Crowning Revolution

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Arguably, no one better than Thomas Paine (maybe Alexander Hamilton) grasped the significance of politicizing common sense, though more so than Hamilton, Paine worried about the implications of doing so. By enlisting the body's capacities for making sense of experience (or experience out of sense) and thus legitimating rebellion against the British Empire, Paine was aware that he could create more problems than not for the revolution he was charged with promoting. The event that he hoped would be an extensive and intensive expression of people's common grievances and aspirations could unravel into what his opponents called "uncommon phrenzy."[1] Not insensitive to this charge, Paine anticipates it in the signature-making political tract that made him famous, if not infamous.[2] Paine's *Common Sense* (1776), over and above an articulation of sensible attunement and passionate attachment to the cause of independence, is also a palimpsest of anxieties about the sensory (i.e., affective) dimension of his revolutionary project.

It is instructive to draw a parallel with Hamilton's own affective politics. Although radically different, Paine's and Hamilton's projects share a preoccupation about the implications of making revolution and nation-building dependent on the sensations of the people. At the height of the contentious debate over the ratification of the U.S. Constitution Hamilton worried that citizens accustomed to local governance would, at the very least, balk at pledging their allegiance to the Federalist state: "A government continually at a distance and out of sight can hardly be expected to interest the sensations of the people."[3] If the new centralized government was to succeed, Hamilton reasoned, it would

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have to reach citizens in their person, making sovereign order intimately felt. The new system of governance would have to subsume citizens' allegiance to local institutions of law and order by quickening in their bodies an affective attachment to a transcendent form of governance, an experience not entirely foreign to former subjects of a distant and out-of-sight empire. American colonists, after all, were once thought to be linked to English citizens by cords of affection, which, as Paine observed a decade or so earlier, had been irrevocably severed by explicit or tacit consent of English subjects to the King's indifference to Parliament's greed, prompting revolution: "The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did."[4] In Paine's formulation, nature is part of the constitution of sentient human beings whose affective capacities would inform revolutionary and republican politics. In both instances, revolutionary and republican collectives are imagined as one subjectivity writ large. For Paine, the generalization of grievances felt in common in favor of independence would be the revolution's driving force; similarly, for Hamilton, the amplification of citizens' sentient investment in a centralized system of governance would legitimate the new Federalist constitution. This is to say that Paine's radicalization of "common sense" and Hamilton's "federalization of affect" constitute two sides of the same problem: how to make of the many One when this One is not all.[5]

Collapsing differences between revolution and state-formation may seem an intellectually irresponsible and politically heretical endeavor, considering that the One in question is a formal abstraction. But if the One suggests a loose, elastic concept deployed initially by revolutionaries and then constitutionalists (militant subjectivities often housed in the same bodies) to loop together disparate, some might say, antithetical projects, it is important to keep in mind that Paine and Hamilton sought to supplement the abstract dimension of the One with a sturdier affective infrastructure. This affective substantiation of the One constitutes the sense of the common underpinning the political events in question. What I am proposing here is a subordination of ideological and political differences in favor of an analysis of the underwriting affective dimension of common sense informing the historical sequence comprising both revolutionary and republican projects. Indexed by the figures of Paine and Hamilton, the arc encompassing the key political events of the late eighteenth century delineates the emergence of what has been considered by some as the American Thermidor, that is, the betrayal of the will of the people by constitutional order. As one of the exponents of this position, Sheldon Wolin claims that constitutionalism "marks the attenuation of democracy."[6] Constitutionalism, so goes this line of thought, signals the narrowing of democratic politics into a specialized, regulated, and administrative juridical order. Similarly, Antonio Negri reads the American postrevolutionary settlement as the political transformation of the people's constituent strength into the state's constituted power, with the people's revolutionary role reduced to a legitimating function of state authority.[7] Jason Frank rejects this model for theorizing the role of the people in a postrevolutionary context, arguing that the

"people are at once a constituted and constituent power, whose enactments can never be wholly free of the resulting paradox." Constituent power, according to Frank, "is not wholly subsumed in the [constitutional] text that represents it."[8] According to his formulation, the people's constituent strength is not an outside force impinging on constitutional order but an internal disruption to the status quo, realized in the people's self-authorized public acts demanding redress against the limitations and exclusions dictated by said order. In other words, what Wolin and Negri find inhibiting or compromising about the organization of constituted power, Frank identifies as the conditions of possibility for democracy. To translate this language in affective terms, Hamilton's federalization of affect is an inconclusive project incapable of wholly absorbing the public rage following the postrevolutionary settlement that disenfranchised so many.

My contention here is that the revolution that would instantiate subsequent public enactments of the people's democratic becoming was itself a contest over a sense of the common, of which Paine's is a compromised articulation. In other words, Frank's paradoxical conception of the people as both constituent and constituted power is not just a postrevolutionary phenomenon but already a symptom of the American Revolution's crisis of legitimation, which Paine sought to shore up in his formulation of common sense.

In the wake of the postrevolutionary settlement, Federalists sought to manage this symptom by purging the national body of revolutionary excesses, and Paine, as the revolution's chief ideologue, fit the bill to perfection. Federalist repudiation of Paine is well evidenced in the political cartoon "Mad Tom in a Rage," [Figure 1] showing the devil taking Paine from behind as the pair jointly pulls on a strap looped around a pillar of classical architecture symbolizing the Federal government.

The image turns Paine's radical opposition to empire against him—that is, the insurgent passion that animated his opposition to British rule has grown intemperate (note the bottle of brandy in the foreground) and rageful against legitimate constitutional order.[9] Revolutionary affect has not only outgrown its usefulness, its excess now threatens the foundations of

Figure 1: Author unknown, "Mad Tom in a Rage," c. 1801, *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1953.

sovereign order. But what the cartoon cannot recognize in its Federalist bias is not just how Federalism, Hamilton's thinking in particular, has made allowance for Paine's radicalization of common sense philosophy, but, more pointedly, how Paine anticipated Hamilton's insistence that matters of state conciliate a sentient and sensible citizenry primed to accept a transcendent form of governmental authority—in other words, how Paine sought to neutralize the radical implications of grounding revolution on sensation by shading sense into feeling and popular insurgency into republican sovereignty.[10]

Sense, Paine observes, can be manipulated as "our eyes may be dazzled with show, or our ears deceived by sound." In contrast, the man of feeling is not distracted by the politics of shock and awe but is rather attuned to "the simple voice of nature," of which the author of *Common Sense* is a master ventriloquist.[11] This is a case of the medium being the message. The emphasis here is on voice (the medium), not language, *phone*, not *logos*. Attuned to the voice of nature, the man of feeling intuits that the institution of "a continental form of government" is the end goal of the war of independence.[12] The "taking up arms, merely to enforce or repeal laws, seems as unwarrantable by the divine law and as repugnant to human feelings, as the taking of arms to enforce obedience to."[13] In other words, what we find in Paine's deployment of common sense as a discourse of general affectivity is an already refined sensibility capable of accommodating Hamilton's subsuming of affect in favor of Federalist sovereignty. This is not to say that there is nothing radical about founding revolution on how sense and sensation implicate bodies in the mutual construction of political subjects and the social worlds they inhabit. Paine's *Common Sense* in fact suggests the opposite, which is precisely why his deployment of a sense of the common for revolutionary ends is a less radical proposition than it is often taken to be.

Although Paine addresses *Common Sense* "to the inhabitants of America," his ideal readership is far less expansive than he initially announces. Paine's ideal reader is "every Man to whom Nature hath given the Power of feeling; of which Class, regardless of Party Censure, is the Author."[14] This man of feeling, generic in his anonymity yet singularly distinguished by sentiment raised above crude sense, allows Paine to claim that his pamphlet is no mere piece of tendentious partisan rabble-rousing but the articulation of sensible truths about the current state of affairs in the colonies—truths that, according to him, cut across factional lines because they are felt, even if not readily understood, by fellow citizens regardless of their political affinities. For Paine, people's capacity to sense and feel comes before any ideological differences that may divide them. This "power of feeling" constitutes the somewhat consistent affective ground on which ideological battles are fought and won—or lost. To be sure, citizens may differ in their feelings about specific issues that concern them, but what matters is their self-awareness as a collective bound by sense, or so Paine presumes his audience believes to be true, and this presupposition constitutes his sense of the common.

This presupposition is in part based on the Anglo-American tradition about the body's sentient capacity to learn about itself and the world based on principles of sense and sensibility. The eighteenth century, as has been more than amply recorded and theorized, witnessed a vast interest in all forms of sensible matters and concerns, developing a form of cognition based primarily on sensory impressions and ideas that subsequent learning, according to Garry Wills, "dimmed or perverted by theoretical presuppositions."[15] Common sense, as theorized by Thomas Reid, a leading light of the Scottish Enlightenment and a major influence on American education, was an "egalitarian epistemology, a humble empiricism, and a communitarian morality."[16] The Scottish Enlightenment's common sense was devised as a way of combating skepticism and an emerging individualism, which threatened commonly held principles of faith and ways of knowing as well as social cohesion. As Sophia Rosenfeld argues,

> [t]he common sense defense of common sense became, in the hands of a small group of mid-eighteenth-century professional men in Aberdeen, the foundation for a decidedly populist epistemology, rooted in the wisdom of the ordinary and the aggregate. When it came time to find truth in the realm of common life, they argued, there was no better starting point than what everybody already agreed to be true; the "unlearned" person was actually less likely to be misled than the overeducated person, and the collective sentiment trumped the individual or the isolated genius every time.[17]

The Scotts' conception of common sense is largely conservative in that it relies, as Rosenfeld notes, on "what everybody already agreed to be true." "Everybody," like "common sense," is an ideologically powerful nominal. It is informed by an inherent notion of One or Oneness that acts as a transcendental form of identity meant to contain or domesticate multiplicity, singularity, and difference. Common sense philosophy is conservative in that it reduces epistemology to recognition of commonly held ideas and beliefs. Yet if habit and tradition mediate and legitimate common sense's truth claims, its "egalitarian" dimension threatens to override its conservative and preservative principles. That is, the egalitarian idea that ordinary people were possessed of innate faculties through which they could, among other things, know themselves and the world and therefore determine what kind of lives to lead and how to go about leading them would eventually unsettle the consensus that some hoped this particular method of apprehending reality would make possible. The unsettling of the status quo may not have been the intent of common sense philosophers, but their generalization of the intellectual conditions for making epistemological as well as sociopolitical truth claims would have repercussions beyond centers of learning in Glasgow,

Edinburgh, and Aberdeen. As Sarah Knott observes, "A dynamic of sensibility expanded, extraordinarily rapidly in a narrow temporal window from the 1760s, and popularized among the elite and middling sort—they were likewise quickly assimilated to reformist and oppositional ethos and a source from which revolution emanated. A shared transatlantic culture of sensibility made at once for a sense of belonging and betrayal, a form of participation in a cosmopolitan empire and the indignant rationale for a necessary alternative."[18]

An intellectual response to a crisis in moral and epistemological authority, common sense philosophy, an ideology inclined to validate tradition or perhaps even passive obedience and nonresistance, also placed a great deal of faith in ordinary people's capacity to challenge authority and chart a political path for themselves based on intuitive principles of sympathetic benevolence toward others. Impediments to the enactment of these principles and their social and material manifestations could be met with radical opposition to the status quo. Impelled by a sense of benevolence for neighbors and fellow citizens immiserated by a despotic government and unfeeling brethren, American colonists legitimated their independence by appealing to common sense principles found in the pages of Frances Hutcheson, Thomas Reid, and Adam Smith, among others. "The Almighty," Paine sounded off, "hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. They are the guardians of his image in our hearts. They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. The social compact would dissolve, and justice be extirpated from the earth, or have only a causal existence, were we callous to the touches of affection."[19] According to Paine, sensibility distinguishes humans from common beasts and further argues that the hardening of feelings toward others dims human capacities for benevolence, wisdom, and justice, thus leading to the unraveling of the social and a reversion to a Hobbesian state of nature where animal instinct and aggression dominate. Reconciliation with a country of men who behave like beasts and take orders from a "Royal Brute" is therefore beneath the dignity of good men for whom the public enactment of virtue as spectacle constitutes the basis for social and political transformation.[20] Paine places the enemy beyond the pale of humanity and in doing so creates the conceptual and affective conditions for legitimating the colonists' claims for independence, which, as he notes, were "sentiments… not *yet* sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favor."[21] Paine tips his hand with that "yet." Natural sentiment turns out to be not natural at all but subject to the vagaries of fashion and dependent on circulating print media as the delivery system for the passions of ordinary people.

The appeal to sense and sensibility pervading political discourse indexes a general crisis of legitimation, political as well as epistemological, the lineaments of which are traceable throughout Paine's pamphlet. His strategy to achieve hegemony over the revolutionary event involves the discursive marriage of language and affect, with the two working in supplemental relation to one another. It is easy to overlook the distinction between these two constituent elements in

the text. After all, are not the two inextricably fused in practice, that is, in Paine's masterful ability to argue in favor of independence from a position of affect? One might ask, why separate the two when their articulation by the author is often lauded as an ideal example of how to do things with words? Many of Paine's contemporaries as well as recent critics have credited the text with extraordinary perlocutionary power, with the ability to move hearts and change minds—in that order—and impel impassive citizens into revolutionary action. Consider Massachusetts Whig Joseph Hawley's telling comment about his reading of the tract: "Every sentiment," he wrote in 1776, "has sunk into my well prepared heart."[22] In Hawley's formulation, sentiment and the printed word, affect and its delivery system, are virtually imperceptible. But if Hawley's heart was already well prepared to receive the text's sentiment, can the pamphlet be said to possess the transformative power so often ascribed to it? I would argue that it is because we tend to think of rhetoric and affect in Paine's text as part of one articulation of an ideological position grounded in the presumption that humans are possessed of a *sensus communis* that writing can potentially touch, that this particular internal tension in the text has not received the full attention it deserves. The marriage of affect and rhetoric in Paine reveals something missing—rather lacking—not only in the idea of common sense but in each of its constitutive elements and, more importantly, in the larger revolutionary event emerging at the close of the eighteenth century. That is, that Paine has to argue in favor of revolution based on common sense principles reveals the very obvious observation that colonial Britons did not sense in common. This point was made readily apparent when only thirteen of Britain's New World colonies rebelled against the Crown, not to mention when North Americans loyal to King and Parliament pushed back against Paine's assertion that the conflict had reached critical mass and general opinion had tipped over in favor of independence. Conversely, the text's repeated claims about the colonists' shared sense of outrage at Parliament's overreach and the King's abdication of responsibility toward his subjects implies that rhetoric is in this case either superfluous or not ideologically cohesive enough. In short, far from completing each other's lacks, the coupling of rhetoric and affect points to a fundamental problem in the attempt to marry language and sentient bodies, the stitching of which for political ends is symptomatic of an open-ended event subject to external threats and internal upheavals and usurpations.

There is a general tendency to structure analyses of Paine's text around oppositions and find in their contradictions the key to what gives the pamphlet its enduring power. Robert Fergusson notes that despite many claims about *Common Sense*'s historical impact and timeless rhetorical merit, the two are rarely brought "together as mutually informing insights or controlling premises."[23] Sophia Rosenfeld argues that the success of "Paine's brief polemic lay in… encapsulat[ing]… two previously distinct and in many ways antithetical Enlightenment uses of both the expression and the concept of common sense."[24] While I agree with these critical observations, I disagree with the notion that the pamphlet's ideological efficacy and enduring power lies in its ability to

reconcile tensions or conflict. For Fergusson, the text's inconsistencies "need to be incorporated into a larger philosophical and rhetorical frame of reference, for when they are not, they seem to be contradictions in terms, blocking awareness of the underlying consistencies and overall aesthetic integrity of *Common Sense*."[25] Like Fergusson, Rosenfeld is also concerned with the text's reconciling of opposites, but whereas for Fergusson this helps explain how the "widest range of readers could be pulled into Paine's orbit," she finds this expansiveness ideologically troubling. Rosenfeld writes, "A politics of common sense is not only an antihistorical politics but also an antipolitical politics, a politics designed to sidestep contention and rational debate. This quality is part of its enduring appeal."[26]

It is important to keep in mind that "antihistorical" and "antipolitical" gestures can and often are both deeply historical and political: Paine's idea of common sense is itself a historically situated response to a political problem for which the Romantic repurposing of the language of blood and soil, popular throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, proves inadequate in an American context defined by differences recalcitrant to appropriation by language of sameness. The language of sense is meant to bypass linguistic and ethnic differences, so the vitalism on which Paine grounds his sense of the common is one conditioned less by tradition and identity carried over from the old country and more by jolting new experiences forged on this side of Atlantic. Cut to the quick and prone to action by a sense of outrage at the curtailment of liberties by a far-removed yet tax-exacting imperial power, colonial subjects legitimated rebellion by appealing to evidence registered on the body's surfaces, more so in the fleshy shallows than in the deep interiors of uppity Britons proud of their place of provenance and lineage.

It should go without saying that sense is not synonymous with sensibility: sense is no refined habitus one acquires over time with routinized practice and alongside other people with whom one shares class history. Sense denotes quickness of perceptions and sensations, which, far from uniform, can be multiple, varied, and contradictory, and, as such, constitute a split foundation for any political project grounded on the body's sensory faculties. Bodies are never just sentient flesh sensitive to the pains and pleasures history doles out. It is because bodies are always historically situated and socially articulated within uneven relations of power that the universalist claims Paine makes on their behalf never quite ring true, as the Loyalist response bears out.[27] He voices his concerns on the fragility of revolutionary sentiment toward the end of the text. What holds the patriots together, he writes, is an "unexampled concurrence of sentiment, which is subject to change, and which, every secret enemy is endeavoring to dissolve."[28] Before we consider the question of how this "concurrence of sentiment" came to be in the first place, presumably obviating the need for the pamphlet, let us consider its exceptional and solvent qualities. It is precisely the fact that this thing he has named is "unexampled," a new assemblage of affects that sustains the revolutionary event, that calls attention to its fragility. That

the revolutionary event is a political process in the making is also what renders the transformative potential of this exceptional set of sentiments "subject to change," or, much worse from a tactical standpoint, subject to appropriation by some secret enemy—there are many, so he claims, capable of undoing the loose affective knot that binds the rebels to the cause. If this is in fact a credible threat to the revolutionary project—that a skillful Loyalist pamphleteer can win over the undecideds against the rebels and not just a genre convention of propaganda—it is the "unexampled" nature of this particular affective flashpoint that is really the problem. With no program to give it consistency or purpose, sense primarily figures as a reservoir of impressions and feelings and of course therein lies both opportunity and problem.

The pamphlet's opening is in keeping with its purpose, that is, to win new converts to the revolutionary cause and not just offer its author with another opportunity to preach to the converted, though the possibility that this is all propaganda ever accomplishes is something Paine is keenly aware of. He addresses his readers, first, as sentient beings, specifically as readers capable of sympathy and other feelings—a sense of betrayal and rage chief among them—and then treats them to critical genealogies of the Crown and Parliament that turn the British government into a debased version of its official representation in an attempt to short-circuit any allegiance and affection his readers may have toward the figures and institutions he holds responsible for the current imperial crisis. This is, after all, what good propaganda is supposed to do: provide popular disaffection with a discursive barebones structure around which grievances can graft themselves onto and grow like affective topiary.

Yet for all the transformative potential ascribed to people's capacity to know and judge by sense, there is nonetheless something troubling about this proposition, not just in the obvious meaning of subjects having disparate feelings about any number of things—especially about what to do about the conflicts that informed relations between the colonies and the metropolis—but in the more radical problem that sense is not subordinate to the unity of the One that Paine invokes in the figure of the common, which is another way of saying that the world sense makes accessible to subjects is always incomplete, as are the sentient subjects themselves. The incomplete nature of this project wherein subject and world are mutually constituted through acts of appropriation poses conceptual and political problems. The sentient bodies Paine is trying to arouse from their political slumber are singular, anonymous, and many. They do not amount to a fragmented whole, but rather constitute populous multiplicities that he is at pains to fashion into a public. Strength lies in unity, not numbers.[29] Mindful of this, Paine knows that he will need the organized actions of crowds to make colonial independence from Britain a reality, and so his project and that of the leaders of the revolution is to make of the many One, not long before that phrase will become enshrined as the official motto on the national seal.

But that is still years away, when the revolution's constituent strength will be enlisted in the service of constituted power, in nation- and empire-building

projects that come to define the nineteenth century. Channeling that strength will not be easy. That is why the shift from sense, in the title of the pamphlet, to feeling, in the address to his ideal reader at the end of the preface, as near imperceptible now as it would have been then, belies an anxiety about enlisting sense in the service of insurgency. That's also why there's a hierarchy at work here, and sense, as Paine employs it, is near the bottom, far from the empyrean heights of Parnassus and the fine sensibilities of its devotees. This reader he envisions is a man who can be counted on to control his passions and channel his anger toward the right cause. The problem is that if the revolution is to succeed, he will especially need the anonymous and unpredictable crowds on his side, which is not to say that crowds are simply synonymous with violent and irrational outbursts. As Jason Frank observes, "Crowds were not only justified in the revolutionary discourses of the day: they were also political repertoires participated in by all kinds of citizens and also noncitizens, by those granted and denied juridical recognition."[30]

But although the crowd, in its quasi-legal status, could be said to be enacting a civic function in its attempt to redress a lack of recognition and representation in its occupation of public spaces, the passions impelling such performances remain indeterminate and unpredictable precisely because they cannot always be said to belong to the order of common sense. Loyalists saw in the increasingly violent actions of Patriots and in Paine's prose evidence of a dangerous irrationality. Philip Gould's history of Loyalist writing during the revolutionary era notes that

> [f]orms of humiliation and intimidation became more widespread and more severe. Loyalists were disenfranchised politically and forced to sign oaths of allegiance. Some were banned from practicing law or other professions; some were even ridden on skimpoles and subject to tar and feathering, which Ann Fairfax Withington has shown was not merely a punitive act or symbolic act but part of a larger regime of terror that 'robbed them of their humanity and rendered them unnatural.'[31]

John Adams agreed with Paine's arguments for independence but "dreaded the effect so popular a pamphlet would have upon the people."[32] Paine himself worried that the insurgency would become unmanageable should the Patriots relent and consider reconciliation:

> [N]othing but independence, i.e. a continental form of government, can keep the peace of the continent and preserve it inviolate from civil wars. I dread the event of a reconciliation with Britain now, as it is more than probable, that it will be followed by a revolt somewhere or other, the consequences of which may be far more fatal than all the malice of Britain.[33]

Paine articulates "independence" with "continental form of government." If reconciliation with Britain could lead to revolts or civil war, an independent continental power, he hoped, could rein in those revolutionary passions so gingerly held together by sense and purpose and therefore subject to the contingencies of unpredictably outbursts "somewhere or other." Should the hegemony of common sense fail to bring about the formation of a republican government, the precarity of the insurgency could lead to its highjacking by unprincipled and interested adventurers: "Some Massanello may hereafter arise, who laying hold of popular disquietudes, may collect together the desperate and the discontented, and by assuming to themselves the powers of government, may sweep away the liberties of the continent like a deluge."[34] Massanello, dismissed by Locke and championed by Spinoza, was a seventeenth-century fisherman from Naples who led a populist revolt against Spanish rule. Paine sides with Locke's conception of Massanello as an example of unrestrained constituent strength resulting in the political instability caused by might-makes-right rule: "The manner of his government by supreme power, made him *properly* king, who was but the day before *properly* a fisherman."[35] For Paine, Massanello is emblematic of the potentially catastrophic consequences of "keeping vacant the seat of government."[36] Massanello, like the form of popular sovereignty he embodies, indexes the improper made proper by a "supreme power" that Paine both exploits and contains for the purposes of propaganda. The result, however, yields not just a sense of indeterminacy as to the unstable constitution of the revolutionary body but indeterminacy as sense in the service of sovereignty. If the revolution fails to yield a continental government, the result could be "more fatal than the malice of Britain."

A decade later, the eruption of a backcountry uprising against farm foreclosures resulting from postwar economic depression and made worse by foreign debt obligations helped the framers of the new constitution make their case for a more "energetic" centralized government. Daniel Shays, an American Massanello of sorts and reluctant leader of the uprising, was part of a larger protest movement led by rural citizens who felt that the Massachusetts legislature, composed of merchants and speculators, was unresponsive to their call for the issuance of paper money as a means of debt relief. As a result, armed citizens of the western counties began closing local courthouses as a form of popular sovereignty against what they saw as a government of and by elites. Addressing the Shays' uprising, Alexander Hamilton asked in Federalist 21, "Who can determine what might have been the issue of her late convulsions, if the malcontents had been headed by a Caesar or by a Cromwell?"[37] If the uprising represented the expression of popular sovereignty against elite interests, Hamilton appeals to fears about a fragile government subject to usurpation not by anarchists but tyrants: "Who can predict what effect a despotism, established in Massachusetts, would have upon the liberties of New Hampshire or Rhode Island, of Connecticut or New York?" As with Paine, an excess of freedom and independence can morph into the expression of its opposite: the loss liberty by

the willful imposition of the One over the many.

According to the Federalists, what is needed is not an abstract theory of government devised by philosopher-statesmen but a strong centralized state sanctioned by the common sense of citizens who recognize in the uprising in Massachusetts not a legitimate grievance by fellow citizens but the inability of the current government to deal effectively with threats to property and state sovereignty. James Madison allows for the imperfection of the new constitution but further notes that the essays written in favor of it are neither meant to obscure its flaws nor convince those who vehemently oppose it: "the truth is, that these papers are not addressed to persons falling under either of these characters. They solicit the attention of those only, who add to a sincere zeal for the happiness of their country, a temper favorable to a just estimate of the means of promoting it."[38] Madison's reasoning is guided by a for-us-by-us logic, the "us" here indexing a sentient body bound by a common zeal for national happiness. In his formulation, the new constitution and the articles in favor of it were written under the aegis of common sense by sensible statesmen for similarly sensible citizens capable of putting aside partisanship and disinterestedly considering the best political course to achieve the common good. The problem is that the partisanship and unrest Madison references show no signs of abating. Backcountry insurgencies by insolvent farmers, growing discontent among the poor and disenfranchised, including unemployed veterans, as well as factional rancor prevents the hegemonic closure of common-sense republicanism. If postrevolutionary partisan self-interest threatened to fragment, if not dissolve, the homogeneity of common sense, Federalists sought to combat what they identified as narrow local or regional affiliation by calling for an unselfish expansiveness of sentiment of a federalized people. Only a centralized state responsive to all citizens, Hamilton argued, could "feel itself most deeply interested in the preservation of every part."[39] Madison sees the factional fragmentation of conflicting passions as the problem, or problems, that the new constitution, the imperfections of which he acknowledges, can address. He is less sanguine than some of his colleagues, like Dr. Benjamin Rush, about mapping the metaphor of the sensible body onto state organs: "The faculties of the mind itself have never yet been distinguished and defined, with satisfactory precision, by all the efforts of the most acute and metaphysical philosophers. Sense, perception, judgment, desire, volition, memory, imagination are found to be separated by such delicate shades and minute gradations that their boundaries have eluded the most subtle investigations, and remain a pregnant source of ingenious disquisition and controversy."[40] This lack of conceptual distinctions for differentiating the human faculties follows an analysis of the importance of delineating the differences between the powers of the states and that of the central government proposed by the framers of the new constitution. The analogy he draws between matters of state and the citizen's faculties is significant because not only does it reanimate the metaphor articulating the relation between the sovereign and the bodies of the members of the commonwealth but also calls for sharper

differentiation and clearer distribution of powers that had been rendered opaque during the tumultuous revolutionary and subsequent postrevolutionary periods. The new republican order demands a recalibration of the Hobbesian image of the Leviathan containing all the subjects of the realm into a more refined and articulated anatomy attuned to the proper function of cognitive and affective faculties: "sense," "perception," "desire," "imagination," etc.

Hamilton imagines the people in terms of a broader subjectivity whose affective dimension ought to intermingle in the ordinary exercise of government. For Hamilton,

> Man is very much a creature of habit. A thing that rarely strikes his senses will generally have but little influence upon his mind. A government continually at a distance and out of sight can hardly be expected to interest the sensations of the people. The inference is, that the authority of the Union, and the affections of the citizens towards it, will be strengthened, rather than weakened, by its extension to what are called matters of internal concern.[41]

In Hamilton, Madison's indeterminacy of sense is subsumed by the positing of a transcendent subject, "Man," for whom the legitimacy of state authority is only a problem when matters of state fail to engage his innermost self. For Hamilton, as for Paine, the citizen-subject's fundamental relation to politics is an aesthetic one, that is, one enabled and mediated by sensation.[42] That their aims differ, in that Paine is trying to give the revolution form and purpose while Hamilton is trying to put the revolutionary genie back in the bottle, matters less than the fact that both take for granted that sensation, as both a somatic and discursive phenomenon, is the new animating element in American politics. This new aesthetics of republican power discards the sense of awe and reverence, or terror, often associated with the sublime, in favor of a cultivation of associational practices designed to integrate the citizen-subject in the ordinary exercise of government. In Hamilton's conception of affective governmentality, the citizen-subject comes into his own not by cowering from the enormous demands of revolutionary and nation-building projects but by fleshing out and animating the concepts and principles that constitute these events. According to Christopher Castiglia, Hamilton understood,

> that turning people into citizens required reaching them where they live, which was not yet in a nation but in churches, families, and communities where the affective bonds of loyalty and affection already existed. Those familiar locations of feeling held structures of hierarchy that, if reoriented toward federal affiliation, would render coercive power obsolete. Hamilton saw that education in social feelings precedes the

> law, rendering its dictates palatable to citizens who might otherwise see little profit in consenting to its restrictions or in answering to interpellative naming.[43]

In Castiglia's formulation, local and familiar institutions like church and family engender the structures of feeling that later facilitate the subject's interpellation into federalist order. Disciplinary institutions like church and family inculcate the civic dispositions that will enable the transition from colonial to republican sovereignty. Both Paine and Hamilton understand that the vacuum left behind by the eclipse of royal sovereignty, whose mystic aura gained precisely from being distant and out of sight, has to be occupied by a transcendent authority that somehow has the familiar feel of the local. The problem republicans face is not quite what Eric Santner in a different context calls "the migration of the royal flesh… into the bodies and lives of the citizens of modern nation-states."[44] But an implicit political theology is nonetheless at work in an American context where the transmutation of the authority and legitimacy ascribed to the king's body is now ascribed to the people's sentient faculties.

Republican sovereignty here is not seen as a system of legal arrangements but as a vital and vibrant political order where citizen-subjects aren't coerced into submission by the state but rather actively participate in the making of self and world. In producing this sense of the common, Paine and Hamilton implement a norm of consensus in response to general agitations in the body politic that are part of the historical sequence in which sensuous life is inscribed into sovereign order. Such inscription results in the unexpected consequences that call into action strategies of containment like the ones articulated by Hamilton, for whom the people's capacity to sense takes on the legitimating functions of conciliation, respect, and attachment for a state authority that's not yet real. It bears keeping in mind that Hamilton's enlisting of the sensible is a direct response to questions about the government's need to exert military force against domestic unrest brought on by turbulent factions.

By relying on sense to produce the One of the common, Paine and Hamilton potentially make their projects vulnerable, not to a diversity of differences—Madison persuasively argued in Federalist 10 that factional conflict could be contained by expanding the franchise and dispersing difference—but to the radicality of an unbound multiplicity not determined by then emergent fictions of blood and soil. Social and demographic realities in America made that kind of project a nonstarter for Paine. He left that to Loyalists, with their appeal to parent or mother country that he found "false, selfish, narrow and ungenerous."[45] The true ideological dimension of this political battle for the hearts and minds of colonial subjects is about the expansiveness of affect: selfish and narrow on the British-Loyalist side, broad and inclusive on the American. The Loyalists' exclusionary discourse needs myth and history, or myth as history, to take root in the lives of people bound by obligation and tradition to the generational transmission of real and symbolic capital. As Paine argues elsewhere, that legacy

is not what revolutionary America is or has been about: "He that is here and he that was born here is alike concerned."[46] Eliding distinctions between native and new arrival—though holding fast to the subject's male gender—his vision of revolutionary America, aims in principle for universalist inclusion: "The cause of America, after all, is in great measure the cause of all mankind."[47] And such a project requires the surmounting of local prejudices, as Americans enlarge their acquaintance with the world to engage in commerce. On this point he writes, "We forget the narrow limits of three hundred and sixty miles (the extent of England) and carry our friendship on a larger scale."[48] The problem is no longer how to limit selfishness and natural rights but how to go beyond partialities, how to move from "a limited sympathy" to an extended generosity, in Gilles Deleuze's language, how to stretch passions and give them an extension they don't have of their own.[49]

Becoming American thus entails leaving behind local attachments and reorienting affects away from the obligations and duties subjects felt they owed kin in the Old World toward the generosity one freely extends to friends in America's new and vast spaces, in contrast to which England's narrow divisions of street, parish, town and county, are rendered irrelevant, as "too limited for continental minds."[50] Paine conceives of this transformation in general affectivity as more significant than the political revolution. As he explains to the Abbe Raynal: "Our style and manner of thinking have undergone a revolution more extraordinary than the political revolution of the country. We see with other eyes; we hear with other ears; and think with other thoughts, than those we formerly used."[51] The revolution has in effect produced "a material change in sentiment," putting the meaning of sentiment closer to sense, as Paine foregrounds the sensory organs that become co-implicated in the refashioning of self and world.[52] The revolution in sentiment is more significant than the political revolution because, while the political revolution comes to an historical end, the radicalization of affect has implications beyond the historical event.

Not yet isolated nor exceptional, as Paine's American will be refashioned in subsequent decades, this early cosmopolitan version stands against a provincial (or provincialized by his pen) Englishman or Loyalist that, try as the latter might, cannot claim a general ethnic or proto-national identity in the colonies, since not one third of America's inhabitants, Paine reminds us, is of English descent.[53] This lack of commonality, this nothing that is, is what he thinks charges Americans with the "the power to begin the world over again."[54] The problem is that the lack of commonality that is the revolution's condition of possibility starts to feel like a liability, a condition made evident in Paine's reversion to the language of sovereignty, indicating that the power for starting all that transformed newness he envisions wants an authorizing source:

> [W]here says some is the King of America? I'll tell you Friend, he reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind like the Royal Brute of Britain. Yet that we may not appear to be

> defective even in earthly honors, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth placed on the divine law, the word of God; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America THE LAW IS KING. For as in absolute governments the King is law, so in free countries the law ought to be King; and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the crown at the conclusion of the ceremony be demolished, and scattered among the people whose right it is.[55]

This key passage articulates the oscillating tension that I have been tracking throughout the text. The rhetorical question with which it opens binds the text's revolutionary message to the political theology that Paine has been trashing throughout the pamphlet, as if wary about the integrity of the affective bond that holds together the revolution his imagination fails him and the inventiveness that's animated the pamphlet up to this point devolves into the familiar legitimating discourse of sovereign authority. The technology that helps mediate this transfer of authority, according to Michael Warner and Trish Loughram, each developing their own arguments, is print. They both read this passage as emblematic of the shift from voice to print that characterizes the transformation of the public sphere in late-eighteenth-century American culture. For Warner Paine here presages how the Constitution will attain legitimacy by virtue of its printedness, thus allowing it "to emanate from no one in particular, and thus from the people."[56] Loughram focuses on the interplay between discursive constructions of abstraction and the challenge perpetually posed to them through the actual embodiment of material texts, living actors, geographical space, and everyday life."[57] In these formulations the materiality of the text attains something close to the status of a relic, a fetishized "icon of egalitarian diffusion, circulation, and exchange among Enlightened citizens of the (American) world." Print thus figures as the people's second immortal body whose function is chiefly a legitimating one.

While print no doubt plays a starring role in the production, circulation, and consumption of revolutionary and postrevolutionary narratives as a conduit of the ideology of popular and republican sovereignty, it also bears traces of its inadequacy as a delivery system for the very thing it sets out to articulate, disseminate, and, perhaps more importantly, animate—this last prompting the political anxieties that may warrant the continuation of traditional legitimating practices. To be sure, the passage quoted above shows Paine trying to lend the revolution the same legitimating aura that once was associated with monarchical rule, but that does not mean that the text achieves what its writer set out to do, especially since he has spent the early part of the pamphlet arguing not only that the concept of monarchy is an ancient practice that has exhausted its currency in the modern world but that its essence is nothing but affect enlisted

in the service of ideology organized in rituals like the one he's described and venerated. That is why his reanimation of ancient rituals of legitimation betrays real concerns about a project that by his own admission lacked foundation or peer in the modern world. This crisis of legitimation, as Bonnie Honig observes, "is largely attributable to the rise of secularism and to the corresponding dearth in modernity of commonly held and publicly powerful instruments of legitimation, such as political authority."[58] By making no attempt to erase or disguise the ceremony, nor his own priest-like function in the proceedings, where print, not flesh, holds pride of place, Paine betrays his own anxiety about both the evacuation of that which once was thought to be held in common and the unpredictable vitality of bodies charged with occupying that same space. This anxiety is evident in the series of pathetic appeals to the unidentified authority to "let" this or that consecrating action take place: let a day be set aside, let the charter be brought forth, let a crown be placed thereon, etc. Paine crowns the revolution his opponents equate with anarchy, not quite foreclosing insurgency at the moment of its inauguration but rather limiting the terms of its articulation.

That he ends this imagined ritual with the destruction of the fetish object, this farewell to symbolism, artifice, and the legitimating mechanisms whose function is to make people believe and consent to sovereign power is a well-known strategy of legitimation. For one, it echoes that of a fictional Italian duke bidding farewell to island magic by breaking his staff and drowning his book of spells only after these implements have helped restore him to the sovereign position to which he always felt entitled. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare understands that modern sovereignty is not simply characterized by a diachronic shift from the symbolics of blood to a creative synthesis of general affectivity, if I may modify Foucault's formulation of the passage from royal to democratic sovereignty.[59] The securing of sovereign power in the play—over and above the symbolics of blood indexed by denouement of the marriage ritual that legitimates rule by kin—is dependent on intractable figures individually recognizing and admitting that the sovereign-magus knew all along what was best for his subjects.[60] "I'll be wise hereafter" says the most unruly, though the statement could well apply to all who now know enough to make a public show of contrition and good sense.[61] Hegemony is here enforced not through coercion but by the consent of subjects disciplined by the not-so-rough magic of the play's governance of affect.[62] Rule by consent has less use for the sovereign, as the play ends with Prospero abdicating his official role for a second time and turning his thoughts to death. Where Shakespeare ends, Paine wishes to go. But the eclipse of the royal sovereign that *Common Sense* announces does not signal a new dawn for populist politics. Paine's fantasy of consecrated popular sovereignty is less sure about its own radical implications. If *Common Sense* articulates a political theology for the democratic age, a shattered crown scattered like relics among the people betrays anxieties about what radicalizing affect can do for a politics of the common.

Notes

1. [Charles Inglis], "The True Interest of America Impartially Stated," in *Common Sense*, ed. Edward Larkin (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2004), 152.

2. Following the pamphlet's publication, Paine regularly used "Common Sense" as his signature.

3. Alexander Hamilton, "Federalist 27," *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 136.

4. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense, The Crisis, & Other Writings from the American Revolution*, ed. Eric Foner (New York: American Library, 2015), 35.

5. As Christopher Castiglia argues, "The nation-state's future as an imagined community required, as Hamilton recognized, a federalization of affect: the creation of metaphors of 'innerness' to serve as sites of correspondence between individual bodies (character, personality, even biology) and state interest." Christopher Castiglia, *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States* (Durham: Duke University Press), 2008, 18.

6. Sheldon Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," *Fugitive Democracy and Other Essays*, ed. Nicholas Xenos (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 108.

7. Antonio Negri, *Insurgencies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 154.

8. Jason Frank, *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 31.

9. According to Edward Larkin, "Paine had to be demonized and dismissed because his ideas threatened the very foundations upon which Adams and his fellow elites' power was built." Edward Larkin, *Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 11.

10. On the influence of Scottish common sense philosophy in revolutionary America, particularly the work of Francis Hutcheson, see Garry Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (New York: Mariner, 2002), 193–206.

11. Paine, *Common Sense*, 9.

12. Paine, *Common Sense*, 31.

13. Paine, *Common Sense*, 52.

14. Paine, *Common Sense*, 6.

15. Wills, 184. On sensibility and common sense, see G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Julia Stern, *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Sophia Rosenfeld, *Common Sense: A Political History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

16. Wills, 184.

17. Sophia Rosenfeld, *Common Sense: A Political History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 62.

18. Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 24.

19. Paine, *Common Sense*, 35–36.

20. Paine, *Common Sense*, 34.

21. Paine, *Common Sense,* 5.

22. Quoted in Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 86.

23. Robert Fergusson, "The Commonalities of *Common Sense*," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2000): 465.

24. Sophia Rosenfeld, "Tom Paine's Common Sense and Ours," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (2008): 634.

25. Fergusson, 469.

26. Rosenfeld, "Tom Paine's Common Sense and Ours," 667.

27. See Philip Gould, *Writing the Rebellion: Loyalists and the Literature of Politics in British America* (New York: Oxford, 2016), 114–44.

28. Paine, *Common Sense*, 50.

29. Paine, *Common Sense*, 36.

30. Frank, *Constituent Moments*, 92.

31. Gould, *Writing the Rebellion*, 11.

32. John Adams, *The Adams Papers*, *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams, vol 3, Diary, 1782–1804; Autobiography, Part One to October 1776*, ed. L. H. Butterfield (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 331.

33. Paine, *Common Sense,* 31.

34. Paine, *Common Sense*, 35.

35. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 53.

36. Paine, *Common Sense*, 35.

37. Hamilton, "Federalist 21," 103–104.

38. John Madison, "Federalist 37," *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 180.

39. Hamilton, "Federalist 23," 117.

40. Madison, "Federalist 37," 181–82.

41. Hamilton, "Federalist 27," 136.

42. On the aesthetic as a sensuous engagement with the world, see Terry Eagleton, "The Law of the Heart: Shaftesbury, Burke, Hume," *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Malden: Blackwell, 1990).

43. Castiglia, 18.

44. Eric Santner, *The Royal Remains: The People's Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 10.

45. Paine, *Common Sense*, 24.

46. [Thomas Paine], "The Forester's Letter III," *Common Sense, The Crisis, and Other Writings from the American Revolution*, ed. Eric Foner (New York: Library of America, 2015), 83.

47. Paine, *Common Sense*, 5.

48. Paine, *Common Sense*, 23.

49. Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Urzone, 2001), 46.

50. Paine, *Common Sense*, 23.

51. Thomas Paine, "Letter to the Abbe Raynal," *The Writings of Thomas Paine v 2: 1779–1792,* ed. Moncure Daniel Conway (New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1894), 105.

52. Paine, "Letter to the Abbe Raynal," 105.

53. Paine, *Common Sense*, 23.

54. Ibid., *Common Sense*, 52.

55. Ibid., *Common Sense*, 34.

56. Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 107–108.

57. Trish Loughran, "Disseminating Common Sense: Thomas Paine and the Problem of the Early National Bestseller," *American Literature* 78, no. 1 (2006): 19.

58. Bonnie Honig, "Declarations of Independence: Arendt and Derrida on the Problem of Founding a Republic," *American Political Science Review* 85 (1991): 84.

59. Foucault characterizes the shift from classical sovereignty to biopolitical governmentality as a shift from "a symbolics of blood to an analytics of sexuality." Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Vol I: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1978), 148.

60. Traitors, conspirators, insurrectionists, and even the inattentive daughter, all come to see the errors of their ways and fall in line at the end of the play.

61. William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, eds. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Westerstein (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, n.d.), 5.1.351, accessed June 10, 2021, https://shakespeare.folger.edu/downloads/pdf/the-tempest_PDF_FolgerShakespeare.pdf.

62. Prospero's slave, Caliban, offers a critique of the master's coercive kindness early in the play: "When thou cam'st first, / Thou strok'st me and made much of me, wouldst / give me / Water with berries in 't, . . . And then I loved thee." Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2.397–402, accessed June 10, 2021, https://shakespeare.folger.edu/downloads/pdf/the-tempest_PDF_FolgerShakespeare.pdf