THE RHETORIC OF CONFLICT IN POLITICAL THEORY

A Dissertation

by

TED HENRY BROWN

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Chair of Committee,	Cary J. Nederman
Committee Members,	Diego von Vacano
	Michael T. Koch
	Jennifer Merceica
Head of Department,	Robert Harmel

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ABSTRACT

The language surrounding the decision to go to war in American political discourse is often very divisive and draws upon numerous rhetorical traditions. Early research on the question of what types of arguments favoring war has been largely inconclusive. Alongside the facts concerning conflict are numerous orators drawing upon various discourses and intellectual traditions seeking to sway their audience either toward or away from conflict. One such study is the work of James Andrews who conducted case studies to develop an “American adolescence” theory suggesting that arguments of honor and principle were the most persuasive in convincing men to take up arms. This research, however, fails to convincingly answer this question.

In this dissertation, I use a rhetorical framework to investigate the types of arguments used in early-American history that try to influence the decision to go to war. Primarily, this dissertation examines Andrews’ theory of principled arguments and employs a second variable, that is, arguments of expediency. I argue that principled arguments are not as successful as Andrews concludes and instead arguments of expediency are more commonplace than arguments of principle. Additionally, I argue that expedient rhetoric is a necessary component for mobilizing mass support for a war but expedient rhetoric is not necessary when arguing for inaction. Rather, principled arguments can also serve to motivate audiences toward inaction.

To examine whether Andrews’ theory of principled arguments is largely correct, I first demonstrate that Machiavelli used arguments of expediency in an attempt to

convince the Medici to go to war. From this example, I conduct three case studies where arguments of principle and arguments of expediency are both present. I find that in arguments prior to the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican-American War are largely a mixed bag. In the American Revolution and the War of 1812, arguments of expediency are often capable in convincing men to take up arms. However, I demonstrate that in the Mexican-American War, arguments of principle may help to limit the severity of conflict.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Dale and Chun, whose endless encouragement and enthusiasm has proven to be my most invaluable resource.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

America has been an intellectual melting pot since its earliest days under British colonial rule. American thinkers have been accused of many things, but rarely have they ever been accused of being deeply principled philosophers.[i] As historians of America's intellectual traditions have concluded, Americans drew from various and often competing intellectual traditions including liberalism, republicanism, protestant political theology, and ascriptive hierarchies.[ii] Each intellectual tradition also has its own language and rhetorical stance. For instance, liberals routinely make appeals to natural rights and reason, republicans appeal to virtue and honor, and protestant theorists use the language of covenants and jeremiads.[iii] What makes the language of American political thought difficult to analyze is that all of these discourses may appear within a single work.

One area in which the rhetoric of the American intellectual tradition is often more decisive is in discourses surrounding the decision to go to war. Factors that decide whether or not a country enters war are of course based on numerous social, political, and economic facts. Alongside the facts, however, are numerous orators drawing upon various discourses and intellectual traditions seeking to sway their audience either toward or away from conflict. In this dissertation, I examine the types of arguments used in early-American history that influence the decision to go to war.

In his seminal study on the question of American war rhetoric, James Andrews framed the question as: "On what did orators favoring war rely in order to convince men to take up arms"?[iv] Drawing from various speeches supporting the decision to enter conflict, Andrews found that within the American context, authors typically appealed to lofty principles such as national honor and commerce. He concludes that these speeches draw on these idealistic principles because there is "… a kind of national adolescence, a gnawing anxiety, perhaps an inferiority complex, that unless America could hold its own in sheer brute strength she would not be respected or feared by the powers of the world…"[v] Andrews argues that these appeals worked well when the country was in its founding era but as the fledgling nation continued to grow, each speech appealing to honor and commerce seemingly loses its effectiveness. As the "adolescent stages" pass and international trade becomes sustainable, Andrews argues that the inherent costs associated with conflict largely serve as a deterrent to entering into conflict.[vi]

From Andrews' analysis, one would expect to find arguments that draw from basic principles, often rooted in the language of republican political thought, including honor, to be prevalent only during America's earliest decades; thereafter, one would expect to find a shift in rhetorical strategy with fewer principled arguments urging the country to enter conflict. Andrews' theory that war rhetoric would move principled arguments concerning honor to pragmatic arguments concerning commerce as the young country matured is both appealing and parsimonious. In this dissertation, I put Andrews' "America's adolescence theory" to the test using three case studies from American history: the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican-American War.

The results of this research demonstrate that contrary to Andrews' prediction, both principled and pragmatic arguments are used throughout American history. Just as Americans have been heterodox in the use of political ideologies, so too have they been heterodox in their use of rhetorical traditions.

The primary interest of this dissertation is to examine the use of arguments of expediency versus the use of arguments of principle as it relates to Andrews' original study. According to Andrews' analysis, questions of honor and principle were enough to convince men to take up arms in the earliest years of the country with appeals to commercial concerns appearing in the 19th century. In this dissertation, I focus upon an added variable, that is, the use of arguments of expediency. Specifically, I examine whether and when arguments of expediency were used in the discussion of convincing Americans to enter into conflict. My secondary area of interest examines the way in which political theorists rely upon these same rhetorical tendencies, that is, arguments of principle and arguments of expediency, in their attempts to reach a larger audience.

To begin, it is necessary to distinguish between principled arguments and arguments of expediency. Drawing sharp lines between these two forms of rhetoric can be difficult, and I draw upon the work of Stephen Lucas to make this distinction. Lucas contends that arguments of principle rely upon "… universal standards for the regulation and guidance of right conduct" that "stand beyond question or refutation."[vii] These arguments from universal standards stand in stark contrast to arguments that are facilitated by "what is politic or expedient rather than from some "received" definition of what is right or just."[viii] While Lucas offers a starting point for distinguishing between

principled and expedient arguments, I find that his definition is lacking a concern for time. Consequently, I further expand the definition of expedient arguments to include arguments that demand that action must be taken quickly. Likewise, I emphasize that principled arguments rarely place the timing of making a decision as a high priority. I also make a slight extension of Lucas' definition of principled arguments regarding an "uncompromising application of his universal standards."[ix] Instead, I include among arguments of principled rhetoric that appeals to lofty ideals. This deviation from Lucas' definition of principle allows me to include the use of honor as a fundamental motivation for going to war. Whereas Lucas judges principles as being fundamental truths, arguments concerning honor are relative to time and place. This additional pairing allows me to generalize this distinction to incorporate some cases that may not traditionally fit the "right or wrong" perspective required by Lucas' definition.

As Andrews' initial discussion focuses upon the use of honor as a fundamental means of convincing individuals to take up arms during the earliest years of the republic, we would expect to find that honor remained relatively constant as a determinant for war in the first century of the country.[x] But if questions of honor or principle are not enough to explain why these early battles were fought, then an analysis of the role of expediency and audiences might be more fruitful for understanding when and why these American skirmishes may turn into war. Since the United States fought in wars where honor was not the sole justification, perhaps there is another explanation for why these early governments would choose warfare over peace. As a result, my research shows that there are cases of arguments advocating for and against conflict that are not explained by

Andrews' theory. I view the use of arguments of expediency as a direct contrast to the principled arguments of honor. As Lucas explains, arguments of principle and expedient arguments are anything but mutually exclusive.[xi] However, attempting to classify arguments as being one or the other allows me to focus my analysis on the aims and context of these speech patterns. Moreover, treating these arguments in this way also helps to discern how political actors use particular forms of rhetoric for particular audiences regarding speeches aimed at fomenting or preventing conflict.

This dissertation seeks to expand upon aspects of Andrews' original article by conducting an analysis of political theory through a rhetorical framework. Because Andrews only examined arguments of principle, namely, arguments from honor, I had to look more broadly to the history of political thought to find a framework for conceptualizing the differences between principled and expedient arguments. I found such a framework in one of the most notorious and skilled rhetoricians in the history of modern political thought, Niccolò Machiavelli. In Chapter 1, I begin by drawing the distinction between principled and expedient arguments by examining Machiavelli's argument for convincing the Medici to go to war in 16th century Florence. Machiavelli provides not only an example of the use of expediency in convincing the Medici that war is necessary but also provides a theoretical framework that serves as a justification for going to war. It is my intention to use this framework in my analysis of early American public discourse in regards to war and conflict. Using Machiavelli's framework to distinguish between principled and expedient arguments, I examine three case studies of American public discourse: the American Revolution, the War of 1812, as well as the

Mexican American War. The first two case studies demonstrate the role arguments of expediency play in helping to motivate individuals to go to war. Given that both of these cases – the American Revolution and the War of 1812 – occur early in American history – they contradict Andrews' theory that arguments of principled honor would be used to support conflict during America's infancy. In my last case study, I examine whether principled arguments, made from outside the prevailing social group, have the ability to counteract the expediency of war rhetoric found throughout the states. In this case, Andrews would predict that only arguments of expediency, namely, arguments concerning commerce, would be used given that America would have matured beyond the need for principled arguments. Nevertheless, I find that opponents to the Mexican-American war used highly principled arguments, again, contrary to Andrews' theory. In sum, this dissertation examines three distinct cases where expedient or principled arguments are used to convince men to take up arms (or not), or in the case of Machiavelli, convincing the Medici to go to war. In each of these cases, I focus upon how each theorist uses arguments of expediency or arguments of principle to help persuade the masses. From these studies, I conclude that contrary to Andrews' predictions, arguments of expediency have been used alongside of arguments of principle throughout American history.

Ultimately this dissertation seeks to build upon Andrews' argument as to what types of rhetoric are most effective at "convincing men take up arms." Whereas Andrews relies solely upon the use of arguments about honor and eventually commerce as being an effective means of promoting a war effort, I argue that principled arguments

are not as successful as Andrews concludes. What Andrews fails to account for is that arguments for or against a war fluctuate not only across decades but also within each individual conflict. From Andrews' work, I argue that political theory in itself is an attempt to have an audience accept one particular viewpoint over many other views that are available. Because theorists rely upon their audience to determine the relative success of their arguments, I also examine the degree to which political theory relies upon arguments of expediency and principle as being helpful in determining how rhetoric is intertwined with political theory. This dissertation thusly advances the fields of rhetoric and political theory by examining the role of principled and expedient arguments in war discourse but also relates these arguments back to political theory.

Rhetoric and War

It is difficult to pinpoint an exact definition of rhetoric, as most definitions are varied and ambiguous in their application. According to Plato, the use of rhetoric has a negative influence on the audience and inhibits that ability to determine truth. As Plato explains, there is a distinction between dialectic and rhetoric, and rhetoric is a form of cookery because it makes the weaker case appear stronger.[xii] Aristotle treats the study of rhetoric and the dialectic as two sides of the same coin, allowing a speaker to use whatever means is necessary to convince an audience of the "best means" of action.[xiii] These classical definitions of rhetoric are early examples of the long and interwoven tradition of both political theory and rhetoric with both sides presenting rhetoric as a tool that orators can call upon to advance any position in an argument.

If we look toward more contemporary and more assessable definitions of rhetoric, language is once again given a neutral position that can be adopted for the purposes of an orator. As D'Angelo explains, rhetoric is "a science which attempts to discover general principles of oral or written discourse." [xiv] However, this definition of rhetoric relies too strongly on systematically investigating rhetoric as nothing more than spoken or written discourse without acknowledging that studies of rhetoric should examine the intent of the message or its possible effects of swaying the emotions. Extending this examination of rhetoric as being more than spoken and written discourse, Kennedy defines rhetoric as "a specific cultural subset of a more general concept of the power of words and their potential to affect a situation in which they are used or received."[xv] From Kennedy we learn that rhetoric requires the potential to affect a situation. Burke furthers this idea as "the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols." [xvi] But perhaps, broadly defined, cooperation is too strong of an indicator. Cooperation implies that individuals will work together. Rhetoric involves symbols and the possibility of cooperation, but should cooperation be the necessary condition to determine whether or not rhetoric exists? As Kochin argues, "Rhetoric is systematic thought about how to move the audience to act or move it to refrain from acting."[xvii] Borrowing from Kochin and Kennedy, this dissertation examines rhetoric as the ability to persuade an audience to act through both literature and oration. From this simple definition, there is the ability to discern the elements of conscious persuasion and manipulation of language that can

move an audience toward action or inaction given the specific context and nuances of speech.[xviii]

As Kennedy explains, "Ultimately, what we call `rhetoric' can be traced back to the natural instinct to survive and to control our environment and influence the actions of others in what seems the best interest of ourselves, our families, our social and political groups, and our descendants."[xix] The study of rhetoric, then, is not in one particular approach to linguistic or literary studies, but rather it is a particular focus on what the author is attempting to achieve and the persuasive elements being utilized to achieve that purpose. Hence, the intersection between rhetoric and political theory should focus upon how theorists and rhetoricians use language to influence their environment. This focus on the ability of language to influence an environment, however, must be observed as a fluid relationship between the intent of the speaker but also the manner in which this speech is given. As Locke and Hobbes are two of the authors in the canon of political thought, their works only give a brief mention to the study of rhetoric. Both authors explain too eagerly that rhetoric is merely "sophistry" and can easily excite the masses. Each theorist also claims that their works are devoid of rhetoric because of its corrupting influence on reason and both authors encourage the audience to accept their conclusions from a rational calculation of the evidence presented throughout their arguments.[xx] However, if we disregard the proclamations of these theorists and instead focus upon their written works as they attempt to persuade their audiences, each author is guilty of the crime they claim to avoid.

Seemingly keying in upon this disparity between the practices and proclamations of these modern theorists, a large literature has begun to develop from the rhetorical study of political theory. Specifically, there are three main approaches to the study of rhetoric in political theory. The first approach to utilizing rhetoric in the study of political theory is to look at the contextual clues surrounding speech acts and writings of individuals to determine how and why their works can help persuade an audience to a particular goal. This literature focuses upon early political thought in the light of contemporary issues to examine how rhetoric and emotion can counteract rational thought.[xxi] This approach focuses upon the application of rhetorical studies and attempting to determine what a theorist's primary motivations may have been.

Following this first approach, there is a long history of scholarly work that analyzes the types of rhetorical arguments presented for specific moments or for brief periods of history.[xxii] As Murphy writes, "…presidential war rhetoric establishes the expediency of war; presidents portray the decision to go to war as a thoughtful one and the reasons for war are embedded within the narratives they present."[xxiii] One recent example of this approach is the dissection of Machiavelli's writings to show that Cicero and Quintilian influence his works heavily and that this humanist understanding has been hijacked by modern interpretations of Machiavelli.[xxiv] Following in this same vein of thought, Skinner analyzes Hobbes' *Leviathan* to argue that Hobbes relies upon a humanist understanding of rhetoric and continues to rely upon rhetorical flourishes to portray the Realist worldview throughout *Leviathan*. Remer follows this example to examine the works of Cicero and Hobbes to argue that each of these theorists relied upon

rhetorical nuances to convince the audience that their arguments were the most correct given the information that had been presented.[xxv] And perhaps Garsten provides the best explanation of the negative connotation given to the modern theorists and their study of rhetoric. As Garsten comments, this negative understanding can most easily be viewed under the assumption that rhetoric is commonplace and this should lead to the acceptance of reasoned persuasion.[xxvi]

This first approach allows modern rhetoricians to not only examine specific examples from canonical theorists but this approach also serves as a filter to understand and critique the past and present. As Aune examines the works of Dewey in response to the changing nature of society and technology, there is an inherent question about whether the public, given an increase in technology, would be able to act as a democratic body.[xxvii] This approach also affords individuals the opportunity to reevaluate the traditional explanations concerning an event and to argue that the current interpretation of this historical event can be better understood using new information gleaned from studies of rhetoric.[xxviii] Using a similar method, Ivie examines the rhetoric surrounding the process of war and the types of arguments that play into debates concerning the decision to go to war.[xxix] These examples all portend that rhetoric is able to influence the decision-making process of an individual and war is often the topic of debate. More recently, Mercieca examines the Abolitionist Mail Crisis of 1835 through the lens of honor and examines the response of southern slaveholders as it relates to Ivie's analysis of arguments concerning the justification of war through perceived victimage of the target population. Mercieca argues slaveholders could not rely upon adopting a position

of being victimized by the abolitionists and instead had to present their case in the language of honor as it pertained to the norms of their society.[xxx] These studies of rhetoric allow researchers to more easily determine whether the standard interpretation of an event includes both the political reasons as well the political undercurrents that ultimately influence public policy.

The second main approach to rhetoric and political theory is an examination of utility and the question of how rhetoric can be useful in the realization of an idealized society. Through the exploration of deliberative democracy, the focus on rhetoric or constant deliberation could provide the public with access to the information requisite for decision-making processes. As Dewey first maintains, the notion of a deliberative democrat demands that the public be allowed equal access to information or be given the ability to educate itself and thus govern itself.[xxxi] Following in this tradition, Gutmann and Thompson suggest that the ease of access to information would allow for individuals to make decisions but it is paramount that all individuals are placed in a mutually defensible and equal position prior to working toward a deliberative democracy.[xxxii] Dryzek also argues that rhetoric would not only allow for the equal access to information but that rhetoric can serve to unify and strengthen social groups.[xxxiii] This particular focus on rhetoric in political theory emphasizes the end product of rhetoric and how it affects deliberation rather than attempting to discern how individual arguments promote one decision over another.

The third approach to the study of rhetoric in political theory focuses upon whether words and their meaning are inherently static between generations and moments

of social upheaval. This "conceptual change" scholarship argues that concepts and words vary "inasmuch as the concepts that constitute political life and language lose old meanings even as they acquire new ones, political discourse appears, in retrospect, to have been–and even now to remain–in a state of perpetual flux."[xxxiv] This perpetual flux requires that political actors mostly agree with a shared definition and are able to argue from this baseline. However, these definitions are dependent upon the context of events and remain fluid throughout multiple events in history.[xxxv] The conceptual change literature finds itself at the intersection of political theory and rhetoric in an attempt "to study how certain theses or beliefs were used in argumentation by the agents."[xxxvi] In this particular approach, there is the expectation that not all arguments are created the same and that an examination of this language will allow researchers to discover the nuances that help frame conditions and arguments. One particular subfield of this conceptual change literature focuses upon the American Revolution to determine how particular words and ideals have grown since they were first invoked in American history.[xxxvii]

While these three predominant approaches to the study of rhetoric in political theory all focus upon language and how it may change the world through continued discourse, or how rhetoric influences the perception and may persuade the actions of the public, I examine the fundamental nature of how political theory is in itself an argument by political theorists that attempts to persuade their audience to accept the political narrative, world, and theory they have created. As Mercieca argues, "The fact that people and political theorists have created and argued for various kinds of government … demonstrates that there is not one ideal form of government, but rather a plurality of

political theories that must be adapted to the particular people and circumstance of a particular political community."[xxxviii] Within this context, normative political thought relies upon rhetoric to convince others that one particular approach or view of the world is more viable than another. As Aune explains, all political theory "strives for advantage over its opponents" and this advantage is often formulated in word choice and the types of arguments.[xxxix] Examining the moments when individuals decide to take up arms will allow us to understand the instances in which theorists can evoke emotional and rhetorical appeals that may influence the decision-making capabilities of the audience.

A rhetorician effectively using ethos, pathos, and logos can help persuade an audience to adopt one argument over another, serving to quicken the rational decision-making capabilities of the masses. As illustrated by the *Federalist Papers*, the founders were concerned that rhetoric and enflamed passions would lead the assembly to declare war more often than if rational thought dictated the response of the country. As Madison explains, "In all very numerous assemblies, of whatever characters composed, passion never fails to wrest the sceptre [*sic*] from reason."[xl] The founders were fearful of the influence and ability of rhetoric to sway the passions and to limit the ability of reason to hold power. As Howe explains, because the Constitution had the potential to inflame the passions, it was " …all the more essential to keep the discourse on a high level and out of the hands of demagogues."[xli] With this idea in mind, an examination of the rhetoric of conflict will serve to elucidate the ability of a speaker to frame arguments in a manner that would more effectively serve to limit rational thought and to promote action. As Bitzer explains, rhetoric is a dialogue leading to an exigency, or an imperfection marked

by urgency.[xlii] Bitzer's definition alone stands in stark contrast to Andrews' belief that honor and principled arguments would be sufficient in getting men to pick up arms. It is entirely necessary that any understanding of the use of rhetoric in the decision to enter into conflict should also include an examination of expedient rhetoric.

Chapter Presentation

This dissertation focuses upon examining the types of rhetoric utilized in the discussions presented before going to war. I build upon Andrews' original study by examining three case studies in which one would predominantly expect to find arguments concerning honor and commerce dominating the national agenda. Instead, I argue that Andrews' study only explains one small aspect of the larger picture and that arguments of expediency are more commonplace than arguments of principle. Additionally, I argue that expedient rhetoric is a necessary component for mobilizing mass support for a war but, expedient rhetoric is not necessary when arguing for inaction. Rather, principled arguments can also serve to motivate audiences toward inaction. I demonstrate this argument by showing:

Chapter II: The popular view of Machiavelli's *The Prince* is that a leader should do whatever is necessary in order to stay in power. While there is a negative connotation generally associated with Machiavellian thought, I argue that this is not the case with Machiavelli's writings. First, I explain that Machiavelli's writings are found throughout the founding of the United States and his writings, coupled with an examination of language, shows that he is at least partially responsible for early elements of the

American republic. Next, I argue that Machiavelli's *The Prince*, the *Discourses,* and *The Art of War* actually work together to present one central argument of returning Florence back to republican rule. I argue that Machiavelli attempts to persuade the Medici about the necessity of war through a strategic combination of arguments that show citizen militias are necessary for a good army, the idea that *virtù* can be learned, and argument for *fortuna* to suggest that there is an immediate need to seize an opportunity (war). While Machiavelli remains a theoretical example of how language and ideas can be used to persuade the elites that war is desirable, can the same language concepts of opportunity and immediacy persuade the masses to undertake a war?

Chapters III and IV: In Chapter III, I examine Jefferson's *Summary View of the Rights of British Americans* and Paine's *Common Sense.* Specifically, I look at the rhetoric of Jefferson and Paine and its influence on the American Revolution to show that arguments of principle are not enough to rally individuals behind a cause. Jefferson's *Summary View* relies strictly upon an argument of principle, whereas Paine's *Common Sense* extends the principled argument and adds an element of expediency. I focus upon the expediency of Paine's rhetoric to show its value in gaining support for the American Revolution.

In Chapter IV, I further the arguments of expediency and principle from Chapter III and examine whether the motivations for a war, whether for the security of a state or for future economic and social advantage, require different uses of expedient and principled rhetoric. I focus upon the War of 1812 and Madison's pro-war discourse to determine that expedient rhetoric is a necessary factor in a call to arms with Britain.

Chapter V: While the previous chapters focus on persuading individuals to pursue war, this chapter examines what types of arguments may be used to persuade the masses not to go to war. I draw upon the writings of Thoreau to examine the rhetorical elements involved with stopping potential conflict. In particular, I look into the discourses involved with the Mexican-American War and *Civil Disobedience* to determine the arguments of principle associated with these dialogues. I then compare these to Thoreau's "A Plea for Captain John Brown" as another example of divergent rhetorical practices that are used to persuade the audience and affect public opinion concerning future conflicts.

Endnotes

[i] Robert G. McCloskey, "American Political Thought and the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review* 51 (1957): 115–29.
[ii] On liberalism, see Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1955); on republicanism see, Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution: Enlarged Edition*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); on reformed political thought see Barry Shain, *The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996)*;* on ascriptive hierarchies, see Rogers Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).
[iii] On liberal rhetoric see Michael Zuckert, *The Natural Rights Republic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996); on republican rhetoric see Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1969); on Protestant rhetoric see Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).
[iv] James R. Andrews, "They Chose the Sword: Appeals to War in Nineteenth- Century American Public Address," *Today's Speech* 17 (1969), 3.
[v] Andrews, "They Chose the Sword," 7.
[vi] Andrews, "They Chose the Sword," 7.
[vii] Stephen Lucas, *Portents of Rebellion: Rhetoric and Revolution in Philadelphia, 1765-76* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1976), 86–87.
[viii] Lucas, *Portents of Rebellion*, 87.
[ix] Lucas, *Portents of Rebellion*, 87.

[x] Andrews, “They Chose the Sword,” 3–8.
[xi] Lucas, *Portents of Rebellion*, 87.
[xii] For a more complete discussion of the Platonic view of rhetoric, see Everett Lee Hunt, “Plato on Rhetoric and Rhetoricians,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 6 (1920): 33–53.
[xiii] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, trans, George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), I, 1.
[xiv] Frank J. D’Angelo, *A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric* (Cambridge, MA: Winthrop Publishers, 1975), 3.
[xv] George A. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 4.
[xvi] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950; reprint. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1962), 43.
[xvii] Michael S. Kochin, *Five Chapters on Rhetoric: Character, Action, Things, Nothing, and Art* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 7.
[xviii] For an excellent discussion of the various definitions and perceptions of rhetoric, see chapter 1 of Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric: The Quest for Effective Communication* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).
[xix] Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric*, 4.
[xx] Bryan Garsten, *Saving Persuasion: A Defense of Rhetoric and Judgment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).
[xxi] For some excellent examples, look at Ronald Beiner, *Political Judgement* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983); George E. Marcus, *The Sentimental Citizen: Emotion in Democratic Politics* (University Park, PA: Penn. State Press, 2002); Bryan Garsten, *Saving Persuasion*; and Eugene Garver, *Aristotle’s Rhetoric: An Art of Character* (Chicago, IL: University Press of Chicago, 1994).
[xxii] An exhaustive list of all the works that view these issues would be impossibly and unbearably long. Some of the more notable works in this list are Andrews, “They Chose the Sword,” Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and Genres of Governance* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Jeffrey Feldman, *Framing the Debate* (Brooklyn, NY: Ig Publishing, 2007); Jeffrey K. Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).
[xxiii] John M. Murphy, “Epideictic and Deliberative Strategies in Opposition to War: The Paradox of Honor and Expediency,” *Communication Studies* 43 (1992), 67.
[xxiv] Maurizio Viroli, *Machiavelli* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998).
[xxv] Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Gary Remer, “Political Oratory and Conversation: Cicero Versus Deliberative Democracy,” *Political Theory 27* (1999): 39–64 and Gary Remer, “Hobbes, the Rhetorical Tradition, and Toleration,” *The Review of Politics 54* (1992): 5–33.
[xxvi] Bryan Garsten, *Saving Persuasion*.
[xxvii] James Arnt Aune, “Modernity as a Rhetorical Problem: Phronesis, Forms, and Forums in Norms of Rhetorical Culture,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric 41* (2008): 402–20.

[xxviii] For an excellent example, see Stephen John Hartnett and Jennifer Rose Mercieca, "Rhetorical Norms of Republicanism in Post-Revolutionary America, 1798-1801," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs 9* (2006): 79–112.
[xxix] For Ivie's notable work dealing with an examination of rhetoric, war language, and the decision to enter into conflict, please view: Ronald L. Hatzenbuehler and Robert L. Ivie, *Congress Declares War: Rhetoric, Leadership, and Partisanship in the Early Republic* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1983); Robert L. Ivie, "Presidential Motives for War," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60 (1974): 337–45; Robert L. Ivie, "Images of Savagery in American Justifications for War," *Communication Monographs* (1980): 279–94; Robert L. Ivie, "The Metaphor of Force in Prowar Discourse: the Case of 1812," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982): 240–53
[xxx] Jennifer R. Mercieca, "The Culture of Honor: How Slaveholders Responded to the Abolitionist Mail Crisis of 1835," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10 (2007): 68–71.
[xxxi] John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Athens, OH: Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, 1991). Also, see James S. Fishkin, *Democracy and Deliberation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991) for a more contemporary application to the Dewey argument.
[xxxii] Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).
[xxxiii] John S. Dryzek, "Rhetoric in Democracy: A Systemic Appreciation," *Political Theory* 38 (2010): 319–39.
[xxxiv] Terence Ball and J.G.A. Pocock, "Introduction," in *Conceptual Change and the Constitution*, ed. Terence Ball and J.G.A. Pocock (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1988), 1.
[xxxv] See John Dunn, *The Cunning of Unreason: Make Sense of Politics* (London, UK: Harpers Collins Publishers, 2000) for an examination about defining politics and the difficulties of determining one set definition.
[xxxvi] Kari Palonen, "Quentin Skinner's Rhetoric of Conceptual Change," *History of the Human Sciences* 10 (1997): 68.
[xxxvii] While there are too many works to list, some of the more notable works are Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967); Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1969); J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975); Garry Wills, *Explaining America: The Federalist* (New York: Penguin, 1982); Russell L. Hanson, *The Democratic Imagination in America: Conversations with Our Past* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).
[xxxviii] Jennifer Rose Mercieca, *Founding Fictions* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2010), 13.
[xxxix] James Arnt Aune, *Selling the Free Market: The Rhetoric of Economic Correctness* (New York: Guilford, 2002), 81.

[xl] James Madison, “Federalist No. 55,” in *The Federalist: with Letters of Brutus*, ed. Terence Ball (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 270.
[xli] Daniel W. Howe, “The Political Psychology of *The Federalist*,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 44 (1987): 495.
[xlii] Lloyd F. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” *Rhetoric and Philosophy* 1 (1968): 1–14.

CHAPTER II

BREAKING BAD OR: HOW MACHIAVELLI LEARNED TO STOP FEARING THE MEDICI AND ADVANCE REPUBLICANISM THROUGH PRO-WAR DISCOURSE

The motivations for going to war are sometimes more numerous than the number of battles fought in a skirmish. War can be waged for the procurement or defense of territory; solidifying the position of a country within the global arena; or even the removal of the political institutions and buildings that once marked the regime of an old government. However, these reasons for going to war often overlook the discussion used to convince others that war is necessary. Underneath it all, this dissertation focuses upon the question of what types of arguments can convince men to take up arms; I examine several case studies to determine whether Andrews' hypothesis that arguments of honor are more likely to help spur action. In the context of war, arguments of honor and principle are likely to be made without any attention given to specific events and outcomes whereas arguments of expediency are more likely to be used when there is a specific outcome in mind. I introduce Machiavelli's writings to show that arguments of expediency are used in an attempt to convince others to act and this is an example of political thought that is does not seek simply to inform but also to persuade.

In this chapter, I argue that in the context of 16th century Florence, Niccolò Machiavelli, the author of *The Prince, Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy,* and *The Art of War*, made varied claims as to the role of war in the process of expanding and securing an empire. The particular message and intent behind Machiavelli's corpus of political thought is difficult to ascertain, given that each of these writings seems to

contain a unique stratagem for achieving political ends that are seemingly unrelated. For instance, there is very little interplay between the themes in *The Prince* and the *Discourses* or *The Art of War*. However, viewing these pieces through a different lens, one can see each as working in concert toward persuading the Medici that there is only one course of action, that is going to war and in essence, forcing social change in early 16th century Florence.

The Prince and the *Discourses* are largely considered to be Machiavelli's definitive texts and form the framework for most of the scholarship about Machiavelli. While some studies include a broader swath of Machiavelli's writings, these other texts are rarely given consideration as much more than secondary or anecdotal writings.[xliii] However, these secondary texts may be dismissed too quickly without proper consideration being given to the meanings behind Machiavelli's subject matter. *The Art of War* is one such text that yields a considerable wealth of information about Machiavelli's beliefs and offers a bridge between the seemingly disjointed narratives produced by *The Prince* and the *Discourses*. I argue that Machiavelli uses *The Art of War* to portray the way in which military service creates a shared identity among the citizens and also cultivates republican ideals and civic virtue. This shared identity and civic culture among the Florentines would eventually lead to the casting out the Medici and returning the government to republican control.

First, I demonstrate that *The Prince*, which is usually understood as an effort to solidify the power of a regime, instead promotes a doctrine that, if followed, would weaken the influence and control of the Medici over Florence. *The Prince* explains that

warfare is the primary means of maintaining and extending military and political power and to make these campaigns successful, a prince should rely on a citizen militia.[xliv] *The Prince,* then, first outlines a method by which the Medici would cede power to the citizens; subsequently, the *Discourses* illustrates that Machiavelli's primary purpose is the prolonged reinstitution of a republican government. *The Art of War*, then, actually serves to show how the citizen armies advocated within *The Prince* would allow for the easy implementation of a republic.[xlv] The underlying message, in short, demonstrates that the population would benefit from advanced training in the military and through this service they would be more adept at achieving Machiavelli's vision of a republican government.

A Brief History

To understand Machiavelli, it is first necessary to note the conditions surrounding the Florentine government that influenced his writings. Prior to Machiavelli's birth in 1469, the Medici, a wealthy family involved in the banking industry of Europe, gained *de facto* control of the Republic of Florence.[xlvi] While Florence still retained the title of republic, Lorenzo de' Medici and family influenced and controlled much of the political and economic environment within the state. By 1490, political unrest had become widespread in Florence because of Lorenzo de' Medici had been "… concentrating all political decision-making in the hands of a small clique of followers."[xlvii] However, this unrest would not reach critical mass until after Lorenzo passed away and Piero de' Medici succeeded him. In 1494 the King of France,

Charles VIII, invaded Italy in hopes of conquering Naples. Upon reaching Florence, the French threatened to sack the city unless Florence could provide a considerable tribute. Piero decided, without consulting the elites in Florence, that it was in the best interest of the state to pay the tribute. Having angered the Florentines by so quickly submitting to the French, Piero left Florence and resigned Medicean control of the city.

The Medicean exit from Florentine political life created a unique opportunity for the Florentines to redesign the constitution – a feat that had not been possible since the Medici gained *de facto* control of the city in 1434. Given the corruption and political unrest that abounded during the reign of Lorenzo and later, Piero, the Florentines attempted to create political representation that would afford the denizens the opportunity to influence their own political affairs. The result of this redefined constitution was an increase in the size of assemblies for the state and a greater degree of inclusion for citizens who were previously frozen out of government service. It was during this period that the relatively unknown Niccolò Machiavelli was first appointed as head of the Florentine Second Chancery and then as secretary to the Ten on Peace and Liberty.

In 1495, Pisa revolted from Florentine rule, and Machiavelli's appointment as head of the Second Chancery and secretary for the Ten of Peace and Liberty (the Ten) in 1498 coincided with Florence's attempts to reconquer the land. Machiavelli's new duties placed him in charge of governing the military, managing the internal affairs of the state, and being secretary to the group that would define Florence's role in the war. Machiavelli was immediately thrust into a position that would force him to navigate

between Florence's refusal to pay for a quality military and the need to successfully resolve the war with Pisa. In 1503, the initial answer to this conundrum would be to hire mercenaries to fight as the main contingent for Florence backed by conscripts from the rural lands outside the city. However, this particular formula resulted in the mercenary troops contributing to a defeat for Florence and led to Machiavelli spearheading an effort to raise a militia as the primary military force. In 1505, Machiavelli received the authorization to form a militia and gained the new title of Secretary of the Nine of Militia.

After several years of raising and training troops, Machiavelli's stalwart support and reliance of the militia proved to be a tremendous success and resulted in the fall of Pisa in June 1509. After the battle, Machiavelli was placed in charge of maintaining and building the militia as the focus of the Florentine forces changed from conquest to the defense of its territory. This confidence in the capabilities of the militia would remain one of Machiavelli's primary approaches to conscripting an armed force, even after suffering defeat. In 1512, the Spanish who were aligned with the Medici attacked Florence. Machiavelli's 12,000 militiamen were unable to repel the trained regular army of the Spanish and the Medici were once again in control of Florentine affairs.

Republicanism and Rhetoric

After being accused of plotting against the Medici and being exiled from Florence in 1512–1513, Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* as a blueprint for a new ruler properly to gain and maintain control of a territory that had once been a republic. It is

difficult to ascertain the motivations for Machiavelli's authoring of *The Prince* so quickly after his exile; however, Machiavelli claimed that the primary importance of *The Prince* is to serve as a "token of devotion" to Lorenzo de' Medici.[xlviii] If a prince were to follow the instructions contained therein, it would be possible for the Medici family to rule Florence without opposition and obtain great honor. However, if one considers the contents or intent of *The Prince* in a different light, it is difficult to believe that Machiavelli did not have at least one ulterior motive.

As Machiavelli writes in the introduction, if Lorenzo were to observe Machiavelli's current living conditions, then it would be easily ascertained "how much I am unjustly oppressed by great and cruel misfortune."[xlix] As Machiavelli's misfortune was the result of being accused of conspiring against the Medici, this "token of devotion" signals that Machiavelli holds no ill will toward the ruling family and that he would be willing to serve in another capacity within this regime. *The Prince* shows a considerable amount of knowledge about how to rule a principality. If his book were well received, then the odds of receiving a future appointment within the regime would be greatly increased. However, this literal interpretation of *The Prince* assumes that this one writing is an anomaly in Machiavelli's corpus and that he had temporarily abandoned hope of Florence returning to republican rule.

A competing interpretation of *The Prince* is that Machiavelli accepts that Florence would not quickly return to republican rule, and thus Machiavelli wrote this text in hopes of gaining the most advantage, including employment or political favor, from the prevailing circumstances. As Garver notes, because Machiavelli failed to

distribute widely the contents of *The Prince* to the public, there was less likelihood that the text would gain Machiavelli any benefit if Lorenzo de' Medici failed to view or act upon the contents of the text.[l] Garver further explains that if *The Prince* had been widely released, then the public would understand the motivations of the prince and that every action was meant to control the changing circumstances surrounding that government. The public would understand that the prince's broken promises and the lack of compassion were not meant to be the actions of a vicious prince but were instead necessary to control the political environment. This mutual understanding between the prince and the public would help to create a glorious society based upon the mutual understanding that a seemingly harsh rule would sometimes be necessary. This particular explanation, however, relies too heavily on the interpretation that the Medici would desire to reach a mutual understanding with their subjects and eventually a republican government would be possible under Medici rule.[li] Garver links *The Prince* to the *Discourses* by explaining that Machiavelli believes the rule of the Medici would eventually return to republican rule given time, but this approach severely misunderstands Machiavelli's desire for republican government via the *Discourses* and underestimates the nature of political power under the Medici. Given Machiavelli's desire for republican rule and predilection for subterfuge, it is difficult to believe that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* and the *Discourses* under the belief that the Medici would simply surrender their political power.

Of the arguments suggesting that *The Prince* is written with pro-republican tendencies, one of the most notable examples is a few simple lines from Rousseau's

Social Contract that claim "[Machiavelli] professed to teach kings; but it was the people he really taught. His *Prince* is the book of Republicans."[lii] Rousseau includes a footnote explaining that the choice of historical figures used in the work as well as Machiavelli's status as an enemy of the Medici clearly shows that the intent of the work is to educate republicans while placating the Medici.[liii] This understanding, however, does little more than to say that Machiavelli's historical allusions could purposely be flawed and that if the Medici followed the document in its entirety, then a form of republican government may somehow emerge. Rousseau's assertion fails to capture the true intent of Machiavelli, which is turning Florence into a republican government through military service and trapping the prince, especially when considering the later *Discourses* and *The Art of War*.

Other scholars contend that *The Prince* was less a political tract and more a literary "tell-all" that would serve to warn the masses of the horrors the Medici would impose upon society.[liv] These previous republican approaches fall short of Machiavelli's intent. *The Prince* was written for the Medici and therefore it would be highly unlikely that the public would ever obtain a copy of the text. Instead, it would be more helpful to revisit *The Prince* as a text containing advice for the Medici about the most effective ways to rule a newly acquired state. However, this advice is designed to lay the groundwork for a return to republican form of government.

One last line of research contends that Machiavelli was attempting to trap the Medici by giving flawed advice to Lorenzo. Dietz argues that Machiavelli knowingly disseminated information that suggested the prince could not take the weapons of the

people and this, along with poor behavior from the prince, would lead to an insurrection against the Medici.[lv] This viewpoint fits closer to my central argument in this chapter, but with a different interpretation of the manner in which Machiavelli is intending to overthrow the Medici and reinstate Florentine republicanism. I contend that Machiavelli uses *The Prince* as a means of genuflecting to Lorenzo de Medici and of convincing him that war is a necessary component of maintaining and increasing the power of a government. If war is necessary, then the inclusion of one's own citizens in an army is the only way to guarantee that a principality does not expose itself to the threat of foreign troops. Knowing that these armies would consist of Florence's own soldiers, Machiavelli uses the language of *virtù* and fortune to explain that wars should be fought by seizing the immediate advantage and that this process can be learned by any individual. Throughout the *Discourses* and *The Art of War*, we see the expansion of Machiavelli's plan to allow Florence to revert back to a republican form of government. The military with *The Art of War* serves as a metaphor for the masses within a republic. Machiavelli argues that military commanders should instill civic values into their soldiers and should seek to create laws and order that would be conducive to reacting to the challenges of facing a state.

The literature concerning Machiavelli's writings systematically makes use of the pro-republican language and ideas that are present in *The Prince* and permeate the later political tracts. Throughout this modern scholarship, there is the attempt to reconcile the perceived intent of *The Prince* with Machiavelli's later works, with particular attention given to discerning whether *The Prince* was written with expedience or as political

philosophy. As Pocock notes, there is an inherent difference between rhetoric and philosophy. Machiavelli's work, while addressed to a specific moment, takes a largely philosophical approach to understanding broader issues affecting government.[lvi] However, Pocock's particular view fails to imagine, as Viroli explains that, "through history, rhetoric can attain results that reason alone would never be able to."[lvii] So while Pocock views *The Prince* as mainly a history-centered philosophical work, Viroli argues that it is a combination of history and rhetoric that allowed Machiavelli "… to persuade an audience or a readership – that is, to win their support – but also to persuade or impel the addressees of his speech or text actually to put his advice into practice."[lviii] As Viroli assumes that Machiavelli's works necessarily focus on expedient political action, Garver suggests that *The Prince* actually succeeds because the work forces individuals to consider the consequences of political action and requires the audience to determine the appropriate course of action for a principality.[lix] Garver treats *The Prince* as a meta-narrative that is fully aware that the arguments contained therein may extend further than just the "princely reader." Kahn utilizes a similar approach, asserting that Machiavelli's use of rhetoric forces the reader to recognize and engage in the issues that a prince would likely face in a principality.[lx] Looking past the immediate issue of "how to maintain power," Kahn demonstrates that Machiavelli's rhetoric alone indicates a strong preference for republics over principalities. If these rhetorical approaches to *The Prince* illustrate such a commitment to one form of government over another, then how does Machiavelli's rhetoric signal his pro-republican preference?

When approaching *The Prince*, it is important to note that Machiavelli focuses upon the outcome of an action as its justification. For Machiavelli, it was possible to be virtuous and moral in the private realm but actions concerning the formation and maintenance of the state are amoral. The actions of a prince could then "… involve a conflict between private morality and political expediency."[lxi] By ascribing to the prince the moral latitude to combat any exigencies, Machiavelli is able to dictate a precise distinction between the view of honor and glory associated with a western Christian belief system and the view of doing everything necessary to maintain authority and stability. As Remer notes, Machiavelli's rhetorical approach ignores his contemporary community's view of honor and glory as being a fundamental aspect of a western Christian belief system and instead establishes a rhetorical dimension that cannot be judged by the standards of his contemporary community.[lxii] With order and stability being the fundamental goals of a society, Machiavelli is able to advocate a government system that emphasizes order over honor and glory.

Within the context of Florence and a tumultuous political environment, Machiavelli declares that a principality would help foster a politically stable society and would therefore be the most advantageous form of government. However, this system remains dangerous because an overly subjugated or even a restless public coupled with a conspiring elite would be willing to overthrow a prince in retaliation for tyrannical acts.[lxiii] The elite need not be enemies of the prince because those held in close confidence would also be likely to attempt to redefine the balance of power within an empire.[lxiv] If a disgruntled public exists, then the conspirators in the cause of rebellion

could enlist these individuals.[lxv] Machiavelli writes, "For men are much more interested in present things than in those that are past, and if they find that their affairs are flourishing, they are content and do not seek changes," thus suggesting that a well-treated public would likely withstand the initial spark of rebellion and minor injustices would not set off the public passions.[lxvi] While emphasizing that there exists an absolute dominion over the subjects in a territory, *The Prince* requires that the public should be kept in favorable conditions lest they be exploited in the cause of overthrowing the prince.

This emphasis on creating a favorable environment for the population stands in contrast to the advice Machiavelli gives concerning whether it is better to be loved or feared by a public. Using love as a means of controlling the population would create a public that would "shed their blood for you… offer their possessions, their lives, and their sons" but this public would just as soon throw off the chains of bondage whenever it suited the cause of liberty.[lxvii] Using fear as the predominate method of controlling the population creates a unique difficulty as well because fear can lead to hatred which would in turn lead to insurrection. Given the belief that a principality would be better able to provide order and control, Machiavelli cautions that the public can be an unreliable and unstable variable in an empire. Thus there arises the question of what form of government best suits the maintenance and growth of an empire. If the end goal is to create the best form of government, then it becomes necessary to examine whether republics or principalities create the most prosperity for the people.

Machiavelli alludes to a principality as being dangerous for stability because of the difficulties of subjugating the people while maintaining control. However, in the *Discourses* we learn that Machiavelli favors a Roman form of republican government. As Roebuck explains, "… although [Machiavelli] does not conceive of the question so explicitly, [he] gives his preference to a Republic and his emphasis to the preservation of states. We might conclude that the *Prince* represents the act of foundation of the state, while the *Discourses* treat not only of foundation, but of growth and maintenance."[lxviii] If we are to believe that Machiavelli did not reach this conclusion immediately after penning *The Prince*, then perhaps the original intent of this work is to find a means of transforming the rule of the Medici into the previously practiced republican rule in Florence or even the Roman model of republican government. Indeed, Machiavelli addresses the Medici in the last chapter of *The Prince* to explain that Italy lacks a central authority that would be wiling to follow the prescriptions of *The Prince* and to use this advice to reinstate Florence back to a state of glory. As Machiavelli explains, "… in order for the valour [*sic*] and worth of an Italian spirit to be recognized, Italy had to be reduced to the desperate straits in which it now finds itself… Again, see how ready and willing she is to rally to a standard, if only there is someone to lead the way."[lxix] The question remains: how does Machiavelli intend the advice in *The Prince* to lead Italy back into this state of "valour and worth of an Italian spirit?" Undoubtedly, Machiavelli defines the successful ruler as an individual that would attempt to conquer new territories and expand the empire. If the Medici had read *The Prince* and were persuaded

by the advice contained therein, then this final chapter serves to goad the Medici into action.

Advocating Action

Typically the act of warfare in a democratic nation involves persuading the masses that warfare is necessary. Because early 16th century Florence was ruled by the Medici, convincing the masses was not a necessary condition for going to war, as the Medici would make the final decision. But could the Medici be persuaded to go to war? In this chapter, I examine the rhetorical arguments Machiavelli uses to convince the Medici that war is necessary. Further, I explore the outcome Machiavelli hopes to achieve by involving the Medici in conflict.

On its face, *The Prince* prescribes the ways in which a ruler might gain and maintain power within a new territory. As Machiavelli explains, "Wanting to annex territory is indeed very natural and normal, and when capable men undertake it, they are always praised or, at least, not criticized."[lxx] Further, the annexation of territory is necessary because the strength of principalities should be determined on the basis of whether "… a ruler has sufficient territory and power to defend himself, when this is necessary, or whether he will always need some help from others."[lxxi] Therefore the prince should attempt to acquire more territory because this would lead to the acquisition of more power and also the ability to protect his territory from external threats. However, there exists a genuine conundrum in that while acquiring larger amounts of land would give the prince access to the resources needed for external protection, the

internal stability of the empire is more at risk of insurrection and rebellion. Machiavelli seemingly solves this issue by declaring that the new subjects within a conquered principality should be granted some degree of autonomy and liberty so that they would be less likely to reject the prince.

But there also exists another purpose for Machiavelli to advocate an expansionist policy for statecraft.[lxxii] He writes that an army is a necessary component of a successful principality because "… any principality that does not have its own army cannot be secure; rather, it must rely completely on luck or the favor of others, because it lacks the strength to defend itself in difficult times."[lxxiii] Moreover, he argues "the main foundations of all states (whether they are new, old or mixed) are good laws and good armies."[lxxiv] This idea of a "good army" may be characterized as the most technologically and tactically adept armed force, but Machiavelli does not believe that military prowess is a sufficient condition for a good army. Instead, Machiavelli discerns the differences between the membership of different military units and explains that the most appropriate and thus the strongest army for a state is one whose membership consists of a state's own citizens. If a prince relies upon a military not composed of his own citizens, then the results can be more disastrous than not having the ability to defend itself. As Machiavelli explains, "… [A]uxiliaries can be capable and effective but they are almost always harmful to those who use them; for if they lose you will be ruined, and if they win you will be at their mercy … Wise rulers … form armies composed of their own men… for they do not consider a victory that is gained by using foreign forces to be genuine."[lxxv] Armies that use their own citizens are more adept at

policing their own members and bolstering the reputation of the state because there is one common objective (the defense of the state). Without needing to worry about allegiances or ulterior motives, a prince could trust that his army would protect the principality. Machiavelli uses these reasons as a justification for not only selling the idea of warfare to the Medici, but also for filling the ranks of a military with the subjects of a principality.

Machiavelli believes that war is necessary as a means of strengthening an empire. But there exists an added benefit of using one's own citizens as the soldiers in an army. Knowing that these citizens are generally not well equipped or even capable of defense, Machiavelli realizes that such individuals must first be trained and, most of all, trusted to obey the rules and regulations set forth by the families in power and the military. Once any campaign is finished, however, these citizen soldiers do not simply forget the training that they have undergone, instead, they resume their primary role as citizens with the knowledge of how to defend the empire. As Hörnqvist writes about *The Art of War*, "Arms are now in the hands of citizens, but more important still is the fact that they are commanded and directed by the republic and its leaders. Such arms can be used in the defense of republican liberty and the pursuit of imperial greatness. Without them there can be no sovereignty."[lxxvi] Once Machiavelli has demonstrated that there exists a reason to enlist citizens as the soldiers charged with protecting the principality, he must find a way to convince the prince that war is a necessary and that victory is obtainable given the right combination of capability and luck.

While the traditional view of war is that the outcome is decided by a combination of fortune and skill, Machiavelli alters this perception in hopes of convincing the prince to take action. Machiavelli relies on personifying fortune as a woman and suggests that these forces can be mastered by anyone with skill and the right degree of impetuousness.[lxxvii] These feminine attributes reinforce the belief that an adept leader would be able to overcome the fickleness of chance and that preparation and skill are the more decisive factors in a battle. Fortune is not completely discounted, however, as Machiavelli establishes a hierarchy that acknowledges that fortune is responsible for the results of some campaigns, "Nevertheless, rulers maintain themselves better if they owe little to luck."[lxxviii] So while republics and principalities may owe some degree of success to fortune, Machiavelli believes that fortune would still favor those individuals "… of much spirit and much *virtù*, that he will recognize those opportunities [fortune] offers…"[lxxix] This minimization of fortune suggests that the result of a battle is not decided by happenstance alone and that skill plays a larger role in determining success.[lxxx]

By creating the narrative of *fortuna* being easily overcome by *virtù*, Machiavelli reinforces the view that order, skill, and preparation are the necessary conditions to overcome political turmoil and the circumstances of war. Any successful leader would benefit his rule by focusing on cultivating *virtù* within his society.[lxxxi] But as Wood suggests, the state of an undisciplined Medicean military suffered from "… a decline of military discipline and organization, and a decrease in *virtù*. In fact, Machiavelli concludes that so little *virtù* remains, that *fortuna* now governs the affairs of men."[lxxxii]

Because *virtù* could be learned and effectively limit the influence of *fortuna*, the prince would have an interest in composing a well-trained military that would simultaneously secure the principality and benefit military conquests. Given Machiavelli's penchant for a strong militia over the use of reserves and auxiliary forces, the focus on *virtù* translates into the training of citizens for military service. This process of training and educating the population would prime the citizenry for an eventual leadership role within a republic. As Hörnqvist explains, "… Machiavelli transforms tyranny from being a destructive force that runs against and threatens to dissolve the other constitutional elements, into a dynamic, creative, and expansive power . . . and places [the tyrant] in the service of the republic."[lxxxiii]

A Simple Plan

While Machiavelli's strong republican leanings are well documented throughout the *Discourses* and can be assumed from arguments regarding *The Prince*, the discussion of types of government is largely missing from analyses of *The Art of War*. With this missing prescription for government, *The Art of War* appears to be nothing more than a flawed field guide for combat instructors or the fanciful delusions of a man once tasked with organizing the Florentine militia. However, if we assume that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* as a means of convincing the Medici that warfare was necessary to expand a regime, and that Machiavelli would write a text with an ulterior motive in mind, then it is all too possible that *The Art of War* should be viewed with the same raptness and attention to detail as these other two works.

As a field guide, *The Art of War* demonstrates Machiavelli's considerable knowledge about the process of selecting troops, the training each unit should receive, the encampment processes, as well as what types of units should comprise an army. Viewing *The Art of War* as an independent text within Machiavelli's corpus, Lynch argues that *The Art of War* serves to destabilize the influence of Christianity within the early 16th century military.[lxxxiv] This particular view relies too heavily on the belief that Machiavelli's works were each written for a particular time and place and that the intent of the writings is too specific to lend themselves to a larger view of politics, government, or the world. Regent approaches Machiavelli more holistically and argues that *The Art of War* represents the end piece to a larger belief that a search for *virtù* and military expansion will eventually lead to the ruin of civilization. Instead of ever reaching an idealized society, Machiavelli's *The Art of War* is the admission that the ends will never justify the means and instead a civilization should find contentment in the process of working toward a republican government.[lxxxv]

Perhaps the most complete analysis of *The Art of War* is given by Hörnqvist, who looks at themes presented throughout *The Prince,* the *Discourses*, and *The Art of War*. Hörnqvist argues that Machiavelli wrote the *Discourses* with the expectation that a proper army would be composed of civic-mind citizen-soldiers that would "…be expected to use their arms not to fight each other or to compete for power *within* the republic, but to contribute to its expansion and territorial growth by seeking glory *beyond* its borders."[lxxxvi] Military glory, while not traditionally categorized as a *virtù* throughout *The Prince* or the *Discourses*, fits into Wood's argument that the nature of

Machiavelli's *virtù* corresponds to the changing political and social atmosphere.[lxxxvii] Hörnqvist's analysis focuses on how Machiavelli's *Discourses* would create the idealized republic through the use of citizen-soldiers. Hörnqvist's treatment of *The Art of War* merely contends that Machiavelli is trying to portray himself as a pragmatic military expert. This analysis of *The Art of War* holds promise if Hörnqvist would further flesh out the argument of *The Prince*, the *Discourses*, and then *The Art of War* as being the realization of the society Machiavelli wishes for in the *Discourses*. In my view, the conquest advocated in *The Prince* and the military relationships described within the *Discourses* create a common bond between the members of the military and the state itself. If the military society from *The Art of War* is created, then the members of the military are unified through the common goal of attaining *virtù*, and the resulting relationship between the soldiers and the state also changes. The inclusion of military glory as *virtù* serves to personalize conquest and to change the reasons for why a soldier would fight. No longer is the command of the prince enough to require blind obedience, but instead, each soldier works toward a personal goal of *virtù* as found in military glory. This changing dynamic between a prince and the military would guarantee a gradual shift from a principality to a republican form of government and as Machiavelli explains, "There will always be a greater number of excellent men in republics than in monarchies because *virtù* is generally honored in the former, but feared in the latter…"[lxxxviii]

For Machiavelli, a member of the militia could be expected to serve during times of battle but also during times of peace. As a failure in design, *The Art of War* fails to differentiate between the role of the citizen and the role of the soldier. As a way of

determining whether the public could or should be armed to form a militia, Machiavelli writes "…for it is certain, that no subjects or citizens, when legally armed and kept in due order by their masters, ever did the least mischief to any state."[lxxxix] Machiavelli believes that the individuals could be armed during peacetime and during battle, but at all times, the commanding officer would be tasked with keeping this armed population under control. If there is no clear distinction between what constitutes a member of the society serving in a militia or generally being armed, then perhaps Machiavelli does not believe that these soldiers would ever leave their posts and would always remain as soldiers. Another possibility is that a citizen, once having been trained to serve in the militia, is imbued with a responsibility to always act for the best interests of society and that all citizens would be similarly required to act in this same fashion. As Pocock argues, "… Machiavelli is employing the concept of armed *virtù* to transform the question of the participation of the many in citizenship. The usual way of defending a *governo largo* was to assert that the many were peaceable… [and] had common sense enough to reject what was not for their own good and moral sagacity enough to elect and defer to their natural superiors in the civic elite."[xc] The individuals who chose to become part of the military were given more responsibilities to protect the rest of the population but also maintained the primary role of citizen. Citizens and soldiers then, have the same responsibility to the society to maintain order and follow the laws that limit harm. If *The Art of War* lacked applicability to a republic then there would be very little discussion about how a citizen-soldier would be expected to act when not on the battlefield.

While *The Art of War* contains advice about militaries, the prescriptions contained therein apply to republics much in the same way as many of the recommendations in *The Prince* apply equally as well to republics. Machiavelli notes that both republics and principalities require laws and arms because: "The main foundations of all states… are good laws and good armies."[xci] As Machiavelli dispels the belief that a republic would require any less order than a principality, there is an inherent need for a prince or a republic to limit transgressions against the rest of the population.[xcii] A militia would require the same amount of order and discipline regardless of whether the troops were on the battlefield or serving as a peacetime contingent tasked with protection. Machiavelli takes particular care to blur the lines between the soldiers on the battlefield and soldiers serving within the confines of a republic by requiring commanding officers to discipline troops regardless of their duty station.[xciii] Furthering this idea of order, throughout *The Art of War* Machiavelli warns that the only way to achieve continued success is through providing discipline for the soldiers. Using the battlefield to show the uncertainty that exists in both war and in the political world, Machiavelli explains, "…a good infantry must able not only to withstand cavalry but also to confront any other sort of infantry fearlessly; and this, as I have often said before, must be entirely a result of their discipline and arms."[xciv] As discipline and arms make an army more likely to respond favorably to any possible threat against a state, Machiavelli argues that "… a republic, being able to adapt herself, by means of the diversity among her body of citizens, to a diversity of temporal conditions better than a prince can, is of greater duration than a princedom and has good fortune longer."[xcv]

Although the *Discourses* relates that republics are better able to adapt to changing circumstances because there are numerous individuals in charge, there is also the requisite that these numerous individuals must maintain a disciplined position that allows for the recognition of the changing environment.[xcvi]

Machiavelli contends that commanding officers are the lifeline of the military by serving in various capacities. These officers are tasked with providing council to the general and with training and preparing the military to fight, but the most important part of this relationship is that commanders serve to mitigate the whimsical and hedonistic nature of the troops. Machiavelli characterizes officers as the general overseers of the soldiers that would have intimate knowledge of troop morale as well as the capabilities of their forces and enemy forces as well.[xcvii] This close proximity to the troops grants the commander the ability to control against the primal instincts of soldiers while on the field of battle. As Machiavelli warns, soldiers will typically become so fixated on the immediate gratification of claiming the spoils of war that many commanders have had their victories lost in the waning moments of the battle.[xcviii] However, the Romans were able to overcome this greed by relying upon a system where "a certain proportion of [the spoils] was given to the soldiers according to their rank and merit. This custom made them more intent upon victory than plunder."[xcix] These officers guarantee that their soldiers are in place to control not only the actions of their soldiers but also to dole out necessary punishments and rewards.

The Art of War concludes that officers are necessary to overcome the fog of war. While soldiers are consistently given training and drills to automate their responses to

changing circumstances, the confusion that comes from a heated battle is normally enough to override training and there exists the need to relay orders that allow the troops to act quickly, decisively, and serve to limit mistakes.[c] The fog of war is enough to limit rational thought and order is meant to ensure that the training is not forgotten because "…good order makes men bold; confusion makes them cowardly."[ci]

Machiavelli suggests that music is the appropriate means to deliver messages during combat because music "…is a direction to the whole army which acts and moves in a certain measure and pace according to the different notes and sounds so that the army may know how to keep due time and order… so an army properly observing the beat of its drums cannot be easily disordered…"[cii] The introduction of music in the heat of battle is instrumental in determining Machiavelli's ulterior motives concerning *The Art of War*. Music is a symbol of civilization and rational thought and Machiavelli makes several references throughout *The Art of War* about the importance of music to maintain discipline. While music does serve to signal the orders of the general, its secondary importance is that the soldiers would be transported from a mindless state of battle back into the realm of civilized and rational thought. These commanders are responsible for delivering their soldiers from a pre-civilized position–the act of war–back to a mass of soldiers that are capable of understanding intricate battle plans. *The Art of War* suggests that soldiers should not be treated as mindless mobs or the minions of a commanding officer. Instead, the soldiers are able to comprehend information and are able to return to a state of rational thought even amongst chaos.

As Machiavelli finds it necessary to convince the Medici that a military should rely upon a militia rather than auxiliary armies or mercenaries, it is also necessary to convince the citizens that a republic is attainable. For this argument, Machiavelli surmises that commanders must not only be capable leaders but should also be capable of convincing their soldiers about a particular course of action. As Machiavelli writes, "It is an easy matter to induce a few people either to do or not to do a thing, for if arguments are not sufficient, you may use force and authority; but the great difficulty lies in making a whole army change its resolution… For this reason, it is necessary that a general should be an orator as well as a soldier; he will sometimes find it no easy task to mold it to his purposes."[ciii] This general does not rely solely upon arms or discipline to convince the army of the necessity of a particular action. Instead, a rousing speech is required to convince soldiers to act on orders and this requirement seems counter to the normal operations of well-disciplined militaries. From this, it seems entirely plausible that Machiavelli is not addressing the rank and file nature of the military and is instead addressing an entirely different scenario, the argumentation and address found within a republican assembly.

If *The Art of War* is a pro-republican piece, perhaps no line of argument more clearly illustrates Machiavelli's preference for the multitude than his negative treatment of elite units and his insistence that a militia should rely most heavily upon infantry. The *Discourses* and *The Art of War* detail the composition of an ideal military and advance the argument that infantry should be held in higher regard than elite units such as cavalry or artillery. The infantry, which is the most populated of all units, symbolizes the masses

within a republic and emphasizes how training provides the appropriate response in the face of adversity, whether it is on the battlefield or within a town square. The obedience of the soldier to the commanding officer portrays the same relationship that a common citizen should have to his representative because both guarantee fair and equal treatment for the individual in relation to achieving the best possible good for the masses. Machiavelli underplays the advantages of the artillery and the cavalry as elite units by emphasizing that well-trained pike men can repel cavalry and that artillery quickly loses its effectiveness if the common soldier shapes the terrain to his own advantage.[civ] This anti-cavalry and anti-artillery position mimics Machiavelli's position against elites being self-interested and often at odds with what is best for the whole population.[cv] The artillery and cavalry seek glory for their own units rather than focusing on merely being part of the whole.

While military units are often trained separately to maximize their potential and role within an army, Machiavelli argues that specialized units provide a limited utility and should be avoided. Cavalry and artillery slow the advancement of the regular military by requiring special treatment, provisions, and considerations while in battle. These forces may turn the tide of a battle but Machiavelli clearly believes that the *virtù* of a common soldier makes a larger determination of success. If the prescriptions for Machiavelli's citizen militia were followed, then the regular infantryman would have a vested interest in the outcome of a contest because a defeat would mean a possible loss to their own land or government. These soldiers, then, the citizens, would be willing to pursue military success through cleverness and hard work. Machiavelli notes that the

digging of trenches or perseverance in battle are often determinants of success and these common soldiers would be the most willing to do whatever is necessary to secure a victory. If we extend this idea to Machiavelli's republic then these common soldiers and citizens would be willing to do whatever is necessary to guarantee success of their government. Machiavelli believes that empowering the masses through military training would lead to an increase in civic virtue and this is the impetus behind *The Art of War*.

Conclusion

If the foundations of all states are "good laws and good armies," then *The Art of War* clearly focuses upon the requirement for good armies as a means to ensure good laws.[cvi] Much of *The Art of War* appears to be focused solely on the best methods of training an army and conducting warfare. However, there exists an underlying theme that Machiavelli believes that modeling a republic after the military would be the best means of unifying a state. To achieve an idealized society, Machiavelli does not prescribe a military government or even compulsory military service. Instead, *The Art of War* through its advocacy of citizen militias acts as an inherently expedient text that reiterates the advice of *The Prince*: the outcomes of campaigns are decided by a lot of training and a little luck.

While Machiavelli's intentions behind *The Prince* have been obscured because of political necessity, it is not all too difficult to posit that Machiavelli's writings are an attempt at persuasion. From *The Prince*, the *Discourses*, and *The Art of War*, we find that warfare can masquerade as a means to elicit social and political change in a closed society. While Florence was under Medicean rule, Machiavelli found it politically

necessary to craft subtle arguments that would undermine the existing government and pave the path to a return of republican government. Machiavelli focused upon persuading the Medici, however, this is only one facet of his entire plan. Machiavelli alludes to citizen militias, skill, and fortune to create a narrative that should persuade the Medici that the outcome of a battle is contingent solely on the factor of which army is more prepared. This rhetoric used upon the Medici can easily be applied to the citizens of any country and it holds an almost universal appeal in its realization and application as Machiavelli's "advice" about maintaining and centralizing political power certainly applies to governments far beyond Florence. In the next few chapters, I analyze whether expedient or principled rhetoric is more commonly used in arguments concerning war in the tradition of American political thought.[cvii]

Endnotes

[xliii] For two recent exceptions to this rule, see Diego A. von Vacano, *The Art of Power: Machiavelli, Nietzche, and the Making of Aesthetic Political Theory* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007) and Cary J. Nederman, *Machiavelli: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications, 2009).

[xliv] Upon furthering my own research about Machiavelli's *The Art of War*, I discovered a similar claim concerning Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*. Christopher Lynch argues that the *Florentine Histories* "… urgently counsels statesmen to furnish their cities with their own arms as the indispensible [*sic*] condition for resisting … the corrupt system of foreign affairs and its pernicious influence on domestic politics." For the full article, please see Christopher Lynch, "War and Foreign Affairs in *Florentine Histories*," *The Review of Politics* 74 (2012): 1–26.

[xlv] Upon researching this chapter and *The Art of War*, I came across a similar thesis from Hörnqvist in the Machiavelli and republicanism camp. Hörnqvist argues that *The Art of War* is a military strategy that would allow for all Florence and Italy to unify and to one day mimic the imperialism associated with the Roman Empire. My particular approach is that *The Art of War* itself, is the third part of an argument meant to lead to republican government by training the principality's soldiers into becoming citizen soldiers for a republic. For a more detailed explanation, see Mikael Hörnqvist, "Machiavelli's Military

Project and the *Art of War*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli*, ed. John M. Najemy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 112–27.
[xlvi] For an excellent biography of Machiavelli, see Niccolò Capponi, *An Unlikely Prince: The Life and Times of Machiavelli*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 2010). Also, Wood provides a brief and easily accessible synopsis of the events influencing Machiavelli's writings. See Neal Wood, "Introduction" to Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, trans. Ellis Farneworth (1965). Revised edition, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1990), ix-lxxix and Quentin Skinner and Russell Price, "Introduction" to Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), ix–xxiv.
[xlvii] Capponi, *An Unlikely Prince*, 20.
[xlviii] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 3. For the remainder of this chapter, the corresponding page in the text will reference a specific quote. For general ideas, I will use Roman numerals to denote chapter numbers from this edition of the text.
[xlix] *Ibid*. 4.
[l] Eugene Garver, "Machiavelli: Rhetoric and Prudence," in *Seeking Real Truths: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Machiavelli*, ed. Patricia Vilches and Gerald Seaman (Boston, MA: Brill, 2007), 103–19.
[li] *Ibid*. 103-119.
[lii] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Social Contract," in *The Social Contract and The First and Second Discourses*, ed. Susan Dunn (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), III, 6, 205.
[liii] *Ibid*. 205. Rousseau footnotes his quote by explaining, "Machiavelli was an honorable man and a good citizen; but, attached to the house of the Medici, he was forced, during the oppression of his country, to conceal his love for liberty. The mere choice of his execrable hero sufficiently manifests his secret intention; and the opposition between the maxims of his book the *Prince* and those of his *Discourses on Titus Livius* and his *History of Florence* shows that his profound politician has had hitherto only superficial or corrupt readers. The Court of Rome has strictly prohibited his book; I certainly believe it, for it is that court which he most clearly depicts." While Rousseau clearly admits that he believes Machiavelli has an ulterior motive to penning *The Prince*, perhaps there are more examples that can be used to determine Machiavelli's veiled treatment of the Medici court.
[liv] Garrett Mattingly, "Machiavelli's *Prince*: Political Science or Political Satire?" *American Scholar*, 27 (1958): 482–91.
[lv] Mary G. Dietz, "Trapping the Prince: Machiavelli and the Politics of Deception," *American Political Science Review*, 80 (1986): 785–86.
[lvi] J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 160.
[lvii] Maurizio Viroli, *Machiavelli* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 100.
[lviii] *Ibid*. 76.
[lix] Eugene Garver, "Machiavelli's *The Prince*: A Neglected Rhetorical Classic," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 13 (1980): 99-120.

[lx] Victoria Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric: From the Counter-Reformation to Milton* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).
[lxi] Carl Roebuck, "Political Stability: Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*," *Phoenix*, 6 (1952): 58.
[lxii] Gary Remer, "Rhetoric as a Balancing of Ends: Cicero and Machiavelli," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 42 (2009): 18-20.
[lxiii] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 10. Machiavelli writes of powerful men in a new territory and the dangers of these men when the opportunity permits them to conspire against the prince. "What usually happens is that, as soon as a strong invader attacks a country, all the less powerful men rally to him because they are enviously hostile to the ruler who has held sway over them … He needs only to be careful that they do not acquire too much military power and influence."
[lxiv] Niccolò Machiavelli. *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius*, in *The Chief Works and Others*, trans. by Allan Gilbert, 3 vols. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1965), 1:3,6. Because all citations in this chapter of the *Discourses* refer to volume one of the Gilbert translation, the subsequent citations will only refer to the book and chapter numbers of this translation (e.g. '3, 6' refers to chapter six of Book Three). Machiavelli warns the reader, "It will be seen, therefore, that those who have conspired are all great men, or familiars of the Prince. Of the many who have conspired, as many were moved thusly by too many benefits as by too many injuries; … All of these men were loaded by their Emperors with so many riches, honors, and dignities, that it seemed nothing was wanting to them for the perfection of their power other than the Empire, and not wanting to be lacking this, they set themselves to conspire against the Prince, but their conspiracies all had that ending which their ingratitude merited."
[lxv] Mikael Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 212.
[lxvi] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, XXIV and again in *The Prince*, XIX.
[lxvii] *Ibid*. 59.
[lxviii] Roebuck, "Political Stability," 52-53.
[lxix] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 88.
[lxx] *Ibid*. 13.
[lxxi] *Ibid*. 37-38.
[lxxii] Machiavelli addresses the acquisition of new territory within a republic and declaring that this leads to the best form of republic, but republics remain outside the purview of *The Prince*.
[lxxiii] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 42.
[lxxiv] *Ibid*. 51.
[lxxv] *Ibid*. 49.
[lxxvi] Hörnqvist, "Machiavelli's Military Project and the *Art of War*," 120.
[lxxvii] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, XXV.
[lxxviii] *Ibid*. 19.
[lxxix] Machiavelli, *Discourses*, II, 29.

[lxxx] *Ibid*. II, 1. Machiavelli writes that for the Romans, a close examination of their successes in warfare cannot be simply attributed to fortune alone. Instead, *virtù* was just as necessary to the success of the Roman Republic as it would be for a principality.
[lxxxi] For an excellent discussion of Machiavelli's rhetorical 'slight of hand' concerning *virtù* and *fortuna*, see Stephen M. Fallon, "Hunting the Fox: Equivocation and Authorial Duplicity in *The Prince*," *PMLA* 107 (1992): 1181–95.
[lxxxii] Neal Wood, "Machiavelli's Concept of *Virtù* Reconsidered," *Political Studies* XV (1967): 168-169. Also, Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, trans. Ellis Farneworth (1965). Revised edition, (New York, Da Capo Press, 1990), II, 80. Machiavelli writes, "These states choose to live a lazy, indolent life, free from trouble and inconvenience, and to rely upon *fortuna* rather than their own *virtù*… they think it is better to follow [*fortuna's*] train than to contend with her for superiority."
[lxxxiii] Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 225.
[lxxxiv] Christopher Lynch, "The *Ordine Nuovo* of Machiavelli's *Arte Della Guerra*: Reforming Ancient Matter," *History of Political Thought* 31 (2010): 407–26.
[lxxxv] Regent treats *The Art of War* as an afterthought and includes only a brief reference to the text. For the full article, please see Nikola Regent, "Machiavelli: Empire, *Virtù*, and the Final Downfall," *History of Political Thought* 32 (2011): 751–72.
[lxxxvi] Hörnqvist, "Machiavelli's Military Project and the *Art of War*," 120. Italics are in the original.
[lxxxvii] Wood, "*Virtù* Reconsidered," 168–169. Hörnqvist's "Machiavelli's Military Project and the *Art of War*," 123, also makes a similar observation that *virtù* in *The Art of War* is "attributed to orders, institutions, collectivities, actions, and horses, and only rarely to individuals."
[lxxxviii] Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, II, 77.
[lxxxix] *Ibid*. I, 30.
[xc] Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 202.
[xci] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 42.
[xcii] *Ibid*. 58.
[xciii] Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, I, 30.
[xciv] *Ibid*. II, 51.
[xcv] Machiavelli, *Discourses* III, 9, 453.
[xcvi] Machiavelli writes "To prevent his army from being thrown into disorder by any sudden attack, he should order his men to be constantly prepared for it…" *The Art of War*, V, 144.
[xcvii] *Ibid*. IV, 124. "… a general should take care to have men of proven fidelity, wisdom, and long experience in military affairs near his person as a sort of council. From such men a general may learn not only the state of his own army, but also that of the enemy's…"
[xcviii] *Ibid*. V, 140–41.
[xcix] *Ibid*. V, 141.
[c] *Ibid*. V, 138. "… many armies have been thrown into great confusion when the general's orders have been either not heard or mistaken. Such orders, therefore, should

be very clear and intelligible, especially on important occasions; if they are given by drum beat or by the sound of a trumpet, it should be done in so distinct a manner that one note or sound cannot be mistaken for another…"

[ci] *Ibid*. II, 61.

[cii] *Ibid*. II, 75-76.

[ciii] Machiavelli, *The Art of War* IV, 127–28.

[civ] Machiavelli, argues that "As for the cavalry, you have nothing to fear from them, for the pikemen who surround you on all sides will secure you sufficiently against their fury, even if your own should be repulsed" *The Art of War*, III, 92. For another discussion on the limited utility of cavalry, see *Discourses* II, 18. Machiavelli also makes similar claims for artillery in *Discourses* II, 17 and *The Art of War* III, 95-99.

[cv] See again Machiavelli, *The Prince*, III and *Discourses*, 3, 6 for a discussion about the role of elite interests within a principality or republic.

[cvi] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 42.

[cvii] In the American tradition, there exists a vast literature that links Machiavelli to the founding era of American political thought. Some of the more notable arguments about Machiavelli and his intent and influence on the American founding come from Quentin Skinner's *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol 1, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1978), Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) and J.G.A. Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975). For Skinner, Machiavelli's political vision revolves around security in *The Prince* and then liberty in the *Discourses* (*Foundations*, 156) and eventually Machiavelli begins to focus his energy upon questions about the rise, maintenance, and fall of republican governments (*Machiavelli*, 49). Pocock argues that the American founding and revolution "stresses Machiavelli at the expense of Locke" (545). Other examples include Machiavelli's influence on the thoughts of Hamilton in John Harper, *American Machiavelli: Alexander Hamilton and the Origins of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007) as well as John P. McCormick, "Machiavellian Democracy: Controlling Elites with Ferocious Populism," *American Political Science Review* 95 (2001): 297-313. McCormick argues that the institutional design of the American government perpetuates class inequalities that would create conflict between the lower classes and the elites. This process might allow for a republican government but McCormick believes that the masses are inept at controlling themselves.

CHAPTER III

REVOLUTIONARY RHETORIC FOR LOCKEAN LIBERALS: JEFFERSON AND PAINE IN COLONIAL AMERICA

The preceding chapter argues that Machiavelli used the narrative of *fortuna* and *virtù* as a means to persuade the Medici that war was necessary. While Machiavelli used the idea of *virtù* to show that victory was attainable in conflict, it is the use of *fortuna* that conveys an arguments of expediency by emphasizing there is an immediate need to go to war. While Machiavelli remains a theoretical example of how language and ideas can be used to persuade the elites that war is desirable, can the same language concepts of opportunity and immediacy persuade "men to take up arms?" This chapter as well as the two remaining chapters are case studies that illuminate the intersection of rhetoric and political theory to answer the question of whether early American arguments relied upon appeals to honor and principle rather than using arguments of expediency in the attempt to persuade the people to take up arms. In these cases, it is important to note that the particular arguments used are less important than the way in which these arguments are conveyed. From a Pocockian perspective, we should study political languages, the modes of discourse available to people discussing political affairs in particular times and places in order to understand the full intent of the written word.[cviii] This chapter illustrates that two individuals, writing in roughly the same time period and from the same tradition, are able to reach vastly different results with the manipulation of language.

Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine have long been counted among the founders

of American political thought because the principles of their arguments support a liberal interpretation of the rights of man and the government's duty to protect these rights. These authors rely upon an understanding of the Lockean conception of liberty that ultimately leads to the default position that revolution may be necessary. First, I look at Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* to explore the justifications for revolution through the liberal tradition and then I explore the ways in which Jefferson and Paine utilize these arguments to create a social narrative with which the colonists can identify. From this point, I argue that principled arguments alone, however, were necessary but not sufficient for the project of independence. In this chapter, I argue that the rhetoric used during the years immediately prior to the Revolution greatly aided in its realization. The work of Jefferson and Paine reveal the divergent rhetorical strategies each employed in their arguments supporting a war for independence. I argue that for the American Revolution, Jefferson's use of the Lockean conception of natural rights in *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* serves to justify and appeal for action, but is never the impetus for the revolution. Instead, the argument of natural rights coupled with an explicit revolutionary rhetorical pragmatism found in Paine's *Common Sense* serves to create an atmosphere conducive to spurring a rebellion.

The rhetorical significance of these two early American revolutionary documents can be easily overlooked. For Jefferson, the *Summary View* is often considered only as a precursor to the Declaration of Independence and not as a significant work within early revolutionary rhetoric. However, "[in] contrast to earlier colonial statements of […] rights, the *Summary View* put much less emphasis on the painful details and dangerous

implications of parliamentary efforts to tax the colonies, and deal[s] primarily with the constitutional and philosophical issues" concerning the rights of British Americans.[cix] Contrary to Jefferson, Paine does not rely upon a strictly constitutional interpretation of parliamentary law but instead gives birth to a continental identity in *Common Sense*. As Lucas writes, "[*Common Sense*] contributed to the creation of a store of public arguments that could be used to rationalize a decision for independence if and when such a decision was forced upon them."[cx] But *Common Sense* was not only a store place for arguments about independence, for within this tract existed the expression of colonial frustrations over Britain and the ability to unify the public. As Foner describes,

> *Common Sense* did express ideas which had long circulated in the colonies–the separateness of America from Europe, the corruption of the Old World and innocence of the New, the absurdity of hereditary privilege and the possibility of a future American empire. None of these ideas was original with Paine. What was brilliantly innovative was the way Paine combined them into a single comprehensive argument and related them to the common experiences of Americans.[cxi]

Common Sense served as a precursor to a newly imagined American identity by reiterating the thoughts already on the minds of the Colonists but also by having the audacity to boldly proclaim that these beliefs were valid. As the foundational work of this new identification, Paine is able to summarily declare that the colonists are not deserving of better treatment from England because they are displaced Englishmen, but instead, they should be treated as citizens of their own country. Both Jefferson and Paine

highlight these two different schools of thought found throughout the colonies and introduce the common theme of revolt in response to mistreatment.

John Locke

The political thought of the colonists was based upon a variety of sources, "the major figures of the European Enlightenment and many of the lesser, contributed substantially to the thought of the Americans; but except for Locke's, their influence, though more decisive than that of the authors of classical antiquity, was neither clearly dominant nor wholly determinative."[cxii] Locke's *The Second Treatise of Government: An Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent, and End of Civil Government* utilizes a natural rights based argument as the legitimating form and end of Government. For Locke, individuals enter into society because society affords protection that is not properly regulated within the natural state. A social contract is therefore formed to initiate the protection natural rights because man "hath by nature a power, not only to preserve his property, that is, his life, liberty and estate, against the injuries and attempts of other men…"[cxiii] This social contract places individuals into a civil society with one another that allows for "… a common established law and judicature to appeal to, with authority to decide controversies between them, and punish offenders…"[cxiv] For Locke, the entrance into society is predicated upon the equal protection of life, liberty, and estate as well as a common and impartial judge to make decisions concerning these rights and infringements upon them. If there is no impartial judge, then man is in "the perfect *state of nature*."[cxv] As Wootton explains, "For Locke… absolute governments

cannot be legitimate because they provide for no impartial arbitrator in disputes between the subject and his ruler," and this places both of these individuals into a state of war with one another.[cxvi] However, "[t]he end of government is the good of mankind; and which is best for *mankind*" and this exists so long as "the boundless will of tyranny, or that the rulers should be sometimes liable to be opposed, when they grow exorbitant in the use of their power . . ."[cxvii] When the rights of the individual are infringed upon by the government, then civil society is given license to find a government that will better protect their interests.

According to Locke, even if the government is dissolved, the individual still does not revert back to a pure form of the state of nature. Rather, the individual must find or install a new government that will allow individuals and government to better fulfill their own reciprocal obligations.[cxviii] These reciprocal obligations dictate that if an individual obtains property, then there is not an absolute dominion over the property. Instead, there is a requirement that all property should not be wasted and government is legitimated so long as it protects an individual right to property.[cxix] Hence, "The *state of nature* has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one . . . that being all *equal and independent*, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions…"[cxx] Within this conception of the natural world and society, reason would dictate that a greater good may be achieved by furthering societal relations instead of the strict accumulation of wealth. Locke's view of property rights and reason dictates that any government is responsible to further society and that a government could encroach upon these natural rights by failing to offer adequate protection. This call for natural rights and

adequate protection, however, fails the universal human rights litmus test when compared to any ideal of egalitarian natural rights.

For Locke, the institution of slavery has been very difficult to reconcile given contrasting views found within the *Second Treatise* and the *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*.[cxxi] While the sole authorship of the *Fundamental Constitutions* are under some scrutiny, David Armitage finds that Locke is mainly responsible for the passages that offer a unique religious toleration and freedom for individuals within the Carolinas.[cxxii] The *Fundamental Constitutions* were written and published before the *Second Treatise* was written and the particular view of the Lockean liberal political society does not extend natural rights as far as the *Second Treatise* does. For the *Fundamental Constitutions*, slavery can legitimately exist and slaves are under the absolute dominion of their masters. The rights of slaves were overlooked in that "no slave shall hereby be exempted from that civil dominion his master hath over him, but be in all other things in the same state and condition he was in before."[cxxiii] Furthering this concept, Locke asserts that "[e]very freeman of Carolina shall have absolute power and authority over his Negro slaves, of what opinion or religion soever" granting that religious liberty will not free an individual who has been already placed in a life of slavery.[cxxiv] As a disjuncture to this approach, Locke allows for a law that gives slaves the ability to choose their own religion and maintain the same benefit and right of practice for their religion as a free man.[cxxv] Also, Locke's *First Treatise* references the practice of slavery within the West Indies by allowing a master the "Power in His Family over Servants born in his House, and bought with his Money."[cxxvi] And referring

to issues of sovereignty and war, Locke writes, "… may not therefore a man in the West Indies, who hath with him sons of his own, friends or companions, soldiers under pay; or slaves bought with money, or perhaps a band made up of all these, make war and peace, if there should be occasion…"[cxxvii] Based upon these references from the *First Treatise*, it is difficult to reconcile the extent to which the natural rights argument of the *Second Treatise* extends to all individuals. Coupling the *First Treatise* with the *Fundamental Constitutions* as well as personal practice, Locke appears to condone the slave trade. However, taking the passages concerning slavery in the *First Treatise*, without the filter of our personal knowledge of Locke, we find that these passages do not condone slavery, but instead simply recognize that slavery occurs in the world and that the power of the owner over the slave is absolute in these circumstances. While none of these offer satisfactory explanations for Locke's personal behavior or the differences between his writings, Waldron explains these contradictions the best in that "… few theorists have managed successfully to establish a perfect unity between theory and practice, and when they have it has usually been in the context of institutional opportunities… that are quite different from the environment in which Locke wrote."[cxxviii]

Locke's acceptance of slavery, notwithstanding the *Second Treatise*, appears to be fueled by the practices and beliefs of the time period in which Locke was writing.[cxxix] The *First Treatise* and *Fundamental Constitution* are in seemingly direct contradiction to the natural rights argument found within the *Second Treatise*. However, as Waldron explains for the *Second Treatise*, " . . . the conditions [for slavery] are themselves very restrictive. We are talking only about the enslavement of captives taken in a *just* war,

and only captives who were *actual participants* in the aggression that made the just war necessary."[cxxx] This just war theory of slavery holds that slavery can only occur when an individual places themselves against the will of the majority and attempts to eliminate or limit the individual's natural right to property. Farr attempts to reconcile the difference between slavery and natural rights in Locke's writings by suggesting that Locke never intended slavery to exist in the New World. Looking back to the *First Treatise*, Locke discusses the power and not the right of the owner over slaves.[cxxxi] This explanation gives much credibility that there exists a distinct difference between the practice and the theoretical justification for slavery. The *First Treatise* and *Fundamental Constitutions* as well as Locke's ownership in slave trading companies suggests that he condones the practice of slavery. The *Second Treatise* is different, however, in that it attempts to legitimate the practice of slavery under a distinct set of circumstances. One possible explanation that may have been largely overlooked by most scholars seeking to answer the question of when slavery may occur in society is that Locke uses slavery in the *Second Treatise* to emphatically suggest that placing oneself in a war against another individual is such a horrendous practice that the aggressor is no longer afforded any natural rights except for death or servitude. If Locke uses slavery as a warning for an atrocious action and the possible outcome of a state of war, then those individuals that would place themselves willingly at war against others are inhuman and are thus removed from society and its comforts. Locke's theories do not allow for a powerful force or sovereign to automatically correct for unchecked aggression, but much like Locke's view of nature, man is allowed to punish a crime to so that it can dissuade the

same crimes from occurring in the future.[cxxxii] Within the terms of society, Locke does not allow for a government to take the life, liberty, or estate of an individual and so an aggressor who has removed him or herself from society is guaranteed life under the condition of slavery, but as a sole exception, allowed to take their own lives if the servitude is too unbearable.[cxxxiii] This warning becomes such a distinct part of Locke's *Second Treatise* that Locke is forced to describe the extent to which the property is subject to seizure by the society.

Rhetorically, Locke's *Second Treatise* may not have to make the strict regulations against slavery that the argument for liberalism would suggest. As Farr explains, "'Slavery' was a rhetorically powerful fear for Englishmen–or radical Whigs at least. They associated it with monarchical 'absolute power' that might descend or had already descended upon the English nation."[cxxxiv] Locke was well acquainted with the conditions of slavery and his familiarity with this practice in the world. His own personal life suggests that Locke could use the term slavery as a grim warning for anyone willingly placing themselves outside guidelines of an ordered society. This relationship, however, is reciprocal because it applies not only to the right of individuals to place themselves in a state of war with one another, but also the ability of government to place itself at war with the people. The state of war removes all societal obligations for the populace, but this also signifies that resistance and rebellion play a fundamental part of the Lockean liberal tradition that is all connected to a theory about the protection of property rights.

The traditional interpretation of Locke's *Second Treatise* was that this treatise seeks to "justify 'the Whig Revolution of 1688.'"[cxxxv] Regardless of the original intent of Locke's work, the underlying theme revolves around a principled argument that the original basis for government is founded upon the consent of the governed, but societal dependence upon institutionally defined rights limits the ability of an individual simply to choose to dissolve government based upon the infractions of these natural rights. Indeed, as Dunn explains, consent may be limited as a positive law that requires that all actions of the government must be based solely on what is considered as the good of the society.[cxxxvi] If the actions of the government do not infringe upon the rights of all the citizens, then Locke holds that the government is not immediately dissolved. Instead, as Corbett explains, there is a distinction between the right of an individual to openly resist government and the process of spurring a large-scale revolution that requires a majority to agree that a government must be replaced. As Corbett writes,

> That such men must suffer is not necessarily just under the law of nature, but should they fail in their resistance, the only common judge would have declared it just. Revolution, then, is limited not only by the law of nature but also by the spiritedness of the people. When a revolution is right is judged by the majority. The individual's judgment as to whether to take part in an attempted revolution must therefore look only what reason says is just but also to what the majority will decide.[cxxxvii]

Corbett argues that while government exists for the protection of the individual, there is a necessity that decisions for the entire society must reflect the general welfare of the mass society. Upon leaving the state of nature, the individual has given up the ability to

punish intrusions on his rights and the process of revolution reflects the individual inability to act in these circumstances. Under the process suggested by the *Second Treatise*, the removal of government must be deemed necessary because multiple transgressions suggest the government has become tyrannical and no longer works for the well being of the society. This call for revolution is one that a single individual cannot make alone.

Should government transgress the natural rights of a citizen, an individual then has the right to withdraw his or her consent from this government and to seek out another that will offer better protection.[cxxxviii] Man does not revert back to the perfect state of nature but is instead given the opportunity to erect a different government that will more adequately protect the liberty and property of that society. As Locke writes,

> To conclude, The *Power that every individual gave the Society,* when he entered into it, can never revert to the Individuals again, as long as the Society lasts . . . Or else when by the Miscarriages of those in Authority, it is forfeited; upon the Forfeiture of their Rulers . . . *it reverts to the Society,* and the People have a Right . . . erect a new Form, or under the old form place it in new hands, as they think good.[cxxxix]

While Locke grants society the authority to remove the current government from power, he fails to explain adequately the means or process by which government would be removed. In theory, *The Second Treatise* would allow for the formation of a new government whenever the legislature or executive has failed to protect the rights of the society, but this process and the formation of a new government requires that society acts in unison toward this end. As Locke writes, "… such revolutions happen not upon

every little mismanagement in public affairs. Great mistakes… will be born by the people without mutiny or murmur. But… a long train of abuses… put the rule into such hands which may secure to them the ends for which government was at first erected…”[cxl] The fomenting of rebellion, then, does not rely solely upon the recognition of an injustice to one individual, but the recognition of numerous injustices to the whole. For an individual can rationally decide that a governing authority has overstepped their boundaries but this does not automatically establish that revolution or resistance is required. This cry for revolution necessitates that a majority of the public agrees that their natural rights have been violated and the encroachments to their rights, when not acted upon, will lead to an undesirable end that is worse than any fate suffered from a revolutionary action. As Wootton suggests, “In Locke’s view men have an inalienable right to stand up for themselves; but rebellion will be futile if others do not recognize that the interests you are defending are theirs too.”[cxli] Locke allows for the removal of government to further the idea that legitimate governments operate solely through consent. However, if a society agrees that a government is no longer acting within the best interests of the society and when the grievances are severe enough, how does one convince others of any particular course of action?

Locke argues from a standpoint of principled action that contains “lofty” ideals that colors the world in black and white, right and wrong. These lofty ideals are not closely represented in the actual world and are often difficult to realize. However, these form principled arguments can alert the public that all is not right with the world and suggest a normative position for which society ought to strive. In the period prior to the

Revolution, Jefferson and Paine utilized arguments from principle to explain that Britain has overstepped its boundaries. Paine, however, furthers this argument with an element of expediency that justifies the call to arms, a point that Jefferson only superficially addresses. Arguments of expediency do not shade the world into two distinct colors that embody the notion of right and wrong, but instead, the preferred course of action is determined through what is deemed as the desired end of the speaker. Jefferson's *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* utilizes an argument of principle in hopes of gaining support for independence by structuring itself strongly upon the Lockean principles of life, liberty, and property and an aversion to slavery. Ultimately, Jefferson's approach is unable to lead the audience to the desired conclusion of a revolutionary syllogism. *Common Sense* differs in that it does not rely upon the audience to complete the logical argument. Instead, Paine offers the premises of the argument as well as the desired conclusion that requires the audience only to decide whether or not revolution will be undertaken.

Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson is the primary author for *A Summary View on the Rights of British America* and a major contributor to the Declaration of Independence, but while these works are just a small portion of Jefferson's entire corpus, they elucidate the ideals for the singular responsibilities of government. More importantly, they serve as a window into the authors who influenced Jefferson's political thought. As a student of the Enlightenment, rhetorical studies, and belles-lettres, Jefferson is also known to have

studied under William Small and George Wythe, whose rhetorical works and teachings played a large role in further cementing a rhetorical presence in his later works.[cxlii] Furthering the tradition of rhetorical studies and the belles-lettres, Jefferson owned numerous volumes of Cicero and Quintilian that would also lead to a fluency in rhetorical strategies and, at very least, a superficial knowledge of argument construction.[cxliii] But if any claim can be made that Jefferson was familiar with an argument solely because it appears in his library, then one must also examine whether the absence of any particular author means that Jefferson was not familiar with the work.

Because a fire at Shadwell is responsible for extinguishing the library of the young Thomas Jefferson, little remains known about which theorists influenced his political thought. Since no authoritative list exists as to what books occupied the shelves at Jefferson's residence prior to the fire, the question of Locke's influence on him still remains in contention. Most famously, Gary Wills uses this fire as a convenient opportunity to explain that the lack of Locke's tracts in the colonies means that Jefferson most likely had other influences on his political writing.[cxliv] Wills asserts that "we have enough evidence of [Jefferson's] reading, and of his conclusions from that reading, to establish that the real lost world of Thomas Jefferson was the world of William Small, the invigorating realm of the Scottish Enlightenment at its zenith."[cxlv] Wills' contention that the Scottish Enlightenment was the primary influence on Jefferson does not withstand a barrage of information presented by later scholarship, which asserts that Locke helped influence the Scottish Enlightenment as well.[cxlvi] The influences and authorship of the Declaration of Independence remain as the decidedly most important

question in establishing the significance of Locke for Jefferson's political thought, though Jefferson denied Locke as a primary influence on his writings and instead related the Declaration of Independence as being the "one opinion on this side of the water. All American whigs thought alike on these subjects."[cxlvii] But as Becker relates,

> Most Americans had absorbed Locke's works as a kind of political gospel; and the Declaration, in its form, in its phraseology, follows closely certain sentences in Locke's second treatise on government. This is interesting, but it does not tell us why Jefferson, having read Locke's treatise, was so taken with it that he read it again, and still again, so that afterwards its very phrases reappear in his own writing. Jefferson doubtless read Filmer as well as Locke; but the phrases of Filmer, happily, do not appear in the Declaration.[cxlviii]

Initially, the Declaration of Independence was written in committee and the identity of the author was not a matter of dispute in the days and years after the initial resolution. As McDonald explains, "The Declaration, like all resolutions of Congress, was a corporate statement. The word 'I' is entirely absent. 'We' appears thirteen times in Jefferson's draft and ten times in the Declaration as altered by Congress."[cxlix] The Declaration remained the finished product and Declaration of a committee, but the committee served only to moderate the original language of the document. While the original document did not bare Jefferson's name and the authorship did not seem to matter in 1776, there were moments in the history of the nation that statesmen valued the identity of the author. John Adams recounts that Jefferson's authorship would benefit the nation because a southern state would sacrifice fewer lives and property in an ensuing

revolution and this would help "elevate principle above interest."[cl] While the final authorship of the Declaration is largely credited to Jefferson, it is important to note that under the cover of anonymity, Jefferson was able to use in the Declaration the same principled argument that appears in the pages of *A Summary View*.[cli] These two documents serve as points from which we can draw a line to understand Jefferson's political theory and fundamentally, the use of principled arguments that supersede arguments of expediency.

A Summary View of the Rights of British America was initially submitted as an anonymous pamphlet, in care of the Virginia Delegates, to the Continental Congress. The identity of the author was not too closely guarded and, as McDonald explains, "after individuals in the Virginia legislature leaked their knowledge of [Jefferson's] authorship, [it] gained him notoriety as far away as London."[clii] The Continental Congress reviewed the letter and decided that it was too "revolutionary" for their tastes and thus shelved the document. Even with this lack of positive reception, *A Summary View* helped earn Jefferson a reputation that would gain him access to the committee that would draft the Declaration of Independence. As Adams recounts, Jefferson "brought with him a reputation for literature, science, and a happy talent of composition. Writings of his were handed about, remarkable for the peculiar felicity of expression."[cliii] As Browne writes, "In his rhetorical craft as in his thought, Jefferson could appear almost too eloquent, as if in the finely crafted sentiment he could make the world over again, in his image, to his own satisfaction, heedless of others."[cliv] As Bailyn notes, Jefferson was "a radical utopian idealist and a hardheaded, adroit, at times cunning politician; a rhetorician,

whose elegant phrases had propulsive power, and a no-nonsense administrator–who, above all others, was fated to confront the ambiguities of the Enlightenment program."[clv] In this confrontation with reality, Jefferson sought to take a "pure vision" and then find a way to lend this vision to the reality of the situation. As an instance of this approach, Golden and Golden recount, *A Summary View* "contains three major claims which, in turn, are developed by multiple subordinate heads and supporting details. The first of these claims is based on a series of historical precedents grounded in experience and stated in the form of an analogy" which draws upon the idea that the lands in the Colonies belong to those who first settled the soil and the invocation of the "Saxon myth."[clvi]

This argument by analogy masks the principle that Jefferson uses to refute the original jurisdiction of Parliament and the King's authority over the Colonies. Jefferson constructs a history that seeks to relate the original ownership of the colonies to the Saxons who first settled the soil. Jefferson did not state that the "colonial problem with British authority [began with] the Stamp Act crisis of 1765; the problem began in 1066, when the Normans defeated the Saxons at the Battle of Hastings."[clvii] From this point, the King began to grant lands under the name of feudalism. As Jefferson writes:

> Our ancestors, however, who migrated hither, were farmers, not lawyers. The fictitious principle that all lands belong originally to the king, they were early persuaded to believe real; and accordingly took grants of their own lands from the crown. It is time, therefore, for us to lay this matter before his majesty, and to declare that he has no right to grant lands of himself.[clviii]

This declaration serves as the basis for Jefferson's argument. Jefferson believes that the lands settled by the colonists are rightfully theirs because "their own blood was spilt in acquiring lands for their settlement…for themselves they fought, for themselves they conquered, and for themselves alone they have right to hold."[clix] Any aid received from Britain "appeared to be motivated not by a benevolent attitude toward the colonies but by the view that it would produce economic gains for England."[clx] The lack of beneficent motivations by Britain limits any right that England has to the Colonies because all their actions were motivated by self-interested behavior. The other revolutionary rhetoric focuses upon the same idea that a legitimate government could exist within the colonies so long as the only goal of Parliament was to "regulate American commerce but not to raise revenue in the colonies…"[clxi] For Jefferson, any interference from the King or Parliament was too much.

Jefferson's "style of *Summary View* was simple and emphatic, with a dramatic flair that previewed certain passages in the Declaration of Independence."[clxii] More importantly, one of the "salient features" of the *Summary View* is "Jefferson's treatment of George III and… the British monarchy."[clxiii] This work openly addresses the King concerning property grievances and in essence blames George III for not allowing the colonies to effectively govern themselves. Prior to the *Summary View*, pamphlets and editorials tended to blame parliament for grievances and excused the King from claims of wrongdoing.[clxiv] Jefferson forces the public attention onto the King and thus changes the posturing of American discourse toward the British monarchy. Jefferson alters the traditional means of addressing the King by using language that is "declaratory rather

than plaintive… the tone toward George III ranges between the disrespectful and the accusatory."[clxv] Jefferson attempts to give the other colonists the ability to directly engage the King as an equal. Jefferson's language replaces the mysticism associated with the King's position by boldly stating the King is the "chief officer of the people, appointed by the laws, and circumscribed with definite powers, to assist in working the great machine of government, erected for their use and consequently subject to their superintendence."[clxvi] Because the King is appointed by the laws and circumscribed with definite powers, Jefferson is able to question the degree to which the King is able to violate the rights of citizens. This sets up a very easy syllogism with two basic premises: The first is British citizens do not have their rights violated by the King and the second is that the Colonists have had their rights violated. The conclusion follows that the Colonists are not British citizens.

Jefferson's use of this basic argument questioning the citizenship of the Colonists is also furthered with a redefinition of property rights in the Colonies. Jefferson introduces the Saxon myth as an attempt to change the narrative typically associated with the King and to alter the dynamic of rebellion for the colonists. No longer are they rebels resisting the rule of their sovereign; instead, they are natural citizens on their own lands resisting the advances of a tyrant. Further, because the colonists were natural citizens who had willingly placed themselves under British rule, they should be accorded all the same rights of British subjects. Jefferson furthers the natural rights argument by maintaining, "Parliament could not legitimately govern the colonies in any form because there was no constitutional and legal link between the colonial governments and

Parliament whatsoever."[clxvii] Jefferson follows that consent to the King could be given only as long as the Crown protected the natural rights to life, liberty, and property; otherwise consent could be revoked. Since the King has refused to concede that these colonists deserve the same basic rights to property, the original contract between Britain and the Colonies has been broken. Therefore, Colonists are no longer breaking British law because the King has no right to the Colonies and British law does not apply in these lands.

The Saxon myth is a convoluted story used to start a common heritage for the colonists and to create an identity for the readers that did not focus solely upon the traditional English heritage. By affirming an origin of the colonists that is counter to the traditional narrative, Jefferson creates an identity that would allow "his readers . . . [to] find therein a powerful source of collective pride in such origins."[clxviii] According to Ellis, the theory of expatriation employed by Jefferson stated that the colonists were free just by having migrated to this new country.[clxix] This changed the basis on which traditional sovereignty issues were defined. If the colonists were free, and always had been, then the trespasses of the King violate the natural law of property rights. And furthermore, Jefferson argues that the only reason the colonies have adopted the British form of government is because the settlers wished to keep the same form of government that they had previously lived under, so that the colonists are free to reject the King's rule at any time. Browne explains:

> The rhetorical function of the Saxon myth: it simultaneously re-authorizes a set of historical claims even as it de-activates another; it recalls from the

past an originary tale of rights earned and assumed, and in the process literally displaces the false sovereignty of English imperial rule.[clxx]

This is almost seemingly enough justification to resist the British monarchy. Jefferson explains that if Parliament has failed to protect the colonists who have willingly placed themselves under their laws, then there can be no obligation to the parent country and the colonies are able to act in their own self-interest to maintain their own rights. The Saxon myth would conceivably create a breaking point with England, but as Ellis elucidates, the Saxon myth is false. Jefferson failed to create a believable common narrative for the audience and this explains why there was no realization of a change in the relations between Britain and the Colonies.[clxxi] However, while the Saxon myth may have failed to establish the desired change, it creates a rhetorical premise that challenges the right of Parliament to levy taxes upon the Colonies. From this premise Jefferson is able to question whether "justice is not the same thing in America as in Britain, or else The British parliament pays less regard to it here than there."[clxxii] Regardless of the degree to which the Colonists believed the Saxon myth, the rhetorical approach furthers the dramatic principle of distancing the Colonies from British influence.

Jefferson's *A Summary View* presents a very principled argument advocating a separation between the Colonies and Britain. While Lucas explains that arguments from principle and arguments of expediency are not mutually exclusive, they distract because principled arguments generally rely upon a retroactive view of events whereas arguments of expediency are generally proactive.[clxxiii] Jefferson attempts to argue from principle while suggesting that the natural outcome to having violated rights is action.

Jefferson conveys a tone that justifies future action, but action for which the timetable for an immediate change is not explicitly stated. *A Summary View* highlights the limited freedoms of the Colonists and the inability of the Colonies to sufficiently govern without the sovereign's approval. The dissolution of the colonial legislatures at the behest of the King serves as one of the grievous issues that Jefferson uses to advocate rebellion. As Jefferson writes, "It is neither our wish, nor our interest, to separate from her. We are willing . . . to sacrifice every thing . . . [for the] restoration of that tranquility . . . Let them name their terms, but let them be just."[clxxiv] The just principle that Jefferson advocates, however, favors the rights of the colonists over the rights of the British and does not rely upon an egalitarian relationship between Britain and the colonies. As Browne notes, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* does not attempt to reconcile the Colonies with England. Any reconciliation would only be a token gesture because the injustices suffered by the Colonies were far too severe to allow for a peaceful end.[clxxv] Jefferson suggests that the Colonies be allowed their own parliaments in exchange for the Colonies and England maintaining a common heritage. As Jefferson writes:

> One free and independent legislature hereby takes upon itself to suspend the powers of another, free and independent as itself; this exhibiting a phœnomenon unknown in nature, the creator and creature of his own power. Not only the principles of common-sense, but the common feelings of human nature, must be surrendered up before his majesty's subjects here can be persuaded to believe that they hold their political existence at the will of a British parliament.[clxxvi]

Jefferson relates that there is only a superficial linkage between the Colonists and Britain and that the Colonists cannot be asked to sacrifice their political rights because King George III is unwilling to recognize these rights. Jefferson asks for no less than a complete change in the political landscape of both countries and maintains that while reconciliation is possible, the resulting act of Britain ceding claims of authority to the Colonies would create the same result as a revolution.

Thomas Paine

Common Sense, originally intended to be a series of letters to a newspaper, was published in pamphlet form in January of 1776, at the urging of Benjamin Rush, also a strong supporter of independence. Paine crafted an argument that was not altogether original, but as Keane suggests, Paine perhaps reiterated clearly and forcefully what was already on the minds of others.[clxxvii] This had an effect of placing Paine at the forefront of the Revolutionary movement as Paine "is the only figure in the pantheon of Revolutionary leaders who achieved his place entirely through authorship."[clxxviii] *Common Sense* is credited as being the fundamental pamphlet that finally sparked the flames needed for revolution, according to Keane, it "sparked a new spirit."[clxxix] Ferguson states, "It was the first American best-seller. Hundreds of thousands of Americans, perhaps a fifth of the adult population in all, either read *Common Sense* or had it read to them during the course of the Revolution."[clxxx] As Wood claims, "*Common Sense* was the most incendiary and popular pamphlet of the entire Revolutionary era . . . In it Paine rejected the traditional and stylized forms of persuasion designed for educated

gentlemen and reached out for new readers among the artisan- and tavern-centered worlds of the cities."[clxxxi] This attention to a new persuasive style propelled the rights-based argument that was predominantly used throughout the Revolutionary period. Fruchtman writes that Paine crafted a language that emphasizes the specific purpose of sparking a revolution, in that he

> On different occasions for specific purposes… [chose] the language he thought was most appropriate to his subject matter. At times, for example, he spoke the Old Whig or Country language of virtue and corruption and at other times used Lockean themes of the social contract and its accompanying rights, liberties, and obligations that every citizen possessed.[clxxxii]

As Lucas opines, "*Common Sense* was so well conceived, so soundly structured, so engagingly written, so perfectly timed that it thoroughly dominated public discussion of independence . . . few authors–whether for or against severing the bond with England–strayed far from the topics introduced in Paine's pamphlet."[clxxxiii] While Jefferson's argument from principle conveys a notion that an injustice is being visited upon citizens and that this in turn requires some form of action, it is largely unsuccessful because it gives no absolute timeline to be followed. With this lack of timeline, Jefferson's arguments become secondary in the discussions of the Colonists. Paine's argument from expediency, however, conveys a sense of urgency and an immediate need for action. This urgency of action served to motivate the public to not only notice the work, but to maintain this argument on the forefront of debate.

Common Sense is often viewed as the germinal work that sparked the debate for revolution. It appeared on the market nearly two years after Jefferson's *Summary View* and is ultimately credited with changing the traditional view of reconciliation for the Philadelphia Whigs. According to Lucas, "Until the appearance of *Common Sense* almost all Philadelphia Whigs had spoken or written of the restoration of American rights within the empire as their goal."[clxxxiv] Paine insisted on independence and the entire pamphlet leads to this conclusion. As Lucas relates, "Much of [*Common Sense's* effect] was due to the manner in which Paine patterned his arguments for independence. He clarifies the direction of the essay early, the mood develops swiftly and forcefully, and the ideas unfold easily and spontaneously. Each argument is positioned to attain maximum ideational and emotional effect."[clxxxv] In part, Paine achieves success because the language does not rely upon elevated imagery. Instead the "ungrammatical language and coarse imagery […] showed the common people, who in the past had not been very involved in politics, that fancy words and Latin quotations no longer mattered as much as honesty and sincerity and the natural revelation of feelings."[clxxxvi] Paine's writings and "interests lay in setting forth his views of politics and society in a bright, vivid language designed to convince his readers that he was right to condemn tyranny and praise democracy."[clxxxvii] John Adams recognized the influence of Paine's work by remarking, in a letter to his wife Abigail, "You ask, what is thought of Common Sense. Sensible Men think there are some Whims, some Sophisms, some artfull [*sic*] Addresses to superstitious Notions, some keen attempts upon the Passions, in this Pamphlet. But all

agree there is a great deal of good sense, delivered in a clear, simple, concise and nervous Style."[clxxxviii]

Paine begins *Common Sense* with a discussion of man and society and an attempt to separate the two. If man can exist in the state of nature with no government, then government exists only as a result of individuals choosing a particular form. For Paine, government is necessary only because of man's "wickedness"; it works by restraining our vices. Furthermore, "nothing but heaven is impregnable to vice, it will unavoidably happen."[clxxxix] Because nature is cruel, men must work together in order to avoid perishing, which forms the very essence of a social contract of which individuals must partake in order to continue to survive. Paine relates that society is the original social contract, which derives its power from necessity. Government is the manifestation of men being too comfortable with their own vices and bad government, or tyranny, only serves to pervert the relationship of men to society. As a whole, however, government serves as an elite class serving to limit the rights of man and the only governments that are just and proper will be found when "the simple voice of nature and reason will say, it is right."[cxc]

Paine defends the idea of a government not ruled by Kings and hereditary succession by bringing in biblical allusions and hinting at the idea of wise men and their private thoughts. "Most wise men in their private sentiments have ever treated hereditary right with contempt; yet it is one of those evils which when once established is not easily removed: many submit from fear, others from superstition, and the more powerful part shares with the king the plunder of the rest."[cxci] Paine draws upon the idea of wise men

to lend credibility to anyone who may question the idea of hereditary succession. The common man is allowed to note his own preferences after having been informed that other men, much wiser men, have given consideration to the same idea. In many ways, this practice gives birth to an open dialogue about hereditary succession and also validates any existing fears that thoughts about rebellion are fleeting. Paine maintains that "[a] government of our own is our natural right; and when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will become convinced, that it is infinitely wiser and safer to form a constitution of our own in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance."[cxcii] Paine argues that it is better for the Colonies to make the decision to rebel and to contemplate these actions rather than delaying an inevitable action and allowing more harm to occur to future generations through inaction.

Paine begins to establish more fully the expediency of his argument by using romantic language that highlights the idea of revolution. Paine highlights the role of nature in the pursuits of the colonists and gives rise to lofty ideals by emphasizing that "the sun never shined on a cause of greater worth," and he asks whether or not reconciliation was just a dream that has passed.[cxciii] The imagery of the sun summons the idea of freedom and living in world that is unencumbered by the constraints of a legislative body that exists miles from the same soil. Paine shapes this argument by defining the scope of possible actions the colonists have in response to the grievances brought about by the King. Paine further emphasizes that the decision is up to the readers themselves in that "I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments and

common sense… than that [the reader] will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves….”[cxciv] By asking readers to consider the implications of the document for themselves, Paine places weight on allowing them to draw their own conclusions, however biased and weighted the argument. Paine openly includes the audience in this decision-making process because the realization of revolution will have to be decided by the degree to which each colonist decides that the King has infringed upon their rights. Paine understands that reconciliation is a possibility for the Colonists, but as a pamphleteer, his arguments center upon the desire to initiate action and not to maintain the status quo.

The expediency of the argument in *Common Sense* is drawn from the use of language that denotes time and action. Paine asserts the idea that the longer action is delayed, the worse the injustices become to the colonies:

> Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected even to the end of time, by the proceedings now. Now is the seed-time of Continental union, faith and honour. The least fracture now will be like a name engraved with the point of a pin on the tender rind of a young oak; the wound would enlarge with the tree, and posterity read in it full grown characters.[cxcv]

Paine attempts to convince the audience that immediate action is necessary because nature demands it. It is the best time to act. Paine relates, “It is not in the power of Britain or of Europe to conquer America, if she does not conquer herself by *delay* and *timidity.* The present winter is worth an age if rightly employed, but if lost or neglected,

the whole continent will partake of the misfortune; and there is no punishment which that man will not deserve, be he who, or what, or where he will, that may be the means of sacrificing a season so precious and useful."[cxcvi] In this sense, the expediency of Paine's argument requires immediate action.

Paine also includes imagery of the family in an attempt to remind the colonists that future generations will be subjected to the same misery if action is not presently taken. As Paine writes, "In order to discover the line of our duty rightly, we should take our children in our hand, and fix our station a few years farther into life; that eminence will present a prospect which a few present fears and prejudices conceal from our sight."[cxcvii] The idea of family and children gives the argument personal and emotional appeal by referencing future generations. Each colonist can relate to these ideas and would surely desire to avoid selling his progeny into the same conditions that he is experiencing. Paine forces the audience to consider not only themselves, but to also question what affect their inaction is bringing on future generations. This appeal deals less with rationality and more with an emotional response, one that is likely to forego self-preservation in hopes of creating a better future.

Paine uses elements of time and petitioning to the common man to achieve his purpose. Particularly, Paine's language makes the case seem urgent, as though a pandemic may break out at any time. This language of crisis and urgency helps force the issue because it signals to the audience that immediate action is necessary in order to save the colonies from absolute tyranny. As Sigelman, Martindale and McKenzie note, *Common Sense* used fewer syllables and sentences to convey the message.[cxcviii] This

direct style, asyndeton, creates a rhythm that forces readers to respond without giving much time for personal thought or reflection on the matter. The lofty ideals and sentiments of liberty served to obscure the author's desire to draw the colonists into a call for action. As Foner notes, "Paine transformed the language of an impending millennium into the secular vision of a utopia in the New World…" where "…the future destiny of America as a society defined by its commitment to liberty and its isolation from the Old World."[cxcix] Paine draws together the idea of liberty with a vision of Heaven and a mandate from God. While God would not ask men to openly attack George III, the separation of the Colonies from England was paramount for His will to succeed. Lucas writes that Paine "understood that his readers could not avow independence without first disavowing George III."[cc] Paine first has to force a break with the idea of remaining loyal to the sovereign. The suggestion of reconciliation is candidly repudiated by Paine, who maintains that bringing America and Britain together again is akin to giving "prostitution its former innocence" or ultimately "[t]here are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did."[cci] Only after individuals had committed themselves to the idea of revolution, preparation for a conflict became tantamount to the success of the Colonies. As Ferguson writes:

> In celebrating the unprecedented promise of America, [Paine] realized that communal well-being might best be appreciated in a context of crisis. Therefore, the presumed glory of America could be made to matter more if the country itself seemed to teeter on the edge of ruin and chaos. Danger, properly conveyed and then overcome, would carry mere prosperity toward the realms of higher accomplishment.[ccii]

Paine's idea of a context of crisis helps to feed the sense of the expedient argument. Action was necessary and necessary now. If one waited too long, all could be lost.

Common Themes

Jefferson and Paine rely upon the process of identification to establish a dialogue between the audience and themselves. Because the message of rebellion may be foreign or an unacceptable conclusion for the audience, the credibility of the authors may become suspect and the message discounted as a simple grievance against the King and little else. Jefferson and Paine rely upon the audience to believe that their writings are beneficial for the common man and that the conclusion of revolution is not too far-fetched and remains a practicable solution. Jefferson and Paine first heighten the division that the colonists face from England by using examples of how the colonists have suffered at the hands of the British empire but then using this division to emphasize a unity between the colonists and ultimately an identification between the audience and writer as well. As Burke explains, the "great emphasis upon *division* really serves to sharpen our understanding of *identification*."[cciii] The process of identification then, makes the audience more susceptible to arguments because it creates a dynamic between the rhetor and audience by emphasizing that we are all in this together. Jefferson and Paine may not be able to reach each person and convince him of the rightness of a liberal argument, but an effective means of gaining support is to appeal to the emotions and to use these emotional arguments as the standard bearer for any potential forms of action.

As Corbett writes, the "… common ground for a fruitful communication between the two parties may be reached through an appeal to the emotions and the imagination of the audience. There is a natural uniformity of emotional response among human beings, and that uniformity constitutes the grounds for the establishment of the kind of identification that [Kenneth] Burke says is necessary for communication."[cciv] This appeal for identification relies upon the image of slavery to draw strong emotional responses from the audience and this creates a cognitive shortcut that eludes rational thought.

Jefferson and Paine use the common theme of slavery to illustrate the dichotomy of the Colonists, on one hand and Britain, on the other. By emphasizing the refusal of the British to work toward a mutually satisfying resolution with the colonies, Jefferson and Paine create strong feelings within the audience of disdain toward Britain by recounting how there is a division between what was once a united kingdom. Jefferson emphatically reiterates that multiple infractions upon the rights of the British Americans were attempts to continuously oppress the Colonists and to limit their ability to self govern through a systematic reduction of the colonists toward slavery. As Jefferson writes, "Single actions of tyranny may be ascribed to the accidental opinion of a day; but a series of oppressions… too plainly prove a deliberate and systematical plan of reducing us to slavery."[ccv] The acts of Parliament in the past act as a justification to explore the degree to which these natural rights have been consistently limited, regardless of circumstance. The numerous transgressions serve as a constant reminder that this government is only interested in patronizing the colonists and that as a whole the British Americans are forced to live at the mercy of the King and Parliament. Jefferson contends

that the laws of Parliament have caused harm and have limited the quality of life for the Colonists.

Using Locke, Jefferson alludes to the argument that slavery is only just under the conditions of war. Without the colonists waging war upon Britain, the British Parliament was guilty of violating the social contract. Jefferson links the terms of slavery to the idea of colonial representation and the inability of the colonists to hold the king accountable for actions that systematically attempt to reduce the colonies to slavery. These claims for representation exist within the ideal of consent that the liberty of man shall not be placed "under the dominion of any will, or restraint of any law, but what that legislative shall enact, according to the trust put in it."[ccvi] Since the King has forbidden the governor of Virginia to give "assent to any law for the division of a county, unless the new county will consent to have no representative in assembly,"[ccvii] Jefferson is able to link liberty to representation and the lack of representation to systemized slavery. Jefferson appeals to the rational capacity of the colonists by asking for the justification for:

> [W]hy 160,000 electors in the island of Great Britain should give law to four millions in the states of America, every individual of whom is equal to every individual of them, in virtue, in understanding, and in bodily strength? Were this to be admitted, instead of being a free people, as we have hitherto supposed, and mean to continue ourselves, we should suddenly be found the slaves not of one but of 160,000 tyrants, distinguished too from all others by this singular circumstance, that they are removed from the reach of fear, the only restraining motive which may hold the hand of a tyrant.[ccviii]

These representation issues are of key importance to the colonies, and limiting the ability to redress Parliament and the King is seen as an act of tyranny in itself. Jefferson draws upon the slavery imagery and the lack of free will to emphasize that the lack of colonial representation is inherently against the rules of reason and that any individual responsible for these acts are placing themselves in opposition to liberty. As Dorsey explains, "[Jefferson] first figuratively describes Britain's plan to enslave the colonies, and then he announces that the colonies intend to end the literal practice."[ccix] Slavery then becomes a strong identifier linked to the terms of discretion prescribed by the King and Parliament. Jefferson asks, "Does his majesty seriously wish . . . that his subjects should give up the glorious right of representation . . . and submit themselves the absolute slaves of his sovereign will?"[ccx] The King not only ignores the will of the colonies and limits the ability of the colonies to diplomatically solve this dilemma; the dissolving of colonial parliaments is an act of war.

Paine, too, uses the image of slavery to accent the division of the Colonists from the practices of England. The use of slavery for Paine, however, is primarily a threat about what may occur if the colonies trust the British for security in the course of reconciliation. "Conquest may be effected under the pretence of friendship; and ourselves, after a long and brave resistance, be at last cheated into slavery."[ccxi] While this is just one possible outcome of reconciliation, Paine also uses the image of slavery to explain it as a course of action for when true governments fail. "It is easy to see that when Republican virtues fail, slavery ensues."[ccxii] Paine suggests that slavery is the natural end to governments that fail to ensure a legitimate form of government based

upon consent. Anyone without this legitimate government is reduced to slavery. For Paine, as well as Locke, legitimate government can only be achieved through consent and through the mutual goal of attaining what is best for the people. Paine loads the argument by asserting that the life of a colonist under British rule is much like slavery because it is against nature and reason for such a large country to operate as the satellite of a smaller country and so "it is evident they belong to different systems: England to Europe, America to itself."[ccxiii] Paine further charges the argument with negative connotations by associating any form of reconciliation with willingly donning the chains of bondage and by equating the consequence of failing to secure a new government with the slavery to which the colonists are already subject. Reconciliation only means that slavery is the preferred mode of life and the only solution for those desiring freedom is to no longer live under the banner of Britain.

The imagery of slavery and bondage functions much like any other strong concept or God-term.[ccxiv] These God-terms serve to limit the ability of an individual to rationally consider the terms of an argument by circumventing reason for a majority of the people and changing an argument to the terms of an absolute dichotomy. One example would be the idea that "anyone not with us is against us," which fails to allow for any middle ground. In the context of Jefferson and Paine, the God-term of slavery serves as an apocryphal syllogism in which the Colonists associate the premise of British rule with the outcome of slavery. In this argument, the warning of slavery does not guarantee that any specific outcome will result from the desired action. Instead, God-terms in these writings rely upon first extinguishing the threat to individual liberty and

then thoughts concerning a better future would be examined. Numerous God-terms exist at any time. As Lucas explains:

> "Liberty" was an emotive word possessing any number of potential meanings depending on the goals, values, and attitudes of its perceivers… Liberty might also mean simply freedom from unconstitutional taxation by an arbitrary legislature three thousand miles away. The term served to unite various people with diverse interests in defense of a common value.[ccxv]

Slavery in *Summary View* and *Common Sense* evokes different ideas for every reader, but unites those readers in a common theme: slavery is against nature and the Colonies should not readily embrace it.

Jefferson and Paine use slavery as a powerful motivator that unifies the public under the idea that unchecked tyranny would ultimately bring misery and injustice to the Colonies. Jefferson suggests that the Colonies should be allowed to decide their own fate as the subjects of Britain while Paine demands the ultimate severing of ties between the two. The injustices of the King and Parliament demand a recourse that would allow British America to steer its own path, unfettered by the whims of the King and requiring Parliament's consent to self-govern. The imagery of slavery and the Colonists' desire for a local parliament reiterates that any large body of citizens must have the ability to make laws to govern themselves. By contrast, the British Government is seeking only to perpetuate its own power through force, no longer concerned with the rights of the people. Jefferson's and Paine's uses of Locke's argument for natural rights and a responsive government only serve to illuminate these problems. While Jefferson clearly

illustrates the two major premises of an argument for revolution, it is Paine's work that essentially serves as a catalyst for action by providing a course of action according to which rebellion could succeed.

Conclusion

If we view Andrews' "American adolescence" theory, one would expect that Jefferson's writings would be enough to convince men to take up arms. This is especially true considering the infancy of the country. As Jefferson's writings suggest, revolution is necessary but this argument fails to gain the necessary support to begin action. Jefferson and Paine both write of the grievances the colonies face at the hands of the British monarchy. These ideas were present within much of the revolutionary literature and lack any novel basis from which to argue that encroachments on the rights of Colonists had been made by Britain. The novelty of Jefferson's and Paine's arguments derives from the rhetorical approaches that these authors use to motivate the public in a revolutionary-inspired syllogism. Jefferson accomplishes this by addressing the King as the chief perpetrator of any injustices by Britain and by identifying the history of claims made against Britain and the failure of the George III or Parliament to rectify any of these problems. Jefferson furthers the syllogism with a premise that the perceived authority of Britain over the colonies is non-existent because free men had spilled their own blood to settle the colonies. If the colonies were not originally under the control of the British government through original consent, then the King has no

legitimate power and can thus be cast off. This argument relates to Paine's ideas concerning the nature of hereditary succession and the legitimacy of monarchy. Paine uses biblical allusions and careful semantic interpretation to convey the point that nature does not allow for monarchy and that continuing to live under one would allow for no relief from the current "atrocities" associated with the British.[ccxvi]

While Jefferson argues from the basis of honor and principle, his argument is not completely devoid of expedience. Jefferson includes a sense of urgency in his writing by outlining the possibility of reconciliation between the colonies and Britain. However, this argument does not quite explain a course of action for the American people to follow if Britain refuses to change their approach to the colonies. Paine, however, guides the public to quite another interpretation. His ultimate goal is not to prepare the readers for the idea of revolution, but rather to not allow any alternative interpretations other than the colonies need to forcefully break their ties with England. Paine attempts to limit the use of history in order to force the context of all interaction to the idea of being "now." By changing the context of past interaction to only the interaction of "now," Paine is able to explain forcefully to his audience that a fight for independence is necessary because current history shows the grievances warrant such action.

When viewing Jefferson's and Paine's uses of Locke's *Second Treatise* as the justification for breaking ties from the Crown, the use of alternate narratives helps explain why one argument may be more successful than another. Jefferson's argument from principle serves to inform the public that rebellion is a possibility but that any change in terms between the two societies would be acceptable. Paine, however, never

allows the colonists to not follow fully through with the Lockean principles of natural rights and the right to revolution. Paine carries out the familiar argument that the King is no longer protecting the Colonies and because of this, action is warranted. Jefferson and Paine attempt to use the same fundamental framework to further the cause of revolution. However, their attempts to get the public to accept the rhetorical syllogism vary quite significantly. In this particular instance, arguments of honor and principle are not enough to cause men to take up arms. Instead, an argument of expediency seems to legitimate action against England.

Endnotes

[cviii] J.G.A. Pocock, *Politics, Language, & Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1989).
[cix] Lee Ward, *The Politics of Liberty in England and Revolutionary America* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 351.
[cx] Stephen E. Lucas, "The Schism in Rhetorical Scholarship," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 67 (1981), 9.
[cxi] Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 80.
[cxii] Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1967), 30.
[cxiii] John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C.B. Macpherson (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1980), §87. All references to the *Second Treatise*, unless otherwise noted, are taken from this edition and all italicizations and capitalizations are left as they appeared in Macpherson's edition.
[cxiv] Locke, *Second Treatise*, §87.
[cxv] *Ibid*. §87.
[cxvi] David Wootton, "Introduction" in *John Locke: Political* Writings, ed. David Wootton (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), 84.
[cxvii] Locke, *Second Treatise*, §229.
[cxviii] Steven Forde, "The Charitable John Locke," *Review of Politics* 71 (2009): 428–58. Forde furthers a debate accented by John Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke: An Historical Account of the 'Two Treatises of Government'* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1969), John Dunn, "Justice and the Interpretation of Locke's Political Theory," *Political Studies* 16 (1968): 50–87, as well as Robert Lamb and Benjamin Thompson, "The Meaning of Charity in Locke's Political Thought," *European Journal*

of Political Theory 8 (2009), which emphasizes a theological underpinning for the idea of charity within Locke's writings. Charity, as thusly understood, becomes a necessary universal imperative for all individuals acting outside of the Lockean government and as a necessary component of political justice.
[cxix] See *Second Treatise* §38 for Locke's discussion.
[cxx] Locke, *Second Treatise*, §6.
[cxxi] All references to the *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* are from John Locke, "The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina," in *John Locke: Political* Writings, ed. David Wootton (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), 210–32.
[cxxii] David Armitage, "John Locke, Carolina, and the *Two Treatises of Government*," *Political Theory* 32 (2004), 618–19.
[cxxiii] Locke, *Fundamental Constitutions*, §107.
[cxxiv] *Ibid*. §110.
[cxxv] The entirety of §107 holds "Since charity obliges us to wish well to the souls of all men, and religion ought to alter nothing in any man's civil estate or right, it shall be lawful for slaves as well as others, to enter themselves and be of what church or profession any of them shall think best, and thereof be as fully members as any freeman. But yet no slave shall hereby be exempted from that civil dominion his master hath over him, but be in all things in the same state and condition he was before."
[cxxvi] John Locke, *First Treatise*, §130. All references to Locke's *First Treatise* are taken from John Locke, "First Treatise," in *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).
[cxxvii] Locke, *First Treatise*, §131.
[cxxviii] Jeremy Waldron, *God, Locke, and Equality: Christian Foundations in John Locke's Political Thought* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 115.
[cxxix] Locke's argument for slavery is found in the *Second Treatise* §22–24. Another conspiracy theory for the inclusion of the passages supporting the absolute rights of owners over slaves within the *Fundamental Constitutions* is that Locke is not responsible for penning the entire document and the passages that condone slavery were actually penned by the Earl of Shaftesbury in an attempt to attract potential immigrants to the Carolinas. See Armitage, "John Locke, Carolina, and the *Two Treatises of Government*," 612.
[cxxx] Waldron, *God, Locke, and Equality*, 201.
[cxxxi] James Farr, "Locke, Natural Law, and New World Slavery," *Political Theory* 36 (2008), 505.
[cxxxii] Locke, *Second Treatise*, §88 and §127 for individuals giving consent to a government to dole out punishment within society and §8 and §12 for reparations/punishment in the state of nature.
[cxxxiii] *Ibid*. §23
[cxxxiv] Farr, "Locke, Natural Law, and New World Slavery," 507.
[cxxxv] Peter Laslett, "The English Revolution and Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*," *Cambridge Historical Journal* 12 (1956): 40–55. Laslett also contends that the *Two Treatises* were composed between 1679 and 1681 and instead of being a justification for

the Whig Revolution, it serves as a call for Revolution. This particular understanding of Locke lends greater credibility to the argument that Locke's political theory serves to actively legitimate government through an evaluation of their everyday functions.
[cxxxvi] John Dunn, "Consent in the Political Theory of John Locke," *The Historical Journal* 10 (1967): 178.
[cxxxvii] Ross J. Corbett, *The Lockean Commonwealth* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009), 100.
[cxxxviii] Locke, *Second Treatise*, §220.
[cxxxix] *Ibid*. §243.
[cxl] *Ibid*. §225.
[cxli] Wootton, "Introduction," 83. Wootton cites Locke's *Second Treatise* §167, and §208–209 as the evidence for this claim.
[cxlii] James L. Golden and Alan L. Golden, *Thomas Jefferson and the Rhetoric of Virtue* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2002), 4–6.
[cxliii] Golden and Golden, *Thomas Jefferson and the Rhetoric of* Virtue, 7.
[cxliv] Gary Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (New York: Random House Books, 1978), 167.
[cxlv] *Ibid*. 180.
[cxlvi] For a more detailed discussion, see Ronald Hamowy, "Jefferson and the Scottish Enlightenment: A Critique of Garry Wills' *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence*," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 36 (1979): 503–23.
[cxlvii] Carl Lotus Becker, *The Declaration of Independence: A Study on the History of Political Ideas* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1922), 15 and Thomas Jefferson, "To Henry Lee, May 8, 1825" in *Jefferson: Political Writings*, ed. Joyce Appleby and Terence Ball (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 147–48.
[cxlviii] Becker, *Declaration of Independence*, 18.
[cxlix] Robert M.S. McDonald, "Thomas Jefferson's Changing Reputation as Author of the Declaration of Independence: The First Fifty Years," *Journal of the Early Republic* 19 (1999): 172.
[cl] *Ibid*. 173.
[cli] Golden and Golden, *Thomas Jefferson and the Rhetoric of Virtue*, 250–52 advances through a Foucaultian argument that because we know that Jefferson wrote *A Summary View* and the preamble to the Virginia Constitution, and that these works appear to influence the Declaration, that we can be certain that Jefferson was the author.
[clii] McDonald, "Jefferson's Changing Reputation," 172.
[cliii] John Adams, "John Adams to Timothy Pickering, August 22, 1822," in *Jefferson: Political Writings*, ed. Joyce Appleby and Terence Ball (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 609.
[cliv] Stephen Howard Browne, *Jefferson's Call for Nationhood* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 130.
[clv] Bernard Bailyn, *To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 47.
[clvi] Golden and Golden, *Thomas Jefferson and the Rhetoric of Virtue*, 225.

[clvii] Joseph J. Ellis, *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Random House Inc., 1998), 36.
[clviii] Thomas Jefferson, “A Summary View of the Rights of British America,” in *Jefferson: Political Writings*, ed. Joyce Appleby and Terence Ball (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 78.
[clix] *Ibid*. 65.
[clx] Golden and Golden, *Thomas Jefferson and the Rhetoric of Virtue*, 225.
[clxi] Ward, *Politics of Liberty*, 351–52. See also James Otis, “The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved,” in *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750-1776*, 2 vols, edited by Bernard Bailyn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), I, 464. See John Dickinson, “Farmer’s Letters,” cited in Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 104, and Samuel Adams, “The Rights of the Colonists,” in *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, 4 vols, edited by Harry Alonso Cushing (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1904-1908), II, 210–12 for specific arguments concerning the grievances of the colonists to Britain’s rule.
[clxii] Ellis, *American Sphinx*, 34.
[clxiii] *Ibid*. 35.
[clxiv] The colonial writers in the 1770s began referring to the King as the source of their problems, this was a departure to the traditional view that the King was not wholly responsible; instead any grievances had been suffered because the King had listened to his advisers. For a more complete account, see Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776* (1972; reprint, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), 237–41.
[clxv] Ellis, *American Sphinx*, 35.
[clxvi] Jefferson, *A Summary View*, 64.
[clxvii] Ward, *Politics of Liberty*, 351-352.
[clxviii] Stephen Howard Browne, “Jefferson’s First Declaration of Independence: *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* Revisited,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89 (2003): 237.
[clxix] Ellis, *American Sphinx*, 36-37.
[clxx] Browne, “Jefferson’s First Declaration,” 241.
[clxxi] Ellis, *American Sphinx*, 32-35.
[clxxii] Jefferson, *Summary View*, 69.
[clxxiii] For a more detailed discussion of different types of arguments present in pre-Revolutionary America, see Stephen Lucas, *Portents of Rebellion: Rhetoric and Revolution in Philadelphia, 1765-76* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1976).
[clxxiv] Jefferson, *A Summary View*, 80.
[clxxv] Browne, “Jefferson’s First Declaration of Independence,” 235-252.
[clxxvi] Jefferson, *A Summary View*, 70.
[clxxvii] John Keane, *Tom Paine: A Political Life* (New York: Little Brown and Company, 1995).

[clxxviii] Robert A. Ferguson, "The Commonalities of *Common Sense*." *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 57 (2000): 469.
[clxxix] Keane, *Tom Paine*, 113.
[clxxx] Ferguson, *Commonalities of Common Sense*, 466.
[clxxxi] Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution: A History* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2002), 55-56.
[clxxxii] Jack Fruchtman, Jr., *Thomas Paine and the Religion of Nature* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 1.
[clxxxiii] Lucas, "Schism in Rhetorical Scholarship," 9.
[clxxxiv] Lucas, *Portents of Rebellion*, 168.
[clxxxv] *Ibid*. 169-170.
[clxxxvi] Wood, *The American Revolution*, 55-56.
[clxxxvii] Fruchtman, *Thomas Paine and the Religion of Nature*, 3.
[clxxxviii] John Adams, "Letter to Abigail Adams, March 19, 1776," *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*, ed. L.H. Butterfield, Leonard C. Faber, and Wendell D. Garret, 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1962), 3:330–35. For a more detailed analysis of Paine's rhetorical methods, see David C. Hoffman, "Paine and Prejudice: Rhetorical Leadership through Perceptual Framing in *Common Sense*," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9 (2006): 373-410.
[clxxxix] Thomas Paine, "Common Sense," in *Thomas Paine: Political Writings*, Revised Student Edition, ed. Bruce Kuklick (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 7.
[cxc] Paine, *Common Sense*, 5.
[cxci] *Ibid*. 12.
[cxcii] *Ibid*. 28.
[cxciii] *Ibid*. 16.
[cxciv] *Ibid*. 16.
[cxcv] *Ibid*. 16.
[cxcvi] *Ibid*. 22.
[cxcvii] *Ibid*. 20.
[cxcviii] Lee Sigelman, Colin Martindale, and Dean McKenzie, "The Common Style of *Common Sense*," *Computers and the Humanities* 30 (1997): 373–79.
[cxcix] Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 80-81.
[cc] Lucas, *Portents of Rebellion*, 171.
[cci] Paine, *Common Sense*, 29.
[ccii] Ferguson, "The Commonalities of *Common Sense*," 468.
[cciii] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950; reprint, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1962), 150. In this passage, Burke refers to an essay by De Gourmont that focuses on division as a way to break identifications but ultimately finds that division leads to a greater process of identification.
[cciv] Edward P. J. Corbett, "John Locke's Contributions to Rhetoric," *College Composition and Communication* 32 (1981): 428.
[ccv] Jefferson, *Summary View*, 69.

[ccvi] Locke, *Second Treatise*, §22
[ccvii] Jefferson, *Summary View*, 75.
[ccviii] *Ibid*. 70-71.
[ccix] Peter A. Dorsey, *Common Bondage: Slavery as Metaphor in Revolutionary America* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 2009), 114–15.
[ccx] Jefferson, *Summary View*, 75.
[ccxi] Paine, *Common Sense*, 32.
[ccxii] *Ibid*. 15.
[ccxiii] *Ibid*. 23.
[ccxiv] God-terms are words or phrases that immediately evoke positive or negative connotations and are not easily argued with/against. For a more detailed explanation, see Richard M. Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (1953; reprint. Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1985).
[ccxv] Lucas, *Portents of Rebellion*, 85.
[ccxvi] See also Locke's *First Treatise* for a more in-depth rebuttal of the rights of hereditary succession.

CHAPTER IV

MADISON AND THE WAR OF 1812

The decision to go to war must often be weighed against considerations of capability and benefits; the question of why countries ultimately decide to go to war remains a rather inconclusive area of study. In a democratic regime, the individuals or groups making the decision to go to war are often responsive to the public and because of this, some attention must be accorded to the degree to which elites are able to convince men to take up arms. As the previous chapters have indicated, the types of arguments used in convincing men to go to war oftentimes involve arguments of expediency rather than relying upon arguments from principle or honor. As the "American Adolescence" theory suggests, we can expect that arguments of principle or honor would be most likely to convince men to take up arms. However, in the case of Machiavelli and then with Jefferson and Paine, expedient arguments are more persuasive for furthering the cause of war. However, are all arguments of expediency created the same? In this particular chapter, I draw upon Madison's war rhetoric and the War of 1812 to focus on whether it is possible to differentiate arguments of expediency into two different categories, namely arguments focusing on the security of a country and arguments where the future advantage of a country is the primary concern.

When war is declared, there are often two main reasons: fighting for security and fighting for gains or advantages. While the last chapter dealt with a war of security, this chapter further dissects types of expedient rhetoric to determine whether security is the

prevailing factor for the success of these arguments or do all arguments of expediency seem likely to help convince men to take up arms? In this chapter, I focus upon the rhetoric of James Madison directly before the War of 1812 to examine whether arguments of expediency can be dissected into fighting for national security and fighting for high-minded ideals such as sovereignty and preferential trade agreements would be likely to convince men to go to war. In this chapter, I argue that Madison uses expedient war rhetoric to convince the citizens of the United States that war is necessary with Great Britain to create domestic and maritime security. However, I also argue that Madison links these arguments of security to arguments about high-minded ideas such as future economic advantage for the country. It is through this cooption of security arguments that Madison is able to successfully persuade the people that war is necessary to protect our country's borders, but also to fight for future advantage.

A Preface to War

The United States has always enjoyed the distinct advantage of being geographically isolated, with fertile lands and the ability to condition an economy based upon the abundant natural resources of the area. These factors contribute to the overall ability of the inhabitants of this country to create a government without resorting to force and to promote a defensive posture in dealings with other nations.[ccxvii] With these geographic advantages, the United States has been able to formulate a government based upon the idea of representation with relatively little influence from other nations. This resulting society creates a thought experiment for the realization of an idealized society,

for if the United States failed to achieve a society that propagated individual freedom and liberties, then perhaps all men would likewise fail in this similar endeavor. As Epstein suggests:

> America's accidental advantages in choosing her own government suggest that America can decide what societies of men are really capable of in only a limited way. If we fail despite our very favorable circumstances, the conclusion must be that men cannot establish government by reflection and choice. If we succeed, our reliance on lucky accidents suggests that a similar choice will not always or often be available to other societies of men.[ccxviii]

With natural boundaries and 'lucky accidents' that help foster this particular approach to government, could the United States remain free from external entanglement? Immediately following the conclusion of the Revolution, the United States had managed to avoid most intrusions from France and Britain and the Zeitgeist favored the idea that domestic security was obtainable with little cost.

Of the multitude of causes that exist for the War of 1812, one of the key events is the 1807 *Chesapeake* Affair in which a British warship boarded the American frigate *Chesapeake* in search of deserters. Perhaps the four dead, seventeen wounded, and four captured sailors were enough of a spark to ignite a long and subtle fire that ended with the War of 1812, but this was only one incident among numerous others that ultimately resulted in the War of 1812. A large literature exists that explores the causes of the United States' second war with Great Britain. Most of these theories further explanations pertaining to re-invigorating economic interests, agrarian expansionism into the West

and Canada, the need for security against Native Americans or the belief that Britain was single-handedly working against the security, national honor, and sovereignty of the United States.[ccxix] The previous studies concerning the War of 1812 follow the debates of the War Hawks within Congress and use these dialogues as the primary influence drawing the United States into war with Britain.[ccxx] However, the few studies focusing upon the issue the United States going to war in order to reaffirm national sovereignty often view sovereignty as a prerequisite for any nation and this idea of sovereignty merely grants territorial and trade rights to the nation. These arguments fail to account for the view that sovereignty would provide a distinct advantage for a new nation when other nations attempted to assert their power and ability over the new nation. In particular, these previous arguments recognize sovereignty and national honor as concerns of the War Hawks, but rarely does the role of the president serve as anything more than a footnote in the dialogue pre-dating the decision to go to war.[ccxxi] I argue that the president is in the unique position to be able to frame and advocate for war and that James Madison uses the common themes developed by the War Hawks as a means to persuade the masses and the rest of Congress that war with Britain would be required to secure future advantages. Further, I argue that Madison views the issue of sovereignty as the paramount concern for the United States and uses the incursions of Britain and France as the impetus to address the issue of the global recognition of the United States.

The War of 1812 was the end result of a culmination of events that were precipitated from the United States attempting to find its own economic identity during the war between Britain and France. Following the Chesapeake Affair in 1807, the

United hoped to economically pressure Britain and France to cease their hostilities toward American vessels. President Jefferson was able to convince Congress to pass the Embargo Act of 1807 that prohibited the exporting of American goods to foreign markets.[ccxxii] This Embargo came in conjunction with Britain's Orders in Council that, in an attempt to limit the availability of supplies to the French, mandated the blockading of ports for any ship that had not first traded with England.[ccxxiii] Alternately, France also insisted that the United States limit trade with Britain and began seizing American ships that violated the French non-trade agreements directed at limiting supplies to Britain. The United States' non-intercourse acts soon proved to hurt the American economy and by 1808 had been largely replaced with policies that promised to confine trade to any country that recognized the United States as a neutral entity. As a whole, the policies of both Britain and France forced the United States either to allow a foreign government to dictate American economic policy or to limit trade with one of the larger markets in Europe. While the Embargo was meant to convince these two aggressor nations that the United States would not allow a foreign nation to dictate economic policy, this Act further strained a stalling economic system in America and soon proved ineffective at allowing the United States to remain neutral in the ongoing war between Britain and France. Given the inability of the United States to temper the acts of aggression toward its vessels, going to war became tantamount to questions of the failing economy.

To reinvigorate the economy, it was necessary for the United States to be able to trade with foreign markets, namely, those of Britain and France. Because Britain blockaded French ports to any vessel that had not first stopped at a British port, and

France would equally disrupt trade, it became difficult for the United States to maintain its economic independence without allying with either France or Britain. Attempting to remain neutral and continue trading with both countries was to invite the loss of American goods, sailors, and sometimes ships. The process of searching private American vessels for contraband on international waters was not illegal according to Britain, but for the United States, this was clearly an issue of Britain trespassing on the sanctity of U.S. sovereignty. As Burt explains:

> What [Britain] did assert, and the United States deny, was the right to search private vessels because this involved no invasion of another sovereignty. Both sides were right, Britain by the old usage, and the United States by a new doctrine then only beginning to take shape: that a country's ships at sea are detached portions of its soil and therefore covered by its sovereignty. Though already admitted for public vessels, it was not yet really established for private ones.[ccxxiv]

This newly identified belief in sovereignty as extending from one's own soil to private ships as well documents the necessity of a continued dialogue over the nature of sovereignty and the view of what each country could and could not do. If the United States was considered sovereign, then its vessels and trade routes would be protected and any trespasses would be punished. Because Britain and France did not embrace this definition of sovereignty, long-range security was problematic in that it remained difficult to protect American sailors and freight on the high seas.

A simple definition of sovereignty only addresses the question of who is the reigning authority in a nation. However, Holsti introduces a normative distinction that a

truly sovereign nation is free to exist without the encroachments of other nations.[ccxxv] While the simple definition encapsulates the degree to which one government is in control of a territory, the normative distinction furthers this idea that a nation should be free to decide not only issues of governance but also of free trade. Britain's infringement on these maritime rights served, in effect, to suggest that the United States was not seen as a fully independent nation and that Britain would violate these rights whenever it is convenient. As Holsti explains, "A state is either sovereign or it is not. It cannot be partly sovereign or have 'eroded' sovereignty no matter how weak or ineffective it may be."[ccxxvi] These maritime failures signaled that the United States was not considered sovereign by England or France and that any country willing to routinely violate the rights of a country to govern itself would make paramount the question of security and defense. If France or Britain did not consider the United States sovereign, then there would also be the concern of whether the United States could secure its own borders and protect itself in the face of an overwhelming power. This soon proved to be the vehicle from which one could house arguments of advantage as issues of security.

Because both France and Britain were guilty of impressing American sailors and attacking American vessels, it was necessary to distinguish whether both countries posed the same threat to the United States. Britain was thought to pose the most immediate threat because of its large naval capabilities, while France was recognized as being predominantly land based. However, before the War Message to Congress, Madison questioned whether war was necessary with both countries. As Madison writes to Jefferson, "To go to war with Engd [*sic*] and not with France arms the Federalists with

new matter, and divides the Republicans… To go to war agst [*sic*] both, presents a thousand difficulties, above all, that of shutting all the ports of the Continent of Europe agst our Cruisers who can do little without the use of them."[ccxxvii] The United States had to consider the strategic implications of a "triangular war" and whether it would be possible to only combat one belligerent without needing to engage in a second war. As Ivie writes:

> Throughout the crisis, representatives of the Federalist majority insisted that France would "relinquish her aggressions" if the United States called the Directory's bluff. America needed only to remain alert and militarily prepared while keeping open the channels of diplomacy, for the threat was one of subversion, subterfuge, and seduction, not direct physical confrontation.[ccxxviii]

The United States would be unable to support a war militarily or economically on two fronts. While Britain and France would continue to fight against one another and the United States would be the late addition to the war, there was an assessment that between Britain and France, France was the more rational of the two countries and the most likely to not follow through on threats of attack. By focusing upon only one belligerent nation, the United States could hope that this war would signal their resolve against the infractions on their sovereignty and this would influence the treatment received by the remaining belligerent. As Ivie writes, "The French were portrayed as essentially rational adversaries who depended upon deception more than force to attain their objectives. Their advance was neither inevitable nor immune to the influence of continued diplomacy."[ccxxix] Given that continued diplomatic negotiations may work with

France and not with England there was the possibility that only one war would be necessary. Madison found it imperative to demonstrate that Britain could not be reasoned with and that this war would pay dividends to the United States in all future international agreements. If the United States can assert its will against one of the superior military powers, then all other countries would fall in line and afford America the same recognition.

War Hawks and Rhetoric

The War Hawks were a group of Republican Congressmen elected to the Twelfth Congress who "represented a popular disillusionment with the Jeffersonian system… who were determined to assert America's position in the world."[ccxxx] Following the numerous incidents with Britain in the years prior to 1812, the War Hawks routinely sought to forego the economic remediation employed by the Jeffersonian and early-Madisonian governments and to actively declare war. The same attempts of previous War Hawks in Congress had failed, but in the election of 1810, some 63 new members were elected to the House, among whom were Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun. Henry Clay became Speaker of the House for the Twelfth Congress and was able to advance an agenda that war with Britain was necessary. Because the War Hawks did not form a majority in Congress, they had to demonstrate that not only was war required to regain and reassert American sovereignty, but also demonstrate a justification for war with Britain, France, or both of these countries.

The recent history of France and Great Britain affecting the United States' trading vessels as well as impressing American sailors did little to differentiate the two countries. Both had been responsible for multiple transgressions against the United States, but in the case of Britain, an argument could be made that these repeated transgressions were the signaling of hostile intent and the hope of once again reclaiming North America. The same case could not be similarly made for France. Perhaps sensing that a war would be necessary in the near future, Congress acted against the will of Presidents Jefferson and Madison by increasing the size of the standing army/militia in the United States. The first of these increases came in response to the 1807 *Chesapeake* affair and the second came in 1811 following "deteriorating relations with England."[ccxxxi] The process of increasing the size of the standing armed forces within the United States demonstrates that Congress, or at least a particular faction within Congress, believed a military initiative would be necessary to curtail the infractions of the English against the American commercial sector. The votes to increase the military, however, only demonstrate that there was an indication that military action may have to be taken against Britain. These military increases represent the awareness that the security of the United States and the protection against an invading force was necessary but without the votes for a war, there was obviously not enough support for the sentiment that the United States should become an aggressor. However, as Risjord identifies, for the Twelfth Congress "as significant as the sudden appearance of a few talented war hawks… was the gradual conversion of the average Republican from Jeffersonian pacifism to a vigorous defense of America's neutral rights… stemm[ing]

primarily from a disillusionment with the old system… and a growing realization that the only alternative to war was submission and national disgrace."[ccxxxii]

Within Congress, there was a consistent syllogism that involved the concept of sovereignty. If the United States was a free nation and able to choose its own markets, and Britain continuously ignored the rights of the United States' trade, then either the United States was not free or Britain could expect some form of retaliation. An additional premise requires that in order for Britain's actions to be interpreted as part of a larger process set to systematically eliminate the freedoms of the United States, then there must be apparent victimization and not the happenstance of events that gave the appearance that Britain was in a de facto war with the United States. As a means of analyzing the recurring themes used in the speeches and public discourse of Congress in the years leading up to the formal declaration of war, Hatzenbuehler and Ivie review the predominant themes that permeated the Twelfth House, first session of Congress. The main two themes are based upon the two concerns of "Depredations on Commerce" and "Violations of National Rights." Combined, these two themes account for a thematic density of .209, meaning that depredations on commerce and violations of national rights accounted for nearly 21% of all instances of discourse concerning the War of 1812.[ccxxxiii] Most arguments were focused upon the economic impact of the English blockades and how these violated the rights of a sovereign nation, furthering the belief that as a sovereign nation, the United States should be allowed to trade without the hindrance of other nations. England and France's trade restrictions were meant to further their own causes by limiting supplies to their enemies but as Mahon explains, the "British Orders

in Council and Napoleon's Continental system were designed primarily to affect England's manufacturing and shipping. It was incidental that they cut off an essential part of America's trade with Europe . . . at about three-fifths of its level of five years earlier."[ccxxxiv]

The trade restrictions that impeded the U.S. economy served to exacerbate the dilemma of U.S. and British relations. Because England was consistently losing sailors at a rate of 2,500 men a year and needed to replenish their membership, the English would routinely seize American vessels in search of British deserters. It was commonly thought that the United States was employing British deserters and this was often the case. But the process of seizing another nation's private vessels and impressing its sailors into its navy only served to further add to the argument that Britain was violating the sovereignty of the United States, regardless of the reasons behind the seizures. As Mahon explains, "If the United States could not protect her own nationals from British press gangs, she could hardly expect to be considered sovereign."[ccxxxv] Coupled with this argument was that if the United States was freely allowed to trade with France, then England needed to disrupt the supply line of their enemies. The third most used theme within Congressional discussions centered on a "repudiation of the retaliation/self-defense excuse." Because focusing upon England's defense of its military actions against American commerce was the third most common theme, Congress reiterates that Britain feels justified in its actions against the United States. There is the implicit distinction that the United States serves only at the pleasure of the British government. Without any consideration being given to the United States as its own entity, Britain has

unforgivably trespassed upon the ability of a country to decide its own fate. Revisiting the earlier syllogism, if the United States is free, then Britain cannot continue this infringement without expecting retaliation.

Madisonian Rhetoric

If one only examines the message of the War Hawks as the sole indicator for measuring the temperature of the public for war, then it is far too easy to miss the subtle changes and degrees to which Madison influences the decision to go to war. If the War Hawks advocate that war is necessary in order to sustain or regain national honor, then it is by examining Madison's multiple writings in the years leading up to the second war with Britain that it becomes evident that there was a distinct and but subtle shift in a War Message to Congress.[ccxxxvi] One early example of Madison's belief in war being used only as the last resort for a long and continuing list of grievances is a refutation of Kant's idea of a "Universal Peace." Writing for the *National Gazette* in 1792, Madison remarks that a wholly peaceful society "will never exist but in the imaginations of visionary philosophers, or in the breasts of benevolent enthusiasts."[ccxxxvii] Because war is a natural extension of men within society, there must be constraints preventing wars of ambition and avarice. War, however, can be "divided into two classes; one flowing from the mere will of the government, the other according with the will of the society itself."[ccxxxviii] The remedy to a war stemming from the will of the government is to set the government as the subordinate to the will of society. Wars resulting from the will of society "can only be controuled by subjecting the will of society to the reason of society; by establishing

permanent and constitutional maxims of conduct, which may prevail over occasional impressions, and inconsiderate pursuits."[ccxxxix] Madison reveals a circular logic concerning war in that government should not commit to war unless the public decides it is necessary and, as a whole, reason will temper the will of the public in matters of conflict.

Even with conflict being the possible extension of governments and society, there exists the primary motivation of regaining honor and justice before allowing bloodshed to occur. In 1807, Secretary of State Madison wrote to James Monroe, the United States' plenipotentiary to Britain, about the impressments of American sailors by the British navy. The tone of the letter suggests that the United States seeks for Britain to acknowledge that their actions threatened the sovereignty of the United States and there should be an immediate reparation paid by Britain "not less by a sense of its own honor, than by justice to that of the United States."[ccxl] Madison's letter to Monroe focuses upon the issue of sovereignty as the chief concern and the majority of the letter focuses upon rectifying this outrage before any other business can be attended to. Madison writes about numerous cases that Monroe can use as examples for Britain when other nations had their sovereignty encroached upon. In each of these cases, the nation responsible for overstepping their jurisdiction and violating the sovereignty of other nations, a formal apology would be issued. The impressments of American sailors are not the chief concern, nor should they be. The particular concern reiterated is that Britain should reaffirm the sovereignty of the United States.

Madison makes a principled argument concerning these international incidents. The apology of Britain to the United States is the foremost goal that Jefferson's government hopes to achieve. As Madison explains, "The President has an evident right to expect from the British Government, not only an ample reparation to the United States in this case, but that it will be decided without difficulty or delay."[ccxli] The belief that Britain should quickly respond to such incidents suggests that the United States wants an immediate rectification, but that also this rectification signals that Britain values and is attempting to stay in the good graces of the United States. If Britain refuses to apologize, Madison asserts that Monroe should send all American vessels home and further, "All negotiations with the British Government on other subjects will, of course, be suspended until satisfaction on this be so pledged and arranged as to render negotiation honorable."[ccxlii] The preoccupation with honor suggests that the United States seeks formally to be recognized as a legitimate power within the realm of international affairs. Madison does not seek to force Britain to acknowledge that its own policies of blockading ports and impressing sailors would place these two countries at war with another. Rather, Madison offers Britain a measure of recourse by suggesting that "it is not easy to suppose, that so rash and critical a step, should have originated with the admiral; but it is still more difficult to believe, that such orders were prescribed by any Government, under circumstances, such as existed between Great Britain and the United States."[ccxliii] As the final measure of suggesting that the United States' national honor is being threatened by England, Madison urges Monroe to "communicat[e] to the Russian Minister at London, the hostile insult which has been offered, as well as the resort which

may become necessary on our part, to measures constituting or leading to war…"[ccxliv] While Madison does not believe that war would be necessary, this is the first consideration that national honor and the recognition of sovereignty is of primary importance for the United States.

Two years after the *Chesapeake* incident and after continued issues with the European belligerents, Madison's First Inaugural Address reaffirms the United States' commitment to constitutionalism and the spirit of liberalism in the international arena. By "indulging no passions which trespass on the rights or the repose of other nations, it has been the true glory of the United States to cultivate peace by observing justice, and to entitle themselves to the respect of the nations at war by fulfilling their neutral obligations with the most scrupulous impartiality."[ccxlv] Madison denotes that the United States will refuse to be drawn into the skirmish between France and Great Britain and that continued trade and relations with these foreign markets is the primary objective. The emphasis that each nation at war can expect to be treated impartially serves to reaffirm that the United States does not wish to enter into any form of preferential trade agreement with either Britain or France, but instead wants to rely upon a fair and open market with the whole of Europe. However, "This unexceptionable course could not avail against the injustice and violence of the belligerent powers . . . [their] principles of retaliation have been introduced equally contrary to universal reason and acknowledged law."[ccxlvi] Madison relates that Britain and France have acted against their own best interests and have committed criminal acts in their attempts to limit the capabilities of their opponents. This process endangers other nations that seek only to sustain free trade

and a liberal disposition toward all countries. Because war threatens to engulf multiple nations due to the actions of England and France, the all too possible scenario developing in 1809 is that the United States is drawn into a war in which there will be clearly defined victors. Madison is aware that the United States will have difficulty remaining neutral against belligerents and their courses of retaliation.

While the first half of Madison's First Inaugural Address identifies the goals and aims of the United States and ultimately the international climate during this time period, Madison uses the second half of the address to reaffirm his devotion to liberal principles. Madison pledges to use the office of the Executive "to cherish peace and friendly intercourse with all nations having correspondent dispositions; to maintain sincere neutrality toward belligerent nations; to prefer in all cases amicable discussion and reasonable accommodation of differences to a decision of them by an appeal to arms…"[ccxlvii] This commitment to principled non-aggression juxtaposes the position of the Executive to the position of the War Hawks in later years. Madison's rhetoric clearly denounces any country that would look to conflict in hopes of solving minor disagreements. Madison's earlier writings and even his First Inaugural Address focus upon the lofty ideals of honor, justice, and sovereignty.

For Madison, however, the idea of sovereignty is not solely a concern for the recognition of a governing body as being the rightful government for a nation, but there are also considerations associated with unregulated trade in the international market. This approach to world politics focuses on sovereignty as a precursor to the advantage such recognition would bestow on a nation. Given the particular predicament of the

United States at the time of the wars between France and England, the U.S. is precariously close to becoming a de facto colony of Britain once again. If the recognition of government and free trade markets were the principal intentions of the United States prior to the War of 1812, then it becomes apparent that the principled rhetoric and mere allusion to conflict was not enough to achieve these goals.[ccxlviii] Beginning with Madison's First Annual Address and continuing through the War Message to Congress, there is a clear addition of exigent language marking a deviation from the principled rhetoric and neutral disposition found in Madison's earlier works.

Madison's Use of War Hawk Imagery

The injustices of Britain's actions toward the United States began to elevate the domestic temperature and Madison's addresses to Congress also begin to reflect these rising tensions. While Madison's earlier writings and First Inaugural Address demonstrate a primarily principled approach for international advantage, the Second Annual Message to Congress serves as an early example of combining questions of security and expediency along with the desire for advantage. If the United States hoped to remain secure on its soil, then it would be necessary to strengthen the military's capabilities and armaments. These increases in defensive capabilities could also be used offensively and by 1810, the United States had begun to fortify strategic areas within the country in hopes of successfully repealing any attacks from Britain or Native Americans. Madison also recognized that securing the borders and increasing weapons would not be enough to stave off disaster. He thus attempted to improve the system for training

commissioned and non-commissioned officers by asking for updated academies. Madison requested that Congress revise the law to allow for another military academy because "the means by which war, as well for defense as for offense, are now carried on render these schools of the more scientific operations an indispensable part of every adequate system . . . In no other way, probably, can a provision of equal efficacy for the public defense be made at so little expense or more consistently with the public liberty."[ccxlix] While there is no direct mention that the United States is preparing an offensive campaign, Madison realizes that the efficacy of the armed forces is contingent on the defensive as well as the offensive capabilities of the military. The public funding of military academies, along with increased armaments and defensive preparations, transforms the public culture from victimage to empowerment. Madison's requests for an increase in the academies signals that the United States is no longer at the mercy of Britain and security can now be achieved. The added bonus is that retaliation is also an option.

While the Second Annual Message to Congress reports on the further deteriorating conditions between the United States and Britain, it is the Third Annual Message that addresses the pending conflict between the two countries. Madison discusses Britain's Orders in Council and the United States' improved negotiations with France. After the restrictions on trade were resolved between the French and the US, Britain indicated that its Orders in Council would be revoked. However, "instead of this reasonable step toward satisfaction and friendship between the two nations, the orders were, at a moment when least to have been expected, put into more rigorous execution

… [and] the United States being given to understand that in the mean time a continuance of their nonimportation act would lead to measures of retaliation."[ccl] Britain's Orders in Council were not only limiting the ability of the United States to trade with foreign markets, but Britain had also demanded, under threat of retaliation, that the United States revoke its own laws regarding the ability to economically regulate its trade practices.

The demand for the United States to relinquish its ability to dictate fiscal policy undermines any definition of sovereignty by effectively allowing its government to be controlled by the threats of another nation. Britain's demands "under existing circumstances have the character as well as the effect of war on [the United States'] lawful commerce."[ccli] The United States is therefore placed in the peculiar position of allowing its own rights to be infringed on or allowing another nation to systematically control the practices of its government. This process is tantamount to being bullied by a superior force and Madison's Third Annual Message suggests that

> Congress will feel the duty of putting the United States into an armor and an attitude demanded by the crisis . . . I can not close this communication without expressing my deep sense of the crisis in which you are assembled, my confidence in a wise and honorable result to your deliberations . . . and on all the means that may be employed in vindicating [the United States'] rights and advancing its welfare.[cclii]

The Third Annual Message to Congress advances the distinction between arguments of principle and arguments of expediency. While Madison has not openly requested that Congress declare war, this is the only conclusion that can be drawn from the implied syllogistic principle. If the United States is a free country, then it should be allowed to

decide its own trading practices. If England can dictate American policy then the United States is not free. Madison's Third Annual Message asks Congress to decide whether the United States is a free country or not and then to decide the appropriate action.

Rhetorically, Madison's War Message to Congress on June 1, 1812 develops a more nuanced characterization of the relationship between the United States and Britain. In this writing, Madison deviates from his typical approach of overarching principled arguments toward free trade and sovereignty and provides a linkage explicitly equating England's regulation of international trade to an act of war. Adopting the same rhetoric as the War Hawks, Madison explains that Britain is a belligerent nation that is routinely violating international trade agreements and treaties by treating the United States, a neutral nation, as an opponent in war. Under the guise of national defense, "British cruisers have been in the continued practice of violating the American flag on the great highway of nations, and of seizing and carrying off persons sailing under it, not in the exercise of a belligerent right founded on the law of nations against an enemy, but of a municipal prerogative over British subjects."[ccliii] In these instances, Britain refused to recognize the sovereignty of the United States and seized vessels and sailors with the explanation that these vessels were supplying the enemy and that the sailors were originally British subjects. Madison maintains that these continuous transgressions mark either a continuation of the Revolutionary War or a failure to recognize the United States as a sovereign and neutral nation. Either reasoning furthers the argument that America is a victim of a superior nation and the only adequate response would be to wage a war

against Britain in order to reassert national identity and to regain the recognition of sovereignty. As Ivie explains,

> Prowar rhetors perform the ritual of victimage as they cultivate images of a savage enemy. Through analogical extensions, they articulate a theme of diabolism that, taken literally, goads nations into defending themselves against barbarians bent upon subjugating innocent peoples. Voices of belligerence, disguised in the overtones of pacific ideals, promise salvation to those who would vanquish satan's surrogate.[ccliv]

While the distinct definition of sovereignty remained a loose principle in the early 19th century, Madison attempts to define sovereignty as not only allowing a country to govern itself, but additionally to allow a government to interact at will with other nations in the international arena. Britain's encroachment upon shipping rights potentially serves to further deteriorate the sovereignty of the United States and provides for a tacit consent to British dominance.

Madison explains that Britain's use of the self-defense argument as a justification for the subjugation of the United States does not exist as a preventive measure to stop the supplies to enemies. Rather this subjugation exists because Britain is attempting to dominate the seas for its own commercial benefit. Madison asserts that "it has become, indeed, sufficiently certain that the commerce of the United States is to be sacrificed, not as interfering with the belligerent rights of Great Britain; not as supplying the wants of her enemies, which she herself supplies; but as interfering with the monopoly which she covets for her own commerce and navigation."[cclv] However, outside of the territorial demarcations, the seas of the world are part of the "great highway of nations."

Emphasizing this highway of nations allows Madison to proclaim that international commerce is dependent upon free and open access to other nations. This need for maritime independence is afforded to all sovereign nations in times of peace and England has repeatedly violated the rights of a non-aggressive nation. Because the United States relies upon shipping and access to foreign markets as a cornerstone of its economy, Madison's emphasis on commercial considerations between Britain and the United States serves to couple economic independence with fiscal security. Each of these economic realities requires that the United States is able to act upon its own interests without relying upon Britain to approve its enterprises.

Because England is characterized as a country that only wants to preserve its own commercial and navigation rights, it is effectively demonized through its actions toward American commerce. As a former colony, the United States once deferred to Great Britain in matters of trade and navigation. Though the Treaty of Paris should have ended any particular deference to the former colonizers, Jay's Treaty saw a continuation of English superiority to American shipping rights. Under this treaty, the overall sovereignty of the United States was in danger because of the lack of free and equal access to shipping rights. Madison identifies the "great highway of nations" as a metaphor to explain the United States coming into its own as a legitimate country in the world. As Feldman explains this metaphor, "Since the sea is a means of transport open to all nations, for a country to threaten this free 'highway' was to pose a potential danger to the entire world."[cclvi] Since the United States is unable to offer fully adequate protection to its shipping industry, it is forced to remain politically neutral in a divided European

front. This political neutrality ultimately has an economic undertone, which subsequently positions economic interests as a cornerstone of all discussions of national independence.

To threaten the United States' ability to freely conduct maritime commerce is to threaten the independence of the nation. As Madison writes, "British cruisers . . . hover over and harass our entering and departing commerce . . . and have wantonly spilt American blood within the sanctuary of our territorial jurisdiction."[cclvii] Madison reiterates that not only has Britain constricted the flow of American trade, but it has gone as far as to attack sailors in United States waters. The occurrence of attacks within the territorial waters of the United States presents the image of a country that will stop at no end in order to control the seas. As Ivie explains, "Above all else, the function of prowar rhetoric is to establish a 'realistic' image of the enemy's savagery in order to eliminate peace as a viable alternative to war. The metaphor of force is the constitutive form of that image, and the rest of the prowar discourse serves largely to embellish the trope until its literalization has been completed."[cclviii] This embellishment of tropes, however, serves to frame only one possible interpretation for the actions of England at the exclusion of other potential explanations. If one can convince the audience to look past all other rational explanations and focus only upon the syllogism provided by Madison, then the conclusion has to follow rationally as well. In this case, Britain is attempting to subjugate and/or recolonize its commercial rival.[cclix] As Ivie explains, "Britain's coercive means and aggressive ends were identical; appeals to reason were futile; the drive to destroy had blinded the beast even to its own best interests. Force defined the enemy's

conduct, the enemy's methods, the enemy's motives, and the victim's recourse – all to the exclusion of other possibilities."[cclx] In this sense, war was the only outcome that could be derived from the nature of the actions against the United States. Congress reiterates this message in their discourse within the House of Representatives and the President also serves to catalyze this belief.

Aftermath

The United States formally declared war on Britain in June of 1812. Skirmishes between the two countries took place on the seas and also within the United States with varying degrees of success for both countries. The hostilities between England and the United States lasted for nearly 30 months and ended in a virtual stalemate. A peace treaty between England and the United States was signed in Ghent, Belgium on December 24, 1814 with a formal ratification by the United States on February 17, 1815. The results of the war served as a basis for which England and the United States returned the property each country had seized during the course of hostilities and to redefine the geographic boundaries surrounding the United States and Canada. While both sides of the war benefited from the halt in hostilities, Madison was able to frame the war as a major success for the United States.

The goal of the United States at the outset of war was to cease British hostilities toward American maritime commerce and for the recognition of the United States' sovereignty by the English. Madison had originally framed the goal of the war as a means of achieving the security of American vessels on the seas and also the securing of

the borders within the United States. As Madison's "Message to Congress on the Peace Treaty" explains, "The late war, although reluctantly declared by Congress, had become a necessary resort to assert the rights and independence of the nation. It has been waged with a success which is the natural result of the wisdom of the legislative councils…"[cclxi] The Treaty of Ghent provided for an immediate cessation to the British policy of seizing American vessels and also returned the United States to the level of non-hostility toward the Native Americans that had allied with Britain. Both of these outcomes were favorable for the American cause of securing commercial property and domestic security. These outcomes allowed Madison and Congress to claim a victory for the War of 1812 and to provide tangible evidence that the desired outcomes had been achieved.

Madison's principled arguments about achieving future advantage remain a little more difficult to ascertain. During Madison's Seventh Annual Message to Congress, he reiterates the primary goals of the war and defines the ways in which future advantage had been achieved. As Madison writes, "It is another source of satisfaction that the treaty of peace with Great Britain has been succeeded by a convention on the subject of commerce… which it may be hoped will be improved into liberal arrangements on other subjects on which the parties have mutual interests, or which might endanger their future harmony."[cclxii] While the Treaty of Ghent does little to improve the immediate position of the United States within the realm of territorial gains, it is perceived as a success because England is willing to negotiate with the United States concerning future agreements. These extra considerations can be interpreted as England beginning to reverse its previous position against the United States and it symbolizes that in the

international arena, the United States is free to decide its own fate. England's willingness to offer these new considerations to the United States also helps to assuage fears that Britain was attempting to recolonize the United States. While the United States did not gain any territory, the conclusion of the War of 1812 allowed the United States to enter into a golden era without any immediate hostilities.

Conclusion

Though there are a multitude of reasons for the War of 1812, very few studies have explored the impact of rhetoric or more specifically the impact of Madison's rhetoric on influencing the decision for war. Most studies focus upon the influence of the War Hawks for reaching the critical mass needed to gain the vote needed for a declaration of war but these studies fail to account for the subtle change in rhetorical styles and the use of expedient and principled arguments to influence the decision-making process. And while many events foreshadowed the war that pitted the United States against the dominant European power of Britain, perhaps the War of 1812 started when Britain first boarded the American frigate *Chesapeake* in 1807. However, without a formal declaration of war for another five years, this hardly seems the case.

Prior to the formal declaration of war, Madison relied upon principled arguments to suggest that war was not necessary to halt a belligerent nation. His belief was that a neutral nation could remain so against two superior military forces. However, these military forces soon began to impede on the ability of the United States to remain neutral. While the *Chesapeake* affair and the impressments of American sailors signaled

that British aggression would overrun the United States if unchecked, this incident also served as a vehicle from which Madison was able to form a list of grievances against Britain. Realizing that it would be difficult to gain support based solely on the belief that war would allow the United States to redefine the idea of sovereignty, Madison found it necessary to address the nation's primary concern, that of securing the United States and its commerce from attacks by the British. By using the desire to obtain security in the face of Britain's aggression, Madison is able to address questions of advantage such as the redefinition of sovereignty.

Madison's rhetoric, prior to the War of 1812, focused upon accentuating liberal principles as well as arguments of honor and principle to explain why the United States would remain neutral in the escalating conflict between France and Britain. Had Madison continued these ideals even while advocating war, then it is entirely possible that this particular incident would reaffirm the "American adolescence" theory. However, Madison only relies upon this use of honor and principle while attempting to keep the United States out of conflict. As Madison and the War Hawks begin to argue for the necessity of going to war, there is a shift in the prevailing argument of the day. Madison envisions that there is a need for expedient political arguments to help persuade the people that liberty is being threatened and immediate action is necessary to protect the United States. While the Machiavelli, Jefferson and Paine, and Madison chapters suggest that arguments of expediency are better able to help "convince men to take up arms," is there a particular type of rhetoric that can help defuse arguments for war?

Endnotes

[ccxvii] David F. Epstein, *The Political Theory of the Federalist* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 19.
[ccxviii] *Ibid*. 21.
[ccxix] For an account of the economic reasons behind the War of 1812, see Margaret Kinard Latimer, "South Carolina – A Protagonist of the War of 1812," *American Historical Review*, 61 (1955-1956): 914–29; Reginald Horsman, "Western War Aims, 1811-1812," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 52 (1957): 1–16; and George R. Taylor, "Depression Stirs Western War Spirit," in *The Causes of The War of 1812: National Honor or National Interest?*, ed. by Bradford Perkins (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 71–79. For arguments about agrarian interests and expansionism into the West and Canada, see Louis M. Hacker, "The Desire for Canadian Land," and Reginald Horsman, "The Conquest of Canada a Tactical Objective" both found in the same volume edited by Bradford Perkins.
[ccxx] In particular, Norman K. Risjord, "1812: Conservatives, War Hawks, and the Nation's Honor," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 18 (1961): 196–210; Ronald L. Hatzenbuehler, "Party Unity and the Decision for War in the House of Representatives, 1812," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 29 (1972): 367–90.
[ccxxi] One particular example of Madison helping to achieve the impetus for war is found in Irving Brant "Madison Encouraged the War Movement," reprinted in *The Causes of The War of 1812: National Honor or National Interest?*, ed. Bradford Perkins (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 71–79.
[ccxxii] This was actually an addition to the Nonimportation Act of 1806, which forbade the importation of goods from England.
[ccxxiii] For an excellent detailed account of the War of 1812, see John K. Mahon, *The War of 1812* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1972).
[ccxxiv] A. L. Burt, *The United States, Great Britain, and British North America from the Revolution to the Establishment of Peace after the War of 1812* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1940), 214.
[ccxxv] K.J. Holsti, *Taming the Sovereigns: Institutional Changes in International Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Also, one has to acknowledge that there are arguments that emphasize that sovereignty in form and in practice does not exist because the stronger state is more than willing to violate the supposed sovereignty of weaker states.
[ccxxvi] *Ibid*. 114.
[ccxxvii] James Madison, "Letter to Thomas Jefferson, May 25, 1812," in James *Madison Writings*, ed. Jack N. Rakove (New York: The Library of America), 684.
[ccxxviii] Robert L. Ivie, "The Metaphor of Force in Prowar Discourse: the Case of 1812," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982): 250.
[ccxxix] *Ibid*. 251.

[ccxxx] Risjord, *1812*, 198.
[ccxxxi] Mahon, *War of 1812*, 3.
[ccxxxii] Risjord, *1812*, 200.
[ccxxxiii] Ronald L. Hatzenbuehler and Robert L. Ivie, *Congress Declares War: Rhetoric, Leadership, and Partisanship in the Early Republic* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1983), 43–46.
[ccxxxiv]Mahon, *War of 1812*, 7.
[ccxxxv] *Ibid*. 7.
[ccxxxvi] As Jeffrey K. Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 70–71 explains, Madison made no speeches during his presidency nor did he attempt to rally the troops during times of war. Instead, Madison relied upon proclamations that were used to signal his position. The lack of public addresses forces scholars to view the written works of Madison to understand the positions of his administration.
[ccxxxvii] James Madison, "Universal Peace, February 2, 1792," in James *Madison Writings*, ed. Jack N. Rakove (New York: The Library of America), 505.
[ccxxxviii] *Ibid*. 505.
[ccxxxix] *Ibid*. 506.
[ccxl] James Madison, "Letter to James Monroe, July 6, 1807," in James *Madison Writings*, ed. Jack N. Rakove (New York: The Library of America), 675.
[ccxli] *Ibid*. 677.
[ccxlii] *Ibid*. 677.
[ccxliii] *Ibid*. 677.
[ccxliv] *Ibid*. 678.
[ccxlv] James Madison, "First Inaugural Address," in James *Madison Writings*, ed. Jack N. Rakove (New York: The Library of America), 680.
[ccxlvi] *Ibid*. 681.
[ccxlvii] *Ibid*. 681.
[ccxlviii] Madison first alludes to the possibility of force against Britain in his letter to James Monroe. James Madison, "Letter to James Monroe, July 6, 1807," 675.
[ccxlix] James Madison. "Second Annual Message to Congress, December 5, 1810," in *Statesman's Manual: Presidents' Message, Inaugural, Annual and Special, from 1789 to 1846*, ed. Edwin Williams, 2 vols. (New York: Edward Walker, 1849), 1:284–85.
[ccl] James Madison. "Third Annual Message to Congress, November 5, 1811," in *Statesman's Manual: Presidents' Message, Inaugural, Annual and Special, from 1789 to 1846*, ed. Edwin Williams, 2 vols. (New York: Edward Walker, 1849), 1:286–87.
[ccli] *Ibid*. 288.
[cclii] *Ibid*. 290.
[ccliii] James Madison, "War Message to Congress, June 1, 1812," in: *The Mind of the Founder: Sources of the Political thought of James Madison*, Revised edition, ed. Marvin Meyers (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1981), 290.
[ccliv] Ivie, "The Metaphor of Force," 240–41.
[cclv] Madison, "War Message to Congress," 293.

[cclvi] Jeffrey Feldman. *Framing the Debate* (Brooklyn, NY: Ig Publishing, 2007), 55. Also, while Feldman explains the highways of the world as it pertains to Wilson's framing of WWI, the conception of broad support for uninhibited trade access successfully works in the Madisonian concept as well.
[cclvii] Madison, "War Message to Congress," 291.
[cclviii] Ivie, "The Metaphor of Force," 253.
[cclix] Hatzenbuehler and Ivie, *Congress Declares War*, 43.
[cclx] Ivie, "The Metaphor of Force," 250.
[cclxi] James Madison, "Message to Congress on the Peace Treaty, February 18, 1815" in *James Madison Writings*, ed. Jack N. Rakove (New York: The Library of America), 707.
[cclxii] James Madison. "Seventh Annual Message, December 5, 1815," in *Statesman's Manual: Presidents' Message, Inaugural, Annual and Special, from 1789 to 1846*, ed. Edwin Williams, 2 vols. (New York: Edward Walker, 1849), 1:328.

CHAPTER V

HEARING A DIFFERENT DRUMMER: THOREAU'S PRINCIPLED ANTI-WAR RHETORIC

One of the key components of readying a population for war or any act that creates a division in the population is the prevalence of rhetoric that demonizes an opponent, expedites action, and ultimately minimizes discourse. The rhetoric surrounding the issue of slavery and the Mexican-American war emphasizes dialogue that reduces empathy and seeks solely to create a cleavage between the two opposed groups. The expedient arguments used by pro-war advocates helps to streamline debate by creating heuristics that are adopted by the prevailing society and serve to circumvent rational thought. In my previous chapters, I focused upon the use of arguments of expediency and how these convinced me to take up arms. However, in this chapter, I focus upon whether there is a form of argument that can diffuse an expedient argument for war? This chapter focuses upon the use of principled arguments as a focal point for engendering dissent within a community and allowing the dissidents to serve a key role within a society, that of a citizen critic. I argue that principled arguments serve to counter expedient rhetoric and the degree to which dehumanizing rhetoric successfully creates two separate group dynamics, those for and against slavery. Specifically, this chapter explores the rhetorical discourse used to re-open public dialogue when a set course of action has been decided upon and the role of a citizen critic in these instances.

In a rhetorical analysis of Henry David Thoreau's writings, I examine the degree to which anti-majoritarian rhetoric is capable of producing a principled alternative to

expedient rhetoric and thus serves as a political instrument for which to allow open public dissent and discussion of government policies. In particular, I investigate the political context in the United States surrounding the Mexican-American War and ultimately the issue of slavery within the new territories of the United States. I focus specifically upon Thoreau's writings concerning John Brown and *Resistance to Civil Government* and find that principled arguments in Thoreau's writings serve two purposes. The first is to activate the language needed to rework the reigning assumptions about a publicly accepted course of action. The second purpose is to transform these principled arguments into a more socially acceptable form of public dialogue.

In the traditional sense of democratic and public discourse, the individual is assumed to agree tacitly with any laws that the majority of individuals have deemed as necessary. In democratic society, every individual is expected to uphold the norms of citizenship, such as paying taxes and obeying laws. While the individual is the base unit of analysis, the view of the individual is aggregated into one unit and assumed to be the view of society. This resulting aggregation is supposed as the consent of all citizens but often ignores the rights of the individual. The distinction between the rights of the individual and the prerogative of society can come into conflict when the source of contention involves questions of morality. Individuals are often pulled into conflict with society when issues involving military action arise and there is the obligation to follow the declarations of the governing body. While the corpus of this dissertation follows the use of expedient political arguments and the likelihood of swaying the public toward war, this particular chapter qualifies the idea that expedient arguments can always gain

public support for war. Further, arguments of moral principle can actually serve to diffuse arguments of expediency.

The Mexican-American War

The historical context surrounding the issue of slavery in the United States was brought to the forefront once Texas was able to win its independence from Mexico in 1836. As a newly independent nation, Texas asked for diplomatic recognition from the United States with the underlying assumption that Texas would soon be annexed by the United States. If Texas were to join the United States, the number of Senators from slave states would increase and the free-state Senators would be forced to adopt pro-slavery legislation. As McCaffrey explains, northern congressmen "… feared that the admission of Texas as a slave state would not only disrupt the balance of power between free and slave states in the U.S. Senate but would also allow the further expansion of slavery into the Southwest."[cclxiii] As Texas would add more territory to the United States, the potential for settling the territory of Texas and the areas west of Texas became realized and under the Missouri Compromise, these territories of modern-day Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California would only further add to the rule of pro-slavery Senators. While this debate was temporarily contained when President Jackson recognized Texas as an independent nation, the argument concerning the admissions of slave states versus the admission of free states still generated much contention between the congressional forces of the Whigs and Democrats in the Senate. This question of the

admission of states was coupled with the question of whether or not the United States should continue to expand its territory by pursuing its ‘manifest destiny.’

Because President Jackson’s recognition of Texas as an independent nation delayed the question concerning annexation, the debate about the admittance of free and slave states was successfully delayed as well. The political climate in Texas and the United States changed briefly over the course of several presidents of both countries and the desire to see Texas annexed also changed with each president. A war with Mexico was foreseen as the end result of annexing Texas and the question of expanding the United States through an aggressive military posture was also raised. The Whigs in the Senate favored a seemingly pacifistic approach to expanding the territory of the United States, whereas the Democrats were stronger proponents of using whatever means necessary to realize the dream of manifest destiny. In 1843, President John Tyler made the first legitimate attempt to annex Texas, but the initial vote was defeated along partisan lines with 28 of the 29 Whig Senators voting against it.

The attempt to annex Texas failed in 1844 but this process was soon reinvigorated when James Polk was later elected president that November. A combination of efforts from President Tyler and President-Elect Polk allowed for the passage of a joint resolution that would allow Texas to be annexed so long as Texas approved. Texas officially became the 28th state to enter the Union in December 1845. Before the annexation of Texas was official, there were territorial disputes between Texas and Mexico concerning where the official boundaries of Texas ended. Once Texas became a state, these territorial boundary issues became a point of contention between

the United States and Mexico with the full weight of the United States army and navy to add pressure to a beneficial recognition of Texas' boundaries. During this same period of time, Mexico was involved with threats of revolution in California and it appeared that Mexico would be unable to defend itself in a war with the United States.[cclxiv] Knowing these terms, Polk offered Mexico the sum of $2 million to settle the boundary dispute with Texas and another $25 million for the territory of California. As Graebner explains, "Having rejected negotiation in the face of superior force, Mexico would meet the challenge with a final gesture of defiance."[cclxv]

The decision to enter into a war is often filled with complex calculations concerning considerations about the hostility of the opponent as well as the opponent's military capability. While the territory dispute between Texas and Mexico was not resolved, there were no significant skirmishes between the two countries before the U.S. military incursion and so this issue could be largely ignored until another time. In 1845-1846, Mexico's military power was in decline. Coupled with the issue of flare-ups in California, there was little hope of Mexico successfully defending itself from American aggression. After a border patrol was attacked in the contested territory between Texas and Mexico, President Polk used this opportunity to make a case for war and Congress approved the declaration, with most Whigs voting against the war. In the case of public opinion, because Congress had declared war, the citizens were largely expected to accept this decision. However, entering into this conflict could hardly be claimed to reflect the preferences of the entire United States. Instead, the arguments concerning war with Mexico clearly delineated along the lines of Democrats and Whigs and this entire

process questioned whether the main causes of the war were merely the lust for territory or the desire to add more slave states to the Union.

The final vote for the declaration of war eventually included the votes of Whigs, but the entire process created massive tension between the Democrats and the Whigs. The Whigs, having voted to declare war on Mexico, were unable to completely dissent from the Democrats and President Polk and indeed had to help furnish supplies for the war effort. However, due to the public impression that the Mexican-American War had been too aggressive toward Mexico and possibly unconstitutional, the Democrats soon lost favor with the public and Whig war general Zachary Taylor soon rose to prominence. While Taylor owned slaves, he was able to successfully navigate the addition of California and New Mexico to the Union and allow these states to write their own constitutions without Congress being forced to make the distinction of having these proslavery or antislavery states. After Taylor's short-lived presidency, Millard Fillmore assumed the office and mostly reversed the policies of Taylor's presidency, leading to further difficulties between the proslavery and antislavery forces.[cclxvi]

Thoreau

Henry David Thoreau, a strong proponent of Transcendentalism and a staunch abolitionist, was born in Concord, Massachusetts in 1817. Spending the majority of his life in the northeast, Thoreau graduated from Harvard and was close friends with contemporaries such as Emerson, another key figure in the Transcendentalist movement. Thoreau tried his hand at a multitude of occupations throughout the course of his life,

but spent his primary time as an educator, surveyor, philosopher, and always an essayist (at Emerson's urging). These experiences offered Thoreau the unique perspective to not only critique industry, but also the belief that an individual should not need to solely rely upon society as a means for industry. As Thoreau wrote in his Harvard College report about his encounters post-graduation, "… I have found out a way to live without what is commonly called employment or industry attractive or otherwise."[cclxvii] Included in this idea of living without a steady stream of employment, Thoreau left civilization for a couple of years in hopes that time away would allow him to concentrate on his writing and allow him to refine his thoughts concerning man and nature. While the questionable employment record and the idea of communion with nature are often used to define Thoreau, this is hardly the criteria that should be used to gauge Thoreau's impact on 19th century social reform. The questions of slavery and the annexation of new territory for the United States was a key element of discourse throughout the mid-1800s and Thoreau addressed these issues along with key abolitionists and Transcendentalists. Believing that individuals should cast off society's grip on the lives of the citizens, Thoreau offers a channel through which individuals could examine their belief systems and conceivably organize social interaction through a moral lens.

The Mexican-American war was not a popular among the Whigs in the northern parts of the United States. While Southern Democrats supported the expansion of the United States and the hope that these newly gained territories would be slave states, this could hardly be thought to be the preference of the entire country. As the role of the individual within a representative democracy is diminished the point of only serving as a

single vote to elect a representative, Thoreau openly questions whether the individual should give up his ability to be a conscientious citizen. As a response to the Mexican-American War, Thoreau wrote *Resistance to Civil Government* in hopes of challenging the presumptive approach of other citizens. Thoreau asks, "Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward."[cclxviii] Thoreau elucidates the distinction between majoritarian rule and the role of the individual within a society concerning arguments. Seeking a relativistic approach, Thoreau invokes the Aristotelian idea of whether there is but one way to argue for a specific course of action within a society. As the Congressional declaration of war indicates only one set action and path for the United States to follow, Thoreau declares that the subjects of deliberation are "… capable of admitting two possibilities; for no one debates things incapable of being different either in past or future or present."[cclxix] Given that there exist several given paths for any action that occurs, the decision-making of the Legislator cannot be assumed to replace the voice and conscience of the ordinary citizen. In these cases, Thoreau legitimates the role of principled dissent as another forum for the individual, a role that is rarely acknowledged within the scope of democratic government.

The political language of Thoreau follows a linguistic meme that is defined by the American Revolution. Given the assumption that American identity was closely intertwined with the ideas of political and economic representation within a legislature, the values of freedom and liberty would naturally follow suit once representation had

been achieved. As Rosenblum explains, Thoreau operates under the assumption that the Revolution of 1776 and, ultimately, democratic consent provide the basis for all forms of political vocabulary within the United States.[cclxx] By continuing the Revolutionary meme, Thoreau can link the ideas that democratic consent is an inherent aspect of political representation and that the current form of government fails to adequately account for the consent of all members of society, namely, the rights and roles of members of the population in the minority that oppose the expansion of territory through aggressive military action. As Rosenblum explains,

> We think we know what counts as consent, but Thoreau casts doubt on the usual institutional mechanisms for signaling democratic consent. Beyond that, he advises that the great question has become how individuals withhold or withdraw consent – for which there is no precedent and no philosophical authority. Above all, democracy must be recognized as an invitation to cast not one's vote only, but 'one's whole influence.'[cclxxi]

This process for securing consent revolves around the idea that members of the minority are able to identify and mark their preferences as adeptly as members of the majority party. If the democratic society still continues to ignore the protests of the minority party and commits injustices upon other groups, namely those of the Whigs, then Thoreau offers a possible remedy.

Resistance to Civil Government is often summarized with the idea that the individual must peacefully withdraw from the luxuries and advantages of government as a form of protest when a government fails to enact the interests of the minority party.

This approach mistakenly fails to acknowledge Thoreau as an inherently political being seeking to change the government. In general, acts of civil disobedience are not solely designated as acts of silent or even peaceful protest. Hendrick and Hendrick suggest that civil disobedience can occur whenever an individual decides to resist openly the laws of a society. This act does not have to be peaceful it only has to be marked with conscious resistance to the laws and political elite of a time and place. As Hendrick and Hendrick explain, the actions of "thousands of slaves during the Revolutionary War [becoming] free by joining British forces. By such action they were declaring civil disobedience against slaveholders and the Continental Congress."[cclxxii] This particular distinction that civil disobedience lacks a coordinated civility affords an individual the ability to recognize that any form of protest that does not seek to overthrow a government directly may in fact be an act of civil disobedience. Authors such as Drinnon, Goldman, and Krutch have argued that Thoreau was everything from an anarchist to an individualist.[cclxxiii] The wide range of interpretations of *Resistance to Civil Government* and *Walden* look toward the act of Thoreau retreating to Walden Pond as the telltale marker for what an individual 'ought' to do in a society that acts against man's own moral compass. Looking solely to Thoreau's individualism blinds these works to the larger implications that a nuanced view of Thoreau's argument resides in creating a bastion for the minority within a society when the majority dominates government.

While there have been many arguments that suggest Thoreau fails to have anything more than a modicum of political thought, Stanley Cavell forcefully asserts that Thoreau's work deserves an important place in the canon of political thought. Instead of

viewing it as an exercise in Transcendentalism, Cavell argues that Thoreau's *Walden* can be understood as a normative blueprint for how individuals should act in a democratic society.[cclxxiv] More recently, Walker explores Thoreau's chapter "The Bean Field" as a metaphor for democratic cultivation, most notably asserting that "…cultivation can be seen either as planting crops or as a politically relevant process by means of which an individual or a group attempts to call forth and develop dispositions that align with and embody ethico-politco ideals…"[cclxxv] Although Cavell and Walker make these observations solely with regard to *Walden* as a political tract, the same idea can be extended to some of Thoreau's other works, notably *Life without Principle*, *Slavery in Massachusetts*, and the *John Brown* letters. As James C. Scott explains, a relationship of 'domination' exists between members of the population who are in power versus those who are found in the minority. Scott explains, "Once established, domination does not persist of its own momentum. Inasmuch as it involves the use of power to extract work, production, services, taxes against the will of the dominated, it generates considerable friction and can be sustained only by continuous efforts at reinforcement, maintenance, and adjustment."[cclxxvi] This attempt at reinforcing the ideology of the class has to be continuously renewed in order to convince the majority party that no change can come as a result of criticism and this particular act is the will of the people as a whole. As Scott further explains, "By persuading underclasses that their position, their life-chances, their tribulations are unalterable and inevitable, such a limited hegemony can produce the behavioral results of consent without necessarily changing people's values."[cclxxvii] Because the Mexican-American War has been authorized by a majority of Congress, the

minority of the population should then dismiss any anti-war arguments because their tacit consent has been guaranteed by the election of representatives. Thoreau seeks to change this paradigm by insisting that the role of the individual does not exist solely as a means to elect Representatives.

For Thoreau to stimulate principled dissent amongst the population, he has to show that the duty of each individual exists not in the realm of representation, but that the true role of the individual is to achieve a high moral standard for personal conduct and that man's moral compass exists independently of societal norms. As Tauber suggests, "Thoreau's moral philosophy is dangerously solipsistic; narcissistic to the extreme, Thoreau's morality was built from the precept that the protection of his autonomy was the crucial and abiding parameter of moral action."[cclxxviii] Tauber focuses upon whether Thoreau's political and moral viewpoint is anything more than a superficial worldview that seeks to gratify only the individual. Hannah Arendt also suggests that Thoreau attempts only to "purify the self" and reaffirms that this form of political action retains a negative value.[cclxxix] If Tauber and Arendt are correct in their assertions about Thoreau's worldview and singularly individualistic nature, then a moral and principled existence would be enough. However, upon further inspection of Thoreau's writing, this is clearly not the case.

Thoreau acts as a foil against the individualistic tendencies found within the nation by seeking to push individuals past their comfort levels and to embrace a larger picture of what society should become.[cclxxx] Thoreau advocates a particular moral vision and duty for the citizen, one that is often regarded as solely individualistic, but largely a

moral vision that seeks excellence in government. If Thoreau simply attempted to attain an idealized world that realized his own particular moral vision, then any governing official or social standard that contradicted this worldview would be at odds with his moral vision. Few individuals could ever hope to attain this narrowly specified moral perfection but Thoreau acknowledges that men throughout history have reached this level. Individuals are capable of attaining moral excellence by disregarding societal ideals and instead focusing upon attuning their actions and beliefs toward a communion with nature and exemplifying the role of living a righteous life. This process is largely antagonistic to the views and practices of society, but as Rosenblum explains, Thoreau's political position fits into the perception that the reality of the political world "is conflict and its chief value is personal power."[cclxxxi] Focusing upon this idea that antagonism and conflict are mutually reinforcing political viewpoints, Thoreau can now become a model for reopening public debate through openly voicing dissent from the masses. Thoreau first identifies that government is not the only measure by which an individual is to be defined. He then uses John Brown as the key example to illustrate that government and majoritarian politics have failed and that an individual has the duty to disregard personal safety to strive for a common good, regardless of whether or not these practices place an individual outside the protections of society.

The Citizen Critic

The role of a citizen within a democracy should not be that of an individual who tacitly consents to rules that violate a sense of morality. Thoreau focuses upon the act of

living a life of expedience versus a life of principle and exemplifies these forms of living by the types of arguments each uses. Expedient political arguments are often centered upon finding a lifestyle that would afford one the ability to live in comfort and luxury so long as this station in life is not questioned. Emphasizing principle instead, Thoreau does not argue for a government different from democracy but a "distinctively romantic justification: democracy as the political order that best corresponds to the romantic sense of infinite potentiality."[cclxxxii] Within the infinite potentiality, Thoreau believes that individuals will be able to best order their lives and to form a government from the bottom to the top. Instead, the current government enforces the decisions of a few as the decision all. Thoreau writes, "But, to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not at once no government, but *at once* a better government."[cclxxxiii] This better government is not the dissolution of the current government or a revolution, but instead a government that evolves to more fully represent the values of the individual, values that correspond with nature and God.

In the current conception of society, the individual is forced to submit to a life that requires blind allegiance to actions that lead to relatively little personal or moral gain. As Thoreau recounts, "Most men would feel insulted, if it were proposed to employ them in throwing stones over a wall, and then in throwing them back, merely that they might earn their wages. But many are no more worthily employed now."[cclxxxiv] Society and the government attempt to allow for the individual to "earn a living" through allowing for the basic modes of economic production. However, Thoreau suggests that the society has been wrongly focusing its attention: the business of living and earning a

wage through labor and toiling in the fields fails to account for the true meaning and purpose of a society, that is, to allow individuals to reach their own conclusions and construct their own value systems. Without the ability to strive toward personal and moral growth, individuals are left as tools of the State. Their very livelihood is defined by the acts that will continue to keep their bodies alive, but this process does very little to ensure that workers will be engaged in any process that can be defined as life. As Worley explains, "When citizens cease to use the government to serve their will and begin to be, instead, servants of its will, they surrender precisely what it is that makes them human: their ability to choose and create their own values and destinies. Citizens cease to be human and become mere inanimate tools and commodities."[cclxxxv]

Thoreau routinely emphasizes that an individual lacking the ability to think and act independently is akin to an inanimate tool or commodity to be traded away by the government. As Thoreau describes in *Resistance to Civil Government*, "The mass of men serve the State thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies… In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense."[cclxxxvi] This process of being nothing more than a machine places the value of these "commonly esteemed good citizens" as having the "same sort of worth only as horses and dogs."[cclxxxvii] While a horse or dog may increase the wealth of the owner, these objects fail to possess any value beyond their immediate uses. The key premise of *Resistance to Civil Government* reaffirms the idea that the individual should seek to serve the State with the free range of motion and sanctity of conscience to fully aspire toward transforming 'bad' government into a moral government. The process of

becoming more than an inanimate tool or commodity centers on the ability to break free from the lifestyle found within traditional society, which can only be attained by individuals who choose to live boldly. Even as the citizens may be tools of the state, Thoreau explains that legislators also fail because "our legislators have not yet learned the comparative value of free-trade and of freedom, of union, and of rectitude, to a nation . . . If we were left solely to the wordy wit of legislators in Congress for our guidance, uncorrected by the seasonable experience and the effectual complaints of the people, America would not long retain her rank among the nations."[cclxxxviii] The end goal of an idealized society revolves around individuals living boldly and legislators being responsive to the people.

If *Walden* serves as a blueprint for the democratic individual, then *Resistance to Civil Government* serves as a blueprint for the individual within a society. As Rosenblum explains, "Thoreau's essay on civil disobedience is enduring because he successfully speaks in the voice of a conscientious democratic citizen."[cclxxxix] As Rosenblum alludes to the conscientious democratic citizen, there is the admission that a democratic citizen has the innate belief that government and the individuals in a society should both strive for the same moral end. *Resistance to Civil Government* creates a conflict between this innately held belief and the observed actions of government and the society. Instead of choosing to work toward resolving this issue through a proactive change in government, some individuals interpret believe that the answer is to remove themselves from society and withdrawing consent. As Worley contends,

> [T]he single greatest obstacle we must overcome in making sense of ‘Resistance to Civil Government’ is the notion that the essay concerns withdrawal from society . . . any such bonds have already been all but destroyed . . . The essay’s true agenda is not the destruction of social bonds but their reconstruction and restoration to their original vitality.[ccxc]

The project of *Resistance to Civil Government* relates to the overall goal that government can become responsive to the citizens. If the two groups are disaffected from one another, then it is the role of the citizen to become a critic in hopes that this process will foster a new form of government or at very least a government more conducive to the growth of the individual.

After the Mexican-American War and the looming admission of new states to the Union, the Compromise of 1850 was drafted as a way of placating both slave states and free states. A particular problem with the annexation of Texas was that the territory claimed by the state occupied areas north of the Missouri Compromise line. Due to the large size of the state, Texas was given the option to split into a total of five different states if it chose to do so. Under the Missouri Compromise, any state North of this line would be admitted to the Union as a free state. Another issue concerning the admittance of states was that California would be split in half as the Missouri Compromise line bisected the state. As part of the Compromise of 1850, Texas was admitted solely as a slave state and California was admitted as a free state. Any other state south of the Missouri Compromise line would be given the option to decide whether it would become a free state or a slave state on the basis of popular sovereignty. As a whole, this process served to keep the division in the Senate as amicable as possible, given such a distinct

difference in belief systems about the future of slavery in the country. Another provision of the Compromise of 1850 was the enactment of stronger guidelines for returning slaves that escaped to the North back to their owners in the South. The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 legalized excessive fines for individuals who aided escaped slaves and also demanded the immediate return of any slave who had escaped to the North. This particular provision of the Compromise of 1850 exasperated those opposed to slavery in the North.

The Compromise of 1850 may not have been widely accepted by those residing in the North, but the attention given such laws as the Fugitive Slave Act could be seen as fleeting at best. In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, introduced into Congress, would repeal the Missouri Compromise and give the individuals in all new states the ability to vote on whether slavery would be allowed. While in Concord, Thoreau attended a meeting about slavery "expecting … to speak on the subject of slavery in Massachusetts; but I was surprised and disappointed to find that what had called my townsmen together was the destiny of Nebraska."[ccxci] Thoreau examines the preoccupation of the citizens of Concord with the issue of slavery in Kansas and Nebraska rather than attempting to resolve the issue as it stands in their own state. In a lecture, *Slavery in Massachusetts*, Thoreau explains that the Governor fails to represent the interests of the masses because slavery exists within Massachusetts and there is little chance of discussion or recourse to this particular injustice.[ccxcii] By focusing on the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, Thoreau intimates that the citizens of Massachusetts were more concerned about the issue of slavery in a far away land than with attempting to have an immediate impact by

denouncing the Fugitive Slave Act and acting against it. Thoreau suggests that the Governor of Massachusetts knows that his constituents clearly do not favor slavery, but he creates a disparity between the wishes of the citizenry and the natural rights of all individuals failing to address the issue. As Thoreau explains, "I listen to hear the voice of a Governor… I hear only the creaking of crickets and the hum of insects which now fill the summer air… when freedom is most endangered, he dwells in the deepest obscurity… every moment [Massachusetts] hesitated to set this man free – every moment that she now hesitates to atone for her crime, she is convicted."[ccxciii]

As the northerners reiterate their desire to see slavery abolished in Nebraska, the lack of action toward the institution of slavery as a whole is reminiscent of individuals who opt to serve evil rather than attempt to live a scrupulous life. Thoreau argues that the judges attempting to determine the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Law only look to the Founders to determine whether this law can or cannot stand. Instead, Thoreau suggests that men follow their own intrinsic notion of what is right and moral by "obeying that eternal and only just CONSTITUTION, which He, and not any Jefferson or Adams, has written in your being."[ccxciv] The moral sentiment of principled action resonates throughout *Slavery in Massachusetts* in which Thoreau argues for a distinction between the laws of man and the law of God. The law of man can easily be influenced by avarice whereas God's law created men to be free of bondage and the will of others. Thoreau openly makes accuses Massachusetts and its citizens as being complicit in slavery by not immediately acting against the Fugitive Slave Act. If these citizens had broken no laws but were still being accused of guilt through their inaction, then there

exists the all too real possibility that they were not being judged solely by the laws of man but also by moral laws. Thoreau’s admonitions, however, carry little weight unless he can illustrate that there is a precedent for moral behavior, an abolitionist willing to act without regard for personal health and welfare. This example is John Brown.

John Brown

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 was an attempt to assuage the fears of both proslavery and antislavery proponents. By allowing for popular sovereignty in new territories, the North and South could be reasonably assured that slavery could either continue or end in the new territories based upon the will of the people. The practice of popular sovereignty, however, did little more than ensure that the residents in these territories would be terrorized by groups of individuals attempting to forcefully sway the elections in the favor of their cause. Lawrence, Kansas was established in 1854 by antislavery settlers with the influx of northeasterners who hoped to vote Kansas as a free state. Later, in 1856, proslavery settlers sacked Lawrence in an attempt to disband the antislavery settlers and to destroy antislavery printing presses and equipment. Hearing that there was violence in Lawrence, John Brown and a company of soldiers started toward the city in order to be of assistance if needed. The company of soldiers eventually decided to turn back, but Brown, four of his sons, and two others continued on. While there was only one casualty in the sacking of Lawrence, Brown and his company executed five male slaveholders as retaliation in what is known as the Pottawatomie Massacre. This act and Brown’s protection of other antislavery settlers in

a couple of other military actions helped gain Brown the reputation for having strong moral convictions against slavery and for having the willingness to resort to violence in the cause of ending slavery.

John Brown's most notable action against slavery was a raid against an armory in Harpers Ferry, Virginia in 1859. Brown, with the financial support of abolitionists in New England, purchased weapons and attempted to enlist the aid of freed slaves and other antislavery advocates. The intent was to capture the armory and to use these weapons to arm recruits to Brown's cause of liberating slaves in Virginia. From there, Brown's forces would travel south and continue to swell in rank as others realized the righteousness of the cause. Prior to the assault on Harpers Ferry, Brown's force consisted of only 22 men, including him, and was unsuccessful at recruiting other volunteers. Deciding to continue the raid anyway, Brown was able to secure the armory but soon drew the attention of the local militia and the raiders were unable to escape. Brown and most of the surviving members of the raiding party were later tried for treason against Virginia and hanged.

For Thoreau to contend that John Brown was an honorable individual willing to do everything necessary to abolish slavery, it is necessary to illustrate that Brown's actions were just and righteous. To accomplish this goal, Thoreau maintains that Brown only enlisted like-minded individuals who were cut from the same moral fiber as Brown himself. These individuals were also willing to follow a law established by a power higher than the legislatures of men. Thoreau also contends that Brown fought for a cause that would not simply pass even if Brown's corporeal body had died. The public could

understand that the common person could aspire to hold beliefs so strongly and of such a high moral caliber that these ideas would be timeless. Thoreau's *John Brown* texts serve as epideictic works that have a twofold purpose: to eulogize Brown while also humanizing him. This eulogy and humanizing allows the audience to see how they might act in a similar situation and to place themselves in Brown's shoes for a moment. As the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* explains "…we shall try to make them [the audience] desire to know a man of such excellence; since the hearers of our eulogy have the same zeal for virtue as the subject of the eulogy had or now has, we hope easily to win the approval of his deeds from those whose approval we desire."[ccxcv]

Thoreau writes "A Plea for Captain John Brown" after the trial that finds Brown guilty of treason against Virginia. Thoreau counters the typical narrative of a lawless man breaking down the bonds of society by portraying Brown as a man of higher integrity than a commonplace criminal. Indeed, if Brown was a moral man, then it is easier to accept the narrative that Brown's cause was morally derived and Thoreau furthers this by recounting that Brown would "'permit no profanity; no man of loose morals was suffered to remain there, unless, indeed, as a prisoner of war'" and that Brown "would have been glad to add a chaplain… if he could find one who could fill that office worthily."[ccxcvi] Brown's inability to find a chaplain that could worthily fill the office for Brown and his men illustrates that Brown took religion seriously and held men of God to a higher standard than other men. Thoreau suggests that "it is easy enough to find [a chaplain] for the United States army" and in doing so, immediately calls into question the decency of any group that could so easily find a chaplain. When asked if the

raid on Harpers Ferry had been at the behest of any authority, Brown responds, "No man sent me here; it was my own prompting and that of my Maker, or that of the Devil, whichever you please to ascribe it to. I acknowledge no master in human form."[ccxcvii] Brown and Thoreau equally add to the narrative of Brown's mission coming from a higher cause by emphasizing the inability to find a chaplain that was worthy of leading Brown's soldiers in a time of war. Brown could not accept any ordinary man and even the men who were ordained as men of God could not pass muster. This process is compounded by Brown's courtroom assertion that the mission to liberate slaves comes from 'no master in human form.' Had Brown been an individual of lesser morals, then the apologetics would convey that Brown was only acting under orders from other abolitionists or that Virginia had in some way violated an antislavery law. Instead, Brown maintains, "I believe that to have interfered as I have done–as I have always freely admitted I have done–in behalf of His despised poor was not wrong, but right."[ccxcviii]

Thoreau openly compares Brown to a Christ-like figure by declaring "some eighteen hundred years ago Christ was crucified; this morning, perchance, Captain Brown was hung. These are the two ends of a chain which is not without its links. He is not Old Brown any longer; he is an Angel of Light."[ccxcix] If Brown was a Christ-like figure, then Brown's hanging is nothing more than a modern day crucifixion and the teachings of this moral teacher have fallen on deaf ears. The average person may realize that Brown's moral behavior is right, but it would be too late to save Brown from the same fate as Christ. Thoreau explains that Brown's men, who double as Apostles, were

of such a breed that “few could be found worthy to pass muster. Each one who there laid down his life for the poor and oppressed was a picked man, culled out of many thousands, if not millions; apparently a man of principle, of rare courage, and devoted humanity; ready to sacrifice his life at any moment for the benefit of his fellow-man.”[ccc] By contending that John Brown’s troops were ready to sacrifice their lives for the benefit of their fellow men, Thoreau seeks to create a disparity between human laws and a higher order of morality. Men should be allowed to stand outside of human laws so long as these incursions are conducted as the basis of a moral principle. By contrast, “The modern Christian is a man who has consented to say all the prayers in the liturgy, provided you will let him go straight to bed and sleep quietly afterward … they cannot conceive of a man who is actuated by higher motives than they are.”[ccci]

This stirring narrative of John Brown as a Christ-like figure is difficult to accomplish while the news of Harpers Ferry was still fresh in the minds of the audience. Thoreau is in danger of losing the argument about Brown as a moral being unless there is a way to justify the transgressions of Harpers Ferry and the Pottawatomie Massacre. Thoreau circumvents this matter by alluding to the story of Christ at the temple with the moneychangers in that “the same indignation that is said to have cleared the temple once will clear it again. The question is not about the weapon, but the spirit in which you use it.”[cccii] Because Christ had once been so terribly frustrated with practices of the moneychangers at the temple and the selling of livestock and doves, Christ’s righteous anger is vented by forming a whip out of cord and overturning tables and chairs.[ccciii] For Brown, the slave trade represented the travesty of government and its inherent

corruption. While the killing of slave owners could be seen as being moral reprehensible, it was in the same spirit as Christ, an attempt to purge the system of its perversion.

In *A Plea for Captain John Brown*, Thoreau pointedly reminds others that expedience or maintaining the status quo need not be the only consideration when choosing how to move forward as a society. In this example, Thoreau emphasizes that no one can fault the character of John Brown and that steadfastly standing by one's own morals allows the individual to explicitly denounce the crime to which the country is a party. As Turner explains:

> … In Thoreau's eyes, democratic citizens must have the capacity for self-criticism, both personal and national. Though it would be wishful thinking to hold up the self-righteous Brown as a paragon of personal self-criticism, he nevertheless fulfills his role in the project of national self-criticism.[ccciv]

This project of self-criticism compels individuals to reexamine their particular station in life and their approach to passively allowing government to rule over them. The problematic aspect of using John Brown as a prime example revolves around the idea that Brown has not only openly resisted the laws of society, but also has taken lives in an attempt to live a moral life. Thoreau is required, then, either to show that the individual is allowed to resist a government through violent action or that the laws were so morally repugnant that the only option to rectify these acts is through an extreme response. As Worley remarks, "The radical, violent gesture situated outside of any discourse or moral argument, risks total meaninglessness if it fails . . . Thoreau responds to the failure of Harpers Ferry by attempting to reattach Brown's action to recognizable cultural values.

Thoreau works to bestow meaning on actions whose failure has left them otherwise unintelligible."[cccv] Thoreau accomplishes this process by attempting to reaffirm the degree to which Brown was a moral individual who spent his life focusing upon rectifying and destroying evil. Brown becomes the prototypical protagonist whose only folly is the belief that all individuals should be accorded the same rights as others.

The raid on Harpers Ferry is interpreted as the beginning of northern aggression against the institutions of the south. In the trial of *Virginia v. Brown*, Brown is found guilty of committing treason against Virginia because any attempt to arm slaves or cause an insurrection is an open attack against the state and this action becomes a capital offense. As Brown declares, however, the raid on Harpers Ferry was meant to secure weapons to give to slaves in an attempt to secure their passage to freedom. Brown makes the distinction that giving weapons to slaves in hopes of peaceably walking to freedom is different than attempting to overthrow a state because he would only be correcting an injustice against a group of people. Brown admits, "I never did intend murder, or treason, or the destruction of property, or to excite or incite slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection."[cccvi] Because Brown was unable to rouse enough support to his cause, he foresees that the only end to slavery in the South can be through force and this approach would surely end in lives lost. As Brown's final statement predicts, "I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land can never be purged away but with blood."[cccvii] Thoreau uses John Brown as a catalyst for inspiring antislavery sentiments by juxtaposing the actions of Brown against the inaction of the public. Thoreau distinguishes two forms of discourse in the United States, that of

maintaining the social norm and that of arguing from principles and morals in an attempt to transcend arguments of expediency. Brown signifies that even when the laws fail to accord an end to unjust action, there is still an outlet to be had through demonstration and principled discussion.

A Plea for Captain John Brown works as a reminder that the conscience of the nation is not necessarily enacted in its laws. Thoreau attempts to use John Brown as the fundamental example for citizens, ultimately reversing the process of tacitly observing rules within a society. In this sense,

> The 'Plea' shows that Thoreau has a positive politics–a politics of *performing conscience*. The performance of conscience before an audience transforms the invocation of conscience from a personally political act into a publicly political one. The aim of the performance is to provoke one's neighbors into a process of individual self-reform that will make them capable of properly vigilant democratic citizenship and conscientious political agitation.[cccviii]

This political agitation is the reminder that dissent remains a viable political alternative to the reigning assumptions and laws of a democratic society. By martyring Brown, Thoreau is able to describe a moral life and to describe how achieving this ideal is possible. For Thoreau, the act of living a morally steadfast life would ensure that an individual had accomplished something in their lifetime and in living for these few moments, their actions would overcome death. If the citizens of the United States knew that slavery was morally reprehensible, then the failure to act against it would be akin to not living. As Thoreau explains, "It seems as if no man had ever died in America before,

for in order to die you must first have lived . . . there was no death in the case, because there had been no life… no temple's vail was rent, only a hole dug somewhere. Let the dead bury their dead. The best of them . . . Franklin – Washington – they were let off without dying; they were merely missing one day."[cccix] The voices and actions of the great leaders allow them to transcend death. For the rest of society can aspire to be great men and "these men, in teaching us how to die, have at the same time taught us how to live."[cccx]

Conclusion

Expedient arguments, whether primarily concerned with security or advantage, are rarely defeated by principled arguments. As a whole, once the decision to go to war is made, it is quite difficult to silence the war machine and to have individuals reconsider their desire to go to war. In this particular instance, Thoreau demonstrates that as a citizen critic, principled argument allows for the minority to envision that a change can be made, not the decision to go to war, but to the extent of how far the war would continue. Thoreau begins with the Mexican-American War as a protester against the inclusion of another slave state in the Union. Over the course of a decade, Thoreau remains the voice of principled dissent and the outlet for other individuals voicing their idea that slavery, regardless of where it occurs, is wrong. Thoreau finally utilizes a key example of an individual who is willing to forego personal security in order to act against slavery. Brown's actions were coupled with language that was plain and refused to be identified as rhetorically based because there was "no need to invent any thing, but

to tell the simple truth, and communicate his own resolution."[cccxi] Through this resolution, this steadfastness in beliefs, Thoreau is able to transform John Brown, not into a monster intent on terrorizing the south and wrecking havoc on the institutions of southern life, but into a martyr who had a quietness about him, a martyr who seemed like a "volcano with an ordinary chimney flue," a martyr who solely wanted to end slavery.[cccxii] The antislavery discourse could not quell the civil discord that would become the Civil War, but it could provide the principles by which one portion of the country could strongly identify. In this case, principled rhetoric could serve to mitigate the effects of expedient rhetoric and to rein in the effects of arguments for security and advantage.

Endnotes

[cclxiii] James M. McCaffrey, *Army of Manifest Destiny: The American Soldier in the Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 5.
[cclxivcclxiv] Norman A. Graebner, "The Mexican War: A Study in Causation," *Pacific Historical Review* 49 (1980): 415–17.
[cclxv] *Ibid*. 419.
[cclxvi] For a more complete understanding of the issues surrounding Polk's presidency and the ascension of Taylor please see Karl Jack Bauer, *The Mexican American War, 1846-1848* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 358–62.
[cclxvii] Citation from Harding's *The Days of Henry Thoreau* as it appears in Nancy L. Rosenblum, "Introduction" in Thoreau's *Political Writings*, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), ix.
[cclxviii] Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government," in *Political Writings*, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2.
[cclxix] Aristotle. *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1357a.
[cclxx] Nancy L. Rosenblum, "Introduction" in Thoreau's *Political Writings*, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xv.
[cclxxi] *Ibid*. xv–xvi.
[cclxxii] George Hendrick and Willene Hendrick, *Why Not Every Man?: African Americans and Civil Disobedience in the Quest for the Dream* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2005), 21.

[cclxxiii] For a useful essay that rescues Thoreau from the Straussians but gives him to the anarchists, see Richard Drinnon, "Thoreau's Politics of the Upright Man," in *Walden, Civil Disobedience, and Other Writings*, 3rd Edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., 2008), 544–56.
[cclxxiv] I can't possibly do justice to all the Cavell has brought about in our understanding of Thoreau. For a more complete account, please see Stanley Cavell, *The Senses of Walden*, Expanded edition (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
[cclxxv] Brian Walker, "Thoreau on Democratic Cultivation," *Political Theory* 29 (2001): 159.
[cclxxvi] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 45.
[cclxxvii] *Ibid*. 74.
[cclxxviii] Alfred I. Tauber, *Henry David Thoreau and the Moral Agency of Knowing* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 163.
[cclxxix] Hannah Arendt, "Civil Disobedience," in *Crises of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1972), 60.
[cclxxx] For a more detailed analysis of Thoreau as a positive democratic individual, see Jane Bennett, *Thoreau's Nature: Ethics, Politics, and the Wild*, New Edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002). Nancy L. Rosenblum, *Another Liberalism: Romanticism and the Reconstruction of Liberal Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Jack Turner, "Performing Conscience: Thoreau, Political Action, and the Plea for John Brown," *Political Theory* 33 (2005): 449.
[cclxxxi] Nancy L. Rosenblum, "Thoreau's Militant Conscience," *Political Theory* 9 (1981): 106.
[cclxxxii] Nancy L. Rosenblum, "Thoreau's Democratic Individualism," in *A Political Companion to Henry David Thoreau*, ed. Jack Turner (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 15.
[cclxxxiii] Thoreau, *Resistance to Civil Government*, 2.
[cclxxxiv] Henry David Thoreau, "Life without Principle," in *Political Writings*, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 105.
[cclxxxv] Sam McGuire Worley, *Emerson, Thoreau, and the Role of the Cultural Critic* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), 107.
[cclxxxvi] Thoreau, *Resistance to Civil Government*, 3.
[cclxxxvii] *Ibid*. 3.
[cclxxxviii] *Ibid*. 20.
[cclxxxix] Rosenblum, *Introduction to Political Writings*, xix.
[ccxc] Worley, *Role of the Cultural Critic*, 107.
[ccxci] Henry David Thoreau, "Slavery in Massachusetts," in *Political Writings*, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 123.
[ccxcii] As Thoreau explains, "there is not one slave in Nebraska; there are perhaps a million slaves in Massachusetts." *Ibid*. 123.
[ccxciii] *Ibid*. 124-127.
[ccxciv] *Ibid.* 132.

[ccxcv] Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 177.
[ccxcvi] Thoreau, A Plea for John Brown, 139–40.
[ccxcvii] John Brown, "Interview in Charlestown Prison, October 19, 1859," in *The Life and Letters of John Brown*, ed. Franklin Benjamin Sanborn (Boston, MA: Roberts Brothers, 1891), 563.
[ccxcviii] John Brown, "Last Speech to Court, November 2, 1859," in *A John Brown Reader*, ed. Louis Ruchames (London, UK: Abelard-Schuman, 1959), 126.
[ccxcix] Thoreau, A Plea for John Brown, 156.
[ccc] *Ibid*. 152.
[ccci] *Ibid*. 144.
[cccii] *Ibid*. 153.
[ccciii] For a more complete account, look to Mark 11:15-19.
[ccciv] Jack Turner, "Thoreau and John Brown," in *A Political Companion to Henry David Thoreau*, ed. Jack Turner (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 156.
[cccv] Worley, *Role of the Cultural Critic*, 103.
[cccvi] John Brown, "Last Speech to Court, November 2, 1859," 126.
[cccvii] David S. Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 393.
[cccviii] Turner, "Thoreau and John Brown," 155.
[cccix] Thoreau, *A Plea for John Brown*, 154.
[cccx] *Ibid*. 154.
[cccxi] *Ibid*. 140.
[cccxii] *Ibid*. 140.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Words have power. By themselves, words evoke little emotion and often have little consequence. Strung together, words begin to exhibit a variety of effects and influences. Words can be used to shape reality, influence decisions, inspire the masses, and ultimately define action. This dissertation, a study of *The Rhetoric of Conflict in Political Theory*, analyzes how words can convince men to take up arms in the early American political tradition. In my first chapter, I explore James Andrews' "American Adolescence" theory that suggests arguments of honor and principle were enough to influence men to take up arms during the early years of the American republic. Andrews further holds that as the United States matured as a country, these principled arguments had lesser degrees of success in leading men to war. This dissertation, however, serves as an extension of Andrews' "American Adolescence" theory by examining the effectiveness of arguments of honor and principle as well as arguments of expediency on persuading men to engage in war.

There have been many studies that attempt to discern what affect rhetoric has on individuals in the American tradition. One approach to rhetoric and political theory focuses upon the utility of constant deliberation and how this can help lead to an idealized society.[cccxiii] Another approach seeks to analyze the use of rhetoric by political theorists in hopes of uncovering a hidden meaning and deeper understanding of the original text.[cccxiv] Of these different approaches, however, few studies have attempted to

examine rhetoric and persuasion through political theory. This dissertation is an examination of rhetoric and persuasion as it pertains to arguments about war.

In Chapter I, I briefly examine Andrews' "American adolescence" theory and suggest this argument is flawed because it focuses only upon one small part of rhetoric. I conduct a brief overview of the literature of persuasion and rhetoric through the lens of political theory and suggest that arguments of honor and principle are only half of the picture. Instead, I argue that arguments of expediency may help fill any holes in the current research over political theory and rhetoric.

Chapter II examines Machiavelli's *The Prince*, *Discourses*, and *The Art of War*. Within the examination, while seemingly unrelated, I determine that these texts contain a common thread that calls for a return to republican government in early-16th century Florence. Moreover, I argue that Machiavelli's language, specifically the use of *virtù* and *fortuna*, creates an overtone of expediency which would convey the necessity of war to the audience. While this chapter does not fit within the early-American tradition through geographic and temporal considerations, Machiavelli is a fundamental influence upon early-American political thought and his influence can be seen throughout the arguments used in the American political tradition. These arguments, which focus upon creating a narrative that intertwines opportunity and expediency, can serve as a baseline for further considerations when arguments of expediency compete against arguments of principle. In Machiavelli's case, a call to arms is a desired conclusion for his political tracts.

While the first chapter examines Andrews' argument concerning the early-American political tradition, Chapter III serves to directly test Andrews' theory:

arguments of principle and honor are sufficient in persuading men to take up arms. In this chapter, I examine the influence of Lockean political thought on the writings of Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine to establish that both authors use similar principles and concepts to argue for the American Revolution. However, I identify one fundamental difference between Jefferson's *A Summary View of the Rights of British Americans* and Paine's *Common Sense.* Compared to Jefferson, Paine utilizes an additional argument of expediency as a persuasive element in his writings. Specifically, I argue that Paine's introduction of an argument of expediency, serves to counter Jefferson's principled call to arms. Paine and Jefferson's argument serves as one example that rejects Andrews' "American Adolescence" theory. If Andrews' original assertion were true, then one could expect that in the earliest of circumstances involving the colonies and Great Britain—arguments of honor and principle would be enough to convince men to take up arms. However, history suggests this is not the case.

Chapter III determines that while some arguments are created using the same basic syllogistic principles, these arguments are not as effective as others. While Jefferson and Paine argue for the same end and use many of the same reasons as justification, Paine is successful because his argument is teeming with language that changes the way the audience interprets the material. Paine's argument introduces the shadow of the future–the costs that future generations will incur– if immediate action is not taken. This immediacy inhibits the ability of the audience to rationally consider if war is in the best interest of the colonies. Instead, *Common Sense* has served as the

rallying cry for the American Revolution as well as the affect arguments of expediency have on convincing men to take up arms.

While the Chapters II and III suggest arguments of expediency are more likely to persuade men to take up arms, in Chapter IV, I extend my analysis to further test forms of expedient arguments. Instead of relying upon Andrews' initial study on principled rhetoric, I differentiate between two forms of expedient arguments: arguments concerning domestic security, and arguments for the political and economic advantage of a state. This analysis determines whether the different forms of expedient arguments would still refute Andrews' original claim. Prior to the American Revolution, Colonists welcomed protection provided by England and after the Treaty of Paris, the United States enjoyed relative security at home but suffered from the British threatening maritime operations. Upon the analysis of James Madison's rhetoric toward England and France directly following the *Chesapeake* incident, Madison relied on principled rhetoric to characterize the decision made by his administration by not pursuing immediate action against England. As relations with England deteriorated and the United States declared war on Britain, Madison's principled rhetoric changed to an argument of expediency–which initially emphasized the economic and political advantages the United States would gain from a war with England. Prior to the War of 1812, the security of the United States was not in jeopardy and Madison was unable to convince the necessity of war to the public, even if this provided future advantages for the United States. As Madison's rhetoric changed from principled arguments with economic advantage, to an argument of expedience for securing the domestic and maritime affairs

of the country, I conclude that Madison is successful because of this shift in argument style. As Chapter IV examines, arguments of expediency served as a prime example of rhetoric that convinced men to take up arms whereas Andrews' "American Adolescence" theory failed to address such examples.

The previous chapters focus on whether arguments concerning honor and principle, or arguments of expediency, are enough to convince men to enter into a conflict. Chapter V is introduced as a counter example in attempt to test the "American Adolescence" theory during an era later than Andrews' initial theory. Can arguments of principle serve to neutralize arguments of expediency? Chapter V focuses upon the writings of Henry David Thoreau to find examples of principled arguments against the Mexican-American War which would later amplify the tensions that lead to the Civil War. I demonstrate that while Thoreau's principled rhetoric is unable to ultimately stop the Mexican-American War, Thoreau is able to form a common identity between dissenters of these conflicts. These dissenters are able to unify with one another and create limitations on how far a war could extend. So while Andrews' theory about principled rhetoric convincing men to take up arms appears to be misinformed, perhaps these arguments of honor and principle can succeed in limiting war.

Future Research

While the study of political theory and rhetoric is beginning to take root in the field of social science research, there are areas within this field that have yet to be cultivated. This particular dissertation predominantly focuses upon political theory and

rhetoric, however, there is a tinge of international relations contained herein. The examination of expediency and principled arguments, as they relate to convincing men to take up arms, can be explored in other time periods as well as laying groundwork for future quantitative studies. This dissertation suggests that argument of expediency have the potential to influence individuals to redefine their self-interests and pursue a call to arms. As war can often begin over any number of reasons, this particular area of research can begin to further explain the age-old question of "why can't we be friends?"

Throughout this dissertation, I have oversimplified the study of rhetoric to create a streamlined analysis of only two types of arguments: expedient and principled. Most arguments and rhetoric are much richer and more nuanced and should be afforded deeper consideration than this dissertation affords. *The Rhetoric of Conflict in Political Theory* simply provides a canvas for future research to draw upon. One of the first sketches that should be made on this canvas is a drawing that attempts to quantify the findings from these chapters. If Andrews' original hypothesis was confirmed in his case studies and if this dissertation adds to and counters these original findings, then a more thoughtful and controlled analysis should be conducted to further tease out the influence of arguments of principle and arguments of expediency. Sometimes, it is not enough to simply acknowledge that words have power.

Endnotes

[cccxiii] See James S. Fishkin, *Democracy and Deliberation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991) for a more contemporary application of deliberative deliberation and how rhetoric can be used for the good of society. Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,

1996), John S. Dryzek, "Rhetoric in Democracy: A Systemic Appreciation," *Political Theory* 38 (2010): 319-39.

[cccxiv] For an excellent example, see Stephen John Hartnett and Jennifer R. Mercieca, "Rhetorical Norms of Republicanism in Post-Revolutionary America, 1798-1801," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs 9* (2006): 79–112. For Ivie's notable work dealing with an examination of rhetoric, war language, and the decision to enter into conflict, please view: Ronald L. Hatzenbuehler and Robert L. Ivie, *Congress Declares War: Rhetoric, Leadership, and Partisanship in the Early Republic* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1983); Robert L. Ivie, "Presidential Motives for War," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60 (1974): 337–45; Robert L. Ivie, "Images of Savagery in American Justifications for War," *Communication Monographs* (1980): 279–94; Robert L. Ivie, "The Metaphor of Force in Prowar Discourse: the Case of 1812," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982): 240–53. And Jennifer R. Mercieca, "The Culture of Honor: How Slaveholders Responded to the Abolitionist Mail Crisis of 1835," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10 (2007): 68-71.

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