

CHILD

ABOMINABLE OFFSPRING

That he, Mr. M—— [i.e., Luther Martin], took every proper and possible step, and employed every suitable weapon to kill and destroy this abominable offspring.

“Grateful,” Baltimore *Maryland Gazette*
15 February 1788 (RCS MD., 318)

BANTLING

Whether the *bantling* would be *black* or *white*, was not to be a matter of *free* discussion with the people, but *they*, forsooth, must at all hazards *adopt* and *foster* the new-born ruler, in whatever *garb* it might come attired.

“Vir.,” Providence *United States Chronicle*
13 December 1787 (RCS R.I., 73)

BRAT

The above mentioned letter, our correspondent asserts, is sufficient of itself, to stifle this brat in the moment of its birth.

New York Morning Post, 11 October 1787 (RCS N.Y., 83)
New Hampshire Spy, 13 October (RCS N.H., 16)

BRAT OF SOME ATTORNEY

From its complexion and features it appears to be the brat of some attorney, who durst not father it himself; therefore procured the old sage to act as sponsor.

“One of the People,” Pa., *Carlisle Gazette*
9 January 1788 (RCS PA., 675)

CHILD

But, great as this was, I say that the adoption of the new constitution is an object of much greater concern. The parents of a child may rejoice at his birth, as a happy circumstance, but his character and conduct in manhood only can give real and permanent pleasure.

“Philadelphensis” III (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Freeman’s Journal*
5 December 1787 (CC 2, 350)

CHILD OF FORTUNE

It is the production of four months deliberation.—It is now a Child of fortune, to be fostered by some and buffeted by others. what will be the General opinion on, or the reception of it, is not for me to, decide, nor shall I say any thing for or against it.

George Washington to the Marquis de Lafayette, Philadelphia
18 September 1787 (RCS VA., 12)



The production of your labours is now a child of fortune to be adopted or rejected by the people, but I hope that their partiality for so promising a child, & the fostering hand of those who gave it birth, will ensure to it a favourable reception.

Tobias Lear to John Langdon, Mount Vernon
19 October 1787 (RCS VA., 80)

CHILD OF INIQUITY AND INFIRMITY

That this child of iniquity and infirmity was begotten by parents the most unjust, despotic, abandoned, profligate and diabolical, the sun ever beheld.

“Grateful,” Baltimore *Maryland Gazette*, 15 February 1788 (RCS MD., 318)

CHILD OF MUTUAL CONCESSIONS

I have no doubt but that you will discover some imperfections in it, but when it is considered that it is the child of mutual concessions between States different in Situation and Interest, and that without some Effi-

cient Government we must shortly be involved in Anarchy that certain road to Despotism.

Bushrod Washington to Robert Carter, Richmond, Va.
4 November 1787 (RCS VA., 143–44)

EMBRYO

I was somewhat mortified on hearing the Proceedings of your Convention—where I placed the greatest Reliance, I have been most disappointed—The Press daily groans with the Labors of producings some deformed Embrio & the Papers teem with wanton & scurrilous Attacks upon the most virtuous & eminent private Characters, whose fault is their Attachment to the standing Welfare of their Country.

William Robinson, Jr. to John Langdon
9 April 1788 (RCS SUPPL. N.H., #72, p. 25)



Yet it is hardly to be supposed, (or rather in my judgment it is irrational to suppose) they will reject a government, which, from an unorganized embrio ready to be stilled with a breath, has now in the maturity of Its birth assumed a confirmed bodily existence.

George Washington to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Mount Vernon
28 June 1788 (RCS N.Y., 1233)

FAVoured BANTLING

The favoured bantling must have passed through the short period of its existence without a name, had not Mr. *Wilson*, in the fertility of his genius, suggested the happy epithet of a *Federal Republic*.

“A Columbian Patriot” (Mercy Otis Warren): *Observations on the Constitution*
Boston, February 1788 (CC 4, 278)

FIRST BORN

The public ear has become deaf to the cries of the distressed, and grow impatient for the christning of the first born.

Roger Alden to Samuel William Johnson, New York
31 December 1787 (RCS N.Y., 483; CC 3, 189)

FOETUS

'Tis not a birth, my dear Sir, 'tis a Foetus only—and you ought to go & help Mid-wife it into existance,—The Mother is in labour—the pangs are convulsive, and unless the most skillful help is at hand She will suffer an abortion.

Samuel Henshaw to Henry Van Schaack, Northampton, Mass.
18 October 1787 (RCS MASS., 100)

GENUINE OFFSPRING OF HEAVEN-BORN LIBERTY

The evil genius of darkness presided at its birth, it came forth under the veil of mystery, its true features being carefully concealed, and every deceptive art has been and is practising to have this spurious brat received as the genuine offspring of heaven-born liberty.

“Centinel” IV (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
30 November 1787 (CC 2, 321)

INFANT

Yet to such a Constitution, so fraught with blessings to our distressed country, have our worthy representatives set themselves in battle array and have come forth in a public address armed with the weapons of hypocrisy and palpable falsehood; and fearing to trust the people with a candid inquiry and discussion, have endeavored to strangle the infant in its birth.

“One of the People,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*
17 October 1787 (RCS PA., 188–89)

LEGITIMATE OFFSPRING

“THE MAJESTY OF THE PEOPLE”—yes, “the majesty of the people” is *insulted* by the proposition to introduce into the federal Legislature, certain *sticklers* for *pretended* amendments. The Constitution in its *present form*, is the Constitution of the people, but *mutilated* or *distorted* by the variations of these *sticklers*, it will no longer be the legitimate offspring of the people, but the creature of an antifederal junto.

Massachusetts Centinel
17 September 1788 (RCS SUPPL. MASS., #935, p. 431)

NEW BIRTH

You ask “what I think of the new birth”—? ’Tis not a birth, my dear Sir, ’tis a Foetus only—and you ought to go & help Mid-wife it into existence.

Samuel Henshaw to Henry Van Schaack, Northampton, Mass.
18 October 1787 (RCS MASS., 100)



A change in our system is unavoidable—every countenance indicates the strongest symptoms of a new birth—and nothing but our own folly and madness can prevent our growing up to manhood, and establishing our empire as on a rock.

Northampton, Mass., *Hampshire Gazette*
31 October 1787 (RCS MASS., 176; CC 1, 516–17)

OFFSPRING

All other nations are more or less in a state of slavery—they owe their constitutions partly to chance and partly to the sword; but that of America is the offspring of their choice—the darling of their bosom; and was there ever an instance in the world, that a people in this situation, possessing all that heaven could give on earth—all that human wisdom and valour could procure—was there ever a people so situated as calmly and deliberately to convene themselves together for the express purpose of considering whether they should give away or retain those inestimable blessings.

James Lincoln, Speech in the S.C. House of Representatives
18 January 1788 (RCS S.C., 156; RCS SUPPL. S.C., #11, p. 46)



When the middle party came to view the offspring which they had given birth to, and in a great measure reared, several of them immediately disowned the child.

“A Farmer” III (Part 2), Baltimore *Maryland Gazette*
18 March 1788 (RCS MD., 389)

OFFSPRING OF THE GENERAL CONVENTION

A more efficacious method to divide & perplex the people could not have been proposed by the Demon of discord, than this offspring of the General Convention.

Draft Preface to a Proposed English Edition of the “Centinel” Essays
December 1788 (RCS N.C., 616)

THE OFFSPRING OF THEIR FOUR MONTHS' DELIBERATIONS

What think you of the Convention now? I am persuaded by this time you would not sign and ratify their productions in the light; altho you was willing to do it in the dark, while in *labor* before they brought forth. We had, it is true, great confidence and high expectations from the characters that composed the Convention. But the offspring of their four months' deliberations is a striking proof of the frailty and imperfections of human nature, and is a suitable lesson to teach us not to put implicit faith and confidence in no man or set of men, for it is the unalienable right of every *freeman* to act and judge for himself, especially in matters of so much consequence as laying the foundation of happiness or misery for thousands yet unborn.

"Extract of a Letter from New York," *Connecticut Courant*
21 January 1788 (RCS SUPPL. CONN., #77, p. 104)

ORPHAN

It goes forth among us in the unprotected situation of an *orphan*, with a modest request to all, entreating, that it may be heard, before it is abused, and examined, before it is condemned.

"Valerius," *Virginia Independent Chronicle*
23 January 1788 (RCS VA., 319)

PRODIGY

A NATION without a NATIONAL GOVERNMENT is, in my view, an awful spectacle. The establishment of a constitution, in time of profound peace, by the voluntary consent of a whole people, is a PRODIGY, to the completion of which I look forward with trembling anxiety.

"Publius" (Alexander Hamilton): *The Federalist* 85
New York, 28 May 1788 (CC 6, 143)

SECOND CHILD

I am no Politician, but to the best of my Judgment it seems as little subject to exceptions as possible and I think the States in general will be wise if they adopt this second Child and disinherit its elder Brother.

Henry Chapman to Stephen Collins, New York
26 September 1787 (RCS N.Y., 54)

SPURIOUS BRAT

The evil genius of darkness presided at its birth, it came forth under the veil of mystery, its true features being carefully concealed, and every deceptive art has been and is practising to have this spurious brat received as the genuine offspring of heaven-born liberty.

“Centinel” IV (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
30 November 1787 (CC 2, 321)

“Deliberator,” Philadelphia *Freeman’s Journal*
26 March 1788 (RCS SUPPL. PA., #568, p. 1103)

AN UNORGANIZED EMBRIO

Yet it is hardly to be supposed, (or rather in my judgment it is irrational to suppose) they will reject a government, which, from an unorganised embrio ready to be stifled with a breath, has now in the maturity of Its birth assumed a confirmed bodily existence.

George Washington to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Mount Vernon
28 June 1788 (CC 6, 208)