

The Contrast



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著者:Tyler, Royall

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"This powerful and lively package of primary materials and historical context will demonstrate how historical 'forces' play themselves out on the ground. Kierner's collection offers a fresh lens on a new world struggling into being and will inspire teachers and students of all ages alike."-- Catherine Allgor, author of "A Perfect Union: Dolley Madison and the Creation of the American Nation" The Contrast makes a real contribution to the existing scholarship on this period, it has great appeal for classroom use, and it puts back in print an amusing play that is instrumental in understanding critical issues in the new nation. The play The Contrast centers on gender roles, relations, and expectations, mocking the gender stereotypes of the day and is a rich source for understanding a host of political and social issues in the Early Republic. It is funny even to a modern audience and replete with literary references.-- Charlene M. Boyer Lewis, author of "Ladies and Gentlemen on Display: Planter Society at the Virginia Springs, 1790-1860"-- Norma Basch, author of "Framing American Divorce: From the Revolutionary Generation to the Victorians" "The Contrast," which premiered at New York City's John Street Theater in 1787, was the first American play performed in public by a professional theater company. The play, written by New England-born, Harvard-educated, Royall Tyler was timely, funny, and extremely popular. When the play appeared in print in 1790, George Washington himself appeared at the head of its list of hundreds of subscribers. Reprinted here with annotated footnotes by historian Cynthia A. Kierner, Tyler's play explores the debate over manners, morals, and cultural authority in the decades following American Revolution. Did the American colonists' rejection of monarchy in 1776 mean they should abolish all European social traditions and hierarchies? What sorts of etiquette, amusements, and fashions were appropriate and beneficial? Most important, to be a nation, did Americans need to distinguish themselves from Europeans -- and, if so, how? Tyler was not the only American pondering these questions, and Kierner situates the play in its broader historical and cultural contexts. An extensive introduction provides readers with a background on life and politics in the United States in 1787, when Americans were in the midst of nation-building. The book also features a section with selections from contemporary letters, essays, novels, conduct books, and public documents, which debate issues of the era.

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