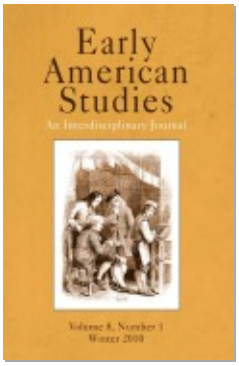
Reading and Radicalization: Print, Politics, and the American Revolution



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Reading and Radicalization

Print, Politics, and the American Revolution

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ABSTRACT Although prerevolutionary politicians worried about radicalized colonial readers, postrevolutionary historians often treated reading and printing as effects rather than as causes of the American Revolution. This essay reconsiders relations of print to politics by focusing on political reprinting and by examining the production and consumption of a cheap pamphlet of Locke's *Second Treatise* issued by Boston printers in 1773. Rather than asking if books make revolutions (or which books), scholars should balance the best-selling pamphlets against the worst, should consider the role of prerevolutionary tracts during and after Independence, and should attend more closely to the marketing of revolution.

The question of whether books make revolutions has never had the same urgency in the study of the American Revolution as it has in debates about the road from Enlightenment to revolution in eighteenth-century France. Scholars describe the relation between print and the American Revolution differently, but most seem confident that the printing press played a significant role in generating popular opposition to British rule. For some the connection between reading and the Revolution is more self-evident than for others. Those who have a strong sense that the origins of the Revolution can be traced ultimately to the political bookshelves of colonial readers are content to count citations of "liberal" and "republican" texts, to comb library catalogs and estate inventories for political books, and to debate what was read, by whom, and when. Other scholars, especially literary historians, have been more cautious about strict accounts of causality. They have suggested that imaginative literature served as a vehicle for politicization and ideological transmission and have insisted that the long-term development of critical reading practices and publics gave print itself special political prominence and meaning in the Revolutionary era. An explosion of interest in "print culture"

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over the last two decades has been matched by an appreciation of manuscripts, voices, performances, and rituals—practices that shaped print, supplemented print, challenged print's putative dominance, and drew inspiration from print. At this point, few would hold that print was the determining agent in the shaping of the Revolution, rather than one set of practices among others, but it nevertheless remains difficult to imagine the making of the Revolution without thinking about the radicalization of readers.[1]

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1. For the French debate, see Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Durham, N.C., 1991), and Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York, 1995). For the relation of print and politics in eighteenth-century America, see Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Prelude to Independence: The Newspaper War on Britain, 1764–1776* (New York, 1958); Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967); Stephen Botein, "'Meer Mechanics' and an Open Press: The Business and Political Strategies of Colonial American Printers," *Perspectives in American History* 9 (1975): 127–225; David Lundberg and Henry May, "The Enlightened Reader in America," *American Quarterly* 28 (Summer 1976): 262–93; Bernard Bailyn and John B. Hench, eds., *The Press and the American Revolution* (Worcester, Mass., 1980); Donald S. Lutz, "The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought," *American Political Science Review* 78, 1 (March 1984): 189–97; Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority* (New York, 1982); Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York, 1986); Thomas C. Leonard, *The Power of the Press: The Birth of American Political Reporting* (New York, 1986); Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990); David D. Hall, *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst, 1996); Christopher S. Looby, *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origin of the United States* (Chicago, 1996); Robert A. Ferguson, *The American Enlightenment, 1760–1820* (1994; rept., Cambridge, Mass., 1997); Grantland S. Rice, *The Transformation of Authorship in America* (Chicago, 1997); David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill, 1997); David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill, 1997); Christopher Grasso, *A Speaking Aristocracy: Transforming Public Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Connecticut* (Chapel Hill, 1999); Sandra Gustafson, *Eloquence Is Power: Oratory and Performance in Early America* (Chapel Hill, 2000); David D. Hall and Hugh Amory, eds., *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World* (New York, 2000); Jeffrey Pasley, *"The Tyranny of Printers": Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville, 2001); James Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers: Transatlantic Literary Community and the Charleston Library Society, 1748–1811* (Columbia, S.C., 2002); Elizabeth Maddox Dillon, *The Gender of Freedom: Fictions of Liberalism and the Literary Public Sphere* (Stanford, 2004); Edward Larkin, *Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution* (New York, 2005); Trish Loughran, "Disseminating *Common Sense:* Thomas Paine and the

The connection between reading and the Revolution made by modern scholars has deep historical roots—indeed, it resonates with statements made on the eve of the Revolution. In 1771, for instance, Benjamin Franklin closed the first part of his manuscript memoir with the claim that libraries like the one he had helped found in Philadelphia in 1731 "have improv'd the general Conversation of the Americans, made the common Tradesmen & Farmers as intelligent as most Gentlemen from other Countries, and perhaps have contributed in some degree to the Stand so generally made throughout the Colonies in Defence of their Privileges." Franklin, writing just outside London, was not alone. London book reviewers routinely lamented, as one did about a pamphlet by Josiah Quincy of Boston in 1774, that it was a "peculiarly unlucky circumstance attending our American disputes . . . that our fellow-subjects there are as well read in the nature and grounds of civil and religious liberty as ourselves." Edmund Burke canvassed London bookstores in preparing his famous 1775 speech on conciliation, reporting the fearful news to Parliament that booksellers "have sold nearly as many of Blackstone's Commentaries in America as in England" and that colonists had lately "fallen into the way of printing them for their own use."[2] In a more humorous vein, at least one British cartoonist pictured a mob of angry colonists preparing to lob books by Locke and Sidney at the arrival of an Anglican bishop in America (figure 1). The specter of well-read colonists, armed with texts and standing ready to oppose encroachments, might have seemed omnipresent to British readers on the eve of the Revolution.

But, curiously, early postrevolutionary accounts of the coming of the Revolution rarely mentioned reading or print. If Franklin was hesitant in 1771 ("perhaps," he wrote, libraries had contributed "in some degree" to a stand "generally" made), by the time he returned to his interrupted autobiography in 1784 he made no mention of the political effects of libraries; and he no longer suggested that American tradesmen and farmers equaled gentlemen of other countries: they merely surpassed other countries' tradesmen and farmers. Franklin was again not alone. Early histories of the Revolution written by William Gordon, David Ramsay, and Mercy Otis Warren downplayed

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Problem of the Early National Bestseller," *American Literature* 78, 1 (March 2006): 1–28; François Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father: Washington's Legacy, Slavery, and the Making of a Nation* (New York, 2006).

2. Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, in J. A. Leo Lemay, ed., *Writings* (New York, 1984), 1372; review of *Observations* by Josiah Quincy, *Monthly Review* 51 (August 1774): 148; Edmund Burke, "Speech on Conciliation with America" (1775), in David Bromwich, ed., *On Empire, Liberty, and Reform: Speeches and Letters* (New Haven, 2000), 85.

Figure 1. In a British cartoon, American colonists armed with books prevent the landing of a bishop in America. Members of the mob threaten the retreating bishop with copies of Locke and Sidney, while Calvin's *Works* careens toward his head; in the foreground a Quaker, his book held low in a gesture of nonviolence, arms himself with a copy of Barclay's *Apology*. *Political Register*, 1769. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

the role of print. To be sure, Ramsay made more claims for texts than his fellow historians: "In establishing American independence," he noted in his 1789 *History of the American Revolution*, "the pen and the press had merit equal to that of the sword." A half century ago the historian Arthur Schlesinger Sr. adopted Ramsay's claim as an epigraph for a book on the newspaper war on Britain, but Ramsay was on the whole less interested in the agency of printers and writers than Schlesinger was. Ramsay repeatedly said that preachers had been more powerful than printers (lawyers came third); and Ramsay clearly favored a certain kind of print. Most comfortable narrating moments in which "well-informed citizens" had used the press to help "the great body of the people" understand their rights and to be patient, Ramsay was thus especially nervous in his appreciation of the influence of Paine's *Common Sense,* which had helped the Revolution along among the multitude but had produced an "eagerness for independence . . . more from feeling than from reasoning." For Ramsay, it was not books or authors that had made the Revolution, but quite the reverse: "When Great Britain first began her encroachments on the colonies, there were few natives of America who had distinguished themselves as speakers or writers, but the controversy between the two countries multiplied their number." Samuel Miller of New York said much the same thing in his *Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* at the turn of nineteenth century; his treatment of print and politics focused on the effects of the Revolution on literature and contrasted the growth of printers, booksellers, and libraries after the Revolution with the small number before.[3] This account of revolutionary printing was far more common after the Revolution than the one frequently embraced by modern historians. To Ramsay and Miller and others, reading had been an effect rather than a cause of the Revolution.

It would be wrong to follow postrevolutionary historians in underestimating the significance of print, but it might be advantageous to adopt some of their perspectives and to treat the literature of revolution as an effect rather than a cause—as a symptom that cries out for further cataloging, analysis, and sustained investigation. The economics of prerevolutionary political publishing remain obscure, and scholars lack an integrated picture of the most-reprinted literature of the Revolution. This essay invites readers to reconsider the causal relation of print and politics in the age of the American Revolution

3. Franklin, *Autobiography,* 1380–81; David Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution,* 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1789), 2:319, 1:267, 1:338–40, 2:321; Samuel Miller, *Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century, Part First,* 2 vols. (New York, 1803), 2:378–79.

by focusing on the issue of political reprinting. After a quick overview of the most-reprinted texts, I turn to a concentrated case study of the production, marketing, and consumption of one particular political reprint: a cheap pamphlet version of Locke's *Second Treatise* issued by a pair of Boston printers in 1773. My point throughout is not to dismiss standard causal claims, or to elevate or demote one ideological strand, but to suggest some of the complexity that confronts any narrative of reading and radicalization. Scholars should continue to count citations and probe estate inventories for imported books and further explore the long-term development of reading practices and alternative texts, but they should not base interpretations of the coming of the Revolution on rough measurements of citations or the availability of certain titles. Rather than asking if books make revolutions, or which books, we should balance the best-selling pamphlets against the worst, consider the role of prerevolutionary tracts after Independence, and attend more centrally to the marketing of revolution.

THE LITERATURE OF REVOLUTION

Guides to the literature of the American Revolution possess coherence rooted in format, style, and national origin, but they do not reflect the experience of readers. Anthologists, bibliographers, and historians routinely distinguish material published in newspapers from separately issued pamphlets, even when they acknowledge the messy reality that key pamphlets began as newspaper essays and that newspapers reprinted some pamphlets. Scholars who have studied non-newspaper items often further isolate pamphlets from books and broadsides, and they sometimes make distinctions between genre as well as format. And then there is textual nationalism: some scholars segregate pamphlets written in the colonies from colonial reprints of British writings; others divide texts printed in America from those printed in Britain and imported into the colonies. Privileging certain kinds of productions from colonial writers and printers, even the best bibliographies give a misleading picture of what colonial readers consumed.[4]

A much-used and -cited list of the "dozen most frequently printed pamphlets" of the American Revolution compiled by Thomas R. Adams of the John Carter Brown Library and first published in 1965 typifies some of

4. Over the last three decades, Merrill Jensen, John Kaminski, and Gaspare Saladino, eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution,* 22 vols. to date (Madison, 1976–), has published statistical information about the most-reprinted writings for and against the Constitution regardless of format or style, but nothing similar exists for the debates over Independence.

these problems even as it escapes others. Adams never intended for his bibliography, *American Independence: The Growth of an Idea*, to be all-inclusive. He was explicit about avoiding what he took to be purely "local" controversies, such as the debate over an American Episcopate or the North Carolina Regulators; and he included British imprints only when colonial writers directly responded to them. He decided to set aside most sermons and all government printing (such as the imprints issued for or from the Continental Congress) in favor of contemporary topical pamphlets—not serials, broadsides, or longer books—that treated imperial politics in a serious way; and the criteria of seriousness meant that poems, plays, and satires were also excluded. Adams produced a list of 237 unique and reprinted titles (42 of them printed abroad) and for the last forty-five years the list has served as an important reference for scholars hoping to narrate the relationship between political pamphleteering and the coming of the Revolution.[5]

The most-reprinted pamphlets on Adams's list (see the appendix) represent an array of genres (orations, sermons, essays) and origins. Adams revealed that Paine's *Common Sense,* with twenty-five editions printed in thirteen American cities in 1776, had circulated far beyond even the second-most-reprinted text, Jonathan Shipley's *Speech . . . on the Bill for Altering the Charters of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay,* which Franklin may have played a role in getting published and which appeared in twelve editions and in eight cities in 1774.[6] Shipley, the bishop of St. Asaph, was in fact

5. Bernard Bailyn and Jane N. Garrett compiled an independent list of over four hundred pamphlets in all genres, but Bailyn drew on the galley proofs to the first printing of Adams's bibliography while completing the first volume of *The Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750–1776* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), xi. Another anthology, G. Jack Gravlee and James R. Irvine, eds., *Pamphlets and the American Revolution: Rhetoric, Politics, Literature, and the Popular Press* (Delmar, N.Y., 1976), reproduces Adams's top twelve texts in facsimile with introductions (Price and Rokeby are reprinted from London rather than American editions). G. Thomas Tanselle has employed Adams's list, with important caveats, in "Some Statistics on American Printing, 1764–1783," in Bailyn and Hench, *The Press and The American Revolution,* 351–352. For recent uses of Adams's list of most-reprinted pamphlets, see Charles E. Clark's discussion of the top three pamphlets (Paine, Shipley, and Dickinson) in "Early American Journalism: News and Opinion in the Popular Press," in Hall and Amory, *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World,* 362–65; and Loughran, "Disseminating *Common Sense,*" 5.

6. On Franklin's role, see the note by Thomas R. Adams in his bibliography; and see Adams's source: Benjamin Franklin, *Letters to the Press, 1758–1774,* ed. Verner W. Crane (Chapel Hill, 1950), li. Franklin told his son William that a few conversations might have inspired the *Sermon,* but that he had not written it; see

the only author with two texts on the list (printers in five cities issued Shipley's *Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts,* 1773); aside from highlighting the significance of religious voices, his presence on Adams's list throws into relief the importance of colonial American reprints of imported texts to the domestic debate. The historian Bernard Bailyn, who saw the galley proofs of Adams's bibliography but had also compiled his own list with almost twice as many titles, selected eight of the top twelve texts in Adams's bibliography for reprinting in an anthology, *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750–1776;* significantly, the four that Bailyn chose not to reprint had all originated as British pamphlets (including the two Shipley texts as well as Baron Matthew Rokeby's *Considerations on the Measures Carrying on with Respect to the British Colonies in North America,* 1774, and Richard Price's *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty,* 1776). If one factors in two other titles on this list that were supplied from London but first printed in the colonies, *Examination of Doctor Benjamin Franklin . . . relating to the Repeal of the Stamp-Act* and *Copy of Letters Sent to Great-Britain, by His Excellency Thomas Hutchinson,* 1773 (which Franklin helped procure and publicize), then fully half of the most-reprinted pamphlets emerged from the metropolis rather than from the colonies; and Franklin had played some part in as many as five of them. The domestic literature of the American Revolution, then, was part of a larger Atlantic world of print.

Relatively few titles were reprinted and so many of Adams's editorial decisions have little bearing on the final list of most-reprinted items, but some clearly alter the picture of the relation between print and politics in late colonial America. Adams's decision about format led him to exclude even extraordinary serials such as the *Constitutional Courant,* a single issue of which was printed by William Goddard in Woodbridge, New Jersey ("at the Sign of the Bribe Refused, on Constitution Hill, North America") in 1765, was sold by a hawker in New York, and was also reprinted in Boston and Philadelphia.[7] Adams also excluded an edition of John Wilkes's serial *North Briton* issued by Hugh Gaine in New York (with a false London imprint, but paradoxically advertised as an American production) in 1768

Benjamin Franklin to William Franklin, September 1, 1773, in Leonard W. Labaree, ed., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 39 vols. to date (New Haven, 1959–), 20:385.

7. For the *Constitutional Courant,* see Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690–1820,* 2 vols. (Worcester, Mass., 1947), 1:525–26. Brigham identifies the hawker as Laurence Sweeney.

or 1769 under the title *The Works of the Celebrated John Wilkes;* after all, a collected three-volume work was hardly a pamphlet.[8] Though such quasi-periodical titles help flesh out publication practices that were direct responses to the imperial crisis, they do not fundamentally alter our understanding. More significantly, however, Adams did not include *The Crisis,* a periodical issued in ninety-two numbers in London from January 4, 1775, through June 8, 1776, and reprinted in the form of a political tract in as many as eight colonial American cities. Parliament ordered number 3 of *The Crisis* (addressed to the king) to be publicly burnt, a fact that the Loyalist printer James Rivington brought to the attention of New Yorkers in a broadside attacking the proliferation of the text (and explaining why a certain Mr. Murray had felt justified in burning a copy near a coffeehouse door).[9] *The Crisis,* whose title Paine would later appropriate, was easily one of the most radical publications circulated in late colonial America; it was also one of the most reprinted, appearing in editions in Philadelphia, New York, Newport, Norwich, New London, Hartford, Williamsburg, and possibly New Bern, North Carolina.[10] But *The Crisis* was not reprinted as fre-

8. Only a fragment of the third volume survives; see John Wilkes, *The History of England from the Revolution to the Accession of the Brunswick Line* (New York, 1768).

9. See *To the Public. The Crisis being declared by the Parliament of England as a Libel and Ordered to be Burnt* . . . ([New York: James Rivington, 1775]). This notice informed readers that a "Mr. Murray, late of the Kingdom of Ireland . . . fired with Indignation at the Grossness, in all respects, of its Contents, could not restrain his Indignation but hastily (living in the Neighborhood), went to the Coffee-House Door properly prepared, and there in the Face of Day committed it to the Flames, declaring, that any Man who opposed him in so meritorious an Act, ought and he made no doubt would be deemed equally culpable with the Author of so base and infamous a Publication." Some of the texts Rivington printed faced similar treatment at the hands of Patriots.

10. I am grateful to T. H. Breen, who will treat *The Crisis* in a forthcoming book, for bringing this important text to my attention. An exact accounting of American editions of *The Crisis* is complicated by several factors. Individual numbers of the text were issued in pamphlet form with continuous pagination, but printers in some cities printed more numbers than others. Charles Evans gave the separate installments 101 individual citation numbers (13896–13996) for the year 1775 in his *American Bibliography,* 14 vols. (Worcester, Mass., 1903–1955). The New York printer John Anderson issued numbers 1–28, printing numbers 1–3 in two separate editions; he also brought out a 236-page book version of the first twenty-eight issues in 1776. Two printing houses in Norwich, Connecticut, issued different editions of the early numbers. Though the Philadelphia printer Benjamin Towne seems to have published fifteen of the numbers, plus an "Extraordinary" issue (and another Philadelphia printer seems to have printed a few issues without identifying himself), most printers in other northern cities—Newport, New Lon-

quently as another text excluded from Adams's list on the basis of genre: *The First Book of the American Chronicles,* a satire that appeared eleven times in eight cities in 1774 and 1775. Contemporaries sometimes linked the text to Samuel Adams, but the literary scholar Carla Mulford has conclusively demonstrated that John Leacock composed this satire written in the style of the Bible.[11] To be sure, neither *The Crisis* (nine editions in at least seven cities) nor *The American Chronicles* (eleven editions in eight cities) come close to the explosive circulation of Paine's *Common Sense* (twenty-five editions in thirteen cities). Nevertheless, these texts do help set the stage for that explosion, and had Adams included them they would have ranked as his third- and fourth-most-reprinted texts; among pseudonymous publications they stand immediately behind *Common Sense.*

We need to reintegrate the literature of the American Revolution by bringing pamphlets together with widely reprinted serials and by setting serious essays next to popular satires, but we also need to think about smaller kinds of political publishing. The wide reprinting and circulation of imported texts like *The Crisis* and of domestically produced satires like *The First Book of the American Chronicles* should be understood within the context of the majority of texts that never saw a second printing, and reprints of topical pamphlets must also be examined in light of the politically motivated republication of older writings. Beyond his top 12, 34 other texts on Adams's list of 195 domestically printed titles had been printed at least twice, which means that only one in five political pamphlets was reprinted in the period.[12] To Adams's list could be added roughly 30 other nonserial imprints (pamphlets and broadsides, sermons and satires) that were printed at least twice, but the addition of many nonreprinted texts in those categories—perhaps another 150 imprints—means that the ratio of reprinted to unique items does not change significantly.[13] Still, though reprinting was

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don, Hartford (but significantly not in Boston)—printed eight or fewer issues; Alexander Purdie of Williamsburg also printed the first eight in May 1776. Evans listed an edition from James Davis, a printer in New Bern, N.C., but no copy survives and it is possible that the citation derived from newspaper advertisements of an edition printed farther north.

11. See the introduction to Carla Mulford, ed., *John Leacock's The First Book of the American Chronicles of the Times, 1774–1775* (Newark, Del., 1987).

12. Here I follow G. Thomas Tanselle, who notes that "Adams lists a total of 237 pamphlets, but 42 of them originated abroad." See Tanselle, "Statistics on American Printing," 352.

13. Though the rate of political reprinting may seem marginal, it represents a real departure from other printing—indeed, very little beyond political pamphlets was reprinted.

rare, there was one reprinting activity that remained largely uncataloged by Adams: the republication of older texts.

Adams's insistence on reference to the contemporary imperial crisis meant that most topically charged reprints of older texts do not appear in his bibliography. Adams did include a 1764 Boston reprint of William Wood's *New-England's Prospect* (first printed in London in 1639), which featured a new preface by Nathaniel Rogers establishing the historical and economic relationship between Britain and the colonies; but he did not note Isaiah Thomas's Boston reprint of *The Revolution in New-England Justified*, a text originally printed in 1691 that Thomas issued in 1773 without a topical preface.[14] The category of political reprints, which was never large and was for the most part centered in Boston, includes familiar political texts like John Locke's *Second Treatise* as well as relatively little-studied works like *The Judgment of Whole Kingdoms and Nations, Concerning the Rights, Powers, and Prerogative of Kings, and the Rights, Privileges, and Properties of the People*. Printers in Philadelphia, Boston, and Newport reprinted the latter text, a British compilation of Whig political maxims derived from Locke and others, in 1773 and 1774; and booksellers in New London, Norwich, and Providence advertised copies of the text, about 150 pages and often sold as a side-stitched pamphlet in blue wrappers for two shillings, in the years before Independence.[15] The exclusion of the single reprint of Locke and the three editions of *The Judgment of Whole Kingdoms and Nations* has no effect on Adams's list of the most-reprinted texts, of course, but it is clear that such texts had real meaning in the period, and they deserve further investigation.[16] Though pamphlets, these reprints were

14. Several other texts, now staples of the early American literary canon, were republished in the period, sometimes for political reasons: *A Brief Narrative of the Case and Trial of John Peter Zenger* was reissued for local reasons in New York in 1770; Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative* was published in Boston in 1771 and 1773; and John Williams's *Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* was printed in New London in 1776. To this list could be added the two Boston editions issued by John Boyles of John Wise's *Vindication of the New England Churches* (originally published in the 1710s) in 1773 and a 1772 Newport edition of Nathaniel Morton's *New England's Memorial,* originally printed in 1669; both these titles were printed by subscription.

15. *The Judgment* was issued in Philadelphia by Dunlap in April 1773, in Boston by Thomas for Langdon in August 1773, and in Newport by Southwick in June 1774; it was offered by John Carter of Providence, William M'Alpine of Boston, Nathaniel Patten of Norwich, and Timothy Green of New London.

16. On the sustained popularity of *The Judgment of Whole Kingdoms and Nations,* as well as for insights about the meaning of shifts in layout, size, and price of late eighteenth-century political texts, see Kirstie M. McClure, "Reflections on Political

longer and less immediate, and special efforts were required to market them to readers.

THE MARKETING OF REVOLUTION

In March 1773 two Boston printers, Benjamin Edes and John Gill, issued a politically motivated reprint: a 128-page pamphlet bearing the title *An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government by the Late Learned John Locke*. This Boston edition of Locke's *Second Treatise* is significant, historically and bibliographically, because it was the only colonial American edition of Locke's politics and because it was the first English-language printing of the *Second Treatise* as a stand-alone text. Though many have wondered what Locke did for American Revolutionaries, scholars have not considered as closely what Revolutionaries did for Locke. Thinking about the marketing of this particular text in Boston allows us to ask a different question about the relationship between reading and radicalization: not did books make the Revolution, or which particular books, but (to follow Roger Chartier) in what sense did the Revolution "make" certain books?[17] It also sheds light on the fate of prerevolutionary political publications during and after the Revolution.

The surviving records of two Boston booksellers indicate late colonial student demand for Locke's *Two Treatises,* which had been reissued periodically in London in octavo editions of around four hundred pages, but it is not clear that the booksellers imagined much of an audience for the book beyond Harvard.[18] The historians Elizabeth C. Reilly and David D. Hall analyzed the account books of Jeremy Condy, a bookseller, and discovered seventy-six student orders for Locke's *Two Treatises* in the 1750s and 1760s; Reilly and Hall also found that Henry Knox, who ran the London Book-Store in Boston, imported twenty copies of Locke's book for students in the early 1770s.[19] Knox included "Locke on Government" in a catalog he issued

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Literature: History, Theory, and the Printed Book," in David Armitage, ed., *British Political Thought in History, Literature and Theory, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 2006), 235–53. I thank Professor McClure for allowing me to see an early version of her essay and for helping me clarify my thinking about the economics of political publishing.

17. See Chartier, *Cultural Origins.*

18. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government,* 6th ed. (London, 1764), which had been edited by Thomas Hollis; and *Two Treatises of Government,* 7th ed. (London, 1772).

19. Elizabeth C. Reilly and David D. Hall, "Customers and the Book Market," in Hall and Amory, *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World,* 389. For more on Condy,

in 1773, but unlike the New York booksellers Garrat Noel and Hugh Gaine, who both advertised imports of "Locke on Government" in Gaine's *New York Gazette* in the late 1760s and early 1770s, neither Condy nor Knox advertised Locke's book directly to readers of Boston's newspapers. Indeed, although the Boston bookstore run by Edward Cox and Edward Berry also noted the text in a catalog produced most likely in 1772, during the imperial crisis no Boston bookseller advertised the book in a newspaper before Edes and Gill issued their abridged edition in 1773.[20]

Edes and Gill, who printed the *Boston Gazette,* were successful printers; and though many of their peers struck poses of neutrality by printing and selling for opposing parties, the Boston printers tied the fate of their business directly to a single political position.[21] The historian Jeffrey Pasley has recently identified Edes and Gill as perhaps "the only consistently partisan printers in the pre-Revolutionary press corps."[22] In the early nineteenth century the printer Isaiah Thomas noted that "no paper on the continent took a more active part in defence of the country, or more ably supported its rights, than the *Boston Gazette;* its patrons were alert and ever at their posts, and they had a primary agency in events which led to our national independence." But it wasn't just a newspaper. Thomas also noted that the Edes and Gill printing office served as a meeting place for the "most distinguished revolutionary patriots in Boston" and that "in those meetings were con-

whose papers are held by the American Antiquarian Society, see Elizabeth Carroll Reilly, "The Wages of Piety: The Boston Book Trade of Jeremy Condy," in William L. Joyce et al., eds., *Printing and Society in Early America* (Worcester, Mass., 1983), 83–131; for Knox, whose papers are at the Massachusetts Historical Society, see W. C. Ford, "Henry Knox and the London Book Store in Boston, 1771–1774," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 61 (1927–28): 227–303.

20. *A Catalogue of Books, Imported and to be Sold by Henry Knox, at the London Book-Store* (Boston: n.p., 1773), 21. Cox and Berry had "Locke on Government, against Filmer" (*A Catalogue of a Very Large Assortment of the Most Esteemed Books* . . . (Boston: n.p., n.d. [1772?]). Other booksellers, such as John Mein in his 1766 *Catalogue,* advertised other titles by Locke, but not "Locke on Government." For New York booksellers, see Garrat Noel's notice in the *New York Gazette,* February 15, 1768; and Hugh Gaine's advertisements for the text in the *New York Gazette,* June 11, July 2, and August 20, 1770.

21. See Stephen Botein, "Printers and the American Revolution," in Bailyn and Hench, *The Press and the American Revolution,* 11–57; and Botein, "'Meer Mechanics' and an Open Press."

22. Pasley, *"The Tyranny of Printers,"* 37. And for more on Edes, see Rollo G. Silver, "Benjamin Edes, Trumpeter of Sedition," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 47 (1953): 248–68.

cocted many of the measures of opposition to the British acts of parliament for taxing the colonies."[23] Thomas was not modest, for he claimed a similar significance for meetings held in the office of his own paper, the *Massachusetts Spy,* but he was careful in his account of causality: it was the "patrons" of the newspaper, rather than its printers, who had a "primary agency" in the movement for Independence; and it was the newspaper offices rather than the presses that served as the origin for and incubators of opposition. It was, however, sometimes difficult to distinguish the paper from its patrons. John Adams recorded that he had spent time in the Edes and Gill office one night in 1769 helping compose pieces for the newspaper, "cooking up paragraphs" and "working the political engine."[24] It is impossible to know how much editorial control Edes and Gill ceded to their friends. The talk inside the shop may have been more radical than the paper itself, which had a circulation of 2,000 on the eve of the Revolution. But in any event, the collaboration between the printers and articulate radicals materialized not just in the newspaper but in the printing and reprinting of political pamphlets.

It would be wrong to characterize Edes and Gill's output as exclusively political, but they clearly invested more resources in the production of political pamphlets than any other printer in Boston. According to the historian Mary Ann Yodelis, Edes and Gill was responsible for the largest annual non-newspaper printing volume in Boston between 1763 and 1775. Yodelis's study of publishing economics in Boston reveals that religious publishing, too often neglected for this period, represented a sizable proportion of most Boston publishers' revenue and was more significant to the success of most publishers than official government contracts. Yodelis found that political printing (distinguished from printing for the government) never exceeded 25 percent of the total printing volume in the city (which it reached in 1775); it was far more common for this kind of printing to represent less than 5 percent of total annual volume. Yodelis measured printing volume by number of pages set in type, not by paper size or by number of copies printed; the overall numbers are imprecise and they homogenize the diverse output of Boston's printing houses: no one printer exactly matches Yodelis's averages. But the numbers are helpful because they throw the political printing of Edes and Gill into starker relief. In 1773 political printing represented just 4 percent of the overall nonserial output in Boston. But that

23. Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America,* ed. Marcus McCorison (New York, 1970), 258, 258–259n.

24. Pasley, *"The Tyranny of Printers,"* 38.

same year—the year in which Edes and Gill printed at least four editions of the Hutchinson letters, Benjamin Church's *Oration* on the anniversary of the Boston Massacre, and Locke's *Second Treatise*—political printing represented 46 percent of Edes and Gill's output. They printed at least nineteen items in 1773, including one sermon and one almanac, but the largest jobs—at 243 and 299 pages—were journals of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. During the period Yodelis examined, the year 1773 was second only to 1769, when the partners' political printing represented 52 percent of their non-newspaper output; but they printed fewer and shorter items in 1769, and so, from the perspective of actual volume, the year they printed Locke (and in part because they printed Locke) was the year they were most busy printing political tracts.[25]

Edes and Gill issued almost two hundred separate imprints between 1765 and 1775, including the first printings of important pamphlets by James Otis, Jonathan Mayhew, Samuel Adams, Joseph Warren, the Boston Town Meeting, John Hancock, Josiah Quincy, and Mercy Otis Warren. In addition, they frequently reprinted political tracts from other colonies and (less often) from Britain. They contributed to the popularity in and around Boston of some of the imprints on Thomas R. Adams's list of the most frequently printed pamphlets, or at the very least (as in the case of four printings of the Hutchinson letters and three printings of Rokeby's *Considerations*) they helped put certain pamphlets on that list. All in all, they printed or reprinted seven of Adams's top twelve texts, including *The Examination of Doctor Benjamin Franklin* in 1766 (though they do not acknowledge themselves on the title page), Dickinson's *Letters* in 1768, the Hutchinson letters in 1773, Rokeby's *Considerations,* Shipley's *Speech,* Hancock's *Oration* in 1774, and (in a joint venture with Thomas and John Fleet) *Common Sense* in 1776. For all the putatively popular reprints, Edes and Gill frequently offered the only printing of political tracts; it was much more likely that Edes and Gill would republish another printer's pamphlet than that other printers would republish the pamphlets issued by Edes and Gill. They were responsible for the sole printings of original pamphlets that strike modern readers and anthologists as crucial texts, but perhaps more curiously they stood alone in reprinting and circulating older texts in politi-

25. Mary Ann Yodelis, "Who Paid the Piper? Publishing Economics in Boston, 1763–1775," *Journalism Monographs* 38 (1975): 1–49, esp. table 1 (p. 6). Hugh Amory makes the case for the sheet as the most meaningful unit of measurement in his "Note on Statistics," in Hall and Amory, *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World,* 504–18.

cal theory that had taken on—or that perhaps they hoped would take on—new relevance. In 1772 Edes and Gill issued John Hawles's *The Englishman's Right,* a dialogue, originally published in 1680 but back in print in London in the early 1770s, in which a barrister explains the importance of jury trials to an ordinary person. And in 1773 they abridged Locke's *Two Treatises,* originally published in 1690.

The likely cause for the new edition of Locke can be traced to the effects of another publication printed by Edes and Gill: *The Votes and Proceedings* of the Boston Town Meeting of November 1772, which had included a statement drafted by Samuel Adams of "the Rights of the Colonists and of this Province in particular, as Men, as Christians, and as Subjects." This text had been circulated to the other towns in Massachusetts with a request for their sentiments, and one-third of the roughly 250 towns in the colony voted resolutions in support of the Boston statement. In January 1773 Governor Thomas Hutchinson offered a reply to the Boston statement of rights at the opening of the colonial legislative session. The Council and the House issued separate replies to Hutchinson, and for the next two months Hutchinson and the writers for the Council (James Bowdoin) and the House (John Adams) traded official rejoinders until the governor closed the session on March 6, 1773. The exchanges appeared in the newspapers, but the House paid Edes and Gill to print a 128-page pamphlet of the speeches made by Hutchinson and the replies, a move designed to upset the governor and to spread the House's views of the rights of colonists.[26]

Edes and Gill announced the publication of Locke on March 2, 1773, in the same issue of the *Boston Gazette* that carried a rejoinder from the House to the governor written by John Adams. Amid all the talk of natural rights in *The Votes and Proceedings* and the replies and counters in the debate between the governor and the Council and House, John Adams's rejoinder was the first to invoke Locke's name, and the invocation was merely bibliographic: Adams cited a passage from "the learned Writer Mr. Hooker, in his Ecclesiastical Policy, as quoted by Mr. Locke."[27] Samuel Adams alluded

26. See *The Speeches of His Excellency Governor Hutchinson; to the General Assembly of the Massachusetts-Bay. At a Session begun and held on the Sixth of January, 1773. With the Answers of His Majesty's Council and the House of Representatives Respectively* (Boston, 1773). For a modern reprinting of the documents and an introduction to the debates among Hutchinson and Bowdoin and Adams, see John Phillip Reid, ed., *The Briefs of the American Revolution* (New York, 1981); and see Richard D. Brown, *Revolutionary Politics in Massachusetts: The Boston Committee of Correspondence and the Towns, 1772–1774* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), 58–91.

27. [John Adams], "The Rejoinder of the House," March 2, 1773, in Reid, *Briefs of the American Revolution,* 142; and see *Massachusetts Gazette,* March 4, 1773,

to Locke's *Second Treatise* frequently in the pages of Edes and Gill's *Boston Gazette* beginning in 1768 and footnoted "Locke on Government" in his statement of the rights of the colonists included with *The Votes and Proceedings* in late 1772, the very text that had set off the recent set of exchanges between the Assembly and Council and the governor.[28] It is possible that the printers on their own, or following the guidance of Adams or friends from the Assembly, sensed that though Locke's name had not been raised, the recent debates between the governor and the legislature had created an audience for the book. Images of books identified as Locke's works sometimes appeared in illustrations of British radicals like John Wilkes (figure 2), and most colonial readers who encountered such illustrations probably had no more than a passing familiarity with the texts depicted there as props of British liberty. A group of readers sympathetic to the claims of the House might crave the textual support of political theory in defense of continuing statements about the rights of colonists. Almost certainly the printers and their friends must have figured that the specter of a widely circulating cheap pamphlet reprint of a book known for its claims about justifiable resistance to oppressive government would infuriate readers who sympathized with the governor's position.

The pamphlet version of the *Second Treatise* was a down-market product that compromised elegance for political utility and cost: it was not a handsome or easy-to-read text, but it was a faithful reprint and it was cheap. In its two most recent London printings (1764, 1772) the *Second Treatise* had run to more than 200 octavo pages, averaging 30 lines of text and 300 words per page; the Boston edition of 1773 reproduced the text at 44 lines and about 450 words per page on 128 octavo pages. This kind of compression

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which prints this rejoinder and an advertisement for the Edes and Gill edition of Locke. On Locke in Boston, see Yuhtaro Ohmori, "'The Artillery of Mr. Locke': The Use of Locke's 'Second Treatise' in Pre-Revolutionary America, 1764–1776" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1988); and T. H. Breen, "Subjecthood and Citizenship: The Context of James Otis's Radical Critique of John Locke," *New England Quarterly* 71, 3 (September 1998): 378–403.

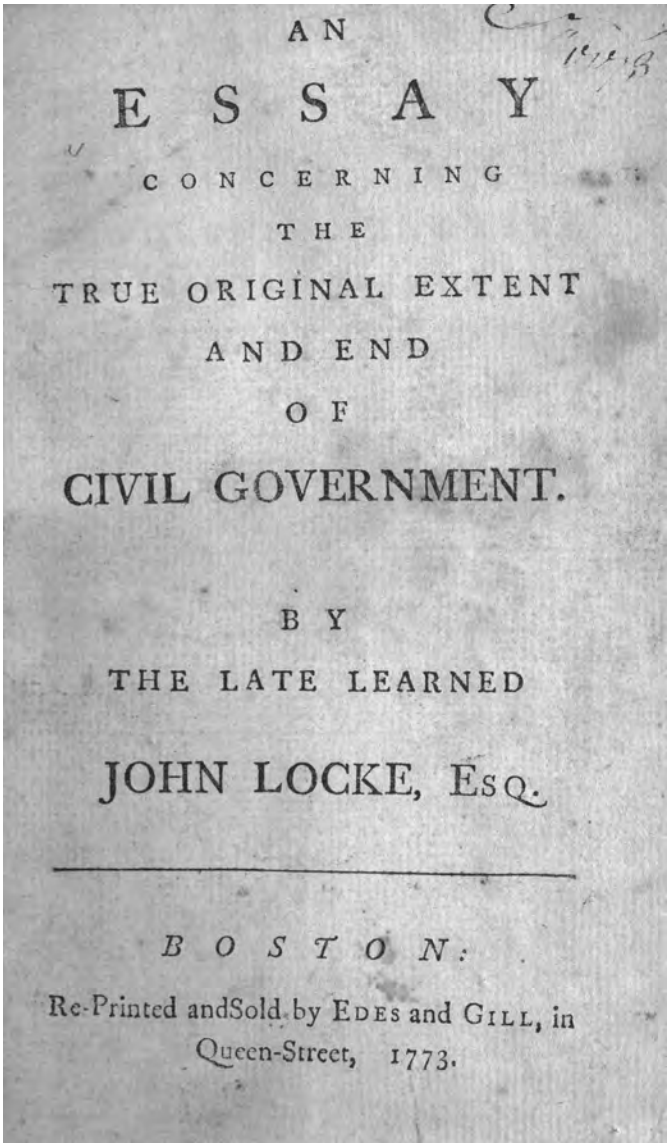
28. For Samuel Adams's use of Locke, see *The Votes and Proceedings of the Freeholders and Other Inhabitants of the Town of Boston* (Boston, [1772]), 5n; and see the pseudonymous essays and letters in the *Boston Gazette,* October 17, 1768 (signed "Principiis Obsta"), September 9, 1771 ("Candidus"), September 23, 1771 ("Candidus"), October 28, 1771 ("Valerius Poplicola"), December 23, 1771 ("Candidus"), January 20, 1772 ("Candidus"), reprinted in *The Writings of Samuel Adams,* ed. Harry Alonzo Cushing, 4 vols. (New York, 1908), 1:251; 2:210, 224, 257, 259, 263, 298, 300, 316, 317. Samuel Adams's essay of January 20, 1772, included the very section that John Adams used in "The Rejoinder of the House" on March 2, 1773.

Figure 2. A portrait of John Wilkes in a Boston almanac surrounded by Hercules, Britannia, Cupid, the arms of England, a serpent, and two textual props of British liberty: "Sidney on Government" and "Lockes Works." *Bickerstaff's Boston Almanac,* 1769. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

was not uncommon in American reprints of British pamphlets: in 1774 Edes and Gill reduced Rokeby's *Considerations* from 160 pages in its London edition to 64 pages, and the printer Benjamin Towne of Philadelphia was able to trim 4 pages off that. Indeed, Edes and Gill routinely tried to reproduce political tracts on the least amount of paper possible, and they made few concessions to the eyes of their readers. Robert Bell's first printing of *Common Sense* ran to 84 pages (and with additions and appendixes, Bell later offered a version that was over 150 pages), but the edition that Edes and Gill helped bring out was 48 pages. In 1768 John Mein and John Fleming printed an elegant-looking version of John Dickinson's *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* on 148 pages, which was for sale at Mein's London Book-Store in Boston; that same year Edes and Gill produced the same twelve letters on 80 pages of the same size. The Boston printers set the title page of their Locke mostly in capital letters (figure 3), a nod perhaps to the neoclassical austerity of the London edition (though Edes and Gill resisted calling the author "IOHN LOCKE"), but the layout of the text made little attempt at typographic elegance. Edes and Gill cut the first chapter, three pages that connected the treatises to each other; they also removed chapter numbers and the numbering of paragraphs and sections, perhaps because they didn't want to call attention to the missing first chapter, but they seem to have reproduced the full text and the footnotes of the London editions. And the price was right. As they explained in a newspaper advertisement, the printers wished "to put it in the Power of every free Man on this Continent to furnish himself at so easy a Rate with the noble Essay." They charged "only" a quarter of a dollar; this price was equivalent to what they charged for much shorter pamphlets, such as the Hutchinson letters, which was only a third as long.[29] It is not known how many copies they issued, but a reasonable guess is between 500 and 1,000; it is also not known if the printers shouldered all the risk for publishing Locke, or if one of the men with whom they associated had given them a subvention toward the printing.

Edes and Gill printed Locke without a topical preface keyed to the current crisis, but the pitch they made for their edition in newspapers made the case for the timeliness and political utility of the text. Reaching more than 750 words, filling almost an entire newspaper column and spilling over into the next, the advertisement that Edes and Gill placed on the front page

29. The Edes and Gill edition of Hutchinson's letters, printed on 42 pages of the same size as Locke, sold for one pistereen (equal to two reals, or a quarter of a dollar); see *Essex Gazette*, October 26–November 2, 1773.



AN

ESSAY

CONCERNING

THE

TRUE ORIGINAL EXTENT

AND END

OF

CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

BY

THE LATE LEARNED

JOHN LOCKE, ESQ.

BOSTON:

Re-Printed andSold by EDES and GILL, in

Queen-Street, 1773.

Figure 3. The Boston pamphlet version of Locke's *Second Treatise,* the first stand-alone printing of the text in English. The printers suggested in 1773 that every free mother should explain Locke to her daughter, and at least one surviving copy (now held in the British Library) may indeed have belonged to a woman, but the edition did not sell out before Independence and was later marketed in 1779 to readers considering the reconstitution of government in Massachusetts. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

of the *Boston Gazette* on March 1 and in the pro-British *Massachusetts Gazette* a few days later was easily one of the longest advertisements (in either newspapers or subscription announcements) for any single text issued from an American printer in this period. It stressed four key selling points. First, the book had proven political agency. "It is well known among the Learned," the printers explained, that Locke's *Two Treatises* had "contributed more essentially to the establishing the Throne of our Great Deliverer King William, and consequently to the securing the Protestant Succession, than the Battle of the Boyne, or indeed all the Victories since obtained." Second, Locke's book was especially necessary at the time, since "modern Politicians" had been reading books by "Speculative Atheists"—"The political Testament of a Richlieu, The Leviathan of a Hobbs, or the Fables of a Mandeville"—and these books, having taken "firm Possession of slender Brains and narrow Souls, have produced those Monsters of Bribery, Corruption, Perfidy and Prodigality, on both Sides of the Atlantic, with which this Age so much abounds." Indeed, Edes and Gill held that it was the readers of these texts who had placed the nation in such deep debt and had filled it with an "Army . . . of Placemen and Pensioners" looking to satisfy their avarice in America. Third, the printers noted that Locke's *Second Treatise* was the only book necessary to understand politics: "This Essay alone, well studied and attended to, will give to every intelligent Reader a better View of the Rights of Men and of Englishmen, and a clearer Insight into the Principles of the British Constitution, than all the Discourses on Government—The Essays in Politics and Books of Law in our Language." And finally, Edes and Gill recommended that all free people—men and women, boys and girls—should read the book. And if they could not read, others should help them:

> It should be early and carefully explained by every Father to his Son, by every Preceptor in our public and private Schools to his Pupils, and by every Mother to her Daughter.—Nor would either of these prove so difficult a Task as some may at first imagine.—The Utility of such a Practice would be very soon quite visible. The Roman Ladies, especially those of the first Rank and Fashion, not only taught their Daughters, but their Sons, the first Rudiments of Learning. These noble Matrons by their Sense and Virtue, contributed in this and a Thousand other Instances, no less towards the building up their glorious Republic than the Wisdom and Valour of the greatest Captain's: Nay, had the latter preserved their Virtue, instead of sinking into Asiatic Luxury, and its attendant Vices, that renowned Fabric of Government might have been now seen in its full Splendor.[30]

30. *Boston Gazette,* March 1 and April 12, 1773; *Massachusetts Gazette,* March 4 and April 1, 1773. Harbottle Dorr, a Boston shopkeeper who annotated and in-

An early instance of what Linda Kerber has termed "republican motherhood," this dilation on the role Locke's female readers could play in sustaining the state capitalized on emerging gender ideologies as well as on the flurry of other pamphlets in the market.[31] That flurry could well have produced something like an "information overload" for many readers, and there was surely comfort in the idea that a single, fundamental text could render some of the other political writing obsolete or at least secondary for most readers.[32] Edes and Gill clearly believed there was a market for such comfort.

And some did buy. Although contemporary names are not attached to many of the surviving copies of the Locke pamphlet, we can learn a few things about how early owners thought about the text from the way in which they bound it.[33] Some early purchasers, perhaps motivated by the idea of the stand-alone fundamental text put forward in Edes and Gill's advertisement, bound the pamphlet on its own. The Newberry Library's copy, for instance, remains in a simple leather binding from the period without a trace of ever having had a spine label; it did not scream "Locke

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dexed his copies of the *Boston Gazette,* made a marginal note on the March 1, 1773, issue of the *Boston Gazette* referring potential readers to *The Votes and Proceedings* of Boston from late 1772 for an understanding of the "present Crisis" mentioned in the Locke advertisement: "The present Crisis is very alarming—Every honest and good Man in America must be under a very sensible Concern for himself and his Posterity." See *The Harbottle Dorr Collection of Annotated Massachusetts Newspapers, 1765–1777,* microfilm edition prepared by the Massachusetts Historical Society, reel 4 (Dorr's 4:245). Vol. 4 of Dorr's collection is currently owned by the Bangor, Maine, Public Library. I thank David Waldstreicher for pointing me to Dorr.

31. Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, 1980).

32. I am grateful to Bradin Cormack for this point. On early modern information overload, see Ann Blair, "Reading Strategies for Dealing with Information Overload, ca. 1550–1700," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64, 1 (2003): 11–28; and Bradin Cormack and Carla Mazzio, *Book Use, Book Theory, 1500–1700* (Chicago, 2005).

33. A copy at the Northwestern University Law Library, most likely trimmed and bound in the late nineteenth century and illustrated with a frontispiece lithograph of John Locke, reveals an attempt by a later user to obliterate the bold property markings of an eighteenth-century Boston owner named (as far as I can tell) Holmes, who signed and dated his acquisition (probably 1787, though it could be 1777 or 1797) in the blank space on the title page between the title and the name of the author. Northwestern University Law Library, Rare Book Room, T L8145e 1773. Two people signed the book before it was bound in its current form: one in the eighteenth century boldly in the middle of the page; the other (A. Holmes [Abiel Holmes?]) in the nineteenth century in the top right-hand corner (this signature was partially trimmed when the pamphlet was bound).

on Government" from the bookshelves.[34] Most of the copies of the pamphlet that survive, in fact, are now bound as books; but they might not always have been. A copy at the British Library (rebound on its own) bears traces of having been the eighth tract in a bound volume. It seems to have been signed by a Mary Purcell, perhaps one of the mothers or daughters addressed by Edes and Gill's advertising.[35] At least four of the twenty-seven copies held in libraries in the United States and Europe have been gathered together, as pamphlets and tracts often were, with other period imprints for binding.[36] In many cases, the Locke pamphlet represents the most recent or second-most recent item in these collections, which suggests binding in 1773 or 1774, but it is of course difficult to know for certain. It is wrong to overinterpret the juxtapositions, but they offer valences for meaning.

How did readers situate Locke in these pamphlet anthologies? One of two copies at the New York Public Library has been bound with a reprint of another late seventeenth-century text, *The Revolution in New-England Justified,* which had been issued in Boston in 1691 and reprinted there by Isaiah Thomas in 1773. This pamphlet anthology (under 200 pages) coupled the revolution in England in 1688 with the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century revolutions in Massachusetts; it was an anthology that, like the printings of the texts separately, operated by a historical logic of innuendo and suggestion. Another owner (whose copy is now at Connecticut College) put the Boston Locke next to Sir James Marriott's *Political Consid-*

34. Newberry Library, Special Collections, case J 0.5108.

35. I am grateful to Will Slauter for examining the British Library's copy (8005.bb.32). Unfortunately, the first name has become illegible, but "[?]ary Purcell" can still be read clearly on the microfilm included in *The Eighteenth Century* (Woodbridge, Conn., 1982), reel 414, no. 1, and slightly less clearly on a digitized version of the microfilm available through the Eighteenth Century Collections Online (Gale document no. CW3304349720).

36. By my count, at least 27 copies survive in libraries. According to a search on WorldCat in July 2006, 25 libraries have copies, but 3 of these libraries actually hold only a microform version of the pamphlet and 3 libraries hold 2 copies each; in addition, WorldCat did not record copies at the American Antiquarian Society and the British Library. It is likely that many others also exist. The relative survival rate for this pamphlet in libraries can be measured against other Edes and Gill imprints. WorldCat records 39 copies of the editions of Rokeby's *Considerations* (1774); 38 copies of Josiah Quincy's *Observations* (1774); 36 copies of the editions of the Hutchinson letters (1773); 28 copies of Jonathan Mayhew's *Snare Broken* (1766); 26 copies of Hancock's *Oration* (1774); 22 copies of John Dickinson's *Letters from a Farmer* (1768); 12 copies of Jonathan Shipley's *Speech* (1774); and 12 copies of the Edes and Gill/Fleet edition of Paine's *Common Sense.*

erations; Being a Few Thoughts of a Candid Man at the Present Crisis, a 112-page pamphlet printed in London in 1762 and occasioned by the retirement of Marriott's patron, the Duke of Newcastle. In June 1774 Marriott (then king's advocate) had charmed colonial readers with his "incomparable wit" in answering Parliament's questions about Quebec; the Philadelphia printer James Humphrey had even issued a short pamphlet version of the examination entitled *The Singular and Diverting Behavior of Doctor Marriott, His Majesty's Advocate General.* But Marriott's *Political Considerations,* if this reader in fact knew that Marriott was the author, would surely have disappointed. It spoke with no levity to a different "Present Crisis," the Seven Years' War; more topical than Locke, the author worried that the very commerce that had made Britain strong would be the nation's undoing. This sentiment may have struck a chord with a reader who had lived through consumer boycotts and nonimportation movements, and it is probable that a more conservative colonial purchaser of Locke in 1773 or (more likely) 1774 would have joined with Marriott in denouncing "a spirit of republicanism too prevalent among us."[37] Yet another reader whose copy is now held by Georgetown University also bound Locke with two other texts printed in Boston in the period: Josiah Quincy's *Observations on . . . the Boston Port Bill,* published by Edes and Gill in 1774, and Isaiah Thomas's 1773 printing (for John Langdon) of *The Judgment of Whole Kingdoms and Nations.* This collection (about 350 pages) balanced the political theory of Locke and the Whig maxims in *The Judgment* with an interrogation of contemporary political practice. Though Quincy never cited those other texts, the collection situates his topical remarks within a common British tradition represented by them; indeed, a British reviewer of Quincy's pamphlet remarked that the well-read Quincy opposed "British pretensions on British principle."[38] The person for whom this collection was bound may not have been as well read as Quincy, and this collection would not bring a reader to Quincy's level, but it represented an aspiration; it was a primer for political literacy.[39] The way early owners bound the Boston Locke suggests

37. Copy at Connecticut College; James Marriott, *Political Considerations; Being a Few Thoughts of a Candid Man at the Present Crisis. In a Letter to a Nobel Lord retired from Power* (London, 1762), 58, 32.

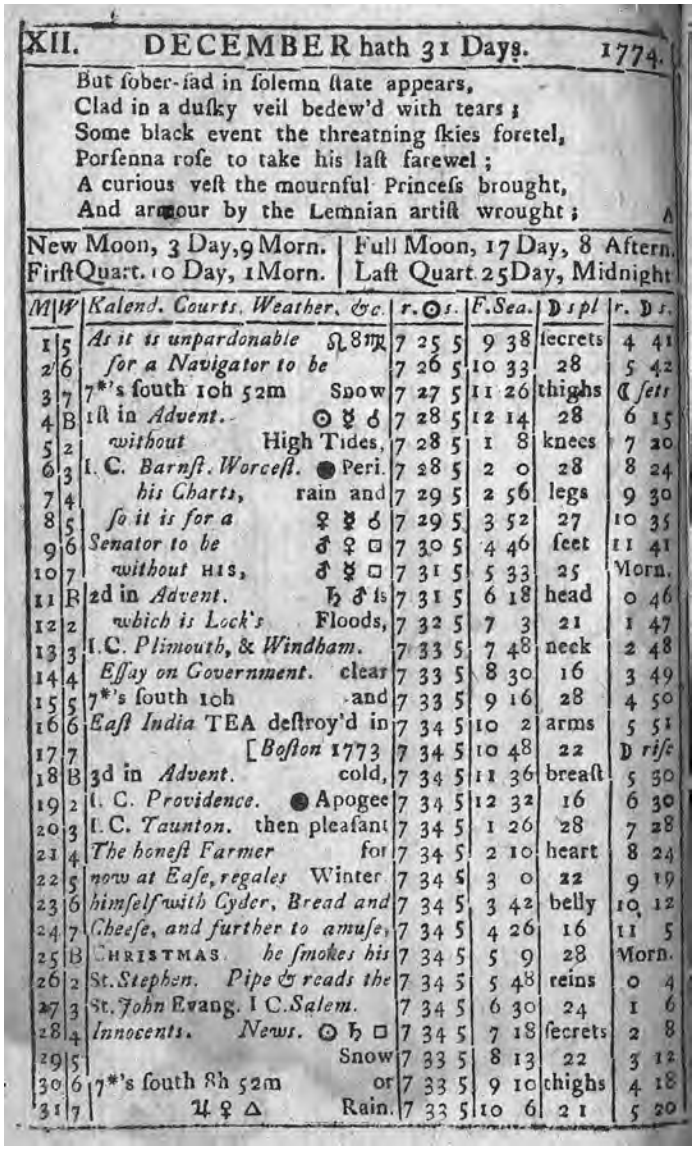
38. Review of *Observations* by Josiah Quincy, *Monthly Review* 51 (August 1774): 148.

39. The largest anthology, now held by the University of Vermont, binds Locke with seven other Boston imprints published between 1756 and 1773. This collection included Oxenbridge Thatcher's *Sentiments of a British American,* which Edes and Gill brought out in 1764, as well as a 1768 Edes and Gill publication, Thomas Bradbury's *The Ass; or, The Serpent.*

certain interpretive horizons, but in the end it tells us little about how they really read the text.

It is of course hard to know just who bought—and beyond that, read—Edes and Gill's pamphlet of Locke, but a surviving copy at the Library Company of Philadelphia offers an extraordinary opportunity to read the text over the shoulder of one contemporary owner.[40] The almanac-maker and physician Nathaniel Ames (1741–1822) left the kind of evidence of close reading that cultural historians dream about. Ames was responsible for *An Astronomical Diary; or, Almanack,* which is said to have had an annual circulation of 60,000. Though he had sold his 1768 almanac to Edes and Gill for £150, a year's worth of the *Boston Gazette,* and the promise of £200 the next year, "if possible," he switched printers in the early 1770s; this did not stop Edes and Gill from pirating the 1772 edition, or Ames from working with the pirates on the 1774 almanac. Ames lived in Dedham, Massachusetts, and went to Boston once or twice a month; he was in his early thirties in 1773, was unmarried, and had disposable income. He had attended Harvard, but he seems not to have owned Locke's *Two Treatises;* or he may have been misled into thinking that this *Essay* was a different text. In either event, he probably acquired the pamphlet shortly after its publication in late March 1773, perhaps on April 28, when (as he recorded in his diary) he went to Boston and "din'd on Salmon," or on May 28, when he went to Boston and "Got a new Wig," or on June 29, when he paid eight dollars for a new green coat. During this period Ames rarely noted book purchases or reading in his diary (a December 1769 note that he "bo't French Authors" is an exception); we can reconstruct his reading mostly from lists of books he lent to friends. He did not record when he read Locke, but it must have been sometime before the end of the year. Interlineated in his almanac for 1774, printed in late December 1773, was this bit of wisdom, which also served as an advertisement for the Edes and Gill edition: "As it is unpardonable for a Navigator to be without his charts, so it is for a Senator to be without HIS, which is Lock's 'Essay on Government'" (figure 4). Massachusetts did not have senators in 1773, but Ames seems to have made certain that his own town's deputy had a copy. A memorandum from 1775 of "some of my Books lent" indicates that Ames lent "Locks Essay on Government" to Abner Ellis (1733–1781), who served as the Dedham deputy to the Massachusetts House of Representatives and

40. I am grateful to Yvette Piggush for her transcription of Ames's marginalia, and I thank the Library Company of Philadelphia for allowing me to reproduce the notes from their copy of Locke's *Essay* (Rare Am 1773 Loc 67121.0).



XII. DECEMBER hath 31 Days. 1774.

But ſober-ſad in ſolemn ſtate appears,
Clad in a duſky veil bedew'd with tears;
Some black event the threatning ſkies foretel,
Porſenna roſe to take his laſt farewel;
A curious veſt the mournful Princeſs brought,
And armour by the Lemnian artiſt wrought;

New Moon, 3 Day, 9 Morn. | Full Moon, 17 Day, 8 Aftern.
First Quart. 10 Day, 1 Morn. | Laſt Quart. 25 Day, Midnight

M	W	Kalend. Courts, Weather, &c.	r. ☉s.	F.Sea.	☽ spl	r. ☽s.
1	5	*As it is unpardonable* ♎ 8 ♏	7 25 5	9 38	ſecrets	4 41
2	6	*for a Navigator to be*	7 26 5	10 33	28	5 42
3	7	7*'s ſouth 10h 52m Snow	7 27 5	11 26	thighs	☾ *ſets*
4	B	1ſt in *Advent.* ☉ ☿ ♂	7 28 5	12 14	28	6 15
5	2	*without* High Tides,	7 28 5	1 8	knees	7 20
6	3	I. C. *Barnſt. Worceſt.* ● Peri.	7 28 5	2 0	28	8 24
7	4	*his Charts,* rain and	7 29 5	2 56	legs	9 30
8	5	*ſo it is for a* ♀ ☿ ♂	7 29 5	3 52	27	10 35
9	6	*Senator to be* ♂ ♀ □	7 30 5	4 46	feet	11 41
10	7	*without* HIS, ♂ ☿ □	7 31 5	5 33	25	Morn.
11	B	2d in *Advent.* ♄ ♂ ♓	7 31 5	6 18	head	0 46
12	2	*which is Lock's* Floods,	7 32 5	7 3	21	1 47
13	3	I.C. *Plimouth, & Windham.*	7 33 5	7 48	neck	2 48
14	4	*Eſſay on Government.* clear	7 33 5	8 30	16	3 49
15	5	7*'s ſouth 10h and	7 33 5	9 16	28	4 50
16	6	*Eaſt India* TEA deſtroy'd in	7 34 5	10 2	arms	5 51
17	7	[*Boſton* 1773	7 34 5	10 48	22	☽ *riſe*
18	B	3d in *Advent.* cold,	7 34 5	11 36	breaſt	5 50
19	2	I. C. *Providence.* ● Apogee	7 34 5	12 32	16	6 30
20	3	I.C. *Taunton.* then pleaſant	7 34 5	1 26	28	7 28
21	4	*The honeſt Farmer* for	7 34 5	2 10	heart	8 24
22	5	*now at Eaſe, regales* Winter	7 34 5	3 0	22	9 19
23	6	*himſelf with Cyder, Bread and*	7 34 5	3 42	belly	10 12
24	7	*Cheeſe, and further to amuſe,*	7 34 5	4 26	16	11 5
25	B	CHRISTMAS *he ſmokes his*	7 34 5	5 9	28	Morn.
26	2	St. *Stephen.* *Pipe & reads the*	7 34 5	5 48	reins	0 4
27	3	St. *John* Evang. I C. *Salem.*	7 34 5	6 30	24	1 6
28	4	*Innocents.* *News.* ☉ ♄ □	7 34 5	7 18	ſecrets	2 8
29	5	Snow	7 33 5	8 13	22	3 12
30	6	7*'s ſouth 8h 52m or	7 33 5	9 10	thighs	4 18
31	7	♃ ♀ △ Rain.	7 33 5	10 6	21	5 20

Figure 4. Nathaniel Ames's *Almanack* for 1774, printed by Edes and Gill a few weeks after the destruction of tea in Boston harbor in December 1773 (an event commemorated on this page), included an interlineated advertisement for "Lock's Essay on Government." Ames read, annotated, discussed, and loaned friends his copy of the Edes and Gill edition of Locke's *Second Treatise* (now held by the Library Company of Philadelphia). Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

was (like Ames) a member of the Sons of Liberty. Presumably Ames had read and marked the text with his notes before he lent it to his friend and representative, but the text remained compelling to Ames and some of the notes may date from later rereadings.[41]

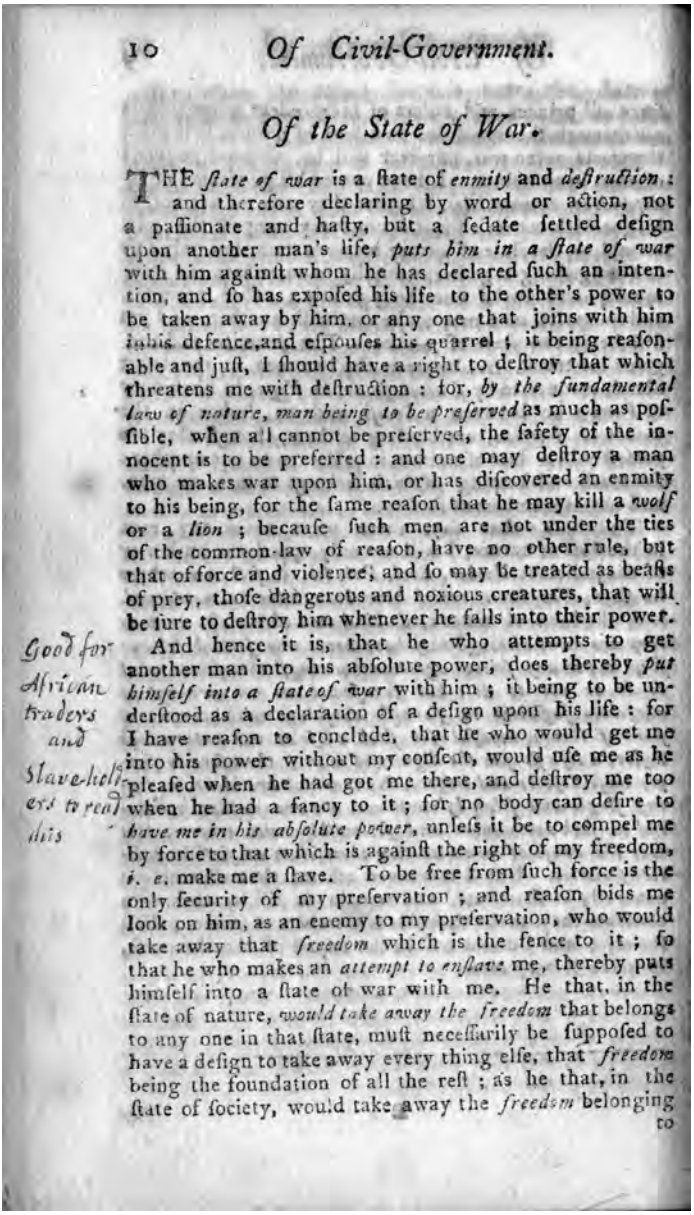
Ames read the pamphlet closely with a pen in his hand, making marks or notes on twenty-three pages. In two cases he merely corrected printers' errors. And at the head of eight chapters he placed simple Xs; one of these may be in another hand. It is never easy to interpret marks readers left in books. Ames may have meant to call attention to important chapters ("Of Paternal Power"; "Of Political and Civil Society"; "Of the Beginning of Political Societies"; "Of the Ends of Political Society & Government"; "Of the Extent of the Legislative Power"; "Of the Legislative, Executive, and Federative Power of the Commonwealth"; "Of Prerogative"; "Of Conquest"). But it is intriguing that in all but two of the chapters he marked with X's Ames made no other marginal notes. The roughly twenty verbal notes he did make elsewhere in the text tended toward sarcasm. It is likely that he found these eight chapters the least objectionable in the book, but it is also possible that the X's were meant not to draw attention to those chapters but to let Abner Ellis, or anyone else who borrowed the book, know that he could skip them. It is possible that many of Ames's notes were written specifically for his friends' eyes. For him, the reading of Locke was a collective experience.

Some of the time Ames tried to score points off Locke or chip away at the philosopher's logic, and he was especially flustered by the philosophical fiction of a state of nature. Next to Locke's claim that "force without right, upon a man's person, makes a state of war, both where there is, and is not, a common judge," Ames scribbled, "hardly, I think!" When Locke wrote that rulers did not have the right to put foreigners to death for crimes committed in their countries, Ames thought this was a "Curious disquisition"—Locke had clearly strayed too far from the main point. And to Locke's suggestion that "*Adam* was created a perfect man," Ames queried, "Had he a navel?" Exhausted by Locke's deductions from the case of Adam,

41. Nathaniel Ames, *The Diary of Dr. Nathaniel Ames of Dedham, Massachusetts, 1758–1822,* ed. Robert Brand Hanson, 2 vols. (Camden, Me., 1998), 1:174, 175, 177, 250–52, 274. Nathaniel Ames, *The Almanac for 1774* (Boston, [1773]), reprinted in Samuel Briggs, ed., *The Essays, Humor, and Poems of Nathaniel Ames, Father and Son, of Dedham, Massachusetts, from their Almanacks 1726–1775* (1891; rept., New York, 1970), 450. A surviving list of maxims from 1773 includes the one about Locke's *Essay on Government;* see Ames, *Diary,* 245.

Ames suggested that if Adam "had lost two or more ribs to make Eves of [then] it would have been a fine argument for polygamy!" Despite his flippancy, Ames still described Locke's functional account of conjugal society—that men and women should join together not just for sex, but "so long as is necessary to the nourishment and support of the young ones"—as "naughty." Ames liked to answer rhetorical questions with other questions. Making a case for the private appropriation of common property in a state of nature, Locke had asked, "Though the water running in the fountain be every one's, yet who can doubt, but that in the pitcher is his only who drew it out?" This brought forth from Ames: "What if a great number of Pitchers in [a dry] time meet at the small fountain striving for water with equal right[;] how could all appropriate its share without breaking the pitchers? Now if those Pitchers are put for so many skulls they represent a State of Nature! So you see!" In all of these instances, Ames was almost certainly speaking to his friends rather than to the text.

At other times Ames tried to imagine how different readers, especially in America, might react to Locke's arguments. Legalized slavery presented one problem. Locke had written that "he who attempts to get another man into his absolute power, does thereby *put himself into a state of war* with him," and Ames thought it would be "Good for African traders and Slave-holders to read this" (figure 5). (Though groups of free and enslaved blacks had circulated letters to Massachusetts representatives and towns, had petitioned the legislature and the governor for redress, and these petitions and appeals had been published in newspapers in the months before and after the publication of the *Second Treatise* in Boston, Ames never suggested that it would be good for slaves themselves to read Locke.) Next to Locke's claim that legislators must follow rules and had no right to "destroy, enslave, or designedly impoverish the subjects," Ames wrote, "Very good, but how is the practise?" And, though slavery was legal in Massachusetts when he first read Locke, Ames immediately wondered, "How can the Southern slaveholders conform to these rules?" But slaveholders were not the only readers Ames imagined. Next to Locke's famous account of the transformation of common property into private property through labor, Ames wrote, "This I deny says the Shaker." (The reference may speak to a later reading: it seems unlikely that Ames knew of the Shakers before Ann Lee and a small group of followers settled on a communal farm in New York in May 1774.) When Locke proposed that there were still "vacant places of *America*" where individuals or families might come to own the land simply by working it, Ames exclaimed, "The squatters in Maine must have read this!" To Locke's rhetorical question—"I ask, whether in the wild woods and uncultivated



10 *Of Civil-Government.*

Of the State of War.

THE *ſtate of war* is a ſtate of *enmity* and *deſtruction*: and therefore declaring by word or action, not a paſſionate and haſty, but a ſedate ſettled deſign upon another man's life, *puts him in a ſtate of war* with him againſt whom he has declared ſuch an intention, and ſo has expoſed his life to the other's power to be taken away by him, or any one that joins with him in his defence, and eſpouſes his quarrel; it being reaſonable and juſt, I ſhould have a right to deſtroy that which threatens me with deſtruction: for, *by the fundamental law of nature, man being to be preſerved* as much as poſſible, when all cannot be preſerved, the ſafety of the innocent is to be preferred: and one may deſtroy a man who makes war upon him, or has diſcovered an enmity to his being, for the ſame reaſon that he may kill a *wolf* or a *lion*; becauſe ſuch men are not under the ties of the common-law of reaſon, have no other rule, but that of force and violence; and ſo may be treated as beaſts of prey, thoſe dangerous and noxious creatures, that will be ſure to deſtroy him whenever he falls into their power.

And hence it is, that he who attempts to get another man into his abſolute power, does thereby *put himſelf into a ſtate of war* with him; it being to be underſtood as a declaration of a deſign upon his life: for I have reaſon to conclude, that he who would get me into his power without my conſent, would uſe me as he pleaſed when he had got me there, and deſtroy me too when he had a fancy to it; for no body can deſire to *have me in his abſolute power*, unleſs it be to compel me by force to that which is againſt the right of my freedom, *i. e.* make me a ſlave. To be free from ſuch force is the only ſecurity of my preſervation; and reaſon bids me look on him, as an enemy to my preſervation, who would take away that *freedom* which is the fence to it; ſo that he who makes an *attempt to enſlave* me, thereby puts himſelf into a ſtate of war with me. He that, in the ſtate of nature, *would take away the freedom* that belongs to any one in that ſtate, muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed to have a deſign to take away every thing elſe, that *freedom* being the foundation of all the reſt; as he that, in the ſtate of ſociety, would take away the *freedom* belonging to

Good for African traders and Slave-holders to read this

Figure 5. Nathaniel Ames read Locke during a period of heightened public scrutiny of slavery in Massachusetts. In one of many topical annotations to his copy of the Edes and Gill edition of the *Second Treatise,* Ames quipped that it would be "Good for African traders and Slave-holders to read" this passage. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

waste of *America,* left to nature, without any improvement, tillage or husbandry, a thousand acres yield the needy and wretched inhabitants as many conveniences of life, as ten acres of equally fertile land do in *Devonshire,* where they are well cultivated?"—Ames curtly replied, "Ask an Indian." Ames had a deep antipathy to lawyers and to the way in which they sometimes circumvented legislative superiority in Massachusetts; he hated when Locke lapsed into what the physician called "Bar-jargon," but he also recognized that his own society did not match the one Locke described. When Locke said legislative power was the supreme power in a commonwealth, Ames exclaimed: "What! is the legislative superior to Bar-meetings, no! not here in Newengland!!!" Next to a footnote on the same page citing Richard Hooker's claim that all human laws are "available by consent," Ames wrote. "Very clever if it was fact—But Bar-rules here control the Laws at pleasure!" For Ames, the realities of colonial America could at different times serve as an illustration and as a refutation of Locke's theory.

But in the end Ames believed that Locke and the radicals in Massachusetts spoke, or could be made to speak, the same language. For all the petty answers and queries, Ames seems to have read with the imperial debate in mind. When Locke observed that "every man's children being by nature as free as himself, . . . may, whilst they are in that freedom, choose what society they will join themselves to, what commonwealth they will put themselves under," Ames exclaimed, "But old mother Britain don't agree to it!" In a calmer moment Ames wrote on the final page: "Here are true American sentiments on government[:] That the body of People are the sole fountain of power whenever they find expedient to exert it and express their irresistible sovereign voice, or fiat."[42] This pamphlet was clearly important to Ames—it was the text he mentioned most in his diary—and he wanted to share it with others. He implicitly advertised it in his almanac. He loaned his own copy to friends in 1774 and again in 1809. And he discussed it with them as well. In late December 1778, following an entry recording "discouraging accounts from our Army at the Southward," Ames noted that his "Club began to read Locks Essay on Gov'mt." In the wake of the Stamp Act, Ames and his friends had formed themselves into the Freebrothers Club, meeting at a tavern in Dedham or in the homes of members; Ames was appointed the scribe for the club, but this was the only time that Ames noted that his social group had become a book club as

42. Ames, marginalia in a copy of Locke, *An Essay Concerning . . . Civil Government* (Boston, 1773) at the Library Company of Philadelphia, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 19, 20, 21, 23, 28, 29, 36, 38, 41, 51, 66, 70, 72, 77, 85, 93, 129.

well.[43] Ames's copy of the pamphlet testifies to a world of communal reading practices, and it also helps illuminate the continuing role of prerevolutionary publications during the Revolution itself.

Despite the evidence of real readers who bound Edes and Gill's pamphlet version of Locke in revolutionary anthologies or scribbled in its margins, the text did not sell quickly. Even with the barrage of advertising, printers in other colonies did not choose to reprint the pamphlet. Size may have been a problem. Edes and Gill's pamphlet competed with the unabridged book available as a British import in Boston and in other major colonial cities; half of the *Two Treatises,* printed without the common apparatus of chapter and paragraph numbers, was perhaps not the sort of thing advanced readers wanted. But at 128 closely printed pages, the book demanded a kind of commitment different from that required by most of the shorter pamphlets issued by Edes and Gill. (Indeed, almost all the twelve most-reprinted texts on Thomas R. Adams's list were half as long as Locke's *Second Treatise;* and six of them were under forty pages.) The marketing of Locke reflected this—with the idea that the book, abridged as it was, could function as a complete manual of politics. Absent account books from Edes and Gill, one can only speculate about the success of their venture. It is unlikely that the printers were able to recoup their investment (if it was their investment), at least not initially. The firm did not advertise the book after May 1773, and Benjamin Edes and John Gill parted ways in 1775 after a partnership of twenty years. Edes maintained the *Boston Gazette,* and Gill started a new paper, the *Continental Journal.* In January 1779, and again in June of that year, Gill advertised a list of "very useful and entertaining publications" that were available at his newspaper office "on very moderate terms." Topping this list was *An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government by the Late Learned John Locke*.[44]

It is not surprising that copies of the 1773 printing of Locke were still available six years later; what is significant is that Gill decided that his edition of Locke deserved further advertising. Looking particularly at the years between 1765 and 1775, Hugh Amory estimated that books published in the colonies "stayed 'in print' for an average of ten years," and further speculated that if 750 copies of an edition of 1,000 sold in ten years, approximately 730 of those would sell in the first five years.[45] Edes and Gill had

43. Ames, *Diary,* 1:245, 274, 326; 2:913.

44. *Continental Journal,* January 21 and June 3, 1779.

45. The numbers are obviously speculative, and they were computed with a different use in mind. Hugh Amory, "A Note on Imports and Domestic Production," in Hall and Amory, *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World,* 197.

not sold out their other reprint from the late seventeenth century, Hawles's *Englishman's Right,* which they had printed in 1772; Gill advertised Hawles when he advertised Locke in 1779. It is possible that, when the partnership dissolved, Edes stuck Gill with the unsold copies of the Hawles and Locke pamphlets; it is also possible that Gill, whose newspaper was far more moderate than the *Boston Gazette,* sensed that Independence had not made Locke any less relevant.

But how might the experience of revolution have altered a reading of Locke? On the one hand, it is tempting to consider the ways in which Edes and Gill's pamphlet version of Locke may have become *more* relevant to readers in Massachusetts in 1779 than it had been in 1773. Gill advertised the pamphlet just three weeks after Ames and his "Club began to read Locks Essay on Gov'mt." In the midst of war, readers three years after Independence may have looked to Locke for justification of acts already taken rather than acts imagined, for comforting theory to attend the discomforts of ongoing practice. But it is also likely that, amid continuing debates about constitutionalism in Massachusetts and in the wake of the rejection of the proposed Constitution of 1778 (which Ames's town had voted 98–31 in favor of adopting), Ames and other readers now turned to Locke not simply for arguments about the right of revolution, about the devolution from government to a state of nature, but for advice about making social and political compacts and about legislative power; it was these sections that were specifically marked with X's in Ames's copy.[46]

It is, of course, impossible to know how ordinary readers read their Locke, just as it is hard to know precisely into whose hands Edes and Gill's pamphlet fell—or, for that matter, the political persuasions of readers and owners of Locke. It is perhaps telling that the only other printer or bookseller advertising "Locke on Government" during this period was a renowned New York Loyalist. Hugh Gaine, who tried to maintain a neutrality in the late 1760s, had advertised "Locke and Priestly on Government" in 1770; though reviled as a Loyalist, Gaine began to advertise Locke again in the fall of 1780 and as just imported "in the last fleet Fleet from London" in the winter and spring of 1781.[47] As Judith Van Buskirk has recently

46. For Dedham's reactions to various proposals, see Oscar Handlin and Mary Handlin, eds., *The Popular Sources of Political Authority: Documents on the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), 137, 258, 392, 409, 773, 940.

47. See *New York Gazette,* June 11, July 2, July 9, and August 20, 1770; October 23, 1780; March 12, 1781 (and continuing through June); *Daily Advertiser,* January 15, 1787.

shown, Revolutionary New York was far more politically complex, and far less socially polarized, than historians had thought, but it is still hard to imagine Patriots purchasing Locke from a printer like Gaine.[48] Read together, the advertisements for Locke from Gill and Gaine printed during the Revolution suggest an ambiguous effect: for some the text was a weapon against the British and possibly a manual for reconstruction; it may have served others as a cultural connection to a tradition of British political thought and as a litmus test against which to measure what Loyalists took to be unjustifiable resistance. In a certain sense, the Revolution helped canonize the *Second Treatise*. It brought new readers to the text, and twice as many advertisements for the *Two Treatises* appeared in the decade and a half following 1776 as in the fifteen years preceding Independence. Locke was almost certainly more frequently read in the aftermath of the Revolution than in its prelude, but it remains difficult to generalize about an "American" reading of Locke in the age of the Revolution.

Nathaniel Ames may be a case in point: though he mentioned what he called Locke's Essay on Government in his *Almanac* for 1774, lent a copy to his representative in 1775, and read the text with his club in 1778, material indications suggest that the annotations in his copy of the Edes and Gill printing of the *Second Treatise* date from the early nineteenth century rather than from the immediate pre- or postrevolutionary period. On the basis of the wove endpapers, which were made in America beginning in 1795 but not much used until after 1800, and of the marble binding typical of the Mann family of Dedham, James N. Green of the Library Company of Philadelphia has suggested that the book was bound or rebound not much earlier than 1810; this would place the binding sometime around the year 1809, when Ames lent the copy to another friend and noted the book for the last time in his diary. The edges of the pamphlet were trimmed down when bound, producing very narrow margins. Ames's marginal notes extend to the very edge of the page but never over it, something that would have been hard to accomplish if the annotations predated the binding. Ames's manuscript diaries at the Dedham Historical Society reveal that his handwriting changed over the course of his life, and the annotations on Ames's copy of Locke more closely approximate his hand after 1800.[49]

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48. See Judith L. Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies: Patriots and Loyalists in Revolutionary New York* (Philadelphia, 2002).

49. I am grateful to James N. Green for his evaluation of the binding and trimming of Ames's copy of Locke, for his suggestions about possible dates for the annotations, and for encouraging me to pursue this line of interpretation; and I

The career of Edes and Gill's edition of Locke demonstrates that the market for revolutionary texts was sometimes smaller than printers imagined, and that books published for one occasion probably came to speak to others. Ames participated in the early career of this pamphlet; but his notes on the text belong to a different moment, and they testify both to the longevity of prerevolutionary imprints and to the changing meanings associated with them. When Ames's marginalia are reread with the new date in mind, it becomes obvious that the bulk of his annotations—about the Shakers, the squatters in Maine, American Indians, the New England bar, and southern slaveholders—concern internal American affairs. His sole marginal reference to "old mother Britain"—that she did not agree to let her children go—might have made as much sense in the context of the first two decades of the nineteenth century as in the context of the American Revolution. Of course, some of Ames's marks may date from earlier, prerevolutionary engagements with the text and represent a lifetime of reading and rereading, but it would not be a stretch to say that, for Ames, a text published in a moment of imperial crisis became a text centrally about the problems and possibilities of domestic American relations.

Studying the marketing and marketplace of political literature can give substance to the contours of our interpretations of the coming of the Revolution, but it also raises real questions about the role print played. Knowledge about the availability of texts is something quite different from knowledge about how texts were read—and even if they were read, for it is clear that even the best-selling pamphlets failed to find readers and remained on booksellers' shelves long after the occasions that brought them into print. Advertisements for just-published political tracts did not always translate into sales. The printer and bookseller Robert Aitken of Philadelphia, for instance, advertised Jonathan Shipley's *Sermon* in three newspapers in the summer of 1773, but his daybooks at the Library Company of Philadelphia record only three sales of the text (one of the most-reprinted pamphlets) during that same period.[50] Printers rarely advertised political pamphlets more than a year after they were printed, a fact that probably speaks more to topical shelf life than to actual sales. John Gill believed the abridged Locke might still find readers after Independence. Among printers or book-

thank Sandra Waxman of the Dedham Historical Society for helping me examine Ames's diaries from the 1770s through the early nineteenth century.

50. See Adams, *American Independence,* 79.

sellers of some of the longer texts printed during the prerevolutionary debates, he was not alone. Between August 1776 and October 1783 booksellers in Philadelphia, Providence, Worcester, New London, and Newport advertised unsold copies of the various colonial editions of *The Judgment of Whole Kingdoms* printed in 1773 and 1774 at around 150 pages; but after 1783 no bookseller seems to have advertised that pseudo-Lockean anthology.[51] Belated advertisements for these prerevolutionary pamphlets perhaps speak to the fate of many other tracts that were shorter, less likely to be advertised years later, but perhaps just as likely to remain unsold. With one exception, printers and booksellers seem not to have advertised Paine's *Common Sense* after July 4, 1776, though many did market replies to that pamphlet. Perhaps printers had sold their copies, or the fact of Independence had made the text obsolete. Why, after all, might someone buy or read *Common Sense* after 1776?[52] But the known surplus stock of other prerevolutionary pamphlets suggests the strong probability that even the most-reprinted pamphlet did not always find buyers or readers.

Claims for the role of print in the coming of the Revolution must rest on better understandings of the market for and marketing of Revolutionary literature—on better overall pictures of the most-reprinted texts, and on better accounts of the sales or failures of texts that were not reprinted. On the eve of the Revolution, readers in disparate places encountered a political literature varied in format, genre, style, and origin. Modern bibliographers have brought order to what may have seemed like chaos, but they have inadvertently produced a misleading picture of what colonial printers marketed and what colonial readers consumed. Printing was an effect of the Revolution as well as a cause. The prerevolutionary debates led some print-

51. For post-Independence advertisements for *The Judgment of Whole Kingdoms,* see Dunlap's *Pennsylvania Packet,* August 5 and September 22, 1776, and September 26, 1778; *American Journal and General Advertiser* (Providence), March 18, 1779; *Massachusetts Spy,* March 3, April 4, April 20, and May 4, 1780; *Independent Ledger* (Boston), September 25, 1780; *New London Gazette,* October 1, 1778; *Connecticut Gazette,* September 7, 1781; *Newport Mercury,* August 30 and October 11, 1783.

52. For the diffusion (or lack thereof) of the most-reprinted pamphlet, see Loughran, "Disseminating *Common Sense*"; Loughran notes that Robert Bell advertised unsold copies of his 1776 printing in 1783 (27n52). Mathew Carey serialized *Common Sense* in the *American Museum* (Philadelphia) in early 1787, and the pamphlet found new readers when reprinted in collections of Paine's political writings published in Britain and the United States in the 1790s. I am grateful to conversations with Betsey Erkkila and James Epstein for helping me to think about the topicality of *Common Sense* after Independence.

ers to bring longer, less immediately topical texts into the marketplace. In most cases, the market had not absorbed these texts by 1776 or even by 1783. My intention in focusing on the marketing of one of these texts, the Boston edition of Locke, has not been to pit one strand of ideological discourse against another, to rehabilitate or deflate the Lockean character of the Revolution in relation to any other tradition. On the contrary, my point has been that any account of ideological discourse should attend to actual books; to the cost, size, and layout of pamphlets; to the interests of printers and to the readers who may or may not have been radicalized by them.

APPENDIX: THOMAS R. ADAMS'S LIST OF THE "DOZEN MOST FREQUENTLY PRINTED PAMPHLETS" OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, WITH ADDITIONS.

Title	*Number of American editions*	*Number of American cities and towns in which editions appeared*
Paine, *Common Sense,* 1776	25	13
Shipley, *Speech,* 1774*	12	8
Leacock, *Chronicles,* 1774	**11**	**8**
The Crisis,* 1775	**9**	**7**
Dickinson, *Letters,* 1768**	7	5
Lee, *Strictures,* 1774	7	6
Rokeby, *Considerations,* 1774*	7	5 [4?]
Allen, *Oration,* 1773	7	4
Dulany, *Considerations,* 1765	5	4
Franklin, *Examination,* 1766	5	5
Shipley, *Sermon,* 1773*	5	5
Hancock, *Oration,* 1774	5	4
Price, *Observations,* 1776*	5	4
Hutchinson, *Letters,* 1773	5	2

*Pamphlet that first appeared in England.
**Pamphlet that was first printed in American newspapers.
Additions in bold.
SOURCE: Thomas R. Adams, *American Independence: The Growth of an Idea, A Bibliographic Study of the American Political Pamphlets Printed between 1764 and 1776 Dealing with the Dispute between Great Britain and Her Colonies* (1965; rept. New Haven, 1980), xi–xii. Additions were derived from extant copies cataloged by the American Antiquarian Society.