, if the colonies are so monstrous as this woman, they cannot be the proper protectors of liberty. Miss Mud I’land, and the colonies she represented, are the harbingers of explosive, dangerous libertinism, rather than passive, virtuous liberty. The critique of the colonies is twofold. First, the satire indicts the colonies for daring to raise an army against the mother country; their military action is as ridiculous, unnatural, and grotesque as this woman’s appropriation of the cannon. Second, and more abstractly, The Takeing of Miss Mud I’land poses a critique of the colonists’ political actions. Taken to its logical end, this print suggests that the colonies independence is really a monstrous abuse of liberty.

By taking on masculine political and military identities in Tory prints, America is accused of abusing liberty and reverting to the licentiousness of a Hobbesian state of nature. America’s licentiousness in the prints is defined through her sexual morality, as well as her racial and gender identity. Whigs reacted against this depiction of the colonies – they saw America not as a conveyor of licentiousness but as the last true bearer of liberty. In Whig prints using the filial metaphor, such as The Tea-Tax Tempest and Darly’s rebus, America was presented as the victim of Britannia’s anarchical ways.

Rather than being sexualized as she was in the Tory prints, America in Whig prints was presented as the chaste protector of vulnerable liberty. This is certainly true in The Female Combatants, and anonymous 1776 print (Figure 1.12). This print uses the now-familiar filial metaphor to portray the battle between Britannia, whose banner (underneath her shield) reads “For Obedience,”
and her daughter America, whose banner reads “For Liberty.” “I’ll force you to Obey, you Rebellious Slut,” growls Britannia, clearly both abusing her parental power and misinterpreting America’s actions. America owes no obedience to this unfit parent. Britannia is no longer the protector of liberty. In fact, liberty can only continue to exist under America’s watch: “Liberty Liberty for ever Mother while I exist,” proclaims America.

The print uses sexuality as the code by which virtue and liberty are assigned to America rather than to Britannia. In order to accuse Britannia of licentiousness, The Female Combatants uses an unusual depiction of Britannia as an upper-class debutante. Britannia’s elaborate dress and hair, along with the now familiar grotesque and masculinized facial features, are contrasted with America’s natural simplicity. Britannia’s luxury is connected with libertinism and decay, symbolized by the dying oak tree in the bottom left corner. America, on the other hand, symbolizes natural fecundity: her tree, topped with the liberty cap, has begun to bloom.

In another Whig example, America’s chaste embodiment of liberty and her eroding filial relationship with Britannia persist as major themes. In The Horrors of War, a Vision, or A Scene in the Tragedy of K: Richd: 3 (1782), America not only distances herself from mother Britannia, but takes on her own maternal identity (Figure 1.14). Once again, as in The Female Combatants, Britannia is portrayed as ruined and decayed by the conspiracies of her ministers: “Oh I have drunk of the deadly pois’ned cup administered by corruption.” One
minister looks woefully at a 1775 map of the British Empire, which had once spanned the globe; the loss of the colonies had indeed crippled Britain.

America, too, had been a casualty to the horrors of war. America’s children, the former colonists, have borne the “dreadful carnage” at the hands of the British ministry. America, here depicted as the most noble of Indian women standing upon a cloud which bears the bodies of her colonial infants, pleads: “Cans’t thou behold this mangled breast – this dreadful carnage of my children & feel no keen remorse!” Liberty, embodied by America, has been mercilessly wounded, but ever the dignified noble savage, still stands proudly. In *The Horrors of War*, America is no longer a young woman; instead, she is the weary mother of her own colonial children. As a maternal figure, America embodies the Lockean ideal of the affectionate mother figure rather than the Filmerian authoritarian parent.

Whig prints such as *The Horrors of War* depicted an America that combined the Lockean model of affectionate government with an idealized notion of liberty. In all of these Whig prints, the idealized America – from the affectionate mother of *The Horrors of War* to the perfect liberty figure of *The Female Combatants* – was construed as a sexually chaste, appropriately feminine figure. Figured as an Indian woman, the Whig conception of America paralleled their lauding of the noble savage: America was the perfect, natural home of simplicity and liberty. In this way, Whigs combined ideologies of sexuality, gender, and race to create an image of a perfect America. They did so largely as a reaction to Tory prints, such as *The Takeing of Miss Mud I’land*, which derided
America as sexually immoral, violent, and licentious. By conceiving of America as the ultimate figure of nobility, chastity, and femininity, Whigs connected their understanding of the concept of liberty as vulnerable and feminine with the new American nation.

English printmakers, whether Tory or Whig, depended on gendered, racialized, and sexualized understandings of politics to create pictorial images of Britain and America. Printmakers combined Lockean or Filmerian ideas about the family and government, constructions of gender, racial ideology, and ideas about sexuality to make their points. These ideas combined to illustrate the nature of the conflict between Britannia and the colonies, and then to depict the liberty or licentiousness embodied by the two nations.

At the core of the English printmakers' feminized, racialized, and sexualized depictions of the colonies was the understanding that that figure was, essentially, and outsider. This was not the case when the printmakers were white colonial men who were trying to live up to the ideal of republican virtue. If the depiction of America as an Indian woman was so incongruous with the identities of the colonial men who created it, why did they adopt it themselves? The next chapter explores American satirical printmakers' adoption of the Indian woman to represent their own emerging nation. As will become clear, Americans found that the Indian woman was not an incongruous symbol at all, but a particularly effective means of pictorially representing the colonies and the new nation.
CHAPTER II
WOMEN, MEN, AND THE BODY POLITIC

By the Revolutionary era, America had for centuries been symbolized by the reclining figure of an Indian woman. So engrained in Anglo-American print culture was this image that it may seem that it was used habitually, on maps, on household decorations, on newspaper mastheads, and on magazine frontispieces. On Paul Revere's frontispiece for The Royal American Magazine for January 1774, the familiar Indian woman lounges in the presence of a classical goddess (Figure 2.1). But by this time, the image of the Indian had taken on a distinctly rebellious political character. Just the year before, Boston patriots had donned Indian dress to toss tea into the harbor. By the outbreak of the Revolution, the image of the Indian woman had been transformed from a benign visual symbol to a potent political emblem.

But what did this Indian figure mean to the colonists? The American Revolution focused the image's political meaning. But even before the Revolution, the Indian women's image was an emotionally charged symbol. The Indian embodied not only what the European abhorred but also what he saw deep within himself. In pictorial form, the Indian represented to the European both the pristine (though savage) qualities of natural man and the lost and innocent past that predated the carnal influences of culture. Therefore, the meanings of the
Indian as a symbol were necessarily plural: as the Other, the Indian symbolized both the foreign and the familiar. The Indian was at once "an other outside, an alter ego, or lots of them, within [the colonists]."  

American colonists continued to use the Indian woman to symbolize the land and the people (both native and colonial) of the American continent. As tensions with Britain mounted, the Indian woman took on new symbolic and political meaning for the colonists. In newspapers, on magazine covers, and especially in satirical prints, a tawny-skinned Indian woman, complete with feathers in her hair, represented revolutionary America. This female Indian image was racially and sexually opposite its European antecedent. Nevertheless, because of – not in spite of – the gender and racial identity of the symbol, the image of the Indian woman was a particularly effective political tool during the Revolution. By identifying themselves symbolically as their racial and sexual opposite, the revolutionaries were able, temporarily and imaginatively, to express their victimization by the British. In reality, however, they held fast to their white, male identities. As it played out in political prints of the Revolution, this process of self-identification revealed what the Whig colonists thought about the Revolution and who they though they were within that conflict.

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At the time of the Revolution, American print culture was less developed than its British counterpart. This is not to say that American printers were

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apolitical; political pamphleteering was a major form of political communication during the Revolution. An American printing industry existed, but it was small and devoted itself primarily to business and government contracts. Despite the utilitarian nature of colonial print culture, the colonists certainly did not suffer from an endemic lack of visual creativity. We know that some Americans, including Benjamin Franklin, John Singleton Copley, and Paul Revere, copied and modified British prints and created their own satires. American prints, like English prints, were steeped in racial, gender, and sexual ideologies. Like English prints, American prints participated in the competing discourses surrounding liberty. And like English prints, American prints adopted the image of the Indian woman to symbolize their newly forming nation. But the meanings of the image of the Indian woman in prints changed greatly when viewed by an audience on the western shore of the Atlantic.

American printers continued the pattern of symbolizing continents and, increasingly, nations with ideal or caricatured people. The emergence of the body as the representative of a nation was an especially apt version of the burgeoning Enlightenment discussion of the body politic. The American version of this international discussion took form in the Indian woman. To English printers, the Indian woman represented the foreignness and lowly outsider status of the colonists within the empire. The symbol's racial identity had been exploited by the Tories to deride the colonies as savage or barbaric. Increasingly, however,
Americans reinterpreted that "savagery" as republican virtue and natural liberty.\textsuperscript{54} The body of the Indian woman was, to the Americans, a useful symbol not only of these abstract principles but of the emerging American body politic.

In his 1651 treatise, \textit{Leviathan}, Thomas Hobbes imagined the body politic as a mortal god arising from the social contract. In the Leviathan "consisteth the Essence of the Commonwealth; which (to define it,) is \textit{One Person, of whose Acts a great Multitude, by mutual Covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the Author.}\textsuperscript{55} The Leviathan embodied the sovereignty of the state and the totality of the authority of its individual persons. Through the transfiguration of the populace into a single body, a ruler's power came not from himself but from the aggregate of the wills of the people. A century later, Jean-Jacques Rousseau echoed the idea of the body politic in \textit{The Social Contract}. But in a departure from Hobbes's authoritarian body, Rousseau figured the body politic as a democratic transubstantiation of many bodies into one.\textsuperscript{56} Rousseau's conception of the body politic emerged contemporaneously with the rise of Britannia as the embodiment of Britain. In this visual representation of the body politic, Britannia symbolized both the British subjects (the people) and the idealized British constitution (the government or state). With her classical motherly grace, Britannia embodies less the Hobbesian authoritarian total of the

\textsuperscript{54} Wood, \textit{Creation of the American Republic}, 104-106.
people’s power than the Rousseauian perfect balance of royalty, nobility, and commons in the English constitution.\(^{57}\)

The rhetoric of the body politic found a visual home when imagined as the power of the nation immortalized in an ideal physical body. When this rhetoric was turned against other nations, rival bodies politic were often represented as degenerate or ridiculous. This pattern of ridicule was seen in Chapter One in Tory satires that pictured America’s illicit “marriage” to France. In satirical prints, England’s imperial rivals appeared as effeminate or otherwise contemptible men, in sharp contrast to idealized, motherly Britannia. France was figured as a foppish dandy, Spain was a don in doublet, ruff, and hose, and Holland was an overstuffed burgher merchant. In Anglo-American satirical print culture, America, symbolized by an Indian woman, was separated from other European nations by race and gender. In English prints, the racial and gender identity of the Indian woman subordinated the colonies to England. To the colonists, that racial and gender identity would slowly come to represent not America’s subordination but its growing separation and independence from Britain; the Indian woman had become a political symbol for the colonies.

With the decision to adopt the Indian woman as a political symbol rather than a geographical one, the colonists subtly shifted their own collective identity. The image’s feminine, Indian body represented the emerging American body politic. Almost as if the body politic had slipped into a costume – and costuming, in the form of the masquerade, was well within the eighteenth-century colonial

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\(^{57}\) Bailyn, Ideological Origins, 70-77.
consciousness - the Americans could “become” the Indian woman. Within her
guise, revolutionary colonists could make political statements about Britain’s
abuses that would have been impossible to make without her. But “what is it that
we finally see: Male subjects in female drag? Women enacting men?
Indeterminate – and divided – subjects?” In other words, why did the colonists
take on this particular image, and to what benefit, in their eyes, did they do so?
How did the body politic come to be represented by such an unlikely body? To
understand the gender and racial implications of the satires, the images
themselves must be understood.

It is important to realize that the Indian woman was not the only symbol
used by Americans to represent America. For example, in his famous 1754 print
Join or Die (Figure 2.2), Benjamin Franklin used the image of a hacked-up snake
to symbolize the disjointed, and thus helpless, colonies. Created during the
Seven Years’ War, the print urges the British colonies to unify under the crown.
Significantly, though, the use of a snake as an American symbol is not altogether
divorced from earlier or later conceptions of America as the Indian woman. The
rattlesnake was typically the Indian woman’s accessory in the tableau of the four
continents. The apparent biblical symbolism of the serpent was no accident: the

58 Joan R. Gunderson, To Be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790
60 Figure 2.2 shows the masthead of The Massachusetts Spy used between 1774 and 1781. In the
masthead, Paul Revere appropriated Franklin’s Join or Die snake for the Revolutionary cause –
the snake faces the griffin, a popular heraldic symbol for England. Interestingly, beginning in
1781 and continuing until 1784, the Spy replaced the snake image with a picture of an Indian on
the masthead. As the war drew to a close and independence was realized, the Indian seems to
have provided a more suitable symbol for the new nation. Olson, Emblems of American
Community, 33, 103, 117.
Indian woman was Eve in the new Eden. That Eden began to be seen as a nascent republic, or at least as a people with a unified identity separate from England. The body politic – America, as an independent citizenry – was imaginatively depicted in the Indian woman’s body. But this process of representation was not uncontested.

As is clear in the series of 1765 prints and copies titled _The Deplorable State of America or Sc[ottis][h Government_, a unified American identity – especially on imagined as an Indian woman – did not emerge early or easily. While the anonymous English originator of the print used the image of the Indian woman to emphasize America’ helplessness and subordination, the American copyist (possibly John Singleton Copley) was not as comfortable with that imagery. In the English original (Figure 2.3), Britannia slyly attempts to dupe America into accepting “Pandora’s Box,” or the Stamp Act. A chorus of Greek gods and goddesses attempts to protect America from Britannia as Liberty mourns, “It is all over with me.” America resists Britannia and the Stamp Act, imploring Minerva, “Secure Me O Goddess, by thy Wisdom, for I abhor it as Death.” Minerva is nervous, though, as she glances at the Tree of Liberty: “Heaven grant it may Stand.” Mercury, as commerce, leaves America with “Reluctance” – his wand is drawn by the evil influences of Lord “Boot,” who in turn seems to be influenced by the French monarch (conspiracy theory took many forms during the Revolution). The Stamp Men have gathered fearfully around a gallows, which is labeled “Fit Entertainment for St-p M-n.”

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image, the message is clear: Liberty cannot survive if America accepts the
accursed Stamp Act.

In an embellished American version of *The Deplorable State of America
or Sc[ottis[h Government* that has been attributed to John Singleton Copley
(Figure 2.4), the coherence of the British print is fragmented and complicated.63
The artist includes more action in the background – Stamp Men and colonists
crowd the gallows and the harbor. But the print’s confusion runs deeper than its
busy visuals. Unprepared to take on the image of the Indian woman as the
symbol of the American people, the printmaker has fractured America’s symbol,
creating both an Indian man and a quasi-Indian daughter of Britannia. The female
America is of dubious ethnicity – the feathers in her hair contrast with the
whiteness of her skin and European features and dress.

Splitting the American symbol fractured the meaning of the print. The
confusion of race and gender roles indicates the lack of solidity in America’s
symbolic heritage. The classically inspired America-as-daughter hearkens to the
image of Britannia and the goddesses of antiquity. On the other hand, the Indian
man conforms to the symbolic tradition of the imagery of the four continents. Is
the daughter of Britannia docile and feminine, or is she determined and forthright,
as the picture deports? Is the male figure strong and masculine, or weak and
effeminate, as his overpowered poster hints? The Indian’s man’s racial identity as
the “ignoble savage” of Enlightenment myth hints at the reason for his defeated

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63 Whether or not this is actually a Copley engraving is a matter of much art historical controversy. Therefore, I have tried to refer more generally to “the artist” or “the printmaker” as much as possible in my analysis. This may seem stilted, but it is an effort to keep from taking sides in a debate in which I am not an authority, and which ultimately does not bear significantly on my argument.
masculinity. These conflicting images signify an inability to make sense of the Revolution’s meanings.

The American Revolution, as Linda Kerber and Mary Beth Norton have shown, unleashed a reevaluation of British-American gender roles. The printmaker of this copy of *The Deplorable State* appears caught in that maelstrom, unable to make sense of the gender identity of the American body politic. Is America successfully resisting Britain, as the female figure depicts? Or is America falling prey to the whims of the mother country and its ministers, as the Indian male figure depicts? Here, those controversies force the breakdown of meaning, impairing the satire’s message. Not only is the symbolic heritage of America in dispute, but America’s future identity as a body politic is questioned as well. It is impossible to tell whether America is strong or weak, successful or failing, feminine or masculine. The clearest remaining messages are few. First, Britannia is not to be trusted. Second, political activity falls necessarily into the hands of the white men in the background, who neither falter (like the Indian man) nor hesitate (like the daughter) but act out decisively, and violently, against their oppressors.

Ultimately, this confusing satire places political power and political activities into traditionally white male hands. But the activities depicted are not traditional politics; these men are acting out and creating political havoc. Stamp men are hanged and buried alive. Those who are spared flee to British forts or grumble at the empty harbor. The colonists could justify these radical actions only if they could express the ways that the British had victimized them. This
print successfully depicts, through text, the malicious intentions — “Plagues,” “Horror,” “Ruin,” “Mischief,” and “Death” — of the British government (again in the form of Lord “Boot”). But the effects of those intentions are unclear because the representation of America is conflicted. Without a clear image of America, how is the viewer to evaluate the ways that America has suffered at the hands of Britain? More important, how is the viewer to justify the extreme actions of the colonists without a clear idea of the wrongs the colonies had suffered?

Reluctance by the colonists to depict their own victimization is not surprising. The gender and racial ideology of the eighteenth century nearly forbade white men, as the most empowered members of society were the leaders of the Revolution, from expressing the ways they were victimized. Only by identifying themselves, through a deliberate and radical reversal of their identity, with those people that they saw as the Other (women and Indians) could the colonists express the ways that Britain had harmed them. This was precisely the reason why the Indian woman was an effective political symbol. Since only women and other feminized groups could be so victimized, they were the most logical and available source for Revolutionary political imagery.

Paul Revere, legendary silversmith and horseman, firmly adopted the Indian woman as American symbol, accepting her racial and gender contradictions in an effort to visually depict the colonies' victimization by Britain. His was a distinguished career of political printmaking, copying British prints and creating original images for American consumption. The Indian woman figures large in Revere’s work. For example, as the Stamp Act crisis wound down in
1766, Revere created his *A View of the Obelisk* (Figure 2.5), which prominently employs the Indian woman as a symbol for the colonies. Like *The Deplorable State*, this Revere print does not advocate colonial independence. In fact, *A View of the Obelisk* rejoiced in the return of British liberties as the Stamp Act was repealed. Unlike the American version of *The Deplorable State*, *A View of the Obelisk* presents a much more coherent conception of the Indian woman’s utility as a symbol for the colonies.

The print depicts the four sides of an obelisk that had been erected in Boston to celebrate the colonial cause. In the first panel, America is dejected as liberty is attacked by British ministers (the print’s interpretation of the events is indeed Whiggish). In the second panel, America “implores the aid of her Patrons,” presumably William Pitt, who is pictured at the apex of the column. As the panels continue, America is attacked “for a short season” and then has liberty restored to her. This narrative is largely motivated by the Indian woman’s gender identity. Notice that while America is depicted dejected, pleading, or rejoicing, she is not depicted at all in the third panel, where she would have been shown fighting for her liberties. The Indian woman’s absence serves two purposes. First, by not showing her in conflict, she is spared from being pictured defying gender conventions. Second, since the Indian woman represents the whole of the colonies, her absence signifies a denial of antagonism between the colonies and the mother country; in this depiction of the crisis, America pleaded for the return of her liberties and was eventually and justly awarded them. In this way, the print uses gender ideology both to deny American complicity in the conflict and to
emphasize America’s victimization by the British. Significantly, *A View of the Obelisk* provides a glimpse at the growth of an American collective identity under the guise of the Indian woman. This collective identity had begun to grow well before independence was even imaginable.

By 1774, America’s victimization by the British would be intensified. The violent victimization of America is central to the meaning of another Revere print, *The Able Doctor, or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught* (Figure 2.6). *The Able Doctor* was created in response to the Boston Tea Party of the previous year. Revere copied a British print, adding the word “tea” to the pot in his version. At least three different versions of the popular print were available in colonial magazines and political pamphlets. The imagery of *The Able Doctor*—British ministers forcing a stream of tea into America’s mouth—was extremely potent, judging by its continued, but contradictory, use in many 1774 satires. *The Whitehall Pump* reversed the imagery of the original print by focusing on Britannia as the ministers’ victim. In yet another version, *The Bostonian’s Paying the Excise-Man, or Tarring & Feathering*, the colonists victimize a tarred-and-feathered British minister. In the background, shadowy colonial figures dump tea into the harbor.

*The Able Doctor* was a copy of a very popular British print. Judging by the number of versions made and the political slant of each of those versions, *The Able Doctor* was clearly seen as a powerful satire on both sides of the Atlantic.

This does not mean that British audience saw in *The Able Doctor* the same thing.

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64 These include copies in the *Royal American Magazine* (1774), the Connecticut Freebetters’ *New-England Almanack* (1776), and the political sermon, *Watchman’s Alarm to Lord N – h; or, The British Parliamentary Boston Port Bill unwrapped.*
the colonists did. The original English printmaker employed the image of the Indian woman as a response to the motif of the four continents. After this print made its way across the Atlantic, the use of the Indian woman could no longer be seen as the innocent co-opting of traditional imagery. American copies of The Able Doctor demanded a distinctly different interpretation from its American audiences.

Eighteenth-century political prints were a potent site for what Lynn Hunt has described as the "underlying interconnections between pornography and politics." In that interconnection, the depiction of political violence is intensified by the implication that political misbehavior is connected to sexual misbehavior. This political pornography is clearly the rhetorical mode in The Able Doctor. Spain and France observe callously as a bevy of British ministers attack the helpless Indian woman, America. Britannia shields her eyes; she cannot bear to watch. Meanwhile, three British ministers violate America as the ubiquitous Lord Bute stands guard in Scottish dress, symbolizing military law. Lord Mansfield, the Lord Chief Justice, holds America's arms down. Lord Sandwich, the minister of the navy, takes a perverse opportunity to peer up the Indian woman's dress as he holds her feet. Lord North, the Prime Minister and sponsor of the Boston Port Bill, pours the hated beverage down the woman's throat. In the foreground lies the Boston Petition, which protested the closing of the port in Boston, which is "cannonaded" in the background.

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An interpretation of this brilliant, disturbing visual satire is based on two important intellectual discussions. First is the revolutionary connection of liberty with femininity and nature. A focus on the Indian woman's gender and race reveals the subtle ways that the print participates in the revolutionary conversation about liberty. Second is the Enlightenment anxiety over the Other. The Indian woman's gender and racial identity was utterly opposed to the white, male identity of the revolutionaries.

In the rhetoric of the Revolution, liberty was gendered female. By definition, liberty was vulnerable; it needed to be protected from rapacious Britain and its ministers. This vulnerability and helplessness precisely repeated the dominant and idealized womanhood of the eighteenth century. Only women could be so depicted because, during the Enlightenment, action, strength, and resourcefulness were seen as specifically masculine traits.67 Linda Kerber has provide a concise description of eighteenth-century gender roles and their impact on the emerging republic: “As there gradually developed a political community that empowered the independent male citizen, women embodied all that was vulnerable...Women’s weakness became a rhetorical foil for republican manliness.”68 The political community to which Kerber refers can also be understood as the American body politic, the entirety of the nation’s independent male citizens.69

69 The connection between liberty and femininity also existed in French revolutionary imagery, in which liberty was pictured as a chaste and vulnerable daughter figure, inherently in need of protection. Landes, “Representing the Body Politic,” 16, 32.
Liberty was also imagined as essentially connected to nature. The Indian woman was doubly connected to nature, and thus doubly connected to liberty. Western culture has continuously connected women to nature (and men to culture) and understood Native Americans as the embodiment of natural humanity.  

John Locke clearly thought of America as the modern embodiment of the natural state that Europe had lost. He wrote in his *Second Treatise of Government* that “in the beginning, all the World was America.” Therefore, in the Enlightenment mind, America defined natural and vulnerable liberty. Nature was, in a Lockean framework, “a State of perfect Freedom.” The Indian woman, untouched by culture, embodied this pristine land. To revolutionaries, an unjust government of corrupt ministers was anathema to liberty. Natural and pristine liberty, in the body of the Indian woman, had to be vigilantly protected from the rapacious acts of the government.

“Sexual degeneration went hand in hand with political corruption” in eighteenth-century revolutionary politics. The Able Doctor depicts a scene of rape. A gang of men holds down a nearly naked America at sword-point, and penetrates her mouth with the tea. This is a rape of the body politic, and attack on the entirety of the American citizenry. This vulnerable America embodies not only the body politic but liberty left unprotected. America, as woman and as liberty, is helpless to defend herself. Britannia, as woman and as the former home

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70 This idea of the connection of nature with femininity (and of culture with masculinity) was articulated by Sherry B. Ortner's pathbreaking work: “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” in *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1996), 21-42.
72 Locke, *Two Treatises*, 269.
73 Thanks to Thomas L. Anderson, whose insights greatly aided this section of the thesis.
74 Hunt, “Marie Antoinette,” 119.
of liberty, cannot protect America either. The Indian woman – America – is left
defenseless against the cruel advances of the British ministers. Left unguarded,
uncontrolled, or uncivilized, eighteenth-century men were seen as susceptible to
the whims of their violent passions.\footnote{Block, “Coerced Sex,” 22.}

In \textit{The Able Doctor}, men’s uncontrolled
sexuality takes on political meanings – drunk on their power, the British ministers
violate America and violate liberty herself.

Gender and race are primary means of understanding the importance of
liberty to \textit{The Able Doctor}. Another crucial concept in the print is the
Enlightenment anxiety about the Other. During the Enlightenment, the Other was
a Janus figure which simultaneously embodied contradictory meanings. The
Other was to be feared: it was the foreigner, a transgressor of European,
masculine, and Christian norms. The Other was also to be embraced: it was the
lost state of nature, the virgin unsullied by man, and the holder of a mysterious
but truly human essence. The Other was the exotic, that which defied normalcy,
that almost seemed to defy humanity. But because the Other was seen as a lost
state of nature, it was also the very core of humanity. Therefore, the Other was
the person simultaneously outside and foreign, but internalized and familiar.\footnote{Rousseau and Porter, “Introduction,” 3-5.}

It was in these paradoxical terms that Europeans defined Native Americans. The
Indian woman, as a symbol of America, must also be understood in these terms.

The exotic Other, foreign but tantalizing, was inextricably connected to
the erotic. Sexualized and eroticized, the Other was wanton and violent.

Therefore, respectable sexuality was defined by its rejection of the Other. White
men’s virtue centered on their ability to control their passions, because to do less would be to succumb to the call of the Other. By attacking America and liberty, the British ministers utterly fail to suppress their urges; they fall prey, through their actions, to the Other inside them. Therefore, by presenting the British ministers in so critical a light, Revere directs the viewer’s process of identification. The viewer – the American body politic – cannot identify with these rapacious, uncontrolled ministers and must identify instead with their victim, the Indian woman.

Even so, this is not a kind representation of the Indian woman – she is placed in the most vulnerable of positions, with apparently no escape. But if The Able Doctor is a visual representation of the colonists’ loss of power, then the visual and sexual violation that the Indian woman endures represents the political victimization that the colonists had endured. Surely, the British ministers are the perpetrators of sexual violence in the print. By relying on the sexual victimization of women to make his message, Revere participated in a culture of sexual violence. The loss of real or perceived power by empowered men in the colonial period led them to lash out at those that they saw as alien. He uses a familiar concept – rape – to illuminate an unfamiliar one – the loss of power by the colonists. Here, the character of the Indian woman is conflated with the reality of white male colonists. The Indian woman, in this context, does not represent “herself”; she represents the body politic of which the revolutionaries are a part.

77 Landes, “Representing the Body Politic,” 29.
She is never a real person but instead a stand-in for the body politic. Via visual and political representation, revolutionary men imagined themselves as the victims of the passionate, uncontrolled British ministers.

But if the revolutionaries imagined themselves as the Indian woman, they clearly did not picture themselves as being literally sexually assaulted. The satires were symbolic fantasies, in which the colonial subject could imagine themselves as the symbolic victims of an assault on their liberty. They were not the literal victims of an assault on their bodies. This separation of the colonial American imagination or ideas from the body should come as no surprise. The genteel eighteenth-century self, especially the regulated, controlled male self, was alienated from the body. Eighteenth-century male gentility was substantiated by assigning all that was “bodily” to the Other. If for this reason alone, the revolutionaries were quite aware of a division between themselves and their imagery – they knew that bodily harm happened to the bodies of Others, not to their own bodies.

Even so, they embraced the “Other” identity of the Indian woman. This second identity allowed the revolutionaries to imagine their disempowerment in visceral, bodily ways. Yet they did not experience that disempowerment in the sexualized, violent ways that they imagined. The adoption of a second identity occurred only in the imagination; the colonists took on the aspects of the Indian woman (her helplessness, her embodiment of liberty) on top of their real collective identity. They used the Indian woman as a rhetorical force, as a

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fantasized costume, and they shed her (and the feminine identity she signified) in order to act out against their perceived oppressors. In this way, the adoption of the Indian woman as a second identity was actually an empowering move for the colonists: it allowed them to imagine their victimization so that they could justify their political actions.

This imagined identification with the Indian woman could occur only within the particular brand of gentility adopted by eighteenth-century colonial men. During the Enlightenment, the Other emerged as the ultimate opposite to the civilized, male self. That European male self was defined, culturally, by his gentility – his ability to make real in himself the immaculateness, the good taste, the control, and the myriad social rules of civil society. Kenneth Lockridge has dubbed this the pathological alienation of the body from the genteel self: gentility necessitated a cerebral, nearly disembodied existence amongst the men who would aspire to it. If the genteel masculine self was alienated from his body, then the perceived Other embodied those things which had been excised from the self – sexuality, corporeality, uncleanness, emotion – in a word, femininity. Wholeness could be found only by assuming the voice of the Other, by possessing that which had been expunged. Lockridge argues:

This sort of a vicarious repossession of women, of other races, and of the low...usually arose from a sense that politically marginalized men...were like these victimized others, and, specifically they were like women because they shared a feminine sensitivity to the wrongs done them. The

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problem in such cases was dealing with a femininity that was inappropriate to manly politicians. \(^8\)

That was a problem, indeed. It was solved by the rhetorical strength of appropriating the Other. Specifically because women and non-whites were understood to be weak and incapable of defending themselves, it was in the Other that the emotions caused by diminished power were most dramatically portrayed. If those emotions were to be expressed, the Other’s voice and identity needed to be absorbed by empowered white men. Masquerading as the Other – and masquerading is exactly what is being done here – could reunite “the civilized male authorial self with its detached sensual as well as sensitive components and so [restore] a certain wholeness.” \(^8\) In an effort to express their victimization in ways that gentility would not allow them, revolutionary men took on the identity of the other. They masqueraded as the Indian woman in order to restore their lost power. \(^8\)

Masquerade culture in eighteenth-century Britain was a cogent and powerful site of absorption of the Other. Masquerade and costuming, much discussed in British America, allowed masqueraders to become what they were not, so that they could do what would be otherwise impossible. \(^8\) At the masquerade, the rich became poor, the secular became religious, the chaste became sexual, and the masculine became feminine. While flexible social categories caused a great deal of discomfort and unrest in Britain and America,

\(^8\) Lockridge, “Colonial Self-Fashioning,” 297-98.
\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^8\) Ibid.
they could be of political benefit. This is exactly what was happening in the revolutionary satirical prints. The political refiguring of colonial identity in the prints functioned in a parallel, though not identical, way as the fluid categories of the masquerade.

In *Liberty Triumphant, or the Downfall of Oppression* (1774), an anonymous American print, colonial men masquerade as Indians in order to reclaim their lost authority (Figure 2.7). Significantly, every white man in the picture is untrustworthy, and in one extreme example, two-faced. It is only the Indians – pure, noble, natural, liberty-loving, unadulterated by culture, the ultimate Other – who have the bravery and principles to defend America. In reference to the previous year’s Boston Tea Party, these “Sons of Liberty” have donned complete Indian garb. The Indian woman, who embodies both America and liberty, leads this costumed army. The Indian woman embodies vulnerable liberty: “Aid me my Sons, and prevent my being Fettered,” she entreats them. Because she leads the colonial army and because she embodies the ideals for which they fight and are willing to die, the Indian woman represents the alter ego for the whole of the emerging American nation. She represents the apex of liberty, the cause and leader for colonial men’s actions, and the principles for which those men fight.

In this print, colonial Americans are represented both by the Indian woman and by her army of Indian men. By taking on the Indian identity, whether masculine or feminine, colonists took on Indian “savagery.” Through the appropriation of this Other identity, they could admit their own vulnerability and
therefore justify raising weapons against their mother country. Because of this focus on justifiable and honorable violence, the Indian army, made up of men, seems to be the most obvious symbol for the masculine American body politic. By protecting the Indian woman, the men protect liberty and the entire nation – as protectors, they act in a patently masculine manner. The Indian woman, because of her feminine vulnerability, is a less obvious symbol for American men. She is a symbol for liberty, the principle that the Indian men are guarding. Nevertheless, the Indian woman is not just a passive concept to be protected. She is, as America, the body politic personified – she embodies the whole of the American nation. Ultimately, the American body politic is dually represented in *Liberty Triumphant*. At once the body politic is the violent but principled army of Indian men, but simultaneously it is the very vulnerable principle for which they fight, embodied in the Indian woman.

The revolutionary body politic, by imaginatively taking on the identity of the Indian woman, becomes what it is not so that it can have done to it what could not happen otherwise. Revolutionaries took on a dual identity in order to justify their political actions: they were simultaneously feminized victims of Britain and masculine aggressors in colonial rebellion. Therefore, this dual identity functioned on levels of both imagination and knowledge. Revolutionary men imagined themselves as victims so that they could know themselves as independent nation-builders. The Indian woman in revolutionary satirical prints was only imagined; she was no woman, and thus she represented no women. A political abstraction, the Indian woman represented her opposite – the white men.
at the helm of the Revolution. The revolutionary body politic was female only symbolically – the new republic would explicitly exclude women from formal political participation.

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Revolutionary politics called for a radical political refiguring of the body politic. Printmakers redefined that body politic by creating and adopting an idealized body to symbolize the body politic. By attaching a female Indian form to the emerging American body politic, the political prints of the Revolution provided a justification for the Revolution. Separated from the revolutionary leaders by gender and race, the Indian woman seems at first an ironic and unlikely symbol. Nevertheless, she would remain a national symbol, for example in Amos Doolittle’s 1781 print, America (Figure 2.8), in which, even at the war’s end, the new nation was embodied in the Indian woman. She also appeared on three congressional medals and one presidential medal between 1787 and 1791. The Indian woman continued to appear until overtaken by the classically inspired image of Columbia after 1815. As the embodiment of liberty under attack, the Indian woman was a temporary disguise for revolutionary men. She allowed them to fantasize the most terrifying of victimization so that they could realize the most radical of politics. In an imaginative appropriation of her identity, revolutionary men expressed their victimization by Britain while acting out radical politics as independent men.

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85 Fleming, “From Indian Princess,” 39, 66.
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