

MACHINE/MECHANICAL

BALLOONIAIC CONSTITUTION

Nothing, observes a correspondent, will go so far to prevent the new ballooniatic constitution from succeeding more, than the late discovery of the delinquent states and public defaulters being skreened and protected in the enjoyment of the *millions*, which they owe the public treasury.

Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
6 March 1788 (RCS SUPPL. PA., #494, p. 994)

CASK WELL BOUND WITH HOOPS

Like a stave in a cask well bound with hoops, it stands *firmer*, is not so easily *shaken, bent, or broken*, as it would be were it set up by itself alone, without any connexion with its neighbours.

“A Citizen of Philadelphia” (Pelatiah Webster)
The Weaknesses of Brutus Exposed, 8 November 1787 (CC 2, 71)

CLAY IN THE HANDS OF THE POTTER

Here, sir, it is expressly announced, “We the people of the United States do ordain, constitute, and establish,” and those who can ordain and establish may certainly repeal or annul the work of government, which, in the hands of the people, is like clay in the hands of the potter and may be molded into any shape they please.

James Wilson, Speech in the Pa. Convention
28 November 1787 (RCS PA., 383)

A CONTROULING BALANCE

The New Constitution knits and weaves the States together by a firm and Strong Web but it leaves them so much of Separate Independency as that they Serve as a Controuling Balance.

Theodore Foster to Dwight Foster, Providence, R.I.
17 June 1790 (RCS R.I., 1050)

DESPOTIC INSTRUMENT

Nothing but such a system of conduct can frustrate the machinations of an ambitious junto, who, versed in Machiavelian arts, can varnish over with the semblance of freedom the most despotic instrument of government ever projected.

“Centinel” XIII (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
30 January 1788 (CC 3, 506)

AN ENGINE OF DESPOTISM

Could it have been supposed seven years ago, that, before the wounds received in the late conflict for liberty were scarcely healed, a post master-general and his deputies would have had the daring presumption to convert an establishment intended to promote and secure the public welfare into an engine of despotism.

“Centinel” XVII (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
24 March 1788 (CC 4, 476–77)

ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION

A pretty considerable band consists of those who hold it as the engine of distruction—& never think or speak of it but with detestation and abhorrence—the extremes are certainly erroneous.

George Lee Turberville to Arthur Lee, Richmond, Va.
28 October 1787 (RCS VA., 127)



Having matured my thoughts upon it, confess I am much alarmed, & am prone to think (although it is a production of much *genius*, yet, it demands the closest attention of every friend to our Country; or it may prove an *enjine* of destruction to the liberties, we have been so long [— —] contending for, & at length acquired, at vast espence of blood & treasure.

William Russell to William Fleming, Aspsville, Va.
25 January 1788 (CC 3, 467)

THE EXPERIMENT

The inhabitants of the old world (says a correspondent) have long been looking at America, to see whether liberty and a republican form of

government are worth contending for. The United States are at last about to try the experiment.

Pennsylvania Gazette, 26 September 1787 (CC 1, 253)



Elections, my dear Sir, Elections to Offices which are great objects of Ambition, I look at with terror.—Experiments of this kind have been so often tried, and so universally found productive of Horrors, that there is great Reason to dread them.

John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, London
6 December 1787 (CC 2, 473)



Most liberal authors would dissuade us from so great and dangerous an experiment.

“Alfred,” *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
13 December 1787 (CC 2, 434)



We believe the people of America are capable of arranging the powers of government from a rational conviction of its necessity, and such is our patriotism that we are willing to run the small risk occasioned by our ignorance of future events for the sake of an experiment which, if successful, must greatly advance the dignity of human nature.

“New England: To the Honorable Richard Henry Lee, Esquire”
Connecticut Courant, 24 December 1787 (RCS CONN., 511)



But some say, a free government like this has not energy enough to pervade a country of such vast extent. We are not satisfied with this assertion; we want to try [the] experiment.

Richard Law, Speech in the Connecticut Convention
9 January 1788 (CC 3, 317)



It is said this constitution is an experiment, but all regular bred physicians are cautious of experiments. If the constitution [i.e., the Articles

of Confederation] be crazed a little, or somewhat feeble, is it therefore necessary to kill in order to cure it? Surely not.

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



Mr. Pinckney confessed, however, that after all that had been said upon the subject, our constitution was in some measure but an experiment,—nor was it possible yet to form a just conclusion as to its practicability.

James Lincoln, Speech in the S.C. House of Representatives
18 January 1788 (RCS SUPPL. S.C., #11, p. 12)



But however great its blessings, they cannot experience them, until it is organized, and in execution. This they are sensible of to their great sorrow.—Miracles are not performed in a moment, and it would be something unusual in the philosophical world, if the effects of an experiment should be realized, before the experiment itself is made. No truer proverb than the old one, “that we cannot tell before we try.”

“A Tradesman,” *Massachusetts Centinel*
19 March 1788 (RCS SUPPL. MASS., #809, pp. 344–45)



The constitution is beautiful in Theory—I wish the experiment to be made—in my opinion it would be found a government of sufficient energy *only*.

Cyrus Griffin to James Madison, New York
24 March 1788 (CC 4, 471)



His [George Washington] character, in short, is A TISSUE OF VIRTUES, and as there are some of our countrymen who doubt the safety of the proposed government, it is happy for us that we have such an approved and faithful citizen to employ in the experiment.

“Federalist,” *Massachusetts Centinel*
26 March 1788 (CC 4, 538)



And will any Gentn. say that Virginia, Respectable as she is, is able to *sustain* the Conflict? does any wish to see the experiment even put in *risque*?

Edmund Pendleton to Richard Henry Lee, Richmond, Va.
14 June 1788 (CC 6, 179)

FABRICATION OF THE MOMENT

How dare the antifederal junto presume to insinuate to the people at large that the New Constitution is the fabrication of the moment (calculated to favor the views of individuals) after reading the above and the respectable quotations from General Washington's last circular letter which sealed his immortality?

"A Friend to Good Government," *Newport Herald*
24 July 1788 (RCS R.I., 364)

A FAVOURITE SYSTEM

The men who have denied the authenticity of the decalogue, and perhaps the divine origin of the gospel, may sport with the credulity of mankind—and droll on the miraculous interpositions of heaven, under an appearance of an enthusiasm for truth, if it will operate to the completion of a favourite system.

"Helvidius Priscus" II (James Warren?), Boston *Independent Chronicle*
10 January 1788 (CC 3, 333)

FEDERAL CHARIOT

We would ask the disinterested part of the community just to look over the characters which are so fond of swallowing this creature, which exhibits all the pourtraits of an over-bearing aristocracy, and see if *they* are not chiefly composed of salary men and pensioners, and those who at least think themselves fair candidates for places of honour and emolument, whenever the aristocratick wheels of the federal chariot shall be set in motion.

"The Yeomanry of Massachusetts," *Massachusetts Gazette*
25 January 1788 (RCS MASS., 803)

THE FIDDLE

The new plan of partnership went by the name of *the fiddle*; those who were in favour of it called themselves *fiddlers*, and those who opposed

it were stiled *antifiddlers*. The former said it was the best plan that human wisdom had ever contrived. The latter imagined it pregnant with mischief of every kind. The former compared it to a strong fence about a rich field of wheat. The latter compared it to the whale that swallowed up Jonah.

In each family a consultation was held on the question, Whether it should be adopted or not? and liberty was given for every one to speak his mind with the utmost freedom. The objections, answers, replies, rejoinders, and rebutters, which were produced on this occasion, would make a curious collection, and form an important page in the history of man. The *fiddlers* were extremely fond of having it examined, because they said it was like a rich piece of plate, which the more it be rubbed shines the brighter. The *antifiddlers* said it was like a worm eaten bottom of a ship, the defects of which would more evidently appear the more it was ripped to pieces; they were therefore for rejecting it at once, without any examination at all.

Jeremy Belknap: *The Foresters, An American Tale*
Boston, 1792 (RCS SUPPL. MASS., #983, p. 477)

THE FIRST EXPERIMENT

The opponents in this State who are attached to the Union and sensible of the necessity of a nervous [i.e., strong] Government for it, would be more dissatisfied with the result of the second than of the first experiment.

James Madison to George Nicholas, Orange County, Va.
8 April 1788 (CC 5, 33)

AS FLOOD CONTROL MEASURE

Suppose thirteen families are settled upon an island in this river, that is liable to be overflowed by the many accidental freshes dangerous to life and property. They must erect a strong bank, and keep it at all times in good repair. If the muskrats bore it through with many small holes, or if it is sunk in one or two places, a sudden storm may destroy the hay, grain, provisions, household goods; drown the cattle and the people themselves. Will they not then naturally appoint overseers, to inspect this bank, and with the most scrupulous attention keep it in order! They

will fix a certain fund, to be collected by these men without any delay and opposition; and moreover empower them in case of any sudden danger to employ all necessary hands; to press men and horses, take provisions and tools that are next at hand.

“Foreign Spectator” (Nicholas Collin), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
18 September 1787 (RCS SUPPL. PA., #51, pp. 176–77)

FLYING ISLAND

It seems to have been formed by jumbling or compressing a number of ideas together, something like the manner in which poems were made in Swift’s flying Island.

William Grayson to William Short, New York
10 November 1787 (CC 2, 83)

THE GLORIOUS WORK

That staunch FRIEND and GUARDIAN of the *Civil* and *Religious* RIGHTS of MANKIND, the sagacious and philosophick FRANKLIN, sits attentive with Spectacles on, having just scan’d over the GLORIOUS Work, which will prove the *political* SALVATION of his COUNTRY.

The Federal Chariot, *Bickerstaff’s Boston Almanack for 1788* (RCS MASS., 570)



The fed’ral States to union drew,
And bade *The glorious work pursue*

“A Vision of the Printer’s Boy,” Hartford, Conn. *American Mercury*
5 January 1789 (RCS SUPPL. R.I., #246, p. 195)

THE GRAND FEDERAL MACHINE

Men of the first abilities and of the strictest integrity are peculiarly requisite to form the first Session of Congress; for then regulations of commerce and of the Impost must be framed, the Judiciary powers systematized, all the various arrangements made, and due motion be given to the grand Federal Machine. Men of less abilities may afterwards answer; but not of less integrity.

William Ellery to Benjamin Huntington, Newport, R.I.
17 February 1789 (RCS SUPPL. R.I., #258, p. 203)

GRAND MACHINE

It is a grand machine constructed by wise men; & I hope & trust that by the blessing of heaven it will diffuse peace, harmony, prosperity, & happiness throughout our land.

Jedidiah Morse, Jr., to Jedidiah Morse, Sr., New York
22 July 1788 (RCS N.Y., 1334)



It is experience and all-trying time after the grand machine is put in motion and make the discovery. This truth the history of all nations evinces.

Gov. Alexander Martin to the General Assembly, Fayetteville, N.C.
23 December 1789 (RCS N.C., 802)

THE GRAND WORK

In my Opinion it will be to your Interest in the upper Parts if it dont Pass tho' am afraid it will as Seven States has already given their Approbation there is then only two wanting to compleat the Grand work.

John Parkinson to Joel Lane, Portsmouth, Va.
18 May 1788 (RCS N.C., 155)

GREAT COMPLICATED MACHINE

When every part of the great complicated machine shall be put in motion, the lustre of our state assemblies will be diminished by the superior splendour of the federal head.

“Aristides”: *Remarks on the Proposed Plan* (Alexander Contee Hanson)
31 January 1788 (RCS MD., 252; CC 3, 543)

GREAT DELICATE & COMPLICATED MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT

I found that the Objections which might be made to a single State thus governed, would not apply to this great delicate & complicated Machinery of Government, & that the Plan proposed by the Convention was perhaps the best which could be devised.

John Page to Thomas Jefferson, Rosewell, Gloucester County, Va.
7 March 1788 (RCS VA., 591)

THE GREAT FEDERAL WORK

I have but one moment in which to mention to You that the Convention of North Carolina have rejected the federal system by a majority of 184 to 82. That is they have resolved that until amendments are made they shall not adopt—altho they do not mean ultimately to refuse—being confident that Congress will recommend a new General Convention finally to perfect the great federal work.

John Brown Cutting to John Rutledge, Jr., London
9 October 1788 (RCS SUPPL. N.C., #117, pp. 58–59)

GREAT POLITICAL MACHINE

The State of New Hampshire—may the glory of putting the great political machine in motion, render her citizens immortal.

Toast, *New Hampshire Spy*, 1 July 1788 (RCS N.H., 412)

HAZARDOUS EXPERIMENT

But if the authors of the present visionary project, can by the arts of deception, precipitation and address, obtain a majority of suffrages in the conventions of the states to try the hazardous experiment, they may then make the same inglorious boast with this insidious politician, who may perhaps be their model, that “the union of the colonies was pretty well broken, and that he hoped never to see it renewed.”

“A Columbian Patriot” (Mercy Otis Warren): *Observations on the Constitution*
Boston, February 1788 (CC 4, 282)

INFAMOUS SCHEME OF LIBERTY

He [i.e., Melancton Smith] is a strenuous, a formidable enemy to the infamous scheme of tyranny.

“Cassius,” Poughkeepsie, N.Y., *Country Journal*
18 March 1788 (RCS N.Y., 1448)

INSTRUMENT

He [Benjamin Franklin] evidently, I think, builds his hopes, that the Constitution proposed, will be a blessing to the people,—not on the

principles of the government itself, but on the *possibility*, that, with *all its faults*, it *may* be well administered;—and concludes, with wishing, that others, *who had objections* to it, would yet, like him, doubt of their own infallibility, and put their names to the instrument, to make an *Unanimity* MANIFEST! No wonder he *shed a tear* as it is said he did, when he gave *his* sanction to the *New Constitution*.

“Z,” *Boston Independent Chronicle*
6 December 1787 (CC 2, 359–60)



That a bill of rights was not necessary because all is reserved in the case of the general government which is not given, while in the particular ones all is given which is not reserved, might do for the Audience to whom it was addressed, but is surely a *gratis dictum*, opposed by strong inferences from the body of the instrument, as well as from the omission of the clause of our present confederation which had declared that in express terms.

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Paris
20 December 1787 (RCS VA., 250; CC 2, 482–83)



But it is surely a *gratis dictum*, the reverse of which might just as well be said; & it is opposed by strong inferences from the body of the instrument, as well as from the omission of the clause of our present confederation which had made the reservation in express terms. It was hard to conclude because there has been a want of uniformity among the states as to the cases triable by jury, because some have been so incautious as to dispense with this mode of trial in certain cases.

Thomas Jefferson to Uriah Forrest, Paris
31 December 1787 (CC 2, 489)



The necessity of a concurrent jurisdiction in certain cases results from the division of the sovereign power; and the rule that all authorities of which the States are not explicitly divested in favour of the Union remain with them in full vigour, is not only a theoretical consequence of

that division, but is clearly admitted by the whole tenor of the instrument which contains the articles of the proposed constitution.

“Publius” (Alexander Hamilton): *The Federalist* 32–33
New York *Independent Journal*, 2 January 1788 (CC 3, 219)



The Plan of complete consolidation by the proposed Instrument could not be eff[ected?] if the States retained exclusively a Part of their Revenue.

Samuel Osgood to Samuel Adams, New York
5 January 1788 (CC 3, 264)



The new instrument of government does indeed make a fallacious parade of some remaining privileges, and insults the understandings of the people with the semblance of liberty in some of its artful and deceptive clauses: which form but a flimsy veil over the reality of tyranny, so weakly endeavored to be concealed from the eye of freedom.

“Centinel” IX (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
8 January 1788 (CC 3, 309)



The instrument is yet in the hands of the people; it is not signed, sealed, and delivered, and they have power to give it any form they please.

“A Plebeian” (Melancton Smith):
An Address to the People of the State of New-York
17 April 1788 (CC 5, 149)



It cannot be supposed but that many of the members now in the opposition are friends to *Union*, though not satisfied with some parts of the *instrument* proposed to form that Union.

Massachusetts Centinel, 14 June 1788 (RCS N.Y., 1171)



The Freeholder has lessened my objections, for the omission of a Declaration of Rights; but still I would wish Abbe Mably call them fundamental laws. I would have the instrument worded as such.

Arthur Campbell’s Manuscript Draft of “Many,” *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 18 June 1788 (RCS SUPPL. VA., #242, p. 88)

INSTRUMENT OF DELIVERANCE

The evils of anarchy have been pourtrayed with all the imagery of language, in the glowing colours of eloquence; the affrighted mind is thence led to clasp the new constitution as the instrument of deliverance, as the only avenue to safety and happiness.

“Centinel” XI (Samuel Bryan), *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
16 January (CC 3, 387)

INSTRUMENT OF THEIR FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY

Inebriated with a temporary superiority, they arrogantly refused to discuss the merits of a system of government that was to determine the fate of a great people, that would prove either the instrument of their freedom and prosperity or of their slavery and misery for ages to come.

“A Freeman,” *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
13 May 1788 (CC 6, 13)

INSTRUMENT OF UNION

The congressional authority is to be collected, not from tacit implication, but from the positive grant expressed in the instrument of union.

James Wilson, Speech in the Pennsylvania State House Yard, 6 October 1787
Pennsylvania Herald, 9 October 1787 (extra) (CC 1, 339)



But in delegating fœderal powers, another criterion was necessarily introduced, and the congressional authority is to be collected not from tacit implication, but from *the positive grant expressed in the instrument of union*.

“A Republican” I: To James Wilson, Esquire
New York Journal, 25 October 1787 (CC 1, 478)



You will find that the great, the supereminent authority, with which this instrument of union proposes to invest the fœderal body, is to be created without a single check.

“The Impartial Examiner” I, *Virginia Independent Chronicle*
20 February 1788 (RCS VA., 393)

MACHINE

But concerning the Senate in section 3d. Quere 1st. Whether the division of the Senate be not making the Machine much more complicated, without deriveing a competent advantage.

William Cranch to John Quincy Adams, Boston
5 October 1787 (CC 2, 221)



I do not therefore so much blame the late federal convention for making their constitution very difficult of alteration, as I insist upon it as an argument in favor of making our amendments beforehand. A machine which cannot be taken to pieces after it is once set a-going, ought to be very well finished at first.

“An Old Whig” VIII, Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
6 February 1788 (CC 4, 56)



I confessed, that, when I considered, that this was to be the Nature of the Government which was necessary to be adopted in the United States I found that the Objections which might be made [— — —] a single State thus governed, would not apply to this great delicate & complicated Machinery of Government, & that the Plan proposed by the Convention was perhaps the best which could be devised.

John Page to Thomas Jefferson, Rosewell, Gloucester County, Va.
7 March 1788 (CC 4, 332–33)



Whenever the machine shall be set agoing, to strike out every part that has the appearance of being federal, and to render it wholly and entirely a national government.

Luther Martin: Address No. II, *Maryland Journal*
21 March 1788 (RCS MD., 419; CC 4, 458)



When you construct a machine, it is impossible to know how it will work exactly, until it is put in motion. Thus, my fellow citizens, I have gone through this man’s long, stupid performance, and I hope have

satisfactorily answered all the objections he has made to the New Constitution.

“A Flat-Bush Farmer,” 21 April 1788 (RCS N.Y., 1475)



If an ingenious artist had constructed a machine, upon the best principles, after *severe* investigation and labour—should we not consider him as a MAD MAN for making *alterations*, before he had made a trial to ascertain the goodness of his invention? We certainly should.

“Steady,” *Massachusetts Centinel*
3 September 1788 (RCS SUPPL. MASS., #928, p. 426)



By this time I presume enough of the members of both branches of the federal government are collected at New York to do business, and hope very soon to hear that the machine is put in motion.

William Ellery to William Duer, Newport, R.I.
21 May 1789 (RCS R.I., 510)

MATTER OF EXPERIMENT

After all Our Endeavours, our System is little better than matter of Experiment; and that much must depend on the Morals and manners of the People at large.

Pierce Butler to Weeden Butler, Mary-Ville Plantation, S.C.
5 May 1788 (RCS S.C., 270)

A MERE EXPERIMENT

The system proposed is untried: candid advocates and opposers admit, that it is, in a degree, a mere experiment.

“Federal Farmer,” *Additional Letters to the Republican*
2 May 1788 (CC 5, 357)

MILL-RACE

Like a mill-race, it will convey off waters which would otherwise produce freshes and destruction, in such a manner as only to produce fruitfulness, beauty and plenty in the adjacent county.

Pennsylvania Gazette, 26 September 1787 (CC I, 254)

MOTLEY MIXTURE OF A SYSTEM

The motley mixture of a system proposed; a system which is an innovation in government of the most extraordinary kind;—a system neither wholly *federal*, nor wholly *national*—but a strange hotch-potch of both.

Luther Martin: Address No. II, *Maryland Journal*
21 March 1788 (RCS MD., 419)

NATIONAL MACHINE

The wheels of the national machine cannot turn, until the impost and collection bill are perfected.

John Vining, Speech in the U.S. House of Representatives
8 June 1789 (RCS BoR I, 311)

NEW-FANGLED FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

We trust in the State at large, to refuse the gilded pill proffered in this newly fangled constitution.

“A Real Federalist,” Poughkeepsie, N.Y., *Country Journal*
11 March 1788 (RCS N.Y., 1446)



Be wise, be virtuous, and catch the precious moment as it passes, to refuse this new-fangled federal government, and extricate yourselves and posterity from tyranny, oppression, aristocratical or monarchical government.

“A Farmer and Planter,” *Maryland Journal*
1 April 1788 (RCS MD., 469)

NEW-FANGLED FEDERAL HEAD

If indeed they possessed that tyrannic sway, which the kings of England had once usurped, we might humbly thank them for their *magna charta*, defective as it is. As that is not the case, we will not suffer it to be understood, that their *new-fangled* federal head shall domineer with the powers not excepted by their precious bill of rights.

“Aristides” (Alexander Contee Hanson):
Remarks on the Proposed Plan of a Federal Government
31 January 1788 (CC 3, 537)

THE NEW FLYING MACHINE

This will give you time to look about you, and perhaps to throw a lock upon one of the wheels of the great continental waggon; for you may depend upon it your wheelbarrow, and the new flying machine, cannot long travel the same road together.

Daniel Shays to the Antifederal Junto in Philadelphia
Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 25 September 1787 (CC 1, 229)

NEW MACHINE

The Imperium in imperio will be the fruitful Source of a thousand jarring Principles, wch. will make the new Machine, notwithstanding all the Oil you can give it, to go heavily along.

Reverend James Madison to James Madison, Williamsburg, Va.
9 February 1788 (CC 4, 96)



I am led to suppose that advocates for the requisite measures for setting the new machine at work may be needed as much in Congress as in this State.

James Madison to George Nicholas, Orange County, Va.
8 April 1788 (CC 5, 35)



Congress have deliberated in part on the arrangements for putting the new Machine into operation, but have concluded on nothing but the times for chusing electors &c.

James Madison to George Washington, New York
21 July 1788 (CC 6, 324n)



To those who are acquainted with their distress & poverty, it is a mystery, how they will procure the *necessary means* of putting the new Machine in motion.

Draft Preface to a Proposed English Edition of the "Centinel" Essays
December 1788 (RCS N.C., 619)

NEW-MADE MONITOR

I am alarmed at the spirit of faction in this extreme corner of the state introduced by our new made monitor.

Alexander Fowler to John Nicholson, Pittsburgh
10 November 1787 (RCS PA., 287)

NEW POLITICAL MACHINE

I cannot but hope their Vote [i.e., Virginia] will be favorable, especially as nine States have agreed & the new political Machine will be set in Motion: should they join the nine, it is of little Importance to the Union how N.Y. votes.

Ebenezer Hazard to Jeremy Belknap, New York
26 June 1788 (RCS N.Y., 1229)

NEW WHEEL

I find it is the general opinion that the New wheel will revolve.

Samuel A. Otis to George Thatcher, New York
18 May 1788 (RCS N.Y., 1102; RCS SUPPL. VA., #420, p. 183; CC 6, 31)

POLITICAL MACHINE

Subsequent to the election which is to set this political machine in motion—no certain and express terms as in your state constitution, that *statedly* once in every four years, and as often as these offices shall become vacant, by expiration or otherwise, as is therein expressed, an election shall be held as follows, &c.—this inexplicitness perhaps may lead to an establishment for life.

“Cato” IV (George Clinton?), *New York Journal*
8 November 1787 (CC 2, 8)



I Beseech You, my dear General, Not to deny Your Acceptance of the office of President for the first Years—You only Can Settle that Political Machine.

Marquis de Lafayette to George Washington, Paris
1 January 1788 (CC 2, 492)



The records of antiquity, or the refinements of modern government, may justly be challenged to produce a model better calculated to support the cause of freedom, and at the same time diffuse an authoritative energy through every part of the political machine.

“A Plebeian,” *Maryland Journal*, 14 March 1788 (RCS MD., 382)



I hope the political Machine may be put in motion, without much effort or hazard of miscarrying.

George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, Mount Vernon
28 August 1788 (RCS N.Y., 2462; CC 6, 352)



By this Time I suppose you have got the Vice Presidt & in a day or two more will have the Presidt with you & thus the political machine will be set a going.—May a blessing attend its movements.

Jeremy Belknap to Ebenezer Hazard, Boston
20 April 1789 (RCS R.I., 486)



I think, with the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. Vining), that the great wheels of the political machine should first be set in motion [before amendments are considered]; and with the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Jackson), that the vessel ought to be got under way, lest she lays by the wharf till she beat off her rudder, and runs herself a wreck on shore.

Elbridge Gerry, Speech in the U.S. House of Representatives
8 June 1789 (RCS BoR I, 328)

POLITICAL MECHANISM

In fine we view this constitution as a curious piece of political mechanism, fabricated in such manner as may finally despoil the people of all their privileges.

Consider Arms, Malachi Maynard, and Samuel Field:
Dissent to the Mass. Convention, Northampton, Mass.
Hampshire Gazette, 16 April 1788 (CC 5, 53)

SO GREAT AND DANGEROUS AN EXPERIMENT

Most liberal authors would dissuade us from so great and dangerous an experiment,—I shall conclude at present, with a quotation from one of them; “Vast empires are in many respects unnatural: but particularly in this, that be they ever *so well constituted*, THE AFFAIRS OF THE MANY *must, in such governments* TURN UPON A FEW; and the relation be less sensible, and in a manner lost between the magistrate and people, *in a body so unwieldy in its limbs*, and whose members lie so remote from one another, and distant from the head.”

“Alfred,” *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
13 December 1787 (CC 2, 434)

SOLEMN INSTRUMENT

[Amendments Proposed to the Constitution]:

I. Each state in the union shall respectively retain every power, jurisdiction and right, which is not by this Constitution delegated to the Congress of the United States, or to the departments of the general government; . . . but the said constitution shall be considered at all times a solemn instrument defining the extent of their authority, and the limits of which they cannot rightfully in any instance exceed.

North Carolina Convention Journal
1 August 1788 (RCS N.C., 460; RCS SUPPL. N.C., #49-K, p. 29)

WHEEL OF GOVERNMENT

I congratulate you on the adoption of the Fœderal Constitution by Virginia—an event of vast Importance to the United States, the present Generation & their posterity; for tho’ it will be but the 1/13th. spoke in the Wheel of Governmt. yet it is an important one.

Jacob Broom to Levi Hollingsworth, Wilmington, Del.
2 July 1788 (RCS SUPPL. VA., #277, p. 107)

WHEELS OF THE GREAT CONTINENTAL WAGON

This will give you time to look about you, and perhaps to throw a lock upon one of the wheels of the great continental waggon; for you may depend upon it your wheelbarrow, and the new flying machine, cannot long travel the same road together.

Daniel Shays to the Antifederal Junto in Philadelphia
Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer, 25 September 1787 (CC 1, 229)

WHOLE MACHINERY

I have this day seen the Report of the Convention and can not express the heartfelt Satisfaction I have from it. I am more than pleased, having only one doubt which is whether the object of the Judicial power is well defined. I wish you to attend to this for I consider it the mainspring of the whole Machinery.

James Sullivan to Rufus King, Boston
23 September 1787 (RCS MASS., 17)

A WONDROUS DEED

To the disappointment of our enemies and the joy of our friends, their wisdom and candour accomplished the wondrous deed, and we now behold a system of federal government acceded to with a degree of peace and unanimity, all circumstances considered, which has no parallel.

Enos Hitchcock, Oration, Providence, R.I.
4 July 1788 (CC 6, 234)

A WORK OF SUPEREROGATION

At present we find a Convention appointed by one authority, but acting under the arbitrary assumption of another, and instead of transacting the business which was assigned to them, behold they have produced a work of supererogation, after a mysterious labor of three months.

Robert Whitehill, Speech in the Pa. Convention
28 November 1787 (RCS PA., 395)

THE WORKS OF DARKNESS

If the proposed plan be a good one upon the whole, why should its friends endeavour to prevent investigating its merits or defects? Why should they hurry it on us before we have even read it? Does not this look suspicious like? Is it not a proof that it is the works of darkness, and cannot bear the light?

“Philadelphiensis” X (Benjamin Workman), *Philadelphia Freeman’s Journal*
20 February 1788 (CC 4, 158)