contribution to the ongoing endeavor insisted on by Hannah Arendt in her prologue to *The Human Condition*: to "think what we are doing."

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Michael D. Hattem. *The Memory of '76: The Revolution in American History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2024. Pp. 360. $35.00 (cloth).

American memory is riddled by a series of striking dualities. John Adams often stands as Thomas Jefferson's foil (and vice versa). The Constitution frames the Declaration of Independence (or perhaps the other way around). Seemingly irreconcilable ideals such as liberty and equality, majority rule and minority rights, and independence and interdependence are repeatedly yoked together in the long arc of our political rhetoric. It's enough to make one wonder why the bald eagle on the nation's Great Seal has one head instead of two.

Duality is very much at the heart of *The Memory of '76*, historian Michael D. Hattem's crisply written, meticulously researched, and well-timed study of how dueling interpretations of the American Revolution have shaped the nation over the past 250 years. Beginning with the aftermath of George Washington's death at the turn of the nineteenth century and ending with the January 6th assault on the US Capitol, Hattem examines how Americans have continuously drawn on the revolutionary past to answer some of the most pressing questions of their own time. Covering a dizzying array of politicians, activists, artists, writers, business owners, historians, preservationists, and ordinary citizens, Hattem explores the myriad ways in which Americans have reimagined the nation's origins and mobilized these reconstructions to either advocate for change or defend against it.

Noting that "there is no single correct, undebatable interpretation of the Revolution" (7), Hattem ultimately argues that memory of the American Revolution has more often served to divide Americans than to unite them. This conclusion contrasts with the thesis he advanced in his previous book *Past and Prologue* (2020), which studied how the evolution of a shared historical consciousness among the American colonists facilitated their separation from Great Britain in 1776. Although Hattem marshals a bevy of careful evidence in *The Memory of '76* to support his claims regarding the Revolution's divided legacy, he understates the extent to which some of his sources have succeeded in harmonizing the American past and its present.

The democratization of the Revolution's memory serves as a key through line throughout the book. As Hattem details, the wartime narratives that

accompanied the growing flood of pension applications by revolutionary veterans marked one of the first times that non-elites succeeded in centering their contributions to American independence—a widening of the pantheon of founding heroes that would become a tradition in American civic memory. As the nineteenth century wore on, antislavery activists, suffragettes, and proslavery voices all capitalized on the Revolution's memory for their own ends. For example, Hattem highlights how William Cooper Nell's 1855 biography of Crispus Attucks and other "colored patriots of the American Revolution" recovered African Americans' role in the Revolution and turned Attucks into a powerful abolitionist symbol. He also considers how abolitionists fought over the Declaration's relationship with the Constitution, culminating in Abraham Lincoln's reconciliatory framework and Frederick Douglass's antislavery reading of the Constitution that Hattem characterizes as "a coherent memory of the Revolution not just as a historical event but as an ongoing process" (71). While he describes the effort by Southern women to preserve George Washington's home at Mount Vernon as "aimed at . . . expanding the South's claim to the nation's revolutionary heritage," Hattem's study of the Confederacy's relationship with the Revolution only reinforces the degree to which the South struggled with the legacy of independence (80). Seceding Southerners may have bandied about tea metaphors and lauded Thomas Jefferson as the author of the Kentucky Resolutions, but they despised him for writing the Declaration—a document they found fundamentally incompatible with an ambitious slavocracy.

Although antislavery thinkers such as Douglass may have advanced one of the first "coherent" memories of the Revolution, Hattem argues that this coherence broke down in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The ideals of liberty and equality that Lincoln powerfully connected in his Gettysburg Address became disconnected as they "shifted from being active reform principles to being more generic ideas from the past that were assumed to have been achieved as fully as possible or as was desirable" (98). Reconstruction's failure to secure lasting political and social rights for African Americans was one significant conduit of this evolution, aided and abetted by Southerners who stripped the memory of the Civil War of its origins in slavery and Northerners who accepted the fable of the "Lost Cause." Hattem convincingly shows how unlinking liberty and equality enabled racism to shape the memory of the Revolution at the turn of the twentieth century. The 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia barely featured African American accomplishments (and, in a few cases, barred Black citizens from attending). Democrats adopted a "White Declaration of Independence" before ousting Black political leaders from power in Wilmington, North Carolina, in the 1890s. And when the Liberty Bell embarked on a trip across the country in 1915 to bolster patriotism as war in Europe loomed, white Americans rioted in Arlington, Texas, in response to a Black girl who had kissed the artifact.

Racism fractured and corrupted the integrated view of the Revolution's memory that thinkers like Lincoln and Douglass had forged during the fight against slavery. But Hattem posits that this corruption was a one-two punch, with economic concerns landing the second blow. As class divisions overtook the sectional politics of the Civil War, debates over the Revolution's meaning split between "progressives" who viewed the regime born out of the Revolution as "insufficient to meet the challenges of the new century" and what Hattem calls "conservative liberals" who lionized the founders and opposed economic regulation (141). When Warren G. Harding coined the term "founding fathers" at the Republican National Convention in 1916, Hattem argues that he and his fellow conservative liberals deified the founding generation to retrofit a modern vision of individualism and limited government onto the Revolution that would be incontestable.

This strain of revolutionary memory would endure through the Great Depression and WWII and crystallize in the postwar period into what Hattem describes as the "Cold War memory of the Revolution" (215). Spurred by the threat of global communism, it centered "individual liberty, limited government, and free enterprise" as the founding's core ideals, relinking the Declaration and the Constitution by elevating liberty over equality rather than holding them in productive tension (215). Hattem details how the civil rights movement nevertheless resurrected Douglass and Lincoln's reconciliatory memory of the Revolution by framing their mission for racial justice as a fight to realize the egalitarian and democratic principles of both the Declaration and the Constitution. In the twentieth-century contest between these two coherent memories of the Revolution, however, Hattem believes that the Cold War memory ultimately triumphed, setting the terms for battles over the Revolution's meaning that have endured through the present.

For example, Hattem's account of the Bicentennial accordingly frames the 1976 celebration as a pitched struggle between Nixon-era conservatives who sought to "canonize" and "commercialize" the founding and progressives who criticized the founding generation's exclusion of racial minorities and women from the Revolution's egalitarian promises. At the same time, Hattem notes that the Bicentennial marked a moment when, "for the first time, it became difficult for many white Americans to continue ignoring or dismissing the coexistence of the Revolution and the institution of slavery, and to avoid reckoning with what the Revolution's shortcomings might mean for the nation's past and its present" (260). He credits the historians of the 1960s and 1970s—such as Staughton Lynd, Benjamin Quarles, Fawn Brodie, and Edmund Morgan—for contributing to this shift in the nation's perspective through their scholarship on the Revolution's relationship with political radicalism, race, gender, and slavery. However, Gordon Wood's seminal work on the sociopolitical revolution wrought by

independence, *The Creation of the American Republic* (1969), goes curiously unmentioned.

Indeed, one of the most valuable threads in *The Memory of '76* follows how historians from the early republic onward have gradually widened the aperture of the public's understanding of the Revolution and the nation it created. A century before Charles Beard challenged Americans to reckon with the Revolution as class conflict, Mercy Otis Warren offered what Hattem calls one of the first "original" interpretations of the independence movement. Eschewing the mere regurgitation of military feats, Warren instead framed the conflict as "a series of [moral] struggles between liberty and arbitrary power . . . virtue and corruption" (23). Nell and Quarles meanwhile form part of a long tradition of intellectuals and historians, including nineteenth-century writers Elizabeth F. Ellet and George Washington Williams, who worked to exhume the buried contributions African Americans and women made toward shaping the Revolution and the early republic. Hattem also rightly highlights how Annette Gordon-Reed laid out the definitive case for Thomas Jefferson having fathered children with Sally Hemings—a relationship whose complexity cuts to the great paradox of the nation's founding era and therefore cannot be ignored.

Hattem suggests that the historians he profiles fall on one side or the other of the progressive and conservative approaches to revolutionary memory that his book traces. Although all attempts to engage with the past, even by professional historians, are unavoidably entangled with present concerns, Hattem's two-pronged thesis occasionally layers a Manichean gloss that obfuscates a richer understanding of what happens when people try to make sense of their nation's past. For example, he lambasts the federal government's decision in the 1950s to begin funding professionally edited transcriptions of the papers of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and other founders as part of a "long-standing tradition of celebrating elite individuals" as "gods" (201). This jaundiced view fails to consider how these transcription projects instead continued to democratize the founding. By facilitating access to the full breadth of these founders' writings, they gave ordinary Americans an opportunity to draw their own conclusions regarding these men's role in the Revolution, and thereby the meaning of independence overall. Moreover, through mentions of women, enslaved laborers, and other marginalized Americans, these papers have offered glimpses into the lives of those who otherwise left scant records of their experiences in revolutionary times.

Hattem's more nuanced examination of the "Freedom Train" organized by Harry Truman's administration, which featured a traveling rail exhibition of the Declaration, the Constitution, the Emancipation Proclamation, and hundreds of other founding and Civil War–era documents from the National Archives, similarly belies easy categorization. Although Hattem argues that Truman and other

"economic and political elites" hoped to use the Freedom Train to distract Americans from labor disputes that were emerging in the late 1940s, he also notes that the train was not allowed to run through Southern cities that attempted to impose segregationist policies on the exhibition (204). By rejecting segregation and inviting postwar Americans to reengage with the sources of the nation's commitment to both liberty and equality, the Freedom Train connected the struggle for civil rights to the struggle for independence in a way that anticipated Martin Luther King's framing of the Declaration as a "promissory note." Immensely popular with Americans of all races at the time, though "little remembered now," the Freedom Train, Hattem concludes, "was a memorable and significant event in the lives and civic identities of millions of Americans" (207).

Though it may be a subtle distinction, there is a difference between using the past to change the present and reconciling the present to the past. Despite moments where Hattem sacrifices complexity to reinforce his thesis, *The Memory of '76* is a significant achievement. In its impressive scope and clarity of writing, it stands as a go-to primer for students and academics who seek to grasp how each generation of Americans has related to the nation's revolutionary origins. As the United States approaches its 250th birthday, it also offers an opportune reminder that more work needs to be done to understand how Americans have wrestled with the many paradoxes at the heart of the nation's founding to construct a shared national memory that is both coherent and capable of binding its citizens together in common cause.

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Darrell A. Hamlin and Joseph Romance, eds. *Dark Places: Crime and Politics in the Personal Noir of James Ellroy*. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2023. Pp. 230. $100.00 (cloth); $45.00 (ebook).

In *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville observes that the political psychology of *Federalist* no. 10 is also present in the overlapping jurisdictions of American political institutions, down to the organizational level of county and municipality. On Tocqueville's picture, magistrates, district attorneys, and county prosecutors can check one another's ambitions (and possible transgressions of the law) by taking one another to court, holding one another to law, and leaving free citizens to the business of their daily lives. James Ellroy's crime fiction, memoir, and journalism invert this picture of overlapping jurisdictions. Ellory depicts competing law enforcement agencies fighting over control of cases and losing and