

JOURNAL ARTICLE

The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought



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The American Political Science Review
Vol. 78, No. 1 (Mar., 1984),
pp. 189-197 (9 pages)

Published by: [American Political Science Association](#)

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DOI: 10.2307/1961257

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1961257>

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Abstract

Drawing upon a comprehensive list of political writings by Americans published between 1760 and 1805, the study uses a citation count drawn from these 916 items as a surrogate measure of the relative influence of European writers upon American political thought during the era. Contrary to the general tendencies in the recent literature, the results here indicate that there was no one European writer, or one tradition of writers, that dominated American political thought. There is evidence for moving beyond the Whig-

The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought

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Drawing upon a comprehensive list of political writings by Americans published between 1760 and 1805, the study uses a citation count drawn from these 916 items as a surrogate measure of the relative influence of European writers upon American political thought during the era. Contrary to the general tendencies in the recent literature, the results here indicate that there was no one European writer, or one tradition of writers, that dominated American political thought. There is evidence for moving beyond the Whig-Enlightenment dichotomy as the basis for textual analysis, and for expanding the set of individual European authors considered to have had an important effect on American thinking. Montesquieu, Blackstone, and Hume are most in need of upgrading in this regard. The patterns of influence apparently varied over the time period from 1760 to 1805, and future research on the relative influence of European thinkers must be more sensitive to this possibility.

The bicentennial of the American founding era has led to renewed interest in the origins and nature of American political thought. One aspect of this interest has been heightened concern with a thorny question that has exercised historians and political scientists for a good number of years—the relative influence of European thinkers on the American founders as they designed their political institutions at the state and national levels.

Shalhope (1972, 1982) has summarized the debate in two historiographical essays. What he calls the “orthodox” view held that John Locke’s ideas dominated American political thought until Thomas Jefferson introduced the republican thought of the English Civil War authors during the post-Confederation period. Two writers frequently cited as prominent among the many holding to the orthodox view are Hartz (1955) and Becker (1958).

On the other hand, Robbins (1947), Rossiter (1953), and Adair (1956) were prominent in dissenting from the orthodox view and in pointing out the non-Lockean roots of our political tradition. In her book, *The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman* (1959), Robbins argued for the importance of the English libertarian heritage to colonial and revolutionary Americans. Men such as Harrington, Milton, Sidney, Neville, Moles-

worth, and Trenchard and Gordon, she argued, had a central and continuing influence on early American political thought. The quickening interest in the topic on the part of historians produced many important contributions that did not directly support Robbins’s work, but the work of others, including Main (1961), Levy (1960), Elkins and McKittrick (1961), Handlin and Handlin (1961), Miller (1961) and Pocock (1965, 1975) fleshed out the importance of English Whig thought.

Just when a new synthesis seemed needed, it was provided by Bailyn (1965, 1967; but see Pocock, 1981). Bailyn identified five major sources from which American colonists drew their political thinking—the writings of classical antiquity, the writings of Enlightenment rationalism, the tradition of English common law, the political and social theories of New England Puritanism (especially covenant theory), and the writers identified by Robbins as being associated with the English Civil War and Commonwealth period. According to Bailyn, this last group, the radical English Whigs, generated the perspective that brought order and synthesis to the other strands of writing, and more than any other source “shaped the mind of the American Revolutionary generation.” Wood (1969) wrote a monumental study describing how this synthesis of ideas informed the events surrounding the writing of the constitutions between 1776 and 1789, and a new orthodoxy seemed firmly in place.

However, this new orthodoxy was soon subjected to methodological modifications that have called into question the supposed monolithic character of the republican synthesis stressed by Bailyn and Wood. The post-Bailyn tendency to

Received: March 1, 1983

Revision received: May 10, 1983

Accepted for publication: July 3, 1983

An earlier version of this article was presented at a Covenant Workshop sponsored by the Center for the Study of Federalism at Temple University, May, 1982.

use categories of European writers, sometimes referred to as "traditions," has continued to breed confusion as new categories are "discovered" or assembled. For example, Wills (1978) adds the Scottish Enlightenment as distinct from Bailyn's more general use of Enlightenment. Lundberg and May (1976) correctly note that the term Enlightenment is too broad and hides a great deal of variance in the authors subsumed by the category. They are led to break it into the First Enlightenment (with the likes of Montesquieu, Locke, and Pufendorf), the more radical Second Enlightenment (which includes Voltaire, Diderot, and Helvetius among others), and the Third Enlightenment (typified by Beccaria, Rousseau, Mably, and Raynal). Wills's Scottish Enlightenment becomes the category "Scottish Common Sense" in their schema, and they add the categories Deists and Near-Deists, Devotional and Apologetic, and Romantic. Lundberg and May, on the other hand, do not mention the categories of Common Law, Puritanism, or classical antiquity.

Nor does the use of general categories solve the problem of where many of the major European thinkers belong. Wills places Hume within the Scottish Common Sense tradition, Lundberg and May place him within the Second Enlightenment, and it is not entirely clear where Bailyn places him. Lundberg and May place Hobbes among the English Deists and Near-Deists, whereas Bailyn never clearly places him. Bailyn makes Locke an Enlightenment figure, Lundberg and May place Locke in the First Enlightenment, yet Wills correctly notes that Locke was very often linked by American readers with Algernon Sidney, the great Whig theorist. Without agreement on either a stable set of categories, or the placement of major writers in them, analysis of the relative influence of such "traditions" is problematic.

The prominent alternative of using close textual analysis on major American political writers still generally eschews arguing in terms of broad categories and focuses instead upon specific European writers. The unfortunate tendency here is to identify a single source as dominant. For example, investigations of the texts by Thomas Jefferson have variously concluded that he reflects the dominant influence of the Scottish Enlightenment (Wills, 1979), John Locke (Mahoway, 1979), or the negative influence of Montesquieu (Appleby, 1982). Madison either borrowed many of his ideas from Hume (Adair, 1956-1957), Locke (Devine, 1975), republicanism (Morgan, 1974), or, like Jefferson, wrote in reaction to Montesquieu (Morgan, 1974). We can even still be treated to close textual analysis that completely denies the influence of Whig political ideas on early American political thought (Schmitt & Webking, 1979).

Method of Analysis

If we are to make significant progress toward unravelling this matter of relative influence, it is essential that we move beyond close textual analysis that assumes discipleship on the part of the person whose text is under examination. It will no longer do to examine a text from the American founding era without considering the possibility of multiple influences. This requires more comprehensive identification of those who are candidates for having influenced American political writing. Otherwise we are left with the relatively fruitless debates between those who find one dominant influence as opposed to another, when there is a reasonable probability that the pattern of influence will be multiple and vary from text to text—even in those written by the same author. The purpose of this essay is to advance such a systematic identification of European writers who need to be taken into account.

Contrary to the general tendencies in the recent scholarly literature, the results here indicate that there was no one European writer, or one tradition of thought, that dominated American political reading and writing during the late 1700s. If there was one man read and reacted to by American political writers of all factions during all the stages of the founding era, it was probably not Locke but Montesquieu. As for the relative influence of the various intellectual traditions, the method used here cannot support either the radical English Whigs or the Enlightenment writers as more important—they look about equal in influence. However, there is strong evidence for moving beyond a Whig-Enlightenment dichotomy as the basis for debate on this issue. Debate in the future should include biblical and common law sources as well, just as the number of individual authors deemed important should probably be enlarged and their relative importance reassessed.

Several surrogate measures of influence have already been attempted. One was to examine the educational background of prominent American political writers such as Madison, Hamilton, and Jefferson (Myers, 1981; Wills, 1978). These attempts are limited to a few men, only a few texts, and marred by the assumption that exposure to one or two college instructors was decisive. Another surrogate measure was the examination of the library holdings of a few dozen prominent Americans (Colbourn, 1965). This approach suffered from the assumption that the critical men have been identified and was seriously marred by the assumption that all books in a person's collection were equally valuable to him. A more ambitious approach was to examine all of the booksellers' catalogues from the era, plus the institutional libraries (mainly colleges),

library companies, and private libraries (Lundberg & May, 1976). Although a major advance, this expanded effort had the one major problem of not being able to tell us how widely a given volume was actually read. A more useful surrogate measure would be a count of how many times a given volume or author was cited, quoted, or paraphrased, since this would not only help to answer how widely a book was read but also how highly regarded it was.

Approximately ten years ago this author set out with Charles S. Hyneman to read comprehensively the political writings of Americans published between 1760 and 1805. This period was defined as the "founding era" during which the theory and institutions informing the state and national constitutions took final form. Reviewing an estimated 15,000 items, and reading closely some 2,200 items with explicitly political content, we identified and rated those with the most significant and coherent theoretical content. Included were all books, pamphlets, newspaper articles, and monographs printed for public consumption. Excluded was anything that remained private and so did not enter public consciousness, such as letters and notes. Essentially we exhausted all those items reproduced in collections published by historians, the newspapers available in the Library of Congress, the early American imprints held by the Lilly Library at Indiana University, the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, and the Library of Congress. Finally, we examined the two volumes of Shipton and Mooney, *National Index of American Imprints*, for items in the Evans collection of early American imprints on microcard.

The resulting sample has 916 items, which include 3,154 references to 224 different individuals. The sample includes all of the Anti-Federalist pieces identified by Storing (1981) plus 33 more, for a total of 197 Anti-Federalist pieces. It also includes 190 items written by Federalists. Most of these items are identified in Storing (1976); the rest can be found in Hyneman and Lutz (1983), which lists 515 pieces. Although not exhaustive, the sample is by far the largest ever assembled, and neither excludes nor emphasizes any point of view. Excluding the proceedings of legislatures and conventions, upon which the sample does not draw, the sample represents approximately one-third of all public political writings longer than 2,000 words published between 1760 and 1805. Also, the distribution of published writings during the era is roughly proportional to the number of citations for each decade.

A citation for purposes of the study is defined as any footnote, direct quote, attributed paraphrasing, or use of a name in exemplifying a concept or position. The primary assumption is that a

citation indicates familiarity with the author being cited. Furthermore, it is assumed that the citation is made because potential readers are also likely to be so familiar. Thus, a citation count indirectly provides a sense of the relative frequency with which European authors were read.

Bailyn (1967) has pointed out that such citations and references in the political literature of the founding era often give the appearance of being more window dressing and that often they betray an incomplete understanding of the author or work being cited. Even in those instances where this is true, there must be some familiarity with the cited text on the part of the person writing the pamphlet, as well as some assumed familiarity on the part of potential readers of the pamphlet, if the window dressing is to make any sense. In short, using a citation count has an advantage over close textual analysis in that we can assume familiarity with the text being cited, whether or not the citation is theoretically serious, or whether or not the author has complete command of the text he is citing.

Another advantage is that a citation count need not distinguish between positive and negative citations; to cite another author in order to attack him still shows that the work has been read, and it also shows influence insofar as the cited author's categories of thought are being used. Locke responded negatively to Filmer. Hume responded negatively to Locke. Madison responded positively to certain aspects of Locke and Hume, and negatively to certain aspects of Montesquieu. In each case it is reasonable to assume that a negative citation represents as much familiarity as a positive citation with a cited work, and it is this familiarity we are seeking to establish.

Thus, "influence" is used here in a broad sense. Only close textual analysis can establish the presence of specific ideas in a text, and comparative textual analysis the probable source of the ideas. A weakness of the citation-count method is that it cannot distinguish among citations that represent the borrowing of an idea, the adapting of an idea, the approval of an idea, the opposition to an idea, or an appeal to authority. An advantage of a citation count is that this inability to distinguish the nature of a citation does not matter if all one is trying to do is systematically establish which European writers were consulted and with what frequency. The overview that results provides a good basis for guiding those engaged in close textual analysis to look for influences that might otherwise be missed. A citation count is also a good way of testing the adequacy of the various schemes that have been developed for categorizing European writers by those interested in the relative influence of various intellectual traditions on American political theory.

The basic categorization scheme used is that developed by Bailyn (1967). Although Bailyn's is one of the most prominent categorization schemes and is relatively noncontroversial, there is still room for argument. Where should Locke and Hume be placed? We might view them in one way today, but early American writers emphasized different works by them than we do, and thus viewed them in a way that might be difficult for us to appreciate. To minimize controversy, a citation count both by category and by major individual authors is provided.

The Pattern of Citations for the Entire Founding Era

If we ask what book was most frequently cited by Americans during the founding era, the answer somewhat surprisingly is: the Book of Deuteronomy. From Table 1 we can see that the biblical tradition is most prominent among the citations. Anyone familiar with the literature will know that most of these citations come from sermons reprinted as pamphlets; hundreds of sermons were reprinted during the era, amounting to at least 10% of all pamphlets published. These reprinted sermons accounted for almost three-fourths of the biblical citations, making this nonsermon source of biblical citations roughly as important as the Classical or Common Law categories. Since our concern in this essay is with sorting out the relative influence of European thinkers, the problem of how to count biblical citations is not important. It is relevant, nonetheless, to note the prominence of biblical sources for American political thought, since it was highly influential in our political tradition, and is not always given the attention it deserves (Lutz, 1980).

References to writers identified with the European Enlightenment are fairly constant throughout the 45-year founding era, but the mix of writers within this category changes significantly over the years. One major conclusion suggested by this study is that the relative prominence of a writer usually varies over time, and when discussing relative influence, we should, for example, distinguish the Revolutionary era from the era surrounding the writing of the United States Constitution.

For example, Montesquieu and Locke are very prominent during the 1760s, when the percentage of Enlightenment citations is highest. Together they account for over 60% of all references to Enlightenment thinkers. During the 1770s these two account for over 75% of all references to Enlightenment thinkers. However, the references to the two are structured in an interesting manner. References to Locke in the 1770s are found heavily in pieces justifying the break with England, whereas Montesquieu is cited heavily in pieces dealing with constitutional design. As the writing of state and national constitutions continues in the 1780s, Montesquieu increases in importance to the point where he accounts for almost 60% of all Enlightenment references. Meanwhile, Locke's rate of citation falls off drastically, never to return to prominence. After the writing of the national Constitution, references to Montesquieu also fall off and are limited primarily to pieces related to the writing of state constitutions during the 1790s. This pattern should not surprise us at all upon reflection. Locke is profound when it comes to the bases for establishing a government and for opposing tyranny, but has little to say about institutional design. Therefore his influence most properly lies in justifying the revolution and the right of Americans to write their own constitu-

Table 1. Distribution of Citations by Decade (%)

	1760s	1770s	1780s	1790s	1800-05	% of Total Number
Bible	24	44	34	29	38	34
Enlightenment	32	18	24	21	18	22*
Whig	10	20	19	17	15	18
Common Law	12	4	9	14	20	11
Classical	8	11	10	11	2	9
Peers	6	2	3	6	5	4
Other	8	1	1	2	2	2
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>N</i>	216	544	1306	674	414	3154

*If we break Bailyn's Enlightenment category into the three sub-categories described by Lundberg and May, the results are not significantly altered. The "First Enlightenment," dominated by Montesquieu, Locke, and Pufendorf, comprises 16% of all citations. The more radical writers of the "Second Enlightenment," men like Voltaire, Diderot, and Helvetius, garner 2% of the citations. The "Third Enlightenment," typified by Beccaria, Rousseau, Mably, and Raynal, receives 4% of the citations, to bring the total back to the 22% listed here.

Table 2. Most Cited Thinkers by Decade^a

	1760s	1770s	1780s	1790s	1800-05	% of Total Number
Montesquieu	8	7	14	4	1	8.3
Blackstone	1	3	7	11	15	7.9
Locke	11	7	1	1	1	2.9
Hume	1	1	1	6	5	2.7
Plutarch	1	3	1	2	0	1.5
Beccaria	0	1	3	0	0	1.5
Trenchard & Gordon	1	1	3	0	0	1.4
Delolme	0	0	3	1	0	1.4
Pufendorf	4	0	1	0	5	1.3
Coke	5	0	1	2	4	1.3
Cicero	1	1	1	2	1	1.2
Hobbes	0	1	1	0	0	1.0
	33	25	37	29	32	32.4
Others	67	75	63	71	68	67.6
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100.0%
<i>N</i>	216	544	1306	674	414	3154

^aThis table is limited to those who were cited at least 32 times, which is 1% of the total of 3,154 citations. The extra decimal point in the last column is to allow more precise recovery of the number of citations over the era, whereas all other percentages are rounded off to the nearest whole number to ease the viewing of the table. The use of 0% indicates fewer than .5% of the citations for a given decade.

tions rather than in the *design* of any constitution, state or national. Locke's influence has been exaggerated in the latter regard, and finding him hidden in passages of the U.S. Constitution is an exercise that requires more evidence than has hitherto ever been provided.

Montesquieu's prominence during the period of constitution writing is supplemented by the relative prominence of two other Enlightenment writers—Beccaria and deLolme (usually written Delolme). It is also during this period of constitution writing that a host of English Whig writers becomes prominent. "Cato" (Trenchard and Gordon), Hoadley, Bolingbroke, Price, Burgh, Milton, Rollin, Molesworth, Priestly, Macaulay, Sidney, Somers, Harrington, and Rapin were most heavily cited during the late 1770s and the 1780s. They are joined by other Enlightenment writers including Robertson, Grotius, Rousseau, Pope, Raynal, Mably, Burlamaqui, and Vattel. All in all, during the period of constitution writing the Enlightenment and Whig authors were cited about equally as a group, with the references to the Whigs spread over about three times as many authors. There is no Whig author to compare with Montesquieu for sheer volume or dominance of the category. Indeed, Montesquieu is almost without peer during the founding era for prominence, except for Blackstone.

Blackstone is the second most prominent secular writer during the founding era. He is cited

well over two and a half times as often as Locke. Whereas Locke's pattern is toward relative prominence early during the founding era, falling off after the 1770s, Blackstone's pattern is that of increasing frequency of citation after the 1770s to achieve prominence late in the founding era. Hume follows a similar pattern. Both Blackstone and Hume are strong on governmental process and the operation and interaction of institutions. There is a certain logic, then, in their becoming prominent during the portion of the founding era when the operation, adjustment, and evolution of political institutions becomes of greater concern than their design. This is not to say that the matters of foundation and institutional design are never discussed by Blackstone and Hume, since they are. And the two are cited in this regard during the early years of the founding era. These two also become vehicles for extending Locke's visibility indirectly. Blackstone himself cites Locke a number of times, and certain of his institutional and procedural concepts seem to be grounded in Locke insofar as they are congruent with Locke's principles, or logically implied by Locke. Hume, on the other hand, was one of Locke's most severe critics. To a certain extent his work is in opposition to Locke and can be viewed as running contrary to some of the implications contained in Locke's writing.

There does not seem to be at this time any basis for explaining the pattern followed by citations to

Table 3. Ordering of Most Cited Thinkers, 1760-1805^a

	(%)		(%)
1. Montesquieu	8.3	19. Shakespeare	.8
2. Blackstone	7.9	20. Livy	.8
3. Locke	2.9	21. Pope	.7
4. Hume	2.7	22. Milton	.7
5. Plutarch	1.5	23. Tacitus	.6
6. Beccaria	1.5	24. Coxe	.6
7. Trenchard & Gordon	1.4	25. Plato	.5
8. Delolme	1.4	26. Abbé Raynal	.5
9. Pufendorf	1.3	27. Mably	.5
10. Coke	1.3	28. Machiavelli	.5
11. Cicero	1.2	29. Vattel	.5
12. Hobbes	1.0	30. Petyt	.5
13. Robertson	.9	31. Voltaire	.5
14. Grotius	.9	32. Robison	.5
15. Rousseau	.9	33. Sidney	.5
16. Bolingbroke	.9	34. Somers	.5
17. Bacon	.8	35. Harrington	.5
18. Price	.8	36. Rapin	.5

^aIncludes all thinkers cited at least sixteen times (.5% out of the total number of 3,154 citations). These 36 names account for 47.8% of all citations.

Pufendorf and Coke during the era. The classics are cited rather consistently, although there is a sharp drop toward the end of the founding era. The category "Peers" is a bit of a misnomer; about a fifth of these citations concern Americans dead by the time they were cited, although all but a few wrote during the 1700s. The term "Peers" is used instead of "Americans" because during the 1760s almost all of the citations in this category are to members of the English Parliament or to articles and essays written by men in England. After 1770, about a third of the references are to documents such as a state constitution or a resolution passed by a state legislature. There is not one of prominence among those cited, in the sense that no one is cited very often. Benjamin Franklin gets a few references, as do Thomas Paine and

Thomas Jefferson, but it is a very diverse category.

The Pattern of Citations from 1787 to 1788

Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the pattern of citations surrounding the debate on the U.S. Constitution. The items from which the citations for these two tables are drawn come close to exhausting the literature written by both sides. The Bible's prominence disappears, which is not surprising since the debate centered upon specific institutions about which the Bible had little to say. The Anti-Federalists do drag it in with respect to basic principles of government, but the Federalists' inclination to Enlightenment rationalism is most evident here in their failure to consider the Bible

Table 4. Distribution of Citations: Federalist Versus Antifederalist

	Federalist (%)	Antifederalist (%)	Total for 1780s (%)
Bible	0	9	34
Enlightenment	34	38	24
Whig	23	29	19
Common Law	8	12	9
Classical	33	9	10
Peers	1	2	3
Other	1	1	1
	100	100	100
<i>N</i>	164	364	1306

Table 5. Twenty Most Cited Thinkers: Federalist Versus Antifederalist

	Federalist (%)	Antifederalist (%)	Total for 1780s (%)
Montesquieu	29	25	14
Blackstone	7	9	7
Locke	0	3	1
Hume	3	1	1
Plutarch	7	0	1
Beccaria	0	4	3
Trenchard & Gordon	2	2	3
Delolme	0	6	3
Pufendorf	0	1	1
Coke	0	1	1
Cicero	0	1	1
Robertson	0	0	1
Licurgus	6	1	1
Mably	7	2	2
Grotius	5	0	1
Temple	.5	1	1
Price	0	2	1
Addison	0	2	.5
Vattel	0	1	.5
Sidney	1	0	.5
	<hr/> 72	<hr/> 62	<hr/> 44.5
Other	28	38	55.5
	<hr/> 100	<hr/> 100	<hr/> 100.0
<i>N</i>	164	364	1306

relevant. Surprisingly, both sides use Enlightenment and Whig authors in about the same proportion.

Montesquieu is almost twice as prominent during the debate over the national Constitution as he is for the decade as a whole, and three to three-and-a-half times as prominent as he is for the entire era. Grotius and Mably are the only other Enlightenment figures mentioned prominently by the Federalists, whereas the Anti-Federalists use Delolme, Beccaria, Mably, Price, Vattel, Pufendorf, and Locke to their advantage. Among Whig writers, the Federalists favor Trenchard and Gordon, Temple, and Sidney, whereas the Anti-Federalists favor Price, Addison, and Trenchard and Gordon about equally. Despite these differences, the most interesting finding is how similar the Federalists and Anti-Federalists are in their citation patterns. Not only do we *not* find the Federalists inclined toward Enlightenment writers and the Anti-Federalists away from them, the Federalists sometimes cite Enlightenment writers while attacking them. For example, there is a lot of arguing against Montesquieu's dictum that republics must be small and homogeneous if they are to survive, while the Anti-Federalists cite Montesquieu with approval on this point.

The debate surrounding the adoption of the

Constitution was fought out mainly in the context of Montesquieu, Blackstone, the English Whigs, and major writers of the Enlightenment. The Federalists also have a third of their references to classical thinkers, while the Anti-Federalists have an average level of such citations. The classical thinkers provided exemplars of practices, leaders, and behavior—often negative ones—but generally were not drawn upon for concepts, terms, and institutional analyses that are most appropriate to such a debate. Hence the Federalists cited most heavily Plutarch, not Aristotle, Plato, or Cicero.

Conclusions

There is hardly an historian or political scientist working in this area who would be surprised by the presence of Montesquieu in the citations, but his prominence turns out to be so great, and his appeal so wide across all factions, it is surprising that so little beyond Spurlin (1940) has been written about him in the American context. It is time to consider as carefully the influence of Montesquieu on specific political texts as we have sought the influence of Locke.

The prominence of Blackstone would come as a surprise to many, and he is the prime candidate for the writer most likely to be left out in any list

of influential European thinkers. His work is not readily available in inexpensive form, but like Montesquieu he was cited frequently by all sides. A trenchant reference to Blackstone could quickly end an argument. Such a respected writer deserves a much closer look by those studying American political thought.

There is good reason to treat Locke's influence with greater care. Even though the motto *Locke et praeterea nihil* as it applies to eighteenth-century American political thought has been thoroughly discredited by historians, there is probably still a tendency to overestimate his importance. Furthermore, the Locke we read today was not the Locke generally read then. Today we are likely to read his *Second Treatise*, whereas during the founding era Americans were much more likely to read *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. References to Locke's *Second Treatise* often indicate a relative lack of understanding—as if they are relying more upon general hearsay than upon a direct reading. Indeed, Lundberg and May (1976) demonstrate that the two treatises had only about one-third the availability of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* from the libraries and booksellers of the era. The availability of the *Second Treatise* about matches that of Addison's *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, Pope's *Essay on Man*, or Wollaston's *The Religion of Nature Delineated*. There is no question that Locke was important for American political thought, but he needs to be placed in context and his influence more carefully assessed.

There is evidence that Hume should be considered about equal in influence to Locke, and that Hume is more important for theory surrounding the writing of constitutions when it comes to content. The Hume read then is also not the Hume we are likely to read today. Citations to his work come overwhelmingly from *The History of England* rather than from his *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* or his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. There is no doubt that his *Essays and Treatises* was highly influential on some Federalist minds, however, such as Madison's and Hamilton's, and the availability of this work precisely matched that of Locke's two treatises. Hume deserves a much more careful look. Beyond this, we need to pay more attention to a whole host of Enlightenment, Whig, and Common Law theorists. The 36 names listed in Table 3 are all possible candidates.

It is interesting that the writers of the so-called Scottish Enlightenment—Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, and Adam Ferguson—are, with only one exception, not very prominent among the citations. In the case of Hume, we may today read him as a member of such a category, but Bailyn and others are

probably correct when they say that Americans during the founding era often saw him as an exponent of Whig republicanism, or else as a covert Tory.

Finally, the patterns of influence apparently varied over time. The current literature is not sensitive to this possibility, and too often a close textual analysis of one or two documents written in, say, 1776 or 1788, allows the establishment of one European author's influence to stand for the entire era. We need to consider the extent to which the debate surrounding the adoption of the U.S. Constitution reflected different patterns of influence than did the debates surrounding the writing and adoption of the state constitutions, or the Revolutionary writing surrounding the Declaration of Independence. Examining more carefully the differences and similarities in such patterns should lead us to a firmer understanding of the intellectual divisions within American political thought at the time, divisions that increasingly appear to be more complex than is usually credited in recent political science literature.

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