
**Observing the Birth of a Nation:
The Oriental Spy/Observer Genre and Nation
Making in Early American Literature**

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In his *Diplomatic History of the American People*, Thomas A. Bailey suggests in passing that “in an indirect sense, the brutal Dey of Algiers was a Founding Father of the Constitution.”¹ This paper explores some of the historical underpinnings and literary ramifications of this unexpected yet interesting proposition, namely how relations with the Ottoman Regencies of North Africa during the early national period contributed to building a sense of national identity among Americans.

The involvement of the United States in the Middle East is often said to have begun around the mid-nineteenth century with the cultural activities of missionaries, educators and archaeologists. In fact, relations were initiated decades earlier on the North African edge of the Middle East, a region Westerners used to call Barbary.² Immediately after independence, the young American republic had to confront the Ottoman Regencies of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli who, spurred by Great Britain, had begun to attack American ships in the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean. The protracted conflict, which involved the first foreign war of the United States on the shores of Tripoli and entered American annals as the Barbary Wars, spanned the entire formative period of the young republic from 1776 to 1815.³

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In the American mind, relations with the Barbary States are generally associated with issues of commerce, piracy, captivity, tribute and war. Inevitably, the relations also involved cultural contact that had interesting implications for the burgeoning national identity of Americans. The Ottoman Regencies represented the first foreign, non-European, non-Christian, Old-World entity that the young republic had to deal with commercially, diplomatically and militarily, while a long tradition of cultural antipathy and major differences in political culture existed between the two parties. It is not surprising that the earliest commercial and diplomatic treaties between them contained clauses designed to clarify national identity and national policy. It seemed necessary for Americans, as they entered the fray of international politics as a new nation, to explain in official documents who they were and what their intentions involved. It seemed particularly important to convey to the North Africans the novel notion that state and religion were separate in the American system and that American policy was not motivated by religious considerations, as might readily be construed by their interlocutors. Thus, the 1796 treaty with Tripoli announced: "As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion—as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Musselmen—and as the said states never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties, that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony between the two countries."⁴

International relations during the early national period compelled Americans not only to identify themselves to the world, but also to look at themselves inwardly as a rising collective entity. As they struggled through the vicissitudes of

international politics, Americans wanted, above all, to build and convey a sense of national identity for the sake of internal as much as external recognition. The early national period had been a soul-searching, “critical” period in American history as the country hesitated between confederalism and nationalism. Americans were not sure they had or even wanted a national identity, or how to reconcile liberty and government. They were at once desirous and apprehensive of becoming a nation. Though the confederation was glaringly impotent, there was resistance to the idea of centralized government. The state and the nation, therefore, remained to be constructed and defined, and a new Constitution had to be devised to provide the instruments of national identity.

Foreign relations contributed immensely to the making of that Constitution and of national identity. While Americans argued by and large in terms of confederalism in domestic matters, they did so in terms of nationalism when foreign affairs forced them to consider bigger stakes. “Indeed, we often forget—and need reminding—how many of the new document’s grants involved national security,” asserts one historian who goes on to enumerate the remedies brought by the Constitution to the deficiencies of the Confederation in military affairs and foreign policy.⁵ Foreign relations, which had been crucial to gain independence (without Rochambeau and de Grasse, Washington’s final victory would have been doubtful), now proved to be important to promote a sense of nationhood after independence. As historians and social scientists have long recognized: it often takes a war to “turn people into a nation.” An enemy indeed plays a crucial role in the “establishment, functioning, and preservation of nationalism” since “national identity...is contingent and relational [and] is defined [on the basis] of an implicit negation of the other.”⁶

As America's first foreign war, the Barbary Wars offered postcolonial Americans a usable context to engage in nation making. There was for Americans much more at stake in the conflict than issues of commerce and piracy: their response and image as a nation was the overriding concern. Throughout the drawn-out crisis, politicians, soldiers and writers issued repeated calls for the establishment of a "national character." The result was a significant body of popular literature contextualized in the Barbary Wars and keyed to the socio-political function of defining national identity and citizenship.

This study deals with one specific sample of that literature: the Oriental spy/observer genre, as exemplified by Peter Markoe's *The Algerine Spy in Pennsylvania* and Washington Irving's *Salmagundi*. Another contemporaneous work written in the same vein, Samuel Lorenzo Knapp's *Letters of Shahcoolen, a Hindu Philosopher, residing in Philadelphia* (1802), is of much lesser importance and pertinence.⁷ The narratives of Markoe and Irving illustrate public interest in defining American identity during the early national period and are interesting examples of the deliberate use of imaginative literature as an integral part of the nation-making process. The works are best approached historically and contextually, as they grew out of specific historical events and addressed issues of importance to a nascent nation, but also generically and rhetorically, since they belonged to a specific genre and used the conventions of that genre. It is particularly interesting to see how the contextual issues related to nation making had been dealt with rhetorically.

Spy stories have fascinated Americans and have become part of American folk epic since the execution of Major John André and the defection of Benedict Arnold during the American Revolution. In 1821, James Fenimore Cooper

exploited those events and inaugurated the “American novel” with *The Spy*, a story of war and patriotism that enjoyed great popularity. Markoe’s *The Algerine Spy* and Irving’s *Salmagundi*, however, are connected to the European tradition of the pseudo-foreign observer genre initiated by Marana’s *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* in the late seventeenth century.⁸ Giovanni Paolo Marana (1642-93), a Genoese political refugee in Paris, had had the brilliant idea of imagining a disguised Ottoman agent who reported secretly to the Sublime Porte on the political and military affairs of Christian courts.⁹ The work enjoyed immense popularity and engendered all sorts of spy or foreign observer stories, notably Montesquieu’s *Lettres Persanes* and Oliver Goldsmith’s *Chinese Letters (The Citizen of the World)*, which also used Oriental personae.¹⁰

The Oriental spy/observer genre itself descends directly from Oriental travel literature which flourished in Europe after the fifteenth century and generally sought to fix “national characters” as “revealed” by geography, race, manners and government.¹¹ Travel was the “school of comparison” whereby Western man attempted to “discover the position of his own civilization and the nature of humanity by pitting his own against other cultures.”¹² While remaining a school of comparison, the spy/observer genre subverted the standard pattern of European travel accounts in two significant ways. First, it inverted the direction of travel by having an Oriental visit Europe. This inversion entailed a substantial shift in roles and perspective wherein the ethnocentric politics and culture of European society suddenly became the foreign land and object of critical scrutiny by some stranger who, traditionally, was considered inferior. The outsider was the rhetorical mask of an intellectual elite in a state of introspection, the expression of a critical mind that questioned its own attitudes and values.¹³ In the hands of Montesquieu and Goldsmith, the

rhetorical mask evolved as the quintessential critical spirit, a philosophical quest into the realms of universality and relativism. I shall refer to both of them for comparative purposes: the comparative approach is crucial here not only because it is peculiar to the genre, but also because it helps identify the singularity of the American adaptations.

The second subversion of the standard travel genre was introduced at the level of the protagonist, the alien alter ego of the European traveler, who was frequently turned into a spy scheming for special interests in a complex web of international and intercultural relations.¹⁴ Naturally, the spy figure introduced specific parameters because he was no ordinary traveler or tourist, much less an innocent observer, certainly not a likeable character. A spy was a conspirator, serving the government of an inimical power on a mission of intelligence and subversion. In an age of emerging nationalisms, the threat posed by the spy figure heightened the sense of national identity and patriotism.

Markoe and Irving historicized the Oriental spy/observer genre to chronicle the birth of their nation. Both used North African observers who, in the context of the Barbary Wars, filed reports on the general conditions of Americans and functioned as contrastive elements to help define Americanness. Both were aware of the importance of foreign relations for the identification of the self and both are valuable examples of the early use of the Middle East as the significant Other against which the American self may be defined. Markoe and Irving used their Oriental personae with sufficient nuance to produce competitive views, and account for changing perceptions, of American nationalism and citizenship during the early national period.

We shall start with Peter Markoe. Markoe was born in 1752 or 53 on the island of St. Croix (Santa Cruz) in the

Danish West Indies, now the Virgin Islands. He was descended from a Huguenot family that had left France shortly before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, and later made a fortune in the sugar plantations. The Markoes removed to the United States in 1771 where they became one of the most aristocratic families in Philadelphia, owning three-fourths of the entire block bounded by Ninth, Tenth, Market and Chestnut Streets, four blocks from Convention Hall. The family boasted a patriotic record during the American Revolution as father and son volunteered in cavalry troops. Educated at Pembroke College, Oxford, Markoe was more interested in literature and alcohol than in business and was nicknamed Peter the Poet. Like others in his time, Markoe considered himself a writer in a public capacity. His major writings were *The Patriot Chief*, a tragedy containing a “deliberate tribute to Washington” (1784); *The Algerine Spy in Pennsylvania* (1787), his only prose piece; *The Times* (1787) and *The Storm* (1788), two satirical poems directly linked with the politics surrounding the ratification of the Constitution. Most of his work appeared in the Philadelphia newspapers before they were published in volumes. Markoe died in Philadelphia at the age of forty.¹⁵

In 1787, “a snug little pocket volume” of 129 pages, later attributed to Markoe, was published in Philadelphia under the curious title: *The Algerine Spy in Pennsylvania: or Letters Written by a Native of Algiers on the Affairs of the United States in America, from the Close of the Year 1783 to the Meeting of the Convention*.¹⁶ It consists of twenty-four letters, most of which purportedly written by a spy from Algiers, Mehemet, and addressed to Solyman, an influential “friend” in the *Divan* of Algiers (15). Written chiefly in Arabic, the letters had been translated anonymously and placed in a bundle on the doorstep of the publisher (ix). Mehemet’s mission in

Philadelphia took place between 1783 and 1787, i.e. between the official date of independence and the Constitutional Convention. The ex-colonies were then in a state of undeclared war with Algiers. “A new nation has started up in America,” Mehemet records. His mission is “to inform our illustrious regency of the actual strength of these states, and their future probable exertions; of the manners and pursuits of the inhabitants; their commerce, manufactures and agriculture; their government and laws” (18, 95). Mehemet considers his mission as “an office of the highest consequence to my country and the Musselman faith” and has nothing to support him but his “religion and patriotism” (11; 61).

The Algerine Spy in Pennsylvania was clearly meant to coincide with two important events in the early history of the United States: the Constitutional Convention and the Barbary Wars. Like other writings occasioned by the Constitutional Convention, it was designed to popularize a certain political vision of the emerging nation and seems to have “attracted considerable attention” at the time of publication.¹⁷ The connection of the Barbary Wars and the birth of the Constitution in this piece was deliberate not just because the two subjects were contemporaneous, but also, and essentially, because both had to do with the construction of nationhood. Markoe used the lens of foreign relations to identify a collective “us” versus a foreign Other and, thereupon, to cultivate a sense of national interest and a community of purpose. The author raises interesting issues of nationalism in international affairs, but also of otherness, citizenship and Americanization at a defining moment in American history.

Markoe, like many in his day and age, might be called a reluctant nationalist. In *The Times* (1787) he took a domestic perspective and sided openly with the Anti-Federalists in favor of state sovereignty and against the new constitution.¹⁸ In *The*

Algerine Spy (also 1787), he took an international perspective and expressed the desirability of union under an effective government while celebrating the unifying bonds of republican culture. Here, he expressed a will to *national community* on a dual level: by arguing for a *national character* nurtured on republican values and a sense of national interest, and for *national unity* when the security of the community is threatened.

Markoe begins to use the globalizing rhetoric that the divided American States must also be perceived as one nation the moment the Algerine spy steps into the New World: “A vast field lies before me. An extensive coast...an immense tract of country, divided into thirteen states, but united, with respect to *national* exertion, under one head” (62, Italics are mine). By acknowledging the effective division of the thirteen States and at the same time imagining their national unity, Markoe is simply echoing the ambivalence of his contemporaries. Recall that the word “national” was unacceptable to many delegates at the Constitutional Convention, which made John Dickinson of Delaware exclaim in a similar vein: “But we *are* a nation! We are a nation although consisting of parts or states.”¹⁹ Markoe’s Mehemet goes on to elaborate the vision of the United States as one nation sharing a common soil blessed with mighty rivers, booming towns, industrious citizens, enlightened government, egalitarian republicanism, virtuous temperance and a religion promoted by benevolent toleration. Elsewhere he conceives of Americans as one people who, by virtue of their freedom, do not need a standing army (96). Whenever he refers to the various American States—and he does so frequently—he never reflects on their distinctive identities or separate sovereignties, nor does he evoke sectional politics or slavery. He rather emphasizes what they have in common and portrays the various landscapes, religions, ethnic

backgrounds, cultures and ways of life as one unified community.

Markoe's vision of a unified community shows clear signs of the influential ideas of his contemporary Noah Webster who typified nascent American nationalism. In *Sketches of American Policy*—an essay published only two years before *The Algerine Spy* and the Constitutional Convention—Webster had called for a nationalistic program that should be at once cultural, economic and political. Webster also pointed to the primacy of the political aspect as the foundation on which everything else depended: “*Three things* demand our early and careful attention [education, industry, and a strong central government]. *All* are essential to our peace and prosperity; but on an energetic continental government principally depend our tranquillity at home and our respectability among foreign nations.”²⁰ In *The Algerine Spy*, Markoe echoes Webster by trying to promote national consciousness in economic, cultural, and foreign affairs. Successively, he deals with American commerce, industry, education and security as matters of national interest that require protection against foreigners.

Markoe praises Americans as a commercial nation yet expresses deep concern about inter-state rivalry and makes an argument for national protectionism. Mehemet begins by admiring the commercial bustle of Philadelphia –“Almost every man I meet is or seems to be a merchant” (73)—in which he sees a modern Carthage (25-26, 30). Ancient Carthage, however, had paid dearly for her openness and Mehemet cannot help but lament the specter of foreign penetration through “unlimited foreign trade” and wonder how the states continue to invite “all the mercantile world to their ports.” He imputes national weakness to excessive, greedy inter-state competition and deplores the “splendid embassies”

of foreign nations who “flatter [the states’] pride and excite their avarice” (70).

On another level, Markoe via Mehemet resents the “tyranny of fashion” introduced by European luxuries in the young republic because the imported luxuries corrupt the unfledged national character of Americans and harm American industry. Mehemet is surprised “to see the immense quantities of rich manufactures imported into [this] country. These importations, I am led to think, can only injure the country by introducing a premature luxury with its concomitant evils.” Of the three kinds of tyranny —civil, ecclesiastical and the tyranny of *fashion*— Mehemet says that “Pennsylvanians have known but little of the first, and nothing of the second; but the greater part of them is grievously oppressed by the last” (73-74). The subject of fashion was seriously debated in public and at the Constitutional Convention as an issue of patriotism, nationalism and the American character. Old-guard revolutionary George Mason of Virginia sponsored regulations called “Sumptuary Laws” for the good of the citizen and the nation. The Laws were meant to control citizens’ expenditure in dress, furniture and other luxury items, limit imports from Europe, encourage the production and consumption of local goods, and promote the values of frugality, temperance and virtue.²¹ Mehemet moralizes that “the phantom of foreign commerce, no longer pursued with inordinate avidity, must soon yield to the solid efforts of domestic industry, guided by the wisdom of the philosopher and patriot” (113).

Concerning education, Mehemet is equally surprised that European models still hold sway in the young republic. He is “truly astonished, that the wisdom of the state has not established a system of education adapted to its constitution and government,” that Americans are still “too much attached to the customs of the old continent.” Here, too, he expresses

Webster's ideas when he suggests to remove the useless ancient languages and metaphysical subtleties of Old Europe from the curriculum in favor of a more useful education adapted to a more practical, modern, scientific and commercial culture (78-79).

It is in politics, however, that the difference between the New World and the Old World is mostly felt. Mehemet finds American political culture exemplary and a legitimate source of pride for all Americans. As he delves into the political ambiance of the young republic, Mehemet absorbs the culture of rights and liberties, checks and balances and the necessity of parties in a republican government. When he tries to explain such political novelties to his friend Solyman, he admits that they do not square with their own Algerian background: "In a republic parties must exist; perhaps you will say I have already caught the infection" (85). Indeed, Mehemet is no longer the same person he was and he begins to impart unusual thoughts to his trusted friend: "I have often lamented the situation of our Deys. No sooner is one murdered, than another is elected by the murderers of his predecessors. Should he dare to decline this honour, his refusal is followed by instant death. To preserve his own life, he is obliged to act the tyrant" (108). When he contrasts Oriental despotism with American republicanism, he remarks that "no man [here] creates or feels terror. The national countenance is therefore mild, and the national deportment manly" (97). The comparisons between Algiers and the American States become compulsive and more pointed in the final letters: "Although I am an Algerine, devoted to the service of my country, you must permit me at times to be the philosopher – at least in words" (96). The strength of the United States, he explains, resides not in an army but in the freedom of its inhabitants: "Their governments are censured by several amongst themselves. These censures are the

strongest proofs of the excellence of their governments, since no man is punished for his censures. Were an Algerine supposed to have imagined only in a dream what a Pennsylvanian speaks, prints, publishes, maintains and glories in, he would suffer the severest tortures" (97). The gradual erosion of Mehemet's patriotism translates as a gain for American nationalism.

International affairs, finally, is the area where Americans had to be most vigilant as a young nation. Towards the end of the book, Mehemet's spying mission enters a conspiratorial phase as he contemplates exploiting Shays' rebellion and Rhode Island's snubbing of the Constitutional Convention to extend Ottoman sway in America.²² "Ever attentive to the welfare and glory of my country," he writes home, "I have revolved in my mind the means of rendering this very probable revolt beneficial to Algiers, and glorious to the Sublime Porte, by establishing an Ottoman Malta on the coasts of America." Should his government approve the idea of infiltration, he plans to commence negotiations with the "refractory leaders of the revolt" and have them protected "from the resentment" of the other states by an army of one hundred thousand *spahis* and *janizaries* (104-05). Although the reference to "Ottoman Malta" is erroneous because Malta never was part of the Ottoman Empire, Mehemet's analogy is clear enough: just as Malta represented a strategic wedge into Europe for the Moslems, Rhode Island could conceivably be a point of entry into the American States for the Ottomans.

The idea may sound outlandish but the fears behind it were genuine. As they experimented with republican government Americans were concerned with the prospect of foreign intervention into their affairs. Alexander Hamilton and George Washington believed that vulnerability to foreign influence was one of the more unfavourable aspect of

republican government.²³ The young republic struggled with alarmingly difficult foreign relations, destabilizing partisanship and dangerous inter-state suspicion and competition, which made the threat of foreign interference very real. That threat was actually raised as a political weapon by the smaller states during the Constitutional Convention. Defending the smaller states over the issue of senatorial representation, Delaware delegate Gunning Bedford lashed out at the delegates of the larger states “*I do not, gentlemen, trust you!*” and warned them not to push the smaller states into the arms of foreign powers: “the small ones will find some foreign ally of more honour and good faith who will take them by the hand and do them justice.”²⁴ The statement was rash but the feeling was far from unique.²⁵

In *The Algerine Spy*, Mehemet finally drops the idea of using Rhode Island as an “Ottoman Malta in America” as he grows convinced that quarrels between the American states are in reality superficial and hide a stronger sense of solidarity. Their factions, he rationalizes, should not “invite foes, since, on the first appearance of hostilities, they would undoubtedly unite in repelling invasion. Even the unworthy conduct of Rhode-Island will not stimulate the other states to oppress or desert an unenlightened or unprincipled sister” (113-14). Once again, Markoe via Mehemet makes a case for a community of purpose to protect American national interests.

At the end of the story, Markoe voices an ultimate plea for nationalism by having the Algerine spy renounce his country and adopt America as his new homeland. Realizing that he can no longer render any “essential service” to his country in America, Mehemet demands permission to return to Algiers, but he is discretely advised to “never think” about it any more. Like Marana’s Turkish spy Mahmut, Mehemet has enemies at home who conspire to smear his reputation by accusing him

of apostasy and desertion. He is informed that “The Rabbi, with whom thou hadst some acquaintance at Lisbon has affected thy ruin by the blackest calumnies [and] has represented thee to the regency as a christian and a fugitive from thy country” (116). But while Marana’s protagonist vigorously denies the calumnies to the last letter, Mehemet chooses to defect to the enemy with a final flourish worth quoting at length:

“RUINED, didst thou say? – No; I am preserved. I am free and delight in the freedom of others, and am no longer either a slave or a tyrant. At once a christian and a Pennsylvanian, I am doubly an advocate for the rights of mankind....How am I afflicted, when I recollect, that, in all possible cases, the laws of the country, which I meant to betray, would have protected me from insult and injury...

“I shall close my affairs in Africa and Europe, and establish my future tranquillity on the pillars of freedom, justice, friendship and religion.

“Algiers! thou, who hast often beheld me, animated by glory, or incited by avarice...who hast often welcomed thy returning son, adorned with trophies and loaded with spoils....Algiers, thou witness of my glory and disgrace, farewell [sic]! And thou Pennsylvania, who hast promised to succour and protect the unhappy, that fly to thee for refuge, open thy arms to receive Mehemet the Algerine, who, formerly a mahometan, and thy foe, has renounced his enmity, his country and his religion, and hopes, protected by thy laws, to enjoy, in the

evening of his days, the united blessings of FREEDOM and CHRISTIANITY. FAREWEL [sic].” (126, 128-29).

The defection and conversion of Mehemet are designed to tighten the definition of national identity. How does Mehemet become a Pennsylvanian? The question echoes similar ones in Montesquieu (“*Comment peut-on être Persan?*”) and in Crèvecoeur (“What, then, is the American, this new man?”). Montesquieu’s question had an ironic, supra-nationalist meaning: how can anyone be Persian, European, or any other nationality for that matter? In Markoe’s America, the question had a literal, functional significance having to do with the gestation of a new nationality in a land of immigration. Writing only five years before *The Algerine Spy*, Crèvecoeur was one of the first American intellectuals to deal with “the concept of national citizenship” which, as Linda Kerber reminds us, had been very recently invented in the era of the American Revolution.²⁶ Crèvecoeur had established one of the earliest and major myths in the cultural politics of the United States by arguing that Americans were European immigrants who shed their European skin and melted into a new race or nation: “a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. From this promiscuous breed, that race now called Americans have arisen... Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men... Americans are the western pilgrims... The Americans were once scattered all over Europe; here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared.”²⁷

Though more liberal in matters of immigration and citizenship than elsewhere,²⁸ postcolonial America was nevertheless imagined in Eurocentric terms. Pamphlets promoting

immigration after 1776 continued to focus on Europe as the sole point of origin of emigrants to America,²⁹ and ethnic groups other than European were disqualified from nationality. Although Crèvecoeur wrote empathetically about Indians and Africans, he did not include them in his vision of an American nationality. Far from being an isolated vision, this way of imagining and constructing the nation produced the Naturalization Act of 1790, by the First Congress under the new Constitution, which racialized citizenship by limiting the privilege of naturalization for a very long time to “free white persons.”³⁰

America was also conceived to be Anglicized and Protestant. The predominantly English heritage in early American history led to the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon, Protestant standard. Throughout the colonial period, “Americans had tended to assume that...differences of language, culture, and religion would prevent the growth of a common loyalty.”³¹ The same assumptions of assimilation through Anglo-conformity were held well into the postcolonial period.³² In promoting the new constitution, John Jay did not hesitate to mythologize that “Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country to one united people; a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs.”³³

A distinct bias towards Protestantism continued among many Americans despite the promotion of religious liberty and tolerance by various states and the federal government. In *The Algerine Spy*, Mehemet’s bigotry targets Catholics and Jews while sparing Protestants: “Portugal is not my object...Ignorance, sloth and barbarism characterise her sons, and her daughters are the victims of pride and superstition.

Her streets swarm with monks, and her convents are crowded with nuns” (58-59). As for the Jews of Portugal: “The Hebrew religion [is] odious to the people and obnoxious to the government” (56). It is also a Jewish Rabbi, the stereotype of Judas, who in the end denounces Mehemet to the Algerian authorities. Markoe is clearly not interested, as Montesquieu was, in a critique of organized religion as a system of authority or superstition or dogma or ritual; nor is he setting up a misinformed prejudice that will be dismissed through experience and knowledge. Montesquieu’s Oriental personae start as dogmatic believers in the superiority of Islam (all reasonableness and enlightenment) over Christianity (all dogma and superstition), but they soon discover inconsistencies everywhere, adopt a skeptical attitude across the board, condemn self-righteousness and promote tolerance. Mehemet’s abuse of Catholicism and Judaism and his final abandonment of Islam are expressions of self-righteous Protestantism.

Markoe’s narrative is a valuable cultural document that gives a sense of the ideological parameters involved in the contemporaneous conceptions of nationality and citizenship. Markoe subscribed entirely to Crèvecoeur’s view of assimilation and citizenship, so the Algerine spy had to be thoroughly whitewashed before he could be embraced as “one of us.” The closure confirms the fundamental design and cultural significance of the narrative as a deliberate contribution to the construction of nationhood. Mehemet’s spying mission is only a context/pretext for his Americanization and the knowledge he collects ultimately serves the higher purpose of his becoming an American. Spying turns out to be an allegory of self-discovery, a process of interiorizing the values and institutions of the country he will finally adopt. But domestication into Americanness requires a total denial of the original self. Mehemet’s ties with the past had to be severed in order for

him to be re-invented as a “new man.” He has to repudiate his original identity, culture, religion, values, prejudices, world outlook and human ties. His son dies. His wife Fatima elopes with their former Spanish slave, converts to Christianity and renames herself Maria. He liquidates his affairs in Algiers and assists Maria in her new life. Mehemet’s Americanization amounts to cultural suicide, but Markoe presents it (in Crèvecoeur’s terms) as emancipation, salvation, regeneration. Mehemet considers himself “preserved” not only from political danger at home but also from his original culture and self. Clearly, the concepts of nation and citizenship in *The Algerine Spy* are structures of power with rigorous exclusionary demands. This may be at odds with a civic and political culture that celebrates inclusion. On the one hand, the narrative celebrates American culture as being at once liberal and republican; on the other hand, it expresses the predominantly ethnocentric spirit of the time by promoting a normative view of American nationality. It is one of the fundamental ironies of the young republic that such exclusionary demands should be considered prerequisites for an ideal of salvation predicated on political liberalism and Christian charity (“the united blessings of FREEDOM and CHRISTIANITY”) and destined unabashedly to advocate the universal “rights of mankind.”

In comparative perspective, Marana, Montesquieu and Goldsmith used the self as other to criticize the self. The mask of the foreign observer in them is what Van Roosbroeck calls “a pretext for spiritual *depersonalization*,” whereby the European attitude of mind is discarded and a “timeless critical intellect” is unloosened.³⁴ Their masquerade involved balancing out cultures and prejudices to promote tolerance. They departed from the Eurocentric travel account to cultivate a new genre complete with a new perspective and philosophy, and may fairly be considered the early anthropologists of

transnationalism or transculturalism. Montesquieu and Goldsmith codified the new genre with a critical spirit visible in their sustained assaults on dogma, intolerance and blind nationalism. By avoiding the spy figure, they had better opportunities to question nationalism and intolerance. They were, relatively speaking, the enlightened heralds of post-nationalist, cosmopolitan universality, and as such far ahead of the average European. Montesquieu's self-portrait in *Les Cahiers* comes to mind: "*Je suis homme avant d'être Français...je suis nécessairement homme...et je ne suis Français que par hasard.*"

Markoe, on the other hand, was interested in "national character" per se (54) and used the self as Other to define and promote a nation among nations. He was the more authentic product and representative of the age of nationalism, more specifically the product and representative of a new nation engaged in constructing its national identity. The touch that Markoe brought to the Turkish Spy genre resided essentially in subverting the approach of Montesquieu and Goldsmith for a nationalist agenda that inevitably entailed intolerance. He used the genre as a strategy of persuasion to help bring the nation forth. Whereas Goldsmith's Lien Chi becomes a better human being as "a citizen of the world" ("the whole world being but one city to me, I don't much care in which of the streets I happen to reside"³⁵), Markoe's Mehemet becomes a Pennsylvanian and a citizen of the nascent United States, which is his definition of a better human being.

It is instructive at this point to look at Washington Irving's own use of the Oriental observer and his approach to nation and citizenship. Like the literati of his day, Irving was familiar with Montesquieu, who was frequently cited in American political literature, and with Goldsmith, who enjoyed "unparalleled vogue in the United States in the last decades of the

eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth.” Irving acknowledged Goldsmith as his favorite author and wrote a biography of him which he called a “labor of love...a tribute of gratitude to the memory of an author whose writings were the delight of my childhood, and have been a source of enjoyment to me throughout life.”³⁶

In 1807-08, twenty years after the publication of *The Algerine Spy in Pennsylvania*, young Washington Irving published his first book, *Salmagundi or The Whim-Whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff, Esq. & Others*.³⁷ Like *The Algerine Spy*, *Salmagundi* was published in small format (“so small that it could be carried in a lady’s purse”), and it was also popular (“In the literary history of New York, its publication was distinctly an event. On one day alone eight hundred copies were sold”).³⁸ The book included nine sizeable letters purportedly “written by Mustapha Rub-A-Dub Keli Khan to Asem Hacchem, principal slave-driver to his highness the Bashaw of Tripoli.” The narrator of *Salmagundi* makes the familiar claim that he has received “a bundle of papers, containing among other articles, several copies of letters” which Mustapha had written to his friends in Tripoli and which have been translated from “arabic-greek” (78).

Though *Salmagundi* was actually a collaborative work written by Washington Irving, his brother William and his friend James Kirke Paulding, the Mustapha letters are attributed to Washington Irving. According to his biographer Williams, “Irving’s own hand is everywhere in the Mustapha papers...Irving was responsible for a large share of the political satire of *Salmagundi*.”³⁹ Irving took his model from the Turkish Spy/Oriental observer genre and his fictional character from the historical records of the Tripolitan War of 1804, during which seven Tripolitan prisoners had been brought by Commodore Edward Preble to New York aboard the U.S.S.

John Adams in February 1805 (1130).⁴⁰ Mustapha is described as “a most illustrious Captain of a Ketch, who figured some time since, in our fashionable circles, at the head of a ragged regiment of tripolitan prisoners” (78).

Obviously, there are many similarities between Markoe’s and Irving’s pieces, in details and in fundamentals. Both used modified versions of the Turkish Spy genre although Irving’s “spy” is a prisoner of war, and both used the epistolary conventions of the genre. Both drew their inspiration from their country’s foreign relations with the Barbary States and both used North African personae as foreign observers. Both based their foreign observers in America’s most important cities at the turn of the nineteenth century, meant them to be mirrors reflecting American manners and concerns, and were very much aware of the significance of nation making for the post-colonial generation.

However, the dissimilarities between the two pieces are equally significant. Markoe and Irving wrote twenty years apart, and the passage of time accounts for important differences in spirit and outlook. Markoe and Irving belonged to opposite ends of that “critical” period in American history between independence and Jefferson’s second term, which really amounted to belonging to two different generations. Twenty-odd years may be considered a short period of time, yet the American nation had developed tremendously during that period. The country had doubled in surface and in population. Political parties had come into existence and American society began to move from consensus to discord (or “chaos,” as Irving would have it), from imagined homogenization to the reality of pluralism.

The perception of nation, nationalism and citizenship had changed accordingly. One can cull a literary measure of that change by considering the differences between Markoe and

Irving in the use of the foreign observer mask. Markoe dealt with beginnings: he witnessed the birth pangs of the nation, was candidly concerned about its future, cultivated homogenization, and was generally grave in tone. Writing at the end of Jefferson's second mandate, Irving perceived that the new order developing in the young republic was one of competing voices. Irving leaned to the conservative rather than the radical side, had a hard time accepting certain aspects of the rising Democratic-Republican ethos and strove to criticize it. He submitted the national experiment to irreverent, even scathing, satire. While Markoe promoted the idea of a nation and the sentiment of nationalism, Irving embarked on a satirical vendetta, targeting national ideology, national leaders, national institutions and various symbols of national sovereignty.

Irving's nationalism was fundamentally more restrained than Markoe's, and certainly not the chauvinistic kind. In his conception of citizenship, he put a premium on oppositional liberalism rather than conformity, and his use of the foreign observer was consequently very different from Markoe's. Irving had announced that *Salmagundi* was to be "the quintessence of modern criticism."⁴¹ In effect, he manifested in that text his early quest for a balanced view of American society and manners. He would defend his country against foreign travelers who wrote condescendingly on American manners, but he would just as easily adopt the mask of a foreign observer to criticize those manners. His narrator describes himself as someone "particularly attentive to the manners and conversation of strangers," someone who has "no national antipathies," just as Mustapha is described as "magnanimous" (77, 78).

Unsurprisingly, Irving constructed his "modern criticism" along Montesquieu's satirical technique of reversing stereotypes and prejudices. The typical American views of Barbary

were now reversed against Americans by a dignified, even condescending, native of Barbary. Mustapha “possesses as much the semblance of a Mahomedan as it is possible for fiction to give” and his opinions of Americans “are formed on the prejudices of his own nation.”⁴² In this respect, Mustapha is a better fictional creation than Markoe’s Mehemet whose veil of a foreign observer is much too transparent.

Whereas Americans may consider themselves “the most enlightened nation under the sun,” for Mustapha they are “a people whom we have been accustomed to consider as unenlightened barbarians” (80). They are more like “our barbarians of the desert [sic]” who also boast of being the most enlightened people under the sun and yet go on “shooting arrows at the sun to extinguish its burning rays” (81). In the eyes of the conservative North African, Americans come forth as irrationally quixotic idealists whose national experiment with republican-democratic government leads to demagoguery —

[Americans are governed by] “a grand and most puissant bashaw, whom they dignify with the title of President, [who] is chosen by persons, who are chosen by an assembly elected by the people—hence the mob is called the *sovereign people*—and the country, *free*; the body politic doubtless resembling a vessel, which is best governed by its tail.... One would suppose that being all free and equal, they would harmonize as brothers.... This theory is most exquisite, my good friend, but in practice it turns out the very dream of a madman. Equality, Asem, is one of the most consummate scoundrels that ever crept from the brain of a political juggler” (81, 259) —

and chaos:

“I find that the people of this country are strangely at a loss to determine the nature and proper character of their government. Even their dervishes are extremely in the dark as to this particular, and are continually indulging in the most preposterous disquisitions on the subject; some have insisted that it savors of an *aristocracy*; others maintain that it is a *pure* democracy; and a third set of theorists declare absolutely that it is nothing more nor less than a *mobocracy*. The latter, I must confess, though still wide in error, have come nearest to the truth” (143).

The American republic is also seen as “a pure unadulterated LOGOCRACY or *government of words*” (144). Mustapha selects Congress as the national institution which best incarnates the “government of words”:

“In nothing is the verbose nature of this government more evident, than in its grand national divan, or congress, where the laws are framed; this is a blustering windy assembly where everything is carried by noise, tumult and debate; for thou must know, that the members of this assembly do not meet together to find out wisdom in the multitude of counsellors, but to wrangle, call each other hard names and hear *themselves talk*” (147).

As for the institution of elections, Mustapha calls it “that great political puppet-show” where an orgy of beer is offered to the populace and “a most *delectable courtship* or intrigue [is] carried on between the great bashaws, and *mother mob*” (202, 207, 208).

In terms of economy, Americans may strive for ideal economic management, but the complexity of democratic government is such that the simplest matter will inevitably engender wasteful mismanagement:

“The nation moves most majestically slow and clumsy in the most trivial affairs, like the unwieldy elephant, which makes a formidable difficulty of picking up a straw! The administration have the good of the people too much at heart to trifle with their pockets; and they would sooner assemble and *talk* away ten thousand dollars, than expend fifty silently out of the treasury; such is the wonderful spirit of *economy*, that pervades every branch of this government” (179-80).

Public manifestations of nationalism are particularly covered with ridicule. He scorns “military foppery” and makes fun of a grotesque military parade: “their rulers had decided that there was no need for soldiers...However, it was thought highly ornamental to a city to have a number of men drest in fine clothes and *feathers*, strutting about the streets on a holiday” (112, 116). The same treatment goes for those orgies of nationalism he calls “patriotick dinners”:

“Oh Asem! couldst thou but witness one of these patriotick, these monumental dinners—how furiously the flame of patriotism blazes forth—how suddenly they vanquish armies, subjugate whole countries, and exterminate nations in a bumper....At these moments every coward becomes a hero....Toast succeeds toast—kings, emperors, bashaws, are like chaff before the tempest; the inspired patriot vanquishes fleets with a single gun-boat, and swallows down navies at a

draught, until overpowered with victory and wine, he sinks upon the field of battle—dead drunk in his country's cause—Sword of the puissant Khalid! What a display of valour is here!—the sons of Africk are hardy, brave and enterprising; but they can achieve nothing like this” (296).

The presidency, symbol of national sovereignty, receives its share of satire. Mustapha remarks that “the present bashaw [Thomas Jefferson] is a very plain old gentleman—something they say of a humorist, as he amuses himself with impaling butterflies and pickling tadpoles; he is rather declining in popularity, having given great offence by wearing red breeches, and tying his horse to a post” (81). Jefferson's gunboat program as a solution to American problems on the high seas, is also jeered at: “instead of formidable first rates and gallant frigates, out crept a litter of sorry little gunboats! These are the most pitiful little vessels, partaking vastly of the character of the grand bashaw, who has the credit of begetting them” (182).⁴³

In spirit and in manner, Washington Irving came closer than Peter Markoe to Montesquieu's and Goldsmith's conception of the foreign observer genre. Via Mustapha, Irving's satirical free spirit struck a resolutely dissonant chord with the self-congratulatory, ideology-based, nationalistic literature that Americans like Markoe had used for nation building. Ironically, this was to no small degree made possible by the very political conditions he was up against, which was not the case for his European predecessors. In a memorial to Irving in 1860, William Cullen Bryant made the shrewd remark that *Salmagundi* was “manifestly written without the fear of criticism before the eyes of the authors [who had enjoyed] a sense of perfect freedom in the exercise of their genius.”⁴⁴ Ironically

too, Irving's sustained satire of the democratic experiment ended up reinforcing that experiment by contributing to the birth of a critical, oppositional tradition in American literature.

Peter Markoe and Washington Irving americanized the Oriental spy/observer genre to chronicle the birth and growth of their nation. Both were concerned with identity politics that they sought to express in literary representation, and both resolved to use the persona of a North African observer in the context of the Barbary Wars to historicize and highlight their conceptions of American nationality. Interestingly enough, Markoe's and Irving's versions of the foreign observer provided remarkably dissimilar perceptions of the emerging nation and of national citizenship. Markoe contributed to framing the original hegemonic myths of American nationality, which makes him all the more interesting in the debate on multiculturalism. As for Irving, he may fairly be credited with having contributed to the demythification of American nationalism by ushering a tradition of oppositional citizenship so vital to that debate.

"Of the nation's enduring traditions," wrote two historians recently, "none is more striking in its significance than the deeply ingrained inwardness of national feeling that marks to this day the American outlook. Foreign observers have always been impressed by this trait, which they have not hesitated to identify with the parochialism of Americans."⁴⁵ The use of the self as other looking at the self confirms that inwardness in an oblique way. Obliqueness, nonetheless, validates outwardness as a pertinent and valuable perspective. Outwardness and otherness retain significance because they are symptomatic of a historically-verifiable pattern in the definition of the self. Just as colonial Puritans had often defined their Puritaness in contradistinction with Islamic heresy, the use of Barbary as a

strategy to define Americanness in the early national period established the Middle East in the role of a significantly contrastive Other against which the American self is frequently defined. This is an important, though neglected, element in the history of cultural perceptions that have shaped relations between the United States and the Middle East.

Notes

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¹ Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People* (New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India, 1980) 65.

² Lotfi Ben Rejeb, "North Africa as *Barbary*: "Imagined Community" and Toponymic Politics" *Revue Tunisienne des Langues Vivantes*, 9 (1999) 59-86.

³ The first foreign war of the US was immortalized in the US Marines' Hymn *From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli*. See Gardner W. Allen, *Our Navy and the Barbary Corsairs* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1905); Henry G. Barnby, *The Prisoners of Algiers. An Account of the Forgotten American-Algerian War, 1785-97* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966); Ray W. Irwin, *The Diplomatic Relations of the US with the Barbary Powers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1913); Glenn Tucker, *Dawn Like Thunder: The Barbary Wars and the Birth of the US Navy* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963).

⁴ Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the United States of America, and the Bey and Subjects of Tripoli, of Barbary (1796); see also the subsequent treaty with Tripoli (1805); Treaty of Peace and Amity Concluded

between the United States of America and his Highness Omar Bashaw, Dey of Algiers (1815).

⁵ Charles A. Lofgren, “War Powers, Treaties, and the Constitution” *The Framing and Ratification of the Constitution*, ed. Leonard W. Levy and Dennis J. Mahoney (New York: Macmillan, 1987) 246. Among other things, the Constitution empowered the US government with provisions related to piracies and felonies committed on the high seas, rules concerning the use of war and the repulsion of invasions, and measures for the creation and maintenance of a Navy.

⁶ David Potter cites Heinrich von Treischke in “The Historian’s Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa” *History and American Society: Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) 82; Leonard W. Doob, *Patriotism and Nationalism: Their Psychological Foundations* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976) 256; Linda Colley cites Peter Sahlin in *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992) 5-6. See also Ross Stagner and Charles E. Osgood, “Impact of War on a Nationalistic Frame of Reference” *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 24 (1946) 187-215; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

⁷ The full title is: *Letters of Shahcoolun, a Hindu Philosopher, residing in Philadelphia; to his friend El Hassan, an inhabitant of Delhi* (Boston: Printed by Russell and Cutler, 1802). This first work of Samuel Lorenzo Knapp, published at the age of nineteen, is a trivial hodge-podge of topics and citations (Mary Woolstonecraft, women’s rights, Hinduism, the Gitagovinda, Hindu poetry, poetry of the Scriptures, American poetry, etc.). The entry to the author in the *Dictionary of American Biography* dismisses it as “juvenile” and adds: “To Montesquieu and Goldsmith it owes little except its title.”

⁸ Suspicion of foreignness was widespread in Europe. Elizabethan literature was also filled with narratives that could be read as spy stories using foreign observers or secret agents who filed reports in inconspicuous letters and entertained devious schemes of infiltration and subversion. See Robert W. Maslen, *Elizabethan Fictions. Espionage, Counter-Espionage, and the*

Duplicity of Fiction in Early Elizabethan Prose Narratives (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

⁹ Beginning in 1684 with a modest duodecimo volume of thirty letters, Marana's work grew into a major European prototype and "reached its ultimate size in the solid set of nine volumes...containing over seven hundred letters." See Joseph Tucker, "The *Turkish Spy* and its French Background," *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 32:1 (1958) 74. See also Giovanni P. Marana, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy*, ed. Arthur J. Weitzman (New York: Columbia University Press; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) Introduction; Safa Fadel Shimi, *Portrait d'un espion du dix-septième siècle. Jean-Paul Marana: L'Espion dans les cours des princes chrétiens* (Lathrup Village, MI: International Book Publishers, 1980).

¹⁰ *The London Spy* (1698-1700) was issued in seven editions and was followed by *The French Spy* (1700), *The Golden Spy* (1709), and *The Northern Atalantis: or, York Spy* (1713). Montesquieu diversified the genre by dropping the spy figure and adopting a new title in *Les Lettres Persanes* (1721). Le Marquis d'Argens imitated him in *Les Lettres Chinoises* (1739), which was translated as *The Chinese Letters*, while his *Lettres Juives* (1739) was, interestingly enough, translated as *The Jewish Spy* (1742). *The German Spy* appeared in 1738. Horace Walpole's *Letters from Xo Ho, a Chinese Philosopher in London to his Friend Lien Chi in Pekin* (1757) was closely emulated by Oliver Goldsmith in *Chinese Letters* (1761), later published under the title of *The Citizen of the World* (1762). Goldsmith used the same character of an upright philosopher from Pekin named Lien Chi, but he was also familiar with Marana and Montesquieu; see A. Lytton Sells, *Oliver Goldsmith. His Life and Works* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974) 241-42. See also Weitzman, xvi-xvii; Gustave L. Van Roosbroeck, *Persian Letters Before Montesquieu* (New York: Publications of the Institute of French Studies, Inc., 1932); Alessandro S. Crisafulli, "L'observateur oriental avant les 'Lettres Persanes'," *Les Lettres Romanes*, 8:2 (1954) 91-113.

¹¹ In the seventeenth century, hundreds of works dealing with the Orient had inundated Europe relaying stock images and attitudes rooted in the Crusades. In France alone, where Marana lived, over one hundred works of fiction dealing with the Orient were published between 1650 and 1720,

and approximately one hundred travel accounts between 1670 and 1735. See Crisafulli, 91-92.

¹² Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969) 319.

¹³ The *Turkish Spy*, remarks Tucker, documents “that important movement at the end of the seventeenth century which Paul Hazard has called *la crise de la conscience européenne*”: that “revolutionary” passage from stability to movement, from authority to contestation, from absolutism to relativity, from dogmatism to skepticism. See Tucker, 74. See also Paul Hazard, *La Crise de la Conscience Européenne, 1680-1715* (1935; Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1961) Introduction; Chapter I explains how the perspective and relativism afforded by travel had contributed immensely to cultural change.

¹⁴ Marana set the spy tone when he referred to “secret documents” in his original Italian manuscript to Louis XIV *L'espion turco e le di lui pratiche segrete con la Porta Ottomana*, or “The Turkish Explorer (or Investigator) and his Secret Documents to the Sublime Porte.” The original French translation introduced the word “spy” in the title (*L'espion du Grand-Seigneur, et ses relations secrètes envoyées au Divan de Constantinople*) which was used in subsequent translations. See William H. McBurney, “The Authorship of *The Turkish Spy*,” *PMLA*, 72:5 (1957) 917. Other French translations: *L'Espion dans les cours des princes chrétiens*; *L'Espion dans les cours du Grand Seigneur*. See Crisafulli, 100-01.

¹⁵ Among his notable acquaintances in Philadelphia were fellow-poet Philip Freneau, the printer-publisher Matthew Carey, and his patron and leader of the Anti-Federalist Party, William Findley. Markoe was buried in Christ Church Cemetery, Philadelphia. The biographical information was gathered by Sister Mary Chrysostom Diebels in her Ph.D. dissertation entitled *Peter Markoe (1752?-1792): A Philadelphia Writer* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1944). See Chapter I “The Life and Ideas of Peter Markoe.” The citation about *Patriot Chief* is from page 23.

¹⁶ (Philadelphia: Printed and Sold by Prichard & Hall, 1787). References to the work will be included in the text.

¹⁷ Joseph Jackson, *Literary Landmarks of Philadelphia*, 228.

¹⁸ A substantial portion of the population, perhaps even the majority, were Anti-Federalist. See Jackson Turner Main, *The Antifederalists: Critics of the Constitution, 1781-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961); Herbert J. Storing, ed. *The Complete Anti-Federalist*, 7 vols. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981); Michael Lienesch, "In Defense of the Anti-Federalists," *History of Political Thought*, 4 (1983) 65-87.

¹⁹ Catherine Drinker Bowen, *Miracle at Philadelphia. The Story of the Constitutional Convention, May to September 1787* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966) 41.

²⁰ Noah Webster, *Sketches of American Policy* (1785), in Richard N. Current, et al., eds. *Words That Made American History*. 2 vols. 3rd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978) 1: 214.

²¹ Bowen, 214.

²² Rhode Island's boycott of the Convention had provoked angry nationalist jibes everywhere, from state newspapers to the highest national leaders. A Bostonian newspaper "called Rhode Island *Rogue Island* in disgust" and recommended that the small state "be dropped out of the Union or apportioned to the different States which surround her." Another commentator thought the conduct of Rhode Island shameful enough "to cause the savages of the wilderness to blush." George Washington regretted that "Rhode Island still perseveres in that impolitic – unjust – and one might add without much impropriety scandalous conduct." Jefferson dismissed Rhode Island as the "little *vaut-rien*"—literally, good-for-nothing. See Bowen, 13. As for Shays' rebellion, there is a broad consensus among historians that the insurrection in Massachusetts was an important catalyst for the adoption of the Constitution. See George Bancroft, *History of the Formation of the Constitution of the United States of America*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1882); Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the*

American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969); Albert A. Feer, "Shays's Rebellion and the Constitution: A Study in Causation," *New England Quarterly*, 42 (1969) 388-410.

²³ Alexander Hamilton once remarked: "the weak side of republican government is the danger of foreign influence." See Bowen, 132. In his Farewell Address, which bears the mark of Hamilton, George Washington would express the same concern and plead for national unity in the face of foreign influence: "the united mass of means and efforts [guarantees] greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations [...] Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake; since history and experience prove, that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of Republican Government." See George Washington, "Farewell Address to the People of the United States" (1796), in Richard N. Current, et al., 1: 248, 254.

²⁴ Bowen, 131.

²⁵ "There must have been other small-state men who had said the like in private...Bedford's outburst had forced into the open an issue that was at the back of everyone's mind: the dangers of foreign intervention and foreign bribes, though until today no state had used it as a threat against her sisters in the Convention." Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts was ominous: "If we do not come to some agreement among ourselves, some foreign sword will probably do the work for us." See Bowen, 131-32.

²⁶ Linda K. Kerber, "The Meanings of Citizenship," *The Journal of American History*, 84:3 (1997) 833.

²⁷ Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) in *An Early American Reader*, ed. J.A. Leo Lemay (Washington, DC: United States Information Agency, 1988) 119-20. Modern historians have dismissed Crèvecoeur's notion that an immigrant could shed his culture the way a snake sheds his skin as romantic "nonsense." See Daniels, 102.

²⁸ Kerber, 834.

²⁹ Harry Toulmin, *Thoughts on Emigration, to Which are Added, Miscellaneous Observations relating to the United States of America* ([London]: Printed in October, 1792); see also Thomas Cooper, *Some Information Respecting America* (Dublin: Printed by William Porter, 1794).

³⁰ *United States Statutes at Large*, 1:103.

³¹ Maldwyn Allen Jones, *American Immigration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960) 40. Ben Franklin bitterly denounced German immigrants (whom he called “Palatine Boors”) for resisting Anglo-conformity and living in a separate community in his state: “Why should *Pennsylvania*, founded by the *English*, become a Colony of *Aliens*, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them?” cited in Leonard Dinnerstein, et al., *Natives and Strangers: Ethnic Groups and the Building of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) 23. In “Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind,” Ben Franklin noted that “purely white people” were outnumbered in the world and wished to see more of the English (the “principle Body of white People”) in America; see *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, Conn.: 1959-) 4:234.

³² Immigration and assimilation have been widely studied; see, for example, Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); Leonard Dinnerstein and Frederic Cople Jaher, eds., *The Aliens: A History of Ethnic Minorities in America* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970); Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990); Ronald T. Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Ellis Cose, *A Nation of Strangers: Prejudice, Politics, and the Populating of America* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1992); Alden T. Vaughan, *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (Oxford University Press, 1995); see also Gary Gerstle, “Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans,” David A. Hollinger, “National Solidarity at the End of the Twentieth Century: Reflections on the United States and Liberal Nationalism” and Donna R. Gabaccia,

“Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Immigration Historians” all in a special forum of *The Journal of American History*, 84:2 (1997).

³³ *The Federalist Papers*, 7.

³⁴ Van Roosbroeck, 10-11.

³⁵ Oliver Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World, or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher, residing in London, to His Friends in the East*. 2 vols. (Philadelphia: B. Davies, 1802) 2: 219.

³⁶ Washington Irving, *Oliver Goldsmith: A Biography*, ed. Elsie Lee West (Boston: Twayne, 1978), xv, 3-4.

³⁷ References to *Salmagundi* in the text are from Washington Irving, *History, Tales and Sketches* (New York: The Library of America, 1983).

³⁸ Stanley T. Williams, *The Life of Washington Irving*. 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1935) 1:78.

³⁹ Williams, 2:268, 271.

⁴⁰ See also *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars With the Barbary Powers*, 6 vols. (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1944) 6:162.

⁴¹ Williams, 1:78.

⁴² Ralph M. Aderman, *Critical Essays on Washington Irving* (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1990) 42.

⁴³ See also Williams, 2:268-69.

⁴⁴ William Cullen Bryant, “Discourse on the Life, Character, and Genius of Washington Irving,” in Andrew B. Myers, ed., *A Century of Commentary on the Works of Washington Irving* (Tarrytown, NY: Sleepy Hollow Restorations, 1976) 9.

⁴⁵ Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) 249.

