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Faculty of Art and Philosophy

**Political Thought in America during the Revolutionary
Period as Reflected in Thomas Paine's *Common Sense***

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Firstly, basic religious and political ideas of the Enlightenment should be introduced with emphasis on changes from earlier periods. Next the historico-cultural background of 18th century America should be summarized, with the various political groupings as well as their goals and tactics outlined, including where the work of Thomas Paine fits into the period. The longest and most important part of the BP should be an analysis of Common Sense in terms of the arguments therein that reflect Enlightenment thinking as well as the different types of rhetorical devices used to express these points. In this section the effects of Common Sense during the period before, during and right after the American Revolution should be described, i.e. who read it and what actions were inspired by the work ? here looking at different socioeconomic classes could prove fruitful. Finally, a brief comparison should be made between the ideals in Common Sense and the reality of setting up the new government under the Articles of Confederation. As a conclusion some aspects of the overall legacy of the work in American culture can be mentioned.

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ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis primarily deals with the radical political thought formulated by the American revolutionary Thomas Paine in his pamphlet *Common Sense* in the context of the Enlightenment and the political theories which emerged from it. The first, theoretical, part focuses on the historical period of the Enlightenment which is ideologically interconnected with the American Revolution. This part discusses the importance of the epistemological analysis of the human mind and its link to a form of government with the emphasis on liberal and radical concepts of this political philosophy, and the consequent conflict of these concepts in the American Revolution. The second, analytical, part examines Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense*. This part especially stresses Paine's radical political thought and his innovative literary tactics in *Common Sense*.

KEYWORDS

Common Sense, Paine, Thomas, the Enlightenment, the American Revolution, Locke, John, radicalism

NÁZEV

Odraz politické idey revolučního období v Americe v *Common Sense* od Thomase Paina.

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se výhradně zabývá radikální politickou myšlenkou Amerického revolucionáře Thomase Paina v *Common Sense* v kontextu osvícenských politických teorií. Teoretická část je zaměřena na historické období osvícenství, které je ideově propojeno s Americkou revolucí. Tato část pojednává o důležitosti epistemologického výkladu lidské mysli a jeho propojení s formou vlády se zaměřením na liberální a radikální koncepce této politické filozofie a následný střet těchto koncepcí v Americké revoluci. Analytická část práce rozebírá pamflet *Common Sense* od Thomase Paina. V tomto oddíle je kladen důraz především na radikální politickou ideu Paina a jeho inovativní literární taktiky v *Common Sense*.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Common Sense, Paine, Thomas, Osvícenství, Americká revoluce, Locke, John, radikalismus

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Introduction

This bachelor paper is concerned with Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense*. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which are characterized by the Enlightenment movement, gave birth to many acclaimed political philosophers, including Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose ideas were without doubt groundbreaking in shaping the beginnings of the modern social and political systems of the western world. These Enlightenment luminaries created the philosophical foundations of one of the most democratic revolutions, the American Revolution. The American Revolution is explicitly connected to the celebrated American historical figures who have been known as the Founding Fathers, such as John Adams, John Dickinson, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, who led the creation of a new nation. Nevertheless, it is not so explicitly acknowledged that the American Revolution was profoundly encouraged by the poor son of a corset-maker, Thomas Paine. Thomas Paine is one of the American revolutionary radicals whose ideas are best understood to be revolutionary not only in political thought but also in logical arguments and emotional appeal. This naturally invites inquiry into Thomas Paine's political thought. The aim of this bachelor thesis is to elucidate Thomas Paine's radical political thought expressed in the pamphlet *Common Sense*.

This bachelor paper is divided into theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical section includes four chapters which aim to portray the crucial philosophical and historical issues of the American Revolution. The first chapter "Defining the American Enlightenment" generally describes the connection between the American Enlightenment and the American Revolution. The second chapter "The philosophical Bases of the American Revolution" turns to more specific philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment with the emphasis on the liberal and radical aspects of this intellectual movement that shaped the cornerstone of the American Revolution. The third chapter "The American Revolution and the Conflict between the Political Groups" aims to examine the internal conflicts between the leading political figures which culminated in the American Revolutionary War. The last chapter of the theoretical section "Dissemination of the Anglo-American Controversy" briefly outlines the crucial means of information that spread the political dispute between the political groups during the American revolutionary era.

The analytical section of the paper focuses the attention on Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* that reflects the radical political thought of the American Revolution. The analysis is divided into four sections which examine *Common Sense* from ethical, logical and

emotional points of view. The chapter “The Democratization of Political Language in *Common Sense*” deals with Paine’s radical moral philosophy as it is reflected in the overall language style of *Common Sense*. The section “The Logical Appeal in *Common Sense*” builds on the preceding chapter by focusing on specific examples of Paine’s logical appeal to his readers by which he describes his radical political thought. In this section Paine’s radicalism concerning society, government and republicanism is analyzed. The analysis then turns to “The Emotional Appeal of *Common Sense*” which focuses on specific rhetorical devices by which Paine demonstrates his persuasive tactics. The last part of the analysis centers on the consequent influence of *Common Sense* on the colonial milieu and the most important reactions to Thomas Paine’s radicalism.

There are important political terms in the bachelor paper which should be clearly interpreted in the context of the American Revolution. In a “liberal democracy”, the scope of democracy is limited by the representatives of government so that natural human rights and the representation of government is not equally applied to all men. In a “full democracy”, the scope of democracy is expanded to all men with regard to absolutely equal human rights and the direct representation of people in government. These terms are commonly defined differently in terms of a specific country and a specific time.

1. Defining the American Enlightenment

The political thought of the American revolutionary era cannot be fully comprehended without examining the intellectual movement which has been known as the Age of Enlightenment. The first task of the theoretical part of this bachelor paper is thus to put the American Revolution into a broader intellectual context from which the crucial political and religious concepts of America in the 1770s emerged.

In general, the Enlightenment represents a historical period stretching from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries which is characterized by significant political and social changes resting upon the shift from an interest in theology towards an interest in human intellect and reason. The core of this intellectual drive became the long-term growth of science and the consequent application of scientific knowledge to religion and political philosophy. The well-known Enlightenment thinker Immanuel Kant set out his views on the Age of Enlightenment in his essay *An Answer to the Question: What Is the Enlightenment?* defining this historical period as "mankind's exit from its self-incurred immaturity."¹ The resulting maturity of mankind refers to the human ability to use reason without the approval of supreme authorities.

The question arises: What is the American Enlightenment? The American Enlightenment represents a momentous socio-political and historico-cultural period in early American history that culminated in the American Revolutionary War, of which the end result was the establishment of the independent United States of America. The most notable era of the American Enlightenment covers the 1770s and the 1780s, the period of high political tension between America and Britain, which marked a watershed in American history. From a socio-political standpoint, this era operated as a long-term process of the intellectual devaluation and dissolution of the social and political norms of Great Britain and of the creation of those of a new American society.² In the historico-cultural respect, this period functioned as the separation of America from her mother country, Great Britain, and of the cultural decline of state paternalism, specifically the paternal position of the British King George III in the Thirteen Colonies.

Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* represents the most influential piece of literature of the American revolutionary era that reflects the aforementioned political and cultural changes in innovative political language. The 1770s and 1780s of the American Enlightenment can be

¹ John Schmidt, *What is the Enlightenment: Eighteenth Century Answers and Twentieth Century Questions*, 58

² Milan Zafirovski, *The Enlightenment and Its Effects on Modern Society*, 10

thus simply characterized as the time of crucial cultural, social and political changeovers from monarchy to democracy.

2. The Philosophical Bases of the American Revolution

One way to explain the socio-political changeover from monarchy to democracy is to illustrate what political concepts the Enlightenment thinkers deprecated and which ones they embraced. The aim of this chapter is to outline the crucial philosophical bases which gave rise to the American Revolutionary War.

Although the American Revolution represented social, political and cultural conflicts between America and her mother country, the tradition of the American Enlightenment is rooted in the intellectual sources which were revived by the British and French Enlightenment thinkers. The most influential of these in early American politics was John Locke (1632 - 1704). Locke is associated with the political ideology of liberalism.³ Liberal political theories began to emerge in Britain after the gradual decline of the feudal system and the expansion of capitalist society in European countries during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The British adherents of liberalism were members of the middle class, the rising capitalist group, who sought political and economic reforms of the then ruling political system of absolute monarchy.⁴

Specifically, the British Liberals deplored the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings upon which the absolute monarchies of the seventeenth century rested.⁵ The Divine Right of Kings is a politico-theological system which is analogous to ancient theocracy. In the Age of Absolutism, this ruling system represented an ideal government, paralleling a biblical paragon, which was typical for Catholic states and for France in particular.⁶ In Britain, the Divine Right of Kings was disseminated by the House of Stuart (1603 – 1689). The first Stuart ruling in Britain was James I of England who explained the absolute authority of divine monarchies succinctly as follows:

The state of monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth; for kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called gods. There be three principal similitudes that illustrate the state of Monarchy: one taken out of the Word of God and the two other out of the grounds of policy and philosophy. In the Scriptures kings are called gods, and so their power after a certain relation compared to the Divine power. Kings are also compared to the fathers of families, for a king is truly *parens patriae*, the politic father of his people.⁷ [sic]

³ Liberalism is a political philosophy founded on the ideas of liberal democracy and liberty of free men, i.e. propertied individuals of upper-class, stressing freedom of assembly, religion and free market, accessed online on June, 24, 2014, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberalism/#PolLib>

⁴ Andrew Heywood, *Politické Ideologie*, 21

⁵ *Ibid.*, 21

⁶ Glenn Burgess, "The Divine Right of Kings Reconsidered," in *The English Historical Review*, 839 - 840

⁷ James I of England, *Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I 1603 – 1625*, edited by J. R. Tanner, 15

The doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings embraces a highly centralized system of government. In consequence of the consolidation of State and Church, public affairs under the rule of the Stuarts were controlled by a narrow elite group of monarchs and the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church. They created one supreme authority in which all political and religious power, including economic power, were centered. Being compared to a divinity, as James I describes, a monarch's political decisions were ideologically defended by the Church, and hence any demonstrations against the monarchy were deemed acts of heresy. This theory was strongly supported by both the monarchs and the Popes (and after the English reformation, by the Anglican Church authorities), as this system reinforced their politico-theological sovereignty in society. In return for the Roman Church's vindication of the Divine Right of Kings, kings were supposed to disseminate and perpetuate Catholicism in the state.⁸ Consequently, freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion and free market was limited and a large number of people became victims of religious persecution and political executions.

Partly because of the need to ameliorate the repressive regime of absolute monarchy and partly due to their rising economic power, the British Liberals began to propose democratic ideas in order to establish a constitutional monarchy and thus decentralize the political and economic power of the kings. The significant philosophical difference between absolute and constitutional monarchies was concisely expressed by John Locke in *Two Treatises on Government*:

The Natural Liberty of Man is to be free from any Superior Power on Earth, and not to be under the Will or Legislative Authority of Man, but to have only the Law of Nature for his Rule. The Liberty of Man, in Society, is to be under no other Legislative Power but that established, by consent, in the Common-wealth, nor under the Dominion of any Will, or Restraint of any Law.⁹

Compared to absolutism, British liberalism supports a more popular system of government in the sense of the democratic idea that legitimate government must be based on the consent of the governed and that this parliamentary government is established only for security ends: to secure free citizens' life, liberty and happiness.¹⁰ It was from this idea that a constitutional monarchy was established after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 when the last Stuart James II of England was deposed. This idea of Locke's is also the fundamental source upon which the American Revolution was founded in the 1770s.

⁸ David Robertson, *The Penguin Dictionary of Politics*, 90

⁹ John Locke, *Locke: Political Writings*, edited by David Wootton, 272

¹⁰ Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States, 1492 – Present*, 73

The socio-political changeover from the regime of absolute monarchy to the regime of constitutional monarchy logically influenced the sphere of religion. After the long-term absolute authority of Catholicism and with its associated religious persecution, the idea that "religion should exist not in the public but in the private realm, where it can be protected while also being prevented from limiting the rights of other" was accentuated by general agreements about the separation between Church and State.¹¹ These arrangements emphasized that religious beliefs should not be connected with political ones and the head of state should be principally neutral in religious matters.¹²

It was the radical change in political philosophy, which rested upon the shift from an interest in theology towards an interest in human intellect and reason, that gave rise to the revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In contrast to absolutism that adopted doctrinaire policies based on theology, the Enlightenment thinkers espoused epistemological approaches to politics.¹³ Before the Enlightenment philosophers could rationalize a proper form of government, they had to look deeper into human psychology as it existed in the state of nature, i.e. the human state of mind before any governmental control. These ideas come from the Ancient concept of natural law theory, a complex of "moral principles innate in the structure of the universe," or "the principles of rational self-interest."¹⁴ These concepts are generally summarized into the moral and ethical philosophy of the Enlightenment which deals with the question of the struggle between human passions and human reason.

Prior to the upsurge of the liberal democratic principles, Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679) elaborated his moral philosophy that supports the governmental system of absolutism. Hobbes holds the belief that human passions are stronger than human reason. In the absence of absolute authority, people, who are motivated by their self-interests, wage "a war of all against all."¹⁵ A monarch, therefore, must exercise "absolute power as a necessary means to achieve the aim of peace and to bridle man's ambitions and passions through the threat of punishment."¹⁶ Hobbes considers people in the state of nature as too vicious and thus incapable of governing themselves without external supreme control.

John Locke, on the other hand, espouses a more positive view of people in the state of nature, and so he favors constitutional monarchy. Locke emphasizes the human capacity of

¹¹ Corwin Smidt, *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics*, 96

¹² *Ibid.*, 96

¹³ D. H. Meyer, "The Uniqueness of the American Enlightenment," in *American Quarterly*, 168

¹⁴ David Robertson, *The Penguin Dictionary of Politics*, 229

¹⁵ Gregor S. Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory*, 123

¹⁶ Peter J. Ahrensdorf, "The Fear of Death and the Longing for Immortality: Hobbes and Thucydides on Human Nature and the Problem of Anarchy," in *The American Political Science Review*, 581

virtue and stresses human reason and the opportunities it can produce. He believes that human reason permits free people to act rationally in order to preserve mutual security and property.¹⁷ In this respect, people are perfectly predisposed to govern by consent. However, Locke stresses that human intellect and virtues are found in different degrees in different races, genders and social classes, and favors educated and propertied men, upon which the British capitalist society was based.

Locke described his empiricist theory of the human mind in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that elaborately states that common men¹⁸ are not able to acquire a good knowledge of political philosophy due to their intellectual deficit and weak cognitive skills.¹⁹ On the bases of these findings, he created a political philosophy that is generally called social contract theory in *Two Treatises of Government*. Locke's social contract theory simply provides a rationale for capitalists' right to govern without a supreme authority and the right to rule common men.

Consequently, human natural entitlements, which form two basic groups of rights, were formulated. The first group of rights is bestowed upon a man in the state of nature without any governmental limitation, and includes the right to life, liberty and happiness. The second group of rights refers to the more procedural law which is formulated by government so that the basic natural human rights are respected and observed by the citizens as well as a monarch. Capitalists thus secured human rights but only with regard to free men in order to secure their property and wealth from a despot and people. The procedural rights are declared, for instance, in the British Bill of Rights from 1689.²⁰

Locke's liberalism became an inspiration for the colonial politicians who have been known as the moderates among whom the Founding Fathers belonged, for instance, John Adams, John Dickinson, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison. They generally agreed on the liberal idea that:

¹⁷ John W Yolton, "Locke on the Law of Nature," in *The Philosophical Review*, 483

¹⁸ From the socio-political standpoint, the term "common man" denotes "a person who does not belong to the nobility," accessed online on June 24, 2014, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/commoner>. In the context of the Enlightenment and its socio-political theories, the term "common men" thus refers to a broad social group of people who did not own property or have political influence in society in contrast to free men, i.e. the upper-class members of wealth and of a privileged position in society.

¹⁹ Empiricism is a branch of epistemology, i.e. philosophical theory that focuses on human cognizance, that holds the belief that human knowledge stems from experiences, accessed online on June, 24, 2014, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rationalism-empiricism/>

²⁰ Robertson, *The Penguin Dictionary*, 230

Some people are simply better endowed with particular talents or virtue than others, and these superior abilities either entitled them to or helped them to attain positions of power in government and influence in civil society.²¹

The liberal interpretation of the state of nature, of human rights and of position of common men in government was contested by a radical contingent of the Enlightenment that flourished in France. The radical ideas proposed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and François Marie Arouet were especially influential in the formation of underground radical groups in the American revolutionary era. Both philosophers held the belief that people in the state of nature are led by their natural instincts and that there is no class, talents or virtue distinction in this state. Rousseau attacks Locke's liberalism by stating that class-distinction is a product of capitalism in which people of wealth enslaved uneducated people and made common men's development of knowledge impossible by restricting their education and their human rights.²² This radical idea gave rise to the ideas of full democracy, racial and gender equality, individualism and full eradication of slavery which were strongly promoted by the radicals of the American Revolutionary era, such as Timothy Matlack, Charles Wilson Peale, David Rittenhouse, Benjamin Rush and Thomas Paine.

Contrary to their British and French counterparts, Americans agreed on establishing a republic. However, they differed in their opinions on what kind of republic would suit best to the conditions of the human mind as they confronted it. While the moderates relied on experience-oriented government stressing that government must be represented by the members of the upper classes, the radicals emphasized "widespread democratic participation both as a check on the ambitions of leaders and as a vital education in the spirit of republicanism."²³ The important difference between experience-oriented and principle-oriented governments is that the former relied on long historical tradition of governments in Europe refusing socio-political experiments, while the latter is strictly philosophical and seeks a completely new and revolutionary order of social and political arrangements in the state.

The American Revolutionary War represented thus a struggle between the liberal, that is moderate, and the radical political thought of the European Enlightenment. While the radical ideas were found popular in the first half of the eighteenth century and profoundly helped to implement the American Independence, the moderate ideas prevailed over the

²¹ John Carson, "Differentiating a Republican Citizenry: Talents, Human Science, and Enlightenment Theories of Governance," in *Osiris*, 77

²² The Philosophies of Enlightenment, "The Anti-Rationalist Trend and Enlightenment," accessed on June 8, 2014, http://csud.edu.phenom_studies/western/lect:8.html

²³ Robert N. Bellah et al, *Habits of the Heart, Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, 253

radical ones in the second half of the eighteenth century during which the *Articles of Confederation* was established.

Together with new approaches to political philosophy which explored and questioned the human intellect, many religious beliefs that focused on human beings and their intellectual and spiritual possibilities emerged in North America. In the first half of the eighteenth century, America experienced the First Great Awakening in which egalitarian beliefs, stressing equality of people, supported the power of radical ideas. One of these widespread religious beliefs that influenced the American revolutionary era in the 1760s and the early 1770s was dissenting Protestantism. Protestantism is characterized by a stress on individual experience, individual responsibility and human equality. Protestant doctrine calls into question the superior position of elite groups, implying that people cannot be divided into superior and inferior groups on the basis of moral predisposition, since upper classes include morally depraved people as well. Other influential beliefs were Methodism and Quakerism which likewise emphasize individualism and egalitarianism in religious and political affairs. In addition to faiths which supported these egalitarian beliefs, many other religious sects were established in America. For instance, the Baptist faith's commitment to "the restoration of virtue in the community" and "equal fellowship which accepted even slaves" was very popular with the radical contingent of American Patriots.²⁴ The influence of the radicals was weakened by the arrival of the Second Great Awakening in the second half of the eighteenth century which was characterized by criticism of the Enlightenment's scientific approach to the human mind and widespread egalitarianism in society.

²⁴ Colin Bonwick, *The American Revolution*, 63

3. The American Revolution and the Conflict between the Political Groups

Revolutions are generally characterized as the outcomes of conflict between social and political subsystems that is caused by newly-developed sets of beliefs, rapid economic and social changes and/or a subjugation of state which leads to internal discontent and consequent reversal of the whole system.²⁵ The aim of this chapter is to outline the crucial turning points of the American Revolution which led to animosity between political groups of the North America.

The American Revolution had a double identity. On the one hand, it represented a struggle between political interest groups: Loyalists defending British interests and Patriots protecting American interests. On the other hand, it created an internal split within the Patriots who were divided into two groups: the moderates and the radicals. The American Revolution was thus a complex process of economic and socio-political changes in which people of wealth and power found themselves in a condition of financial distress and at the same time their political autonomy was threatened by influential ideological weapons of radical underground groups.

Interest groups are defined as “organizations which have some autonomy from government... and which try to influence public policy.”²⁶ It was particular American interest groups of wealthy men – the moderates – who decided to detach from the mother country and establish an independent United States of America with the vision of more autonomous economic and political power.²⁷ Similar to the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the American Revolution was determined by strong economic interest groups which sought independence from supreme control in order to attain that supremacy in the state. What distinguishes the American Revolution from the British Glorious Revolution is the advantageous historical development of North America in which there was no absolute political power and thus the American interest groups had better opportunities to gain broad political power within the Thirteen Colonies.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, North America underwent crucial demographic and economic changes. The entire population increased from 210,000 in 1690 to 1,200,000 by the 1750s.²⁸ This rapid demographic growth led to remarkable economic prosperity, ranging from the export of a wide variety of goods to the slave trade, which was in

²⁵ Lawrence Stone, “Theories of Revolution,” in *World Politics*, 65

²⁶ Rob Hague and Martin Harrop, *Comparative Government and Politics*, accessed on June 13, 2014, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/137706542/Comparative-Government-and-Politics>, 166

²⁷ Zinn, *A People's History*, 59

²⁸ Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America*, 279

the hands of the colonial interest groups. The moderates were landlords, merchants, lawyers and planters who were members of wealthy families which owned a large part of the colonial wealth that made them “free from external control by any other person.”²⁹ For this reason, the moderates are often called “independents.” The independents’ economic advantage expanded their social roles into colonial politics in which they controlled the other social category that can be referred to as “dependents.” The lower ranks of the dependents were poor citizens, such as free laborers, servants and slaves who were subjected to the independents as available manpower that consolidated the independents’ political and economic autonomy. The middle ranks of the dependents included many people with radical political views who supported themselves as journalists, editors, merchants and artisans.³⁰

In the pre-revolutionary era up to the 1760s, the moderates and the Loyalists mutually cooperated, as they shared economic autonomy and broad political authority together. They needed each other in order to keep stable control over colonial trade and public affairs.³¹ In the 1760s, the radicals gathered together in underground groups and published anonymous pamphlets and essays in local newspapers. In this stage of the American Revolution, the political and cultural customs of the British monarchy were still influential in the colonies and, therefore, radical ideas were not yet found popular with the dependents and were not so dangerous for elites’ positions in the local economy and politics.³²

The North American social, political and economic situation was thus relatively stable up to the end of the series of wars which the British Empire waged against the European world powers Spain and France from 1689 to 1763.³³ The first military conflicts featured the Nine Years’ War (1689 – 1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1702 – 1713). The second cycle of wars featured the French and Indian War (1754 – 1763). The motive for these military conflicts between Britain, Spain and France was religious and political supremacy over European countries and the control of North American territory and its natural wealth.³⁴ In 1763 the British Empire won the French and Indian War. Accordingly, the British gained a large amount of territory in North America.

²⁹ Jack P. Greene, *Pursuit of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture*, 188

³⁰ Greene, *Pursuit of Happiness*, 186 - 187

³¹ Douglas S. North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Changes*, 108 - 109

³² Raphael Forshay, *Valances of Interdisciplinarity: Theory, Practice, Pedagogy*, 14

³³ North, *Understanding the Process*, 108

³⁴ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 421

Until 1763 the British Empire had let colonial political circles function relatively freely in return for peaceful cooperation with the British parliament.³⁵ Nevertheless, after signing the Treaty of Paris (1763) which officially ended the French and Indian War, the British parliament found itself confronted by many problems which resulted from the consequences of the series of wars. Firstly, the British parliament had to bear a massive debt burden after heavy losses in battles. Secondly, it was imperative to defend the large territory of American land from prospective intruders. Consequently, the British parliament limited the political and economic freedom of the moderates by imposing high taxes on colonists which have been known as the Stamp Acts.³⁶ The Stamp Acts was a series of direct taxes that negatively influenced the entire economic sphere of the Thirteen Colonies and limited economic freedom of the independents.

The British parliament thus initiated potentially exploitative and dangerous political tactics which could threaten the moderates' position in colonial society. Moreover, the Loyalists held better positions within the Thirteen Colonies such as governors, royal and executive officeholders. In this respect, the Loyalists were profoundly advantaged because all colonists were economically dependent on them.³⁷ Under this condition the moderates might lose their superiority and cohesion within the social and political spheres. In other words, the moderates could have been overwhelmed by the financial crisis and consequently joined with the dependents.³⁸ The moderates, on the other hand, hesitated to challenge the Loyalists and the British parliament, as they lacked financial resources and the ideological means which were necessary for any political change. Hence, a possible radical change in moderates' and Loyalists' mutual cooperation without a well-thought-out plan could likewise lead to the loss of economic and political superiority.³⁹ The crucial turning point occurred when the British parliament passed another series of acts, this time the Navigation Act. The Patriots established the First Continental Congress as a reaction to the acts and openly opposed the British in the 1770s.

In the 1770s, the adverse change in the Patriots' economic and political autonomy was, moreover, made potentially worse by another problem: the mobs. The dependents were directly affected by the series of wars that preceded the American Revolution. The wars were accompanied by revolts and battles which claimed many colonists' lives and which

³⁵ North, *Understanding the Process*, 109

³⁶ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 421

³⁷ N. E. H. Hull et al., "Choosing Sides: A Quantitative Study of the Personality Determinants of Loyalist and Revolutionary Political Affiliation in New York," in *The Journal of American History*, 347 - 348

³⁸ Stone, *Theories of Revolution*, 165

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 165

profoundly damaged the harmony in the social and political systems in North America. Furthermore, after the Treaty of Paris the British reinforced military troops in America in order to protect the American territory. Consequently, a large number of the dependents created unruly mobs and demanded colonial socio-political changes and better conditions of their rights.⁴⁰

The moderates realized the extent to which they needed the support of the dependents in order to win the conflict with the British. For this reason, they started to cooperate with the radicals whose ideas appeared to be appealing to the colonists, as radicals offered social security in the form of equal human rights. Moderates thus adopted the concepts of radicalism for the duration of the worst conflicts in the 1770s up to the Declaration of Independence in 1776.^{41, 42}

Nevertheless, the moderates' and the radicals' relationship gradually developed into political rivalry when the American Revolution was heading to its finish. Although the radicals were still involved in colonial politics after the Declaration of Independence in 1776, their political power started to be disregarded and criticized. Especially, Thomas Paine's radical ideas and influence on the public was considered dangerous to the stability of future government. The radical influence eventually disappeared from the American political scene during the drafting of the *Articles of Confederation* in the 1770s and the 1780s and with the arrival of the Second Great Awakening.⁴³

⁴⁰ Michael E. Newton, *Angry Mobs and Founding Fathers: the Fight for Control of the American revolution*, 34 - 58

⁴¹ Forshay, *Valences of Interdisciplinary*, 64

⁴² Michael J. Lacey, *Religion and Twentieth Century American Intellectual Life*, 14 - 15

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 14 - 15

4. Dissemination of the Anglo-American Controversy

The American Revolutionary war led to a radical change in the education of common men, as the support of people was necessary to achieve the American independence. By the mid-eighteenth century there were established social associations throughout the Thirteen Colonies. In places such as clubs, taverns and coffeehouses, more and more enlightened ideas were purveyed to “those who lacked the means, time, or skills to acquire such knowledge on their own.”⁴⁴ In contrast to the British social organizations which were limited to free men and controlled by political authorities, coffeehouses, taverns and clubs represented places where “precedence was determined by the will of majority, and agendas were set by amicable discourse and consent.”⁴⁵

The most crucial means of communication and dissemination of the enlightened ideas and the Anglo-American controversy were printed texts. Printed texts came out in a wide variety of forms, such as volumes, pamphlets, newspapers and gazettes. Newspapers and gazettes were especially considered “as easy vehicles of knowledge as more highly calculated to preserve the liberty, stimulate the industry, and ameliorate the morals of an enlightened and free people.”⁴⁶ For instance, many anti-British articles and essays were published in the *Boston Gazette* which was edited by Samuel Adams and in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* which was edited by Thomas Paine in the 1770s. The *Pennsylvania Magazine* found popular especially with common men for its plain style and egalitarian political thought. Articles celebrating America were in turn printed in the *Georgia Gazette*, *Maryland Gazette* and *Connecticut Courant*.⁴⁷

The most influential philosophical ideas were published in the form of treatises and inquiries which were typical of the intellectual luminaries, such as John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Treatises were in demand especially within American political circles. However, they were not accessible within non-elite groups of society because of their length and expensive cost. For instance, John Locke’s *Two Treatises on Government* cost 7.7 pounds. For this reason, many complex philosophical and political ideas were rewritten and summarized in pamphlets.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Daren Staloff, *Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson: the Politics of Enlightenment and the American Founding*, 24

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 25

⁴⁶ Everett Emerson, “The Cultural Context of the American Revolution,” in *American Literature 1764 – 1789: the Revolutionary Years*, 8

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 7 - 8

⁴⁸ Staloff, *Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson*, 26

Pamphlets were read out to people in the social associations and to soldiers on the battlefields. They were accessible to common men, as the price of one pamphlet did not exceed two shillings. As a rule, pamphlets were published in a short, emotional and dramatic form.⁴⁹ Pamphleteers, who wrote anonymously, used a wide range of genres and rhetorical devices such as fables, parables, poems, metaphors and similes. Pamphlets thus became the convenient instruments for creating strong arguments for and against American Independence. It is stated that over four hundred pamphlets related to the American Revolutionary War were published before July, 1776.^{50, 51}

Pamphlets became an effective political tactic of the American Revolutionary era. Patriots developed the theme of republican manliness for supporting the American Independence which called on American men to act bravely and fight for a republic. Loyalists, on the other hand, created strong arguments for paternalism to achieve reconciliation that reminded colonists of their cultural and political attachment to King George III. The examples of Loyalists' pamphlets supporting the British Crown and reconciliation are Joseph Galloway's *A Candid Examination of the Mutual Claims of Great-Britain and the Colonies* and an anonymous pamphlet *Friendly Address to All Reasonable Americans*.⁵² Important additional Loyalists' pamphlets are also James Chalmer's *Plain Truth* and Charles Iglis's *The True Interest of America Impartially States* which were published as reactions to Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.

Pamphlets written by Patriots up to 1776 can be classified into three categories. Firstly, there were pamphlets written as a response to the military conflicts between America and Britain, for instance, *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre* and *A Narrative of the Excursion and Revenges of the King's Troops under the Command of General Gage, on the Nineteenth of April, 1774*. Secondly, there was a series of pamphlets published as a response to each other. These pamphlets were usually written in the form of letters. The pamphlet *A Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax* is a case in point. Thirdly, many public speeches and ceremonies were republished in pamphlets by Patriots to support efforts to repeal the Acts passed by the British parliament.⁵³

⁴⁹ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, 2 - 4

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 26

⁵¹ Elaine K. Ginsberg, "The Patriot Pamphleteers," in *American Literature 1764 – 1789: the Revolutionary Years*, 19 – 20

⁵² Charles E. Modlin, "The Loyalists' Reply," in *American Literature 1764 – 1789: the Revolutionary Years*, 59 - 60

⁵³ Ginsberg, *American Literature*, 21

Prior to the publication of Paine's *Common Sense* there was a prevailing wish to reconcile America with the mother country. For instance, John Dickinson's series of letters *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* expressed disagreement with the taxes imposed on colonists but it simultaneously expressed a plea for reconciliation. Another example of such a pamphlet that criticized the British action towards the Thirteen Colonies and at the same time praised the British monarchy is James Otis's *The Right of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved*.⁵⁴ No pamphleteer, however, supported American Independence before Thomas Paine started his publishing career.

⁵⁴ Ginsberg, *American Literature*, 22

5. Thomas Paine and *Common Sense*

Thomas Paine was born on January 29, 1737 in Thetford, England. After acquiring a basic education at Thetford School where he manifested his literary talent, Paine was educated by his father, a devoted Quaker, who imbued him with egalitarian thought. Later Paine educated himself by attending lectures on liberal and radical Enlightenment thought in London where he simultaneously supported himself at a number of jobs including being a teacher and a Methodist preacher. In London, Paine met Benjamin Franklin in independent political circles discussing the state of the American colonies. Franklin recommended to him that he should leave for Pennsylvania to spread his radical thought among Americans.⁵⁵

Paine reached Pennsylvania in 1774 at a time when the conflict between the Patriots and the Loyalists had reached its peak. Paine was introduced to the leading politicians of Philadelphia due to his acquaintance with Benjamin Franklin and soon he affiliated with the political radicals of Philadelphia, including Benjamin Rush. Paine was employed as an editor at the *Pennsylvania Magazine* in which he honed his rhetorical style while publishing essays on contemporary political and social problems of America. In addition to criticism of the British parliament, Paine also castigated the moderates for establishing slavery in America. Paine's sharp criticism was not found popular with many political leaders and Paine made an enemy of many leading politicians in the Thirteen Colonies.⁵⁶

In 1776 Thomas Paine penned the pamphlet *Common Sense* on Benjamin Rush's advice.⁵⁷ The pamphlet was published for the first time on January 10, 1776. Paine insisted on complete anonymity of his pamphlet to forestall the prejudices of his personal foes and political opponents and to maintain his identity as a common man. The pamphlet *Common Sense* had a wide readership within a mere few days. Paine refused to gain profit from the immediate success of *Common Sense* and continued to insist on the anonymity of his pamphlet, which caused him copyright and personal troubles. The first version of *Common Sense* which was signed by "an Englishman" was republished by the printer Robert Bell on January 29, 1776 without Paine's permission. The authorship of *Common Sense* became soon apparent to Paine's colonial rivals and Paine found himself under verbal and even physical attacks.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Michael Burgan, *Thomas Paine: The Great Writer of the Revolution*, 27 - 33

⁵⁶ Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 21, 72

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 74

⁵⁸ John Keane, *Tom Paine: A Political Life*, 182 - 183

The pirate copies of *Common Sense*, on the other hand, helped to propagate Paine's call for independence more quickly. Many common men identified themselves with the radical ideas of *Common Sense* and felt encouraged by its emotional appeal. After the discovery of the identity of the author of *Common Sense*, it was believed by the moderates that Paine could win mobs over to the American Independence. Consequently, over 400,000 copies of *Common Sense* were republished and widely disseminated with the financial support of the moderates.⁵⁹

Soon after the publication of *Common Sense*, Paine penned another pro-independence pamphlet *The American Crisis* and was employed as a secretary to Congress's Committee on Foreign Affairs. Nevertheless, Paine's radical ideas, especially those concerning the unicameral system of government, were later found unsuitable for the future of the independent United States of America. When Paine published more pamphlets on unicameralism and full democracy, *The Crisis Extraordinary* and *Public Good* in 1783, he was denounced not only by his political colleagues in government but also by the press.⁶⁰ The insults became so strong that Paine decided to leave for Europe, as his personal friendship with Thomas Jefferson posed a threat to Jefferson's political career.

In Europe Paine became a popular figure in the French Revolution. He further elaborated his strong radical ideas concerning society, government and unicameralism in *Rights of Man* for which he was imprisoned in France. In prison, Paine penned the most famous and controversial deistic work *Age of Reason*. Paine was released from prison in 1793 by the American ambassador James Monroe and arrived in America in 1802. The United States was experiencing many changes. Thomas Jefferson became the first Republican President. Apart from the adoption of the Constitution and the creation of bicameralism, common men were influenced by the Second Great Awakening.⁶¹ Paine's deistic ideas and political radicalism suddenly did not endear him to Americans. Only Thomas Jefferson welcomed Paine with open arms and involved his old friend in politics. Paine subsequently authored a few more pamphlets supporting Republicans.⁶² However, he soon began to lose his power, both political and physical. Thomas Paine died on June 8, 1809 in New York.

⁵⁹ John P. Kaminski, *Citizen Paine: Thomas Paine's Thoughts on Man, Government, Society, and Religion*, 10

⁶⁰ Harvey J. Kaye, *Thomas Paine: The Firebrand of the Revolution*, 43 - 60

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 130 - 133

⁶² Kaminski, *Citizen Paine*, 29, 32

6. The Democratization of Political Language in *Common Sense*

Thomas Paine was one of the early American Patriots who fully understood that “in order for the revolution to take place in the minds of the people, and for it succeed, it first had to be available to them.”⁶³ One of the crucial radical features of *Common Sense* is thus its literary style that supports “modernization of political consciousness.”⁶⁴ Modernization of political consciousness refers to the changes in “the nature of the political reality.”⁶⁵ It is about a simplification of political language and political issues so that politics and public affairs can be understood and consequently governed by all men, including the lower and middle ranks of the dependents.

The idea of democratizing the public sphere stems from Paine’s moral and ethical convictions which shape his political philosophy. Paine holds the belief that familiarity with public affairs and participation in local politics has a civilizing influence on common men. In other words, if people are properly informed about and responsible for public affairs, they become more civilized. For this purpose, Paine aims to provide the lower ranks of society with “the opportunities of acquiring and communicating knowledge.”⁶⁶ Although Paine was inspired by Locke’s belief in human reason and takes the view that the “human nature is not of itself vicious”⁶⁷ in contrast to Hobbes, he simultaneously stresses the radical vision of the possibility of improvement in common men’s reason and intellect.

Paine criticizes the distinction between the public and private spheres which, according to Paine, was based on “ideology employed by elites to conceal their political motives.”⁶⁸ In the opening lines of *Common Sense* Paine expresses his reservation about political parlance which “excludes a man from the means of information.”⁶⁹ The complex political phraseology and philosophical terms which are typical of the Enlightenment volumes written by authors such as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Hobbes act, according to Paine, as an obstacle to spreading knowledge among common men:

And though the expressions be pleasantly arranged, yet when examined they appear idle and ambiguous; and it will always happen, that the nicest construction that words are capable of, when applied to the description of some thing which either cannot exist, or is too incomprehensible to be within the compass of description, will be

⁶³ Edward Larkin, “Inventing An American Public: Thomas Paine, the Pennsylvania Magazine, and American Revolutionary Political Discourse,” in *Early American Literature*, 270

⁶⁴ Jack P. Greene, “Paine, America, and Modernization of Political Consciousness,” in *Political Science Quarterly*, 73

⁶⁵ Robert A. Ferguson, “The Commonalities of *Common Sense*,” in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 470

⁶⁶ Edward Larkin, *Thomas Paine and Literature of Revolution*, 35

⁶⁷ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man, Common Sense*, edited by Michael Foot, 176

⁶⁸ Edward Larkin, *Thomas Paine*, 51

⁶⁹ Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, 255

words of sound only, and though they may amuse the ear, they cannot inform the mind.⁷⁰ [sic]

Paine believes that political ideas require concrete expression in order to be properly understood. He thus stresses simplicity that can be easily illustrated by concrete context and specific time which subsequently allows common men to comprehend the political situation and complexity. *Common Sense*'s message, therefore, includes specific Enlightenment patterns, such as familiar findings of science, history, geography and religion together with political philosophy which helps common men interconnect complex political philosophy with simple familiar facts.⁷¹

Prior to the publication of *Common Sense*, moderates also aimed to apprise colonists of political developments of the 1760s and the early 1770s, as this era of the American revolutionary era played a vital role in preparing for American Independence. In 1765, John Adams expressed his antipathy towards the British parliament concerning the lack of education among British citizens in his *Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law* in which he claims that "ignorance and inconsideration are the two great causes of the ruin of mankind."⁷² Although Adams acknowledges the need for an educated public, his use of overly formal language simultaneously excludes common men from the public sphere. Two years later, John Dickinson published his *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, which drew common men closer to the problems of contemporary political affairs, as he uses persuasive literary strategies, such as similes and writing in the first person. On the other hand, Dickinson's work lacks a coherent explanation of the ideas of the Enlightenment.⁷³ *Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law* and *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* become an illustration of the prevalent view of the moderates who believed that common men should be "sufficiently educated" as to evaluate the state of affairs in America, but they should not be "so well informed that they would dare to judge public affairs on their own."⁷⁴

What makes Paine's *Common Sense* radical when compared to the works of the moderates is the revolutionary change in the way it expresses political reality. While Adams and Dickinson used political texts as propaganda to support the American Revolution and for the benefits of the moderates, Paine becomes a representative of common men in colonial politics, as he defends their common good in *Common Sense* and gives them the opportunity

⁷⁰ Paine, *Common Sense*, 255

⁷¹ Ferguson, "The Commonalities of *Common Sense*," 477

⁷² Richard Brown, *The Strength of a People, the Idea of Informed Citizenry in America 1650 – 1870*, 53

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 53 - 54

⁷⁴ Larkin, *Thomas Paine and Literature*, 25

of full democracy to participate in politics due to the simplification of political language and the clear explanations of political reality.

7. The Logical Appeal in *Common Sense*

In the first chapter “Of the Origin and Design of Government in General. With Concise Remarks on the English Constitution” Thomas Paine expresses the motto of his social and political philosophy: “I draw my idea of the form of government from a principle in nature, which no art can overturn, viz. that the *more simple anything is, the less liable it is to be disordered.*”⁷⁵ [*sic*] Simplicity is the maxim of logical appeal in *Common Sense* that reflects Paine’s inventiveness by which he further draws his apolitical audience to political debate. In the above mentioned chapter Thomas Paine adopts a synthetic argumentative approach based on the tenets underpinning the radical Enlightenment ideology. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the central ideas of Paine’s radical political thought and with it the associated logical appeal.

The crucial radical shift in political thought that Thomas Paine makes in *Common Sense* rests upon the distinction between society and government: “Some writers have so confounded society with government, as to leave little or no distinction between them.”^{76, 77} To better comprehend the nature and roles of society and government, Paine clearly distinguishes the one from the other:

Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections, the latter negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher.⁷⁸

Paine’s philosophy of society is founded on simple scientific reasoning. Society works as a well-ordered universe holding people together through the force of mutual wants, affections and aid. It is a natural principle, like the laws of the physical universe, that people in the state of nature are predisposed to be sociable and mutually cooperative: “It serves to show, that instinct in animals does not act with stronger impulse, than the principles of society and civilization operate in man.”⁷⁹ The center of Paine’s moral and political philosophy is thus sociability that renders human coexistence autonomous and self-regulating. This radical concept approximates the French Enlightenment’s comprehension of the formation of society

⁷⁵ Paine, *Common Sense*, 253

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 251

⁷⁷ Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 82

⁷⁸ Paine, *Common Sense*, 251

⁷⁹ Paine, *Rights of Man*, 138

as a *natural instinct*.⁸⁰ Paine further demonstrates the natural process of society's creation by drawing his audience to a parable of colonial life:

Let us suppose a small number of persons settled in some sequestered part of the earth, unconnected with the rest, they will then represent the first peopling of any country, or of the world. In this state of liberty, society will be their first thought. A thousand motives will excite them thereto, the strength of one man is so unequal to his wants, and his mind so unfitted for perpetual solitude, that he is soon obliged to seek assistance and relief of another. [...] one man might labour out the common period of life without accomplishing any thing; when he had felled his timber he could not remove it, nor erect it after it was removed.⁸¹ [*sic*]

The French Enlightenment thinker, François Marie Arouet, explains human cooperation as a natural instinct through a story of two men assisting each other to climb a plum-tree to alleviate hunger. Paine similarly adopts a story of building a joint dwelling in the middle of a country that is isolated from the rest of the world.⁸² The striking parallel between Paine's short parable and the beginnings of the colonization of the New World is an example of Paine's use of simplicity and logical appeal - Americans can easily identify themselves with the fictional colonists in *Common Sense*, as this small number of persons reflects their own experience in early America. In other words, Paine illustrates his philosophy of the state of nature in a very concise, simple way in *Common Sense* but at the same time the main point of the complex philosophy can be clearly understood by common men due to its familiar context.

John Locke's liberalism espouses an opposite view which deals with the establishment of society as an act of abandoning human natural rights by forming a *political institution*:

But though (common) men, when they enter into society, give up the equality, liberty, and executive power they had in the state of nature, into the hands of the society, to be so far disposed of by the legislative, as the good of the society shall require; yet it being only with an intention in every one the better to preserve himself, his liberty and property.⁸³

Unlike Paine, Locke does not draw a distinction between civic society and political society. Society is thus, in Locke's political philosophy, frequently understood and interpreted interchangeably as government.⁸⁴ This model of government which is proposed by Locke functions, in Paine's radical view, as an external intervention into the natural order of

⁸⁰ Aldridge, *Thomas Paine's Ideology*, 198

⁸¹ Paine, *Common Sense*, 251 - 252

⁸² Aldridge, *Thomas Paine's Ideology*, 198

⁸³ Locke, *Locke: Political Writings*, 350

⁸⁴ Jack Fruchtman Jr., "Thomas Paine and John Locke Re-examined," 12, accessed online on June 8, 2014, <http://tpnha.keybrick.net/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=F2QgD4nnNu4%3D&tabid=2183&mid=4715>

societies and their natural preservation of rights. Consequently, natural rights are absent in Locke's concept of government. Similarly to the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Paine finds the British governmental system to be an artificial stratagem of economic interest groups who aimed to preserve political and economic power in the hands of the minority of wealthy people.⁸⁵ "Government ought to be as much open to improvement as anything which appertains to man, instead of which it has been monopolized from age to age, by the most ignorant and vicious of the human race."⁸⁶

On the other hand, Thomas Paine recognizes the necessity for government control in the state. Paine poetically refers to government as "the badge of lost innocence" appealing to the religious knowledge of his audience.⁸⁷ This metaphor raises the subject of human vice. Although society is an autonomous and self-regulating entity and government is an artificial institution, people are tempted to sins, just as Adam and Eve were in Eden.⁸⁸ "As nothing but heaven is impregnable of vice," human imperfection must be regulated by some form of government.⁸⁹ Paine's view is that it is a republican form of government which can not only regulate vice but also develop virtue in the state. However, this can occur only under the condition that the government allows *all* men to participate in public matters in order to "improve the rights of common men and thus promote higher level of civilization."⁹⁰ In contrast to his British and American liberal counterparts, who assign human virtue according to race and social status without the possibility of improvement of the people of lower ranks, Paine's radicalism believes that virtue can be encouraged and improved in common men by promoting human natural endowments for self-regulation. Self-regulation and natural cooperation of humankind is an important philosophical premise for Paine's concept of republicanism and international trade.

With this in mind, Paine continues to develop his parable of colonial life and proceeds to outline his concept of full democracy:

Some convenient tree will afford them (colonists) a State-House, under the branches of which, the whole colony may assemble to deliberate on public matters. [...] In this first parliament *every* man, by natural right will have a seat.⁹¹

⁸⁵ Foner, *Tom Paine*, 93

⁸⁶ Paine, *Rights of Man*, 177

⁸⁷ Paine, *Common Sense*, 251

⁸⁸ Harvey J. Kaye, *Thomas Paine and the Promise of America*, 44

⁸⁹ Alfred Owen Aldridge, *Thomas Paine's American Ideology*, 198

⁹⁰ Gregory Claeys, *Thomas Paine: Social and Political Thought*, 95

⁹¹ Paine, *Common Sense*, 252

When the small colony gradually extends, the necessity for the control of human vice compels its inhabitants to divide the colony into smaller parts and choose one representative from each part. In contrast to Locke's constitutional government in which "the lord and master of them all (people) sets one (man) above another, and confer on him, by an evident and clear appointment, an undoubted right to dominion and sovereignty,"⁹² Paine's republican government ignores the class distinction and the separation of powers in government and emphasizes the principle of "the right of the governed to self-government" with regard to *all* men.⁹³

Guided by their natural instinct for sociability and mutual cooperation, colonists establish a single colonial legislature controlled by a common interest and popular checks. These popular checks are carried out democratically, as the representatives elected by the colonists do not limit the natural freedom of people but defend the popular will and thus support the common good. To preserve the popular will, Paine suggests holding elections often in order to promote sociability in the form of frequent interchange of representatives with the general body. This way, people are regularly and actively informed about and responsible for public affairs.⁹⁴ Paine then poetically concludes his thought on full democratic government:

Here then is the origin and rise of government; namely, a mode rendered necessary by the inability of moral virtue to govern the world; here too is the design and end of government, viz. freedom and security. And however our eyes may be dazzled with snow, our ears deceived by sound; however prejudice may wrap our wills, or interest darken our understanding, the simple voice of nature and of reason will say, it is right.⁹⁵

Having presented his simple democratic allegory, Paine turns to introduce the constitution of the British monarchy, making it appear, by contrast, irrational and complicated.⁹⁶ Paine starts with a statement that the English constitution is an anachronism based on the remains of "ancient tyrannies."⁹⁷ To demonstrate that the English constitution is not a product of human reason or instinct but a product of "obstinate prejudice" and English "national pride," Paine explains that the three constituent parts of the British governmental system – the King, the peers and the people reciprocally checking each other – are "flat

⁹² Locke, *Political Writings*, 263

⁹³ John Keane, *Tom Paine: a Political Life*, 299

⁹⁴ Daniel Wrills, *The Invention of United States Senate*, 41

⁹⁵ Paine, *Common Sense*, 253

⁹⁶ Kaye, *Thomas Paine*, 44

⁹⁷ Paine, *Common Sense*, 254

contradictions” and create “an house divided against itself.”⁹⁸ Appealing to the laws of scientific reasoning by stating a simple example of a machine in motion, Paine concludes that the British system is:

... *felo de se*; for as the greater weight will always carry up the less, and as all the wheels of a machine are put in motion by one, it only remains to know which power in constitution has the most weight, for that will govern; and though the others, or a part of them, may clog, or, as the phrase is, check the rapidity of its motion, yet so long as they cannot stop it, their endeavours will be ineffectual; the first moving power will at last have its way, and what it wants in speed is supplied by time.⁹⁹

By this example of a machine in motion, Paine aims to demonstrate imbalance and inequality of the British governmental system, warning that the tripartite division of governmental powers in Britain became a means of the minority to govern the majority. Paine also expresses this conviction in his *Rights of Man*: “In mixed governments there is no responsibility: the parts cover each other till responsibility is lost; and the corruption which moves the machine, contrives at the same time its own escape.”¹⁰⁰ In Paine’s radical political thought, the mixed government serves as protection for elites from “inspection and indictment by the citizenry.”¹⁰¹ On the contrary, Paine believes that a republican form of government based on unicameralism meets the needs of equality of people:

Government in well-constituted republic, requires no belief from man beyond what his reason can give. He sees the rationale of the whole system, its origin and its operation; and as it is best supported when best understood, the human faculties act with boldness, and acquire, under this form of Government, a gigantic manliness.¹⁰²

The preceding statement is an evidence of Paine’s belief in human improvement which can be facilitated by a republican form of government. This thought is an important premise for Paine’s unicameralism.

In the chapter “Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession” Paine turns to the origins of monarchy, recounting the biblical story of the Jews in order to provide a deeper rationale for his arguments for a republic.¹⁰³ In this section Paine focuses his readers’ attention on the artificial class-distinction in society by opening the second chapter with the following thought on equality:

⁹⁸ Paine, *Common Sense*, 254, 256

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 255

¹⁰⁰ Paine, *Rights of Man*, 111

¹⁰¹ Jason S. Maloy, “The Paine-Adams Debate and Its Seventeenth Century Antecedents,” in *Thomas Paine: Common Sense for the Modern Era*, 279

¹⁰² Paine, *Rights of Man*, 110

¹⁰³ Kaye, *Thomas Paine and the Promise*, 45

There is [...] distinction for which no truly natural or religious reason can be assigned, and that is, the distinction of men into KINGS and SUBJECTS. Male and female are the distinction of nature, good and bad the distinction of heaven; but how a race of men came into the world so exalted above the rest, and distinguished like some new species, is worth inquiring into.¹⁰⁴

Using the Bible as historical evidence, Paine demonstrates that “the exalting one man so greatly above the rest cannot be justified on the equal rights of nature, so neither can it be defended on the authority of scripture.”¹⁰⁵ Paine aims to prove that “monarchy is ranked in scripture as one of the sins of the Jews,” relying for his arguments mostly on the books of Samuel.¹⁰⁶ The Jews demanded a king, ignoring that “it was held sinful to acknowledge any being under that title.”¹⁰⁷ God, as Paine puts it, directed Samuel to confer with the Jews and to make them use reason. Nevertheless, the people did not follow Samuel’s advice and God permitted their suffering as a punishment for their sins.¹⁰⁸ Paine claims that this is the evidence that either “the Almighty hath entered his protest against monarchical government is true, or the scripture is false.”¹⁰⁹ Paine then turns to “the evil of monarchy”, that is the hereditary succession to the throne and social position within society, concluding that:

For all men being originally equals, no one by birth could have a right to set up his own family in perpetual preference to all others for ever, and though himself might deserve some decent degree of honours of his contemporaries, yet his descendants might be far too unworthy to inherit them. One of the strongest natural proofs of the folly of hereditary right in kings, is, that nature disapproves it, otherwise she would not so frequently turn it into ridicule by giving mankind an ass for lion.¹¹⁰

Similarly to Samuel, Paine in *Common Sense* warns colonists against the monarchy in hopes that they can reawaken their autonomous order of mind and abandon the irrational habits of monarchies.¹¹¹ Paine again relies on simple logical arguments to appeal to his colonial audience. In the preceding quote, Paine refers to Aesop’s fable, in which an ass disguises itself as a lion and later is betrayed by its braying. Paine alludes to the fact that many governors who reigned in Britain under the noble title of the British monarchs were mentally insane. This fact includes King George III who suffered from porphyria which

¹⁰⁴ Paine, *Common Sense*, 257

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 257

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 258

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 258

¹⁰⁸ Vikki Vickers, *My Pen and My Soul Have Ever Gone Together: Thomas Paine and the American Revolution*, 37

¹⁰⁹ Paine, *Common Sense*, 260

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 260

¹¹¹ Vickers, *My Pen and My Soul Have Ever Gone Together*, 38

prevented him from exercising his office several times.¹¹² Another aspect of the absurdity of hereditary succession is, as Paine points out, the fact that “the throne is subject to be possessed by the follies either of age or infancy.”¹¹³ Here, Paine raises the irrationality of the habits entrenched in the system of monarchies. Paine, moreover, illustrates that Kings’ business was nothing but laying “the world in blood and ashes,” focusing the readers’ attention on the historical records of the British kingdom from the conquest of William the Conqueror in 1066 to the reign of Henry VI in 1489.¹¹⁴ Paine then concludes the chapter with the following words, rejecting kings as suitable to govern:

In England a k- hath little more to do than to make war and give away places; which in plain terms, is to impoverish the nation and set it together by the ears. A pretty business indeed for a man to be allowed eight hundred thousand sterling a year for, and worshipped into bargain! Of more worth is one honest man to society, and in the sight of God, than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived.¹¹⁵

Paine then proceeds to open the chapter “Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs,” announcing the central argument of *Common Sense*: the American Independence. This chapter is very strong in terms of the emotional appeal to his audience. With respect to its logical appeal, Paine develops further his logical justification for independence:

It is repugnant to reason, to the universal order of things, to all examples from the former ages, to suppose, that this continent can longer remain subject to any external power. [...] The utmost stretch of human wisdom cannot, at this time compass a plan short of separation, which can promise the continent even a year’s security. Reconciliation was a fallacious dream. Nature hath deserted the connection, and Art cannot supply her place. For, as Milton wisely expresses, ‘never can true reconciliation grow where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep.’¹¹⁶

Here, Paine uses an example of dissenting Protestantism. The phrase “Never can true reconciliation grow where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep” was actually uttered by Satan. In Milton’s *Paradise Lost* Lucifer voices his pain and growing feeling of disenchantment with God, arriving at the conclusion that there is no hope of reconciliation.¹¹⁷ Satan thus rebelled against his superior Lord. In the same manner, Paine insists that “there are injuries which nature cannot forgive.”¹¹⁸ “Every quiet method for peace hath been

¹¹² Ann Gaines et al., *King George III: English Monarch*, 57

¹¹³ Paine, *Common Sense*, 263

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 264

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 265

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 272

¹¹⁷ Vickers, *My Pen and My Soul Have Ever Gone Together*, 31

¹¹⁸ Paine, *Common Sense*, 280

ineffectual,” Paine further argues, “our prayers have been rejected with disdain.”¹¹⁹ Paine implies that there is no other reasonable choice than to rebel against the British kingdom and become independent.

Another example of Paine’s logical justification for independence which reflects dissenting Protestantism is supported by the laws of science.¹²⁰ This time, Paine brings up geographical facts and the historical period of Catholic persecution:

Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America, is a strong and natural proof, that the authority of the one, over the other, was never the design of Heaven. The time likewise at which the continent was discovered, adds weight to the argument, and the manner in which it was peopled increases the force of it. The reformation was preceded by the discovery of America, as if the Almighty graciously meant to open a sanctuary to the persecuted in future years, when home should afford neither friendship nor safety.¹²¹

Paine further appeals to the laws of the universe: “In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet,” and points out the logic that should apply to governing: “There is something absurd, in supposing a Continent to be perpetually governed by an island.”¹²²

Indeed, all natural laws deny the connection between America and Britain. Every man can find logical and natural justification for American Independence in *Common Sense*. Paine uses simple examples from science, logic, history, geography and dissenting Protestantism, in order to propose a complete change to political reality and makes monarchy the enemy to common sense.

Paine, nevertheless, does not only look for reasons for independence, but also suggests the means to gain it: “If there is any true cause of fear respecting independence, it is because no plan is yet laid down.”¹²³ Paine modestly recommends “hints” of a new republican government which, as he believes, would “form materials for wise and able men to improve to useful matter.”¹²⁴ In this part of *Common Sense*, Paine appeals to his independent colleagues and recommends to them possible solutions for the American republican government.

In *Common Sense*, Paine stresses the principle-oriented government, the radical idea he summarized in his *Rights of Man* in 1792:

¹¹⁹ Paine, *Common Sense*, 272

¹²⁰ Kaye, *Thomas Paine and the Promise*, 47

¹²¹ Paine, *Common Sense*, 270

¹²² *Ibid.*, 273

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 277

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 277

What is called a republic is not any particular form of government. It is wholly characteristic of the purport, matter or object for which government ought to be instituted, and on which it is to be employed, Res-Publica, the public affairs, or the public good; or, literally translated, the public thing. It is a word of a good original, referring to what ought to be the *character* and *business* of government; and in this sense it is naturally opposed to the word monarchy, which has a base original signification. It means arbitrary power in an individual person; in the exercise of which, himself, and not the res-publica, is the object.¹²⁵ [sic]

In *Common Sense* Paine outlines his vision of this simple, principle-oriented government, stressing the character and business of government. To displace the authority of George III and the constitutional monarchy, Paine suggests a democratic form of government for the colonies: “Let the assemblies be annual, with a President only. The representation more equal. Their business wholly domestic, and subject to the authority of a Continental Congress.”¹²⁶ To ensure equality in the state, the Continental Congress and the colonial assemblies alike must be based on unicameralism, i.e. a political system that is operated by one governing body in contrast to mixed governments.¹²⁷ Paine further describes a simple democratic structure for each colony divided into districts:

Let each colony be divided into six, eight, or ten, convenient districts, each district to send a proper number of delegates to Congress, so that each colony send at least thirty. The whole number in Congress will be at least 390. Each Congress to sit and to choose a president by the following method. When the delegates are met, let a colony be taken from the whole thirteen colonies by lot, after which let the whole Congress choose (by ballot) a president from out of the delegates of that province. In the next Congress, let a colony be taken by lot from twelve only, omitting that colony from which the president was taken in the former Congress, and so proceeding on till the whole thirteen shall have had their proper rotation. And in order that nothing may pass into a law but what is satisfactorily just, not less than three fifths of the Congress to be called a majority¹²⁸

Paine’s plan for an American republic reflects his moral and social philosophy as it was described in the parable of colonial life in the first chapter of *Common Sense*. In other words, Paine’s draft for a democratic republic is based on the natural cooperation and sociability of people. The creation of the unicameral state assemblies is based on broad suffrage and popular representation through frequent elections and with no class-distinction

¹²⁵ Paine, *Rights of Man*, 146

¹²⁶ Paine, *Common Sense*, 277

¹²⁷ Kaye, *Thomas Paine and the Promise*, 47

¹²⁸ Paine, *Common Sense*, 277

and no rivalry.¹²⁹ The intention of this proposal is to ensure popular sovereignty and to guarantee that the government fulfils “the interests of the people and their will.”¹³⁰

To certify the common good in the state, Paine suggests an “intermediate body” between the people and the Congress: a Continental Conference. The Conference will write the “Charter of United Colonies” which is to fix “the number and manner of choosing members of Congress, members of Assembly, with their date of sitting, and drawing a line of business and jurisdiction between them,” and secure “freedom and property to all men, and above all things the free exercise of religion, according to dictates of conscience.”¹³¹ Put in different words, the Charter of United Colonies represents a document of procedural law based on the principles of human natural rights: liberty, security and freedom of religion. It is to be a modern parallel of the British Bill of Rights.

In the conclusion of his draft of an American republic Paine delivers a republican rite, displacing the last sentiments of kings and monarchy:

But where says some is the King of America? I’ll tell you my Friend, he reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind like the Royal – of Britain. Yet that we may not appear to be defective even in earthly honours, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth placed on the divine law, the word of God; let the crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America THE LAW IS THE KING. [...] Let the crown at the conclusion of the ceremony be demolished, and scattered among people whose right it is.¹³²

This metaphorical destruction of crown, and of sovereign power, depicts the act of decentralization of power from the King George III to American people.

Paine believes that not only society and government can work as mutually cooperative and sociable entities, but also states can do so on an international scale. Paine asserts that “because it is the interest of all Europe to have America a free port,” an international trade based on the mutual cooperation of states would secure America “the peace and friendship” of Europe.¹³³ Paine views British capitalism as evil, because it exploits the colonists. However, he does not consider international commerce to be evil. Commerce and trade between nations supports, according to Paine, the natural mutual cooperation of humankind, and it is thus beneficial to the happiness of people. Moreover, international trade would secure world peace, as the nations become mutually dependent. Paine again ignores the competition of social

¹²⁹ Foner, *Tom Paine*, 77

¹³⁰ Lee Ward, *The Politics of Liberty in England and Revolutionary America*, 394

¹³¹ Paine, *Common Sense*, 278

¹³² *Ibid.*, 279

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 269

classes and rivalry between states and concludes that international trade could work as “a pacific system, operative to unite mankind by rendering nations, as well as individuals, useful to each other.”^{134, 135}

The pamphlet includes key suggestions for a way that the new nation could work as a republic which moderates were not able to properly formulate or were hesitant to express. The international trade appeals to the wealthy men, as it envisions greater economic and thus political independence and autonomy.

¹³⁴ Paine, *Rights of Man*, 180

¹³⁵ David M. Fitzsimons, “Tom Paine’s New World Order: Idealistic Internationalism in the Ideology of Early American Foreign Relations,” in *Diplomatic History*, 576

8. The Emotional Appeal in *Common Sense*

Together with logical arguments Paine uses an emotional appeal to his audience. Paine shows a great insight into the psychology of his readers in *Common Sense*, as he describes the integral symbols of colonial cultural and political systems: monarchical paternalism and republican manhood. Realizing that emotional arousal can profoundly affect the human assessment of the situation, Paine operates with these themes in favor of his arguments for American Independence.

Paine opens *Common Sense* with the following statement:

Perhaps the sentiments contained in the following pages, are not yet sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favor; a long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defence of custom.¹³⁶ [sic]

Beginning with these words, Paine points out the ancient prejudice that holds the theocratic idea that a monarch depicted as the figure of Father is indisputably right. Paine warns that the policy of monarchy became a function of entrenched custom instead of human reason. Since King George III was perceived as “the *pater familias* of the nation,”¹³⁷ the colonists were culturally attached to the monarch. From the political point of view, this cultural custom represents a perilous pattern of patriarchal authority that implies a society of “dependent beings, weak and inferior, without autonomy or independence.”¹³⁸

The controlling emotions which Paine puts forth in *Common Sense* are thus connected to the metaphorical relationship between America and Britain in which America is depicted as a child and Britain represents a mother. The emotional appeal that Paine makes is simple: to devalue this connection. The first reference to the familial metaphors is found in the chapter “Thought on the Present State of American Affairs.” To make a strong emotional objection to the arguments for reconciliation with Britain which were grounded on the mother-child relationship, Paine argues:

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America hath flourished under the former connexion with Great Britain, that the same connexion is necessary towards her future happiness. [...] We may as well assert, that because a child has thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat; or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty.¹³⁹ [sic]

¹³⁶ Paine, *Common Sense*, 249

¹³⁷ Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 11

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 12

¹³⁹ Paine, *Common Sense*, 267

The preceding statement is an example of the Enlightenment conception of immaturity as political subjection and maturity as a symbol of freedom, as it was expressed by Immanuel Kant in his essay *An Answer to the Question: What is the Enlightenment?* Paine aims to explain that American maturity is decelerated by the connection with Britain and that reconciliation is an obstacle to political and economic growth of the American colonies.¹⁴⁰ America is no longer an infant who needs breast milk in order to survive, as she is sufficiently developed in terms of economic and political affairs. This theme of maturity also appears in Paine's *American Crisis* in which he asks his male colleagues: "Is it the interest of a man to be a boy all his life?"¹⁴¹ From the psychological point of view, Paine attempts to persuade his readers to act as the right republican men who fight against injustice and protect their country from tyranny.

Paine continues to devalue the familial connection between Britain and America and aptly points out the fact that Britain is incorrectly addressed as a mother country, as America became "the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe."¹⁴² If there is a "mother" of America, it must be logically Europe. Paine further focuses the readers' attention on the wartime that preceded the American Revolution and stresses the fact that colonists became victims of prejudice and crime:

Even Brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families; wherefore the assertion, if true, turns to her approach; but it happens not to be true, or only partly so, and the phrase parent or mother country hath been jesuitically adopted by the – and his parasites, with low papistical design of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of our minds.¹⁴³ [*sic*]

The concept of Britain's paternal role is founded on mendacity and hypocrisy that limits America's ability to see her opportunities of liberty and independence.¹⁴⁴ The preceding statement can also be interpreted in a different way. Although Paine's words reflect an obvious disdain with the elites' manipulation of masses of people, the words "credulous weakness of our minds" indicate the self-incurred immaturity and ignorance of humankind. It is time to awaken human reason and stop relying on others' decisions. The metaphors: "brutes," "savages" and "parasites" stress the dynamism of Paine's argument.

¹⁴⁰ Courtney Weikle-Mills, *Imaginary Citizens: Child Readers and the Limits of American Independence, 1640 – 1868*, 74

¹⁴¹ Paine, *The American Crisis*, 33, accessed online on June 8, 2014,

<http://books.google.cz/books?id=XrbMhZLVxnYC&printsec=frontcover&dq=american+crisis&hl=cs&sa=X&ei=dbKVU8j7HYff7Aap4oHYDw&ved=0CDoQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=american%20crisis&f=false>

¹⁴² Paine, *Common Sense*, 267

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 267

¹⁴⁴ Bernard Bailyn, *Faces of Revolution: Personalities and Themes in the Struggle for American Independence*, 79

The peak of Paine's emotional appeal concerning the paternal relationship is the following quote:

No man was a warmer wisher for reconciliation than myself, before the fatal nineteenth of April 1775, but the moment the event of that day was made known, I rejected the hardened, sullen tempered Pharaoh of – for ever; and disdain the wretch, that with the pretended title of FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his soul.¹⁴⁵

Paine demonizes King George III by depicting him as a mass murderer of his own people. Calling the monarch “Pharaoh” and “wretch,” Paine degrades and devalues George III's cultural and political influence over colonists.

Another example of the theme of family in *Common Sense*, which also plays a pivotal role in an emotional appeal towards the colonial milieu, is posterity. The theme of posterity is interconnected with the theme of future:¹⁴⁶ “Posterity are virtually involved in the contest and will be more or less affected to the end of time.”¹⁴⁷ Paine asserts that an immediate action is inevitable or the future of America is endangered:

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 will enlarge with the tree, and posterity read it in full grown character.¹⁴⁸

Paine further warns colonists, especially those who have become parents, that reconciliation with Britain will “leave sword to our children,” and that it is against human reason to support a monarchy which will “leave the next generation to be cutting throats, under the violated unmeaning names of parent and child.”¹⁴⁹ Paine then turns to the responsibility of parenthood:

As parents, we can have no joy, knowing that *this government* (of Britain) is not sufficiently lasting to ensure any thing which we may bequeath to posterity: And by a plain method of argument, as we are running the next generation into debt, we ought to do the work of it, otherwise we use them meanly and pitifully. 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.¹⁵⁰ [*sic*]

Although Paine illustrates immaturity negatively in connection with America's political and economic growth, he at the same time uses immaturity and childhood in terms of

¹⁴⁵ Paine, *Common Sense*, 274

¹⁴⁶ Ferguson, “The Commonalities of *Common Sense*,” 484

¹⁴⁷ Paine, *Common Sense*, 266

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 266

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 274

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 270

posterity as a way to affect the future positively. As soon as American children are liberated from the influence of monarchy and the problems connected with it – debts, and irrational and tyrannical customs, America will have a better future.¹⁵¹

The next theme that appears in the pages of *Common Sense* is republican manliness that has a minor role in the pamphlet. Paine believes that America is entrenched in deep prejudice that must be eliminated. For this reason, Paine appeals to his readers:

I have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves; that he will put on, or rather that he will not put off, the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.¹⁵²

Thus, Paine argues in a manner similar to his patriot counterparts: Benjamin Franklin stressed “manly freedom” in his speeches, John Adams praised “manly pertinacious spirit against tyranny,” and Thomas Jefferson applauded American soldiers for “demonstrating manly firmness and manly spirit by renouncing British authority.”¹⁵³ Paine calls upon American colonists to think and act without prejudices as the right republican men.

Paine attacks the supporters of reconciliation calling them “men of passive tempers who look somewhat lightly over the offences of Britain,” and claims that a Loyalist has a “heart of a coward, and the spirit of a sycophant,” who is not “awaken from fatal and unmanly slumbers.”¹⁵⁴ Paine, however, does not decry only those who support reconciliation but also his moderate counterparts, naming them:

Interested men, who are not to be trusted; weak men who cannot see; prejudiced men who will not see; and a certain set of moderate man, who think better of the European world than it deserves; and this last class by an ill-judged deliberation, will be the cause of more calamities to this continent than all other three.¹⁵⁵

The criticism of moderates also appears in some of Paine’s essays published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* in which he calls the leading political figures “desperate wretches” who “steal and enslave men by violence and murder for gain.”¹⁵⁶ This reflects the growing political tension between the moderates and the radicals.

¹⁵¹ Ferguson, “The Commonalities of *Common Sense*,” 482

¹⁵² Paine, *Common Sense*, 265

¹⁵³ Wood, *The Radicalism*, 30

¹⁵⁴ Paine, *Common Sense*, 271

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 270

¹⁵⁶ Kaye, *Thomas Paine and the Promise*, 36

9. The impact of *Common Sense*

Common Sense experienced immediate success. The radical, Benjamin Rush, proclaimed that *Common Sense* “burst from the press with an effect which has rarely been produced by types and papers in any age or country” and that “its effects were sudden and extensive upon the American mind... read by public men, repeated in clubs and spouted in Schools.” George Washington remarked that “*Common Sense* is working a powerful change there (Philadelphia) in the minds of many people,” and Abigail Adams sent her husband John Adams a letter with the message that the pamphlet is “highly prized here (Boston) and carries conviction wherever it is read.”¹⁵⁷

There were also many positive reactions to *Common Sense* published in the colonial newspapers and gazettes. Perhaps the most inspiring of these are found in the *New York Journal* that acknowledged the success of *Common Sense*:

You can scarce put your finger to a single page, but you are pleased, though it may be, startled, with the sparks of original genius. [...] It treats of most important subjects of America. [...] Exciting and calling forth to public view, the thoughts of others.¹⁵⁸

The *Connecticut Gazette* responded to the anonymous author of *Common Sense* in a poetical way:

You have declared the sentiments of millions. Your production may justly be compared to a land-flood that sweeps all before it. We were blind, but on reading these enlightening works the scales have fallen from our eyes; even deep-rooted prejudices take to themselves wings and flee away. [...] The doctrine of independence hath been in times past, greatly disgusting; we abhorred the principles – it is now become our delightful theme, and commands our purest affections.¹⁵⁹

The radical ideas of *Common Sense* inspired the lower and middle ranks of the dependents. For instance, the middle class merchants and tobacco planters refused to respect colonial leaders and attempted to escape trading restrictions imposed by the independents.¹⁶⁰ The middle class artisans and small tradesmen were likewise encouraged by Paine’s radical political thought, as they “launched a full-scale attack on wealth and even on the right to acquire unlimited private property.”¹⁶¹ The lower ranks of the dependents spread the message of *Common Sense* in every part of the Thirteen Colonies and began to claim their right to be involved in public affairs. The extent to which *Common Sense* influenced common men

¹⁵⁷ Jordan D. Winthrop, “Familial Politics: Thomas Paine and the Killing of the King, 1776,” in *The Journal of American History*, 295

¹⁵⁸ Ferguson, “The Commonalities,” 476

¹⁵⁹ Winthrop, “Familial Politics,” 295

¹⁶⁰ Claeys, *Thomas Paine*, 111

¹⁶¹ Zinn, *A People’s History*, 62

disquieted the many of the independents. The Anglican minister Jacob Duché argued that after the publication of *Common Sense*, suddenly “the poorest laborer... thinks himself entitled to deliver his sentiments in matters of politics with as much freedom as the gentlemen and the scholar.”¹⁶²

Common Sense, however, did not motivate only the dependents to action. On June 7, 1776 the politician Richard Henry Lee was inspired by Paine’s proposals for a unicameral system of government and on international trade, and he drafted the Constitution of Pennsylvania. Similar to Paine’s plan for a new republican government, the constitution stressed “great trust in the judgment of the citizenry” and relied on “the maturity of popular judgment.”¹⁶³

Paine’s *Common Sense* also did great service to the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Thomas Jefferson was inspired by Paine’s egalitarian beliefs and strong emotional arguments against George III. He learned from Paine that “personalizing an enemy was the best way to arouse emotional support for a cause.”¹⁶⁴ Consequently, in the first draft of the Declaration of Independence Jefferson decided to blame George III for all the tragedy that had struck America:

He waged cruel wars against human nature itself, violating its most sacred right of life and liberty in the persons of distant people who never offended him, captivating them into slavery in another hemisphere.¹⁶⁵

This version of the Declaration of Independence, however, was found inappropriate and unpopular with the slave owners from the South, especially from Georgia and Carolina. After meeting John Adams and Benjamin Franklin in 1776, Jefferson was persuaded to edit the first draft and to overlook all comments on slavery.¹⁶⁶

After declaring their independence on July 4, 1776, the Founding Fathers had to decide on what kind of government they should establish and how the thirteen states would be related to the central government. The first national government arrangement resulted in the *Articles of Confederation*.¹⁶⁷ The first draft of the *Articles of Confederation*, which were

¹⁶² Wood, *The Radicalism*, 12

¹⁶³ Wrils, *The Invention of United States Senate*, 42

¹⁶⁴ Joseph Conlin, *The American Past: A Survey of American History*, 146

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 146

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 146

¹⁶⁷ West's Encyclopedia of American Law, “Origins of U.S. Government,” accessed online on June 24, 2014, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3437704857.html>

drafted in 1776, approximated the unicameralism proposed by Thomas Paine, as the Congress consisted of only one chamber in which each of the thirteen states had one vote.¹⁶⁸

Nevertheless, there were growing concerns about the unicameral system of government during the 1780s. The Congress could not force all the thirteen states to meet the needs of the central government which had to resolve the economic and social problems which resulted from the American Revolutionary War. Contrary to Thomas Paine's philosophical surmises that colonies would mutually cooperate in the planning of the state laws and in the national commerce, the Congress had to settle legal and economic disputes between the states which culminated in rebellions, such as Shays' Rebellion in 1786.¹⁶⁹ Drawing on this experience, the Founding Fathers worried that the assigning the legislative, judicial and executive powers to the population as a whole in the unicameral system of government could in the course of time act arbitrarily and thus become either autocratic or anarchistic.¹⁷⁰

John Adams reacted to *Common Sense* and its proposal for a unicameral system of government very truculently. In his *Thoughts on Government*, Adams calls Paine an anarchist and expresses the idea that a unicameral system as it is proposed by Paine is "prone to greed."¹⁷¹ Adams finds Paine's unicameralism too democratic and thus too dangerous for the public good, as common citizens are not properly qualified for politics and unicameralism can be thus swayed by emotions and passions of men. For this reason, it is necessary, according to Adams, to "depute power from the many to the few of the most wise and good."¹⁷² [*sic*] Consequently, the Congress resolved the problem of unicameralism in the Great Compromise that established bicameral system of government. The government was thus divided into two houses: the House of Representatives and the Senate which were responsible for the separation of powers and the checks and balances.

The controversy of unicameralism was caused by the negative experiences with unicameral systems of governments. This fact was raised by the Loyalist, James Chalmer, who penned *Plain Truth* in reaction to *Common Sense*. Chalmer criticizes Paine for being "a political quack" that supports a "Quixotic system," as republics in all ages and places were always aggressive. Chalmer also criticizes Paine's emotional outburst towards King George III, being convinced that America would not be successful without the help of the British

¹⁶⁸ Edward Sidlow and Beth Ienschen, "The Constitution," in *GOVT*, chapter II

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, chapter II

¹⁷⁰ Dennis C. Mueller, "Public Choice: An Introduction," in *The Encyclopedia of Public Choice*, edited by Charles Rowley and Friedrich Schneider, 39

¹⁷¹ Claeys, *Thomas Paine*, 51

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 51

monarchy. Another Loyalist, Charles Iglis, also doubts Paine's republican government and emphasizes that the principles of the American Revolution would not exist without the principles of the Glorious Revolution of 1689 in *The True Interest of America Impartially States*. Iglis criticizes Paine's arguments against monarchy which are grounded on the biblical references and disparages Paine's radical distinction between society and government, stating that one from the other cannot be distinguished and that one without the other cannot be implemented.¹⁷³ Iglis's criticism also reflects the notion that the principle-oriented ideas of the Enlightenment began to be considered as too impractical and unrealistic in political practice in the late 1770s and the 1780s. Hence, the experience-oriented government based on a bicameral system of government was preferred in the final draft of the *Articles of Confederation* and the resulting government was divided into Republicans and Federalists.

¹⁷³ Claey's, *Thomas Paine*, 51 - 52

Conclusion

Thomas Paine's radicalism was unparalleled in the Age of the Enlightenment. Paine's extremist positive view of humankind that all human beings are naturally predisposed to govern themselves by their natural instinct for sociability and mutual cooperation created a unique political philosophy which is reflected not only in the content of *Common Sense* but particularly in the literary style of the pamphlet.

Paine's idiosyncratic political language expressed in *Common Sense* became the language of full democracy that empowered the dependents and gave them confidence in the public matters which posed a potential menace to the political elites of the American Revolution. Paine's *Common Sense* represents a unique revolutionary pamphlet that eliminated the information gap between the public and the private spheres in the Anglo-American controversy by a simple literary tactic of simplification of complex philosophical ideas. Paine's passionate plea for the American Independence and his emotional outburst towards the King George III depreciated the cultural attachment of America to the Great Britain and his logical justification for republicanism made the British governmental system of monarchy an enemy to common sense.

The most radical concept of Paine's political philosophy is the crucial difference between society and government which might lead to possible ambiguity of his radicalism that holds the belief that human beings are virtuous in the state of nature. If people are naturally predisposed to autonomous and self-regulating governance, why do they need a state government? If people are innately virtuous, why do they need external control over their vices?

People are naturally virtuous in the sense of the idea that human beings are led by their instincts for sociability and mutual cooperation to maintain the bare necessities of life. However, all human beings may be tempted to sins by the trying circumstances of the world around them. The government is, therefore, only a means of protecting the citizens from possible evil and, moreover, it is a mode of retaining and improving human virtue in the state. Paine argues that it is only the principle-oriented republic which focuses on the purpose of government rather than on its form, which can facilitate justice in politics. He further suggests that a unicameral body for the government is the most effective structure since it provides formal assurance that the government reflects the will of the people and supports the natural mutual cooperation of people in the state.

The merits of unicameralism are particularly apt to maintain human natural predisposition towards sociability and mutual cooperation. In the unicameral system of

government people are directly involved in political matters. There is consequently no distinction in social classes or formal positions in the government. Hence, people are becoming the source of the laws and the rights in the state.

This radical change to political power was not found popular with the moderates who already had gained broad economic and political influence in the North America. The unicameral system of government as proposed by Paine would result in weakening of the moderates' supremacy in the Thirteen Colonies. The economic and political power would be decentralized from the leading politicians to people. For this reason, the moderate contingent of the American Revolution began to stress the problem of functionality of unicameralism in political practice.

The problem of unicameral system of government as proposed by Paine was particularly the equal separation of powers in the government. Paine's unicameralism does not allow proper checks on the national legislature made by a second chamber of government. This aroused worries that the unicameral system of government would result in absolutism or in anarchism. The unicameral system of government was found too inconvenient and dangerous in political practice in the post-revolutionary era in the North America. Consequently, the bicameral system of government divided into the House of Representatives and the Senate was established in order to secure equal separation of powers and the equal checks and balances.

Paine was in the end one of the most influential of all the American revolutionary thinkers, and through his writings he ensured that the democratic rights of *all* Americans would continue to be advanced.

RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá radikálním politickým myšlením amerického revolucionáře Thomase Paina tak, jak jej vyjádřil v pamfletu *Common Sense* (přeloženo: *Selský Rozum*). Cílem resumé je seznámit čtenáře s nejdůležitějšími výsledky tohoto bádání.

Politické myšlení Thomase Paina se v posledních letech stalo vyhledávaným předmětem zájmu politických a historických věd. Pro lepší pochopení velmi komplexní interpretace Painova radikalismu v *Common Sense* bylo tedy nutné v teoretické části jasně vymezit intelektuální a historický kontext tohoto díla. Z tohoto důvodu se teoretická část zabývá intelektuálním hnutím osvícenství, které bylo ideově propojeno s Americkou revolucí. Americké osvícenství představuje významné sociálně-politické a historicko-kulturní období rané historie Severní Ameriky, které vyvrcholilo v Americkou revoluční válku, jejímž konečným výsledkem bylo vyhlášení nezávislých Spojených států amerických. Nejvíce pozoruhodná éra amerického osvícenství zahrnuje 70. a 80. léta 18. století, která zaznamenala klíčový mezník v americké historii. Ze sociálně-politického hlediska je toto období definováno jako dlouhodobý proces intelektuálního znehodnocení a následného potlačení sociálních a politických tradic Velké Británie a vytvoření nových politických norem vhodných pro budoucí americkou společnost. V historicko-kulturní souvislosti je toto období vnímáno jako kulturní odloučení Ameriky od své rodné vlasti a oslabení státního paternalismu typického pro Britskou monarchii.

Osvícenství se obecně vyznačovalo komplexní filozofií, která se zabývala teoriemi lidské mysli a vhodného vedení lidí v zemi. Osvícenští myslitelé jako jsou John Locke, Thomas Hobbes nebo Jean-Jacques Rousseau svými filozofickými idejemi zásadně přispěli k vytvoření politického souboru lidských práv a zákonů pro budoucí liberálně demokratické země. Nicméně zásadní filozofické a politické koncepty liberální demokracie byly značně omezeny pro širokou veřejnost kvůli finanční nedostupnosti vědeckých spisů či jejich komplexnosti a nesrozumitelnost pro běžného občana, tedy občana, který byl v 17. a 18. století vnímán jako člověk bez demokratických práv či majetku.

První zásadní znak Painova radikalismu tedy tkví v modernizaci vyjadřování politické filozofie osvícenství. Paine vytvořil v *Common Sense* politický literární styl, který otevřel cestu běžným občanům ke komplexním filozofickým a politickým idejím. Jeho literární taktika spočívající v prosté alegorické demonstraci filozofických a politických konceptů na konkrétních familiárních příkladech tehdejšího světa, jako například základní geografické, historické, vědecké či náboženské vědomosti, umožnila běžným občanům pochopit

komplexní teorie politické filozofie. Paine tímto způsobem zásadně zmenšil rozdíl mezi soukromou a veřejnou sférou politiky, čímž chtěl umožnit běžným občanům možnost přímého zásahu do veřejného dění, jinými slovy zavedení přímé demokracie.

Ostrým metaforickým jazykem Paine v *Common Sense* označil britského krále Jiřího III. za vraha svého lidu, pavažujíc ho za lidského ubožáka, který není hoden paternalistického postavení ve státě. Paine popsal vládní tripartitní systém konstituční monarchie Velké Británie za lidský hřích, který je pouhým nástrojem kapitalistů jak skrývat své politické motivy před občany. Tímto způsobem Paine napomohl k znehodnocení a potlačení politického systému Britské monarchie v Severní Americe.

Paine v *Common Sense* navrhuje však i alternativy založení nových politických norem americké společnosti. Základem Painovy radikální filozofie je silná víra v lidské ctnosti. Paine věří, že lidé jsou schopni vládnout sami sobě na základě svých přirozených instinktů. Paine tak vytváří silný rozdíl mezi civilní společností a vládou. Lidé tvoří společnost, protože jsou k tomu předurčení a potřebují jeden druhého k přežití. Z tohoto důvodu jsou civilní společnosti ještě před zásahem vlády již autonomní a samosprávné. Paine byl přesvědčen, že společnost lidí bez zásahu vlády funguje nejlépe, avšak i lidská mysl je podřízena záporným vlastnostem, a tudíž určitá vládní kontrola nad lidskými neřestmi je nutná.

Paine tedy navrhuje v *Common Sense* radikální přímou demokracii prostřednictvím republiky, která je spravována vládou založenou na principech. Tyto principy spočívají v zachování lidských přirozených schopností vládnout sobě samým. Aby nedošlo k omezení predispozicí lidí vládnout sobě samým, Paine doporučuje unikameralismus, tedy vládní strukturu jedné komory, která jednotně zodpovídá za výkonnou, soudní a zákonodárnou moc. V konceptu Painova unikameralismu se všichni lidé, včetně středních a nižších tříd, ve vládě postupně vyměňují a tak se stávají přímou součástí tvorby mocenské veřejné správy státu.

Painův koncept jednokomorového parlamentu zásadně ovlivnil *Konstituci Pensylvánie* roku 1776. Tato konstituce byla charakteristická tím, že striktně odmítala vícekomorový parlament a vkládala veškerou důvěru ve vůli lidu. Nicméně po vyhlášení nezávislých Spojených států amerických a vydání *Článků Konfederace*, první písemnou ústavu Spojených států amerických založenou na unikameralismu, bylo shledáno, že jednokomorový kongres a jeho velká víra v občany nebyla v praxi ideální. Během politické a ekonomické krize, která následovala po skončení Americké války, Kongres nedokázal efektivně kontrolovat všech třináct států a docházelo k povstáním a rebeliím. Na základě těchto negativních zkušeností, byly *Články Konfederace* upraveny a výsledná vláda byla sestavena z dvoukomorového Kongresu skládající se ze Sněmovny reprezentantů a Senátu.

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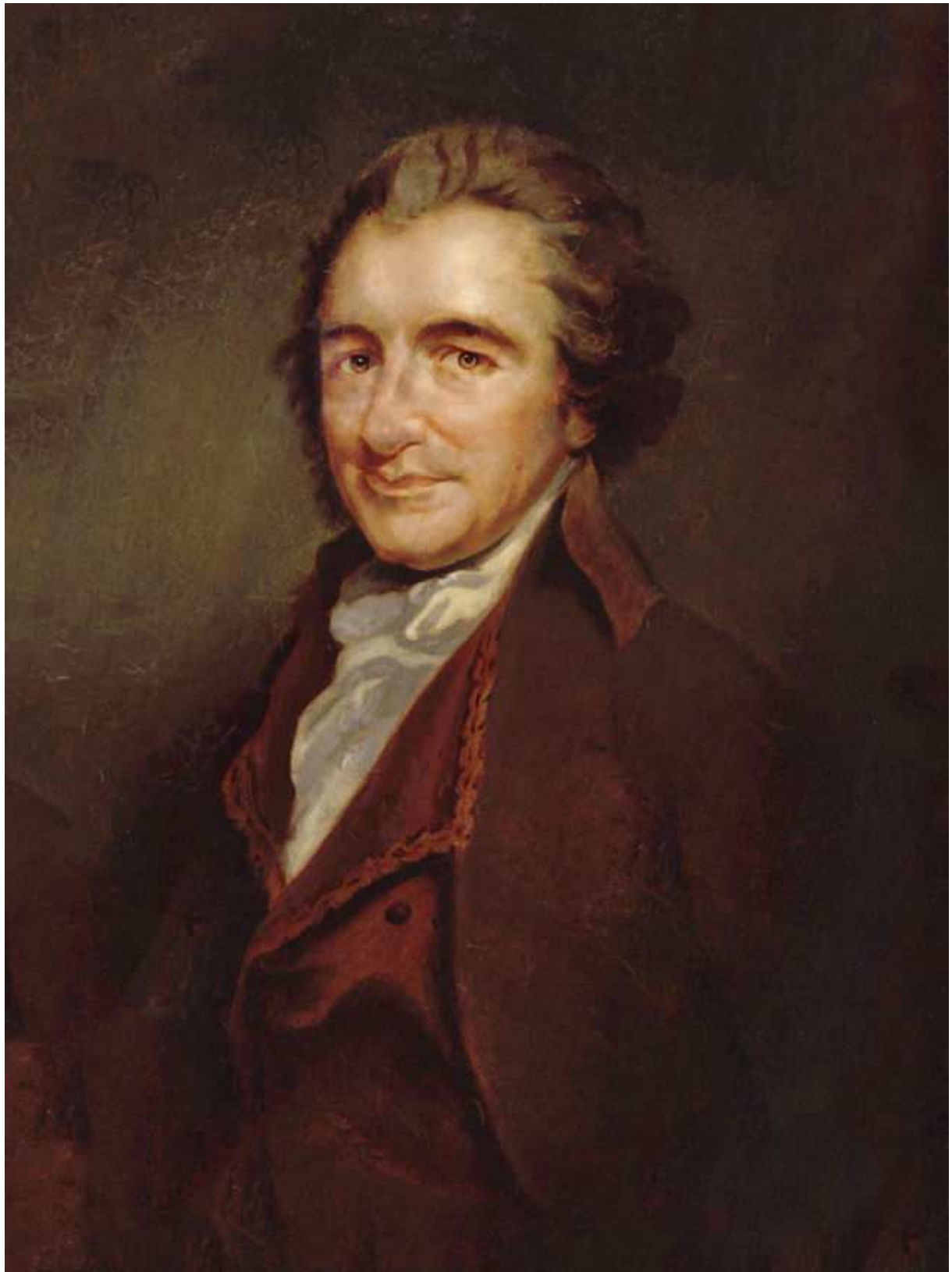
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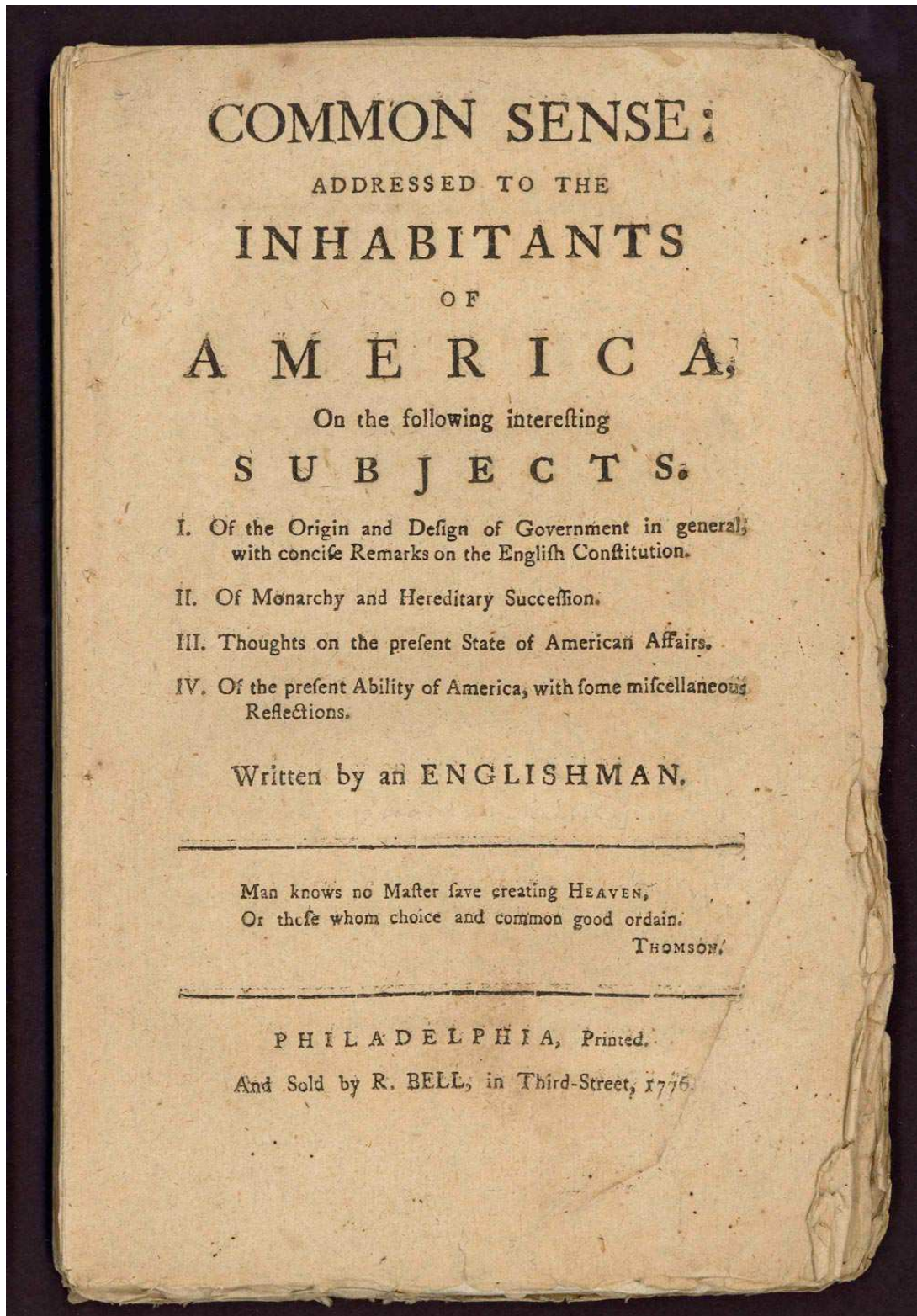
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Appendix A: A famous portrait of Thomas Paine by Auguste Millière, circa 1876

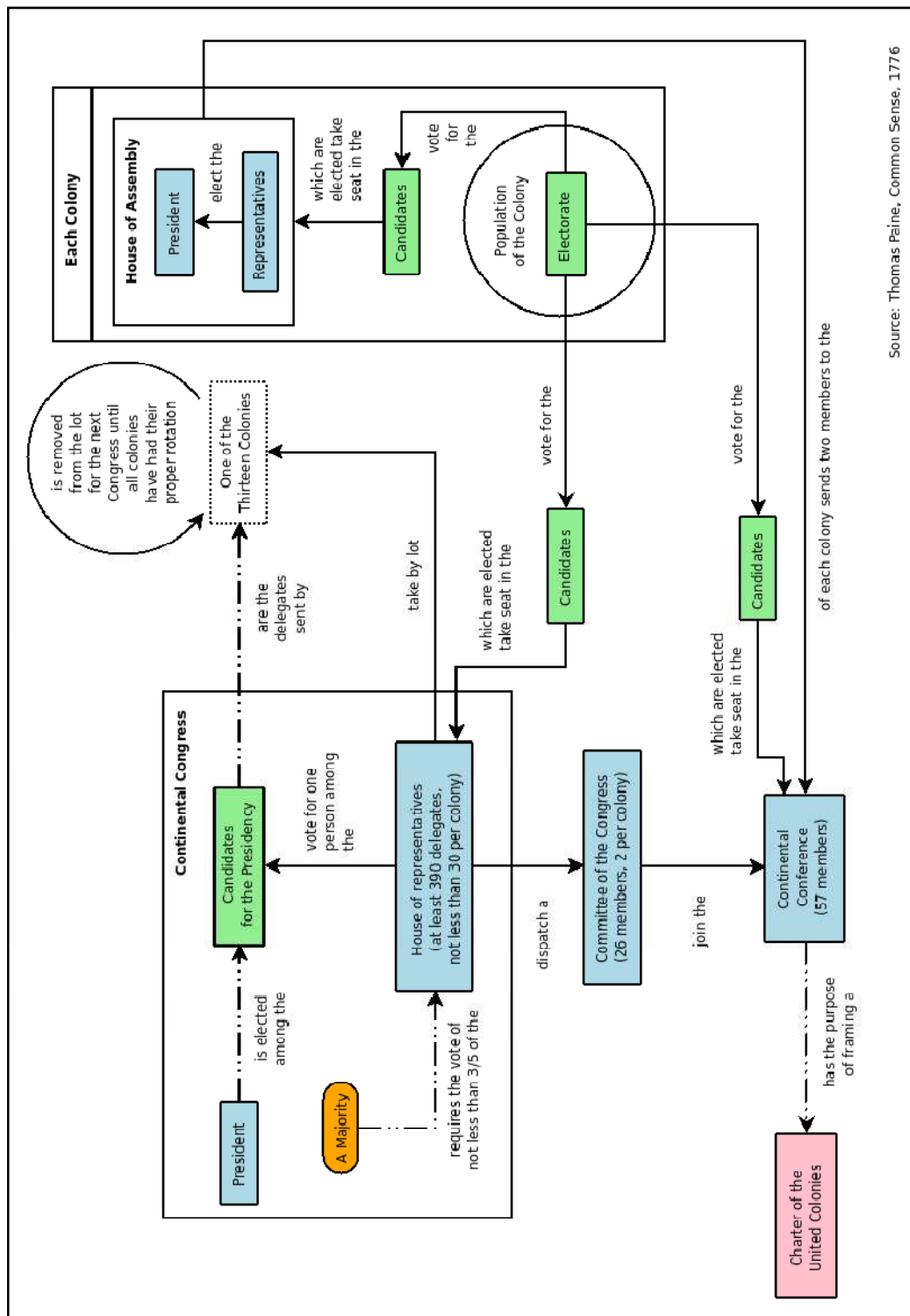


Appendix B: A photo of the original pamphlet *Common Sense* which was published in Philadelphia by Robert Bell.¹⁷⁴



¹⁷⁴ This photo was accessed online on June 13, 2014, <http://literarypubcrawl.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/common-sense.jpg>

Appendix C: A diagram representing the unicameral system of government of the United States as proposed by Thomas Paine in *Common Sense*.¹⁷⁵



¹⁷⁵ Although this diagram was published on Wikipedia, the quality of the diagram is considered to be useful for this bachelor paper. All rights belonged to Mathieu Gauthier-Pilote, accessed on June 13, 2014, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Sense_\(pamphlet\)#mediaviewer/File:Constitution-usa-thomas-paine.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Sense_(pamphlet)#mediaviewer/File:Constitution-usa-thomas-paine.png)