

Both of these books insightfully raise the issue of how to think about identity in a context of multiple sites of oppression. Scholars concerned with the history of identity, power, and change have called our attention to the fact that to “add on” another identity may be descriptively satisfying, but conceptually dangerous. Considering political action as emerging from such an identity context entails thinking about identity as complex and intersubjective—as these authors do. Banaszak chronicles racial discrimination within the women’s movement, pointing out that for the civil rights movement there is no inside-the-state parallel to the case they present. Bice and Maiguashca site the work of Chicana theorists who find that systems of oppression such as sexism, homophobia, and racism are mutually reinforcing, and they propose that more conceptual work be done to understand such dynamics.

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Jason Frank, *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010, 360 pp.

In the past decade and a half, the high tide of American political theory has undergone continual disruption at the hands of a growing insurgency. A number of political theorists continue to challenge the orthodox position that Enlightenment reason, deliberation, legality, legitimacy, and constitutionalism have, from the very beginning, defined the American political experience. In the first disruptive wave, classic political and rhetorical tracts were shown to either reject or skirt accepted norms of deliberative rationality, instead emphasizing alternatives such as protest, passion, narrative, subjectivity and even violence. Kimberly K. Smith’s *The Dominion of Voice* (1999) and Joshua I. Miller’s *Democratic Temperament* (1997) stand out. The second wave in this movement is comparable to the first, though more sophisticated in articulating its theoretical foundations. Its members foreground their historical reconstructions of the American political experience against a background of agonistic political theories advanced by David Owen, Chantal Mouffe, Bonnie Honig, William Connolly, James Tully, and Jacques Rancière, among others.

Jason Frank’s new book can be situated in this second wave. Similar to other agonistic political theorists, he focuses on the affective, aesthetic, and strategic dimensions of politics, while assuming that conflict and struggle are inevitable features of political experience. Discounting the importance of constitutional conventions, elected legislatures, and their formal pronouncements, Frank looks to storytelling, poetry, and improvisation as indicators of “constituent moments” in post-revolutionary/antebellum America. In these moments, unauthorized individuals and organizations speak in the name of “the people.” Infusing public spaces with agonism, not reasoned deliberation, they transform the rules of representation, rather than defer to institutional norms, and some achieve lofty goals only vindicated in the rear-view mirror of history. It is through these successive moments, Frank contends, that “people both menace and ground the political order ... [and] are at once a constituent and constituted power” (p. 7).

The book is organized into seven main chapters. In each, the author elucidates the post-revolutionary phenomenon of individuals and groups speaking on behalf of "the people" by recourse to a specific theoretical-historical perspective. Chapter 1 links popular constitutionalism to Hannah Arendt's historical narratives. Chapter 2 discusses eighteenth-century crowds and theories of representation. Chapter 3 connects crowds and theories of sympathy. Chapter 4 addresses democratic societies and public sphere theory. Chapter 5 relates Charles Brockden Brown's literary reflections to theories of subjectivity. Chapter 6 ties Walt Whitman's poetry to aesthetic theories of democracy. Finally, Chapter 7 discusses Frederick Douglass's anti-slavery rhetoric and its relation to agonistic theories of politics.

In the first chapter, Frank tests Hannah Arendt's "historically situated democratic theory" as a heuristic for reducing the complexity of the post-revolutionary American experience (p. 42). To its credit, Arendt's approach carefully interprets historical sources and avoids the pitfalls of prior accounts of constitutional power, such as Carl Schmitt's decisionism and neo-Kantians' absolutism. However, in her own reconstruction of the American Revolution, Arendt ignores "the people as an agency of constitution-making power," acknowledging only that their representatives participated in the superficial practice of "mutual promising" (p. 45). Although Arendt's historical-theoretical analyses are usually close and insightful, she did not, Frank argues, explore how the voice of the American people emerged as the founding bedrock of the constitutional order. He blames this oversight on the strict distinction she makes between people power and law, as well as a superficial pragmatism she shares in common with the American people: "Arendt's neglect of the problem of constituent power in revolutionary and post-revolutionary America ... may be ... a pragmatic consideration not to dig too deeply into the unavailable foundations of constitutional authority (and, relatedly, to define the people more precisely as the basis of constitutional authorship" (p. 55). Besides neglecting the people's constituent power, Arendt obscures the agonistic politics and struggles to determine who the people are, which were so common during the antebellum period. Thus, Frank roundly rejects Arendt's historical-theoretical framework as a tool for understanding "constituent moments" and the emergence of popular power in post-revolutionary America.

The second and third chapters consider the relationship of crowds to unauthorized invocations of "the people" in the aftermath of the American Revolution. Though crowds are typically associated with the irrationality of rioters and mob rule, Frank casts them in a more positive light in Chapter 2. Direct crowd action is "that which formally and physically exceeded the consolidation of both institutionalized politics of representation and an orderly public sphere" (p. 69). Instances of politically motivated crowd action, from Shays's Rebellion in 1786–1787 to the assault on James Wilson's house in 1779 to ritualistic displays of opposition and support for the ratification of the US Constitution, were commonplace in revolutionary and post-revolutionary America. Despite Federalist portrayals of Antifederalist rallies as anonymous, illegitimate, and illegal, Frank insists that crowds in this period had a quasi-legal status, a self-generated authority of the people "out of doors"—what political theorists nowadays call "the common of the community as a political community" (Jacques Rancière) and "fugitive democracy" (Sheldon Wolin) (p. 99). In Chapter 3, Frank argues that the crowd's capacity to exceed the limits of current constitutional/institutional forms (and norms) has also inspired political theories based on human sympathy.

From David Hume and Adam Smith to Francis Hutcheson and Benjamin Rush, many eighteenth-century thinkers acknowledged that contagious fellow feeling, or “the environmental formation of subjectivity,” could generate political solidarity and regime stability, and just as easily undermine them in the heat of political contestation (p. 118).

Chapters 4 and 5 explore the expansion of subjectivity in this formative period of American history through political societies and literature. In chapter four, Frank highlights the Democratic-Republican societies that sprang up in the 1790s, revealing “widespread postrevolutionary anxieties about the dilemmas of collective self-authorization” and “suggest[ing] some limitations attending the preoccupations of contemporary democratic theory” (p. 129). These societies were not vehicles of dispassionate argumentation and skill-based civic learning, but “spaces of [emergent] political education through theatrical contention”—thereby demonstrating the impoverishment of recent theories of political deliberation that emphasize reason and deny affect (p. 130). Another limitation of contemporary democratic theory, according to Frank, is its inability to integrate a politics of voice with a politics of representation. In Chapter 5, Charles Brockdon Brown’s 1798 novel *Wieland; or the Transformation: An American Tale* becomes a site for what Frank calls “transportive interpellation,” both illustrating how voice functioned in post-revolutionary America and criticizing any authoritative claim to vocalize on behalf of another. Popular demagogues and manipulative propagandists were just as likely as well-meaning politicians to speak on behalf of “the people.” While it is tempting to dismiss Brown’s novel as a politically insignificant piece of literature, the fact that the author mailed it to the then Vice President Thomas Jefferson signals the political import of its message: “[T]o beware of the collective capacity to be seduced by the utterance of popular voice, to beware of captivating fantasies of collective self-presence” (p. 181).

The final two chapters address Walt Whitman’s aesthetic theory of democracy and Frederick Douglas’s “politics of unsettlement,” respectively. Many commentators have noticed that Whitman’s poetry, especially *Leaves of Grass* (1855) and *Democratic Vistas* (1871), suggests how the sublime enters into the lives of average citizens. However, few have argued, as Frank does, that Whitman offered a full-fledged democratic theory. Similar to the Flâneur who strolls through the city’s arcades, always open to the sights and sounds that surround him, Whitman’s citizen wanders the streets shoulder to shoulder with his fellow citizens, engrossed in—as well as renewed by—the force and immediacy of his own political experience. Frank interprets the awakening of Whitman’s faith in aesthetic democracy as symptom of a previous loss of faith in institutional democracy: “[H]e turned away from institutions to an unmediated understanding of the people as the only reliable source of democratic regeneration” (p. 185). While suffering from the vagaries of a poetry never intended to be political theory, Whitman’s aesthetic account of democracy did offer a far-reaching vision of political experience—in Frank’s words, “not . . . a law to be obeyed so much as a capacity to be enacted; the people’s capacity for regeneration becomes the affective source of its political bond” (p. 208). Chapter 8 presents a reading of Frederick Douglas’s anti-slavery rhetoric as a vehicle for what Rancière calls “staging dissensus” or unhinging the status quo in preparation for radical political change. Although Douglas never vindicated his claim to speak for “the people,” history has shown that he did: “Democracy may require us to imagine ourselves as speaking for others, to base

our claims in an authority that always comes after the fact, but it does not provide rules to adjudicate impartially between those claims, or definitively to determine their legitimacy before the fact of their enunciation" (p. 236). Douglas's "politics of unsettlement" was justified *ex post facto* by the moral sentiment and political narratives, not the reasoned argument and dispassionate deliberation, of later generations.

In the conclusion, Frank favorably quotes J.G.A. Pocock: "There is a point at which historical and political theory meet" (p. 237). One of the strengths of the book is the author's impressive command of American post-revolutionary/antebellum history and knowledge of political theory past and present. Recall, however, that two waves of insurgents have challenged the intellectual hegemony of political theories based on rationality and deliberation. In formulating this challenge, the insurgents have chosen the opposite horn of a false dichotomy between affect and reason. Hence, they commit the same error as the theorists they criticize, only in the opposite direction. Surely the American political experience is a dialectic that involves both affect and reason. In some parts of the text, Frank signals that they are mutually implicated; in others, he too unequivocally privileges affect over reason (p. 78). Another looming problem—this one peculiar to the insurgency's second wave—bedevils the entire work: namely, the danger of forcing American history through the fine screen of a foreign interpretive filter. Frank regularly invokes the ideas of contemporary agonistic theorists, especially Rancière, to clarify the meaning and significance of historical events that occurred independently of those ideas. In this way, he risks evaluating the political past by a theoretical standard unknown to the historical agents and events that occupied it. So, while Pocock is right—"historical and political theory [do] meet"—he surely did not wish their meeting to license infelicitous readings of history that often result from this filtering move.

Nonetheless, Frank's *Constituent Moments* makes an important contribution to the growing literature exploring the intersection between American political history and contemporary political theory.

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Kenneth J. Long, *The Trouble with America: Flawed Government, Failed Society*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009, 164 pp.

Kenneth J. Long's book *The Trouble with America: Flawed Government, Failed Society* is a brief, but powerful and sweeping critique of US political culture and economics. Providing an array of graphs and data, Long identifies a host of cultural and economic problems with the United States' flawed trinity of political ideas, pluralism, constitutionalism, and capitalism. In this review, I advance three claims. First, the book succeeds on its own terms, namely it is an excellent "ancillary" text for political science courses. It presents a provocative counterpoint to mainstream textbooks, and would challenge students in a number of areas. Second, the book is a persuasive indictment of US politics, but its positive program is in tension with its critique. Long favors a majoritarian democracy, in part