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## **Title**

The Representation of President John Adams in Tom Hooper's Miniseries and Adams's Life Writings: A Comparison with the American Cultural Figures of his Time

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To the memory of two extraordinary men: my father **DIABI Ahcene** and my Secondary School's teacher **Mr. AMEZIANE Nacer**. I dedicate this work to my brother Idir, family friends and colleagues.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation studies the representation of President John Adams in Tom Hooper's miniseries *John Adams* and the latter's life Writings. It explains why Hooper seeks to rehabilitate John Adams in the context of the terrorist attack of America in September 11, 2001. Following a historicist approach, four major findings are reached. One John Adams stands for a political republicanism that modern America seems to have forgotten. This political republicanism is contrasted with both economic republican, the popular republicanism, which is used into screen in the present day America. Two, John Adams is represented as a self-made man whose success story is built on high ideals rather materialism. His association with the American Dream is meant as a criticism of contemporary America's material economic version of the American Dream. Three, John Adams and his wife Abigail illustrate gender relations based on equality not subordination. In a sense, the portrayal of the Adamses is addressed as a critique to the Bush family as another example American presidential family. Four, the miniseries shows strong belief in politics and diplomacy to solve domestic and international problems. John Adams is portrayed as a politician with a low profile. His leadership is not authoritarian since it is marked by delegation of power. Five Adams is used to rehabilitate New England and move particularly, Massachusetts as a central of American politics. Through Adams, Massachusetts and New England it is the American Revolution that Tom Hooper goes back to, to celebrate American ideals. Six, Adams's politics is described as being non-partisan. This constitutes an indirect critique of partisanship politics of contemporary America.

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## **Appendices**

As the lives of Philosophers or Historians written by themselves have generally been suspected of vanity, and therefore few people have been able to read them without disgust; there is no reason to expect that any Sketches I may leave of my own Times would be received by the public with any favor, or read by individuals with much interest. The many great Examples of this practice will not be alleged as a justification, because they were Men of extraordinary Fame, to which I have no pretensions. My Excuse is, that having been the Object of much 'misrepresentation', some of my posterity may probably wish to see in my own hand writing a proof of the falsehood of that Mass of odious Abuse of my Character, with which News papers, private Letters and public Pamphlets and histories have been disgraced for thirty Years. It is not for the public but for my children that I commit these Memoirs to writing: and to them and their Posterity I recommend, not the public Course, which the times and the country in which I was born and the circumstances which surrounded me compelled me to pursue: but those Morals Sentiments and Sacred Principles which at all hazards and by every sacrifice I have endeavored to preserve through life.

(John Adams, October, 5.1802, Quoted in James Bishop Peabody, 1973: 18)

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# General Introduction



## General Introduction

The events displayed in *historical films* seem to be new and true. However, the reality seen on the screen is a vision built of many images and based upon different historical documents such as: books, pamphlets, autobiographies and biographies. Reconstructing the past, either through written or visual means is a hard task which historians and directors must bear. Both of them need a certain cultural background about any given historical period and its people's values and lives. As researchers, our task in this paper is to understand the aims in representing the past into films and the connection between the latter to the present.

Indeed, it is hard to be accurate when reconstructing history, because any film provides the audience with emotions and prejudices. It is meant to entertain and to take the viewer to a different world. Furthermore, films play a key role in forming opinions, constructing images and reinforcing the dominant cultural values. Today, the film has become a new text and medium by which directors represent nowadays social and political issues. According to Andrew Higson, the Twentieth First Century cinema becomes crucial in preserving the past and understanding the present. In other words, it allows the establishment of an intercultural bridge between societies, though their cultural divergences. He writes what follows:

The media are vital to the argument that modern nations are imagined communities. But contemporary media activity is also, one of the main ways, in which history understanding and transnational cultural connections are established. (Douglass Kellner, *Media and Film*, 1995: 17).

Understanding history and being informed about the heroes' lives is important. Thus, almost all the nations resulting from bloody Wars and Revolutions such as America keep remembering and reminding the new generation about their values. The changes accelerating around the world and the contemporary American political conflicts linked to leadership, family values, education, liberty, human rights, patriotism, nationalism and self-reliance make the new generation in need to more and more understanding and appreciation of the principles

upon which their Republic was founded. Why this strong interest about the past? What those “self-evident truths” stated by the Founding Fathers are? Who were they? What was the source of their courage? How do the Americans perceive them today and why their interest falls mainly in John Adams’s life and actions?

Tom Hank Hooper and Kirk Ellis’s miniseries *John Adams* (2008) is among the historical films that portray the American Revolution and the Founding Fathers’ lives. They represent the new Republic’s birth and celebrate the past principles and values. On the one hand, Hooper’s interest in reconstructing President John Adams’s life is the result of the misrepresentation and the neglect in which he falls. On the other hand, these *Biopic* and *Docudrama* films represent the contemporary American political context and issues. Likewise, *Biographical* film or what is called *Biopic* dramatizes the life of a person or a group of people. Despite their different based sources and techniques, they portray real people’s lives, actions and characters. According to *Chicago Sun Times* Newspaper, “the *Biopic* film can be based on true historical stories, because it attempts to tell a person’s life story or at least the most important years of his life”. Others “emphasize the historical events, where the person is involved and that happened in different periods of time” (Chicago Sun Time, 2010:15).

The American Modern scholars have published countless books on Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin and George Washington at the expense of John Adams. They have neglected his pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary achievements and put aside his political written collection, which has not been available for several decades. The question we ask is why this neglect? Is it because of his character, his political writings, his *Peace-Treaty* with France, or because of his defense of the British soldiers at the Boston Massacre? All these questions need to be answered.

Despite his extraordinary achievements, Adams has always posed a problem for historians. Americans had rarely seen him as a political leader and he was in a constant battle to be recognized among his society. Adams was accused of treason, vanity, aristocracy and harsh character. Therefore, we feel the need to undertake a case study about his representation in his life writings and historical films, in comparison to Jefferson, Washington, Franklin and Hamilton. The study will be conducted with reference to Tom Hooper's *Biopic* and *Docudrama* miniseries *John Adams* (2008), which is based on David McCullough's biography *John Adams* (2001). In addition to the film, we will analyze John Adams's life writings, which are selected accordingly such as his *Autobiography*, *Discourse on Davila* (1790), *Diary* (1775), *Defence of the Constitution and the Government of the United States of America* (1787), *Thoughts on Government* (1776), *Dissertation on Canon of Feudal Law* (1765) and the Adamses's Letters.

The purpose of this dissertation is to address the major issue, which states that in spite of his achievements; President John Adams is often compared unfavourably with the American cultural figures of his time such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Alexander Hamilton. Why this misrepresentation and how do Americans perceive him today? How and at what extent do Tom Hooper's miniseries and Adams's life writings represent and rehabilitate him? What are the director's aims in representing him as a lawyer, a diplomat, a Vice-President and a President? What is the link between the real Adams and the represented one and how can we link his actions with today's issues? In other words, what are the lessons that can be deduced from Adams's life experience, political thought and social actions and Hooper's miniseries? Have they something to do with the Americans' identities and the American dream and justifications?

The choice of this topic is not arbitrary. Our intention is directed to the purpose of arguing that both Adams's life writings and Tom Hooper's miniseries *John Adams* on the one hand, rehabilitate President Adams as an important revolutionary leader, in comparison to the cultural figures of his time and demonstrate Adams's real image. On the other hand, we shall uncover the underlying discourses and the director's ideologies, which lie behind his production. Moreover, we shall argue that these cinematographic representations, across the different historical periods debate the major American today's cultural and political issues such as identity, leadership, family values and self-image. Therefore, it redeploys the past to teach lessons about the present. Today's American president's foreign and domestic policies and the American wars with many countries urged the Americans to question their acquired values. We will try to put forward arguments that in his writings and letters, Adams favored liberty and peace. As a result, the analysis will be conducted in function to the three historical periods: the pre-Revolutionary period, the Revolutionary and the post-Revolutionary one.

### **Methodology**

To achieve the first aim, we will follow the theoretical guidelines of the Biographical approach, where we will define *Biography* as a genre and a theory. By emphasizing Wittgenstein's principle which says that a biographer can know and interpret and describe someone's thought and character, we will be able to interpret Adams's character and political aims. Another concept, *Point of View*, which is according to Wittgenstein a form of understanding that helps the biographer to construct a *picture* about his subject when there is a *public criterion* (manifestation of thought and language in public), will help deepen the analysis. This constructed picture will allow perceiving one thing/person in a variety of ways. In this case, it is up to the biographer's will and choice to see his subject in a certain manner.

Furthermore, to argue that the materials are used as an ideology to represent the current American political and social issues, we appeal to the use of *New Historicism*.

Greenblatt's concepts of *Other* (past) and *Self* (present) are generated by the power and the effect of *Resonance* and *Wonder* inside the viewer, when he reads or saw an artistic work. The historical films' effect then, allows the Americans to identify themselves to their Founders' principles which Greenblatt calls the *Process* of *re-fashioning* and *defamiliarization* (reconstruction, questioning and rejection) of someone's principles and identities.

For many people "History" is what they see in films and television programs. Most of them trusted *Historical* and *Biopic Films* far less than books, academic historians and museums. The reason is that as Nonthrop Frye said "the most obvious Conventional fictions are the easiest to read". History in images became easier for people to understand and historians look at the historical film as evidence of the past and lessons of the present. The question is why using history and biographies in films? In exploring the various forms of representation in *The Rhetoric of the Image*, for example, Roland Barthes distinguishes the *having-been-there* of photography with the *being-there* of film. Thus, photographic images can appear to be identical to what they represent and record or capture the past existence of the objects and the subjects. Whereas *realistic* films transform what is represented through contemporary codes and conventions of narration, sequencing and perspective, which help the continuity of identities or their redefinition in the future as stated in Greenblatt's essays.

The continuity of identity is essential. It is generally agreed by historical film's critics that this sense of continuity is produced through the integration of past, present and future identities. The process of creating a life story, a self-narrative or representing them on films is one way in which these links between past and present are made. Thus the Cultural memory from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity is preserved. The objective manifestations of cultural memory are defined by Greenblatt as a kind of identificatory determination either in a positive (We are this) or in a negative (That's our opposite). Such a concretion of identity involves what Nietzsche has called *the constitution of*

*horizons*; which is the distinction made between those who belong and those who do not, between what belong to oneself and what is foreign. The access and the transmissions of this knowledge are done either by a *need for identity* as described by Greenblatt or its redefinition.

The capacity of one's identity to reconstruct the past can preserve the collective memory, because cultural memory works by reconstruction of the past. That is, it always relates its knowledge to a present contemporary situation, which is linked to the past either by appropriation, by criticism, by preservation or by transformation and representation on historical and biopic films such as that of *John Adams* (2008). As a result and according to Greenblatt, cultural memory exists in two modes: that of archive whose accumulated texts, images, and rules of conduct act as a *total horizon* and that of actuality and its relevance which acts as a *partial horizon* (Greenblatt, 1993: 11-12).

To conclude, we can say that our aim in choosing the above theories is to argue that some people's biographies, either written or reproduced into films, are made with the purpose of understanding their lives (past) and attempting to persuade the reader or the viewer to see them in a certain way. The main reason of choosing these theories is our will to demonstrate John Adams's representation in Tom Hooper's film *John Adams*. On the one hand, we want to make the audience and the readers see Adams differently and Wittgenstein's concept of *picture* helps us to attribute some images to him as an honest, a simple, a wise, a faithful responsible teacher, lawyer, delegate, ambassador, and a convincing and peaceful vice-president and president. We want to reach the result that the miniseries rehabilitate him as an important figure in the American history, in particular and the world in general. On the other hand, the use of biography and the New historicism approaches help us to deduce that Adams's life writings and Tom Hooper's miniseries are texts which try to reconstruct the past (the other) in order to interpret, understand and depict the American social, political, economic and cultural present context (the self). Therefore Greenblatt's concepts of wonder

and resonance allow us to make this link between these binaries: life-writing/ biography, self (past)/ other (present), subject's identity/ cultural memory and representation/narratives.

Therefore, we will apply a narrative comparative deductive procedure in order to deduce the director's ideologies in *John Adams* (2008) and analyze Adams's representation as a child, a lawyer, a teacher, a delegate, an ambassador, a Vice-President and a President, in comparison to Jefferson, Washington, Franklin and Hamilton.

## **The Review of Literature**

The Founders' lives and political actions are significant for the American new generation today. As a result, a considerable amount of books and essays were written about Adams's character, policy and life. He predicted in his *Diary* (1775) that he would not be famous and that "Mausoleums, statues, monuments will never be erected" in honor of his actions. He claimed that "the quest for fame "was a lifelong obsession" (John Adams to Benjamin Rush, March, 23. 1809). By the mid of the 1970's, Adams's papers were published and public television produced the *Adams Chronicles* (1975), in which both Adams and his wife Abigail, were portrayed as the progenitors of a remarkable family. Consequently, a heater debate and critics rise about his importance in American history. Some writers prefer to remember Adams for his signature of the *Sedition Act*, in 1798 and for his political writings and others for his *Peace Treaty* with France and his character.

In his book *John Adams: an Autobiography of his Own Words*, James Bishop Peabody reveals his observations and self-criticism. As far as Peter Shaw's book *The Character of John Adams* is concerned, it analyses Adams's ideas, which are developed in his *Diary*'s major inspired scholarship themes such as: maturity, wisdom and adulthood. Shaw's book didn't attract enough scholarly attention, because it was published when the women issue and the Afro-American struggle prevailed.

The publication of John Ferling's and J.Ellis's *Passionate Sage* gave persuasive argument about Adams's character and was a starting point in the present scholarly interest in Adams's remarkable achievements. Since then, the academic and the public institutions have organized a conference, in Boston University (2008) entitled *John Adams and the Founding of the American Republic* which has surveyed John Adams's political, social and foreign policy.

Likewise, Bradley Thompson's book *John Adams and the Spirit of Liberty* which is addressed to an academic audience supplies a deeper analysis of Adams's political ideas. Thompson enables the reader to understand Adams's political thought better. He believes that *personality* and *biography* are as much relevant to Adams's ideas as to Locke's or Montesquieu's theories about liberty and natural rights (Thompson, 2000: 45). He tried to find common points between Adams's texts and those of the two above philosophers.

Thompson made a scholarly exposition of Adams's principles by setting his major works as the *Defense of the Constitution and the Government of United States of America* (1787) and *Discourses on Davila* (1790), in the context of Condorcet's main important works such as *Sketch of a historical Picture for the Progress of the Human Mind* (1793), which discusses the notion of enlightenment. Condorcet's usage of *lumiere* is at once an inner and outer light, a quality that can be acquired through instruction, the mastery of the body of knowledge, but which requires the internalization of certain habits of thought and feelings. He saw that one principle of *lumiere* was calculation not only a technique, but also a form of intelligence and a spiritual exercise (Condorcet, 1793: 54). Thompson claims that "Adams was a significant contributor to the political science of his day and Like Montesquieu, Adams was a comparative scholar and he regarded historical experience as the laboratory, from which he extracted general truths" (Thompson, 2000: 49). He confirms that history taught Adams that the balanced forms between "the different branches of government were



necessary to preserve liberty and to favor Republics based upon legislatures and independent executives and judges” (Ibid: 54-56). As Thompson explains, it is difficult to analyze Adams’s texts because of their complexity. They are based on the Constitution, the citizen’s liberty and happiness. Thompson claimed that Adams’s politics is based on three ideas:

that human psychology is based on the universal need to be recognized and loved, epitomized in the classical story of the starving beggar, who refused to kill his dog, asking “who will love me then”, that “all governments are Defacto Aristocracies” and that “all sound governments must be constructed on the basis of mankind as it is not as we wish it. (Thompson, 2000: 55-56).

For Thompson, these beliefs were neither projections of Adams’s personal psychology nor legacies of puritan belief. They were Adams’s conclusions based on personal observation and his readings, on the information he possessed and his analysis of the imperial politics, after 1765. Thus, Thompson’s remarks are useful for making a close reading of Adams’s works. However, his analysis doesn’t answer our major issue of why Adams’ importance in American history was neglected in comparison with other Founding Fathers such as Jefferson, Franklin, Washington and Hamilton.

In contrast to Thompson, Ferling’s book *Setting the World of Ablaze* objectives don’t emphasize Adams’s character and works, but tells the story of Independence from a comparative biographical perspective. He attempts to restore the three leading figures in the American Revolution, Jefferson, Adams and Washington back into history. Ferling suggests that “the historian’s role is not to pass judgment about historical actors, but also to execute them” (Ferling, 2004: 10). In fact, Ferling seeks to link personal and impersonal elements of the American Revolution. He claims that his aim is to restore the three dead men’s lives; Jefferson, Washington and Adams (Ibid: 11-10). By comparing their roles in the Revolution, Ferling attributes to Jefferson and Washington “historical greatness” (Ibid: 306). However, his judgments on Adams are less favorable, because he considered him as “the least

committed to service and sacrifice... the least capable of fully and adequately filling the great offices he held” (Ibid: 303).

*Setting the World Ablaze* supplies the reader only with a Revolution’s narrative to assess the three principal characters Adams, Washington and Jefferson. Despite his gift of narration, the author valuated Jefferson’s actions and neglected those of Adams and Washington. He claimed that “Adams was ill and his illness was not psychological but hormonal, which results from *Thyrotoxicosis* (hyperthyroidism) caused by stress” (Ibid: 304). Consequently, both Ferling and Thompson lead the readers away from understanding Adams’s emotions and works. Indeed, Ferling’s subject is not concerned with the analysis of ideas or character of Adams, but with the narration of events.

Other critics say that in contrast to his pre-Revolutionary years, when Adams supported individual liberties, there were changes in his political philosophy and that he became more conservative after his coming back from Europe. Indeed, most Americans considered him as an Aristocrat, mainly when he wrote *A Defense of the Constitutions and the Government of the United States of America* (1780). Joseph J. Ellis for example believes in his book *Passionate Stage* that Adams “reassessed the political affirmations he had formed” as a revolutionary leader. He adds that being influenced by the writings of Jean Louis De Lolme, “Adams formulated a new conservative position” (Joseph J. Ellis, 1993: 34). Ellis explains that for Adams “to talk calmly of monarchy and aristocracy as ingredients, in the social equation was to challenge implicitly the inherently democratic character of the new American government” (Ibid: 40). Joseph Ellis claims that in his formal writings as in his conversation “Adams careened off one subject into another like the proverbial loose cannon on a slippery deck” (Ibid: 41). Another aspect of Adams that scholars reviewed is his personality and character. He was often considered a vain man, preoccupied by his place in society and history. Adams was compared unfavorably with other political figures of the

American Revolution. Adams based much of his writing on the ancient Roman hero Cicero, a roman good orator, and often identified himself to him. He viewed the ancient Roman as “a tragic hero who could help to explain his own political decline and pending obscurity” (James Bishop Peabody, 1973: 123).

Adams’s Autobiography and political works have received little critical attention and the reviewed writers have analyzed Adams’s writings and his character but they neglected his intensions and didn’t interpret deeply his works as he would wish it. They neglected his aims about forming a free, equal and a strong nation and preserving the American old values. No one so far has worked on Adams’s representation in both films and his life writings, by using a New Historicist perspective. Furthermore, some of the above writers tried only to link historical events and others considered Adams as an aristocrat, a vain, sick and anxious about his reputation.

## **Hypothesis and Issue**

What is missing in the review is the rehabilitation of Adams as a major figure of the American Revolution. The above scholars focus on Adams’s writings and character. In some cases, they compare him unfavorably with Jefferson, Franklin, Hamilton and Washington. None of them analyzes Adams’s representation in films and some historians overlooked the major issue, which consists of his unfavorable comparison with the other Founding Fathers and his political actions significance for today’s Americans. To achieve our aims and after visualizing the film and reading Adams’s writings, we put forward these hypotheses:

The study of Hooper’s miniseries on John Adams and the letter’s biography shows an emphasis in Adams’s strong republicanism.

Adams’s life writings and Tom Hank Hooper’s miniseries *John Adams* (2008) rehabilitate Adams as a major figure of the American Revolution and political development

and explore and show his major achievements. Both the film and Adams's writings allow the discovering of Adams's character, sensibility, honesty and perseverance. As a result, we claim that the image of Adams's changed because the new generation became more and more open-minded toward their ancestors' values. His life and experience became a standard against which they measure their present and planify their future.

Both Tom Hooper's miniseries and Adams's life writings have something to do with the Americans' identity, values and issues today such as leadership, family values and education. All the Founders represent the material, the intellectual, the political and the imperial side of America. It has something to do also with the American history and identity, the identities of other nations such as Great Britain, France and Germany and those of the colonized societies. Unlike the other nations, the United States is founded on a set of beliefs, common values and principles and the film helps to establish the Americans' nationhood, to reinforce their principles and to preserve the American historical and cultural memory.

As far as the last hypothesis is concerned, it says that Americans suffer from the crisis of self-image, American nationalism and unity. As a result, Tom Hooper tried to recreate that past in *John Adams* miniseries and attempted to restore the *americaness* elements as self-reliance, individualism, independence, utopianism, liberty, egalitarianism, democracy, anti-statism, populism, the sense of destiny and respect for the law and other nations' liberties.

## **Methodological Outline**

Our study falls into three chapters. The history of the American Revolution and the film's context are presented in the first chapter. The latter provides the reader with a historical and social background of Tom Hooper's film *John Adams* (2008) and its relation to the American current political and social situation,

As far as the second chapter is concerned, it will be oriented towards highlighting the representation of John Adams in the pre-Revolutionary and the Revolutionary periods. It is

divided into four sections; the first deals with his representation before the Revolution, which is devoted to his childhood, school life, teaching and a legal career. The second section tackles his representation during the Revolution as a Diplomat to France and Holland. In order to demonstrate Adams's importance and to prove that the film rehabilitates him as a sincere political man, the third part aims to compare him to Jefferson, Washington, Franklin and Hamilton. To inform the reader about Abigail's role in this period, a fourth section is devoted to her representation as an eighteenth-century woman, mother and a farm manager during Adams's Revolutionary missions.

Adams's representation after the Revolution will be dealt in the third chapter. It is composed of three sections. The first discusses his capacity as an envoy to Britain, a Vice-President and a President. In addition, the second section compares Adams to the previous Founders in terms of presidency, policy, family life and retirement. Finally, the third section is concerned with Abigail Adams's psychological and political role in Adams's decisions and the American Republic. Then, we will discuss Abigail as a political adviser and Adams's trusted confident.

Finally, our dissertation ends with a general conclusion, which summarizes the research results and limitations and gives hints for further studies, since people's lives have a value, a meaning and a mission.

## **The Relevance of the Work**

John Adams, the second president of the United States played an important role before, during and after the Revolutionary years. It is partly because of this matter that he is such an interesting subject of study. He represents both the sympathetic and almost the tragic character of the American Revolution. His *Diary*, autobiography and letters expose his humanity and honesty and his writings become the basis of his historical reputation and the current scholarly debates. His significance lies not only in his revolutionary activities or his

presidency, but in his understanding of the conflicts between the past and the present. This relation between what Greenblatt called self (present) and the other (past), can be understood through Adams's writings and Tom Hooper's miniseries *John Adams*. We hope therefore, that it will empower other students to further the study and to consider the other aspects which this simple work is not concerned with.

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## **The Historical and the Social Background of the Miniseries and Adams's Life Writings:**

They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

(Benjamin Franklin, *the Poor Reacher*, 1767: 54).

Since Hooper's miniseries is centered on John Adams and his wife Abigail, the following historical background will place emphasis on the major historical events in which Adams participated. The miniseries start with Adams's defense of the British soldiers involved in what is known as the Boston Massacre. The Latter is a turning point in American history. To understand more, one has to go back to the resistance of the American colonies to taxation.

John Adams leaved when the Dutch of New Netherland, the Swedes and Finns of New Sweden, the Quakers of Pennsylvania, the Puritans of New England, the English settlers of Jamestown, and others came to the New World for different reasons and created colonies with distinct social, religious, political and economic structures. Initially, the Thirteen Colonies had a peaceful distant relationship with England. England grew rich from colonial trade, while the colonists followed their own interests and developed new ways of life (O'Callaghan, *An Illustrated History of USA*, 1990: 24-25).

However, the French and Indian War changed that. The French wanted control of the frontier lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. By 1754, the British and French engaged in the *French and Indian War* and in the *Seven Years' War*, in Europe. When France and Britain signed the *Treaty of Paris* (1763), France lost most of its land to Great Britain, which began to take firmer control of its colonies and wanted to protect newly won lands. The War left Great Britain with huge debts and many in England thought the colonists should help pay those debts(Ibid: 26).



This led Parliament to impose the *Proclamation* of 1763, which banned the colonization of British subjects west of the *Appalachian* mountains. It also ordered the colonist that had already colonized the *Ohio Valley* and beyond to abandon their homes and move back east. Followed by the *Sugar Act* in 1764, England decided that the Americans should help pay for the cost of the war, because of their participation. This would tax any sugar or molasses that came into the colonies, because many of them considered themselves less British and more as citizens of their colonies. This first tax helped to foster these feeling. Two other acts by the British also lead to the colonists' anger, the *Currency* and the *Stamp Act*. Parliament banned the colonies from printing their own money which would make it easier for them to pay off their debts. The British also changed the legal status for many crimes in the colonies to guilty until proven innocent in the Vice-Admiralty court (Ibid: 28).

James Otis was a Lawyer from Boston, who began to push the idea that the British had no right to tax the colonies, since the colonies had no direct representation in Parliament. There was representation in the form of the *Parliament* representing all of the colonies. The American colonist felt that without representation of their chosen members, all taxation was illegal. When the British hear the colonies' complaining about the *Sugar act*, Parliament asked the colonies what would work for them. When no answer came back to the Prime Minister, he sent to Parliament the *Stamp Act* (1765). This act forced anyone who bought Newspapers, pamphlets, licenses, legal documents, and playing cards, to pay a tax and have that item stamped to show the tax had been paid. Because many Americans boycotted stamped items, British mercantile was damaged. Consequently, the *Stamp Act* was repealed, in 1766 (O'Callaghan Bryn, 1990: 62).

However the *Stamp Act*'s repeal, other Acts such as the *Townshend Acts* (1767), which put duties on imported glass, lead, paints, paper, and tea, were insured. Writs of assistance to fight the smuggling of the items covered by the *Townshend acts* were used. These are like

search warrants today. This meant the British could search any home for smuggled goods and confiscate any items they deemed necessary. The colonist felt this was a huge abuse of power by the crown (Ibid: 64).

When the merchant ship *Liberty* was seized, which was owned by Samuel Adams, who was against the *Townshend Acts*, violence erupted in Boston harbour and a group of men known as the *Sons of Liberty* attacked the homes of British customs agents. The Governor of Massachusetts had to request British troops to restore order. They occupied the city in a move that was sure to lead to conflict (Ibid: 68).

Another incident named by Samuel Adams and his friends as the *Boston Massacre* on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1770 happened and used as propaganda against the British. An argument between a colonial and a British soldier led to the stones and snowballs throwing at the British soldiers guarding a customs house, by the colonists. Soon, more troops came to back up the lone soldier. As the tempers rose, the British soldiers fired into the crowd killing five men (Ibid: 69).

Britain wanted to break the force of the colonies and passed *The Tea Act*, in 1773. The colonists continued to boycott English goods and smuggled huge amounts of tea into the colonies to keep from paying the British taxes. The *East India Company* worked out a deal with Parliament to sell tea directly to the colonist, at the lowest price. The *East India Company* force small colonial tea merchants out of business, but colonist continued to fight against all of taxes from Britain. Three ships arrived in Boston Harbour loaded with tea. *The Sons of Liberty* demanded that the ships leave without unloading cargos. The British governor, Thomas Hutchinson, ordered the tea to be unloaded. Captains were afraid of both the colonist and the Governor and decided to just anchor the ships in Boston Harbour. On the night of December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1773, a group of patriots dressed as Indians snuck aboard the ships

and dumped ninety thousand pounds of tea, into Boston Harbour. When one of the men was caught trying to steal some tea he was stripped of his clothing and sent home with nothing. It became known as the *Boston Tea Party* (Ibid: 70-72).

To punish the colonist for dumping the tea, the British passed the *Coercive Acts* which the colonist called the *Intolerable Acts* (1774). These acts close Boston Harbour until the tea was paid for and cancelled the *Massachusetts Charter*. They made it illegal for the local government to meet unless the Governor called for the meeting. Furthermore, these Acts moved all Loyal British trials to England (Ibid: 74).

In September 1774, a group of fifty six men meet in the *First Continental Congress* to decide how to work something out with the King. They sent a resolution to King George III declaring what they thought were their rights and how they were being mistreated. Instead of working with the demands, the King ordered the troops to prepare to take the colonist weapons. The British marched to many towns to take colonial arms and gunpowder. In 1775, the British meet in Lexington and Concord by less than seventy Minutemen and they tried to stop them. Someone opened fire, eight colonists were killed and ten were wounded. By the time, the British arrived in Concord but the Patriots had moved the guns and powder to another place. The British began to burn buildings and the Patriots attacked. When the British arrived back in Boston, they had lost over two thousand fifty men compared to the one hundred Minutemen (Ibid: 74-75).

In May 1775, men representing the thirteen colonies meet in the *Second Continental Congress*, in Philadelphia to raise an army to help protect the colonies and try to reconcile with the King. The *Olive Branch Petition* failed and the Revolutionary war began. In January 1776, Thomas Paine produced a pamphlet entitled *Common Sense*, which called the colonist to leave the British control and form their own governments. This is the most important

document leading toward independence. By early July 1776, after delegates to the *Second Continental Congress* endured long disagreements and debates, they voted for independence. The *Declaration of Independence* (1776) was drafted (Ibid: 77).

Americans were fighting for a republic, in which citizens elect representatives to manage the government on their behalf. However, the *Continental Army* had few soldiers, low morale and lack of money, gunpowder and supplies. It was John Adams, General Washington and other Founders who held them together by insisting upon organization and discipline. The War for Independence lasted more than five years and meanwhile Americans enduring hardships. The American victory at the *Battle of Saratoga* (1782) was a turning point of the War. Spain and the Netherlands allied with France against the British and they send needed money and supplies to the American colonies. On September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1781 the French and American troops surrounded Yorktown. The British could not retreat by sea and they surrendered on October 19<sup>th</sup>. While the British still controlled New York City and didn't leave Charles Town until 1782. When the Revolutionary War was over in 1783, Americans had won the right to form their own government which was based on equality and freedom (Ibid: 78-79).

Today, the principles to spread liberty and equality over the world are destroyed after the September attack of 2001. The film of *John Adams* is produced in the context of the American neo-colonialism and capitalism. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized by the USA's dominance in economy, politics, technology and even culture. Along with the western European countries and Japan, it has established itself as a dominant first world power.

This development influenced the world of cinema represented by Hollywood. The USA used it as a mean to control and rule over the world's nations and to acculturate them (Stewart Hall, 1997: 173-179). The advances and discoveries in several fields including

medicine, media, and technology and food productions allow the USA to promote itself as the ideal to follow. Historically, it promoted itself as the fighter for democracy, since the Founding Fathers' fight in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Stewart Hall reveals this process, by exposing American Policies' world globalization. "America uses colonialist and imperialist discourses as the ideological and linguistic apparatus, which justifies imperial practices", he states (Ibid: 179).

But was the American neo-colonialism that interested the Founders? As we can see it in the film, in the summer of 1798, USA President John Adams faced the strongest crisis of his time. Since his election, the revolutionary regime in France had raised. France was seizing American merchant ships off the Atlantic coast. Adams's effort at diplomacy had failed and his diplomat Charles M. de Talleyrand sent to France had been insulted. As a result, French publication of dispatches against America provoked war and the public led by Adams's own Federalist Party wanted war. But as a peaceful president we see him using diplomacy and peace, to avoid bloodshed.

The September 2001 attacks caused the death of many people including American and non American and the United States exploited the attack as a justification for its interferences in the Middle East and in Afghanistan. Additionally, news broadcasts and Hollywood mainly during the war with Iraq, showed the country through films that glorify directly or indirectly, the choices made by the USA military force and government (Kaplan, 1997: 226). Hollywood as part of media, therefore produces films filled with knowledge and justification for the USA development of power and the killing other country's men, women and children, to protect their own interests. Under the umbrella of destroying terrorism, they have implemented their laws and culture in those countries, pretending that their aim is to build democratic governments (Kaplan, 1997: 227).

The film is released also when People inside and outside USA has varied opinions about the country and its people. Some opinions are based on facts and others are conditioned by ideology or prejudice. The American self-image has historically been that of *exceptionalism* and *democracy*. Believing that it is its destiny to protect the world, America uses justifications. However, internal disagreements about the country's values, institutions, policies and national identity, have risen. There are debates on whether the USA ideals match the American reality or if there is a gap between the two (John Oakland and David Mauk, 2009: 2). As a result, different attempts are made to reconcile the differences and unify the country, such as adapting and reproducing the life of the most important historical leaders into films, as Tom Hooper's miniseries *John Adam* (2008), which seeks to spread the feeling of nationhood again, among the Americans.

The context of the film is surrounded by Public opinion, which suggests that under the national and international events, Americans like other people alternate between feelings as those during the two World Wars, the Vietnam War and that with Iraq and Afghanistan, since 2001. Although these issues, there is a desire for change and solving the domestic and global problems among the 2008 electoral compains, between John McCain and Barack Obama. However, some international opinions have recently argued that the American historical values declined. The USA Department of State reported and declared in 2008 that Canada, Britain, France and Germany had shown attitudes as anger, envy or disagreements with the USA's policy between 2002 and 2007. It claimed that "America's alleged values are as a smoke for national self-interests" (Ibid: 4).

The film's context is conditioned by the September 2001 attacks on New York and Washington. In response, the USA's administrations sought to protect its domestic and foreign interests and therefore declared its opposition to terrorism, initiated military action in

Afghanistan and Iraq and warned some countries about their aggressive policies. In 2007, USA's citizens identified the following countries as the greatest threats to global stability such as Iran, Iraq, China, North Korea and some Arab countries. The American government holds itself and its History successful. The film depicts the American contemporary presidents such as George W. Bush, who between 2001 and 2008 justified the legitimacy of War in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, by proclaiming "you are either with us or with the terrorists" (Bush, 2001). Thus, Bush administration forced countries to ally with his sentence and his administration binarised the world into "us" and "Them" and influenced politics, by giving arms for many countries. Indeed, it was not the goal of the Founding Fathers, because the film remembered the Americans about the principles of their nation that of spreading equality and peace, over the world.

Fortunately, the positive international responses to the 2008 presidential elections results will influence America's overseas relationships. To understand the contemporary USA and how it developed historically, some factors and historical events needed to be emphasized by the medium of films as: the Revolutionary period and the Founding Father's values. Their aims are to insure their principles and to present a model of honest leaders for the audiences.

According to Oakland, these historical events and figures have created three major cultures in the mind of American people; their origins as a result of diverse ethnic culture, founded on indigenous Native American civilization, European settlements, African American slavery and later on waves of immigrants, their culture which is based on the different religious or cultural practices which reflects their beliefs and traditions. The third one is a political-legal culture, which is based on individualism, constitutionalism and respect for the law. The last one is the union under the ideals of *Americaness* such as egalitarianism,

morality and patriotism, which should be reflected in political and legal institutions (David Mauk and John Oakland, 2009: 5).

To conclude our historical background, we can say that USA's society has been directly or indirectly conditioned by these major cultures, since American independence in 1776 which shaped the national identity. Today the Americans suffered from a crisis of self-image, American nationalism and unity and the values associated with those rights written in the declaration of independence, the constitution and the Bill of Rights are in danger. This is why directors try to recreate that past in films as *John Adams*, in an attempt to restore the Americaness elements such as self-reliance, individualism, independence, utopianism, liberty, egalitarianism, democracy, anti-statism (destruct of government), populism and a sense of destiny and respect for the law and other nations. These principles originated from the Puritan religion and the European Enlightenment. Thus, the Founders, mainly John Adams, were ideals and leaders who preserved these values.

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# **Chapter One**

## **The Representation of John Adams in the pre-Revolutionary and the Revolutionary Period**

## Introduction

John Adams, the second president of the United States played an important role in the new Republic pre-Revolutionary years. Stephen Kurtz confirms that John Adams “is seldom emphasized as one of the great American Founding Fathers” (Stephen. G. Kurtz, 2000: 123). He witnessed the American Revolution from its beginnings to its end and; he made all his best with his family to build a free nation.

In this chapter, we will analyze John Adams’s Representation from the Boston Massacre to the accession of independence, in 1783. This period is represented by the miniseries’ three first episodes entitled: *Join or Die*, *Independence* and *Don’t Thread on Me*. By using Gordon Wood’s book *Revolutionary Characters* and James Bishop’s one *The Founding Fathers: John Adams an Autobiography of his own Words*, which includes Adams’s letters with Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Rush and his wife Abigail, we will try to compare him to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and Alexander Hamilton. The aim in this chapter is to argue that all these written and visual materials expose his character, his values, honesty and political thoughts which are in our view the basis of his historical reputation. To show women’s role in this period, we saw the necessity of including Abigail’s role in these period, at the end of this chapter.

Furthermore, his great significance lies not only with his Revolutionary activities, but also with those of his pre-Revolutionary period. The examination of his Representation in the three first episodes addresses his motives for opposing the motherland. By using Biography theory, we will demonstrate that the changes in Adams’s life were determined by historical events, his education, the different positions that he held and the influence of his surroundings, which made his political struggle more significant. In order to rehabilitate and defend his thoughts, the validity of his writings and his love of equality and peace for today’s

America, which are in our point of view undiminished by his honesty and temper, we will use the above materials to depict what happened in the United States today and prove that Adams's life, his character, his political ideas and his domestic and foreign policy has something to do with the American social, political and economic situation. The Americans feel this need of reconstructing the past to understand and solve the issue of leadership, family values, education and social class. According to Vallerie Orleando "Americans need to go back to our Founding's Father's values, as Americans we feel that America forgets those principles of spreading equality over the world..." (Vallerie Orleando, Seminary, 9 November. 2013).

## **I-John Adams in the pre-Revolutionary Period:**

### **I-1- Adams Early Childhood:**

Biography is defined as the study of man's moral, intellectual and emotional development, in which materials are gathered for a study and the analysis of someone's life process. According to Catherine N. Park, there are three points that Biography emphasizes: the work of art, the personality of the creator and his character and finally the scientific interpretation of the work. She said:

Biography explains and illuminates the product of fiction and non-fiction, it is also interested on human personality and finally it is considered as materials for a science, which is the psychology of the artistic creation. (*Biography: Writings Lives*, 2000: 01).

Biography is based on a narrative and an interpretative approach and through the Adams's life writings and Tom Hooper's miniseries *John Adams* (2008) narrative technique, a kind of *Resonance* and *Wonder* is created inside the reader and the viewer. Therefore, the film becomes a bridge between the *self* and the *other* (individual and society) and thus a gap between *past* and *present*. This allows us to understand and interpret Adams's life process from his childhood to his death and interpret his personality, by alternating between his works and the film. To rehabilitate Adams and to correct his misrepresentations, Wittgenstein's

concept *picture* produced by the *point of view* about these visual and written materials, helps us to attribute to Adams many good images and to understand his character and thoughts. We use these images as standards against which we can measure the current American leaders' policies, by interpreting Adams's *private* and *public* use of language (life writings, letters...). According to Wittgenstein the *public criterion* is an important element for knowing someone's thought and character. The miniseries and Adams's own writings are the best examples on which these ideas can be applied. The *external* and the *internal* factors that formed his childhood, his adult, private, family and political life, informed about the conditions that shaped his character and policy. Adams's life and thought serve then, as conclusions and lessons to interpret the present social, political and economic situation of the United States of America.

John Adams was born in a small village of Braintree, Massachusetts, on 19 October, 1735. Despite the control and the acts imposed by the British Empire, the colonies developed its economy, industry and the social field. The Adams family had an established history in Braintree and they were one of the earliest Puritan families to settle in the region, as a comfortable farming family but not a wealthy one (James Bishop Peabody, 1973: 15). In a letter to his friend Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia, John Adams summarized the origins of his family by writing:

Henry Adams a congregational Dissenter from the Church of England persecuted by the intolerant Spirit of Archbishop Laud came over to his country with eight sons in the Reign of King Charles the first... My family I believe have cut down more trees in America than any other name. What a family distinction! Have I not a right to glory in it?...This Henry and his son Joseph become original proprietors of the town of Braintree in the thousand six hundred and thirty nine, ...This Henry and his son Joseph my Great Grandfather, and his Grandson Joseph my Grandfather, whom I know, though he died in 1739 and John my father...! (Quoted in James Bishop Peabody, 1973: 19).

Since any *Biography* and *Autobiography* can be interpretative and any *life-narrative* expose the author's intentions, the *life-worlds* (contexts) are always interpreted and

symbolized within the author's words or images (Catherine N.Park, 2000:3). As a result, the above narrative makes us understand that Adams was proud, close and bound to his origins and the members of his family. The future president's father named John Adams was the Deacon of the *Congregational Church* and played an important role in Braintree's community. In addition to farming his lands, he served as a tax collector and militia officer and was elected nine times to Braintree's Local Governing Assembly (Heather Lehr Wagner, 2004: 14). This means that the Adams had played important roles in the social and the political American life. Since the beginning, Adams was influenced by his father, who occupied important position in the village. John Adams wrote and described his father as follows:

My father by his Industry and Enterprise soon became a person of more property and consideration in the town than his patron had been. He became a selected Man, a Militia Officer and a deacon in the Church. He was the honestest Man I ever knew. In Wisdom, piety, Benevolence and charity in proposition of his education and sphere of life, I have never seen his superior... (Adams, July, 1802, Quoted in James Bishop Peabody, 1973: 20)

Today, with the United States' social advancement, the American family is no longer united as in the past. With the nuclear family, parents find difficulties to transmit those past values to their children. As a result, Adams was a good child and the quotation expresses his care about his father and his family in general, a rare quality in today's American people. He described every detail about his father's work, which means that there was communication and exchange of ideas, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century families. His parents taught him the values of hard work and his mother Suzanna Boylston, Thomas Boylston's daughter who came from London, taught him reading and writing.

As a healthy young boy, he preferred to be a farmer but his father insisted that he will receive a formal education to become a clergyman. Although Adams passed his time in fishing, hunting and swimming, his parents were both passionate of reading. They send him,

at the age of six to Dame School College, a local school taught by a woman teacher that was destined to teach the reading and writing skills. Then he followed a Latin school; a preparatory school for those who planned to attend college. It was a primary school for boys and girls and lessons were based on the *New England Primer*, a book that combined principles of reading and writing, with puritan religious beliefs. As a result, we deduce that Adams's writings were inspired from the kind of education he received. His style was full of biblical and puritan themes and vocabulary.

According to Adams, Children spent hours memorizing and reciting phrases like "He who ne're learns his ABC, forever will a blockhead be" (Heather Lehr Wagner, 2007:15). Soon, young Adams graduated from the dame school and attended the Braintree Latin School, one of the two types of schools available to young students in those days, where they were prepared for college. Most of them became Clergymen or lawyers and they spent six to eight years studying Latin and Greek. Adams did not like his teachers or his school and spent his time dreaming and according to Wagner he wanted to leave school. Sometimes he took his hunting gun and put it outside school and when he had the opportunity he escape to hunt. This means Adams's love nature and adventure. One day, he told his father that he decided to become a farmer. The following day, Adams's father invited him to the farm, in order to persuade him how hard the work was, because he wished that Adams carried on his studies (James. B. Peabody, 1973: 23). Adams wrote:

I was about nine or ten years old at that time and soon learned the use of the gun and became strong to lift to take it to school and leave it in the entry and the moment it was over went into the field to kill crows and squirrels and I tried to see how many I could kill... I soon became large enough to go on the marches to kill wild fowl and to swim and used to beg so hard my father and my mother to let me go...Accordingly next morning he took me with him at work. At night at home he said well John are you satisfied with being a farmer... Though the labor had been very hard and very muddy I answered I like it very well sir... (Adams, July, 1802, Quoted in James B. Peabody, 1973: 23)

Adams didn't like school and when his father realized that the problem was the teacher not the school, he put him in another school, where Adams's schooling results improved. In this way he succeeded in his studies and entered Harvard College at the age of fifteen, where he graduated in 1755. Later on, Young Adams taught in a Latin school in Worcester, Massachusetts to earn money to study law from 1756 to 1758, with a local lawyer in Worcester. As a result, Adams was a studious student and he worked hard to become a brilliant lawyer. He claimed:

...When I said to my father very seriously, I wished he would take me from school and let me go to work upon the farm. You know said my father I have set my heart on your education at college and why will you not comply with my desire...Sir I don't like my schoolmaster. He is so negligent and so cross that I never can learn anything under him. If you will be so good as to persuade Mr. March to take me, I will apply myself to my studies as closely as my nature will admit and go to college as soon as I can be prepared. Next morning the first I heard was John I have persuaded Mr. Marsh to take you and you must go to school there today...My father soon observed the relaxation of my Zeal for my fowling piece and my daily increasing attention to my books. In a little more than a year Mr. March pronounced me fitted for college (Ibid: 23)

There is no unmediated access to the past and the act of recalling and telling Adams's life is an exercise of our interpretation of the present. This means that Adams was no more excited about college than he had been about his schooling, but contrary to today's American children, he didn't want to deceive his father, because he was aware that his father will be disappointed if he gave up his education. As a result, he rode on horseback to Cambridge to pass an exam in Harvard. The exam consisted of an interview with the college president and a few professors, a frightening experience that Adams passed. He cared a lot about his parents' feelings and wishes and by respect to them, he returned home with happy news that he had been accepted. This step of Adams's life allowed us to argue that he was a studious and a successful student. The class he joined at Harvard consisted of twenty seven young men, who like him were about fourteen or fifteen years old. It was an elite group and few young men went to college in those days. He found a new passion for books and studies, especially



Mathematics and Science. He made friends and was disappointed, when the four years came to an end. He was also uncertain about his career and his father had assumed that he would become a clergyman, but a career in the church did not appeal to Adams. Some of his friends and professors had suggested that he study law. Adams added:

The last two years of my Residence at college, produced a club of students, I never know the history of the first rise of it, who invited me to become one of them. Their plan was to spend their evenings together in reading any new publications or any poetry or Dramatic Compositions that might fall in their way. I was as often requested to read as any other, especially tragedies... My inclination was soon fixed upon the law: But my judgment was not so easily determined... (L.H. Butterfield Quoted in James Bishop Peabody, 1973: 31)

We claim that he liked the idea of a career that will provide him with money and public recognition, and he knew that he had a talent for public speaking. But in order to study law, he had to pay an amount of money to be taken into the office. Therefore; he took a job as a teacher in Worcester, Massachusetts, in the summer of 1755.

Any research which aims to understand how people live and understand their everyday lives must consider the *self* (present) as well as the *other* (past). No one lives in an eternal present and past, both individually and socially. But the past influenced people's present, because it helps to reshape their personality and values and to correct their mistakes. As John Berger has observed "I "am" includes all that has made me so . . . It is already biographical" (Berger, 1992: 370-371).

The *picture* (image) of Adams as an adventurous child and a brilliant student is deduced from his manner of using language in *public* space, his letters and autobiography help me to interpret and understand the American youth today and their relationship with their families. Therefore, to be responsible and productive citizens in a democratic society, American students today need to understand their nation's heritage and past. From a New Historicist's point of view, art and society are connected and Adams's life-writings and Tom Hooper's film cannot be evaluated outside of its political and cultural context.

This period of Adams's life deploys the most predominant values of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in churches, at schools and inside the family as parental authority and children's obedience and respect. The American society was patriarchal; the father was the power and the authority in the family. It was demonstrated by Adams's acts towards his father and all those who were in official positions of authority such as his teachers and headmasters. Adams's above letters proved his obedient and a respectful behavior.

The American past is gone and its existence in the present is maintained through representations in dreams, memories, historical films and life stories or narratives (biographies and autobiographies). These means work as means of bringing together the historical fragments into another representation, a narrative in which events bring about other events. Therefore, President John Adams is represented in this section as a simple citizen and an educated child. He first lived as a simple man and encouraged by his parents, he became a good citizen. As a result, Adams's texts describe his childhood and schooling and remind the readers and the Americans about the nature and the importance of the family ties and values that surrounded Adams, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Greenblatt concludes his essay *Resonance and Wonder* that "it is the function of the New Historicism continually to renew the marvelous at the heart of the resonant" (Greenblatt, 1990: 181). Through the image of an educated and a brilliant child that we attribute to Adams, Tom Hooper wishes to renew these family values among the audience. When situating Adams's education in the contemporary American context, one can deduce that it becomes among the basic values of the American society.

## **I-2- Adams as a Responsible Teacher:**

In biography theory, life experience is considered as a primary resource to have evidence and understanding of the everyday cultures, the past and the present. Life writings are important so that people make sense of their experience, lives and interpret their social world. In the everyday life, these narratives fulfill the days of any person life, link him to his

society and bring the past and the present into relative coherence. Adams's experience as a teacher shows that teaching was among the few important professions that were deserved to woman or man, in the eighteenth century. Through his writings; he emphasized responsibility in teaching and showed his honesty and his virtue when teaching. Shortly after starting writing his *Diary*, John Adams described and reflected about his new role as a schoolmaster. He thought that he sat at the head of a world in miniature. His early *Diary* presented lessons about judging characters since he attempted to see beneath and inside his society. Adams considered teaching as a noble task. Adams added:

...It is not then the highest pleasure my friend to preside in this little world, to bestow the proper applause upon virtuous and generous Actions, to blame and punish every vicious and contracted trick, to wear out of the tender mind everything that is mean and little, and fire the new born soul with a noble ardor and emulation...I had rather sit in school and consider which of my pupils will turn out in his future life, a hero, and which a rake, which a philosopher and which a parasite than change breasts with them...(John Adams, Monday 15 March, 1756, Quoted in James Bishop Peabody, 1973: 39-40)

We claim that Adams's letter prize the act of teaching by defining it as the act of giving the new generation a perfect education, by instructing them an effective and meaningful knowledge, in order to form useful citizens. He wanted his students to become intellectuals and philosophers, who will change people's lives and conditions. Adams gave importance to education, virtue and transmitting noble principles to the future American generation. According to the part of the above letter, one can assert that Adams was represented as a responsible, rigorous and modest schoolmaster. Despite his short time at Harvard, his mastery of Greek and Latin facilitated his entry into education to earn money for his studies in Law. During this period, Adams's enriched his thought, developed his beliefs and formed his ambitions. As a teacher, he considered himself as a ruler and compared himself to Cesar and Alexander the Great. He wrote:

Honesty, sincerity and openness, I esteem marks of good mind....I sometimes, in my springly moments, consider myself in my great chair at school, as some Director at the head of a commonwealth. In this little State I can discover all the great Genius, all the surprising actions and revolution of the great World in miniature. I have several

renowned Generals but three feet high and several deep-projecting Politicians in coast. I have others catching and dissecting files, accumulating remarkable pebbles.... With an ardent curiosity, as in any Virtuous manners in the royal society. Some rattle and Thunder out A, B, C, with much fire and impetuosity, as Alexander fought and very often sit down and cry as heartily, upon being out spelt as Cesar did... (John Adams, 15 Monday, March. 1756, Quoted in James Bishop Peabody, 1973: 36)

From his letter, we deduce that during his teaching career, Adams developed a sense of loneliness (solitude), reflection, meditation and a new passion for the English literature, mainly the post-Classical Rationalism's writing. Influenced by Alexander Pope, Samuel Johnson, Wordsworth and Gray, Adams believed in the connection between nature and human emotions. He admired the landscapes and the nature's silence that were his source of inspiration and liberty. According to McCullough, Adams saw life contrary to nature as a drama like that of the theater, "but with significant differences" (David McCullough, 2005: 42). We assert then that Adams supported the men's freedom of speech and struggle for their rights. Adams often stayed alone in his room meditating life and forgetting the external world, by trying to be in harmony with nature and understand its language. He added:

The Road is walled non each side with a Grove of trees the stillness, silence and the uniformity of the prospect puts the Mind into a stirring thoughtful Mood. But the reflections that are made in a Grove are forgotten in the Town and the man resembles a saint in his Thoughts in the Man who resembles Devil in his Actions in the last...In such silent scenes, as riding or walking thro the woods or sitting alone in my chamber or lying awake in my bed, my thoughts commonly run upon Knowledge, Virtue , books and tho I am apt to forget these, in the distracting Bustle of the town and ceremonious converse with mankind...(John Adams, 1759, quoted in James Bishop Peabody: 42)

Adams's interest in politics began during his years as a teacher in Worcester. His interest in civilizations' development and decline push him to assert that when a civilization reached its summit, it declined while another rose somewhere else. Adams's interest in ancient civilizations and history provided him with the necessary knowledge of the monarchical great empires as had Greek, Egypt and Rome and their historical mistakes. This allowed him to have an understanding of the British Empire's colonial policy toward the Americans. In the following letter, Adams described his political career's beginnings:

All that part of creation which lies within our observation is liable to change. Even mighty states and kingdoms are not exempted. If we look into history, we shall find some nations rising from contemptible beginnings, and spreading their influence till the whole globe is subjected to their sway. When they have reached the summit of grandeur, some minute and unsuspected cause commonly their ruin and the empire of the world is transferred to some other place. (John Adams, October 12. 1755, Quoted in James. B. Peabody: 38).

We argue that Adams tried to define virtue in his *Diary*. Besides the philosopher Bolingbroke who said that “True moral virtue is something very real and it is the cause of our happiness”, Adams wrote “This is divine and eternal truth. But alas! How shall we define true moral virtue? And where shall we find it? ” To discover virtue, he believed that he had to “pierce the veil of appearances in order to see the underlying truth” (Adams, 1765: 65). He admired Bonaparte’s expression “The Scenery of the Business” and in an essay printed in the *Boston Gazette* (1763), Adams claimed that “self-deceit was the source of far the greatest and worst part of the vices and calamities among mankind” (Adams, 1763: 15).

In his *Diary*, Adams saw that “No man is entirely free from weakness and imperfection in this life. Men of the most exalted genius and active minds are generally most perfect slaves to fame. They sometimes descend to as a mean tricks and artifices in pursuit of honor or reputation as the miser descends to in pursuit of gold” (Adams, *Diary*, February 19, 1756). We conclude from Adams’s words that the human being can’t be perfect whatever his status and sometimes he is the slave of his pursuit of fame and wealth, but Adams never reflected on his reputation or fame and sacrificed all what he had to the welfare of his nation.

Therefore, Adams’s experience was a struggle to fortify his own virtue and a battle to acquire values and to protect them. Adams’s *Diary* served as a forum in which he could examine his and the others’ virtue. His *Diary* revealed the difficulty of achieving virtue, which left Adams worried about his own virtue and pessimistic about everyone else. During his youth, his *Diary* provided a basis for his personal battle with the human nature and he was

convinced that self-government was a challenge. Adams's pursuit of virtue was not only a spiritual quest, for him self-discipline also brought not only virtue but success in the world's governments. As a result, he believed that he could succeed only through rigorous education and the recognition of the past (Adams, *Diary*, 1765: 70).

From his *Diary* we argue that Adams's political and social decisions and meditation dated from this period. Behind his political wisdom, there was a teaching career and he believed that to rule over people, a president must set a good ruling example. Adams advocated a good policy in all domains. He embodied the past values and work to protect them. He worked hard to insure and revive those ideals on which the nation is built, by supporting a strong education.

As is stated in biography theory, the experience produces meanings that draw conclusions from the past, in order to understand the other's cultural and political experiences held by those in positions of power, authority and control. Today, the American educational system has been shaped by the political and the ideological beliefs of those who are in positions of power. Adams's childhood, education, teaching career and historical origins contributed to his presidency and his political decisions, which are not made by ignorance, because he was a responsible teacher and intellectual. Therefore, we claim that education became a fundamental value and a basis for the Americans who still in progress today. Schools functioned to inculcate in each generation of young people particular ideas and experiences that serve to shape their beliefs and future opportunities as citizens. Experience provide basic material for the examined life and make the reader of Adams's works think of it in both general and specific.

### **I-3- Adams as a Successful Lawyer and a Defender of Liberty:**

The Part I took in Defense of Cptn. Preston and the Soldiers, procured me Anxiety, and Obloquy enough. It was, however, one of the most gallant, generous, manly and disinterested Actions of my whole Life, and one of the best Pieces of Service I ever rendered my Country. Judgment of Death against those Soldiers would have been as foul a Stain upon this Country as the Executions of the Quakers or Witches, anciently. As the Evidence was, the Verdict of the Jury was exactly right (Adams, March 5, 1773).

Greenblatt claims that the effect of resonance is forged between the *viewer* (reader) and the *object* (literary work), between the *past* and the *present*, between the *Textuality* and *Historicity*, by means of negotiation, exchange and circulation of power. Writers, historians and directors as Tom Hooper engage in re-constructing the American past/history to forge resonance and deep feelings between his audience and the film and between Adam's life and the American ones today. As a result, Hooper represents the American Revolution (past) as an underlined discourse to understand the present. This stimulates the viewer's powerful wonder to interpret Adams's writings, because every reconstruction is a *linguistic construct* with a *political objective*. In addition to their understandings of today's presidents justifications, ideologies and policies, implemented in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Tom Hooper's miniseries is a celebration of the American Revolution, Adams's life and the American social, cultural and political values. It is also a criticism of the contemporary presidents' domestic and foreign policies. The first episode of the miniseries portrays well Adams's defense of the British soldiers, in what is called the Boston Massacre. It opens with a cold winter, in 1770, Massachusetts. Adams played by the actor Paul Giamatti is depicted in the first shot as a simple country man riding his horse. In his mid thirties, he was known for his belief in law and justice and in the film Adams is represented as a successful lawyer and a proponent of justice.

Hooper's visual reconstruction of this historical period tends to enter Adams's consciousness as the collective memory of that period. The first episode *Join or Die* draws the audience's attention with suspense of not knowing, whether Adams will support the cause of freedom for the American colonies. He appears no more than a respected lawyer, trying to provide the needs of his family and honor his love for justice. The affair of the British soldiers and their commander, Captain Thomas Preston puts him in a dilemma and a self-struggle. According to Biography theory, this transitional period in Adams's life is the end of the first period of life structure, which consists of his childhood and youth. It is the end of one's period of life and the beginning of another that will determine his future. It can also be experienced as a time of difficulties depending on the choices an individual makes. Therefore, the film starts with a critical period in American history. It is also a critical period for Adams the Lawyer. Adams is portrayed differently from other people and despite his harsh character, he possesses high principles. He is not represented as an emotional man and defends the soldiers as innocents who proved guilty by a jury.

Adams is depicted speaking to Abigail, played by Laura Linney, in the following scene as being reluctant in his decision to defend the British soldiers. He knows that he will be dismissed by his neighbors and friends as a betrayer to the Revolutionary cause if he defends them. He tells Abigail what follows:

Can it harm to go and see these soldiers? and Abigail answered "I have" and he adds: "how?" Abigail replied: "because you will find a way to believe him" John replied "He may be telling the truth!" Abigail: "All your client tell the truth John Adams, but your prospective client is the most despised man in Boston. By the time the news of last night's events spread. I am sure he will be the most despised man in all Massachusetts" John replies: "I will be much talked of" Abigail encouraging him: "ah ambition" John: "Council is the last thing an accused person should lack in a free country, Abigail!" Abigail: "Then accept it" John: "But will I be condemned for it" Abigail: "They will say you are the crown's man" John: "I care not for malicious tongues on either side. (Tom Hooper, *John Adams*, 1<sup>st</sup> episode, *Join or Die*, 2008: 5 minutes).



This scene shows that Adams doesn't care about his reputation and encouraged by his wife Abigail, he takes the case. In this episode, Adams is despised by people because of his choice, but his aim is to change the standards of Justice. In June 1770, Adams was elected as a representative from Boston to the provincial legislature; this allowed him to defend the British soldiers, while representing the rebellious town of Boston, in its struggle with the royal governor. Adams wrote:

A town meeting was called for the choice of a successor to Mr. Bowdoin, Mr. Ruddock a very respectable Justice of the peace...I had never been at Boston meeting, and was not at this, till Messengers were sent to me, to inform me that I was chosen...I accepted the choice many congratulations were offered, which I received civilly, but they gave no joy to me. (Adams Quoted in James Bishop Peabody: 119).

According to his *Diary*, he never received attention from people despite his position and efforts and in another scene they looked at him as a betrayer. However, Adams succeeded in settling the trials that last eight months and after his hard work, Captain Preston and his soldiers were acquitted by a jury, on December 5, 1770. In this shot, Adams appears as a studious man doing his best to defend his clients and trying to convince the Jury. The following scene shows him as a just man and a proponent for justice. He told his wife Abigail:

The jury are all but certain to have judged this issue before they hear a word of evidence, does this government of King George have the right to tax the citizens of Boston, when they are denied representation in the parliament in Westminster?...But this is not a trial about Taxes levied in Massachusetts" Abigail replied: " You would do well to acknowledge it" Adams carries on: " No, it is a trial about whether or not Captain Preston ordered his man to fire on that crowd and if that crowd was a lawful assembly or not...The resentment of Boston towards the Crown is irrelevant (Tom Hooper, *John Adams, Join or Die*, 2008: 4 minutes).

Adams is represented as an honest man and the scene stands as an example of his fight against British soldiers' harassment in the night of the Boston Massacre. He works hard to prove the truth. His anger, red face and high voice show his sincerity and love of truth. No other lawyer has taken the case, because the accused were British. But Adams believes that the case is important to defend the rights of all men to legal representation and fair trials.

Ultimately, two trials are held in the episode, the first for the British commander Thomas Preston, who has been accused of giving the order to fire and the second for the soldiers. Adams's decision to defend them is risky both professionally and personally, but we see him trying all his best to prove the truth and his closing arguments in their defense are impressive. As it can be seen in the following, Adams is trying to convince the jury and seems as if he is dealing with all human's rights. The following words came from his inner heart:

If am for the prisoners at the Bar. In the words of the Marquis of Baccaria, If by supporting the rights of Mankind, I shall save from the agonies of death one unfortunate victim of tyranny, or of ignorance equally Fatal in his blessings will be sufficient consolation to me for the contempt of all mankind" when people are taxed without representation, they are sometimes to feel abused and sometimes they may even rebel. But we must take care, lest borne away by a torrent of passion we make shipwreck of conscience. The prisoners must be judged solely upon the evidence produced against them in court and by nothing and the evidence we have heard speaks plainly enough, gentlemen... (Tom Hooper, 1<sup>st</sup> Episode, 2008: 3 minutes)

From this shot, we conclude that Adams's subjectivity and thought is revealed to the readers/audience through his words. They represent the *past* or the *other* and are manifestation of the *self* or the *present* redeployed in Tom Hooper's film *John Adams* (2008). Adams argued that people must bear some responsibility for what had happened. By quoting The Makquis of Baccaria (a philosopher prisoner of Baccarea in Italy called Condorcet) , Adams appears as an intellectual of high quality. His words are very organized and full of logic and he appeals to philosophy, politics and law in order to convince the jury. Physically his face is red, his eyes crying and his hands moving right and left. It symbolizes his brave, sensible heart and love for justice. He carries on his defense by saying:

A sentry's post is his castle! And to attack it, by English law is an illegal act. Soldiers so assaulted may defend themselves to the death. The people are crying: kill them! Kill them! Knock them down and they're heaving sharp cutting ice, oster shells, clubs. What are they to do, behave like stoic philosophers lost in apathy? Disguard these uniforms. Consider them the men who wear them consider yourselves in such a situation and judge if a reasonable man would not fear for his life. Facts are stubborn things, see whatever our wishes our inclinations... On the dictums of our passions... They can't alter the state of facts and evidence. You see, the law on the one hand is inexorable to the cries and lamentations of the prisoners. But on the other hand, it is

deaf deaf as adder to the clamors of the populace. Gentlemen of the jury, I submit to your candor and justice... The prisoners and their cause (Ibid: 4 minutes).

We notice that after the trial, Adams's value grows among the patriots and through his defense, none of the accused soldiers are sent to jail. Six of the soldiers are found not guilty and two were charged with manslaughter. Consequently, his legal practice and reputation in Boston grows quickly and he begins to publish numerous essays in *Boston Newspapers* on social, legal, and political issues. Soon, Hooper depicts him representing some of the wealthiest men in the colony, the English people who first settled in America long years ago. They considered their new societies as *Excellencies* of the old English ones and believed that they have all the rights of the Englishmen. Adams contributed in the American political thought and in the summer of 1770, he was elected to the Massachusetts Delegates. At the end of the first episode, Adams is chosen as a delegate to Philadelphia for the First Continental Congress (1776). Adams gives a speech and tries to define the concept of liberty:

Let it be known... The British liberties are not the grants of princes or parliaments... that many of our rights are inherent and essential... agreed on maxims and established as preliminaries even before parliament existed we have a right to them, delivered from our maker. Our fore fathers have earned and bought liberties for us at the expense of their ease, their states, their pleasures and their blood. Liberty is not built on the doctrine that a few nobles have a right to inherit the earth. No! No It stands on this principle that the meanest and lowest of the people are, by the unalterable indefeasible laws of god and nature, as well entitled to the benefit of the air to breathe, light to see, food to eat and clothes to wear as the nobles or the king that is liberty. And liberty will reign in America (Ibid, first episode: 2 minutes).

Adams's above speech shows his preoccupation with the meaning of "liberty" for the Americans his attempt to give a formal definition. In this regard, Adams addresses John Taylor of California:

...Liberty is an intellectual quality, an attribute that belongs not to fate not to chance. The definition of it is a self-determined power in an intellectual agent. It implies thought, choice and power, it can elect between objects, indifferent in point of morality. Neither morally good nor morally evil. If the substances in which this quality, attribute, objective, call it what you will exists, has a moral sense, a conscience, a moral faculty if it can distinguish between moral good and evil and has power to choose the former and refuse the latter, it can if it will, choose the evil and reject the good (Ibid, 1<sup>st</sup> Episode).

Through writing, people are trying to make their world more known and to give it a sense. The significance of Adams's writing about liberty and justice is to be found not only in what was written but also in the act of writing and his efforts to defend liberty and his country. Adams inspired his definition of liberty from Algernon Sidney's *Discourses Concerning Governments* (1698) and *Court Maxims* (1696), Sir John Harrington's *Discourse of a Stale Subject, Called the Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596), John Locke's *Second Treaties of Government* (1689), Baronde , Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Law* (16 ) and Rousseau's *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts* (1750), *On the Social Contract* and *Emile* (1762). In Addition to Thomas Hobbes's *The Materials View of Human Nature* and *Fear as Determining Factor in Human Life* (17 ).

According to Adams, *Liberty* is a natural right "it is one consequence of just laws" (John Adams, 1765: 45). It is constructed to mean a state of mind or character, which allows a man to be free though bound or imprisoned, as he said to Benjamin Ruch: " The Liberty of a man chained hands and foot...a perfect liberty to stay there..."(Ibid: 46). Adams based his idea of freedom upon a set of assumptions about human nature such as the men's gregarious and religious nature by God's design. They also possessed strong passions and instincts, which keeps society in a state of tension and turmoil and which threatened freedom. The most important of these for him are passion, emulation, ambition, envy, jealousy and the desire to excel an excessive love of Liberty itself. Adams saws the desire to be admired and esteemed was "as a real want of nature as hunger" with the impulse to do good things to others (Ibid: 54).

According to Adams, human reason and conscience is not a match for "human passion, human's imaginations and enthusiasms are the result of reason". He also noted that violence is an inclination to luxury, military, religious desires, family pride even the arts and

sciences were threats to freedom. Although the circumstances, “liberty” will not be achieved whenever people were ignorant and where there is no freedom of speech and debate. Adams considers that education is important, because it will form a wise nation that will struggle against wars and injustice, by taking measures to defend the country from outside invasions. For him, people should participate in the affairs of government. He also argued that freedom and property were synonymous to “Property”. “It must be secured or liberty cannot exist”. Adams considers any man free to earn his bread and “It is necessary to be just and good, because without it, there will be no political liberty” (Ibid: 60-74).

When reading the Declaration of Independence, it holds that all men, not just Americans, are endowed with a right to liberty. Thus, liberty is an aspect of human nature everywhere and constitutes America’s first principles. Therefore, Adams insisted that the promotion of freedom in the world has been and should always be the objective of the American foreign policy. The question we ask then after knowing Adams’s definition of liberty and justice, is not whether but how to advance liberty today?

From what has been said, three conclusions can be drawn: first, that Adams and the Founders understood that America is a particular nation and that it must always keep in mind its own sovereign obligations and defend itself, its people, and its interests. Second, Adams understood that America is linked to the world and it must not forget its limits towards the other countries. One can notice also how Adams gave importance to people’s contribution and participation in liberty. Adams saw that the political order can’t be reached if people are oppressed. Many nations today suffer from internal conflicts, terrorism and destruction, because the notion of liberty is not understood. Third and most important, Adams was aware of the difficulties involved in advancing the cause of liberty and building a strong central government.

This period of Adams's life teaches that Liberty which is not just about holding an election; it is also about establishing stable constitutional government and the rule of law. There is a great distance between the natural right to liberty and the capacity of particular peoples and nations for self-government. Every human has a desire to be free; but it is difficult to be free. Through the Founding Founders' own experience of breaking with Britain, making a Revolution, building self-governments and constitutional values, Hooper reminds the Americans about the importance of liberty for the oppressed nations today.

#### **I-4- Adams and Abigail as Good and Devoted Parents:**

The miniseries and Adams's letters represent the Eighteenth-Century American's family life. Separated from her husband during the wartime, Abigail's role as a mother was not easy. Along the seven episodes of the miniseries, she is taking care of her children; she raised them with little assistance from John Adams, who was consumed by the development of the new nation. One scene of the second episode, *Independence* represents Abigail's courage in deciding to inoculate her children during the Small Pox disease and to take a gun to defend them, believing that the troops passing near her house are British. Mrs. Adams's affection towards her five children is the symbol of her motherhood. Fortunately for the Adams family, their fourth children survived the Small Pox. For many years, Abigail was alone to make decisions concerning her children's health and education. A year after the British invasion of Boston, Small Pox invaded the city. During the epidemic of 1776, Abigail decided to travel with her young children to Boston to have them inoculated against the disease. Without informing her husband as it is depicted in the second episode, she encouraged her children to be inoculated. After the inoculation Abigail wrote to her husband:

I must begin with apologizing to you for not writing since the 17 of June. I have really had so many cares upon my Hands and Mind, with a bad inflammation in my Eyes that I have not been able to write. I now date from Boston where I yesterday arrived

and was with all 4 of our little ones inoculated for the small pox (Abigail Adams to John Adams, 16 July 1776).

Adams approved her decision and understood the dangers of the disease, although he was not informed immediately. This example stands for Abigail's and Adams's responsibility as parents and their confidence against each other. He replied his wife:

I suspect that you intended to have run solely, through the small Pox with the family, without letting me know it, and then have sent me an Account that you were all well. This might be a kind Intention, and if the design had succeeded, would have made me very joyous. But the secret is out, and I am left to conjecture. But as the Faculty has this distemper so much under Command I will flatter myself with the Hope and Expectation of soon hearing of your Recovery (Ibid, 20 July, 1776).

Likewise, according to biographers and the film, we argue that both of them experienced the same fears when Abigail. Jr suffered from a breast cancer and Charles died as a young adult. Abigail's sadness is depicted in the sixth and seventh episodes, but her faith in God makes her strong. The only one who accomplished his parents' wishes and became an ambassador was John Quincy Adams (the sixth president of the USA). However the difficulties, both Adams and Abigail succeeded in surpassing their children's diseases.

Therefore, we assert that Abigail provides for her children all the protection they needed and consults her husband, when she needs guidance. Adams insisted on their children's education and provides them with the best means, but unfortunately not all the Adams's children were as successful in life as their parents had hoped. Hooper's ideology is to make the two parents as examples for today's ones who must perceive failures as their own and struggle to assist them in their achievements. Both Adams and Abigail represent the devoted, the responsible and tender parents.

To conclude, we assert that Adams's family, as it is described in the miniseries, is not an ordinary American family in the sense that it has a presidential dimension. Two presidents came out of it; John Adams and John Quincy Adams. It is also not ordinary because it does not describe the husband-wife relations superficially. Though Adams's is a high level

politician, Abigail is depicted as strong enough to give advice to her husband and to remind him about women's rights in the new Republic. Abigail's proto-feminism is featured in the miniseries because it foreshadows the feminist struggle in Contemporary America. The type of family that she builds with Adams is not that of her times because it opens perspective for the new family types that will emerge with changes in the American society centuries later.

## **II- Adams in the Revolutionary Period:**

### **II-1- Adams as an Honest and Active Delegate in the First and the Second Continental Congress:**

Before God, I believe the hour has come. My judgment approves this measure, and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, and all that I am, and all that I hope in this life, I am now ready here to stake upon it. And I leave off as I began that life or die, survive or perish, I am for the Declaration. It is my living sentiment, and by the blessing of God it shall be my dying sentiment. Independence now! Independence forever! (Adams, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1776).

At the end of the first episode and after his successful defense of the soldiers, Adams's image changed and becomes more respected than before. He is asked in the film by his cousin Samuel Adams to represent Massachusetts in the First Continental Congress, in Philadelphia. Samuel was one of the colonists, who opposed the British government's oppressive Acts and one of the executive members of the sons of liberty, an anti-British group of agitators. Adams replies to Samuel Adams, in the following scene that his reputation is destroyed after the British case and people no longer trust him. This scene shows a reluctant and prudent Adams. He said:

I know you share our sympathies, cousin. Why not stand for election on the Massachusetts council? John replies: I have no talent for politics. I am by nature as far too independent minded and besides, I hardly think that my name will add luster to your cause at this time, half my clients have left me (Ibid: 5 minutes).

When the Colonialists protested against parliamentary policies of the *Stamp Act* in 1765, Adams was at the beginning hesitating to be involved in the revolutionary movement. With a small and growing family, he feared for his legal practice. In addition, he rejected



many of the radical leaders' violent actions, including those of his cousin Samuel Adams. However, under pressure to act, he assisted the popular movement by writing anonymous newspaper essays and spreading propaganda pieces. Britain continued its attempts to tax the colonies and to deprive them of their autonomy. Later on, he was convinced that it was time to react and at the end of the first episode, Adams went to Philadelphia in 1774, as one of the four delegates from Massachusetts to the First Continental Congress. It was in this period that Adams comes to the conclusion that he must commit his life to the cause of liberty, by using his knowledge in law (Heater Lehr Wagner: 20-24). His letters reveals his will and his response to the patriots' call. He wrote in his *Diary*:

At this period of 1773-1774, the Universal cry among the friends of their country was "What shall we do to be saved?" It was by all agreed as the governor was entirely dependent on the crown and the council in danger of becoming so if the judges were made so too, the liberties of the country would be totally lost and every man at the Mercy of a few slaves of the governor. But no man presume to say what ought to be done or what could be done...I understood very well what was meant and I fully expected that if no expedient could be suggested...I dreaded the effect upon the Morals and Temper of the People, which must be produced by any violence... (Adams, July 1802, Quoted in James Bishop Peabody: 136).

This period of Adams's life is well portrayed in the second episode, which covers the disputes among the members of the Second Continental Congress about declaring independence from Great Britain, as well as the final drafting of the Declaration of Independence. As its title *Independence* suggests, it covers both the First and the Second Continental Congress in 1776 and 1777. Adams is depicted as a leader and a supporter of independence. He is trying to convince the members of the Congress that there is no other solution than to break off and to declare independence from the British Empire. He is depicted as the selector of Colonel George Washington as a new head of the Continental Army. However, he manages to alienate many of the other Founding Fathers going sometimes so far and insulting Mr. Dickenson, an influential conservative leader in the Continental Congress.

He implied that “the man suffers from a religiously based moral cowardice, making him a “snake on his belly”. Because of Mr. Dickenson’s refusal to support Massachusetts’ cause, Adams seems angry. Mr. Dickenson says in this scene:

I would read into record, for the benefit of those delegates who are unable to remain close of session, the declaration resolves of this first congress, resolved that to the recent grievous acts imposed by Parliament on Massachusetts we cannot submit But in hopes that our fellow subjects in Great Britain will restore to us happiness and prosperity rather than support the Massachusetts militia, we have agreed to pursue the following peaceable measures...To publish a statement of the afore said to the inhabitants of British America”(Tom Hooper, 2<sup>nd</sup> Episode, 2008, 5 minutes).

Adams’s behaviour and anger against what Mr. Dickenson says stands for his sincerity and dislike of hypocrisy. None of the Founding Fathers dares to express his thought in the Congress and according to Adams “The business of this Congress has been to achieve nothing”. It is clear that the relationship between him and Mr. Dickenson is degrading. Adams is proud of his wife, who convinces him to participate in the Revolutionary movement. In his Autobiography Adams claimed:

The Quaker and proprietary interests in Pennsylvania now addressed themselves to Mr Dickenson, who as well as his wife were Quakers and in various ways stimulated him to oppose my designs and the Independence of the country and they succeeded so well that they although they could not finally prevent any one of my Measures from being carried complete execution, they made him and his cousin Charles Thompson and many others of their friends, my enemies from that Time to this 2 April 1805...(James B. Peabody: 173).

Likewise, the director represents him, more than any revolutionary, as the Founder of the political and the constitutional principles of the American Nation. His work in Congress, his pamphlets and *Thoughts on Government* (1776) were influential in the Revolutionary period. In 1780, he wrote the *Massachusetts Constitution* that was the most important document in this era. Gordon Wood claims that “Adams merits a special attention as a Founder, because his political character contrasts with those of the other Americans” (Gordon Wood, 2006: 178).

Throughout his life, Adams saw that no society including America could be egalitarian. Although he attempted to understand the American political and the social life, but his political thought's honesty alienated him from many people. In one important scene, he has a conversation with Abigail, where he expresses his sadness about the killing of many patriots by the British soldiers. In this scene, he appears as a disillusioned, sensible and honest man. He was determined in convincing Congress about independence and gives importance to time, because people are waiting for light. He says to Abigail describing his feelings and anger against the British oppressive actions and the Congress's members, who are not doing anything to stop the massacres:

There can be no mistaking about Britain's intentions now. If you had seen them, Abigail, an army of plain country boys...with no experience of professional soldiering, but their faces shining like the sun through a church window, we must support them with guns and leadership and faith in what they do...I have to stand and rail until my voice breaks and my legs collapse beneath me...this time Congress will act...I don't have time to coddle like a young girl courting a beau Abigail...to sit in Philadelphia listening to men talking to hear themselves talk resolving nothing to subject myself to that yet again, I cannot...I cannot.(Tom Hooper, Second episode, 2008: 3 minutes).

Adams is depicted as a committed excited revolutionist. According to Gordon Wood Adams "knows well the importance of virtue in the construction of the New Republic" (Gordon Wood, 2006: 180). Indeed in the miniseries, Adams carries all the people's feelings, engendered by the Revolution. He knows that there are many people drawn by ambition, power and fame, but he believes that there are others, who are ready to sacrifice everything to get freedom. More than any other American Revolutionary, Adams believes and has many hopes in the new American Nation's future. We deduce from this episode that he embodies the American values, wishes, faith and self-determination. For him people shall make a difference between what is true and false, what is right and wrong. This following quotation from his writings illustrates well the above analysis:

America was designed by providence for theatre on which man was to make his true figure, on which science, virtue, liberty, happiness and glory were to exist in peace.[...]The Revolution would be an astonishment to vulgar Minds all over the world, in this and in the future generations: "Human nature itself is evermore an advocate for liberty. There is also in human nature a resentment of injury, and indignation against wrong. A love of truth and a veneration of virtue. These amiable passions are the latent spark. [...] If the people are capable of understanding, seeing and feeling the differences between true and false, right and wrong, virtue and vice, to what better principle can the friends of mankind apply than to the sense of this difference? (John Adams, Dairy 1775: 123).

Because of his hard and good work in the First Continental Congress, Adams was reelected to the second one, which was convened in May 1775; just few days after War, with the mother country had erupted at Lexington and Concord. When Congress created the Continental army on June 1775, he was the first to nominate George Washington of Virginia to be its commander. Adams soon emerged as an important leader in Congress and thanks to his efforts, independence was declared. On June 1776, Adams asked Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin to write the Declaration of Independence. This proves his modesty and respect for the other Founders shown in the scene, where there is the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. He believes that Jefferson was the appropriate person to write it. When Adams takes a decision, he was serious and firm. Therefore, we assert that his conscience and knowledge of the results is a proof of his wisdom and good analysis of facts.

Despite his achievements, he knows that he is unpopular. The director shows Adams's feeling of neglect on the one hand and on the other hand, his resistance to people's misjudgment, by showing his greatness, his wisdom, his hard work and his honesty. He is represented as being behind all the Revolutionary important decisions the writing of the American Constitution. The following scene is about Adams's conversation with Jefferson about the necessity to write a Declaration, believing and trusting Jefferson's skills of writing and enlightened mind:

We are of the same mind there; Massachusetts too must have its constitution. But I would have founded on principles, which could one day inform the Confederacy of all

the states, but we must first achieve this long hoped for separation and to that end we must have a declaration of principles... No! No! I do not have time. I do not have time. I head the board of war and ordinance as well as serving on 22 other committees and the outcome at this great question far from certain...So my energies must be spending on the floor...First you are a Virginian and a Virginian should be not at the head of this business as it's the most powerful state and second I am obnoxious, suspected and unpopular and you are very much otherwise. Third and perhaps the most important I have read your summary view of the rights of British America and I have a great opinion of the elegance of your open mind and none at all of my own...I am not by nature a humble man but circumstances sometimes require a change of habits...(Tom Hooper, Second Episode, 2008: 5minutes).

Likewise, Adams is depicted as an important member of the committee that prepared the Model Treaty, which guided the Congressional members sent to France to secure foreign trade and military assistance. Early in 1778, after nearly four years of service in Congress, Adams was sent to France to secure aid and to obtain the needed loans and open commerce. In 1781, together with Franklin, John Jay and Henry Laurens, Adams was part of the commission of American diplomats that negotiated the *Treaty of Paris* that was the *Pact* that brought an end to the War of Independence. Adams returned home during the war and from July until November 1779, he drafted the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780. We argue then that Adams has the gift for convincing people wisely and as honestly as possible. He always expresses his thoughts and at the end of the second episode, Hooper shows Adams's strong devotion for his country. His wish is to see his country free. Therefore, the director is using him as an artifact to representing the Founders' sacrifice and belief in the American free Republic. The following shot shows Adams's purpose of unifying the colonists under one cause that of Independence. He declares:

Objects of the most stupendous magnitude, measures which will affect the lives of millions, born and unborn are now before us, we must expect a great expense of blood to obtain them. But we must always remember that a free constitution of civil government cannot be purchased a too dear a rate as there is nothing on this side of Jerusalem of greater importance to mankind. My worthy colleague from Pennsylvania has spoken with great integrity and eloquence. He's given you a grim prognostication of our national fame, but where he forces apocalypse. I see hope I see a new nation ready to take its place in the world not an empire but a Republic and a Republic of laws, not men, Gentlemen. We are in the very midst of Revolution the most complete unexpected and remarkable of any in the history of the world. How few of the human races have ever had an opportunity of choosing a system of government for

themselves and their children. I am not without apprehensions gentleman. But the end that we have in sight is more than worth all the means. My beliefs says that the hour has come (his eyes full of tears) my judgment approves these measures and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, all that I am and all that I hope in this life. I am now ready to stake upon it while I will live let me have a country a free country... (Ibid, Second Episode: 3 minutes)

In this shot, Adams expresses his will of forming a Republic. This vision is reflected in his pamphlet *Thoughts on Government*, which was written in a form of a letter to a friend on March, 1776. In the latter, he believed that “where annual elections end, there slavery begins” (Adams, 1776: 23). In his *Thought on Government*, he confirmed his belief in the separation of powers, a bicameral legislature and a strong executive as the indispensable means for the preservation of personal liberty in a Republic (Ibid: 182). He also claimed that freedom was dependent upon the right from Republican Government and that it was the only good government, which every society was founded. For Adams, “human behavior is primarily driven by emotions, with reason as the “lawyer for the passions” (Ibid: 187).

In his *Defense*, Adams discusses the predominance of the self-serving emotions. Though we allow benevolence and generous affections to exist in the human breast, yet every moral theorist will admit the selfish passions in the generality of men to be the strongest. Adams stated:

There are few who love the public better than themselves, though all may have some affection for the public. We are not, indeed, commanded to love our neighbor better than ourselves. Self-interest, private avidity, ambition, and avarice, will exist in every state of society, and under every form of government (John Adams, *A Defense of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America*, 1788: 57-74).

From Adams’s words, we deduce that the most influential of the human passions is the desire for distinction, in the eyes of others. This compulsion is unchanging and it underlies the thirst for power. This striving for distinction gives rise to a “natural aristocracy” in every society (Ibid: 189). Adams discusses this drive as early as 1765, when in *the Dissertation on Canon and Feudal Law*; he refers to it as the “love of power”:

The love of power, which has been so often the cause of slavery, has, whenever freedom has existed, been the cause of freedom. If it is this principle that has always prompted the princes and nobles of the earth, by every species of fraud and violence to shake off all the limitations of their power, it is the same that has always stimulated the common people to aspire at independency, and to endeavor at confining the power of the great within the limits of equity and reason (John Adams, *Dissertation on Canon and Feudal Law*, 1965: 323).

In the *Discourses on Davila* (1790) for example, the love of power has become “the passion for distinction” (Adams, 1790: 23). This discussion is one of the most interesting passages in all of Adams’s works and is worth quoting at length:

There is none among [the natural human traits] more essential or remarkable, than the passion for distinction. A desire to be observed, considered, esteemed, praised, beloved, and admired by his fellows, is one of the earliest, as well as keenest dispositions discovered in the heart of man. If any one should doubt the existence of this propensity, let him go and attentively observe the journeymen and apprentices in the first workshop, or the oarsmen in a cockboat, a family or a neighborhood, the inhabitants of a house or the crew of a ship, a school or a college, a city or a village, a savage or civilized people, a hospital or a church, the bar or the exchange, a camp or a court. Wherever men, women, or children, are to be found, whether they be old or young, rich or poor, high or low, wise or foolish, ignorant or learned, every individual is seen to be strongly actuated by a desire to be seen, heard, talked of, approved and respected, by the people about him, and within his knowledge (John Adams, *Discourses on Davila*, 1790: 232).

In Adams’s writings, we notice that he was influenced by Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*, who supported individualism, self-reliance and rejected government. Paine admitted that “Society in every state is blessing”, but claimed that “Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil, in its worst an intolerable one” (Paine, 1776: 182). Adams was inspired by these ideas and tried his best to apply them in his society but contrary to Paine, he considered the central government as a necessary institution to organize the American society.

Our deduction is that Hooper wishes to attract the audience’s attention to the disagreement between those who consider a strong government as indispensable to personal liberty, because it establishes law and order and the ones who regard government as an enemy of freedom and an instrument of tyranny and oppression. Adams shared with Thomas Paine the belief in people’s sovereignty through legislation. Indeed, Paine’s ideas of self-reliance

and individualism influenced Adams's Revolutionary thoughts. This is reflected in his *Discourse on Davila* and his *Diary*, where he tried to combine both respect for the law and people's liberties. The manifestation of Adams's thought and language in public helps to distinguish his role in the First and the Second Continental Congress. He is represented in the above episode as a major influential figure. Despite the difficulties, he succeeded to unite all the colonies under the cause of liberty to form of a free and equal country.

## **II-2- Adams as a Wise Diplomat and Ambassador to France and Holland:**

I must study politics and war. [...] so that my sons will have the liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons must study navigation, commerce, and agriculture so that their children will have the right to study painting, poetry, and music. (Paul Guiamatti, Second Episode: 30 seconds).

After his mission in the Congress, Adams went to Europe as a diplomat. He remained there from 1784 to 1785. He served on a diplomatic mission targeting to arrange Treaties of Commerce with several European nations. In 1785, he became the first United States' foreign Minister to England. Abigail accompanied by their daughter Nabby, joined him in England in the same year. Their sons, Charles, Thomas Boylston, and John Quincy spent these years in America completing their schooling (Gordon Woods, 2006:189).

The third episode *Don't Tread on Me* shows Adams's travel in Europe during the war, seeking alliances with foreign nations. It first shows his embassy with Benjamin Franklin in King Louis XVI's Court of France. The episode stands for the old French nobility, before the French Revolution, which is portrayed as decadent. Adams is depicted as a plain speaker and thoughtful man. Whereas, his friend Benjamin Franklin adopted the French nobility, seeking to obtain by seduction what Adams will gain through honesty. In one important scene Adams is represented as a modest, wise faithful and a man of principles. When he is sitting around



the French Nobles' lunch table, the Comtesse Ligniville d'Autricour asks him if Adams, the first man on earth, was his descendent. He answers:

Ah yes, I see very good, yes, yes Madame, well yes my family resembles the first couple Both in name and frailty so, much that I have no doubt that we are descendent from that in paradise. Well I suppose it was simply by instinct. No whenever a man and woman would approach within...striking distance of each other I suppose that they would simply fly together, no? Like two objects in one of Dr Franklin's electric experiments...I forget to say that I have no ear for la music. No, I am afraid my occupation allows me little time for the finer arts, No I study politics and war, you see, that my sons will have the liberty to study mathematics and philosophy, My sons must study Navigation, commerce and agriculture, so that their children will have the right to study painting, poetry and music.(Ibid: 3 minutes).

His words show that he was not pleased with the behavior of the French around the table, they represent the European aristocracy and Hooper's aim is to demonstrate that Adams' is no, as he was accused, an aristocrat. He redeploys Adams's values and principles who don't adopt their way of living to depict the American capitalist society. In one scene, Franklin blamed him for his lack of diplomatic talent calling him a "direct insult followed by a petulant whine". Therefore, Franklin has removed him from any position of diplomatic authority in Paris, when Adams said to the French ambassador that their aids are insufficient. In order to obtain monetary support for the Revolution, Adams travels to the Dutch Republic.

Although his illness and the Dutch agreement with the American cause, they don't consider the new nation reliable and trustworthy. Adams worked hard using diplomacy to convince the Dutch representatives about the loan. In the following shot, we see that he performed himself as a successful and a simple wise diplomat, by remembering the Dutch about their good relations and its shared history with America. This scene in fact shows his great knowledge of world history and foreign policies. We notice that the Dutch are astonished by his simplicity, when he asks for ten million dollars loan and his determination to form an independent country. He denies the rumors that the United States will make peace with Great Britain. He says what follows:

If ever there was a natural alliance surely it is between the Republic of the Netherlands and the United States. The Dutch first gave asylum to the pilgrims; New York and New Jersey were first settled by your country men... Indeed, sir if I may America and Holland are so close in history, in Religion, in government. That every Dutch man instructed in the subject must pronounce the American Revolution just and necessary or pass on the great actions of his immortal ancestors...An initial loan of ten million dollars...No, sir, no! The only acceptable outcome is complete and irrevocable independence... (Tom Hooper, Third episode, 6 minutes).

At the end of the third episode, the Revolution is won, the Dutch accepted the first loan to the American government and Adams became ill in the Netherlands. We conclude that the image of Adams changes in the film. By the end of the American Revolution, he has earned a solid reputation as a patriot, who had served his country. He was depicted as a brilliant and wise spokes' man and essay writer. His essay *Thoughts on Government* (1776) argued that the various functions of government executive, judiciary, and legislative must be separated to prevent tyranny. As far as his *Defense of the Constitutions and the Government of the United States of America* (1787) is concerned, it states that the greatest dangers to any policy "came from unbridled democracy and an unrestrained aristocracy capable of becoming an oligarchy. The antidote to these dangers" according to Adams "was a strong executive" (Adams Quoted in Gordon Wood, 2006:195).

Adams considered a powerful executive as the "father and protector" of a nation, where ordinary citizens "were the sole official, with independence to act in a disinterested manner". In 1790, he treated the same theme in a series of essays in a Philadelphia Newspaper that were known as *Discourses on Davila*, in which Adams discussed the system of checks and balances between the three branches of Government. In these essays, he advocates equal power to these branches. Greenblatt believes that cultural objects or subjects like Adams, from the *past* show something that is *otherness* in the *present*, "something that can extend and renew the personal experience and understanding of the selves or the present" (Greenblatt, 1990: 6). The notion of otherness thus becomes essential to New Historicism, especially in its

colonial analysis. We deduce that Tom Hooper revives the American historical memory and imagination by representing it through Adam's actions. This enable the director to conceive and understand the times, places, people's lives and cultures that are different from the ones represented in the miniseries.

Finally, history cannot be known except through the linguistic intervention which is language as those represented in Adams's life writings. But these writings cannot be understood without the knowledge of its historical context. The first is called by Greenblatt the *Textuality of History* and the second *the History of Text*. We assert that Adams's experience as an ambassador can be useful for the understanding of the American foreign policy now. Today, the recent changes in the world represent a challenge to leaders, who make foreign policy, as well as to those who study it.

### **III- The Comparison of John Adams to Jefferson, Washington, Franklin and Hamilton**

#### **III-1- Adams and Thomas Jefferson:**

As it is mentioned in Wittgenstein's theory, there is no separation between the *external* and the *internal* world of a person and the *inner process* is linked to the *external* one. Adams's interactions with his society influenced his thoughts, character and writings, because any subject or work of art represents a certain social and political context. Maurice Halbwachs states that an individual's memory and experience is the "intersection of collective influences from the family's conventions and the culture's norms to which the individual belongs" (Maurice Halbwachs, Quoted in Catherine N. Park, 2000: 65). The relationship between life and social environment is that there is an influence by the groups in which the subject participates. His life then has a social function in the present; as a result, we intend to

compare him to his Friends, to reveal his real inner image and significance for the Americans today.

John Adams, who nominated George Washington to lead the Revolutionary army, asked Thomas Jefferson to draft the Declaration of Independence and named John Marshall to head the Supreme Court, was a leader whose achievements are very important, both in war or in peace. But in our era, his achievements alone don't explain his popularity. What makes Adams a hero now is his honesty, simplicity, his peaceful attitude and his love for his friends and country. Adams's relationship to his surroundings and qualities appear in the comparison with his contemporaries such as his best friend Thomas Jefferson.

In the second and the third episode of Hooper's miniseries, which stand for the pre-Revolutionary and the Revolutionary periods, we are introduced to Thomas Jefferson played by Stephen Dillane. He appears as Adams's close friend, political and intellectual opponent. According to Wittgenstein mixing up physical and unconscious process allow us to know and interpret the inner side of a person. In terms of physical appearance, Adams is depicted as small and fat with big eyes, in contrast to Jefferson, a thin and tall man, with a narrow and calm face who has a fixed and thoughtful look. Wood claims that "Jefferson was tall six feet two and gangling, with a reddish freckled complexion, bright hazel eyes, and copper-colored hair, which he tended to wear unpowdered in a queue"(Gordon Wood, 2006: 99). The Contrast in physical appearance indicates a contrast between the origins of their family background. While Adams is depicted as issued from a farming family in Massachusetts, Jefferson is a Virginian with aristocratic origins. The strike differences between the self-made man Adams and the aristocratic Jefferson are reflected in their behavior. Jefferson wrote the following about his family:

The tradition of my father's family was that their ancestors came to this country from Wales and from near the mountain of Snow on the highest in Gr.Br. I noted once a case from Wales in the law reports, where a person of our name is the only instances, in which I have met with the name in that country... Peter my father, who settled in the lands I still own called Shadwell adjoining my parents residence. He was born Feb.29, 1707/8 and intermarried in 1739 with Jane Randolph... My father's education had been quite neglected, but being of a strong mind, sound judgment and eager after information, he read much and improved himself... (Thomas Jefferson, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1821, quoted in Copyright, 2009: 3).

Known historically as a shy and meditated man, Jefferson is depicted as a shadowy and silent man, during the Congress. Unlike Adams who tried his best to convince the colonies to declare independence, Jefferson remains in the background. No matter the differences, their cause is one. For both, separation from Great Britain is necessary. In the scene where Jefferson watched the British troops' treatment of the colonists, he says with anger: "I would lend my hand to sink the whole Island of the British Isles in the ocean" (Tom Hooper, Second Episode: 5 Seconds). These words appeared in a letter that Jefferson wrote to John Randolph, in 1767.

Both Adams and Jefferson were successful in their education and both became gifted writers, touching many subjects such as liberty and how to form an ideal government. However, strong are these similarities, they differ in some issues like their way of looking at life, slavery, parenthood, society and policy. Contrary to Adams, who worked hard in his farm and trying to be a successful lawyer, Jefferson as McCullough put it "spent his money in pleasures. [...] When he returned he brought sixty three paintings in addition to many books". (David McCullough, 2001: 347). Unlike Jefferson, Adams never owned slaves and he worked with the members of his family in his farm. Jefferson, as McCullough claims "was ready to sell his people rather than his land to pay for his extravagances" (Ibid: 347). Adams's commitment against slavery shows that he framed for the state of Massachusetts' Constitution. This Constitution explicitly ended slavery in this state, whereas the USA's Constitution according to Jefferson's writings maintained it explicitly by one third of the

population. Adams was the first president to entertain an African descendent, the representative of Haiti, as a dinner guest (Ibid: 348).

As regard parenthood, Adams and Abigail are represented as responsible and affectionate parents. Adams is usually said to be a severe and a neglecting father, but the miniseries shows Adams's great care about his family. Each time an occasion was presented to him, he tries to provide them with affection, though his revolutionary duties which often keep him far from them. Contrary to Adams, Jefferson kept farther from his daughter Martha, who studied and leaved alone in Paris (Ibid: 348). The best example of Adams's care of his family are the two shots, in which Adams is taking Nabby between his arms, after a long absence. In another scene, he takes his son John Quincy with him to Paris to form him as a successful ambassador. Though fearing for the security of his son, he sends him to Russia to form his character. The following exchange between father and son about the necessity of accepting to challenge in the accomplishment of one's duties:

Come , come, come, Russia here father! Very good! Will it be very cold there father?" john responded "Good heavens, no, no not for a man of Massachusetts. Man you must not let the idea of going to Russia frighten you, you are fourteen old, Johnny already a man and never one for childish pursuits and I have confidence that you will make both of us very proud... Son I would rather that you stay as well, but it is time that you put your accomplishments to use in the service of your country and you must not mind being sad. I would think less of you if you were not. There are times...when we must act against our inclinations and those times we may pain those that we love, I left your mother who I loved more than anything in the world, in order to shake Europe, by the scruff of the neck. That was my choice that was my duty. You see and whatever one may say of me, I always press forward with any challenge that has ever been given to me. (Tom Hooper, Third episode: 3 minutes).

Through the care that Adams shows to his son's initiation into statesmanship, one can see an Adams working for the establishment of a pedigree for the Adams's family. The director takes Adams's family as an archetype in American history of presidential families. The latest among these presidential families is that of the Bushes. The relation of President John Adams and President John Quincy Adams reflects that between President George

Herbert Walker Bush and his son President George Walker B. Bush. By constructing Adams's presidential years, he is used as an archetype of the American presidential families. The film's director indirectly criticizes Bush presidential terms which were characterized by war and conflicts.

The miniseries also emphasize Adams's sociability and his faithfulness to his friends. Contrary to Jefferson who tended to isolate himself from people, Adams kept forming new friendships and reviving the old ones, with the members of Congress, through communication. Jonathan Sewall remarks that Adams had "A heart formed for friendship" (David McCullough, 2001: 349). Even Jefferson, his political opponent attests that Adams "is so amiable that I pronounce you will love him if you ever become acquainted with him" (Ibid: 362). Adams and Jefferson have become close friends during their Joint service in Paris, before the French Revolution. Their difference in political outlook appears in their positions towards the French Revolution and the Algerian-American conflict. Unlike Jefferson who is shown using violence, Adams is portrayed as a deft negotiator. Jefferson is viewed as a forerunner of what came to be known as gunboat diplomacy later on in American history, a gunboat diplomacy that is best represented by the Bush presidents. This is why he tells his wife in one of the scenes of the miniseries "I always loved Jefferson and I still love him". What perhaps distinguishes him from Jefferson is the delegation of power to his friends and his trust in them. Politics does not make inflate his ego by showing off himself in the limelight.

The fact that Adams became later on Vice-President of President George Washington shows that he adhered to Washington's Farewell Address (1796). In this address Washington claimed that the United States should maintain commercial, but not political ties to other nations and not to enter into any "entangling" as permanent alliances while not advocating

isolationism. Washington laid out principles that would be followed in the making of American foreign policy until the 1940's and 1950's.

In his friendship with Jefferson, Adams remained above politics. Though he is shown in strong disagreement with Jefferson even when the later became his Vice-President after the 1796 election, he stills held friendship as more important than the political game. Through the faithfulness of Adams, one can see the tolerant Adams, who saw friendship as a sacred relationship between two human. We conclude that Adams and Jefferson are both passionate men about the USA's future. Adams's trust in his friend goes beyond. He persuades Jefferson in one scene to write the draft of the Declaration of Independence. This scene shows Adams's simplicity and belief in other's people abilities. He saw Jefferson as the appropriate man with intellectual abilities and enlightened mind to write such an important document. He convinces him by telling him that his reputation diminished among people after the British soldier's trial. One can understand from that, that Adams is able of recognizing his weaknesses and the positive attributes of even his political opponents. The conversation which follows is the best example of what has been asserted:

Adams: "We are of the same mind there; Massachusetts too must have its constitution. But I would have founded on principles, which could one day inform the confederacy of all the states, but we must first achieve this long hoped for separation and that end we must have a Declaration of Principles" Jefferson: " should you not write this?" John: "No, No I do not have time. I head the board of War and ordinance as well as serving on 22 other committees and the outcome of this great question is far from certain. So, my energies must be spent on the debate on the floor."Jefferson: "What can be possibly the reasons?" Adams: "First, your area Virginian and a Virginian should be at the head of his business as it's the most powerful state and second you are very much otherwise. Third and perhaps the most important I have read your summary view of the rights of British America and I have a great opinion of the elegance of your pen and none at all of my own" Jefferson: " You are too modest" John: " You are the first to find me so...(Tom Hooper, 3<sup>rd</sup> episode: 4 minutes).

It follows that political dissent does not stand in Adams's way of making friends. Partisanship is not the equal of friendship especially in the way of practising statesmanship. At no moment did Adams seek petty factional advantage. One could argue that the exemplary friendship that



Adams develops with Jefferson is an oblique critique of the political game in contemporary American partisanship. This partisan politics showed up clearly in the second presidential election of 2004 that opposed George Bush the Republican to Al Gore, the Democratic candidate. The counting and recounting of the votes in Florida because of the draw in the state and the excesses of accusation among the political factions demonstrated the extent of political corruption in the United States.

Unlike his other friends, Jefferson is a courteous reserved man. He disliked “personal controversy and was always charming in face-to-face relations with both friends and enemies” (Wood, 2006: 102). His courteousness is taken for hypocrisy by many of his opponents who think that he is a double-faced man. All through the film, one can see that Adams is well-spoken. This capacity of ornate speech is set in parallel with Jefferson’s fondness for paintings. Though it is hard to understand his thought, because he doesn’t manifest it in public, Jefferson is interested in oratory and philosophical debates. Gordon tells us:

It is easy to make fun of Jefferson and his parvenu attitudes and behavior. But it would be a mistake to dismiss his obsession with art and good taste merely as a trivial affectation or as the simple posturing and putting on of airs of an American provincial who would be the perfect gentleman. Jefferson may have been more earnest and enthusiastic about such matters than the other revolutionary leaders, but he was by no means unique in his concern for refining the sensibilities of himself and those of the American people. This was a moral and political imperative of all of the founders. To refine popular taste was in fact a moral and political imperative of all the enlightened of the eighteenth century. The fine arts, good taste, and even good manners had political implications. As the English philosopher Lord Shaftesbury had preached. (Ibid: 104).

In one of the scenes of the fourth episode *Reunion*, Abigail, Adams and Jefferson attend a spectacle in the opera of Paris. Abigail and Jefferson share this passion for arts. He tells Abigail not to deny the fact that she is “transported” with her feeling, by looking at the spectacle. He considers that her embarrassment caused by the show is “in favor of enjoyment and a certain elevation of the spirits, which is occasioned by witnessing the human body liberation from its earthly shackles” (Tom Hooper, Fourth episode). For Jefferson, arts are

liberations from the oppressions of the body and life. However, Jefferson compares everything from gardening and food to music, painting, and poetry in English or European fashion to the American one. Unlike Jefferson, Adams is depicted as an American Cicero, who uses the verbal art and oratory not simply for aesthetic purposes, but also in defense of the Republic. Both Jefferson and Adams are portrayed as neo-classical political thinkers and statesmen. But Adams's excellent speeches set him far above Jefferson, since it is geared to the liberation of which Jefferson converses with Abigail. Just as Marcus Julius Cicero, the Roman orator, Adams uses the art of eloquence in defense of the Republic. It has to be noted that Cicero brought Latin eloquence to its summits and so did Adams.

### **III- 2- Adams and Benjamin Franklin**

The other political figure to whom Adams is compared is Benjamin Franklin. Played by Tom Wilkinson, he appears in the second episode as an elderly man. Born in 1706, he is represented as having seventy years old in the film, whereas Adams was in his mid-forties during their meeting, in the Second Continental Congress. Belonging to an older generation than the rest of the Founders, Franklin "was deeply more committed to the British Empire than they were" (Gordon Wood, 2006: 70).

Unlike Adams who is deployed as a modest young lawyer, Franklin is already a famous man before the revolution, because he lived longer under British rules. When he arrives at the Continental Assembly, all the members look at him with admiration. His diverse scientific discoveries, mainly in electricity, earned him a place in the Royal Society. Posthumously, "he received honorable prizes degrees from universities in America and Britain, including Saint Andrew and Oxford" (Gordon Wood, 2006: 70). Philosophers and scientists from all over Europe consulted him on everything from how to build a fire place to why the oceans are salty.

Adams shares with Franklin a huge number of attributes, Franklin is described as a politician though he was the person who first attracted the attention of colonial American to its wealth and potential and thus influenced the men who rose in resistance to British taxing measures in the years after 1763. Since America is a viable country, why not elevate it to an independent nation?

There is a remarkable similarity between Franklin and Adams in the sense that they are both portrayed as self-made man. Franklin's image as a self-made man is conveyed in his autobiography where he shows how he progressed from being an apprentice to a respected man in his community. Franklin is an American model of colonial citizenship. He is portrayed as a father to all those who attended the Continental Congress. However it can be noted that the generation gap between Adams and Franklin makes a striking difference in their commitments. Franklin is portrayed only to be put in the background.

It is hard to interpret Franklin's autobiography, because of his temperament's changes. He was a runaway apprentice, a searcher of wealth, a scientist and inventor, an ambassador and a politician. In the scene when he arrived at the Congress, he spoke with humor and self awareness; he assumed the different personalities and roles, which attracted the crowd looking at him, without knowing how to understand him. He seems to have many masks and always mocked himself. Gordon writes:

Sometimes he was a woman like "Silence Do good", "Alice Addertongne", "Celia Shortface" and "Polly Baker", saucy and racy and hilarious...At other times he was the "busy body" or "Obadiah Plainman" or "Antony Afterwit" or "Richard Saunders"... "Sometimes he wrote in the London newspapers as "an American" or "a New England man". Other times he wrote as a "Briton" or "a London manufacturer (Ibid: 72).

Adams was a nationalist who lived in America, in the pre-Revolutionary period, contrary to Franklin who spent all his life abroad. Franklin was absorbed by the European culture. In 1749, he wrote a pamphlet *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in*

*Pennsylvania*, in encouragement of learning and intellectual advancement. Comparing the European and the American educational opportunities, he writes that in Europe a poor man's son could rise from law or church to high offices and "to an extraordinary pitch of grandeur" (Franklin, 1949: 45). He carried on by saying that in America, one could become a militia colonel, but in Europe one might be able "to have a voice in parliament, a seat among the peers" may become "first minister to govern nations and even mix his blood with princes" (Franklin, *Poor Richards' Almanacs*, 1763: 45).

Contrary to Franklin who embodied the stereotyped idealization of Europe, Adams had no admiration to the European Empires. Because of his ambitions and admiration of the British Empire, Franklin acted as the agent of Pennsylvania Assembly, in order to persuade the Crown to turn it into a royal province. He even wanted to become the first Royal governor of Pennsylvania.

Although in his mission he was ostensibly the agent of Pennsylvania Assembly, he was in reality the king's man. No one could have been more loyal. His confidence in the virtue and good sense of politicians at the highest levels of the British government was so great that it bewildered and analyzed even some of his English Friends. He even prominently displayed in his home a picture of George III's dearest friend and chief minister in 1762, Lord Bute and Bragged of his acquaintance with him...(Ibid: 79).

Franklin was a complete Anglophile in the late 1750s and 1760s. Other colonial Americans visited London, such as Charles Carroll and John Dickenson, who often contrasted the luxury and corruption they perceived in English life, with the virtue and simplicity of America. But Franklin in the late 1760s began to fill his letters with disparaging comments about "the provinciality and vulgarity of America in contrast with the sophistication and worthiness of England" (Ibid: 79). Britain "that little Island" he wrote in 1763, "enjoyed in almost every Neighborhood more sensible, virtuous and elegant minds than we can collect in ranging one hundred leagues of our vast forests" (Franklin, 1763: 54). No one brought up in England", he said, "could ever be happy in America". In one of the main important scenes of

the third episode, Franklin is shown as an admirer of the French way of life through his clothing, behavior and love for women. He believes that Adams was not a man for Paris:

You are a very good man John Adams, a very moral man but you are not a man for Paris. Paris requires a certain amount of indecency in thought and action, how good is your French... You must attend the theater or take a mistress..." (Tom Hooper, Second Episode: 40 Seconds).

Franklin claimed in his *Autobiography* that it was not England but America that was corrupt and luxury loving and the great danger was that the English nation, if it did not draw of some of its wealth "would like ours, have a plethora in its veins productive of the same cloth and the same feverish Extravagance" (Franklin, Quoted in Wood, 2006: 79). Franklin was pessimistic and compared America to the luxurious Empire.

In the early 1760's Franklin was an elitist; his political faith was as he said "in his superiors, who think about what is best for us". Contrary to Adams who believed in people's power, Franklin expressed little confidence in the common people (Ibid: 80). In December 1764, he came back from England and became involved in the *Stamp Act* resistance. What follows revealed his misunderstanding of popular government and the weakness of his elitist approach to politics. Like other colonial agents, he opposed the Act imposed on variety of colonial items including Newspapers and playing cards. But when Franklin saw that passage of the tax was inevitable, he accepted it and said that "empires cost money". Convinced that Empires cost money, he wrote Hughes to express his allegiance to the Crown:

A firm loyalty to the crown and faithful adherence to the government of this Nation[...]will always be the wisest a course for you and I to take whatever money be the madness of the popular of their blind leaders (Franklin, Quoted in Wood, 2006: 53).

Most critics argue that Franklin's *Autobiography* is written with frustration, nostalgia and defiance. The first part of his *Autobiography* is an expression of disappointment and

justification to his living son, to whom it was initially addressed and was continually accusing his father for his love of money and luxurious life.

On the whole Benjamin Franklin appears as a deflated father in the miniseries. He is involved only to be dismissed into the background of American politics, while Adams's presence is foregrounded. It's Adams who is made to incarnate all the puritan philosophy of hard work, thrift, sobriety that Franklin defunded in his *Poor Richards' Almanacs*. In a sense, Adams comes across as heir to American values that have come to be associated with Franklin's name.

In the context of the expansion of the consumer society that is America in the twenty-first century, it is Adams not Franklin who represents the virtues of thrift and sobriety. This aspect of the miniseries shows that the director wants to urge the American people to go to peasant frugality giving the example of a president who refused to sell out to materialism and corruption of politics.

### **III- 3- Adams and George Washington:**

In the miniseries George Washington played by David Morse doesn't appear a lot on the stage. However, the brief appearances that he makes allow us to compare him with Adams. Both Adams and Washington are Federalists and belong to the same political board, but the contrast between these two leaders is no less evident. The contrast in representation is due mostly to the mythical dimension that is given to Washington. The emphasis in his portrayal falls on his character. Washington is deployed as a tall handsome man in comparison to the big and short Adams. Washington has all the physical characteristics as a classical hero with a military uniform in the second episode. Wood writes:

He had all the physical attributes of a classical hero, he was very tall by contemporary standards six feet three or eighty, and was heavily built and a superb athlete. Physically he had what men and women admired. He was both a splendid horseman at a time that skill really and an extraordinary graceful dancer and naturally he loved both riding and dancing. He always moved with and looked like a leader. (Gordon Wood, 2006: 33).

According to this description, contrary to Washington who liked reading and arts, Adams had no passion for the arts, because he was preoccupied by the Revolution. Adams's honesty and gift of convincing people in the second episode distinguishes him from Washington who has not so much to say. By contrast with Washington, Adams is represented as an intellectual knowledgeable of law. He convinces the representatives to unite to get Independence. It was certain, says Adams "that Washington wasn't a scholar, that he was too illiterate, unlearned, unread for his station and reputation is equally past dispute". Adams's judgment is surely too harsh and Gordon adds confirming his words:

Washington was not a learned man, especially in comparison with other Founders. He was very ill at ease in abstract discussions. Even Jefferson who was usually generous in his estimates of his friends said that Washington's colloquial talents were not above mediocrity. He had neither copiousness of ideas nor fluency of words". (Adams to Benjamin Rush, March 19, 1812)

Washington was not in the class of Bacon, Locke Newton or even Jefferson and Franklin. He was not an intellectual. He was a man of business and war. He was one of the most successful planters and businessman in all of Virginia. It was not his military victory, which make him famous, but his character. In this respect Gordon Wood says what follows:

His military exploits were of course crucial. Still Washington was not really a traditional military hero. He did not resemble Alexander, Caesar, Cromwell or Marlborough. His military achievement were nothing comparing with those of Napoleon would soon have. Washington had no smashing, stunning Victories. He was not a military genius and his actual and strategic maneuvers were not the source of his reputation something else was involved, his character (Ibid: 34).

Unlike Adams who is depicted as simple and not fashionable, Washington is obsessed with wearing clothes in fashionable and is careful about his appearance to the world. It is as if he is on stage. Indeed, as Adams, he always thought of life as "the stage" on which one was a

“character making a work”. Contrary to Adams, who knew to write very well, Washington was accused by historians of deceit. Gordon is reporting that through Benjamin Rush’s words:

Washington worked on his penmanship, spelling and grammar and following the Revolutionary war, when he knew he would be a famous man, he went back corrected what he took to be deficiencies in his earlier writings” “So anxious was he to appear neat and correct in his letters...he was known to copy a letter of two or three times sheet, of paper, because there were a few erasures on it (Ibid: 35).

Precisely, because Washington had not attended college and received a liberal arts education, he became literal-minded about observing and adopting, what he had formally missed. He was forever embarrassed that he had never learned any foreign language. In the 1780s, he refused invitations to visit France in part, because he felt it will be humiliating for someone of his standing to have to converse although he was an interpreter. It was his lack of a formal education that kept him from writing down his recollections of the Revolution. Adams was able to write letters and discuss freely with foreign ambassadors. Washington was preoccupied by his reputation whereas Adams was not. “No one” said Jefferson, “worked harder than Washington in keeping [...] motives of interest or consanguinity, of friendship or hatred from influencing him. He had a lifelong preoccupation with his reputation for disinterestedness” (Ibid: 37- 43).

In the miniseries, Washington is represented as a careful man, his excessive coyness, his extreme reluctance to get involved in public affairs that could endanger his reputation have not usually been well regarded by historians. Gordon Douglass Southall Freeman, one of his biographers thought that Washington in the late 1780s was “too zealously attentive to his prestige, his reputation and his popularity. Always in Gordon’s opinion, he is “too much the self-conscious national hero and too little the daring patriot” (Gordon Southall, Quoted in Wood: 47).



### **III-4-Adams and Alexander Hamilton:**

More than Washington, Alexander Hamilton hardly appears on the screen, though he played an important role in the rise of American banks and strong economy. Therefore, we will emphasize the comparison of Hamilton and Adams on written sources. Hamilton's absence in the miniseries is justified, since the aim is to rehabilitate John Adams as a major figure of the American Revolution.

In terms of physical appearance, Hamilton is as short as Adams who is about five feet to seven and well built. His beauty attracted men and women (Wood: 127). He married Elizabeth Schuler, the daughter of one of the most important families of New York. Contrary to Adams who was attached to his colony, Hamilton lived in the West Indies and came to North American continent as a teenager. He had therefore little emotional attachment to a particular colony or state. He thought for the national benefit and focused his attention on the government of the United States. As early on 1779 before the war was over, Hamilton was writing letters about the defects of the confederation and the ways for reforming it. Having "Not only the Congress needed the power to tax but the government required a proper execution" (Ibid: 127).

By 1789, at the age of thirty-four, Hamilton became a self-made man. He was the American's first Secretary of Treasury who was introduced in the fourth episode, during Washington's administration. He appears as a handsome and an organized man with a creative mind. Unlike Adams, Hamilton was born in Nevis in the British West Indies; in 1755 (though Hamilton thought he was born in 1757). His father, James Hamilton (the younger son of a Scotsman a merchant, who had come to the Caribbean to make his fortune) and his mother Rachel Lavien were not legally married. After his father's abandonment of the family in 1765 and his mother's death in 1768, the fourteen-year-old Hamilton ended up keeping the books for a merchant in St. Croix, in order to escape from what he called his "groveling

condition of a clerk [. . .] to which my fortune, etc..., condemns me". In short, both Adams and Hamilton rose from rags to riches and are self-made men.

The relations between Adams and Hamilton are not as friendly as those between Adams and Jefferson. They were marked by conflicts that would be retraced to the days of the Continental Congress of 1765. In this context, Adams claimed that "Animosity was based on unintentional slight of a relative of Hamilton back in days of the Continental Congress" (David McCullough, 2001: 503). However, according to McCullough Adams and Abigail appreciated and "approved the treasury policy rather than the man creating them" (Abigail to Mary Cranch, February 20, 1790 quoted from McCullough: 504).

Due to his illegitimate birth, the young Alexander was not able to attend any school, only a Jewish school. Hamilton's mother also taught him French to the level of fluency that Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson don't reach, though they spent several years, in Paris. However, Hamilton's life suddenly changed, in 1767 at the age of twelve, his mother died of fever. After his mother's death, Hamilton and his brother were placed under the care of their older cousin Peter Lytton who committed suicide two years later.

In 1769, Hamilton began to work for the mercantile house of Beekman and Cruger. There, he gained skills in commerce. During these five months, he learned leadership abilities that impressed Cruger. During these years, Hamilton began to publish poems, in the *Gazette* magazine. His most famous one was not a poem, but a letter written to his father concerning a hurricane. The letter revealed Hamilton's rhetorical ability and imagination. He wrote "the hurricane as a divine event, death comes rushing on in triumph, veiled in a mantle of ten old darkness. His relenting sky the pointed and ready for the stroke". Wood claimed:

After the letter was printed in the *Gazette*, several of Hamilton's mentors realized his potential and put together a fund to send Hamilton to America for an education. It is likely that much of this money came from Hugh Knox [one of Hamilton's early mentors], who had mentioned his desire for Hamilton to travel to America. Knox had provided Hamilton with access to his expensive library to continue his education. The other donors were likely Hamilton's old bosses: Cruger, David Beekman, and Cornelius Kortright (Wood, 2006: 25).

Hamilton became a captain and a proponent for war. He often had contact with General Washington who in 1777 asked him to join his staff. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. Adams and Hamilton shared the feeling of patriotism and nationalism. After the Boston Tea Party in 1773, he traveled to Boston. He heard patriotic anti-British speeches that changed his attitude towards the war. In late 1774, Hamilton first began publishing under the name of a Westchester Farmer. His famous articles *The Farmer Refuted* in the *New York Gazetteer* announced the necessity for Americans to resist British oppression:

That Americans are entitled to freedom is incontestable upon every rational principle. All men have one common original; they participate in one common nature, and consequently have one common right (Hamilton Quoted in Wood, 2006: 26).

On the spring of 1775, while volunteer militia grew throughout the northern colonies, Adams was preoccupied with forming a strong government and Hamilton joined the continental army, while still attending school. He gained respect from his superiors and in March of 1776 was appointed as an Army captain and the first Treasury Secretary of the United States by Washington

It follows from what is written above that Hamilton and Adams have strikingly different educational and family backgrounds, both of them can be said to be self-made men despite their different ways to achieve success. Hamilton's political program, as will be shown in the second chapter, has much to do with the fact that he was not attracted to only particular state of the Union but with the common welfare.

## **IV- The Representation of Abigail Adams in the pre-Revolutionary and the Revolutionary period**

### **IV-1- Abigail as a Proto-feminist:**

The miniseries are given a feminist dimension by the equal emphasis that they give to Adams and his wife Abigail. Abigail is not portrayed as a silent, obedient wife. On the contrary, all through the film we can see her advising her husband face-to-face or through

correspondence. The film for example, refers to the letter that Abigail wrote to Adams on March 1776, when the latter was absent because of his participation in the Continental Congress of 1776. She addresses her husband as follows: “In the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies”. Deploying the same language as the male patriots of the time, she goes on saying “if particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation”

By including the correspondence between husband and wife, Hooper manages to make of Abigail an early model of American feminists. Abigail differs strongly from the Republican motherhood of her time, because she wants to change the division of gender roles prevalent at her time. She is portrayed not simply as a mother who cared about household or domestic affairs but about the place of women in the republic and the emancipation of women’s rights.

Abigail is represented in the film, mainly in part two more than a responsible and courageous woman. Abigail did her best to help not only her husband but also her country. In her support of her husband, even when he was overseas and she is patient, strong, and faithful. Hooper redeploys her protecting her family and providing Adams with the necessary pieces of advice, in his diverse missions. Abigail stands for the emancipated, educated and enlightened women of her time. Her reactions and self confidence in the film pushed us to state that she was unique in her ideas, behavior, understanding and decisions. She dares to give her opinion on matters of law and even politics. To emphasize my argument, the scene of her pieces of advice to Adams, during the trial of the soldiers is the best example. From this scene we can deduce that she has a great knowledge of human rights and the functioning of the court, though she hadn’t received a formal education. In another important scene of the second episode *Independence*, she is represented as someone who understands the British aims and

projects the future consequences of War for people. Outraged by the Congress, which did nothing to stop the British's Massacres she says the following to her husband:

Will General Howe attack on Boston again...what is that but an army? And the Congress goes on its knees to the king has the king designed to reply...I understand people like Mr. Dickenson and his friends all too, John. Send a woman to the congress she might knock some sense into them...Politics? Politics? And I go to the Cupboard and I find no coffee, no sugar, no pins and no meat, am not living politics. This war touches people that your congress treats with the same contempt King George deserves for, that matter through I am sure you wish I would not mention that subject as it might upset your southern friends...I am cold and frightened. I am afraid this war will never end or begin... (Tom Hooper, Second Episode: 4 minutes)

From her questions, one can deduce that she is interested in what happened at the political level and strongly defends the idea of women's participation in the congress. This stands for her enlightened mind and knowledge of women's rights. Her Family environment influenced her strong personality as a woman. Born Abigail Adams Smith on November 11, 1744 in Weymouth Massachusetts, Abigail Adams was one of the four children of Reverent William and Elizabeth Smith. She did not receive a formal education in her youth, but as an adult she was recognized as a woman of high intellect, because she was well informed about the classical literature as well as politics. Her brother in law Richard Cranch introduced her to subjects such as English poetry, literature and letter writing. She enjoyed theater, loved poetry and memorized many of the English poets. Abigail was a writer and her beautiful style led to a correspondence with family friends and politicians. She requested her family to "not burn all my letters", but most of her letters were lost and destroyed.

On October 26, 1765, Abigail Smith married John Adams of Braintree, Massachusetts, who first met her in her cousin's marriage, at the age of fourteen. They married and moved to a modest farmhouse that Adams inherited from his father. The house was located next to his childhood home, which Adams's mother Susana occupied. From this short biography, we can understand the source of Abigail's wisdom.

Abigail dared to express herself, when she met George Washington, in the film. She worries that his army would be defeated by the British and she considers the War itself as a punishment for slavery. She told Washington: “Are you certain of defeat...that such evil should be befall a people. Could it be a punishment for the sin of slavery?” Abigail is deployed more than an ordinary American woman preoccupied by domestic tasks. Washington greatly values her advice:

Your advice is greatly valued by Mr. Adams. The more quickly he received it the more quickly we may all be beneficiaries of your counsel... (Ibid, Second Episode: 5 minutes).

As a women and wife, she considers her correspondence with Adams necessary, she tells Washington: “My correspondence with my husband is more important than I can say” (Ibid: 3seconds). Hooper wants to show her writing skill and eagerness to preserve her relation with Adams, despite the distance. During Adams’s absence, she is shown patient and loving towards her children. Today, Abigail is considered as an example of a perfect American woman with a strong personality and great wisdom. She stands for the World’s militant women, who are struggling either by pen, by their voice or by arms for liberty and work to accomplish their dreams. But, the great majority of them, notably in the third World countries, still suffer from oppression and hard conditions.

#### **IV-2- Abigail as a Good Farm Manager:**

The miniseries emphasize the break of gender roles. It responds to feminist agenda by showing Abigail in the role of a manager of a farm. The miniseries also shows Abigail farming, while Adams was doing in politics. She found herself alone in managing the farm and the family’s finances. She is able to release Adams of his home responsibilities so that he may pursue his public service obligations. Throughout her marriage, she had the habit of taking decisions with little or no help from her husband. Unlike Marta Washington, who used slaves to cultivate her lands, Abigail managed to organize her farm alone or with the help of

family. At that period, women were essentially concerned with the domestic affairs of the home, such as cooking dinner and doing home works. But, Abigail found herself doing both the male and female roles inside and outside the home.

While Adams was serving as Vice-President and President, the Adams owned a small land and two small Quincy farm houses, located in Braintree. Abigail's uncle Cotton Tufts assisted her in taking care of the farm. In compliance with the law of land, property was granted to men only. It was Cotton Tufts who performed the official duties of purchasing land, goods and she never imagined that one day she would be responsible for the family farm. When she was given control over it, she requested her husband's opinions and advice. Abigail became a good farm manager but regularly informed Adams about their finances and purchase. She wrote: "I know I must sometimes perplex you with domestic matters I would not do it, but that I wish your advice and direction".

As the time passed, she became more confident with her decisions, but still required Adams's pieces of advice. In a February 1793 letter, she addressed him:

Few domestic concerns occur that I wish to mention. Dr Tufts desires me to mention to you clover seed. He wishes Brisler to inquire about the price and if it can be purchased as low as 10pence or a shilling per pound...would not be advisable to purchase a strong farm horse in Connecticut and let Brisler take home the chaise...he solicited me to let him go to Abington and try. I consented and he last night brought home a yoke coming seven years for which he gave 58 dollars. He says they are right handsome cattle used to make stone wall kind smart in very good flesh and I hope what I have done will meet your approbation, which will always recompense me for whatever exertion I may make (Abigail Adams to John Adams, 18 February, 1793).

From this part of Adams's letter, one can understand that he was pleased about Abigail's management of the farm and continued to encourage her:

You go on in the conduct of your farm with so much spirit, amidst all your melancholy avocation, that it is a noble regale to read your letters. Plant the ground, which broke up last fall with corn. Sow barley, where we had corn last year. Plant again the mower garden potatoes again at the beach meadow. Plant again Farons last year cornfield. Bay as much cows and young stock as you can keep in plenty. Send the sheep as soon as convenient to the pasture by Hermans. I shall send you some Money in a fort-night or three weeks. (Adams to John Adams, 13 July, 1776)

Despite Abigail's success at managing the farm, Adams continue to supply her with pieces of advice and money for farm and Abigail provided him with lists of items she needed. Adams tried to send the furniture she needed:

You will be weary of hearing of my wants and of supplying them, but I find we want for the two farms a wheelborrow for each place 2spades 2 forks 2 shovels, 2axes and hoas...I wish you to inform me whether for the corn land which is broken up here, the measure is to be spread as the last year (Abigail Adams to John Adams, 23 July, 1776).

Despite Adams's support, Abigail worried about the farm and tried she take the right decisions, because women of the 18<sup>th</sup> century lacked business experience. Although she sought Adams's opinion on certain matters, she managed to keep the farm throughout his political career. Even when she was with Adams in New York, Philadelphia and Washington, Abigail managed the farm via letters to her sister and brother-in-law M<sup>r</sup> and M<sup>rs</sup> Cranch and her uncle, Cotton Tuft. She instructed her sister in the work that was to be done for the farms.

Adams's letters and the miniseries depict the chief impact of advancement in all industrial democracies and societies as the United States of America. The radical change probably happened occurred in family life and the role of women. Today, there is a shift from traditional roles in marriage to personal relationships. In the past, roles in marriage couples were different, men as breadwinners and providers and the women as caretakers and homemakers. Now these roles have changed and Abigail represents modern women who can do all male jobs as well.

The shift is strange at the beginning for the American societies, since historically marriage was based on defined roles for husbands and wives. As a result, there is a great confusion; marriage becomes a major source of tension. The effect of individualism, women's rights and autonomy, more choice, less sacrifice and more questioning of traditional women and men's roles has been to place the family as one of the social issues of the century. The



redefinition of the family has become a necessity for millions of Western Europeans, Japanese, and American families.

Changes in American family composition are clear. These transformations are due to the shift in values, but value changes contribute to them. From our analysis of Abigail and Adams relationship, two strong tendencies emerge in the American families today: one toward fragmentation, due to the satisfaction of individual needs. As far as the second is concerned, it is about community, connections, and family union. Today there are no big families. The nuclear type of one is predominant in the American society. Children separate from their parents at an early age. There are single-parents families. There is no respect for parental authority; as a result there is a need among the Americans to return to the past family values and the hierarchical social authority today. Therefore, the director used the eighteenth century context and appeals to nostalgia about the warm feelings generated by the ideal family as that of Adams.

## **Conclusion**

Hooper's portrayal of Adams in the miniseries leads us to the following conclusions. Adams's family as it is described in the film is not an ordinary American family in the sense that it has a presidential dimension. Two presidents came out of it; John Adams and John Quincy Adams. It is also not ordinary because it does not describe the husband-wife relations in subordinate terms. Though Adams's is a high level politician, Abigail is depicted as strong enough to give advice to her husband and to remind him about women's rights in the new Republic that the American patriots wanted in the Continental Congress of 1776. In the absence of her husband, Abigail is shown assuming the roles that were usually associated with males. Abigail's proto-feminism is featured in the film because it foreshadows the feminist struggle in Contemporary America. The type of family that she builds with Adams is

not that of her times because it opens perspective for the new types of family that will emerge with changes in the American society centuries later. The Adams family contrast strongly with the conservative Bush family, which Hooper's film directly criticizes. Adams is a self-made man and embodies in broad terms the American dream. That is why his life is brought to the screen. His success story is as exciting as that of Franklin.

John Adams's lifelong philosophy of government, which, we believe, varied little from his earliest thoughts on politics to his writing on the French Revolution in the 1790s, was based on his strongly held views of human nature. And his understanding of human nature was, in turn, informed by the religious milieu in which he was raised. This interpretation of Adams's philosophy has been offered by several scholars, who have studied Adams's political thought for the purpose of identifying constants and changes. Few, though, have emphasized the closeness of the specific governmental form he espoused to his beliefs about human nature.

Despite the reviewed scholars' assertion that Adams underwent fundamental changes during his time abroad in the 1780s and as a reaction to events in France and America, acknowledge the importance of Adams's religious upbringing and beliefs about the human character. "No area of human knowledge, with the possible exception of physics, received more attention among eighteenth-century men than moral philosophy," observed Howe, adding that Adams knew "the effort to understand society, to speculate about constitutions and systems of government must begin from a clear understanding of human nature". In a 1759 letter, Adams conveyed concisely a belief that would inform all of his later work:

It is impossible to judge with much precision, of the true motives and qualities of human actions or of the propriety of rules contrived to govern them, without considering with like attention all the passions, appetites, affections, in nature, from which they flow. An intimate knowledge, therefore, of the intellectual and moral world is the sole foundation on which a stable structure of knowledge can be erected. And the structure of British laws is composed of such a vast and various collection of materials, taken partly from Saxony, Normandy, and Denmark, partly from Greece

and Rome, and partly from the Canon and Feudal law, that 'tis impossible for any builder to comprehend the whole vast design...without acquainting himself with Saxon, Danish, Norman, as well as Greek and Roman history, with Civil, Feudal, and Canon law. (John R. Howe. Jr, *The Changing Political Thought of John Adams*, 1966: 243).

We see a young man, Adams nearly two decades before the War for Independence, he wrote *Thoughts on Government*, which is cited by many as his most hopeful, republican, egalitarian text. Explaining the impossibility of understanding constitutional forms without understanding “the passions, appetites, and affections of men” and those “societies influential to Britain’s constitutional form”, Adams men’s dangerous tendencies must be controlled. In his autobiography, Adams would write of the years 1768-1770:

I had read enough in History to be well aware of the Errors to which the public opinions of the People, were liable in times of great heat and danger... when artfully excited to Passion, and even when justly provoked by Oppression.... I had learned enough to show me, in all their dismal Colours, the deceptions to which the People in their passion are liable, and the total Suppression of Equity and humanity in the human Breast when thoroughly heated and hardened by Party Spirit.

If we accept that Adams believed deeply in the importance of studying both history and the human heart, in order to create the best possible forms of government, it makes sense that some scholars have turned to Adams’s own formative influences, especially his religious upbringing and the religious history of New England. First and foremost, one must understand his relationship with certain aspects of Puritanism that resulted from reflecting on his own nature, and especially his vices. So important were these early experiences and observations that we could argue that Adams developed the principles by which he would eventually condemn much of France’s revolution as a young man struggling to fully understand his own desires.

To understand these principles, we examine both the society in which Adams lived, his historical and his Puritan origins. As David McCullough rightly notes, “We can’t understand the people of that distant time without understanding the culture. You have to read

what they read, not just what they wrote.” What we see, in short, is that the unique history of Massachusetts and its people had a profound influence on Adams and served as a stimulus to his study of human nature and government. Adams’s advocacy of a government structure inherited from England, without, he emphasized, “hereditary nobility, feudal dues, and inquisitional courts”, must be related to his understanding of human nature, which we can derive through a brief consideration of Puritanism, its principal values and Adams’s belief in the sinful nature of man.

Adams’s early adulthood was marked by a struggle between his desire to be esteemed by others for his intellectual prowess and the Puritan condemnation of vanity, the belief that it was vain and sinful to aspire to greatness. So intense was this tension that Adams wrote of it frequently throughout his diary, discussing his vices and admonishing himself for his inability to escape them. As Adams’s reputation grew, eventually elevating him to positions of great respectability in the eyes of his contemporaries, so too would his inner conflict between ambition and piousness.

What we see, ultimately, is that Adams, like most eighteenth-century theorists of human nature, was a Universalist; he believed that, despite cultural differences, human character did not vary from one culture to another. His extensive historical studies proved to him that the dangerous aspects of that nature could not be totally tamed. They could only be controlled through the proper governmental institutions.

We conclude that both of these mature works *Defence of the Constitutions* and *Discourse on Davila* are cited by change theorists as evidence of Adams’s turn towards conservatism in the 1780s. But, in fact, they merely develop explicitly principles that can be seen in his earliest considerations of social distinctions as a reflection of the “passion for distinction” and differences between members of society, some innate and some due to

circumstances, and his ideas about the only kind of republican government that could accommodate those things. His *Thoughts on Government* espouses the same basic balance as this praise in *Defense* implies, as does his admiration for the actions of his Puritan ancestors in *A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law*, his *Novanglus* series, and others of his earliest essays.

If Adams's devotion to the uncorrupted constitutional forms of Great Britain makes him a conservative, then he was a conservative from the beginning of his public career. This very adamant and very specific inclination was, as discussed in the previous chapter, influenced by his dark view of human nature, which derived from his Puritan heritage and his close study of governmental forms throughout history. Though accusations against Adams and his apparent affection for monarchy became notable only in the 1780s and 90s especially with the publications of *Discourses on Davila* and *Defense of the Constitutions* his ideas about the necessity of two houses, an independent judiciary, and most important, a powerful executive branch, were pillars of his political philosophy that can be traced back, again, to even his pre-public pre-revolutionary years.

There is no way to ignore the shift in focus from Adams's early works to his later years; those who argue that he changed in his fundamental political thought emphasize this change in focus from simply outlining constitutional systems in his writing to emphasizing the connection between human nature and the institutions as an indication that Adams became less republican and more conservative, even monarchical. However, it is possible to reconcile these two periods. When we do, we see the same fundamental philosophic principles and their relation to his theory of politics and government throughout his life. Examining a number of his major publications, as well as lesser-known sources, we see that Adams remained devoted to the "fight against innovation", against a major change in the governmental structure inherited from Great Britain, because of his views on human nature. He did not simply react

to the different event; but he publically and privately railed against its opponents using the same arguments throughout his life, if this ideal governmental system was challenged. While it may seem inconceivable that an adamant supporter, for the American Revolution Adams could be within twenty years of the French threat, one can claim that this was not simply a new reaction to a new threat; it was impassioned opposition to a familiar political situation by Adams.

Though Gordon Wood asserts that Adams's greatest intellectual shortcoming was his failure to leave behind Old World preoccupations, like the necessity of a powerful executive, Adams was adamant about his political ideas because he was nobly committed to liberty and, less-often emphasized, republicanism. His commitment to the constitutional form of Great Britain, though certainly a monarchical system, reflects this. His most complex and most controversial ideas concerned the definition of a republic and how it related to monarchy. According to Adams, the most perfect system of government is that of Great Britain, which was not a simple monarchy, but instead a republican one. His ideas about monarchy are central to the question of change versus continuity in his political thought; therefore we will devote the next chapter to a close analysis of those ideas.

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# **Chapter Two**

## **The Representation of John Adams in the post-Revolutionary Period**



## **Introduction**

At the end of the Revolution, John Adams had earned a great reputation, because of his sacrifices to the welfare of his country. In the four first episodes, Adams is represented as a brilliant convincing spokesman, a successful lawyer and a wise and sincere ambassador. But his achievements go beyond, as it will be shown in the following chapter. The three last episodes of the miniseries entitled: *Unite or Die*, *Unnecessary War* and *Peacefield* represent Adams as a convincing Vice-President and a peaceful president. As far as the seventh episode is concerned, it reconstructs Adams's retirement years in his farm. We are going to prove that as a peaceful president Adams solved the major issues of that time mainly the Quasi-War with France and the conflict between the Federalists and the Republicans.

To better explore his character and achievements and compare Adams's physical appearance, his years in Britain as a minister, his Vice-Presidency's accomplishments, his political policy, his aims and achievements in the domestic and the foreign affairs, his thoughts about government and society and his retirement from the public office, with those of Jefferson, Washington, Franklin and Hamilton. Adams's past political actions can be good lessons for the contemporary World leaders. Contrary to Bush's ideologies and policy of war, Adams choose a diplomatic peaceful plan and that Bush's political, social, educational and economic reforms are as those of Adams. Indeed, Bush's election is another starting point for the Americans and for the entire world, in terms of social and economic life and in the world countries' relations. Again, Abigail's pieces of advice were so important and as a trusted political equal, she helped Adams to reach his political aims.

### **I-1-Adams as a Wise Minister to Great Britain:**

To remember the public about the nature of the previous foreign American's relations with the world, Tom Hooper tried to reconstruct Adams's career as a minister to Great

Britain. Just after the Revolution, John Adams was forty nine years old and Hooper depicts him traveling to England to assume his new position as a Minister to Great Britain. The fact of visiting King George III made him nervous as it is shown in the fourth episode, where he trains himself to meet him. The fourth episode informs us about Adams's respect to the British monarchy, he was the first American official ambassador to assume the position. When he entered in the court, he expressed the wish of his country to build a new relationship with England based on Friendship. The king replied that he regretted being unable to prevent America from separating from England, but he too agreed that friendship should be their goal. When the meeting was over, we notice Adams's sympathy and sensibility to the King's disillusionment and sadness of losing the thirteen American colonies. Adams is then torn between his motherland and his own country.

Adams's service as an American chief in England reminds the audience about the importance of peace and diplomacy for nowadays countries in solving their conflicts. Diplomacy was a basis in the American Republic. During this period, Adams faces political difficulties and is obliged to remedy to the Revolutionary War's hard conditions, in which the States felt and to restore the British-American political balance. Hooper wants to show that on the one hand, it is a hard task to accomplish, most of the diplomats he encounters in England alienated him, but thanks to his strong mind that helped his success in the mission. On the other hand, Adams's mission is not easy, because most Americans are against this meeting. Adams felt that his goal is to achieve peace for America and rebuild the trade relations between England and her former colonies. Though the United States have not yet an organized government, it could negotiate peace, set up an army and navy, send ambassadors and receive others and make treaties. But it could not pay its debts and collect taxes.

Adams's political writings remind the Americans that the USA government is based on a set of principles. Those years spent in Britain influenced Adams's writings, mainly when

he was in London. In 1786, he published the most influential work in his life, by writing his famous political book entitled *A Defense of the Constitution of the Government of the United States of America*. It is composed of three volumes which treat the government's role and importance for people's life. The first volume was published in London, in 1787 and reached Philadelphia during the Constitutional Conventions. Together with his essay *Thoughts on Government* and the *Massachusetts Constitution*, Adams's *Defense* played an important role in forming the new national constitution and earned Adams the title of "The father of the American Political Science". His aim is to persuade the Americans to guarantee their liberties by "adhering to strong and clearly defined Republican institutions" (James Bishop Peabody, 1973: 329).

Adams emphasized in his books the fact that the free Republics should be based on "a bicameral legislature", which means the checks and balances and that the three branches the executive, the legislative and the judicial one must be independent and control each other's power. In his preface to the first volume of the *Defense*, Adams traced the "melancholy history of man's loss of liberty" through his failure to ensure adequate government checks and balances and "safeguards against the tyranny of an individual, the tyranny of the few and that of the mob" (Ibid: 329). One can deduce that he was against violence and minority practice of power and dictatorship. Adams declared:

The arts and sciences, in general, during the three or four last centuries, have had a regular course of progressive improvement. The inventions in mechanic arts, the discoveries in natural philosophy, navigation and commerce and the advancement of civilization and humanity, have occasioned changes in the condition of the world and the human character, which would have astonished the most refined nations of antiquity. A Constitution of similar exertions is every day rendering Europe more and more like one community, or single family. Even in the theory and practice of government, in all simple monarchies considerable improvements have been made. The checks and balances of republican governments have been in some degree adopted at the courts of princes... Property is generally secure, and personal liberty is seldom invaded... (Adams, Quoted in James Bishop Peabody, 1973: 329).

Adams in this passage exposed the importance and the influences of press and public opinion in the American Republic and society; they are archetypes that control and maintain power inside society. In addition to this, he assumes that corruption limits freedom and liberty in the modern aristocracies, because they neglected the importance of checks and balances' system, which is any free State's basis. According to Adams, the nobility attempted to limit the king's power, because human nature is "an incapable of Revolution without prudence and patience" and that freedom can't be preserved only by a strong linked executive and legislative government. In his *Defense*, he asserted that the United States succeeded to form its first government and that press was another power, which is considered as a fifth branch today. He wrote:

The press has great influence, even where it is expressly tolerated; and the public opinion must be respected by a minister or his place became insecure, corruption in elections is the great enemy of freedom,...Dividing the districts, diminishing the distance of travel, and confining the choice to residents, would be great advances towards the annihilation of corruption...The modern aristocracies of Holland, Venice, Bern...Have tempered themselves with innumerable checks, by which they have given a great degree of stability to that form of government; and thought liberty and life can never be there enjoyed so well as in a free republic...Human nature is as incapable now of going through Revolution with temper and sobriety, with patience and prudence, or without fury and madness, as it is among the Greeks so long ago...The nobles support the crown, as it is in full possession of the gift of all employments; but they support it still more by opposing than promoting their ordinary views...The United States of America have exhibited, the first example of governments erected on the simple principles of nature...( Ibid: 329-335).

As a conclusion to the first volume of the *Defence*, we can argue that Adams emphasised the need for a federal Government and for the independence of the three branches. His *Defense of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* (1787) presented his thought about the greatest dangers to any politics, which came from unbridled democracy and an unrestrained aristocracy capable of becoming an oligarchy. The antidote to these dangers, according to Adams was a strong executive as the "father and protector of the nation and its ordinary citizens for this person was the sole official with the independence to act in a disinterested manner" (Ibid, 1787: 456). In 1790, he expanded on this

theme in a series of essays for a Philadelphia newspaper that were ultimately known as *Discourses on Davila*. Unfortunately, many contemporaries mistakenly believed that they advocated a hereditary monarchy for the United States of America.

Being tired from the life abroad, Adams decided to come back to America. In 1788, he asked congress to resign and on April and sailed back with his wife to America. At the end of the fourth episode Adams is represented as a hero welcomed by people and his family, in Boston, sounds of church militia songs can be heard, people cries and flags are flying. Later on, Adams is offered many positions and is elected once more to serve as a representative in Congress. At the beginning he refused but he changed his mind and decided to be Vice-President, when the nation had been universally recognized.

The past indeed needs to be represented, in order that the collective memory live and the Americans identity continue to exist. By linking this period of Adams's life to today's situation, one can say that the recent changes in the world present a challenge to leaders who make foreign policy. With the changes in global politics, the world is transformed and the superpowers such as the USA, Russia and the European countries have moved toward greater political and economic integration. New powers have emerged in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Thus, through the above Adams's actions and period of life, Hooper wants to emphasize the context of the contemporary American internal and external developments and its foreign policies

Throughout history, Americans have been inspired by their political, religious, and economic freedoms to act as ambassadors of liberty. As missionaries, merchants, and medics, these citizen diplomats have established schools, orphanages, and hospitals. They have translated literature, educated children, and inspired political reform in countries around the world that were oppressed. The "greatest enemy of tyranny," as Webster said, "is this

republican spirit of self-government”. Yet, as one Republic among others, America has to practice diplomacy towards other governments. The Founders understood that America’s principles must be reflected in its relations with other nations. For them, diplomacy was not only a means of negotiating America’s interests; it was also a tool for advancing liberty.

The director Tom Hooper wants to inform his audience about the United States’ foreign policy and economic exchanges, in the eighteenth century. Patriots as Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams are sent abroad as diplomats representing the American people and the exceptional ideas of the young republic. The United States’ foreign policy has always been important for the American people through their elected representatives. Hooper compares the monarchies and the empires of Europe with the new Republic which recognizes the “rights” of human liberty. Indeed, the Founders believed that America’s role in the world would be limited by constitutional government and will always be inspired by justice and law.

## **I-2-Adams as a Convincing Heir-Apparent and Vice-President:**

The fifth episode *Unite or Die* opens with Adams presiding over the Senate and the debate over attributing the title “His Majesty” to President Washington. It depicts Adams lacking the gifts for political speeches; one can notice that he hardly convinces the members to be silent, except in the case of a tied vote. Washington’s administration was composed of Jefferson as Secretary of State, John Jay as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and Hamilton as secretary of treasury. Adams regarded himself as the *Heir Apparent* which means a natural and hereditary right to be in such a position. Adams is preoccupied by his role as a Vice-President. In one important scene with Dr. Benjamin Rush, Adams is questioning the real role of a Vice-President and expresses his prediction about the division between the Federalists and the Republicans. He says:

The role of Vice-President is the most insignificant office ever devised by the mind of man, No, I answer you it is punishment. To hear other men talk five hours a day and not be at liberty to talk myself. Me of all people ...Most of all I hear they are too young, they are too inexperienced. They are too fractious. I was of a mind to refuse the Vice-Presidency, You know and half of the electoral votes were determined to oblige me ...and thus we set an example of the world. Tales of dirty and duplicitous intrigues, in our first election. I hear that we are called Federalists now because we believe in strong central government. And our opponents now style themselves Republicans because they believe in the sovereignty of people. I dread a distinction of our Republic into parties, Doctor yet that is what I see is happening... (Tom Hooper, Episode Five, 2008: 7 minutes)

From this shot, one can understand Adams's self criticism and fears of division inside the new government and his awareness of the Federalists, Republican's conflicts. As a vice-president, he has authority over the Senate and according to James Bishop Peabody "he was to cast his deciding votes twenty times, more than any Vice-President. His votes on important preceding issues, such as the president's right to dismiss appointees, without the concurrence of the Senate were to contribute greatly to the growth of good government"(James B. Peabody,1973: 337). He was able to settle the Senate's debates over the ratification of the treaty with Great Britain, by voting "yes".

In another scene, Adams is excluded from George Washington's cabinet, who say: "There are cabinet members that I would like to discuss, If you would excuse us, Mr. Adams please convey my regards to your wife". Despite Washington's behaviour, Adams obey without saying more than "Gentleman", "Mr. President" and this scene stands for his respect and patience towards his friends and the president. His face is upset; disillusioned by Washington's behaviour, he fixed him as if he will cry, but he left the room with great wisdom and self-control. In another scene, the appointment of John Quincy as an ambassador by Washington honored Adams. He began advising and guiding his son and reminding him that he should make all his best for his country:

...The President has named you our minister to the Netherlands. The Revolution in France has spilled over into Holland. The change is a listening post by which you can keep the government informed. Presiding over your confirmation will be any proudest moments as Vice-President. Now England and France will drag all of Europe into this Freud before it is over. We must avoid any action that threatens our neutrality. You must make yourself master of all of our disputes with them Spain as well. Do not be

drawn in by the French and Keep well clear of the English ambassador and all the Anglo-Maniacs...”John Quincy replies: “Don’t worry father I know my duty as an Adams (Tom Hooper, Episode Five, 2008: 7 minutes)

From this shot, one can notice Adams’s policy of neutrality towards the European Revolutions and his knowledge about most of their policies and strategies. He was represented as a wise experienced man, who detected France and Great Britain’s strategies, because of his experience as an ambassador. Quincy as an obedient son reassures his Father and he replied that he knows his duty as an Adams. This stands for the Adamses’s sacrifices and devotion for their country. In a letter to Robert Livingston early in 1783, Adams described what he learned as a minister, explaining that honesty and common sense is the key of any successful negotiation, with foreign countries. He wrote:

The true designs of a minister of state are not difficult to penetrate by an honest man of common sense, who is in a position to know anything of the secret of affairs, and to observe constantly the chain of public events; for whatever ostensible appearances may be put on, whatever obliquities may be imagined, however the web may be woven, or the threat double and twisted, enough will be seen to unravel the whole...I have lived long enough, and had experience enough of the conduct of governments and people, nations and courts, to be convinced that gratitude, friendship, unsuspecting confidence, and all the most amiable passions of human nature, are the most dangerous guides in politics.(Adams,1783, Quoted in James Bishop Peabody,1973: 312).

Likewise, this episode stands for the clash between two groups; the Federalists who wants a strong central Government and the anti-Federalists or the Republicans who believes that the states should remain strong and any central government should have little power over the states’ rights. Adams cares about the nation’s debts and supported Hamilton’s point of view but at the same time he agrees with Jefferson, who believed that establishing a central government will divide the country into the south and the north. Adams’s mission as a Vice-President is to settle those clashes. He serve also as a president of the Senate without voting, unless in case of a tie-breaking vote (when there is an equal result between two sides).

Adams was concerned with the Senate’s decisions, when the president spoke and whether the president should be called as “his Excellency”, “his Majesty the president” or



even “his Highness the President of the United States of America and Protector of the Rights of the same”. According to Wagner’s book *John Adams* (2001), “the first sign that Adams’s time in Europe had left him unaware of the changes that had been taken place, in America” (Ibid: 51). The miniseries represent Adams as a fair monarchist (someone who supported a government ruled by a monarch). One of the Senate’s members suggested that he should be given the honorary title “His Rotundity”, which was taken as a nickname for Adams.

Affected about what happened inside the government, Adams turned to writing. He published *Discourse on Davila* published as a series of essays in the *Gazette* of the United States (1790 and 1791). It reflected Adams’s conviction about the French who “were sliding rapidly into despotism, because they refused to set up a bicameral legislature with checks and balances and did not respect the independence of the three branches of government” (James Bishop Peabody, 1973: 344). The Discourses is an extension of his work *Defense of the Government and the Constitutions of the United States of America*, which summarized the views of an Italian participation in war with France, in the sixteenth century. As the two works were published without proper editing, they are exposed according to Peabody to criticism from Adams’s opponents. Adams believed in the above work that the European history was the best example for men’s turning to monarchy to avoid the anarchy’s horrors.

Indeed, John Adams has been interpreted as an American conservative, a “monarchist Founder influenced by the European model of mixed government, and “an irascible Puritan perpetually complaining that his peers were reaping the honors that rightfully belonged to him”. But when reading his *Discourse*, many of the distinctive themes in Adams’s political thought can only be illuminating about the contemporary governments. All what that Adams learned from the classical republican thought was a belief in “the primacy of politics”, and a search for “meritorious public” (men whose virtues and talents would be manifested in their services to the republic), which he particularly learned from the classical wisdom of

republican Rome was “the possibility of rooting republican politics in the human desire for fame” (Adams, 1790:354). Concluding that “disinterestedness was too rare to uphold a republican polity, and that ambition and avarice perpetually threatened to undermine it”. Adams depicted those who search for fame by occupying republican leadership in *Discourse on Davila* such as Franklin’s fame, as a republican diplomat. He questioned:

Modest merit! Is there such a thing remaining in public life? It is now become a maxim with some, who are even men of merit, that the world esteems a man in proportion as he esteems himself, and are generally disposed to allow him to be what he pretends to be. Accordingly, I am often astonished to the boldness with which persons make their pretensions. As Franklin, a man must be his own trumpeter, he must write or dictate paragraphs of praise in the newspapers,... he must get his picture drawn, his statue made, and must hire all the artists in his turn, to set about works to spread his name, make the mob stare and gape, and perpetuate his fame (Adams,1790: 71-72).

In this passage, Adams described the criterion of public fame that Benjamin Franklin had earned in Europe. He thought about the phenomenon of fame through publicity and he gave the example of Franklin’s publications and portraits in Paris. While, Adams as a diplomat behaved as a simple republican who embodied the republicanism values, Franklin lived luxuriously and, subordinating public duties that Adams attributed to a “wealth of personal gratification”.

Since the past helps to understand the present, one can support the above analysis by saying that Adams’s vision about the aristocratic Republic merits a great attention and recognition, because he treated questions about leadership that still need to be discussed today. Now, the World’s nations pay little attention to the kind of talents, virtues, and services that the leaders must fulfill. Few means and resources are used to distinguish authentic political leaders’ policies and the corrupted ones. If Adams’s “classical republican” conception of leadership can be understood and used for the benefits of all the emerging capitalist nations today, order and perfect government will raise in this world. Thanks to

Adams's above essay, one can learn how wealth and aristocracy affect political leadership and becomes the symbol of political merit and fame that a simple man can't have.

### **I-3- Adams as a Peaceful and a Modest President:**

The fifth episode concludes with Washington's retirement and Adams's inauguration as the second President of the United States. Washington expressed his displeasure with the Presidency and the disgust at and the criticism of a press that was influenced by one group of politicians or another. During Adams's last years of Vice-Presidency, the country was influenced by events happening in the overseas. France declared War on England and the Netherlands and the American government was forced to consider its positions as neutral, because any participation in the War will affect negotiations with England. During the *Peace-Treaty* with France, Washington and Adams remain neutral, despite people's anger. Adams was disappointed by what happened inside Washington's cabinet and the country, but was pleased by his position as a vice-President. He wrote his best friend Abigail: "My country in its wisdom contrived for me that most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived".

If Adams's achievement as a Vice-President were important to the nation, what he accomplished as a president can't be counted. When Adams was elected in 1796, he was confronted with many issues. His administration was dominated by a *Quasi-War* with France and the split within the Federalist Party. Mr. Adams appears without experience in the sixth episode and one can notice that he was struggling to find a balance between honoring Washington's actions and keeping his own position and political policy.

Just at the opening credit of the sixth episode, Adams is represented as a simple president. Contrary to Washington who arrives at his inaugural address with six white horses, Adams is carried with a carriage drawn by two horses. In the scene portraying Adams's

inauguration's speech, the two Virginians Washington and Jefferson stand near him. Washington and Jefferson are represented tall and eloquently dressed. Adams is dressed in a simple suit of gray color which shows that he is not a monarchist. In his speech, he expressed his feelings about the country and his belief in Republican institutions in general and in the constitution in particular. His aim is to solve the conflict between the *Federalist* and the *Republican* Party. He also expressed his appreciation of the government's system and his support for states' rights. We can notice that after the end of his speech, the audience seems attracted and removed by his sincerity and country's love. He declares:

...There can be no spectacle presented by any nation more pleasing, more noble, majestic or august than an assembly like that, which has so often been seen in this and the other chamber of congress; of a government in which the executive authority as well as that of all the balances of the legislature are exercised by citizens selected at regular periods by their neighbors, to make and execute laws for the general good... For they are the people only that for their power and majesty that is reflected and only for their good in every legitimate government, under whatever form it appear... (Tom Hooper, Sixth Episode: 6 minutes).

This episode portrays the little support that Adams received from his friend and Vice-President, the Republican Thomas Jefferson. In one of the scenes, they are walking and discussing about the issues and deduced that the divergence began among the parties. Jefferson opinion hurts Adams and Abigail advised him to get rid of Jefferson.

Adams was forced to focus on foreign policy; because France had begun seizing American ships in the West-Indies and attempting to block trade between America and England. New attempts of negotiation with French were made by appointing three men as peace ambassadors .The French government had refused to meet with the three new American ambassadors to France John Marshall, Charles Pinckney and Elbridge Gerry. Charles de Talleyrand, a French foreign minister sent spies to demand that America pay for a bribe. A \$10 million loan for France and \$ 250.000 for Talleyrand. Adams chooses peace and refused to tell Congress the names of the three spies and the affair was called the X, Y, and Z

(Heather Wagner, 2005: 66). In this context, the American national slogan became “Millions for defense but not one cent for tribute”. In another scene, Adams proposes to the Congress a series of defensive measures that might help avoid War. One can understand that he wants to create a strong navy to protect American ships against seizure and pass new laws to organize and arm the militia to help defend the country.

Another issue that Adams faced was the split inside his administration. There were no restrictions as those of today on what newspapers wrote about politics and presidents. Most of the opinions published did not support the president’s peace with France. The determination of Adams persists and one of the important achievements of Adams is the *Naturalization, Alien and Sedition Acts*. Adams did not ask Congress to declare war but to be aware of the enemies inside America, particularly the French immigrants. The congress passed the Naturalization, Alien and Sedition Act, in 1798. The two *Alien Acts* gave the President power to expel any foreigners that he thought might be “dangerous”. Within the Alien Acts there was a Naturalization Act, which extended from five to fourteen years the period of time necessary for foreigners to live in American soil, before they could be granted citizenship.

The *Sedition Act* is the most important law passed by the Adams’s cabinet. It tells that anyone who was guilty of “false, scandalous and malicious” writing against the president, Congress or government in an attempt to spread up sedition, a rebellion against the government, will pay an amount of money or be imprisoned. The Federalists who supported this Act claimed that it was a necessary measure in times of War, despite the fact that it seemed a violation of the Constitution’s protection of free speech. Several newspapermen, who accepted the new law are Republicans (Democrats) editors, unfortunately for Adams the Sedition Act expired in 1801.

Adams received less support from his cabinet. At the end of Adams's presidency, he experienced greater difficulties with his secretaries and the Federalist Party. As a result, he made a campaign of preventing War with France, which didn't succeed. After receiving bad publicity while in office, by Hamilton and Jefferson, he lost the election against his Vice-President, Jefferson and Aaron Burr. This election is now known as the Revolution of 1800. Adams left the Presidential Palace (now known as The White House) retiring to his peaceful life in Massachusetts, on March 1801 and returned to his farming life again (Wood, 2006: 69).

Greenblatt indicates that the wonder's results are not only cultural resonance but also in violent and irrational possession imperialism and colonialism as exhibited by most of today's powerful countries. America declared War on Iraq and Afghanistan under the umbrella of terrorism. From this period of Adams's life one can deduce that these issues may be solved only by peace negotiation and diplomacy. Therefore, Adams and Tom Hooper want people to reject selfish-individualism and materialism and to return to community spirit and social responsibility. His aim is to preserve the American collective memory and help them to restore their identities. Adams's peaceful policy towards the French Revolution is an instructive example about the Americans' optimism about the influence that their principles would have on the cause of liberty elsewhere.

Furthermore, Democratic American leaders as Adams ought to possess a moral commitment to the nation, which is reflected both through their interpersonal relations, conduct in the office and policy initiatives that seek to bring improvements in all fields. We may assert that to be good leaders, presidents now should be peaceful intermediaries in the complex political climates, because any positive change can only be effected by one's political strengths. Whatever we say about President Adams, it will be insufficient and by comparing his political thought, foreign, domestic policy and his retirement with that of Jefferson, Washington, Franklin and Hamilton in the following section, we will be able to

know his inner side more and understand his political aims, after the Revolution. The following comparison will reveal his simplicity and peaceful decisions, which are valuable for today's America.

## **II- The Comparison of Adams to Jefferson, Washington, Franklin and Hamilton, in the post-Revolutionary area:**

### **II-1-Adams and Jefferson:**

The fourth, the fifth the sixth and the seventh episodes represent Adams's life after the Revolution. During Washington's administration, Adams served as we have previously seen it as a Vice-President and Jefferson served as a Secretary of State. In 1796, Jefferson runed for the presidency but lost to Adams and became Vice-President during the election of 1796 and when Washington retired, after two terms, Adams was elected President in 1797. In the fourth episode, Adams, Franklin and Jefferson meet at the *Treaty of Paris* and discussed about the USA's Constitution purpose. Contrary to Jefferson, Adams insisted on law and order as a means of controlling the "mob" and Jefferson has the faith in man and reminded him that the Revolution don't "stop at the American borders". Jefferson indirectly makes reference to the future conflict between Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans, over the Government's and the French Revolution's purpose. Jefferson's response reflects his enlightened education, his involvement in the French Revolution of 1789 and his avocations of socialism. Jefferson says:

I expect that any constitutional document that emerges from a will be compromised as our declaration of Independency... I am increasingly persuaded that the earth belongs exclusively to the living and that one generation has no more the right to bind another to its laws and judgment than one independent nation has the right to command another... yes possibly but I fear that the constitution could prove a breach in the integrity of our revolutionary ideals through which will power the force of reaction (Tom Hooper, Fourth Episode: 3 minutes).

Adams was aware that Jefferson is taking another direction and has an excess faith in people. The conflict between them increases during the fifth and the sixth episode, which represents Adams's eight years of Vice-Presidency (1789-1797) and his five years of

Presidency (1795-1801). Contrary to Adams, who was Federalist, Jefferson was a Republican and stated in his electoral address that he will remain faithful to the constitution and to the states. Unlike Adams who wanted to increase the military construction and to reduce the national debts, Jefferson didn't support Hamilton's policy of Banks. But as Adams, he favored peaceful relations with foreign countries and didn't want any political connections that could force the country into an unwanted War. Jefferson wrote in a letter:

I am for a government rigorously frugal and simple and for retiring the national debt, eliminating a standing army and relying to the militia to safeguard internal security and keep the navy small, lest it drag the nation into "electoral wars. (Ferling, 2004: 140).

Jefferson like Adams fears Hamilton's love of power and War. In one shot of the fifth episode, they express their thoughts about the matter. In contrast to Adams who sees the constitution with a strong executive against corruption, Jefferson believes that there are some inefficient articles. Both of them fear Hamilton's greed. Jefferson lost faith in Republic contrary to Adams, who still believes in it. This shows Adams's capacity and wisdom to solve the conflicts inside their Government. They tell each other:

...It will favour the British...I do wonder John if you can be blind to Mr. Hamilton's scheming as you seem...Mr. Hamilton would have us British in our economy, British in our forms of Government, British John...He believes that man can be governed only by force and self-interest, the first available to him at present, so he appeals to our based instincts Fears and greed" Adams replies: "Our Constitution provides a strong executive to counter just such legislative corruption. As you imagine, Thomas..." Thomas replied: "our constitution has many good articles and some bad ones. I do not know yet which predominate...With this government I am not certain that we are a republic. At any rate I have offered the president my resignation. I can't descend daily into the arena to suffer martyrdom on every conflict...my departure will be a great relief to me and no great loss to the public..." John replied: "It will be a great loss for me, Thomas. (Tom Hooper, Fifth Episode: 4 minutes).

Jefferson like Adams has doubts about the Government's members and the elected representatives. Adams believes that people are undisturbed by monarchists Federalists and Jefferson refuses to recognize the structure and the institutions of a modern State, by accepting the State's authority. During Adams's first presidential administration, the USA



was a bound Confederation. He was against the fact that “a northern confederacy might break away from the southern United States” (Wood, 2006: 107-108).

According to the fourth episode, Adams sees no division between society and government contrary to Jefferson, who celebrates the superiority of society over government. Indeed, this division is represented as the basic thinking of the Republican ideology. Contrary to Adams, who believes in a central government, Jefferson believed in the common moral sense of ordinary people and he has faith in the natural organization of society. He claimed:

Man was destined for society. His morality therefore was to be firmed to this object. He was endowed with a sense of right and wrong merely relative to this...The moral sense or conscience, is as much a part of a man as his leg or arm...This sense is submitted, indeed in some degree to the guidance of reason, but it is small stock, which is required for this All human beings had implemented in our breasts this love of others, this moral instinct these social dispositions, were what made democracy possible. (Jefferson Quoted in Gordon Wood, 2006: 106).

According to Wood the New Testament influenced Jefferson thought. He took it as a basis for his Republican principles. Unlike Adams, he believed in minimal government, but both of them believed in nationhood and not in the modern State. Adams hated all bureaucracy and he gave the impression that Government was “only a device which never accepted the modern idea of the state as an entity possessing a life of its own, distinct from both rulers and ruled”. For Jefferson, there will be no power without people (Wood, 2006: 107).

Contrary to Adams, who supported industry, trade and commerce, Jefferson and his fellow Republicans saw that the Western land are a means of escaping from the European nations. With land available for farmers, Jefferson claimed that “America’s social development could be retarded and the country would not be obliged to enter the stage of commerce by confacturing luxuoury and urban decadence” (Ibid: 109). Jefferson and his followers believed that America’s expansion to the West would save them from the ravages of time. We assert then that unlike Adams, who had an industrial vision and a modern state, Jefferson has an agrarian vision of America’s future.

It was not the only thing separating them, in the scene of the fourth episode, Jefferson and Hamilton talk about the Government's form and policy. Unlike Adams, who supported a central modern government, Jefferson favored modernity. However, Jefferson and the other enlightened leaders believe that commerce among nations in international affairs is the equivalent to affection among people in domestic affairs, which need to be freed from monarchical bound and interventions of leaders. As a result, Jefferson's disastrous Embargo of 1807- 1809 is an attempt to change international behavior, which would be beneficial for the American foreign foreign policy. Wood argues:

Hence in 1776 and the years following Jefferson and other Revolutionary ideals Hoped to do for the world what they were doing for the society of the United States: change the way people related to one another. They looked forward to a rational world in which corrupt monarchical diplomacy and secret alliances balances of power and dynastic rivalries would be replaced by the natural ties of commerce. If the people of the various nations were left alone to exchange goods freely among themselves, then international politics would become republicanized and pacified and indeed was itself would be eliminated (Ibid: 109).

In terms of foreign affairs, contrary to Adams who is disturbed during the French Revolution, Jefferson was not during the *Shays' Rebellion*, which consists of the southern farmer's rebellion against the prohibition of bank credits. He saw the French Revolution as a human rights' movement that had originated from the American one. In a letter, he expressed his lifelong belief that the American Revolution would be "the signal of arousing seen to burst the charms under which monkish ignorance and to assume the blessing and security of self-government" (Wood, 2006: 110). In one important scene, Jefferson tells Adams that there are many Revolutions, but both of them remain neutral towards the French Revolution.

Concerning their presidency, Adams's one is represented in the film as a peaceful period and according to their writings, that of Jefferson is full of conflicts without resolutions such as the French Indian War with the British and the Shay's Rebellion. Unlike President Adams, who relied on his knowledge of law, his sincerity and gift of oratory to convince people and the members of his government, Jefferson relied on newspapers and pamphlets (

Ibid: 112). By the 1800, several papers Republicans and Federalists were published. In the fifth and sixth episode Hamilton publishes papers against Adams's Administration and uses political cartoons to praise Jefferson. As it is demonstrated in the miniseries, these political papers helped Jefferson to be elected on March 4<sup>th</sup> and caused the shift of power from the Federalists to the Republicans. Hamilton's misrepresentation of Adams as a vain and not competent is abusive. Consequently, Adams insured the *Sedition Act* to protect the president and his followers from persecution and intimidation. The *Act* confirms Adams's point of view that press and media, which is considered today as the fourth branch in the USA's political system, shall respect the president's private and public life.

Despite their differences, Adams wrote his wife that he and Jefferson are still friends, because she cared about their declining relationship, he said that "Mr. Jefferson was polite enough to accompany me, so you will see we are still upon Terms". The Relationship between the Adams family and that of Jefferson became complex and during the 1800 election, Adams knew that he will lose, because of the propaganda against him. At the end, Jefferson won the election and Adams retired from the office to return again to his farm.

Jefferson retirement years are between 1809 and 1820. Adams's ones were according to Wood "a period of Wars between the French and the British, there was a commercial panic, the rapid growth of Democracy and evangelical religion and the Missouri crisis over the spread of slavery" (Wood, 2001: 123). It was not a hard time for Jefferson as well as for Adams. But during his retirement to Monticello, he reconciled with John Adams, who re-corresponded after Abigail's death in the Seventh episode with him. It is a proof of Adams's respect of friendship and his loyalty and sociability. During this time, Jefferson tried to establish the University of Virginia and Adams supported his son Quincy in his presidency. Both Adams and Jefferson thought that the world around them is changing. In a scene where they exchange letters, they discussed about how the American Revolution took another

meaning and the American society was becoming more capitalist. At the end of the seventh episode they say to each other that the American Revolution, for which they had devoted their lives, was in danger. These scenes stand for their questioning of their values and their disillusionment and sadness about the fall of the American dream.

As Jefferson, Adams was unable to understand the economic forces that were transforming the country and destroying the upper South. Jefferson blamed the banks and the speculative spirit, which caused Virginia's miseries. He had no comprehension of banks and thought the paper money they issued was designed "to enrich swindlers at the expense of the honest and industrious part of the nation" (Wood, 2006: 113). Both of them thought that America is becoming degenerated by the wealth quest. The Missouri crisis for example of 1819- 1820 provoked by northern state to limit the spread of slavery, in the west, was to Jefferson "a fire bell in the night", a treat to the Union and to the Revolutionary experiment's. For him, it violated the constitution and threatened the balance of power between people. Self-government congress he said had no right "to regulate the conditions of the different descriptions of men composing a state, only each state had the "exclusive right to regulate slavery. If the Federal Government arrogated to itself that right, then it would next declare all slaves in the country free" (Wood, 2006: 113). But Adams was against this view and supported the freedom of all slaves.

After his retirement from public life in 1809, Jefferson according to Wood became a narrow minded and stayed in Virginia and never left it. He caught himself off from many sources of knowledge of the outside world, as it is seen at the end of the seventh episode. One of his visitors, George Ticknor noted that he became a "singularly ignorant and insensible on the subjects of passing politics" (Ibid: 114). According to Wood, he took only one newspaper, the Richmond Enquirer and had no interest in receiving mail. In all this, he differs from his friend Adams, who became a farmer again unlike Jefferson who according to Wood tried to

sell his land and his slaves to pay his debts. In addition, Adams devoted his time to his family and autobiography. He looked for all his letters and put them in one document, as it shown in the seventh episode.

Jefferson like Adams had a lot of terrifying moments between 1809 and 1826 and many doubts about the future of the nation. His personal troubles, his rising debts and the fear of losing Monticello were part of it. Jefferson was destructed by his confidence in the people and by his optimism in the future. The Enlightenment, the Democratic Revolution to which he had contributed so much, caused his isolation. He told John Adams in 1816 that he liked “the dreams of the future better than the history of the past” (Ibid: 114-115). Thus, Adams and Jefferson letters in the seventh episode allow us to separate John Adams the turbulent politician from John Adams the reflective scholar.

In the last scenes of the seventh episode, Hooper introduced the audience to Adams’s correspondences with Jefferson, which expressed his laments over the rising generations as he said “of which I once had sanguine hopes” (Ibid: 121). In another important scene, Adams is introduced to the painting about the Declaration of Independence. Far from betraying history, the miniseries script writer Kirk Ellis’s distortions of reality maintains the audience’s interest and increases their wonder and understanding of the period. There, Adams is shown inspecting John Trumbull’s painting *Declaration of Independence* (1817). He lamented the fact he and Thomas Jefferson is the last surviving people depicted. “It is bad history!” he said, reminding him that the figures in the painting never met together to sign the Declaration, because of war. His warning “not to let our posterity be deluded with fictions under the guise of poetical or graphical license” is a slogan for the show itself. According to David McCullough, “what Adams thought as he looked at the painting will never be known” (Ibid: 232). Therefore, the scene is as a revelation of John Adams’s character and a meditation on

the 18<sup>th</sup> century attitudes toward history. It embodies the conflicting relationship between the *historian's truth* and the *dramatist's truth*, in historical film.

Finally, both Jefferson as Adams investigated intellectually and emotionally for the future of the American nation, but they were disappointed by the changes that occurred after the Revolution. God wanted that they died in the same day and in the last scene of the seventh episode, Adams is lying ill on his bed and asking his son about his friend Jefferson, who in his turn thinks about Adams. This scene raises the audience's wonder and emotions. It stands for the strong friendship of the two, however their differences. Is there such a friendship today among people and politicians? It will not be sincere to answer yes.

From what have been said, many differences may be drawn between the Federalist and the Republicans. Unlike the Federalists emphasis on manufacturing, shipping and trading, the Democrats support agriculture. The Federalists believe and support strong government, whereas the Democrats support a strong State government. While the Federalists loose interpretation of the Constitution and consider it as a guideline for their decisions, the Democrats follow strict interpretations of the constitution's articles. Most of the Federalists were pro-British and adopted the British way but the proponents of the Democratic Party were pro-French, because the France helped them in the Revolution. Another difference is that the Federalists favored the national Bank and the Democratic opposed the latter. In terms of tariffs, the Federalists supported protective contrary to the Republicans, who opposed them and supported protective tariffs. Finally, the Federalists believed that wealthy and well educated people should lead the nation, while the Republicans supported the fact that any person can govern.

## **II-2- Adams and Washington:**

Adams and Jefferson were the best example of friendship and good values. This fact leads us to know more Adams's character. Washington, another Revolutionary character contributed immensely in the development of Adams's political career. What is the nature of their relation and what is the basis of their political policies? After the Revolution, Washington was appointed to the office without election to be the first President. Contrary to Adams who was elected to the position, Washington was the only president in American history that was so honored. The fourth episode represents Washington's inauguration and in the fifth one, the first President faced the Federalists and the Republicans' conflicts wisely. He was the first chief executive, who created a new elective Republican President. Unlike Adams, Washington had no model to follow, "he has to set up a basis for the new government and "he should prove that the United States' self governing is possible" (Wood, 2006: 48).

Washington is represented in the four last episodes using democracy in order not to offend the Republicans. He possessed the dignity, patience, restraint and reputation for Republican Virtue that the office of presidency needed (Ibid: 57). His presidency seems as a coronation in the film. Contrary to Adams, he was not hopeful, because the new nation's crisis. Like Adams, he sought pieces of advice from his closest persons, including the Vice-President Adams and Alexander Hamilton, the secretary of Treasury. He consulted Adams as Wood proposes, on how should he meet with public? How accessible should he be host state dinners? Could he dine with friends? Should he make a tour of the United States? (Wood, 2006: 65). Indeed, Hooper's ideology of showing Adams in one scene of the sixth episode walking in the street freely is to represent his simplicity in contrast to Washington distant behavior towards people. The latter behaves as a king and was uncomfortable with ceremony. Wood claims:

In his public appearances he rode in an elaborately ornamented coach drawn by four and sometime six horses attended with four servants in lively, following by his official family in other coaches. When he traveled declared a British observer "it is a very kingly style". In Washington's public pronouncement, he referred to himself like a king in the third person and sat for dozens of state portraits all modeled on those of European monarchs (Wood, 2006: 54).

Adams's and Washington's presidency in the miniseries are characterized by a series of foreign crises that threatened to destroy the national government. Two parties emerged in 1790 *the Federalists* and *the Republicans*. The Federalists party was composed of Washington, Adams and Hamilton and the Republicans under Jefferson, John Jay and Madison. In the fifth episode, Washington uses his prestige and good judgment to restrain fears, and clashes that can be transformed into Violence between the two parties. In 1794, he avoids the bloodshed in settling down the *Whiskey Rebellion*, which consisted of a hundred farmers' protest in western Pennsylvania, because of the impossibility of having bank credits like the northern merchants and businessmen. Despite this division, both Adams and Washington keep respecting all the party's leaders. .

Through the above comparison, one may say that Hooper depicts both the American politician and military men. Unlike Adams, Washington understood the exercise of authority, because he had led an army and employed slaves at Mount Vernon. According to Wood "He was a systematic and energetic administrator and communicated regularly his department heads advisers he was determined that the government speaks with a single voice" (Wood, 2006: 55). In contrast to Adams, he lacked intellectual abilities and confidence in his advisors and acted decisively, in cases of serious decisions such as the acceptance of Hamilton's bank. Washington knows that every step and decision will be a basis for the country's future and says: "We are a young nation and have a character to establish; it behooves me therefore to set out right, for first impressions will be lasting" (Washington, Quoted in Wood, 2006: 57).

In dealing with foreign affairs, both Adams and Washington are represented as realistic president. In the Treaty negotiation with Great Britain with John Jay for example, in



1794 and ratified by the Senate in 1795, Washington made a series of effective decisions. Hooper shows them through both men's firm decision to establish the young Republic and their control of the British War threat against the United States, because of the seizure of its ships and the popular opposition to the Treaty with the motherland. But contrary to Adams who saw all men equal, Washington believed that "some were born to command and others to obey" (Washington, Quoted in Wood, 2006: 58).

In domestic affairs, Washington like Adams favor the union and as a President, he tried to prevent the country from fragmentation. When Adams became president, he exchanged salutations with twenty two leading religious groups and attended the church services, including the Roman Catholic Church and the Jews of Newport and Rhode. Both of them wanted that America became an enlightened civilization, where everyone shall live as Washington claimed "safe under his own vine and fig tree" (Ibid: 59). Washington promoted roads and canals and the post-office. According to Wood, both of them do all their best to bind the different States together:

He spent much time considering appointment to office because he wanted not only to get the best men available but also to build local support throughout the country for the nation and those he called the "unborn Millions". More than any other person he was responsible for backing Pierre L'Enfant in designing the magnificent Federal city that was to bear his name. Since he hoped that the United States would eventually become a great nation rivaling, if not surpassing, the powerful states of Europe (Ibid: 59).

We assert then that both Washington and Adams never took the unity of the country for granted, they knew that if there will be a separation; it is between the Northern and the Southern States. Contrary to the neutral Adams, Washington told his secretary Edmund Randolph, in 1795 that he chose the North. However this difference, Washington like Adams promoted the sense of union that Lincoln and others later held. Even in the social life, their wives Martha and Abigail embodied their collaboration. They helped the poor and arranged marriages including that of James Madison and Dolley Payne (Ibid: 60).

Unlike Adams, Hooper shows Washington giving up the office. The significance of his retirement is the destruction of people's ideas about the Founders' intention of forming a monarchy. It also shows Washington's moral authority which helped the possibility for others to govern. In one scene of the fifth episode, Washington informs Adams about his retirement and it stands for his trust in Adams. He retires by informing Adams about the difficulty of being unpopular and approves that it is hard to accept it, which means Washington's recognition of Adams's actions. Affected by Washington's words, Adams is upset and sad about his retirement. Washington says while looking to people manifesting against Jays' Treaty:

The hell hounds are in full cry. They say I have sold this country to England, that I have sided with a mad English king over the French Republic. Slanders and labels, Mobs, Seditions and then hissing snakes, the burning torches and haggard honors of Civil War. My desk overflows with memorials and petition, with addresses resolutions, remonstrance from every corner of the country, all urging me to refuse my signature declaring I' m traitor, because I've sided with mad English King over the French Republic. Chief Justice informs me that he could steer a course from one end of the country to the other by the light of his own burning effigies I do not approve of everything in that treaty. But at least it keeps us out of their blasted war. I know what it is to be unpopular Mr. Adams I am weary of the task, most weary. (Tom Hooper, Fifth Episode: 3 minutes).

As those of Adams and Jefferson, Washington's retirement's years were characterized by disillusionment about the American political conflicts and changes. It stands in the film about Hooper's disillusionment about today's' American issues. Washington becomes again a head of the army (commander in chief) during Adams's presidency. Later on, Washington returned to Mont Vernon and takes care of his farm.

By comparing, Adams and Washington, Hooper wants to show the Founders' anxiety towards their country. His Adams's comparison to Washington shows the American intellectual and political richness. The political world is changing and becoming more democratic with diverse parties. As a result, the Founders are represented great heroes of the past endowed with high values. However the differences between them, both Adams and

Washington were extraordinary men, who made it possible for ordinary men to rule. There had been no one like Washington and Adams and it is sure not to see others like them again.

### **II-3- Adams and Franklin:**

Another figure to whom Hooper compares Adams is the famous Benjamin Franklin. How did both of them become after the Revolution? Both Adams and Franklin established a great Reputation as it is demonstrated in the fourth episode. Both of them are famous ambassadors to France and Britain. But contrary to Franklin, Adams involved himself in political life again and became Vice-President and President. Furthermore, Franklin's reputation as a great scientist and philosopher stood for "the idea of America with its primitiveness, its innocence and its liberty" (Wood, 2006: 86).

The fourth episode *Don't Thread on Me* represents Franklin as a member of the French aristocracy. He was considered as a hero and seems absorbed by the French culture and bourgeoisie. In his Autobiography, Franklin told his daughter that "all these images have made your father's face as well known as that of the moon" (*Poor Richards' Almanacs*, 1763: 86). In the shot of both Adams's and Franklin's meeting in Versailles, Franklin dressed in a simple brown and white linen suit and wore a fur cap without any sword or arms. He can walk freely in public, because of his fame. After the Peace Treaty with France, Franklin decided to return to America in 1785 and devoted the rest of his life for his autobiography, contrary to Adams who stayed in Europe with Jefferson and Abigail for more years. According to Wood, at his death, in 1790 there was only one public eulogy given by William Smith in America. The United States "refused to join the house in endorsing a resolution honoring Franklin" (Wood, 2006: 89). It was Mirabeau who delivered a speech during the French National Assembly in France to his memory, published few years later.

Both of them favored the unity of the country and it is represented in the miniseries through Franklin, Jefferson and Adams meeting in Paris. Franklin expresses his real intentions and recognizes many disagreements but invites them to preserve the Republic. Franklin reminds his friends that “they should prove to Mr. Dickenson that he was wrong” and admits that Adams is an honest collaborator. Throughout the episode, one can feel Franklin’s regret about his betrayal of Adams in France and happiness for his appointment as an ambassador to Britain. He declares:

We have our disagreements, but you have always been an honest collaborator I can think of no better choice to represent the united States in Great Britain than yourself. The English love an insult. It’s the only test of a man’s sincerity. My own days abroad are at a close. But Mr. Jefferson will replace me here quite well, I am sure...Well I m sure we’ll all disagree a great deal our country is founded on the right to disagree. Still we must prevail if only to prove Mr. Dickenson wrong that we will not tear ourselves asunder after the defeat our common enemy...It is no small thing to build a new world, gentlemen, we have our Republic, we must endeavor to keep it if we can...(Tom Hooper, Fourth Episode: 2 minutes).

After this shot, Franklin was not represented in the other episodes. Indeed, in his autobiography, Franklin was revealed as a symbol of the businessmen’s cause, a self-made man and a shaper of his destiny. Hooper represents Adams as a politician assuming many positions. In contrast, Franklin is identified less as an eighteenth century gentleman and philosopher than as the poor printer, who became rich thanks to his hard work.

Furthermore, both the miniseries and Franklin’s life writings identify him with bourgeois materialism. Even after his death, it was that image which imaginative writers like Poe, Thoreau, Melville and Laurence criticized, in their writings. It is this picture of the hard working self-made business man that is important for the Americans at that time. Hooper wants his audience to understand that his capitalism in the early Republic continues to dominate American culture until now and he was an example for many business self-made men to follow. Contrary to him, Adams is represented as a simple man. His richness lies in his moral values and intellectual abilities. He never showed himself, never been attracted by

wealth and was not caring about fame as Franklin. Unlike Franklin, Adams is used as an artifact to represent the American values, naturalism and equality between people.

## **II-4-Adams and Hamilton:**

Both Adams and Franklin's aim is the unity of their country and the miniseries reveals the bourgeois and the republican side of American people, at that time. According to Kenneth T. Jackson and Valerie Paley's interview with Hamilton's biographer Ron Chernow, "Hamilton was an ideal figure because he draws us back to the founding of the Wall Street and to the creation of the fiscal and the monetary policy, in the United States" (Ron Charnow, 2001). After the War, both Adams and Hamilton contributed to the economy improvement and the country management. After defeating the British, the American patriots needed to construct a stable government and insured the Articles of Confederacy. Hamilton considered them weak and saw that it is devoted only for functions that didn't touch the central government. Hamilton felt that the Articles of Confederacy were a disaster, which will lead to War between the States. He wrote:

America, if not connected at all, or only by the feeble tie of a simple league offensive and defensive, would by the operation of such opposite and Jarring alliances be gradually entangled in all the pernicious labyrinths of European politics and wars... (Alexander Hamilton, November 17, 1787. Quoted in Idem, 1961: 188).

Under Washington's presidency, Hamilton is shown in the fifth episode as a Secretary of Treasury (1787 1795). He was depicted in the miniseries as an ambitious man and a runner after money and power. Contrary to Adams, Hamilton never traveled to Europe and had little influence on foreign affairs. In the fifth and the sixth episode, France and Great Britain went to War. President Washington made a firm decision to stay uninvolved but Hamilton supported the War and drafted a *Jay's Treaty* to keep the strong British trade ally. The Republicans however, saw the Treaty as a betrayal of the American alliance with France. In

1795, Hamilton resigned as a Secretary of Treasury and devoted the rest of his life to support and lead the Federalist Party.

Although both men are represented as Federalists, they don't seem to like each other in the miniseries. Hamilton claimed that Adams had a violent temperament that made him unapproachable and doubted about his leadership. The dislike has deeper origins it dated from Adams's support Haratio Gates over Hamilton's father in law Philip Schuyler, as the lead officer in a military campaign (Wood, 2006: 225).

The sixth episode represents the steps of the first Government. Adams becomes a Vice-President and supported Hamilton's creation of a National Bank. Both men foresaw the difficulty with commerce and under a strong government, they increase commerce and the State's revenue. As a result, this emphasized in the central Government and enforced taxation, which Hamilton found "an indispensable ingredient in every constitution" (Ibid: 256). In his article *The Federalist Papers*, Hamilton showed the importance of taxation and commerce. Hamilton wrote *The Federalist Papers* under the name *Publius*, with the help of James Madison and John Jay. One of the most significant reports was the *Report on Public Credit* on January, 1790, which proposed that the Federal Government take responsibility for the country's debts and give it much power over the States (Gordon Wood, 2006: 91).

However his achievements and contrary to Adams, Hamilton's reputation was ruined in 1751, because of the first clash between them, this occurred during the Quasi-War with France, in 1786. Adams created an army commended by Washington, who decided in the sixth episode to make of Hamilton his second commander. Adams was against this decision, because Hamilton supported the army, while he wanted to expand the navy. Unlike Hamilton, who believed that America could depend on the English navy for defense, Adams felt that America needed its own strong navy.

The second conflict between them was on handling the American-French relations. On the one hand, Adams supported peace negotiation to avoid an unnecessary War. On the other hand, Hamilton wanted military action, which he considered as an opportunity for imperial expansion into Florida and Louisiana. Unlike Hamilton, Adams choose peace negotiation and a direct War never occur. Hamilton felt that America should concentrate its efforts on making England its strongest economic ally. He stated in 1790 that “England had a great commercial capital and immense trade unlike America, which had no capital” (Wood, 2006: 95). Hamilton insisted on War and Adams was against. They exchanged the following conversation in one of the shots of the sixth episode:

...In that regrettable instance we must be prepared to take possession of valuable, strategic territory before France can lay her hands on it all the territory. This is necessary must be ours...” Adams replied: “Spanish Florida and Louisiana and not only those sir” Hamilton: “ and not only this sir If universal empire is to be the pursuit of France what can tend to defeat their purpose better than to detach south America from Spain... We must be prepared to bring the renegades back into the fold by force if necessary...” Adams: “never in my life have I heard a man speak more like a fool... You dream of empire Mr. Hamilton. (Tom Hooper, Sixth Episode: 6 minutes).

Therefore, Hooper wants to show that both Adams and Hamilton represent the clash and the division inside the Federalists and their weakness in front of the Republicans. However, both the two parties advocated union and the nation’s development. The Federalists argued that they were preventing America from becoming anarchist, while the Republicans believed that they were saving the country from a counter Revolution. The scenes and the moments of the election show Hamilton’s attempt to defame Adams publically, in a pamphlet entitled *Letter from Alexander Hamilton Concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, President of the United States* on October 24, 1800. Once it reached the public, Ron Chernow has described Hamilton’s letter as “a form of political suicide that blighted the rest of his career” (Ron Chernow, 2001).

The miniseries deploys how this letter hurts Adams and damages the Federalists’ power. It gives the Republicans an edge in popularity, because it demonstrated the split within

the Federalists party. Hamilton wanted to highlight Adams's red temper, which was well known by Federalists. Hamilton appears in the miniseries as an arrogant man and a successful collaborator of Washington. Unlike Jefferson as a head of the State Department and Henry Knox as a head of the War Department, Hamilton as a secretary of treasury, Hamilton, as a Secretary of Treasury, saw himself as a Prime Minister to Washington's monarch. He exercises his authority by making independent decisions. He was treated differently because of Washington's lack of knowledge about finance and belief that the Treasury Department was different (Wood, 2006: 128).

In contrast to Adams who does only his job, Hamilton began to interfere in the legislative matters of the congress. However, both of them were pro-British and carried a great admiration to the English values. The miniseries represent Jefferson's organized dinner in 1791, in which Adams and Hamilton take part. During their conversation, someone mentioned the English constitution about Adams says: "purge that constitution of its corruption and give to its popular branch equality of representation and it will be the most perfect government ever devised by the wit of man". Hamilton replies "it would become an impracticable government as it stands at present, with all its supposed defects, it is the most perfect government, which ever existed" (Ibid: 129). For Hamilton it is the perfect government. Wood adds:

Hamilton was nothing if not a hardheaded and in the 1790's he set out to do what the successful eighteenth century. British ministers had done in effect to "correct" the society for the sake of stable government. He sought to use monarchical interest and dependency that would substitute for what he believed was the Lack of virtue in America" (Wood, 2006: 129).

In fact, Hamilton knows that there were Americans as merchants, speculators...etc, who are able to make money. Contrary to Adams, he believes that the new government needed their support.



In terms of policy and politics and like most Federalists, Hamilton assumed that politics was a matter of having the support of the influential wealthy man, because they are in position of power. He thought that “a statesman inevitably captures the whole society”. Contrary to Adams who is against War and empire, he is represented in the film as an ambitious man searching more power and economic interests. But behind his varied programs as Wood claims, “there is no doubt that he meant to strengthen the central authority and the Union, by increasing the number of ligaments between the government and the interests of individuals” (Ibid: 130-31). Like all the previous European State’s builders, Hamilton aimed to use the business’ system to improve American’s economy.

One may assert that Hooper wants to show to the audience that both Adams’s and Hamilton’s policy aims to strengthen local interests and that of government. Unlike Adams, who supports both agriculture and industry, he rejects the agrarian vision of the future United States held by Jefferson. He saw the country becoming a pro- European and aims to copy Britain’s form of government and turn the United States into a great power, which will rival Britain and the other European States. But Adams suggests that the country avoids War, until it has a strong military navy.

Hamilton’s program was made in a series of four reports to congress, between 1790 and 1791, which deals with credit, National Bank and manufactures. Hamilton proposed that the United States paid not just the Federal Government’s debts, but also those of the States. At the same time, he proposed the creation of a National Bank that could stabilize the credit of the United States and create money. Finally, he projected the development of manufacturing in the United States, in order to fulfill military needs and to create a source for money. (Wood, 2006: 133).

From the above comparison, we may claim that the miniseries demonstrates Adams and Hamilton projects for the manufacturing's improvement in the United States and creates a prosperous economy that will be less dependent on European supplies. Hamilton was not a businessman or an entrepreneur, but he succeeded in his policy, because he was an eighteenth century gentleman and genius, who practiced law in Wall Trade Street. Jefferson and Madison believed that the Bank is unconstitutional. But Washington signs it, in 1791 with the agreement of Adams, who said: "Every dollar of a bank bill that is issued beyond the quality of gold and silver in the vaults represents nothing and is therefore a cheat upon somebody" (Wood, 2006: 134). Unlike Adams, Hamilton ignored the farmers and wanted to have monopoly on money. The Northern Jeffersonian opposed Hamilton's *National Bank* and created *State Bank* that gave ordinary Americans the credit they wanted.

From all what have been said, one can notice that Adams and Hamilton worried about the New Federal Government's future. They wanted the United States to become as great and powerful as Great Britain and the European powers. In domestic and foreign affairs, Hamilton saw himself as a realistic man and like Adams; he wanted to form a united society. Quoted in Wood's book *The Revolutionary Characters*, Hamilton wrote:

as Human nature shall refine and ameliorate by the operation of a common moral sense and the spread of affection and benevolence, government eventually will become useless and society will subsist and flourish free from its shackles, was a wild and fatal... scheme" they go far enough to endanger human happiness (Wood, 2006: 137).

After Jay's Treaty and contrary to Adams who became a president, Hamilton left Washington's cabinet, in 1795 and returned to his Wall Street practice of law to make money and controlled the Federalist Party. As it can be seen in the fifth episode *Unnecessary War*, which is set in 1798, France wants War. Therefore, Adams calls Washington's out of Retirement to be a commander of an army. Washington reluctantly agrees, with one condition that Hamilton will be major general. It is remarkable in the miniseries that Adams is furious

against Washington's decision to choose Hamilton such a position and denounces that it is "the most restless, impatient, indefatigable and unprincipled intrigue in the United States, if not in the World to be second in command under himself" (Wood, 2006: 137). Contrary to Hamilton's option for War, Adams's new peace mission, in 1799 and the end of the Quasi-War with France, was an important political decision. Unlike Hamilton, he considers it more important than his reputation.

Hence, Hamilton's achievements seemed bizarre at that time, but Hooper's saw them important for nowadays America. He intend to glorify Hamilton and Adams's actions and claim that if both are alive today, they will be pleased by vast Federal Government, its Pentagon, its CIA, its huge public debts, its taxes, they will also like its professional military force with million men and women spread across two oceans and many countries. One can deduce from the miniseries that America has created the powerful worldwide empire about which Hamilton dreamed of. In this sense, Hamilton may be "The man who made modern America". Hooper wants to raise the audience's wonder about these American ideals, who made great sacrifices for their country. Most Americans feel great Admiration towards Adams's political achievements and thought and still consider him the most peaceful United States' president they ever heard or read about. He rejected power, segregation and empire. Through Adams's life, Hooper reminds the Americans audience about their liberty and peace principles. Adams promised to preserve them at any price and he was never driven by the desire of colonization or imperialism.

Today, America is developing a new form of neo-colonization and its leaders don't care about the other nation's welfare. All what they want is the protection of their political and economic interests. Despite the number of people who are still dying, the number of countries, cultures and values which are distracted, the United States' leaders continue to justify their military and economic actions, in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East. Hooper

then hopes to remind the American about their past values and uses the Founder's achievements and lives as good example for human liberty and rights. The following representation will show that woman played important roles in the Founder's lives and the American's national values and identity's transmission.

### **III- The Representation of Abigail in the post-Revolutionary Period:**

#### **III-1-Abigail as a Devoted Wife of a Vice-President:**

As a Vice-President, John Adams needed his wife's support again and after nearly sixteen years of absence, the couple reunited in Europe. This period is well portrayed in Tom Hooper's fourth episode *Reunion*, which redeploys Adams's years in France and Britain as an ambassador. The couple wanted to avoid long periods of separation, but in 1789 Adams once again found himself in New York City without Abigail. He was in need for her pieces of advice in politics, he says in one shot: "I must now seriously request you to come on to me as soon as conveniently you can. Never did I want your assistance more than at present, as my physician and my Nurse".

One can notice Abigail's hesitation in the film to leave her house and children and join her husband in New York. Hooper shows her torn between leaving their home, their farms, their family and their friends and supporting Adams's political cause. She comes back from Europe exchanged that life for her husband's career. She replied in a letter: "I say nothing about coming; you will know when it will be proper and give me timely notice". But Adams insisted and continued his request and showed that her political pieces of advice and presence are very important for him. He answered:

I have taken a house, now wish you to come on and the place must be left, as you can...Charles must come with you...My garden is preparing for your reception and I wish you were here...I expect you here indeed in a week or ten days farthest, from this date, I had been a great danger that you did not come on with me" (Adams to Abigail, 1789)

As respectful and independent women at the same time, she embodied the American traditions and values. Abigail could no longer refuse her husband's wishes and decided to travel to New York. Hooper represents Abigail's hesitation as a sign of her independent control of the farm and of her care about leaving the Quincy Farm to serve her husband's political struggle. This proves Abigail's attachment for their origins and achievements there. When she leaved her new Braintree home and farm, Abigail traveled to New York. She served as the wife of the vice- President for eight years (1789-1797) and that of a president for the following four years (1797-1801). When she arrived there, she quickly had been appreciated by Mrs. Washington and became her friend.

The two families built a strong friendship, when living in Virginia planter society. Both Abigail and Mrs. Washington was preoccupied by the social and the political affairs. President Washington and his wife set the basis for the social structure of the early American Republic. Martha Washington was from Southern Aristocracy and Abigail from the middle class puritan family. Though the two ladies come from two different social statuses and cultures, but both of them forged a strong friendship and Abigail considered Marta as her guide. She confirms in a letter to Adams:

Remember me to Mrs. Washington most affectionately. I respect and look love that good lady. You have never said a word about his lady. I presume you have exchanged visits.

In the miniseries, Abigail keeps advising Adams and in one shot of the fifth episode, she warned him against Jefferson, who changed during his years in Europe. She says: "you must be careful, John I find him much changed". She seemed protecting Adams and at the same time deceived by Jefferson's change. We can deduce that Abigail understood her husband's feelings, was aware of what is happening inside Washington's government and between the Federalists and Conservatives.

### **III-2- Abigail as an Intelligent Political Adviser:**

Along the seven episodes, Abigail was depicted as having a great knowledge in politics. Hooper shows her expressing her opinion about judicial and political situations, upon which she often agrees with her husband. According to David McCullough, Abigail was more than a simple woman and wife:

The good lady his wife has been often talkative in similar strain and she is as complete a politics, while direct proof of Abigail's influence in lacking their relationship warrants conjecture that Abigail did provide her husband political advice when he was in need. (David McCullough, 2001: 76).

The miniseries depicts Abigail as being curious about the political events, the strategies of Adams's members of the Cabinet and deployed as Adams's political equal. In another scene, her observations of the conflicts, which lead to the separation between the south and the north and between the Federalists and the Republicans, proves her objective analysis of the political issues. During the spring of 1792, she noted that the Southern anti-Federalist members of Congress were opposing the Secretary of State Hamilton. From the following part of her letter, Abigail is assessing the political, the social and the cultural environment and helped Adams to take many effective decisions. She wrote:

The secretary of state and even the president have not escaped. I firmly believe if I live Ten Years longer, I shall see a division of the southern and the northern states, unless more candor and less intrigue of which I have no hopes, should prevail (Abigail to Adams, Massachusetts, 1792).

After the inauguration of Adams as a President of the United States, Abigail became his closest confidant and informant. Hooper depicts her never imposing her point of views but was an influential woman, who shares all the details of Adams's political works. The last episodes represent Abigail as an intelligent politician and loving wife, who respects both her private and political life with Adams. Born in a period when women were second to men, Abigail is represented as a heroine daring to challenge the popular opinions and traditions of the past, when women are only destined to be house wives keepers. She is a free and a strong

woman and stands for the emancipated women. By criticizing the patriarchal society, she says: “Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could”. Abigail is represented as an enlightened woman and Adams as an open-minded man, who granted Abigail an unlimited liberty in decisions. One can deduce that both of them are a perfect complementary couple bound by strong marriage principles and a mutual respect.

### **III-3-Abigail as Adams’s Trusted Confident Friend and Adams as a Devoted Comprehensive Husband:**

As in all concrete marriages, a husband and a wife support each other and shared secrets. In the miniseries Abigail is represented as a good adviser; she was more than a wife; she was a trusted friend and consultant for Adams. She was able to express her political opinion during the Revolution and after it. In one scene of the sixth episode, there was the appearance of an article in the Boston Newspaper, in 1789 by Alexander Hamilton. He suggests and accuses that the Vice-President John Adams is succumbing to pride, vanity and malicious intent. This scene shows Abigail’s anger and defense for her husband. She is telling him that Hamilton hadn’t the right to do this. This shows Abigail’s consideration for Adams. Another example of Abigail and Adams’s good relationship and confidence is in the fifth episode, where Adams told Abigail that Washington will retire from the office. This shot expresses their sadness on the matter and their great consideration for Washington. Abigail’s wonder about Thomas Jefferson’s opposition to Adams, in the next election proves her involvement in the political affairs. She knows that it will be a hard task for the next president to bear the important political responsibility, for which Washington sets its basis. Abigail confirms:

To relinquish the presidency after two terms when he could’ve served for the rest of his life George Washington is an extraordinary man...whoever follows General Washington inherit a devilish load...Will Thomas oppose you? (Tom Hooper, Fifth Episode: 5 minutes).

In the above shot, Abigail supports her husband's decisions of being against War with France and approves Adams's measures to protect the country. Adams continued to write to his confident about politics, knowing that his wife understood what happened in the field as any political advisor and that her piece of advice are valuable. Hooper wants to show that it is difficult to write during his presidency, because he was so busy, but always finds time to tell Abigail the news. In one of his letters, he informed her about what happened in the office:

I don't like the president as a correspondent half as well as the Vice-President. Now don't be alarmed. I mean only your honor, you used to write me much more freely then, now if you chance to say anything, I am left in a wide field of conjecture, as for instance, judge Cushing had a visit in Delaware from Mr. John Dickenson. I know you will reply that it is not proper for you to write freely and that you have so many perplexities you can scarcely write at all, but that you know cannot prevent my curiosity (Adams to Abigail, 5 January, 1796)

From this excerpt of letter, we understand how he missed Abigail's letters and feel lost without her pieces of advice. Another point that proves Abigail's knowledge of politics is her belonging to the Federalist's party and Adams's decisions sharing. The following part of his letters is the best example:

..Since my nomination of Murray I have been advised by some to name my son John...Rivalries have been irritated to madness and Federalists have merited the Sedition law and Cobbet the Alien Bill, I will not take revenge. I don't remember that I was ever vindictive ... (Adams to Abigail 5 January, 1797)

Adams preferred to take the above decision by advising Abigail. This proves his great consideration and respect for her opinions. In her turn, Abigail understood and encouraged him by her ideas and suggestions. Hooper shows her with high intellectual capacities that allow her to understand all the political matters of that time. The director intends to prove that the American history had known ideal women. One day, her son Thomas wrote about his father's political strategies, in a form of a story. In this amazing story, he informed her that a group of men on ship in Boston were speaking of possible peace with France. Being informed about all what happened in politics and War, she supported her husband's decisions to plan



peace with France and even advised him to apply the strategy of appointing Murry as an ambassador, to avoid War. Thomas Adams claimed:

With the appointment of Mr. Minister Plenipo to France, a measure which had astonished all the Federalists; and was a subject of great speculation in Boston. Soon after, Thomas...got a good story in Boston. Some of the feds who did not like being taken so by surprise, said they wish the old woman had been there; y didn't believe it would have taken place this was pretty sausy, but the old women can tell them they are mistaken, for she considers the measure as a master had been feeling through that minister for a long time. Besides the appointment shows that the disposition of Government is still pacific and puts to the test the sincerity of the directory...It is a measure, which strikes in the head Jacobinism. It came as unexpected to them, as to the Federalists (Thomas Adams to Abigail Adams, 14 March, 1796).

As far as Abigail's support for her husband after his retirement in the seventh episode *Peacefield* is concerned, she is represented as Adams's companion all along the end of their lives, when they returned to their farm and lived far from the political atmosphere. In one shot, she encourages him to write his autobiography and correct people's misjudgments about his character and political aims. In another they support each other when Nabby died by a cancer, which left them broken and sad. In another scene, Abigail is taking care of her husband, when he hurts himself during his farming days. Hooper shows that Adams in his mid sixties becomes nervous on the one hand. On the other hand, the director wants to expose the qualities of a good wife, by representing Abigail as a careful and patient woman. She understands her husband's anger against people's lack of consideration for his decisions.

This shot captivates our attention, because we feel directly Adams's sadness to the fact that Jefferson, Franklin and Washington are recognized by people. The director represents his autobiography's first pages. Psychologically, Abigail manages to reassure and convince him to take his pen and correct people's misrepresentations and misunderstandings of his political intentions. She also expresses her disappointment about Jefferson, who hurts them so much during the election of the 1800. She was determined that "he has no place in her heart as a friend". The Director represents Abigail as a good example of women, who love and support their husbands. Mrs. Adams was a wife, a friend and a confident for Adams. She

stands and embodied all the values of the Eighteenth Century American women, who devoted their lives for their families and country. Adams and Abigail exchange the following conversation in the seventh episode:

Abigail: "...there is a letter for you from John Quincy...I should think you would be happy to receive a letter from your son with news from Washington city ...I thought you would find great relief...in having to fill your own days. Why don't you pick up your pen and correct people's misimpressions?" John replied: "Hopeless! No, no the essence of our Revolution will be that Dr. Franklin smote the earth with his electrical road and out sprang Washington and Jefferson that they together conducted all the policy negotiation legislation and war" Abigail: "Mr. Jefferson did you great harm, John I remember the place in my heart where Thomas once sat, that place is now empty at least he is not the Revolutionary we forget" John: "now he is expanding our territories by brokering a deal with Napoleon, huh? I do not need to justify myself on paper, beside posterity will judge as she sees fit" (Tom Hooper, Seventh Episode: 4 minutes).

At the end of the seventh episode, Abigail is telling Sally that the old age is hard to support and often was despaired by the absence of Adams, as a young Woman. This is a proof of their strong relation, in the difficult moments. The shot represents Abigail's fifty four years of marriage. From this long period of marriage, the film shows that their love, support and respect for each other's liberty and professional career, which are the basis of a successful marriage. Hooper uses them as a perfect couple, both in terms of duties and rights.

Adams doesn't accept Abigail's death and he admitted to his son John Quincy that he missed her company. In another scene, John Quincy speaks about politics but his father's mind is gone. It stands for the importance of Abigail in Adams's life. He told Quincy: "your mother was always my most faithful advisor and the Wisest". In another shot just after the death of Abigail, Adams is represented as a very sad man; he could not support their separation and wishes to die. He confesses to Thomas Jefferson:

I wish I could lie down with her and die too. I can't conceive that god would create such a creature as her to simply live and die on the earth. The longer I live...The more I read the more patiently. I think, the more anxiously I inquire, the less I seem to know... (Tom Hooper, Seventh Episode: 4 minutes).

From this quotation, one can understand Adams's love for Abigail. Adams's sadness and faithfulness, devotion and love, which normally any husband should feel towards his wife, are

used by the director as symbols of the eighteenth century husband and wife relationship. Both of them are irreplaceable nowadays. They embodied the Americans' social, cultural values, history and identity. Both of them are an example of a unique and perfect couple that modern couples shall follow. Through their representation, Hooper wants to restore the old marriage values.

## **Conclusion**

Adams was adamant about the things in which he believed. We see this in the consistency of his thought from the years surrounding the American Revolution up to his Vice-Presidency and Presidency, and in between, his reaction to the French Revolution. This stubbornness was based in his own well-placed intellectual confidence and, ultimately, in a deep commitment to what he believed to be the public good. In a perfect summary of the controversial thinker, Morgan writes, "Adams was ridiculously vain, absurdly jealous, and embarrassingly hungry for compliments. But no man ever served his country more selflessly. His own self-pitying, self-righteous affirmations of this fact should not be allowed to obscure its veracity."

In analyzing his vision of the executive, though, we find a puzzling question: What would prevent the executive from abusing his power? Charles Francis Adams, editor of *Works*, addressed this issue directly and in detail. And indeed, in *Thoughts on Government*, Adams explained that if the president's term is limited, and he is subject to re-election, he would not dare do things that oppose the interest of the people. He would in theory be elected which is based on merit, and would maintain allegiance to the people, using his wisdom to mediate between the opposing factions of society, as represented by the lower and upper house of Congress. We've seen, though, that Adams was not as confident in the elective process as he may have publically appeared, especially during this phase in American history. Thus, we think he hoped for something that went beyond ordinary merit; ideally, a president

would represent the top tier of intellect and morality, and these traits would allow him to rule efficiently. Alexander Hamilton, often associated with the same conservative philosophy change theorists associate with an older Adams, expressed his concern with the elective process at the Constitutional Convention of 1787, as we pointed out in the previous chapter, writing in the notes for his speech, “The monarch must have proportional strength. He ought to be hereditary, and to have so much power, that it will not be his interest to risk much to acquire more.” Though Adams found elections risky, because of society’s fickleness and vulnerability to manipulation by demagogues, he did, at least publically, assert that it was unnecessary component of any government whose goal was to promote and maintain happiness in a free society. And he had enough faith in the decisions of the people and an educated populace, ideally to trust a system of election based on merit.

Adams is represented as a good Minister in Britain, a Convincing Vice-President and a peaceful modest President. Contrary to the fame of Franklin and his adoption of the French aristocracy, Adams had no admiration for the French way of life. In contrast to Jefferson’s excess faith in people, Adams believe in a balanced central government, where there is checks and balances and allow people participation. In addition, Adams faces the crises with France by maintaining peace, what Washington didn’t succeed to achieve and retire from the office.

Adams resisted to the greed of Hamilton, who wants more power and an empire. Who can be as this sincere and virtuous Adams today? Who will dare to put his reputation in danger for the welfare of people and his nation? What makes a good citizen? Americans today place less importance on some measures of citizenship than in the past and the miniseries remind them about this value.

A large part of the miniseries is also devoted to the relationships between Adams, Franklin, Washington, Hamilton, and Jefferson. The personal stories interpreted into the political action are meant to reveal Adams’s character and his principals. Tom Hanks Hooper

and Kirk Ellis emphasis of history allows their characters to involve the audience through events. One can conclude that there is a great debate between the Founders over the interpretation of many events such as the French Revolution. Hamilton sees it as a violent social change, whereas Jefferson sees it as the chaotic advance of liberty. At the end Washington Administration (which included Adams, Hamilton and Jefferson) conclude that the French Revolution may spread violence throughout Europe, drawing other nations such as America into a Worldwide War. Despite their disagreement about implementing the policy of peace, they agreed that the United States should stay neutral towards the French Revolution.

Indeed, in portraying the Founders' attitudes towards the French Revolution, Hooper wants to depict the United States' attempts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its negotiations about the Iranian nuclear production and its involvement in the recent Arab civil Revolutions called the *Arab Spring*. Whatever the conflict, the Founders succeed to take effective decision either by neutrality or action. History repeat itself, in the First World War, America isolated itself from the rest of the world to protect its interests. No one can know the real objectives of today American leaders, sometimes they seem incapable of solving the above issues and in others they adopt the policy of neutrality. Its military and economic capacities allow America to solve these issues, but few things are done. Why? This question will perhaps be asked by millions of Americans and hundreds of nations today.

The above analysis shows that in the late 18th century, Western governments were led by men who probably couldn't imagine women participating for any elected office or lead alone the presidency. Abigail Adams was a head of her time, in her advocacy for the inclusion of women in politics. "Remember the ladies", she wrote to her husband, the revolutionary leader John Adams, in March 1776, when he was a delegate to the Continental Congress. She

urged him to consider the women's rights and believed that it will lead to the American independence by claiming "Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could". She adds:

If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation (Tom Hooper, Second Episode: 2 minutes).

Abigail Adams became the first lady when her husband succeeded George Washington as president in 1797. She stood for today's American women political position. Between Abigail Adams's letter and the 2008 campaign of Hillary Rodham Clinton, the first politically female candidate for presidency, the new generations of American women overcame stereotypes and broke down barriers to be elected in office. In 1887, Susanna Madora Salter was elected Governor of Argonia, Kansas, becoming the first female U.S. Few weeks after in Kansas, women earned voting rights. In June 2008, former first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton became a USA's Senator from New York. She Says:

Think how much progress we've already made," Clinton tells her supporters. "... From now on it will be unremarkable for a woman to win primary state victories, unremarkable to have a woman in a close race to be our nominee, unremarkable to think that a woman can be the president of the United States (Hillary Clinton, 2008).

Hooper represents Abigail and Adams as perfect example of marriage and parents. She said to Sally, the wife of Charles that "there were times as a young woman when I despaired even having Mr. Adams besides me now...We have been together longer than we were ever apart..." (Hooper, 2008). They complete each other, educated their children, supported the hardships of the American Revolution and contributed in the creation of a new nation.

What can be said about Adams is that he was not the *conservative outlier* that some have claimed him to be. It is more correct to say that he was more explicit, persistent and scholarly in advocating for an executive, whether in America or abroad. He was independent and powerful, both during the revolution and in the decades afterwards.

We may deduce that he could rid himself of idleness, the search for fame and his unyielding ambition. We have argued that Adams would come to see his own vanity as innocuous to his ability to devote himself to what he saw as, “ultimately, a life of service in the political world”. He believed that the ability to evade the effects of the same passion that lay in every man was the sole distinguishing factor between those capable of fulfilling the role of executive chief, perhaps the most esteemed position in the land, and the rest of society. It is this quality in Adams that has only recently been expounded and lauded by historians, but we believe Adams knew and very few others possessed.

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# General Conclusion



## General Conclusion

Historical and Biopic films have troubled and disturbed historians since the early days of filmmaking. Despite this, film has become a crucial medium in shaping the collective memory and national identities. Filmmakers' historical interpretations have played an influential and an informative role in the audience's awareness about the past. The visual reconstruction of any given historical period tends to enter consciousness through a given period's collective values. Furthermore, technology developments make history appear more realistic than "authentic" photographs. Apart from its being an influential cultural artifact to denounce the current issues, Tom Hooper's miniseries *John Adams* portray Adams's life and praises the American Revolution.

Therefore, the present dissertation is an attempt to relate Adams's life representation in Tom Hooper's miniseries and Adams's life writings to the historical atmosphere and discourses that surrounded their production. The title, *The Representation of President John Adams in Tom Hooper's Miniseries and Adams's Life Writings: A Comparison with the Cultural Figures of his Time* shows that the common points between these materials are their being neither about Adams's nor for the benefit of the later. However, Adams's life is instrumentalized by the American film industry to express the values of the mainstream American culture across different periods of history.

The study of Hooper's miniseries on John Adams and the letter's biography stresses Adams's strong republicanism. As John Dickinson claims the form of government that the Americans chose to live under raised no controversy: "we knew that the people of their country must unite under some form of government and that this could be no other than the Republican form". In American political thought, republicanism as Marry Beth Norton et.al argues is into three main strands. The first strand of republicanism was defended mostly by the educated elite and was inspired directly by ancient history and political theory. Two

variety of republicanism based on two firm beliefs, that the republic should be small in size and homogenous in terms of population in order to be viable; and that the citizens of the republic must be endowed with a sense for self-sacrifice for the common good. Unless then, two principles observed the republic will inevitably collapse. The government of such republic society is to be put in the hands of a natural “aristocracy” of men or meritocracy not upon merit due to inherited wealth as status.

It is with this form of republicanism that the miniseries associate John Adams. The later is portrayed as a self-made man, a man who rode from the position of farmer’s son to become the second President John Adams representing in short, the natural aristocracy, who sacrifices their own private interests for the good of the new republic. His statesmanship surpasses that of his contemporaries. As noted all through this dissertation, Adams talks himself for the Roman orator Cicero by using his eloquence on behalf of the republic. Adams’s eloquence in other words is deployed to construct the new nation on lasting virtues such as honesty, sobriety, self-sacrifice, industry....

Adams’s republicanism is contrasted in the miniseries with two other types of republicanism that he dismisses as being non-viable. The first one is a republicanism that is based on economic self-interest. It has its foundation in Adams’s theory that makes the public good a derivative from the pursuit of rational self-interests. In other words, the quest for personal material improvement can be the basis for national wealth. In the miniseries, it is Benjamin Franklin and to some extent Jefferson, who embody this second form of republicanism. It is shown that the quest for personal enrichment does not lead to the supposed communal ideal. On the contrary, it results in the corruption of the very ideals that their ventures want to reach. It follows that Hooper’s positive portrayal of the political republicanism embodied by John Adams is meant as a critique of the economic republicanism of present-day America. This economic republicanism explains to a large measure the anti-

democratic impulses of contemporary America and the corruption of its ideals. By rehabilitating John Adams, the miniseries director in a way rehabilitates one of the foundations of the American republic.

In the John Adams's portrayal, Hooper also draws attention to conservative strain in his hero's character. Adams's initial opposition to the mob calling for the summary execution of the British soldiers, who had shot American citizens at the beginning of the miniseries shows that he was against popular republicanism, the third form or strand of American republicanism, defended by Thomas Paine during the American Revolution. Popular republicanism even if it is the most egalitarian of the three forms of republican government is also the most dangerous in terms of political activity since it lacks an educational basis. In short, for Hooper and Adams, the republic still needs enlightened political figures to lead the nation. But these enlightened figures must issue from plebian stock, in order to be able to speak for the people as a whole.

The different portrayals vary in their motivation regarding Adams's image. What messages mainstream society choose to tell reveal Adams's character that has a strong influence in the American mainstream culture. They followed two extremes and either deployed as a critical metaphor or as an epitome of American wholesome conservative and republicanism values. The first set of values in the miniseries while the second set in spelled out in Adams's life writings. These portrayals of Adams's and the American Republic in the biopic may be entertainment, but they also represent the American past values and rose the audience wondering about the Founding Fathers' true values.

Adams's political philosophy is unusual in its complexity, because he was deeply influenced by the English Constitution. It was informed by his vision of man's nature and a combination of the rational. We now know that Adams believed in the necessity of an active, powerful executive to check the actions of the bicameral legislative body. Though he became

most bold and explicit about this, when he felt social and political circumstance demanded his vision of mixed government was developed in his years as a revolutionary. In his large body of writings, though, both published and unpublished, Adams rarely addressed the issue of the monarch or executive's ability to evade the sins inherent in mankind and "the passion to dominate his fellow man and to control and accumulate power". In other words, if man is naturally inclined to self-interest and domination of others, what would prevent the executive and the passionate from abusing his power? And, most prominent, we have seen that the latter were based on an understanding of man's nature rooted in the Puritan culture of the Massachusetts colony.

Therefore, we don't think that Adams would have ruled out the possibility of lifetime appointments for a qualified executive, as long as good behavior endured. He would not have supported a hereditary king, as many of his enemies and some historians assert. This accusation undermines what we believe to be the most crucial aspect of Adams's feelings about both the monarch and executive. He believed that they should be men of rare intelligence and generosity, that is, of ultimate merit. It was his own intelligence, he believed, that prevented his ambition from impeding his life of service to his own. Whether or not Adams believed that an executive, who held his position for life would be less corrupt than one who had to be reelected, Adams was not blinded by the same "Old World" naivety, many of his countrymen fell victim to. Adams argued that the American executive, like the monarchs, is endowed thanks to the people with extraordinary charismatic qualities, that the great powers given to. The American presidents were really based on old beliefs about the divinely ordained power and wisdom of the monarch country. What Adams idealized was the platonic philosopher-king. Therefore, he was devoted to meritocracy, yet he believed man's vanity and ambition were universal.

The miniseries teaches us Adams's own recognition of his ambitious nature, his vanity, and his drive for distinction, but he was confident in his own ability to overcome, or at least suppress these qualities through strength of character. It was this ability, he believed, which would allow him to rule his country selflessly. Adams was adamant about the things in which he believed. The miniseries represent the consistency of his thought from the years surrounding the American Revolution up to his Vice-Presidency and Presidency, and in between, his reaction to the French Revolution. This stubbornness was based in his own intellectual confidence and, ultimately, in a deep commitment to what he believed to be the public good.

By implementing the biographical and the New Historicism approach, we reach the results that Adams's representation as a student Teacher, Lawyer, Delegate, Ambassador, minister, Vice-President, President, husband and father has something to do with the Americans' past values and identity. Therefore, Tom Hooper and Kirk Ellis used Adams as an American historical artifact to understand and interpret the contemporary social, economic and political issues such as family values, education, nationalism, leadership, foreign policy, the cause of liberty and human rights...etc. The portrayal of Adams as a responsible, wise, honest, sincere, convincing and peaceful man and the use of the above approaches have something to do on the one hand, with our aims and Adams's readers and viewer. On the other hand, these images are related to the American historical heritage, cultural memory and identity. In addition to the rehabilitation of Adams as a major figure of the American history, the director wants to plant in the viewer's mind the above images.

The research proves that throughout his successes as well as his mistakes, Adams aimed to build a strong nation based on liberty and justice and played an important role in the American history. He never hides and keeps his opinions, thoughts and aims for himself. In other words, either by written or oral language, he succeeded to manifest his thought in

public. As a result, the fact of reproducing history and life by combining historical documents (life writings) and visual means (the miniseries) make our perception and interpretation of Adams's life and the American history as an audience first and a researcher second, more accurate and reliable.

John Adams was an example of the eighteenth-century leaders vulnerable to criticism. Contrary to Washington, Jefferson, Franklin and Hamilton, who had been already popular, Adams was not. The miniseries show Adams as being behind the most important political decisions and suffering misjudgment and even humiliations, without diminishing his faith in the new nation. According to his life-writings and autobiography, he suffered psychologically from not being recognized as an important Founder, knowing that his achievements will never be mentioned. Adams's comparison with Jefferson, Washington, Franklin and Hamilton in the first chapter reveals that contrary to the cited Founders' good appearance, Adams is not caring about his physical beauty, because he is preoccupied by supplementing the revolution with money, thought and strategies. He is a man of law and a direful one and the miniseries show him the most active Founder, during the First and the Second Continental Congress.

In the second chapter the comparison is around policy, presidency and retirement. Contrary Hamilton, Adams was against war with France and was neutral towards the Federalists and the Republican. Despite his contact with the European culture, Adams was not attracted by wealth and fame as Franklin. In addition, he didn't believe much in people as Jefferson and didn't retire from the office as Washington. However their differences, all of them had the same aim that of forming a strong nation with a powerful government, based on liberty and justice and they and to be neutral towards the French Revolution.

Though John Adams is rightly seen as one of the most active proponents of the American drive towards independence in the 1770s, he was also a staunch opponent of another revolutionary movement, the French Revolution of the 1790s. It has been difficult for

scholars to reconcile the “radical” Adams of the 1760s with the apparently “conservative” and wary Adams of the 1790s. Historians have generally taken one of two approaches. Some argue that he underwent a deep and fundamental shift in political philosophy in the 1780s in reaction to a number of political developments in Europe and America. Others contend that he did not change significantly during this period but maintained his previous positions, but they have tended to provide little support for this position with examples from Adams’s own writing. He held a consistent set of political beliefs, deeply rooted in the Puritan tradition, which formed his reaction to many events, including independence movement in America and the Revolution in France, two decades later.

Adams’s political philosophy is unusual in its complexity. Though it was not radically innovative, since he was deeply influenced by the “constitution” of England, it was thoroughly informed by his vision of man’s nature a combination of the rational and the passionate. We have seen its nuances, some subtleties expressed more avidly at certain points in his life than at other times, and its pillars, which bent little from the American Revolution to the French Revolution. Most prominently, we have deduced that the latter were based on an understanding of man’s nature rooted in the Puritan culture of the Massachusetts colony. There are still questions to be answered. In the details of Adams’s early conjectures on the universality of sinfulness and the structures of government essential in curtailing unchecked ambition lies a baffling and important issue. We now know that Adams believed in the necessity of an active, powerful executive to check the actions of the bicameral legislative body.

Furthermore, from the beginning to the end of this paper, we have seen the image of a man full of passion, love for his country and his intellectual abilities and his writings revealed this fact. In his *Defense of the Constitution and the Government of the United States of America* and his *Discourse on Davila*, he described the ancient European Aristocratic life and

believed that the ancient regimes will not work in Democracy. According to him, “Democracy is an ideology and power is an illusion” that a person pretend to occupy. Today the United States and the majority of countries have parties and each one wants to be the powerful one. We are living in a world, where there is little trust between the leaders and their people. Therefore, Adams is revealed in his writings as a moralist, a sociologist and an interpreter of politics. His experience and knowledge allow him to criticize philosophers and even painters. As a result, his critics can be valid today and contrary to the other Founders; he saw the danger behind destructing the old republic. He has understood as an ambassador the unity of regimes such as monarchy, aristocracy and the importance of diplomacy in foreign affairs, as a president he saw the importance of peace and tranquility in his country in particular and in the world in general.

Likewise, the miniseries shows him as a man who preserved the American classical ideals by being aware of the modern issues such as individual egotism, the divergence between classes and the destruction of the relation that rose between men, groups and nations. Adams last years were lamentations about the changes that occur in American life the past deployed in the scenes, which represented Adams and Jefferson’s letters, prove that as Jefferson, he couldn’t accept the new generation way of governing and life. But he understood the changes and by his use of the past. He criticized the representation of history, when looking the painting about the Declaration of Independence, by claiming that “it is a very bad history”.

Both his writings and the miniseries represent Adams’s passion, which some scholars consider as the cause of his unpopularity. This quality is what make him an interesting subject of study and the research proved that both his writings and the miniseries are a bridge between the present and the past and has something to do with the Americans’ identities and values. Americans today feel the need to understand their past in order to fellow or reject their



leaders' domestic and foreign policies. Consequently, Tom Hooper as a director and Josef Ellis as a script writer tried to reconstruct an emotional and a historical experience of early America, from the Boston Massacre in 1770 until the death of both Adams and Jefferson, in July 4<sup>th</sup> 1826. By representing America as a world different from the contemporary one, both of them raise the audience's wonder about this perfect past made by virtuous men. This allows Americans to identify themselves to their Founders' principles; their identities are as Greenblatt says to *self-refashioned* (reconstruct). Or to be defamiliarise from their identities completely and questioned their country's domestic and foreign policies, since they are aware about today's political changes, which occurred in the United States, in particular and in the world in general,

To more understand Adams's life, we have analyzed the representation of his wife, Abigail and her role in his political decisions. Without her devotion and advice, Adams would never succeed in his mission as a lawyer, an ambassador, a Vice-President and a president. As a woman, Abigail expressed her opinion in every matter, which many didn't do at that time. Either by letters or by her presence, she was there to support her husband. Through this chapter, Adams is represented as a devoted husband and father, being with such intelligent and affectionate wife, both of them make all their best to supply their children and each other with the necessary support and affection. One may consider them as a perfect couple and an example of a successful marriage.

Furthermore, the seven episodes represent the history and the cultural memory of the American nation. It praised John Adams's life and achievement and represent him as an active element in the construction of a new Republic. By depicting the past and people's life, the miniseries and Adams's writings interpret that past, through a modern context, that of the political atmosphere of the 2000s. Today, America's success in reshaping the international system to protect freedom and human rights will depend on how its leaders implement their

policies. Therefore, the international political, legal, and economic institutions are transformed in ways that do not affect free and democratic nations with tyranny and civil wars.

Indeed, both Adams's writings and Tom Hank Hooper's miniseries *John Adams* (2008) illuminates the human aspect of the American Revolution, the personal and the political aims and the Founders' lives. Adams and Abigail were not icons but creatures of flesh and blood and one of the greatest accomplishments of the miniseries is to restore them their value and humanity. Adams is used by the director as a standard against which he measured today's American issues and as a mean of raising the audience's wonder about the *other* (past) to better understand their *self* (present). Therefore, he urged them to remember and question their lost American dreams, their values and identities. He wants to argue that history taught through *Biopics* play an important role in developing the Americans' personal, national, and international identity. The American governments are using history and Hollywood as an instrument for promoting nationalism and encouraging the younger generation to advancement. The *historical* films are thus never just about one time and Tom Hooper's miniseries don't offer a linear chronological time but a cyclical one in which a past leads inevitably to the present and where the future emerges predictably out of the present. The makers of *John Adams* (2008) therefore mean many presents (contexts) and futures and they provide the viewers with an understanding of the relations of past and present, by enabling them to have a good and strong collective memory and unique identity.

Finally, the implementation of Biography and New Historicism approaches can be beneficial for further perspective and studies. Adams's life is used to develop knowledge about the American policies and issues, in particular and those of the world in general. The materials examined the importance of historical films and life-writings which makes the reader of this simple works think about new studies. But, due to the limited corpus of the

study and its restriction to the American Revolution, farther researches on president's life-writings and representation in other countries' Revolutions are palanified.

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# Résumé de la Thèse en Français



### **Résumé en Français:**

Cette thèse étudie la représentation du président John Adams dans la minisérie de Tom Hooper *John Adams* et dans ses écrits de vie ainsi que les lettres. Il explique pourquoi Hooper cherche à réhabiliter John Adams dans le contexte de l'attaque terroriste des États-Unis en Septembre 11, 2001. Suite à une approche historique, quatre principaux résultats sont atteints. Un, John Adams représente un républicanisme politique, que l'Amérique moderne semble avoir oublié. Ce républicanisme politique s'oppose à la fois au républicanisme économique et au républicanisme populaire, qui sont utilisés plus de nos jours en Amérique. Deux, John Adams est représenté comme un homme indépendant dont l'histoire de succès est bâtie sur des idéaux élevés plutôt que le matérialisme. Son association avec le rêve américain est conçue comme une critique de la version économique importante de l'Amérique contemporaine. Trois, John Adams et sa femme Abigail illustrent les relations entre les sexes fondées sur l'égalité et non la subordination. Dans un sens, la représentation des Adamses est traitée comme une critique à la famille Bush comme un autre exemple de la famille présidentielle américaine. Quatre, la minisérie montre une forte croyance dans la politique et la diplomatie pour résoudre des problèmes nationaux et internationaux.

John Adams est dépeint comme un politicien avec un profil de la loi. Son leadership n'est pas autoritaire, car il est marqué par la délégation de pouvoir. Quatre, Adams est utilisé pour réhabiliter la Nouvelle Angleterre et se déplacer en particulier vers la Massachusetts comme un centre de la politique américaine. Grâce à Adams, c'est la Révolution américaine que Tom Hooper remonte à, pour célébrer les idéaux américains. Cinq, la politique d'Adams est décrite comme étant non-partisane. Ceci constitue une antiquité indirecte de la politique de l'impartialité de l'Amérique contemporaine.

# Appendices

# Appendices

## The Analyzed Scenes

### I-Before the Revolution:

#### Episode One: Adams the Lawyer and the Defender of Liberty



01: Adams on his horseback.



02: Adams during the Boston Massacre with Samuel. A.



03: Adams telling Abigail about the Massacre.



04: An American who supported the British soldiers.



05: Adams's hesitation to take the case.



06: Abigail encouraging him to defend the soldiers.



07: Adams speaking with the British soldiers



08: Adams during the trial.



09: Samuel Adams's manifestation.



10: Adams looking at the drawing about the massacre.



11-12: Adams shouting when proving that the soldiers were not guilty.



13: Abigail, the only women in the court.



14: Abigail reading Adams's report.



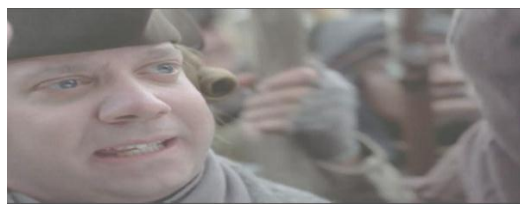
15: Adams proving the soldier's innocence.



16: during the governor's reading of the Stamp Act.



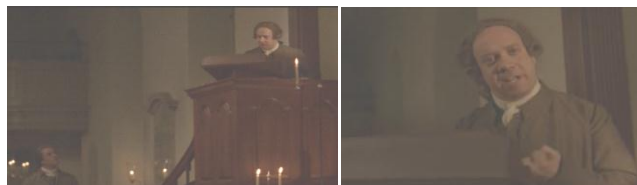
17: Adams angry against the act's content.



18: Adams against the violence in the Tea Party.



19: Abigail's reading of Adams's speech.



20-21: Adams's speech about liberty and freedom.

## Abigail before and during the Revolution:



01: Abigail teaching her children



02: Abigail playing with Charles



03: Abigail taking her children on her arms, they heard the British attack. 04: Abigail and her children look at the attack on Boston.



05: Abigail taking the gun to protect her children. and tells Nabby that they should rely upon themselves.



06: Abigail depressed about the absence of Adams



07: Abigail giving water to the patriots captain.



08: Abigail dinning with the french



09: Abigail receiving Washington in her home and sending letters to Adams. 10: Washington saying that her advices are valuable, both for Adams and the nation.





11: Abigail expressing her fear about the Revolution. 12: Abigail saying to Adams that women and children suffer from this Revolution and she was angry against the congress, which do nothing. She proposes the involvement of women in their meetings.



13: Adams expressing his sadness about the Dead Americans. 14: Abigail advising Adams to convince the congress about Independence.



15-16: Abigail as a farmer during the absence of Adams and telling Nabby that their father wants her to go to France.



17: Abigail and her children during the inoculation against the Small Pox. She was the first to be inoculated.



## II- During the Revolution:

### Episode Two, Three and Four: Adams as Active Delegate in the Continental Congress and a Wise Diplomat to Paris and Holland.



01: The First Continental Congress.



02: The Second Continental Congress.



03: Adams with the delegates of Massachusetts.



04: Adams answering Mr. Dickenson



05: Adams as an ambassador in Paris saying honestly that the French's helps were insufficient.



06: Adams as an ambassador in Holland.



07: Adams asking a loan from the Dutch.



08: The Dutch's Representatives discussing the loan's conditions. 09: Adams receiving the loan.



10: Adams sending his son John Quincy at the age of fourteen, as a Diplomat to Russia. John Quincy obeyed by saying: "I knew my duty father".



11: Adams becoming ill in Holland.

12: Adams kissing the hand of his secretary after telling him about the victory upon the British.

### III- After the Revolution:

#### Episode Five, Six and Seven:

#### Adams as a Wise Minister, a convincing Vice-President and a peaceful President



01: Adams preparing himself to see the king of Britain. 02: Adams as a minister to Great Britain entering the court of Saint James.





03-04: Adams expressing the United States' will of renewing the friendship with Great Britain.



05-06: The king expressing his sadness of losing the States and was happy that Adams was the minister.



07-08: People welcoming Adams, when he came from from Britain



09-10: Adams as a Vice-President presiding over the Senates. William Smith.

11: Adams and his secretary Colonel



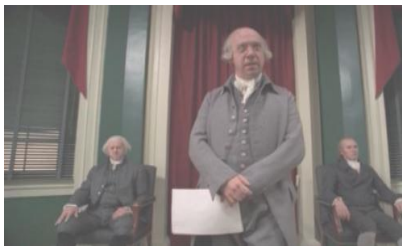
12: Adams and Dr. Rush speaking about the role of a vice-president.13: Dr. Rush is telling Adams that there are rumors, which said that he was elected by corruption.



14: Adams advising his son John Quincy of how to behave as an ambassador. 15: Adams looking at Quincy when he went to Europe with Thomas.



16: Adams looks on how he is represented by Hamilton, in this icon. 17: President Adams arriving at his inauguration.



18: Adams's inaugural speech and inauguration. He says that there should be checks and Balances between the branches of Government.



19: Adams reading the Sedition Act.

20: Colonel William, the husband of Nabby,



21: Adams saying angrily that War with France is never inevitable. 22: Adams reading Hamilton's papers about his character.



23- Adams blaming his son drunkard Charles, but after leaving he cried silently of sadness.



24: Adams leaving the White House in a simple car with ordinary men, after his compain against Jefferson in 1800.

## Adams's Retirement:



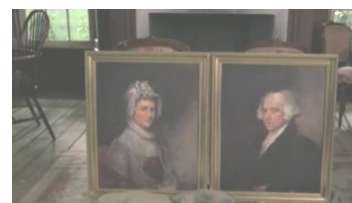
25: Adams as a farmer again, just after his presidency



26: Adams and Abigail hurrying to know their daughter's state after Dr. Ruch examined her cancer.



27: Adams kissing his ill daughter Nabby, after knowing that she will die.



28: Adams looking at his painting and that of Abigail.



29: Adams surrounded by letters writing his autobiography.



30: Adams sadness after the death of Abigail. He tells Thomas that he wishes to die with her.



31: Adams telling president John Quincy that Abigail was a good adviser and telling thomas that he traveled to Europe but he will not change the small flower against the luxury of Europe.



32: Adams, Quincy and the painter of the Declaration of Independence. Adams is telling the painter that it is a very bad history .



33: Adams's death



## **The Comparison:**

### **Adams and Jefferson**

#### **Before the Revolution:**



01: Dilane as Jefferson.



02: Paul Guiamatti as Adams.



03: Jefferson is silent during the Congress.



04: Adams suggesting the alliance with France.



05: Jefferson telling John that he has no gift for oratory.



06: Adams explaining why he couldn't write the Declaration of Independence and asking Jefferson to do it.



07: The drafting of the Declaration of Independence.



08: Adams, Abigail and Jefferson in Paris.



09: Jefferson expressing his faith in people.



10: Adams is detecting Jefferson's intentions of forming a party.

## After the Revolution:



11: The three are looking at the Balloon, which represents the new free United States Nation.



12: Jefferson as a Vice-President to President Adams



13: Adams is walking with Jefferson



14: Adams and Jefferson's conflict began and Adams is telling him that as a vice-President, he didn't support him.



15: Adams writing a letter to Jefferson.



16: Jefferson reading Adams letter



17: Jefferson replying in another letter.



18: Adams reading it.



19: Jefferson's illness and death.



20: Adams' illness and death



21: Jefferson's death. He is surrounded by his slaves and servants.



22- Adams' death. He is surrounded by his family.

## Adams and Washington:

### Before the Revolution



01: Washington during the Continental Congress.



02: Washington when meeting Adams



03: Adams a man of law and politics



04: Adams visit to Washington military camp

### After the Revolution:



01: Adams as a Vice-President with the President Washington



02: The inauguration of Washington



03: Adams crying by Joy of having a president

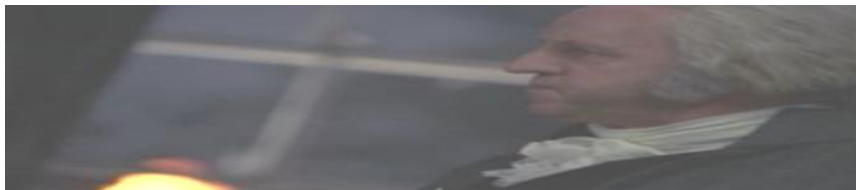


04: Washington asking Adams to leave and call him Mr.

President nothing else. Adams was excluded from Washington's meeting with Hamilton and Jefferson.



05: Washington telling John that he designed his son Quincy as an ambassador. 06: Washington is in conflict with Hamilton and Jefferson and Adams was waiting for him and tries to calm the situation.



07: Washington is announcing to Adams his resignation and outside there is the French demand to participate in the war against Britain, which both Adams and Washington.

## Adams and Franklin:



01: Adams and Dr. Franklin in the Continental Congress.



02: Franklin is blaming Adams about his aggressive words against Mr. Dickenson and that he keep his Opinions for himself





03: Adams and his son Quincy meeting Franklin in Paris,  
a sculpture is making Franklin's face.



04: When they went to see the king Louis.



05: Franklin telling Adams that he was not a man for Paris.



06: Adams, Abigail and Franklin who  
announce that Adams is appointed as a minister to Great Britain by the congress.



07: Franklin asking Adams to distribute USA flags to the French. 08: Adams singing one of the patriotic songs

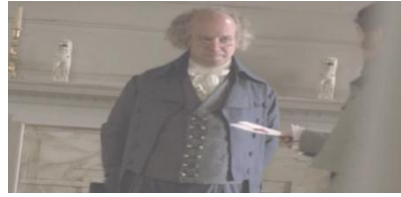


09: Adams when he said: "I must study politics that my sons study..." 10: Franklin blaming Adams's' behavior  
towards the French minister. But Adams says that the French aids are insufficient.



11: Franklin telling Adams that he is always an honest collaborator

## Adams and Hamilton:



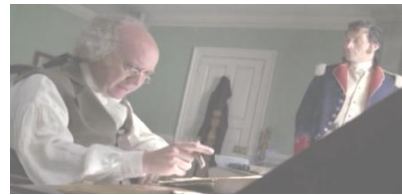
01: Adams receiving Washington's nomination of Hamilton as a General.



02: Washington welcoming Jefferson, who returns from France.

03: Adams tries to settle the conflict between

Hamilton and Jefferson about the National Bank.



04: Hamilton shouting on Adams and want war with France.

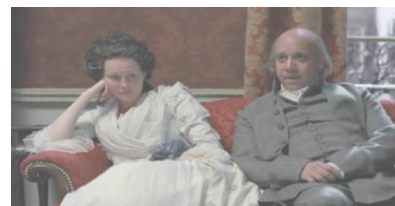
05: Adams was against and he replied that he

dreams of empire.

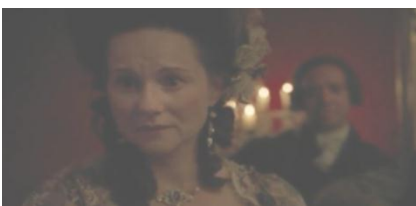
## Abigail Adams After the Revolution:



01: Abigail joining her husband in Paris.



02: Abigail with Adams in Britain



03: Abigail at the opera of Paris.



04: Abigail discussing arts with Jefferson and

admitting that she was transported by the piece of theater.



05: Abigail understands the burden of office on Adams after the resignation of Washington. She is telling him that Washington is an honest and noble man and consoling him when he wins the election.

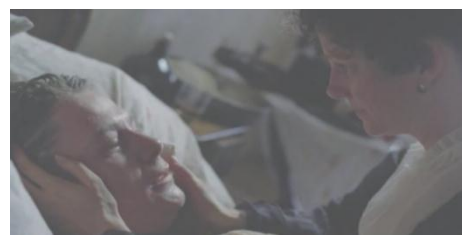


06: Abigail sensible to her daughter's marriage.

07: Abigail trying to make Nabby express her feelings after William left her.



08: Charles' wife Sally is telling Abigail that he became a drinker. 09: Abigail shocked reassures Sally that she will take care of her children.



10: Abigail and Adams disillusionment about their son's behavior.

11: Abigail with Charles, before his death.



12: Abigail taking John Quincy in her arms before he went to Europe.



13: Abigail angry about what Hamilton wrote on Adams. 14: Abigail reading it to Adams



15: Abigail is crying on the death of her son Charles.  
(the First Lady).

16: Abigail arriving with Adams at the White House



17: They look at the slaves with sadness, before entering the White House. 18: Abigail and Adams inside the White House, which is not yet ready to be inhabited.



18: Abigail taking care of Adams after he hurt his feet.

19: Abigail orienting John to take his pen and

correct people's bad judgments on him, but Adams replied that it will be unnecessary.





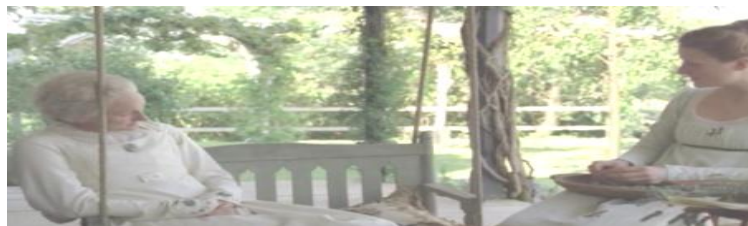
20: Abigail choked about Nabby's illness, which became more dangerous. She is taking her in her arms and seems not accepting the fact that she will die.



21: Adams reassuring Abigail after the death of their daughter Nabby.



22: Abigail as an old women reading and giving advises to Adams about his autobiography.



23: Abigail telling Sally that the family is lucky to have her and that it is the fifty four anniversary of her marriage with Adams.



24: Abigail's death.