
Reviewed by Jennifer Desiderio, Canisius College

In his introduction, Philip Gould poses the question, “Why has Revolutionary literary studies largely ignored the writing that opposed the American rebellion?” (6). In other words, why do Americanists study the winners and almost completely ignore the losers? Gould points to literary scholars’ fondness for narrative and how Revolutionary War writing serves as a perfect point of origin for cultural and creative independence that effortlessly leads into antebellum American literature and the American Renaissance. Gould praises the contributions of Michael Warner, Jay Fliegelman, Christopher Looby, and Robert A. Ferguson for broadly expanding our knowledge of the era but nonetheless locates an insistence on a “national critical teleology” (6) or a “nationalist literary historiography” (7) that dismisses Loyalist authors and printers and their influence on revolutionary culture.1

In Writing the Rebellion, Gould impresses the reader with a succinct and cogent argument: that “the Loyalist presence changes the ways in which we read the political literature of this period and produces a new image of the complex political and cultural dynamics shaping British Americans’ renegotiations of their fraught and often damaged relation to ‘English’ culture” (8). According to Gould, both Patriots and Loyalists identified with English literary culture and its long tradition of wit, burlesque, satire, and the sublime. The difference, though, between a Loyalist and a Patriot was “not who embraced English culture but how they did so” (8). Gould over-turns stereotypical images of the Loyalist as “the hopeless anglophile,” the “elitist aristocrat” (9), and “being two things at once—British subjects and American indigents” (10). Alternatively, Gould cites Edward Larkin’s historical description of a Loyalist as someone “who favored reconciliation with Great Britain during the conflicts that began with the Stamp Act and concluded with the War of 1812” (9). Extrapolating on Larkin’s terms, Gould writes that Loyalists suffered from the “unsettling crisis of being nowhere and alone” (10). Gould’s redefinition of the Loyalist as neither American

nor British, but alone, complicates the transatlantic categories of the “local” and “imperial” (23). *Writing the Rebellion* illustrates that Loyalists experienced violence in the local arena and disregard from the imperial domain, resulting in a terrifying sense of dislocation.

In addition to transatlantic methods and theory, *Writing the Rebellion* is indebted to a rich literature on the history of the book. Gould makes certain that readers understand that his study is neither revisionist nor celebratory, explaining, “My intention is not to turn the Revolution’s losers into winners, but to analyze the literature of politics in ways that adhere to their historical publication, dissemination, and reception” (23).

To organize his analysis of the literature of politics and its circulation, he selects three events central to Revolutionary print culture: the Stamp Act controversy, the calling of the Continental Congress and the enactment of the Continental Association, and the publication and reception of Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* (1776). According to Gould, these events “inaugurated and intensified the political crisis and raised further questions about Anglo-American cultural affiliation” (27).

Gould commences his fascinating study of the connection between aesthetics, literary form, and national identity with the passage of the Stamp Act. He narrates the story of an effigy of a Loyalist stamp master in Newport, Rhode Island. Patriots labeled the effigy “Martinius Scriblerus” (31), a name that ironically was aligned with the Tory wits in London, including Alexander Pope, Jonathon Swift, and others. Gould brilliantly takes this unique historical moment and interrogates its literary and national meanings as Patriots and Loyalists used the traditions of sublimity and bombast inherited from the metropole to represent and shape their political positions. British authors such as Edmund Burke and Joseph Addison, as well as classical authors such as Longinus, deployed the sublime as a literary trope to describe the conflicting emotions of delight and horror. Loyalists and Patriots, according to Gould, dismissed each other’s use of the sublime in revolutionary literature as mere bombast or overstatement, another literary trope. Gould reveals how Loyalists and Patriots sought to claim a “public mastery of metropolitan cultural literacy” and “political credibility” (32) through their invocation of the rhetoric of the sublime and the tactic of overstatement, both of which “derived from British literary and critical traditions” (56).

Similar to his portrayal of the Loyalists’ and Patriots’ literary reactions to the Stamp Act, Gould critiques the strategic use of wit and ridicule to explore the Loyalists’ reaction to the meeting of the Continental Congress and the formation of the Continental Association. Gould looks at the debates between the Loyalist Samuel Seabury and the Patriot Alexander Hamilton and follows their understanding of wit, from John Locke’s *Essay on Human Understanding* (1690) to the writings of Addison and Samuel Johnson. Gould argues that “for these Loyalist writers in Revolutionary
New York, the formal and aesthetic canons of wit became an important means to imaginatively realign their relations with patriotic Americans and thereby affirm their place in the empire” (28). Even so, Gould persuasively reveals how “both sides of the American political crisis anchored themselves in British cultural authority” (65). Thus, Loyalists never felt comfortably at home in a literary tradition that was shared with their political antagonists.

Gould continues his focus on literary style by looking at the popular traditions of satire and burlesque at a historical moment when the relations between American colonies and Britain were deteriorating rapidly. Gould situates “Loyalist satire in context of what is now known as the ‘Ballad Revival’ in eighteenth-century Britain, a literary and cultural movement in which antiquarians and critics recuperated, collected, and published ballads for the purposes of recovering the past and telling the story of national cultural development” (87). Interestingly, while this movement helped to form a narrative of national identity in Britain, “the border ballad ironically reaffirmed the very provincial position that Loyalist satire was trying to disavow” (28). In other words, while Loyalists satirized British America’s provincialism (to little cultural and political avail), English poets were celebrating the pastoral and England’s long and proud history with the ballad. Thus, Gould’s analysis of the ballad serves as a perfect example of his main argument that the Loyalist was simultaneously dislocated from the local and the imperial.

The last half of Gould’s study veers away from explicit discussions of literary form and explores the publication of Common Sense. Gould offers a transatlantic definition of authorship and makes use of Michel Foucault’s famous query, “What is an author?” To answer his probing question, Foucault introduces the term “author function” as a way of understanding the author not as an individual genius but as a product or function of his or her historical moment. Gould claims that a norm arose during the Revolution for authorship in Britain and British America and it “lies somewhere between an older, aristocratic model of writing” (115), the author as genius exposing his or her unique interiority, and “the commercialization of literary production” (115), the author as a function or reflection of the cultural moment. Connecting the argument of the first half of Writing the Rebellion to Common Sense, Gould writes that Common Sense and its literary and political retorts are examples of the author function; in other words, the pamphlet and its responses coexisted with traditional forms of style and aesthetics and “older norms of collaborative and depersonalized literary production” (143).


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regionalism, especially the important case of New England, and rather than complement the customary narrative of regionalism's development toward a national identity, he argues that "the Loyalist version of New England was meant to undermine the U.S. nation" (145). Loyalists drew a correlation between the seventeenth-century Puritans and contemporary Patriots, and Gould posits that Loyalists recognized "a toxic history of transatlantic Puritan radicalism" (146) in the Patriots that could only conclude with violence and gore. Loyalists interpreted the Patriots as suffering from the disease of Puritan radicalism, which would usher in "a period of cultural backwardness" (157). Gould portrays how the Loyalists likened Paine's *Common Sense* to "[Oliver] Cromwell's demagoguery" (162). Loyalist responses to *Common Sense* paint New England not as the city on the hill on the verge of industrial capitalism and democracy but as a grotesque and dangerous place with wildly radical political roots.

Gould's account of the battles over linguistic authority and form is a smart and strong contribution to Revolutionary War literary studies. *Writing the Rebellion* explores "the literature of the losers" (173) and introduces the reader to a host of Loyalist writing and thinking. Gould offers a new and compelling definition of the Loyalist in terms of his or her reverence for the English literary tradition. Complicating this definition is the fact that Patriots saw themselves as the beneficiaries of the very same literary tradition. Gould's apt summary of this situation is worth repeating, "the difference between Loyalists and Patriots was not who embraced English literary culture to leverage one's political position but how each side managed to do so" (32). Gould's thesis underscores the protean nature of language and the surprising discord and violence that a shared literary heritage caused in late eighteenth-century America and England.