

Jill Lepore. *The Whites of Their Eyes: The Tea Party's Revolution and the Battle over American History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2010. Pp. 207. Cloth \$20.00.

According to Jill Lepore, Professor of History at Harvard University, novelist, and Pulitzer Prize finalist, the American Revolution formulated an American national identity that lacked a definitive trajectory. This book discusses the misuse of history and the way falsely constructed historical narratives over the last two hundred years misrepresented the events of American Revolution. In misused history, or what Lepore calls *antihistory*, all narratives point to the American Revolution and founding fathers as the grandiose starting point of America's collective existence. Focusing on media discourse surrounding the 2007 rebirth of the Tea Party movement and her scholarly work on the American Revolution, Lepore's study relies unconventionally on her personal experiences attending modern Tea Party events in Boston, Massachusetts, as well as a wealth of early-American newspapers and journals.

The first three chapters of Lepore's book begin with the rise of the Tea Party Movement in 2007 and describe *antihistory* narratives as a major part of media debate and discourse. Describing a parallel between the newspaper crisis during the Early American Stamp Act and the current challenges to the veracity of information in the media, Lepore argues that media in pre-revolutionary American society was no more objective than it is today. Her interpretation of Early American political history is based on paradoxical qualities: recognition of the way American historical analysis is subject to personal interpretation and a desire for definitive civic stability. Lepore suggests that the collective American national identity unnaturally uses the past to explain the present, while also taking up the challenge to avoid "presentism" or inaccurate causal explanations of the past.

Lepore's ability to provide parallel analyses of the American Revolution and growth of the modern Tea Party movement situates the challenge of paradoxical history within a larger discussion of history's role in civic debate. The last two chapters of Lepore's book discuss the founding fathers and their use by the political right in current political debate. Debunking

the popular myth that “everything wrong with America” is the result of a grand deviation from the founding fathers’ intentions, Lepore suggests that the founding fathers lived in and discussed a different culture than we do today. She argues that the greatest accomplishment of the founding fathers was not a unified vision of America, but rather the construction of the Constitution as a living document to be continually adapted and be applied over time. To Lepore, it is only within the fabricated bounds of *antihistory*, that a unified American national identity and ideology exists.

Although Lepore’s arguments about the nonlinear nature of history mirror previous historical theorists like Michael Foucault and Benedict Anderson, Lepore’s application in current political discourse deviates through her discussion of *antihistory* as a separate area of study. Demanding that the reader rethink the use of history, Lepore provides a framework through which scholars can discuss other areas of historical use and misuse. Focusing primarily on political discourse, she leaves the door open for further study into areas, such as public schooling or the legal system, arenas where *antihistory* continues to play an important role in constructing ideologies.

Lepore’s challenge to the use and misuse of history in current political debates may interest academic scholars specializing in early American history, political science, international relations, and legal history. In addition, beginning graduate and undergraduate students as well as non-academics interested in politics will find Lepore’s clear writing style appealing. Altogether, Lepore writes an engaging book that allows a wide audience to reflect on how various events in history, such as the American Revolution, do not have a static and singular interpretation.

Julia Devin

Artemy M. Kalinovsky. *A Long Goodbye*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011. Pp. 304. Cloth \$27.95.

A Long Goodbye, by Artemy Kalinovsky explores the reasons behind the Soviet Union’s intervention in Afghanistan beginning