

## **A “Perfectly Different” People: The Redefinition of American in the Era of the American Revolution**

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### **Abstract**

This paper investigates the period of the American Revolution and how developments during this time contributed to the on-going process of the construction of an American identity. Even though in the early years of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the residents of colonial British America had experienced vigorous demographic and economic growth, as well as political, social and cultural development, prior to the American Revolution they had no positive feeling of corporate self. They used Europe as the criteria for judgment, believing themselves and their society to be simple and undeveloped. However, in the last thirty years of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the American Revolution and its attendant developments inspired English, European and American observers, which led to a careful and sympathetic reexamination of America and her people. Overall, however, there was a wide range of national blindness to the degrading of Afro-Americans and the abuse of American Indians, while highlighting the unique social configurations which caused America to become a globally dominant country and the free white people of America to become the preeminent ethnic group there. In this process, there gradually appeared a highly positive conceptualization of America as an exceptional place and Americans as an exceptional people.