

The Pastoral Connection

Examining Parallels Between Pastoral and Political Rhetoric During the Revolutionary
War

A Thesis Submitted to

The Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences

In Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Composition

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May 5, 2022

Abstract

This paper examines the parallels between rhetoric in sermons preserved from the Revolutionary War period and rhetoric in political speeches and writings from the same period. The aim is to establish the extent of the parallels in rhetoric and to demonstrate that the rhetorical stances from the pulpit preceded the same rhetorical stances in political, secular work through establishing the date each document was published or presented. Studying these sources alongside reliable secondary sources on both the political and religious rhetorical themes will demonstrate, when put together to form a more complete picture of the period, that the political rhetoric was an echo of what was already being preached in the pulpits and published in sermons well before the war itself commenced. While sermon rhetoric was hardly the only influence on the rhetoric of politics at the time, this study will show that the rhetorical shift of the time—from supporting Britain to a war against Britain on the grounds of broken contracts, abuse of authority, and religious persecution—began in the pulpit and was then caught, in its final stages, by the political orators and writers of the day to set a nation on fire for freedom.

KEYWORDS: Revolutionary War, pastors, Founding Fathers, sermons, politics, rhetoric

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Acknowledgments

First, I want to acknowledge and thank my father for inspiring my love of history and philosophy, which set me on this path to begin with. He is the one who instilled this passion in me from an early age and the one who offered me access to his own knowledge and library when I first began my close study of the primary sources from the American Revolution and Founding three years ago. If not for him, this study might never have come to be.

I also want to acknowledge and thank both of my professors for this project. They were the ones who introduced me, formally, to the world of rhetoric when I first began my Master's in Composition with Liberty. They brought my passion for philosophy and my love for the art of persuasion and argumentation together, offering me new insights into how the two connected. I am particularly grateful to Professor Holt for his guidance in my Modern Rhetoric class, where I wrote my very first paper on this area of rhetoric. It was from that paper's initial study that my thesis paper's research question came to be.

Finally, I want to acknowledge and thank my family and friends for the support they have offered through this process. They have listened to me ramble on about the research and the writing of the paper, prayed for me to find the right words and the sources needed to complete the project well, and lent a listening ear at times when the process was proving stressful or frustrating. Their support has meant a great deal to me.

Preface

This thesis is a study of the connections and similarities in the rhetoric found in sermons leading into and during the Revolutionary War and the political writings and documents from the war. It has been written to fulfill the graduation requirements of the Composition program at Liberty University. I worked on the thesis and its research from January to May of 2022.

The project began as a research paper in my Modern Rhetoric class under the guidance of Professor Travis Holt. My research question came from the body of research I did for that earlier paper and was narrowed with the help of both Professor Holt and Dr. Robert Brandon. The research required a great deal of work given the interdisciplinary nature of the subject matter, but this study has allowed me to formulate an answer to the initial question. It was difficult to narrow such a broad area of study down to something that would be within the scope of this paper, and much more research will be needed to explore the full depths of the topic. Thankfully, I had both Dr. Brandon and Professor Holt to assist me in focusing the topic and honing the research focus until I had a specific and narrow research question that would be answerable within the scope of this paper.

I want to once again take a moment to thank those who supported me in this project. A special thanks goes to both Dr. Brandon and Professor Holt for all their assistance on the project, as well as to my dad for inspiring my passion for the topic and to the rest of my family and friends for keeping me motivated by engaging me in discussions about the project and my research. Whenever I was feeling overwhelmed with the sheer enormity of the project and the research, they helped me to refocus by discussing bits and pieces of what I was reading and studying. Thank you to each one of you for the part you played.

I hope you will find the paper informative and illuminating.

Abigail Zedwick

Illinois, May 1, 2022

Chapter One: An Introduction

Opening the Discussion—The What and the Why

Studying the rhetoric of the American Revolution offers a wealth of directions to go in any discussion of the subject. It is no easy matter to whittle the topic down to a narrower sub-topic that can be discussed in the scope of a thesis paper. I will freely admit that I struggled to decide which direction to go and felt the pull in a host of directions thanks to the interdisciplinary nature of the field. In the end, however, I settled upon exploring the parallels between the rhetoric in sermons preserved from the years before and during the Revolutionary War and the rhetoric in printed political speeches or pamphlets and documents from the war.

My aim is to show that there are significant parallels and, through demonstrating the parallels that can be found, even in sermons some seventy to eighty years before the war, to show that the sermon rhetoric preceded the political rhetoric, acting as a significant influence on the philosophy and rhetoric found in politics during the war.

I fully acknowledge, of course, that this is not the only influence. The pastors preaching these sermons were themselves often influenced by men like Locke and Hobbes as much as they were influenced by prior generations of clergy. Any balanced study must further admit that, if the focus is narrowed solely to the Founders in particular when studying political rhetoric, other influences played a significant role as well. It must also be admitted that other factors, as we will see shortly, did play a role in how broadly the rhetoric—political or religious—in favor of revolution could spread. However, these factors have been closely studied by other well-studied scholars, and it is not the point of this paper to prove the influence or the extent of that influence

from other sources. The point of the paper is to focus on one neglected area of the study: the rhetorical parallels and the reality that the sermon rhetoric influenced the political rhetoric, not the other way around. The goal is not to diminish the other important factors that played a role but is only to leave those to others who have covered them in detail already.

This leads us to the question *why*. Why choose the parallels between pastoral rhetoric and political rhetoric during the period for the paper's focus? There are two points of significance for me in studying this topic, beyond the reality that it is a gap not closely or broadly studied in either side of the scholarship—secular or sacred. The topic has both personal and academic significance to me as a scholar and significance to me as a Christian.

First, the topic has personal and academic significance to me as a scholar. I have been studying the American Colonial period up through the American Founding period for around three years now. This may be why it was so difficult for me to settle on a narrow enough area for the paper. There was so much to choose from that it was difficult to settle on the primary question I thought needed studying. In the end, I realized that my studies revealed a disconnect between what secular scholars and religious scholars were studying, with neither connecting to the other in any significant way. Only a few of the studies I reviewed in my reading even connected politics to religion in this period at all. Most took up either religion or politics and sought to focus solely on one as the only or key influence to the exclusion of the rest.

This struck me as strange. How could anyone on either side study a period where the secular and the sacred were so obviously intertwined and manage to exclude the other from the discussion to give sole credit to one or the other for how the war turned out? I set out to better understand how religious and secular rhetoric intersected, how they influenced one another—if indeed they had—and why it was the way it was in the Revolutionary War period.

As a scholar, I am searching for the truth and an understanding of the why, so when I see a connection being misrepresented or ignored in scholarship on a topic I am passionate about, it bothers me. My personal interest in this topic was to take what I had learned in my own study and to make it accessible to others looking for the connection, whether fellow scholars or laymen.

Second, this topic has significance to me as a Christian. This area of history is my heritage as an American Christian, not just as a United States citizen, and I believe that understanding my roots and learning from both their strengths and their weaknesses is pivotal. My fascination with rhetoric used to defend theological stances in general intersected well with studying this area of my heritage to understand why the church had such a great influence on the rhetoric at the time.

Today, it is either a distant hope or nearly unimaginable to the average American Christians that we could ever have that kind of influence. Even those who grasp that we had it in the past often fail to grasp why we had it or how we could ever achieve that again in the future. They focus their energies on the political in the hope that it will bring about the same sort of spiritual Revolution seen then, but they miss what undergirded the political action, which leaves them destitute of the power that led to the Revolution. A great deal of study and introspection on our past will be necessary if we are to grasp fully how it was achieved or why it was even possible, let alone how we might make use of similar methods and approaches today.

My goal is only to demonstrate the extent of the connections between sermon rhetoric and political rhetoric here. I am aiming to draw the two realms of scholarship together in alignment as they should be based upon the intersection between sacred and secular in the primary sources of the time. The two are inseparable, with the church and the state intertwined

and supporting one another in their own realms, each playing a distinct role but aiming to support the other insofar as it was moral to do so. It is this connection I wish to demonstrate, though I do not aim to establish, nor do I claim, that sermons were the only influence of importance at the time.

I cannot digress into every particular about how that connection was possible or all the reasons why the rhetoric in the pulpit was able to spread out to the political scene of the day so effectively because it is outside of the paper's scope. However, I believe that proving the influence was there and the nature of the connections in rhetorical stances is the first step. One must understand that it *was* there before they can grasp *why* it was there, and that is where I want to start a discussion.

Further studies and papers would be needed to go into all the details regarding the history of the church in New England or the other colonies and how they built so much influence over the politics of their day. Some are already available, though most examine the historical rather than the rhetorical aspects, and while that is useful, more studies of the rhetorical aspects would be necessary to extrapolate any useful principles or techniques the modern church could hope to apply.

I will cover the history of the New-England tradition, which birthed the movement both religiously and politically, in brief in this introductory chapter to set in the reader's minds both the historical context necessary to understand the rhetoric and the discussion of other scholars. The interdisciplinary nature of this topic makes it impossible to cover the topic without touching on other disciplines such as history, law, or religion, but the discussion of those disciplines must be limited here to mere mentions as they are relevant and necessary to understanding the focus of the paper. I do believe these areas are pivotal for further study, however, and would encourage

interested readers to seek out some of the papers reviewed here and the primary sources themselves if further study is of interest.

A final note is needed before delving into the literature review. I use the terms secular scholarship and religious scholarship. In order to avoid confusion, I mean by these terms those who make close study of the secular influences on the period are secular scholars and those who make close study of the religious influences are religious scholars. Both may be present at either religious or secular institutions, though it does seem less common for the second to be present in many well-known secular institutions. However, it is possible to see both types of scholars in both types of institutions, so the institutions are not the defining factor in my definition of the two as distinct. Finally, it should also be noted that it is possible to have a blend of the two—papers where the scholars have studied the two together as is done in this paper. For the sake of clarity in classification, I will place those scholars in their own section as those who attempted to bridge the divide or bring some balance to the two. These sources were, admittedly, rare in my studies, but I did find a few and wish to highlight them and applaud them for taking on the difficult task of striking a balance in examining the two sets of influences. For the most part, however, the sides are clearly defined with a line drawn between them that does not seem, upon my own studies of the available research, to be crossed on any regular basis. With these definitions established, the split in scholarship below should be of less confusion to the reader.

The Split in Scholarship—A Literature Review

In the wide body of literature from scholars on the Revolutionary War, there is a distinct gap between the studies done by secular scholars and those done by religious scholars. Both bring something of value to the discussion, but both are missing something by refusing to

acknowledge the significance of the other, and both do harm to the discussion on a scholarly and a popular level when readers rely on only one side of the aisle and thereby are led to wrong conclusions about the time that formed our nation.

If one read purely religious scholarship on the subject, he would walk away with the impression that Christianity was the most important influence—if not the only influence—on the war and the Founding after it. Scholars in this field deemphasize the influence that secular rhetoric had on the pastors they study by ignoring this aspect of the discussion in their work in order to focus narrowly and exclusively on the pastors themselves or what they were preaching. Perhaps the most famous example of this approach on a historical level is David Barton, a famous and controversial scholar who traces every thread of the Revolution back to religious influences. While he certainly makes good points, points that need to be made to the broader public, overemphasizing the influence is a mistake because it leaves out credit to the influential secular sources at play during the time. Not only does this overemphasis at times gain the religious community mockery from the secular community on the sometimes-deserved critique that they are making connections that do not exist, but it is the reason why so many readers of purely religious scholarship on the Revolution make the claim that the nation was purely founded on religious and Christian principles, effectively ignoring or leaving out the secular side of the discussion and its importance.

Meanwhile, anyone reading secular scholarship would point to a host of other purely secular influences and claim that Christianity had nothing at all to do with the war or the Founding. This claim stems from the exclusive focus on secular influences present in secular scholarship. Most do not go so far as to claim that religious influences were non-existent, but by ignoring them or mentioning them only in offhanded ways that seem to have little to do with the

topic at hand, they deemphasize religious influences just as much as religious scholars deemphasize the secular sources. One example of this occurs in Sandra Cleary's paper, reviewed below, when she mentions offhand that a certain pastor opposed one group; the mention was brief and the pastor seemed to play no important role, so his mention seems disjointed and insignificant in a discussion about newspapers in Boston. With no solid connection to the material discussed, the pastor seems insignificant. This is just one example of such a situation; it is far more common for papers from secular scholars to simply omit any mention of religious figures at all. This results in claims from readers of scholarship on this subject that America is a wholly secular nation that never was influenced by Christianity and that was certainly never founded upon any Christian principles—a claim which simply is not supported by the primary source record and one that I doubt very much most honest scholars in the secular realm would make themselves. This unfortunate imbalance in viewing the movement is not likely the result of any concerted effort or plot but simply results from scholars narrowing their focus as much as absolutely possible to the point that they know little about anything else and feel unqualified to mention it—an unfortunate occurrence that leads to a lack of broader understanding of how their field fits into the wider picture and, thereby, a lack of similar understanding in readers.

Putting on “blindness” of a sort is an unfortunate byproduct from focusing exclusively on one set of influences to the exclusion of the equally important influences from the other side of the aisle, and both sides are guilty of this, leading both of their readers to conclude that their side's set of influencers were the only influences to speak of. As a result, neither side of the debate has an accurate picture. The reality displayed by the primary sources is that both were extremely pivotal, and both had different parts to play, often in compliment to one another. Clergy were being influenced by secular and religious sources from the English Civil War in

England and before as well as by their own religious contemporaries, and then their secular contemporaries were influenced by them in combination with many of the same sources that the clergy were drawing from in the decades prior. The issue of influences is by no means clear cut, but the scholarship does not examine them with the sort of nuance the primary sources tend to reveal, and this mistake is costly to our understanding of the nature of the movement. By examining both sides together, understanding of the movement can be deepened and enriched.

My aim is that this paper would stand in the gap, connecting the two together where they belong—side-by-side instead of at odds. The goal here is that the entirety of this paper act as a response to that divide, both by beginning to build the bridge between the two with the discussion here and in encouraging other scholars to follow in my footsteps to bring the two sides back together where they rightfully belong so that all of us can better understand the movement that fascinates us as scholars equally regardless of which side—secular or sacred—we happen to be on.

To do that, however, it is necessary to examine some of the various points of discussion on both sides to orient this paper firmly in the discussion. The focus of this literature review is on sources from both sides of the discussion surrounding printed rhetoric, specifically. This means most of the sources aim to delve into either secular political rhetoric in places like newspapers, pamphlets, written oratory or speeches, letters, and more; or else on religious political rhetoric mainly found in the form of printed sermons from newspapers or circulated pamphlets. My goal with this review is to establish what both sides of the discussion are saying because it is my intent to draw from the primary sources both are using in order to lay out the connections between the two. It is not my intent to disparage one side or the other for the gaps in their discussion of the movement; both sides are at fault in part for choosing to ignore or neglect

aspects of the other side's arguments in favor of their own narrative. The goal of the paper is to begin bridging the divide between the two realms to start drawing the discussion back to a balanced acknowledgment of the importance of studying both in conjunction with one another.

Secular Studies

The secular body of literature on printed rhetorical pieces is much more expansive than the religious body of literature, at least in its types of sources, since it generally covers everything except printed sermons or pastoral papers. There are two areas of secular focus that this paper will explore: newspapers or pamphlets and Founding documents or writings from Founders. This subdivision allows for better categorization of the various sources I will explore in the literature review and a more organized reading experience for the reader.

Newspapers and Pamphlets

Newspapers and pamphlets were pivotal to the spread of the Patriots' rhetorical stance. As it became increasingly dangerous to speak out in public places, many patriots turned to writing letters to the editors of various newspapers or to writing pamphlets for publication with the request that their work be published under pseudonyms.

In her paper *Of No Party: The Independent Newspaper and the Rhetoric of Revolution, 1765-1775*, Sandra Cleary offers an excellent opening into the discussion with her exploration of the importance of newspapers to public debates. She focuses specifically on the Boston newspapers. She says that "the newspapers of pre-Revolutionary Boston, the seedbed of the revolt, played a central role in these public debates" (Cleary 157). Part of the reason for this, she

argues, is that the papers were publishing “letters (real and fabricated), speeches, essays and straightforward propaganda in the form of songs and poems” (Cleary 157). She states that there were five newspapers in Boston, specifically, by the time of the revolt, with seven prior to that during the period of 1763-1775. According to Cleary, “that was more than any town except Philadelphia (Thomas 1810)” (Cleary 157). Nor were the newspapers purely patriotic sympathizers carrying on the debate against England for the side of the resistance. In examining the papers, Cleary breaks down who supported what, stating “Isaiah Thomas’s *Massachusetts Spy* rivaled Benjamin Edes and Jon Gill’s *Boston Gazette* in patriotic fervor, but the *News-Letter*, and the *Post-Boy* were Tory in sympathy. John and Thomas Fleet’s *Boston Evening Post* maintained a dogged independence, opening its pages to Whig and Tory views alike until war began” (Cleary 157). Given this, it is hardly a surprise to discover that some of the most important rhetorical pieces for both sides were published in newspapers.

According to Cleary, few of the newspapers from the time achieved impartiality. “Other Boston papers,” Cleary says, “proclaimed goals similar to the *Post* [acting purely as a printer, not as the promoter of faction politics], but seldom achieved them in practice. The short-lived *Independent Advertiser*, for instance, declared that ‘we are of no Party, neither shall we promote the narrow and private Designs of any such. We are ourselves free, and our Paper shall be free’ (Thomas 50).” (Cleary 158). Of course, the definition used for freedom then looks little like the holy grail of objective reporting in today’s newspapers, as Cleary points out that “the freedom the *Advertiser*’s contributors sought was the opportunity to advance a radical Whig agenda, and one searches in vain for government defenders in its pages” (Cleary 158), a point that closely echoes the reality in the pamphlets as well, which Tories complained about because they advanced such a radical stance, one the Tories felt was aimed at whipping the people into a

frenzied mob, not at rational discourse (Tanner and Krasner 4). Cleary devotes considerable time to exploring the one paper that remained relatively neutral, defying the aims of both sides to promote only one side of the narrative. She states that “Fleet’s dogged insistence on his right to print without regard to ideology was verified by the content of his paper” (Cleary 159). The example that Cleary gives is the printing of George Whitfield’s work, a preacher whom Fleet was not personally a supporter of. This point, though brief and only intended to support her broader argument about Fleet’s paper, does serve to illustrate one point of connection between secular scholarship and religious scholarship, which is important for this paper’s scope since it is one example of how sermons were spread throughout the colonies alongside the political points of the day. Other newspapers in other colonies boasted some of the same objectivity, such as the small newspaper run by loyalist James Rivington, which profited by publishing works on both sides from authors like Alexander Hamilton and Samuel Seabury. (Gould 384). Of course, Cleary is only examining one avenue through which rhetoric spread. They were, in many cases, framing the argument that scholars find in the pamphlets by behaving as the publishing outlet for the writers seeking to push their pamphlet out to other colonists. Without papers like Cleary covers in her own work, we might not have the ability to discuss the broad impact that the pamphlets examined below had, which makes studying the newspapers first critical to understanding the broad range of influence these works had.

The newspapers may have made the discussion possible, but the pamphlets were the biggest space where the debate raged between the two sides, with examples of wit and knowledge displayed by both sides. The Tories generally took a very unemotional, coldly logical approach to the situation and ridiculed the Whigs for their impassioned speeches and writings. One of the most famous examples of such ridicule in political Tory pieces circulating at the time

was Robert Rogers' *Ponteach*, though Hamilton and Seabury's pamphlet debate also garnered a great deal of attention and displayed a similar level of wit. The two pieces are quite different in genre, but both demonstrate the carefully crafted rhetoric deployed by the Tories in this fight. In their study of Rogers' verse drama titled "Exposing the 'Sacred Juggle': Revolutionary Rhetoric in Robert Rogers' *Ponteach*," Tanner and Krasner seek to explain why such rhetoric is found in this unique example of drama in Revolutionary America. Their paper attempts to demonstrate how the work is political allegory intended to offer "a loyalist critique of revolutionary rhetoric" (Tanner and Krasner 5), a goal they achieve well, showing the wit and intelligence behind Rogers' approach at the same time.

They begin with a discussion of the political scene, noting that "during the 1760s oratory and pamphleteering became principal tools of both the proponents and opponents of American independence" (Tanner and Krasner 5). Much like Cleary noted with the newspapers, pamphlets were an indispensable tool for carrying on the debate between the two sides of the war. While the newspaper debate was at times present between the publishers themselves as they chose what material and reporting to print, it was also present in the newspapers through which writers they chose to publish, a point that Cleary also makes in brief when she notes that "some of the most important pamphlets such as John Dickenson's 'Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer,' appeared first in the provincial newspapers or were later serialized in them" (Cleary 157). An abundance of printed material from both sides clearly demonstrates the importance of oratory and pamphlets to the development of the rhetorical arguments from both sides.

Before bullets did the talking, words were the primary weapon of choice. Both sides attacked the other vigorously, accusing one another of rhetorical games and tricks. The pamphlets were not exempt from this battle and were, in fact, one of the chief modes of engaging

in the fight. Both sides have notable examples of attacks on the other, with many patriots representing it as a rhetorical fight. Nor were the patriots the only ones making this claim. “Richard Bland’s satire of 1764, ‘The Colonel Dismounted,’ represents the conflict between Britain and America as a rhetorical battle” (Tanner and Krasner 5) as well, though he does not depict the revolutionary cause favorably. The tone he utilizes is reminiscent of Seabury’s tone in his first pamphlet when his “snide dismantling of the seventh Article of Association” (Gould 386) focused on Congress’s literary expression to ridicule it for being base, lack of rhetorical clarity when using terminology surrounding rights and freedom, and lack of classical expression. Bland, Rogers, and Seabury offer an excellent understanding of the Tory side’s pamphlet rhetoric, which was on the whole derisive and derogatory toward the patriot cause. They were frequently “elite conservatives” who “prized classical learning as the badge of social status” (Gould 387), and while writers like Rogers satirized and mocked the Whigs for their so-called rabble rousing, the Patriot side fired back by mocking them for their pretentious attitudes and stuffy insistence upon tradition to the exclusion of any decent but new arguments that failed to utilize traditional literary techniques.

Whatever they thought of one another’s literary technique or lack thereof, both sides felt that the other was using rhetoric “to pad an argument devoid of real substance” (Tanner and Krasner 5), though the loyalists were the ones most concerned with the particulars of the revolutionaries’ rhetoric and its effect. They frequently complained not only that Whigs were using rhetoric to make the weaker argument stronger but also that their rhetoric was dangerous because it sought to appeal to the lower classes. Not only that, they became increasingly concerned with mob riots and attacks on anyone opposing the Revolutionary cause, a fact which can also be seen in Cleary’s work where she notes that many Tories reached out to Fleet’s paper

for publication, one with a note that “I and others have for some time past been stigmatized and Treated with sneer and ridicule, and as enemies to our country, because we have not fallen in with the most commonly received Opinion” (Cleary 162). This unfortunate divide became increasingly clear, not just in the newspapers that Cleary discusses, but also in the pamphlets where attacks on Whigs as rabble rousing troublemakers and mob-inciters became increasingly common.

The Whigs, for their part, while they fought the battle on a legal and philosophical level in engaging with Britain herself, aimed to reach the common man and make the message they had plain for anyone to understand, educated or not. This only furthered the accusations by loyalists that Whigs were trying to incite mob riots. Tanner and Krasner point out that “the majority of Tory pamphleteers portray revolutionary fanaticism as a calculated deception. In the eyes of their opponents, Wood states, ‘the Whigs were not actually expressing anything meaningful about themselves but were rather feigning and exaggerating for effect’ (Tanner and Krasner 6). This led the Tories to a point where they looked on everything the Americans said and felt that it “could not be taken at face value but must be considered as a rhetorical disguise for some hidden interest’ (“Rhetoric” 49)” (Tanner and Krasner 6). These writers roundly condemned works, even from highly educated men such as Thomas Paine, as being pernicious, carefully crafted lies intended to disguise the lack of a real reason to revolt, yet another example of their derision even for those who *did* fit their literary expectations on account of their adoption of different definitions to words and the “influence of Lockean ideas about the arbitrary nature of language” (Gould 386), which enraged men like Seabury as they watched the patriots use loose definitions for rhetorical terms, an issue they believed could open the way for “political misrepresentation” (Gould 386). It was from this position that Richard Rogers’ *Ponteach* came,

as the play characterizes revolutionaries as a “combination of hot-headed fervor and coldly rational manipulation” (Tanner and Krasner 7). The key point was made in numerous ways throughout Tory rhetorical pamphlets, but Rogers makes it himself by using rhetorical devices to present the revolutionaries’ argument as seeming justified initially before flipping it around and demonstrating that Ponteach—the type of an American revolutionary in Rogers’ play—is using “the appearance of moral righteousness as a means of disguising his quest for power” (Tanner and Krasner 8). Rogers serves as an excellent example of the way in which pamphlets proved pivotal to the argument for the Tories, who were increasingly pushed out of the political discussion in the newspapers—the other major way to gain an audience as the war heated up. He is accompanied by men like Seabury in deriding the patriot cause as base and sensationalist.

The Whigs used pamphlets with a slightly different approach because their goal was to appeal to the common man, not just the educated elite—who were often the crowd Tories prided themselves on appealing to. They, like the loyalists, used pamphlets to attack the other side, but they often approached it with much plainer language. There were also many more pamphlets intended specifically to rebut loyalist arguments already being made in the pamphlets. The most famous of these sorts of exchanges is the battle in print between Alexander Hamilton writing as “A Friend to America” and Samuel Seabury, who wrote under the name A.W. Farmer or A West Chester Farmer.

Despite the infamy of Seabury, a well-known loyalist who wrote many pamphlets defending Britain during this period, few papers on the war’s literature delve into the argument, except for studies of the revolutionaries’ responses to it. In the introduction to his paper *Wit and Politics in Revolutionary British America: The Case of Samuel Seabury and Alexander Hamilton*, Philip Gould points out the reason for this. “Literary scholarship about the loyalists

opposed the Revolution has been notably thin—a fact that reveals the nationalist concerns that traditionally have shaped the Revolutionary American literary canon” (Gould 383). Though he admits this is unsurprising, Gould seeks to illuminate the conflict between the two groups through examining the exchange between Hamilton and Seabury in order to show that both sides possessed intellect and characterizations of the Tory side as intellectually bankrupt or a failure to study the Tory side are both a mistake. In this sense, he follows in the footsteps of the previous scholars in trying to look at both sides and illuminate the intelligence and concerns of both, not just one. Like Tanner and Krasner, he seeks to show the Tory rhetoric for what it was—intelligent regardless of whether it was misguided or wrong in the end.

Both Hamilton and Seabury, in this case, were examples of the highly educated individuals on both sides of the fight just as Rogers provided Tanner and Krasner with an intelligent writer to highlight in studying Tory rhetoric. Seabury, according to Gould, was “an eighteenth-century British American writer who received a medical education in Scotland, went to Britain to be ordained as an Anglican minister, and, most importantly, remained a loyal British subject during the entire Revolutionary period” (Gould 384). Hamilton, on the other hand, was “a precocious King’s College student, recently come to New York from the West Indies” (Gould 384). As such, Gould seeks to prove that the Tory rhetoric does not deserve to be characterized as unintelligent, dull, or uninformed, nor does it deserve to be ignored as though it is less worthy of study than its American counterpart.

In the case of Hamilton and Seabury, Hamilton began the battle of rhetorical wit when he published, under the pen name “A Friend to America”, his pamphlet *A Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress* with loyalist James Rivington’s paper, the *Gazetteer*, one of the many papers that “played a central role in these public debates” (Cleary 157) and the paper that would

set the beginnings of the Hamilton-Seabury pamphlet war down in history. Seabury had already been working on his own pamphlet regarding the Continental Congress when Hamilton's piece came out, and he "added a nasty postscript to his new work, *The Congress Canvassed: or, An Examination into the Conduct of the Delegates, at their Grand Convention*, promising a fuller response to the "Vindicator" in the near future" (Gould 384). That response became his third paper, *A View of the Controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies*, in 1775. The rhetorical battle between these two highly educated men went going beyond the political issues of the day to create a battle of wits: who knew the authorities on the subject at hand best and who could argue it most eloquently. In this way, they echo the prose found in *Ponteach*, though as was noted earlier, Rogers' language more closely mirrors his fellow Tory's in its derisive tone. Hamilton's takes on more of a disbelieving and incredulous tone, still with the intent to at times mock Seabury, but in many cases simply to make plain his inability to see how anyone could possibly fail to see the situation so spectacularly.

This process of debate between the two men and in other pamphlets too was important for a few reasons, according to Gould. First, these pamphlet debates were "an important feature of Revolutionary print culture, and it asks us to allow for a kind of generic flexibility, since the political pamphlet operated, albeit obliquely, as an important site for engaging in literary and cultural criticism as well" (Gould 385). This can be seen in the newspapers as well, given their concern with publishing "letters (real and fabricated), speeches, essays and straightforward propaganda in the form of songs and poems" (Cleary 157), all of which also helped to shape and engage with literary and cultural critique. This was true more broadly of the debates in the pamphlets as a whole as well, but "in the case of Seabury and Hamilton, the dispute that emerged focused principally on the matter of wit—who possessed it, who did not, and, most importantly,

who could demonstrate mastery of English literary authorities on this subject to undermine his opponent” (Gould 385). This was, of course, important since it provided the readers with a broad range of evidence and reasoning to consider in deciding where they themselves would align in the war. Still, it was hardly the only reason the dispute was pivotal. A secondary, more important purpose that the pamphlets, and this debate in particular, was involving “the larger and complex reconstruction of British American identities out of canonically English materials, at a time when the deteriorating political situation made such a project all the more difficult” (Gould 385). This was a difficult task, but it was crucial to developing a distinctly American rhetorical identity. By publishing the pamphlets, newspapers framed the debate and played a role that would offer scholars “the outlines and progress of the evolving public consciousness” (Cleary 157). In much the same way as Cleary argues the newspapers show the progress and evolution of Americans’ public consciousness, Gould argues here that this sort of debate, and in particular the one he is examining, played a crucial part in developing that sense of identity on the rhetorical stage in America.

Although the Tories roundly condemned the Patriot cause for attempting to incite mob violence, looking at examples of pamphlets put out by the key figures involved demonstrates that there was a blended message to the people regarding the rhetorical and political scene of the day. In his paper *The Invention of a Public Machine for Revolutionary Sentiment: The Boston Committee of Correspondence*, William B. Warner examines yet another example of pamphlet rhetoric in the pamphlets published by the Boston Committee of Correspondence. Warner examines only the pamphlet they wrote to surrounding Massachusetts towns under the original commission of Boston’s Whig leadership, but it is an excellent example of how pamphlets from the Whig side of the argument actually appealed to the people. Warner does not fit in with the

others in that he does not focus his attention on the wit or brilliance of Tory rhetoric but instead showcases the reasonableness of the Whig rhetoric, a sharp contrast against the claims of the Tories that the Whigs were merely attempting to rouse people to revolt. However, he is in good company in examining pieces of pamphlet literature that reveal the wealth of intelligence possessed by the individuals involved in the public debate occurring in the newspapers.

Warner explains that “the Boston committee [was] composed of the minds and bodies of twenty-one members who engage in corporate acts of deliberation, writing, and reading. . . . What results from the systematic expansion of the standing Whig committees of correspondence can be understood, as the Pennsylvania Whig Joseph Reed did, as a ‘public machine’ for producing consensus and unity” (Warner 149-150). This committee’s correspondence with the people via pamphlets offers scholars today some of the most influential examples of Whig pamphlet rhetoric preserved from the period. While the scholarship above regarding *Ponteach* and Seabury’s work offered some insight into the best of Tory pamphlets, Warner’s work seeks to illuminate the other side of the discussion by examining some of the best of Whig pamphleteering. In this way, he provides the balancing point to the viewpoint of the Tories that the other papers examined, demonstrating that the accusations they leveled at the Whigs were in fact unfair in the case of sanctioned literature.

The rhetorical form these formal pamphlets took focused on the ancient device of the petition rather than arguing against a particular viewpoint, as Hamilton and Seabury’s pamphlets did, making the approach slightly different from what the earlier sources examined were doing. “What the Boston committee composes and sends out to other towns,” says Warner, “is the first instance of a new political genre: the popular declaration. It involves a clever repurposing of two of the three primary elements of the ancient right to petition: the statement of rights and the list

of grievances” (Warner 150). While these popular declarations certainly sought to rouse the common man to action and to challenge the authority of Britain, they were intended to be clear, rhetorically based arguments that laid out the rights owed to the American colonists by Britain and the list of grievances caused by Britain’s abuse of those rights but still, at that point, unaddressed and denied. This was a logical stance, not a vapid, emotionally driven attempt to whip the mob into a frenzy. It bears little resemblance to the “fear and frenzy, the exaggerations of enthusiasm (Wood, “Rhetoric”, 60)” (Tanner and Krasner 4) that Tories like Robert Rogers viewed “as ‘propaganda, that is, as a concerted and self-conscious effort by agitators to manipulate and shape public opinion’ (Wood, “Rhetoric, 47)” (Tanner and Krasner 4). Of course, this may be of little surprise considering that rhetoric on both sides at times mischaracterized or falsely demonized the other.

What made these committees so dangerous, as the Tories and the British accurately understood them to be, was that their arguments successfully roused the people to action, so much so that at times, various committee members had to make their own public appeals to the people to remember reason in acting as a corporate body. Instead of appealing to literary tastes in the way that Hamilton and Seabury did, which was the more recognized way to “debunk the initial gesture towards colonial political sovereignty” (Gould 387) and question political authority, they took to older types of writing to address their grievances that would reach those who were not as well-educated as society’s elites, making some of the same arguments accessible to the masses. Warner quotes from one such appeal from Samuel Adams after Britain made a move to pay judges from customs duties instead of through the colony’s House of Representatives.

The next step may be fatal to us. Let us then act like wise Men; calmly look around us and consider what is best to be done. Let us converse together upon this most interesting Subject and open our minds freely to each other. Let it be the topic of conversation in every social club. Let every Town assemble. Let Associations & Combinations be everywhere set up to consult and recover our just Rights. *Valerius Poplicola* [an early consul of Roman Republic].² (Warner 146)

Notice the calm language and the lack of inflammatory speech. In fact, as Warner points out, "...Adams' call to calm the passion of the moment by slowing down and coming together" (Warner 146) is crucial to the point Adams is trying to make. Many other similarly influential figures called for the same in their writings. Overviewing the newspapers and pamphlets of the time through the lens of current scholarship reveals that both sides were attacking each other, both were making well-reasoned appeals to various groups to take one rhetorical stance and set of actions or another, and both had people who advocated for extreme responses where extreme responses were inappropriate. Neither side was without its incendiaries, just as neither lacked its wise advocates for caution. Cleary, Tanner and Krasner, Gould, and Warner all illuminate various facets of the rhetorical struggle going on within the newspapers and pamphlets of the day, offering valuable insight into what was happening and why. However, even as they discuss a major outlet for the various voices in the discussion surrounding the war, they still leave out any discussion of the sermons, which pastors typically published through the newspapers or in pamphlet form, an oversight that leaves out a major influence on public sentiments during the period.

Founding Documents and Writings

The second key area of secular scholarship regarding written rhetoric focuses on the Founding documents and writings as extensions of revolutionary principles blended with an attempt to temper the destructiveness of revolution. These studies focus on aspects of the Constitution, writings of Founders, and the Declaration of Independence as their primary written sources. Here, there is a shift away from studying the rhetorical war before the Revolution to the way that the new country handled the rhetorical problems that war created. As such, there is a bit of a disconnect between the scholars mentioned above and the ones covered below, but it will be helpful for the reader to consider these sources in light of the previous stances established. Those stances in rhetoric during the period before the physical war created the problems and act as a framework for the issues that the scholars below are discussing. Without understanding the rhetorical scene detailed through the review of sources earlier, it would be impossible to grasp how the same Revolutionaries who fought the war then had to turn around and deal with a host of problems caused by the very same sentiments they fought to foster.

The major focus of scholarly discussions surrounding this period is the rhetoric of violence in the Revolution. Given that the battle was mainly rhetorical in nature until 1776, it makes sense that most of these works center on a discussion of rhetorical violence in the war's aftermath rather than physical violence alone.

For the new republic to survive, it was imperative to curb the violence, both rhetorically and physically. The same principles that roused the people to fight for independence, if not tempered and refined, could be turned to further uprising against the new government just as it had been against Britain. In the early years before the Constitutional Convention was called, this

would certainly have been devastating, as the Continental Congress, under the Articles of Confederation, did not have the power to suppress such a revolt on any legal grounds. Even had the violence not led to new forms of tyranny, continued violence based on revolutionary principles would lead to chaos and the harm of the citizens of the new country. Because this was one of the biggest issues facing the Revolutionaries and therefore one of the issues most covered in the primary sources, scholars often turn to examining how the Founders dealt with this issue rhetorically.

Two intriguing studies on this issue are Jeremy Engels' *Reading the Riot Act: Rhetoric, Psychology, and Counter-Revolutionary Discourse in Shay's Rebellion, 1786-1787* and David Randall's *The Rhetoric of Violence, the Public Sphere, and the Second Amendment*. The two examine two different areas of this issue, but both focus on how the new country shaped the structure of the country and dealt with the matter of violence to keep revolts from occurring continually and also to ensure that liberty was protected. This balancing act is revealed clearly in Shay's Rebellion, the focus of Engels' work, and the Second Amendment, Randall's area of the discussion. While both are seemingly at odds with one another—Engels focuses on the suppression of a revolt in the new nation and Randall focuses on the enshrining of the possibility of revolt and violence—the two partially overlap to create the unique rhetorical solution to the problem revolutionary violent sentiment posed to the new republic.

Engels' article examines the short revolt that took place just after the Revolutionary War ended. He clearly defines the rhetorical problem as the necessity of “[demonstrating] that the American Revolution was an unavoidable revolution, not a disobedient rebellion, for revolution connoted a natural cycle akin to the revolution of the heavens, whereas rebellion was unlawful, wicked, and worthy of the swift retort of the King's militia” (Engels, 63). This required a great

deal of rhetorical groundwork and debate in the decades prior to the war, and such a shift could not be redirected overnight. Once one revolution could be proven natural and lawful on a certain set of arguments, such as the presence of tyranny, the same argument could be applied to any similar revolution so long as the list of grievances was sufficient. Unfortunately, this is precisely what occurred in Shay's Rebellion with the rhetorical stance taken by those pressing the revolt.

Engels states that "just 10 years after Jefferson immortalized this revolutionary logic in the Declaration, it was repeated in Shay's Rebellion, which erupted in 1786—1787 when backcountry Massachusetts farmers (calling themselves "Regulators") who were economically abused by government policies favoring Boston elites marched on rural courts to bar the entry of judges and juries" (Engels 64). The Founders, all of whom had lived through the Revolution and most of whom had also fought in it, lined up on either side of the conflict. Some, like Jefferson, argued that the rebellion was perfectly natural and that violence had a positive effect on the political situation in America. Others, like Washington, roundly condemned the revolutionaries. This group of elites "tried to limit the right of citizens like Daniel Shays to take up arms against the state. Those who were eager to consolidate power in a Federal Constitution thus used Shay's Rebellion to advance their cause" (Engels 65). Massachusetts's government agreed with those like Washington and responded first with rhetoric intended to make the new revolutionaries seem insane and then with violence to repress the revolt.

It is clear in studying this rebellion that it, like the Revolutionary War, was a rhetorical fight as much as it was a physical one, and this time, the State won out. The revolt and the government's claims that those perpetrating it were violent, insane men frightened the citizens and convinced many of them that it was necessary to quell the violent rhetoric that had been so pivotal during the Revolution in favor of something more orderly. While the government's

violence prevailed and those defrauded were not, ultimately, given the justice they deserved, Engels does point out that some good came of an otherwise heinous abuse of a group of rightfully angered, protesting people. He considers the event pivotal because “it exposed the instabilities of democratic mob rule, known at the time as ‘mobocracy,’ thus furthering the American quest for rational, non-violent government,” (Engel 65) moving the people toward “the reformulation of popular politics around the practice, and ideal, of reasoned debate” (Engel 65). However, Engel also makes a note about what else it demonstrated about reason and violence, arguing that many oppose reason and violence but Shay’s Rebellion “demonstrates that reason is often violent, and that violence can be rational” (Engel 65). The rebellion showed that at times it was reasonable to use force when facing an unreasonable exercise of power, something that should have been readily evident to people from the Revolutionary War, but had yet to be fully realized. It also exposed the importance of striking a balance between restraining revolutionary sentiment and keeping the government from tyrannizing the people. Randall notes that this conundrum was solved by shifting the “locus of sovereign rhetorical violence from the Leviathanic state to the people” (Randall 127) and then combining it with “the newer Lockean tradition of rights” (Randall 127) to settle the tension by appointing the armed militia as the method by which the people could preserve their freedoms and rights under the new government (Randall 127). He offers the Second Amendment as the answer that was found to the difficult rhetorical situation that Engels notes Shay’s Rebellion brought to the forefront of the discussion around the time of the Constitution’s writing.

As Engels unfolds the rest of the paper, he focuses on the rhetorical stance of the Massachusetts government, a gap in the study of this event he is seeking to close. The paper discusses the government’s strategy to turn the public against the revolutionaries, a strategy that

ironically mimicked those Britain had employed against the colonies only a few short years earlier. Despite the tragedy that unfolded and the government's prevailing over citizens who had been wrongfully used by that government, Engels demonstrates how this event impacted the second Founding document of America—the Constitution. This is significant to the discussion because it assists us in understanding how it was possible to shift the area of rhetoric we will be studying in this paper from a resounding condemnation of tyranny and call to uprising to a call to protect against tyranny and the banning of uprisings. It explains how the Constitution can contain many of the themes and rhetorical language we will study here and yet simultaneously condemn revolution, the very thing which made its writing possible. Because of Shay's Rebellion, the Constitutional Convention members, with the exception of a few notable figures like Jefferson, were convinced of the need to reverse or at least soften the rhetorical stance Jefferson's Declaration of Independence had taken. Engels notes, "For the new federal Constitution to criminalize the tradition of revolution enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, the members of the Constitutional Convention had to create a government that reserved the right to punish another Daniel Shays if he arose" (Engels 81). They achieved this by turning back to Thomas Paine and his later arguments after publishing *Common Sense* in 1776. Paine had argued "that revolutions were problematic because they tended to force individuals to 'lose sight of morality, of humanity and of the theology that is true'" (Engels 82). To achieve a balance between the tyranny of a single despot and the tyranny of the mob that often resulted from revolutions, Paine argued that "former revolutionaries lost their state-toppling powers the minute they entered into representative government" (Engels 82-83).

Engels makes a point to note that not all of the Framers were impressed with this train of events, however. Jefferson, in particular, felt that the Framers' preoccupation with the possible

dangers of further revolution following Shay's Rebellion made too great an impression on the writing of the Constitution, and whether this is true or not, the Bill of Rights balanced out the suppression of a means to buck off tyranny should it arise in the new regime. He is joined, evidently, by Madison who was the mind mainly responsible for the Bill of Rights, in which he defends the people's vehicle to rhetorical violence to prevent government usurpations and tyranny. Randall also highlights this while pointing out the balancing point to Paine's later arguments with the use of political philosophers from former generations to deal with the rhetorical problem of violence, but he argues that the Founders used Locke rather than Paine to simultaneously criminalize revolt and also force the government to fear the people. He points out that "Sidney and Locke both had argued that the operation of the free state depends on the people inducing fear in the government, but how was this to be done? The answer lay in the Anglo-American militia tradition" (Randall 135). The nature of Paine's tradition allowed the Framers to criminalize revolt without intense public protest, while the earlier writings of Paine and the writings of Sidney and Locke gave them a way to retain the possibility for the people to act as a powerful warning to the tyrant that he could not proceed to enslave the people unchecked. The framers of the Constitution took a blend of Paine, Sidney, and Locke, and in the end, were successful in defending the movement to criminalize popular violence, a move that stabilized the republic.

However, even though they criminalized popular violence, the Bill of Rights, which was added to the Constitution to gain the support of the opposition, also enshrined a right to bear arms and for states to have militias. This is an area that Engels does not address. How can one reconcile the right to bear arms, which was added for the sole purpose of allowing the people to defend themselves from the predations of government, with the movement to criminalize revolt?

The two seem incredibly at odds, but once again, the rhetoric of violence comes into play, this time with the possibility and threat of violence as a tool to constrain overreach from government. While Engels focuses on Shay's Rebellion and its influence on the Founding, David Randall makes the seeming contradiction between criminalizing revolt and defense against tyranny in his paper *The Rhetoric of Violence, the Public Sphere, and the Second Amendment*. Taking up the issue that Shay's Rebellion demonstrated, which was, as Engels pointed out "that reason is often violent, and that violence can be rational" (Engels 65), Randall argues that violence and rhetoric can go hand in hand in preserving freedom, an argument he makes on the grounds of rhetorical violence as opposed to realized, physical violence.

While acknowledging the issues facing the new country, much as Engels does, Randall believes that the Framers had more of a balance than Jefferson's quote in Engels' paper would imply. He states that the Second Amendment was the answer to avoiding the tyranny that the outlawing of rebellion, which Engels discusses in his paper, would tend towards if left to stand alone. In effect, the Second Amendment acts as the balance to the movement to criminalize revolt in order to ensure the government would not easily be able to take advantage of such criminalization to enact tyranny over a defenseless people.

He argues that thinkers like Algernon Sidney and James Madison, "who were sensitive to and influenced by the rhetorical elements of Machiavelli and Hobbes as Habermas's preferred philosophes were not" (Randall 127), shifted "sovereign rhetorical violence from the Leviathanic state to the people, and, in combination with an appeal to the newer Lockean tradition of rights, specified the armed militia as the essential means by which the sovereign people exercised this rhetorical violence so as to maintain a free regime" (Randall 127). Key to the argument for both criminalizing revolt and enshrining rhetorical violence in the Constitution via the Second

Amendment is the point that the violence need not be literal, physical violence. Randall, just like Engels, is speaking on the rhetorical violence used to subdue one side or the other. In Shay's Rebellion, the violent rhetoric was used to gain the support of the people to subdue a rightfully aggrieved minority, and in the case of the Second Amendment, it is used to check the government and make them afraid of the people. Randall, therefore, argues that the violence is rhetorical because it is not a physical display of force but a forceful persuasion that the violence is both possible and likely if power is abused by those put into authority by the people.

With the Second Amendment in place and a firm foundation on the principle that the people were the wellspring of any government's authority, the people could take those in power out of power just as well as they had put their rulers into it, and the violence of rhetoric as a persuasive tool was considered a powerful means to that end. As Randall argues, "[f]rom the time of rhetoric's classic origins, the philosophical critique of rhetoric generally characterized it as a quasi-violent abuse of human judgment...Rhetoric was characteristically conceived of as being coercive as such, with a force that hovered near to more open violence" (Randall 129). The Second Amendment, Randall argues, was intended to cause the tyrant to fear the people's power enough to restrain their own behavior before violence was necessary to right the system.

Revolutionary violence was both criminalized in one form in the Constitution and enshrined in another in the Bill of Rights. Of course, such a tension does create a difficulty in discussing the issue of instilling fear into the government through the people's ability to seize the power from the government. This "discourse, of course, smacked of treason, and there is usually a guarded air in the relevant discussion (e.g., Fletcher 1698, 24-26, 35-36, 43-44). It was in Revolutionary America, therefore, that the defense of the armed militia received its sharpest articulation" (Randall 136). Naturally, after the criminalization of revolt, that guarded air

returned to the discussion in the colonies, though the people still held to the right to bear arms fiercely, believing firmly in Patrick Henry's warning "'Guard with jealous attention the public liberty. Suspect everyone who approaches that jewel. Unfortunately, nothing will preserve it but downright force. Whenever you give up that force, you are ruined' (cited in Williams 2003, 51)" (Randall 136). This leads Randall to the conclusion "that the Second Amendment drew on a fear of popular rebellion, exercised by the militia, as a means of deterring the American government from succumbing to the temptations of tyranny and thereby allowing the simultaneous delegation of sovereign violence to that government without danger to the continuing operation of a free republic" (Randall 138). It is clear that though Engels' note about Jefferson's distaste for the Framers' concerns with preventing revolution in the Constitution has its place and validity, the Bill of Rights and its amendments were the answer to the imbalance Jefferson noticed (Engels 81-81). Jefferson had felt, like most of the Anti-Federalists that "the Constitution was a complete rejection of the spirit of 1776" (Engels 82) because it rejected the "popular, anti-government violence displayed in Shay's Rebellion" (Engels 82). But with the second amendment, the Constitution's blow to what had been accomplished in 1776 was softened as the amendment was intended to embrace the violence promoted by the Revolution to "[harness] it toward republican ends" (Randall 140) and to translate "the exercise of violence by the armed citizenry of the militia into the *universal* and *individual* right to bear arms (Scalia 2008).¹⁵" (Randall 140). This important amendment became the backbone of the people's defense against tyranny; an armed people is never so easy to subdue as one with no defense left them. Through putting the Second Amendment in place, the Founders ensured that government would check its own tendency to abuse power out of fear of what a well-armed, vigilant people might do if it did not.

Randall ends his discussion by emphasizing the interesting point that it is not necessary that the militia be capable of launching a revolution. Like Engels, he does not intend that the reader focus on the physical violence itself. The rhetorical violence is the more important point as it was both the vehicle to government suppression of revolt and to forcing that same government to stay its hand for fear of the people's retribution. Far from requiring the capacity for literal violence, he says that "[w]hat has mattered, rather, is the rhetorical power of the Second Amendment—its power to influence public opinion, its power to make the people think of themselves as fearsome and to make the government to think of itself as afraid" (Randall 143) and that "[i]t is our fond passion to construe uncertain words, not guns nor any other certainty, which makes us free" (Randall 144). Randall's discussion of this topic hits on an important point at the end, a point that is vital to the following discussion. It was ideas and words that changed the nation, not the physical revolt. The physical revolt became necessary after the words had changed the colonies and the other would not let them go. Randall examines the end result of the change that these rhetorical shifts through verbal battles. This paper seeks to examine them as they occurred before and during the war to better explain how they ended up at the point where Randall's paper picks up.

In this manner then, as the documents from the period are considered and the thread of violence in them examined, it becomes clear that there is a tension between the form of violence criminalized and the form preserved for the purpose of creating a protective force behind the liberties enjoyed in America today. This was a key part of what made the documents so unusual and special at the time. It is also this thread of violence—rhetorical and physical—that was able to rouse the people to action and still holds the power to ignite action again.

Religious Studies

On the other side of the discussion, religious scholars are studying the influence of various religious aspects and movements on the wider political movement in British America at the time. This study focuses mainly on the pastors, sermons, and other religiously based movements going on just prior to the Revolution. It does not have solid overlap with the discussion of sources above in most cases because it focuses on an area of the broader discussion that those scholars have largely ignored and, as mentioned in the introduction to the literature review, largely ignores the area that the other scholars have covered.

Some of these studies also examine how these religious aspects intersected with the politics. This is the closest the two studies seem to come to intersecting, though the bias is often clear in the effort made to point everything back to the religious aspects, thereby excluding an admission of the importance of the secular ones. Rarely do these studies discuss the two side-by-side, which makes it hard—if not impossible—to connect them with each other.

This would be less of a problem if there was a decent blending in the secular field of the two in order to make up for the propensity of religious studies to, with good reason, focus on the religious aspects alone. Unfortunately, this is not the case, and the study in this field tends to be very narrowly focused on the body of literature being ignored in the secular field. Fortunately, when these studies are brought together with the political ones in the secular field, the picture becomes much clearer. This study aims to begin doing so by first orienting the reader in the broader discussion from both groups and then by drawing the reader into a closer examination of the two sets of primary sources being used by each in order to see the two side-by-side and thereby understand the commonalities better. In this section, there will not be a great deal of

reference back to the secular sources since the two discussions have remained largely separate. Studies that do overlap the two a bit more will be in their own section as examples of studies that did overlap the two sides of the discussion well.

The Clergy

The clergy are the first major area of study in the religious scholarly. Both historical and rhetorical scholars have made close study of the clergy's influence on the political scene throughout the many years prior to and during the Revolution. The studies cover everything from the influence of the Great Awakening to the roots of New England clergy's influence in Puritanism.

One article by Frank Dean Gifford, titled *The Influence of the Clergy on American Politics from 1763 to 1776*, provides an excellent survey of the studies in this field by tracing the history of the clergy's influence on politics, particularly in New England where most of the clergy supporting the Revolution were preaching. He says that "[t]he position of the clergy in New England during the eighteenth century was one of great power and influence. Although they had lost some of the peculiar strength of their office during the very early years of the settlements in Massachusetts, yet there is abundant evidence that they were leaders and spokesmen for their communities" (Gifford 105). They held such influence because of their education, their part in the community as teachers, and their travels which allowed them to become "far better acquainted with events in the outside world than their parishioners" (Gifford 105). Gifford makes an interesting note here about sermons during the period, which connects back to Cleary's study of newspaper influence. He quotes Professor Van Tyne, stating, "'It must be remembered,' says Professor Van Tyne, 'that the pulpit was in that day the most direct and

effectual way of reaching the masses—far outrivalling the newspaper, then only in its infancy” (Gifford 105). This may be somewhat accounted for by the role clergy played in civic life, a role that far outweighed newspapers at the time. Returning to Tyne, Gifford’s paper points to the reason for that prominent role, stating that ““This [preaching a sermon as part of the election day ceremonies] was not a mere compliment to religion, for after 1750 certainly the sermons were listened to as a source of political instruction” (Gifford 105). In fact, the sermons enjoyed a broader reach at times than newspapers because ““by legislative resolution they were published in pamphlet form, and were scattered throughout the colony, becoming in some cases a sort of text of civil rights”” (Gifford 105). Because of this, Gifford argues that ““a study of these election sermons will make it very clear that the clergy used these special opportunities to the full” (Gifford 105) to espouse civic theories, the necessity of resisting tyranny, and the belief that government’s power is granted by the people.

In New England, especially, the clergy held a special role politically and rhetorically from the years of 1763 to 1774. “When we come to consider the part played by the clergy during the years from 1763 to 1774 we must begin with New England where, as Van Tyne says, ‘the political leadership, as well as moral guidance was beyond question with the clergy, and only the commandments of God took precedence over their teachings’” (Gifford 107). Gifford’s point here is extremely important to the study of pulpit rhetoric broadly or specifically because it reminds readers that the position the clergy held put them in a position to make arguments on politics to the general public and be heard rather than dismissed. It means that more weight has to be given to the sermons, particularly in New England, as a barometer of where the people were rhetorically because most of the political and theological positions held by laymen began

with the pulpit, not with universities, the press, or philosophers—however influential these three became or were on given individuals involved in the war or the Founding.

These clergy members were well-versed in the ideas of Locke, Sydney, and others of their nature, and they disseminated the same concepts, intertwined with theology, to the people from the pulpit. Many of the writers discussed above in Randall's paper on the Second Amendment were highly influential on the clergy before they became influential on the generation of the Revolution. Further, the clergy were also closely connected to the revolutionaries' political leaders, as Gifford notes. He points out that "Andrew Eliot, along with Jonathan Mayhew, Charles Chauncey and Samuel Cooper, formed a group of very able and influential clergy about Boston who were friends of James Otis, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, John Adams and other leaders" (Gifford 108). These men often influenced the ideas and direction of their secular friends, as was the case with Mayhew, who was the original of the Boston Committee that Warner discusses in his paper. He suggested a committee of that sort to Otis, and Otis made sure it happened upon considering the idea and finding it to be useful.

Nor were these well-known men the only ones with friendships and ties to the political and civil leaders of the day. Even those without close ties to the political leaders were preaching the same message—though admittedly with a great deal more overt theology espoused in the message—on natural rights and law, government, and resisting tyranny. One such example, Reverend Jonas Clark from Lexington, "was a country minister yet learned from his studies of Locke, Milton, Hoadly and Sydney. He is said to have preached Sunday after Sunday and in many a town meeting the doctrines of natural rights, constitutional government and the duty of resistance to tyranny. ... It is well to remember that such men as these clergy were said to be able to present Locke's theories more clearly than Locke himself" (Gifford 109). Again, this is a

significant point of contribution to scholarship on the rhetorical movement because Gifford uncovers and illuminates the reality that the ministers were well-versed if not well-trained in rhetorical and oratorical arts and were responsible for spreading the ideas of many of the influential philosophers of the day to the common man. They were not simply expounding on theology as a sub-study of philosophy; they were expounding on philosophy more broadly with the sub-study of theology blended seamlessly into the discussion.

It is important to note, however, that there is some dissent within the religious community. While Gifford is representative of the tone of many religious scholars, not all in the religious scholarly circles agree that the religious aspects of the war were *the* influence on the situation. Frank Lambert is one such example. He is not writing a lengthy piece himself to argue for the blending of influences from both sides of the study, so he does not precisely fit with those who are doing blended studies, but he is an important voice in the debate because he reminds us that there is nuance to this study, something which could easily be forgotten and missed in reading an article like Gifford's. His article *Religion in the Public Square: Interactions Between the Sacred and the Secular in Colonial and Revolutionary America* examines two different scholarly works that aim to measure the depth of the influence on politics by the clergy. He opens by discussing the struggle to study this area of rhetoric, saying that "if one gauges influence by rhetoric, then there is a strong case to be made that religion has, from the beginning of the republic, shaped public affairs..." (Lambert 595). He acknowledges that there is disagreement to this from "liberal and secular academic historians" who "question the change that religion effects in the marketplace and the political arena. They point out that the greater change is that of America shaping religion rather than that of religion shaping America" (Lambert 595). However, he rejects both the concept that religion was shaped by America and

the concept that religion was the only major thing that shaped America. The difficulty of the middle ground, as a result, is in determining how much influence one had on the other.

Examining the primary sources proves that there is a measure of influence, but Lambert chooses to examine two writers who refused to go along with either group's desire to give religion too much weight or too little based on their preferred narrative. He points to Mark Valeri and Thomas Kidd, noting that they argue "that religion has had profound influence on American life," (Lambert 595) but "acknowledge that the influence between religion and American culture is bidirectional" (Lambert 595) by focusing the discussion "on interaction between the sacred and secular," (Lambert 595) interactions that they see as fluid. "Both," says Lambert, "challenge the idea that secularization has pushed religion to the sidelines. Both refute the notion that religion is strictly private and has no public role in American life. Neither panders to those who wish to rewrite the story of religion in America in search of a usable past" (Lambert 595). He, like these two authors, agrees that the answer lies somewhere between the two groups' partisan arguments. He examines the scholarship of these two authors particularly because of his own conviction that much of the scholarship on both sides unfairly leaves the other out, a position that this paper also takes in its attempt to draw the two back together where they rightfully belong. His work is a review of two authors left out of the narrative rather than an explicit examination of this period's rhetoric, and he interacts very little with the ideas represented earlier by Gifford given that his piece is focused mostly on authors who blend the sources in a way that Gifford does not and as such, he only briefly touches on sources like Gifford by noting that he feels they, like many secular sources, fail to treat the narrative in a balanced, honest way. Still, though there may not be a great deal of overlap, I felt it was important to include it because he is one of the few scholars I discovered who was advocating a blend or a drawing together of the two fields

where they are traditionally at odds and one of the few voices that dissented from the popular approach that most religious scholars seem to take.

Religious Studies on Political Figures

While many sources focus on the connections between pastors and politics, others, like Wade Williams, argue that the two were intertwined far beyond the connections between pastors and political figures. Williams does not argue that religion is not a key influence, but he shifts the focus from the writings and sermons of pastors to the political figures themselves for study. Williams' article *Religion, Science, and Rhetoric in Revolutionary America: The Case of Dr. Benjamin Rush* focuses on Benjamin Rush, one of the Founders, in an attempt to demonstrate how religion and rhetoric impacted a member of that group. He, like the others already examined, is seeking to establish religion's influence but goes about it by demonstrating its presence and impact in the life of a man who was a key figure in the developing rhetorical scene of early America. Williams argues that Rush, "through his own writings and the work of his son, James," (Williams 55) was "instrumental in defining the nascent science of speech pathology during the first half of the nineteenth-century" (Williams 55). This examination of a rhetorical figure who operates in both worlds is crucial to the discussion because it opens up a field of study that is often left unexplored: political figures who were also closely connected with religious figures and movements or trained in ministry. This paper examines the writings of John Witherspoon, another pivotal figure who straddled the line between the two just as Rush did. His writings impacted both secular and religious fields rhetorically, not just one, though Williams focuses on a figure who mainly impacted the rhetorical field of America on a broad scale rather than specifically in a political or religious way.

Williams goes on to develop his argument for Rush's importance as a key part of both religious and political movements by detailing the tension between science and religion in Rush's life. As a Founder, Rush was a crucial part of the work to establish the new system, but he was also deeply religious, and Williams argues that the two worked alongside each other in Rush's life, though there was often a tension between competing ideas and rhetorical positions. He says that "Rush's religious education, though seemingly at odds with his later training in Enlightenment science, provided an important foundation for his subsequent ideas about language, voice, and authority" (Williams 56), ideas which would be a part of his influence in defining speech pathology later in life.

He argues that "[f]ocusing on an individual such as Rush as a register allows historians to observe more immediately the cultural uses of rhetoric, the ways that individuals encountered, synthesized and utilized coexisting—and often competing—assumptions about language to fashion identities, and negotiate social realities at specific historical moments" (Williams 56). In the same way that the earlier scholars use the pastors as a register for religion in rhetoric thanks to their uniquely influential positions, Williams argues for using Rush to offer insight into the cultural uses of rhetoric and believes that religion was a large part of who Rush was as that register for study. "Such a stance [using an individual as a register to study cultural uses of rhetoric]," Williams says, "allows historians to understand how individuals and communities utilize the systems of rhetoric" (Williams 56). Others that this paper examines, such as John Witherspoon or Jefferson, might also be said to show a similar cultural use of rhetoric for both political and cultural ends, though neither man shows the same level of tension between science and religion that Rush displays as both adhered more closely to one or the other with the second taking a complimentary or secondary position.

The combination of religion, science, and rhetoric with Scottish Enlightenment ideals, which Rush learned during his studies at the University of Edinburgh, were found clearly in his writings on science and religion, and they paved the way for Enlightenment philosophy to make its way into the national discourse leading into the Revolution. For this reason, Williams views him as such an important register for the use of rhetoric in the period, particularly given his involvement in defining the rhetorical scene and his part in politics. Such individuals as Rush played a key role in shaping the rhetoric and the thought of the new nation, and Williams' paper is a strong contribution to the examination of such pivotal figures. This paper also seeks to examine similar figures through their writings to establish how they influenced the views of the times and what the nature of their rhetoric was, but it does not focus on the figures themselves. Williams' paper is somewhat unique in the field of rhetoric for examining a figure as a rhetorical register or measuring stick rather than the figure's writings more particularly as the register. The earlier scholars do, in some ways, use the figures and writings they cover as barometers of thought at the time, but they do not treat those figures as a register of the development of rhetoric in a specific area in quite the same way as Williams does either.

Sources Examining Both Secular and Religious Rhetoric and Influences

Here, I want to take a moment to examine two sources from my studies that did not fit in with either group in singularly focusing on one set of sources to the exclusion of the other. While such sources do seem rare, they can be found, and the two below are excellent examples of the sort of scholarship this paper promotes and seeks to explore. Both scholars seek to blend religious and secular rhetorical studies together to examine the parallels, something that this

study also seeks to do. They also both focus on Scripture more broadly as a tool to make rhetorical points more persuasive or clear.

John Thomas Scott's article *On God's Side: The Problem of Submission in American Revolutionary Rhetoric* points out that the war efforts faced a significant rhetorical problem because advocating for revolt was a position the people saw as anti-Biblical and anti-Christian. John Adams strikes on this point in his letter to Hezekiah Niles on February 13, 1818.

While the king and all in authority under him were believed to govern in justice and mercy, according to the laws and constitution derived to them from the God of nature and transmitted to them by their ancestors, they thought themselves bound to pray for the king and queen and all the royal family, and all in authority under them, as ministers ordained of God for their good... (Adams 1)

Of course, in the same sentence, Adams tells Niles that when the colonists saw that England's king had renounced all right principles of authority and was determined to destroy the "securities of their lives, liberties, and properties, they thought it their duty to pray for the continental congress and all the thirteen State congresses, &c." (Adams 1).

This leads many religious scholars to an important question: how did a people who believed so strongly in submission to authority as ministers God had ordained go from submission to revolution? This is, in part, addressed in this paper as an examination is made of the rhetorical language used to advocate against tyranny and for resistance to it, but Scott's article makes a more specific examination of the shift on a broad level rather than on the minute level that examining language and common terms might offer.

He lays the stage first by making clear the difficulties that would face the Revolutionary cause in America, addressing the gap between Adam's first statement on the people's submission to and prayers for authority and his second statement that they chose to switch loyalties to dethrone one authority and put another in its place. He focuses first on the problem that faced the colonies, stating that "submission to higher authorities came easily to most Americans in the eighteenth century; organized resistance to them did not. Despite a few well-known uprisings in the previous century, the tradition of deference and submission was not one easily swept aside" (Scott 111). In the end, however, he finds that they "swept aside conventions of submission and deference and replaced them, albeit unevenly, with notions of resistance and egalitarianism. They did not do so lightly, however, and they did not do so quietly, either" (Scott 111). Certainly, there were a multitude of voices calling for dissent and revolution, but the secular voices alone were not enough to persuade a people firmly rooted in Scripture and devoted to the principles and commands found therein. As Dreisbach points out, "The founders' frequent recurrence to the Bible in their public rhetoric reveals as much about the Bible's place in the hearts and minds of their audiences as it does about them," (Dreisbach 403) and the Bible held such a crucial role in the day-to-day lives of the people that it shaped everything from childhood primers to last wills and testaments. The language of Scripture and the principles found within it were pivotal and held enormous influence over public sentiments, something that both Scott and Dreisbach point out. In New England, especially, where sermons supporting obedience to authority had been common with a few notable exceptions in cases of immense tyranny, how could a Bible-believing people be persuaded to change their opinion of what Scripture taught? Only through the pastors, who had unparalleled authority over theological matters—particularly

in New England—and even over how the Bible should be applied to politics, could such a change be affected rhetorically.

Unfortunately, as Scott points out, few if any of the studies on how religion and politics intersected in this period focus on how they overcame the rhetorical issue of the Biblical command to submit to authorities, which the Revolutionaries were now saying ought not to be done. Most of the studies utterly fail to look at the issue, and the few that do, unfortunately including Scott's own work, fail to acknowledge that this battle rhetorically had actually been fought once already over the ocean in Britain with John Milton at the forefront of the fight against Charles Stewart. Nevertheless, Scott's paper begins to explore the issue as he finds this to be a significant concern to the study of rhetoric in the time, arguing that "[h]istorians over the course of the twentieth century examined many of the rhetorical and ideological justifications for resistance and revolution in great detail. Most of these works...rarely have included any extended discussion of how the colonists biblically dealt with the scriptural side of the tradition of submission" (Scott 111), an issue which he takes up in his paper in an attempt to bridge that gap. While he acknowledges that "[s]ome historians have focused primarily on particular groups of clergy and their role in shaping their parishioners' thought and encouraging them to action," (Scott 111), he feels that they "limited their examination of biblical rhetoric to a specific region and to a specific group: the clergy" (Scott 112). He is joined in this accusation of scholars for their failure to broaden their understanding and their works' scopes by Dreisbach, who comments that many of today's scholars fail to grasp how rhetoric used theology more generally in the way they "often described as an age of Enlightenment and rationalism in which 'the founding generation,' according to political theorist Wilson Carey McWilliams (1984, 21), 'rejected or deemphasized the Bible and Biblical rhetoric.'²" (Dreisbach 401), a characterization

of the era which is not entirely fair given that it was “sandwiched between two religious revivals known as the first and second Great Awakenings” (Dreisbach 401). Scott and Dreisbach’s assessments seem fair when the research topics of the many papers on the Revolutionary War are considered as a body. Most studies, unfortunately, missed a key area of study that was needed to understand the rhetorical shift that happened: how both secular and religious leaders used the Bible to surmount the rhetorical problem submission presented. This was a major theme in both political and religious rhetoric, not just in America—the focus of this paper—but also in Britain during the English Civil War, which provided American clergy with a rich source of argument and rhetoric to draw on concerning the issue. The theme is one that this paper examines in great detail because of its significance and the number of parallels between the two sets of sources in the colonies at the time.

Scott also addresses this area, but his focus is on demonstrating more broadly that the Bible itself was used by both groups to argue for this non-submission, rather than on examining specific parallels between sermons and secular writings. He begins by addressing the Biblical issue and specific passages creating problems the leaders and followers of the Revolution had to contend with in order to set the stage for examining the arguments and the use of Scripture by both groups. The main passages that gave the Revolutionaries the most trouble were from Romans and 1 Peter, and these passages “stared American radicals in the face in the 1760s and 1770s and stood as potential roadblocks to the burgeoning American resistance movement” (Scott 113). It is interesting to note that Scott brings up an excellent point about the nature of this struggle. Had the people of America and the leaders and followers of resistance been entirely secular figures as many secular studies seem to imply, these passages should have offered no serious difficulty at all. As Scott puts it, “the admonitions from Paul and Peter would have

carried no weight with them, and they would have swept them aside as easily as the French radicals did some two decades later” (Scott 114). Why, then, do we see such a concern with dealing with these passages in order to allow the Revolution to move forward? The simple answer is that “American culture, however, permitted no such sweeping away,” (Scott 114), and “[f]or that reason, those inclined towards resistance, cleric and laity alike, had to find a way around these passages, either by explaining them in some other way than their seeming self-evident meaning or by offering other scriptures which might countervail these two sections of sacred Christian text” (Scott 114). Some did this with more devotion to a strict reading of Scripture than others, with some even turning the passages on their heads with the argument that some passages in Scripture were understood to have limits or restrictions on them and these two were among them. Jonathan Mayhew is one of the best-known ministers to argue from this stance. However, all of them were making arguments on these passages with remarkable discernment, wit, and cunning use of rhetoric.

In order to accomplish this, they took the stance—most frequently, “that rulers should serve for the good of the people,” (Scott 115) and this concept “was singularly important to their explanation of Romans 13” (Scott 115). Indeed, a brief survey of sermons from the time reveals that most arguing on this passage taught that it could not apply to a tyrant but only to a good ruler because tyranny flew in the face of God’s commands against slavery and injustice. They argued from many different grounds, including with the use of Biblical figures’ examples, such as that of Paul—the author of Romans 13—himself, to point out that these figures did not themselves practice unlimited submission in Scripture and must not, therefore, be advocating that in their own writings.

However, Scott does not end his conversation there. He goes a step further to indicate how this religious rhetoric was found within secular writings as well, albeit in less overtly theological terms. This is where he challenges the scholars who leave religion out of the picture when studying the political and secular writers of the day. He does not settle for merely proving that this was an issue everyone had to confront. Instead, he goes the additional space needed to prove that secular writers embraced the challenge with Scriptural language as much as the religious ones do, a challenge to secular studies that fail to acknowledge or openly dismiss religion's role in the lives and arguments of these figures. He states that "secular writers, both in the colonies and in England, pursued this overturning of Romans 13 in the public press," (Scott 116) and offers the example of Dan Foster, who, in his piece *A Short Essay on Civil Government*, "contended that the civil power referred to in that passage was only power in the abstract and so the commandment of obedience did not apply to all rulers in all situations" (Scott 116). This paralleled the exact same shift in argumentation found in sermons from the period. Both secular and religious writers had a solid command of Scripture sufficient to allow them to make a theological and philosophical argument against interpreting these problematic passages as meaning submission ought to be unlimited even in the face of tyranny. This is a strong argument against ignoring religion in studies of secular figures from the period, and it is certainly a strong rebuke to modern historians who actively seek to distort the story by claiming that religion had no part in the Founding or the Revolution. To modern rhetoric scholars, it is a challenge to avoid putting blinders on and to avoid failing to study and acknowledge this important aspect of the rhetorical shifts in the colonies. As this paper seeks to demonstrate, the pastors were undoubtedly instrumental in establishing those shifts since it happened in the pulpit a bit ahead of the same arguments appearing in secular rhetoric, but it is undeniable that Biblical arguments were being

made by clergy and laity alike and being done eloquently by both, and as Scott points out here, ignoring it means creating a hole in our understanding of the period.

Dreisbach follows in Scott's footsteps in part as it seeks to establish the influence of the Bible itself on political rhetoric. However, he takes a broader focus than either Scott or the other scholars mentioned in the religious section because his focus is not on the clergy or on how secular writers and clergy alike shifted around a Biblical problem, but on how the Bible, standing on its own, was used by political leaders to argue their position. However, his study is most like Scott's in tone because he also seeks to go beyond the clergy to establish that secular writers were using the Bible and Scripture in their arguments. His abstract makes it clear that the paper is intended to examine all uses of the Bible, not just the ones that were truly theological. He also brings some balance to the discussion by recognizing that some uses were "strictly literary and cultural" or "stylistic" rather than being theological in nature. (Dreisbach 401), an aim that results in his entering the same area as this paper does in attempting to establish the nature of the rhetorical language used regardless of the nature rather than attempting to credit that nature to only one set of influences from the times. It also allows him to enter the discussion in the secular realm nicely because he acknowledges that some uses were purely rhetorical or ornamental in nature rather than being theological uses, and this makes his work more agreeable to those seeking to study purely the secular influences of the day.

He opens with a critique of present scholarship on both sides of the debate, just as Scott did, noting his disappointment with their lack of work in his area of study and acknowledging a variety of reasons—both intentional and unintentional—that may lead to the imbalance. While he acknowledges that, in comparison to the revival eras sandwiching the period, the rhetoric's Biblical language is muted, which might be the reason why some scholars claim that the Bible

had no influence on the period of our Founding, he still argues that “late nineteenth-century Americans remained biblically literate, and contrary to the claims of modern scholarship, biblical language and themes continued to permeate both the private expressions and public pronouncements of those who shaped the new nation and its civic institutions” (Dreisbach 401-402). For this reason, he feels that modern secular scholarship often gets this point wrong by downplaying or removing altogether any admission of the important place Scripture held in the rhetoric of and lives of the Founders. This critique echoes that of Scott, who noted that “[s]ome [studies], like Bernard Bailey’s groundbreaking *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* or Pauline Meier’s impressive follow-up, *From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776*, made only scant reference to Biblical rhetoric in American propaganda” (Scott 111). Both Scott and Dreisbach note that key scholars from the secular field downplay or fail to acknowledge Biblical rhetoric’s place in the developing scenes of the Revolution, a concerning issue that both seek to address in various ways.

Nor is Dreisbach without evidence of his claim that such lack in mention of Biblical rhetoric’s place leaves out a key influence on the various Founders. He points to several obvious examples—men like Witherspoon, Patrick Henry, Samuel Adams, Sherman, or Jay who were all among the many Founders who were openly religious—but also demonstrates later that even those like Paine or Franklin used Biblical language in their rhetoric, evidence that leaving the Bible out of the narrative is a failing that is at best an oversight and at worst dishonest. In support of his argument, Dreisbach notes, “Many founders were students of the Bible, and a few even wrote Bible commentaries and learned discourses on theology and Christian doctrine and practice⁵” (Dreisbach 402). This seems borne out by examinations made of the frequency of

various sources' citations or appearances in writings from the period. Note the following survey on American political literature and the frequency with which various sources were cited.

Following an extensive survey of American political literature from 1760 to 1805, political scientist Donald S. Lutz (1992) reported that the Bible was cited more frequently than any European writer or even any European school of thought, such as the Enlightenment or Whig intellectual traditions. Even though he excluded from his sample most documents, including many political sermons, that included no citations to secular political thinkers (greatly suppressing the number of references to the Bible in this literature), the Bible accounted for about a third of all citations. (Dreisbach 402)

This would certainly seem to indicate that Dreisbach's argument that Scripture was used in founding rhetoric is one with merit, but Dreisbach is not content merely to argue that Scripture was a main underpinning of the rhetoric of the time. Like Scott, he aims to prove more than that, and he does so by demonstrating the various ways secular writers used Biblical references, showing in doing so that they used it both theologically and stylistically. Here, he takes an approach very similar to the one that Scott did, and this lends a much more balanced and truthful view to the discussion, one that neither gives religion and religious figures all the credit for the war's end results nor focuses entirely on secular influences to the exclusion or explaining away of any religious influences.

To achieve this, he starts at the cultural influence the Bible itself exerted on America in those days, noting that "the Bible (and Christianity) was among the most important sources of cultural influence in the colonial and early national periods. It shaped the language. It also informed education, letters, law, and politics" (Dreisbach 403). In fact, Dreisbach states, "[t]he founding generation wove biblical language, often without quotation marks or explicit

references, into their ordinances, official proclamations, judicial opinions, political discourses, private correspondence, and last wills and testaments” (Dreisbach 403). If there is so much Scriptural language in the writings of the founding generation, though, the question must be asked: why do so few secular historians and scholars seem to acknowledge, recognize, or credit the Bible as the source of so much of their rhetorical language? Dreisbach believes that it might be that this pervasive use of Scripture is overlooked by modern scholars due to a lack of knowledge about the King James Version Bible, causing scholars to be incapable of seeing the references riddling the writings of the time, and due to a general sense that “a focus on the God of the Bible and religion divisive or even offensive to twenty-first century, secular sensibilities” (Dreisbach 403). By way of example, he notes a particularly offensive passage for modern readers that comes from Washington’s farewell address. Washington there warns that “that anyone who labored to subvert a public role for religion and morality could not call himself a patriot (Washington 1931, 35:229)” (Dreisbach 403). Such a view would make most modern politicians look very little like the patriots Washington imagines, and his views were far from the only or even the most controversial views. Other Founders advocated for state support of Protestant denominations or the restriction of civil and religious liberties for “Catholics, Unitarians, atheists, and Jews” (Dreisbach 403), sentiments which blow away any secular notion of the modern conception of separation of church and state being grounded in what our Founders advocated or believed. With quotes, beliefs, and advocacies like these riddling the writings of Founders, it may be little wonder that some scholars, though not ignorant of the Bible’s place in the rhetoric of the time, choose to downplay, ridicule, or simply ignore its presence as a major influence.

Ignored or not, however, the Bible was used in a whole host of ways, and Dreisbach's study proves its use to make rhetorical arguments of many different natures, both overtly religious and merely stylistic. This paper operates in a similar area of the discussion to Dreisbach's in that it examines the language of religious works and secular ones for the sake of establishing commonalities and themes, but like Dreisbach, I do not seek to establish the commonalities as definite proof that every influence was religious, nor do I seek to establish every commonality as resulting from religious sentiment or intent on the part of Founders or secular writers. My goal, like Dreisbach's, is to examine the commonalities for what they are, doing my best to indicate where the influence genuinely derived in part or in whole from a religious source and where it was merely in line with the religious source.

Conclusions on the Research Reviewed and Furthering the Discussion

First, I have concluded that there are very clear parallels and connections between the political rhetoric found in printed sermons from the period prior to the Revolutionary War and during the war itself and the political rhetoric found in the documents usually considered "secular" political writings.

For the purposes of this paper, I do make a distinction between political rhetoric from clergy and political rhetoric from prominent political figures among the laity, though I have also concluded in my research, both primary and secondary, that many of these supposedly secular figures were themselves far from what we would deem secular today. Many had religious training, some even had ministerial and theological training, and the rest gained a foundationally Biblical worldview through training for law or other professions thanks to the focus of the major schools at the time on training them to uphold Christianity and the Gospel in whatever profession

they undertook. Only a very few came close to being “secular” figures as most scholars define it today, and even those two—Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson—were still far more religious than secular scholars give them credit for being, though it must be admitted that both had some very untraditional religious perspectives for their time.

However, I feel it fair to consider these laity as non-religious, secular figures in terms of their own context. They would’ve been considered political leaders in their time even though they were well-versed in and often invoked Scripture in support of their cause; they were not religious leaders because they were not clergy or the heads of religious institutions (except for a few like John Witherspoon or Abraham Baldwin). Therefore, using the 18th century definition of religious figures and political or civic figures, I will make a distinction between the two even though both did in fact draw on religious principles in defense of their ideologies.

Finally, I have concluded—based on the dates of these sermons in comparison with the dates on the political writings I was able to uncover, which included some British political writings like Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England* that were not included in the paper due to scope and space constraints—that the rhetorical similarities are the result of the political writers drawing on a long-standing pulpit rhetorical tradition of defending civil liberties, natural law, obedience to just authority, and resistance to tyranny. This tradition originated in New England and spread out to others as the years drew closer to the Revolutionary War, making its way first to other pastors in the middle colonies and a few in the Southern colonies and then working its way into the public political discourse where it would blend itself further with Enlightenment philosophy. I have concluded that the pastors were the earliest point of origin in the colonies for the rhetorical stances taken by the revolutionaries, in part drawing from the pulpit tradition in New England and then, in the years just before the war, from

Enlightenment principles and secular philosophers to build out the rhetorical stances begun by predecessors. I seek only to prove, through offering the dates on each piece examined in the following discussion, that there are parallels between religious and political rhetoric and that the religious rhetoric was the forerunner of the rhetorical themes instead of the political rhetoric, as is often claimed by the secular side of the discussion.

My aim is not to establish that religion was the sole influence. Based on my research, I not only did not conclude this but would argue that is an extremely inaccurate view to take, particularly since it became apparent in my studies of the literature—both primary and secondary—that many of the later clergy were in fact well-versed in and influenced by secular Enlightenment philosophers as well as in the theological philosophers from the periods before them. They blended the secular and the sacred in the pulpit, from all I can discern from my research, and both must be given credit. My goal is only to examine the area of this discussion that seems to be neglected: the rhetorical parallels and the origination of those parallels in the pulpit; I am not intending to delve into where those pulpit ideologies drew their original inspirations from.

Historical Backdrop—A Brief Review of How Politics and the Pulpit Intersected

Here it is necessary to offer a brief review of how politics and the pulpit interacted in New England, the primary area which this paper covers. This overview provides a grounding to understand why there are so many parallels and what tradition the sermons in the narrower scope of this paper draw upon. It is easy to view a narrow topic like this as disconnected from the broader narrative when delving so deeply into the finer details, but disconnecting the discussion at hand from the broader discussion denies readers a grasp on how the discussion fits into the

broader scope and why what they are reading through matters to the broader situation the discussion fits into. However, for the sake of being concise, this section covers only the most basic details.

In New England colonies, particularly, but even in the middle and Southern colonies, the churches had a history of dealing with political and social issues of the day as they related to a Christian's appropriate response to them. In New England, this tradition took the form of commenting both against tyranny and in support of government as a general concept, though not in support of every government ruler as they resisted submission to tyranny.

In the Southern colonies, the clergy generally focused mainly on espousing the greatness of Britain and supporting the King; this makes a great deal of sense considering that the Southern colonies were mostly composed of Church of England (Anglican) clergy. Their church's laws required that they speak only in support of the king; treason was a religious offense as well as a legal one. In New England, where the tradition of Puritanism and Reformation theology and a history of freedom-minded, oppressed people settling there combined, it makes just as much sense that New England clergy had a strong tradition of defending liberty.

It is important to note here that the divide between the two churches and colonies was as much theological as it was cultural and political. The two were following very different theological traditions from one another. Anglican churches were based in the Church of England, which had held onto most of the trappings and theological stances of Catholicism due to its roots in that church. It had been formed only because the founding king had wished to be allowed divorce, and the Catholic church would not allow it. As such, they were not only rooted in the theology of Catholicism, but also in the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings, which stemmed in many ways from the same thinking that had created the idea of the Popes being the mouthpiece

of God. Both theological traditions were rooted firmly in political positions, and the Church of England, by placing the king as the head of the church, made treason a crime and a religious affront worthy of excommunication. As such, it is a wonder that any Anglican ministers would dare to join the Revolutionaries or pray publicly for the Continental Congress. Their numbers were few, but there were a good handful who chose to do so despite the repercussions. In New England, the strong tradition of Puritanism and Reformation theology blended with their ancestors' aims to establish colonies free from the persecution of the Church of England to create the tradition of defending liberty that is seen so clearly in their sermons. They also had a strong tradition of blending politics with their theology, in that they did not view politics as outside the purview of what theology could be applied to. The theology came first, but they viewed politics and culture as acceptable topics to apply that theology and Scriptural study to. Other colonies did this to a lesser degree, but New England held the monopoly on this practice based on the sermons still available to scholars today. As Gifford points out, because everyone went to church either as a matter of their own conviction or because law required it, preachers all over had "weekly opportunity[ies] to impress upon [their] hearers by discourses, much longer than would be tolerated at present, [their] own ideas and principles" (Gifford 105). The New England pastors made good use of this, espousing their own discourses in favor of just government, civil rights, and resistance to tyranny each week and in any other opportunities that presented, such as election day sermons or other special occasions such as thanksgiving or fast days set by public proclamation. With this in mind, then, it is fair to say that the divide between the churches was as much about theology as it was about philosophy, culture, and political ideology.

Many of these political sermons were delivered not just to the congregation, but before the civil authorities of the day as well. It was particularly common for pastors to preach a whole

sermon on the principles of just authority and rightful rulership and then turn to addressing the legislators, governors, soldiers, judges, and other civil authorities in attendance, exhorting and admonishing them to live up to the high calling God had given them. In this way, they were bold in approaching civil authorities on issues of government, just as they were bold in defending political theories they held using Scripture. This was a well-accepted tradition in the New England colonies, though it met with ire from the British in the years of the Revolution—unsurprisingly given that these same preachers who had once extolled Britain as the force for freedom and justice against foreign invaders like the French in the French and Indian War were now using the same rhetoric they'd used to denounce the French king on Britain, and they were doing so with much the same response from the people: outrage and a desire for the defeat of an unjust power.

Though not the only example, Gifford gives an excellent illustration of how this often played out during the war in New England.

It is difficult for us in these days when the clergy are quickly faulted for bringing politics into the pulpit to realize to what extreme lengths the New England clergy went to arouse their hearers to resistance. It is recorded that Dr. Chauncey preached a sermon on the anniversary of the Boston Massacre in the Old South Church in 1772. When he finished Joseph Warren stepped into the pulpit, which was hung with black cloth, and gave a vigorous discourse on the danger of standing armies.³⁴ No wonder that General Gage and his standing army in Boston at that time “was piously shocked that ministers shamefully pervert the duties of their sacred functions.”³⁵ (Gifford 111)

Nor was this tradition during the war unique. Eighty to ninety years prior to the war, another New England pastor, John Wise, stood against civil tyranny along with several other prominent

ministers. He was the pastor of the church at Ipswich, Massachusetts at the time, and he was instrumental in leading the resistance to Sir Edmund Andros, who was violating the terms of the colonies' charters on self-government. When Andros levied a tax on property holders without giving the people any voice, after a meeting to determine the appointment of assessors for dealing with the tax Andros had imposed, "Wise made a speech opposing the appointment of assessors for the purpose specified, in the course of which he gave emphatic expression to the sentiment that 'taxation without representation is tyranny'" (Mackaye 77), a cry which would later be picked up in the Revolution by pastors and civil leaders alike. With his example, the colonists chose not to appoint any assessors and openly opposed the tax, refusing to help Andros to enforce it. Wise ended up under arrest for his part in it, was denied the right to habeas corpus—a violation of the English constitution—and found guilty by a stacked jury "composed principally of aliens" (Mackaye 77). As a result, he ended up being fined and spent a good portion of time in jail for it. Wise later wrote of the trial that one of the judges had asserted that "we (Wise and his fellow prisoners) must not think that the laws of England follow us to the ends of the earth," adding, "Mr. Wise, you have no more privileges left you than not to be sold as slaves," and no man in Council contradicted" (Mackeye 77).

Beyond owing to these men the tradition of resisting civil authority's abuses of power, the Revolution owes to them a more specific debt in the concepts that began showing up in the pulpit, starting with Wise. As Mackeye points out, even though historians began, as early as 1900-1903, to credit Jefferson with being the first to offer us the concept that "All men are created equal", "it will be noticed by reference to the first extract quoted above that Wise uttered this exact sentiment, though not in terms so concise, twenty-six years before Jefferson was born. The difference between the assertion that 'All men are created equal' and that 'nature' has 'set

all men upon a level and made them equals” (Mackaye 81-82), he goes on to say, “is one merely of words, and hence unless Jefferson’s contribution was one to rhetoric only, Wise as the originator of the dictum is entitled to the credit which the world unites in bestowing upon Jefferson” (Mackaye 82). More important still is the realization that in Wise’s day, such words were far, far more radical and unheard of than they were in Jefferson’s time. By 1776, Jefferson was drawing on a tradition that started with Wise and continued to grow, and it was the prevailing political view by then that all men were indeed equal. They owed such a tradition to the forerunners of it, with Wise being the first documented source of such an idea in America—at least—if not in the known world at the time.

The abuses by Britain had begun well before the turning point for the people’s willingness to endure them, and as Wise demonstrates, the tradition of applying theology to politics from the pulpit stretches back far before the Revolutionary War clergy took up the task of changing the views of the people regarding the war and submission to authorities. They were building on a foundation that went all the way back to the days of the Pilgrims when the new settlers at Plymouth cited Scripture specifically for nearly all civil laws and edicts they wrote up for the governance of their new civic body. They also contributed the most important natural rights concept of the time, giving the world the idea for the very first time that all men were created equal and giving them, in the years to follow, the first clearly articulated argument for that stance.

It is important that students of the period recognize that the intertwining of rhetoric, philosophy, theology, and politics in the Revolutionary War was not a new tradition in the making; rather, the clergy of the war were taking the torch that had been passed down to them and making it burn more brightly than ever before using what they had been given. This was not

a movement built overnight or even in a few short years. It was decades in the making. Pastors were influenced decades prior to the war by men like Milton, Locke, and Sydney, and they blended those ideas with Biblical concepts to create a unique rhetorical thread in America that was, at the time, radical and revolutionary. Because it was so new and strove to overthrow the accepted ways of doing things, the pastors as the forerunners of the rhetoric had the difficult task of drawing on English literature and Bible to convince a reluctant people to agree with their position. They were still working at it when the war began, and it was on their foundation that the Framers would then build. The influences during this period are not as clear cut as they sometimes seem in reviewing the scholarship. While the clergy exerted a great deal of influence upon the Revolutionary generation and the Framers who came from that generation, to claim that the influence was purely religious would be dishonest since the clergy themselves were being influenced by earlier secular influences, which they blended with the rhetoric that would in turn influence the secular contemporaries writing alongside the clergy. It would do scholars well to keep this circle of influence in mind as they examine the specifics of a narrower area of study like pastoral or political rhetoric in the Revolutionary War.

Keeping the broader picture in mind allows orientation and a better grasp of the narrower field to be established. We must, if we are to be honest with the primary source record and with our readers, engage with the nuances present. This paper seeks to engage with one of those influences by bringing secular and religious influences into one place to give a fuller picture, but it is by no means capable of providing the entire picture alone, which makes further studies of this nature imperative.

It is this history of blending theology, rhetoric, and politics in the pulpit that readers must keep in mind as the discussion moves into a much narrower discussion of the parallels between

the war's sermons and the war's political documents. It must be kept in mind in any examination, certainly, of the dates of each document in the aim to establish how much before the political rhetoric the sermon rhetoric developed. The dates serve to underscore the length of the tradition's existence as discussed here, and this brief overview helps the reader to understand why it is that the dates on some of these sermons date so much earlier than the war itself.

Methodology—A Brief Review of Approach and Analysis of Sources

It was difficult to establish a straightforward methodology for this project. I had hoped to find more secondary, scholarly sources than I did to support my research, but in the end, I was unable to find many that covered my topic in the same way I wanted to cover it. While this was a clear indication I had chosen well and had identified a gap I could fill with my own research, it did pose a difficulty in figuring out exactly how to approach my research question and made it difficult to figure out how to focus on any particular point.

Faced with this problem, I turned my focus to examining mainly primary sources, using the secondary sources I had only to orient my own work within the broader field or as support for claims regarding historical facts that I wished to utilize in my work. In the end, I chose to utilize historicism and rhetorical analysis as my final methodology in writing the research portion of the paper. Here it should be noted that while I firmly believe that historical documents do not transcend time and place in their context, nor do I think it appropriate to apply a 21st century outlook—whether we speak of applying postmodernism, postcolonialism, or any other theory of literature from our time—to the study of sources so clearly rooted in a historical movement and time, I also do not intend to state that nothing can be learned from texts, even firmly rooted in their time and place. I believe there is great value in examining why things happened as they did

and in looking for lessons to learn from history and sources regarding that history. However, I adhere firmly to the belief that what we can learn from these sources is usually the abstract principles. The particulars of how those principles are applied in method may vary between the way the principle was appropriately applied in the historical context and how it may be best applied today. The method is what changes, however, not the principle. There is objective reality and objective truth to be considered in examining source material, and it is from those two things that any application must be drawn. We cannot speak in particulars and prescribe the method of applying principle back then to today's society, but we can speak in abstracts and state that such abstracts apply equally today as they did then, which then allows us to make an inquiry into how we might enact such a principle today. This requires in some part a slight departure from historicism, which does not seek in any part to apply abstract or concrete to today's society but seeks only to understand both in the context of the document's time. However, in order to learn and to apply what we do learn while studying under historicism's methodology, I believe any application must in part depart from purely examining the knowledge gained as a historical artifact. So long as we are examining how principles may then be applied effectively in a modern context, I find this an acceptable departure and one that can prove extremely useful in taking the knowledge gained from a theoretical or abstract understanding to one that is practical and concrete. As has often been said through the decades, those who do not know history are doomed to repeat its mistakes. Equally, those who know history are able to both avoid its mistakes and learn from its greatest successes.

When it came to source material, I found a great deal of background knowledge in secondary sources that was useful in understanding what I was seeing in the primary sources, but most of my research aimed at reading as many sermons and political papers as I could get my

hands on from the period. This approach served me well as it offered a much clearer answer to my initial research question than the secondary sources did. Because I was focusing on the rhetoric rather than the historical aspects, I found it incredibly difficult to locate essays in rhetoric journals that covered the matter I wanted to examine. Most of what I found on the religious rhetoric came from religious journals, not rhetorically focused ones, and this certainly presented a difficulty in explaining how my work would fit into the rhetorical world's discussion of the matter. As explained earlier in this chapter, the scholarship was drastically split between religious scholars and secular ones, and this made the task of drawing the two worlds into overlap incredibly hard when I was focusing solely on secondary sources to begin my work.

Thankfully, due to three years of study of the primary sources, I found that my own archive of primary sources contained most of what I needed. I had fewer collections of sermons, but I was able to locate a two-volume set of Revolutionary War and Founding era sermons that filled this gap beautifully, and I set my focus on examining as many of those as I could to pick out the themes and language that paralleled what I had found in studying the secular writings and Founding documents from the same period.

The biggest trouble in my approach was finding a way to whittle such a massive body of research down to a manageable focus for this paper. My broad scope of sources offered me an excellent high-level view, but there were so many different threads that it became incredibly difficult for me to decide which ones to pull together to trace. This, I am afraid, reflected very obviously in the original proposal for this project, where my broad-net method for conducting the initial research showed how many different angles I had been examining. The result was an ill-defined focus and surface skimming of a range of topics from law and history to rhetoric. My approach, therefore, had to shift to make the project a thesis-length one instead of a multi-

volume one. My professors helped me to narrow my methodology sufficiently to focus the project by advising me to choose a field first and then to decide on a very specific question to answer.

In doing so, I settled on my originally proposed field—rhetoric—and chose to focus on answering the question “to what extent do rhetorical positions and language in sermons parallel the rhetorical positions and language in political documents from the Revolutionary War, and which came first?” I felt that this question was a good one to work with because it was addressing the gap I was noticing between secondary sources on political rhetoric from the period and secondary sources on religious rhetoric. Many examined the two separately, and the few that examined them together tended to focus on clergy’s influence on the political rhetoric or on the Biblical themes in political rhetoric more broadly instead of focusing on the printed sermons’ rhetorical stances in comparison with those of the printed political works. Not only is the topic one I feel is less studied and therefore presents me with an opportunity to fill a pivotal gap in the study of both religious and political rhetoric in the period, but I also I believe this question is far more manageable. In defining that question more specifically, I was able to then go through my secondary sources to weed out any that did not focus on rhetoric in one of those two areas, which gave me a body of literature surrounding printed rhetorical pieces in a variety of forms—both political and religious.

Once I had done this, I found I had a much better grasp on the discussion surrounding political Revolutionary War rhetoric and religious Revolutionary War rhetoric, though—as my literature review demonstrates—the two still were quite distinct discussions with only a little overlap.

Through this focused goal and the use of historicism's aim to firmly root texts in their own context, I was also able to pick and choose sermons and political documents that would not only establish the range of time in which common themes were being preached versus the range of time in which the same themes were being written in American political documents but would also demonstrate the context in which the later writers were operating. I chose to keep the political document focus very narrow to allow for a closer examination of the language as a result and selected the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and selections from official writings like the Federalist or Anti-Federalist papers or Hamilton's responses to Seabury—a rhetorical battle on the secular scene discussed earlier in the literature review.

I feel that this approach to research and selection allows for a solid review both of the discussion into which this paper enters and of the source material present for the defense of my own argument that the sermon and political rhetoric not only reflect each other but that the rhetorical positions in common appear first in the pulpit before they spread out to the political scene to be blended with other Enlightenment philosophies.

Chapter Two: Common Themes

Here our attention turns to the themes and language that connect the sermons to the political rhetoric that followed after it. To the best of my ability, I endeavor to state when a parallel is directly connected to the sermon rhetoric as what seems to be the only influencing factor. Where this is not stated, it should be presumed that it was one influence but not the only one since both the pastors and the secular authors discussed were well-versed in political theorists and jurists like Locke, Montesquieu, Milton, and Blackstone. This chapter begins the discussion with an examination of the themes held in common between the religious and secular sources.

Common themes

In this portion of the discussion, the focus is less on the particular language and more on the parallel in ideas. Much of the influence from the early pastors on the leaders of generations after them—both the secular and the religious leaders—is not found in exact quotations, something that is often common in modern society. Instead, it is found in the themes and ideas that they develop, building on previous generations' work and applying it to the new challenges facing them. Those themes are the focal point of this part of the analysis.

Government, the Duty of Submission Owed to It, and the Rights of the People

The first and most obvious connection focuses on government. Given that the generations from John Wise down to John Witherspoon had to deal with various forms of civil authority and, frequently abuses of that authority, it is no great surprise to find that government, the question of

submission, and the people's rights were a common question. This was a discussion approached in a variety of ways, but there was a shift from the earliest position of pastors, which was that of unlimited submission across the board, to the Revolutionary pastors' position that non-submission to tyranny was a Christian duty.

The shift was not an easy one to make given the tradition of submission across the colonies. New England ended up being the hotbed of that shift thanks to their strong stance on religious liberty and the pastors' grounding in Puritanism and Reformation theology, which led many of them to reject outright the idea that anyone but Christ should be head over the church and, by extension, that the king could ever have unlimited authority in religious matters. Their objections to English tyranny began much earlier than it did in the Southern colonies because of this stance and because the crown tried to impose Anglicanism and religious slavery upon them as early as 1717, when John Wise wrote his political sermon "A Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches," a fight that began much earlier than most scholars note. Far from being a sudden movement, the shift from submission to revolution was a gradual and difficult one. Wise was the first to pick it up, and in 1717, his ideas were extremely radical—at least in the colonies. Some of his positions may be found earlier still in Milton's works, but his work is significantly earlier than any other writers espousing the ideas he supported. However, his work would later be used in the Revolutionary War, and we still have copies today thanks to the Sons of Liberty, who are credited with printing and redistributing it as a pamphlet in support of the Revolutionary efforts. While Wise was the forerunner for it, he was far from the only one—religious or political—to argue on government as limited in its scope and authority, as will be demonstrated in a moment. While it should be remembered that the early pastors were drawing on a mixture of secular and religious influences from earlier generations still, we do find, upon

examining the wide number of sources available, that many of the political statements made about government's origin, its authority, and the source of that authority begin in the theological moorings of the sermons before later spreading out to the pulpit.

One of the more radical claims made, starting with Wise in the colonies, was that the people were the font of government's authority. Locke had argued this before in England, but it was still a relatively unadopted viewpoint in the colonies when Wise wrote his pamphlet. In fact, he is the first American writer we have record of who claimed that "The first Humane Subject and Original of Civil Power is the People" (Wise 44) on the basis of man's natural state as a created being. Blackstone, an English jurist who wrote the famous *Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England*, would argue something similar in the work's introduction, stating that "The only true and natural foundations of society are the wants and the fears individuals" (Blackstone 5). This, he argued, stemmed from the fact that man, in his natural state is predisposed to society for his own good, and "when society is once formed, government results of course, as necessary to preserve and to keep that society in order" (Blackstone 5). Similarly, Wise argued that government was a natural outgrowth of man's needs in nature.

Others followed in their footsteps, and it became mainstream by the time of the Revolutionary War to argue that the people were the origin of government's power and, further, that the people's security and the protection of their rights was a pivotal purpose for government's existence. On that point, Wise also expounds, saying that once a civil compact has been formed, it is the responsibility of government to protect with care the natural rights of individuals within their society. In his 1730 sermon "Government the Pillar of the Earth", Colman picks up on this point as well, arguing that government should act as a pillar both "in respect of strength to uphold and support the virtue, order, and peace of it" (Colman 14) and "to

uphold and adorn the world” (Colman 14), which he believed was accomplished “by employing their superior wisdom and knowledge, skill and prudence, discretion and judgment for the publick good” (Colman 15). Elisha Williams echoes the point in 1744 when writing his famous sermon “The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants”, stating that he believed reason could teach us “that all men are naturally equal in respect of jurisdiction or dominion one over another. ... For the freedom of man and liberty of acting according to his own will (without being subject to the will of another) is grounded on his having reason, which is able to instruct him in that law he is to govern himself by, and make him know how far he is left to the freedom of his own will” (Williams 56). Here, Williams adds to Wise’s point and clarifies it into one, succinct statement, arguing that man’s natural state is liberty, equality, and self-governance predicated on his status as a rational being. Wise had vaguely hinted at this in his own work, but he focused much more on man’s origin as a created being granted reason to govern himself, and he did not make the point in nearly so clear or brief a manner as Williams has here.

Colman adds yet more to the discussion of what government ought to be and where its power comes from by arguing that “religion is the pillar of government. Take away the fear of God’s government & judgment, and humane rule utterly falls, or corrupts into tyranny. But if religion rule in the hearts and lives of rulers, GOD will have glory, and the people be made happy” (Colman 22), and he is joined by Charles Chauncy, who preached in his 1747 sermon “Civil Magistrates Must be Just, Ruling in the Fear of God” that “had man continued in obedience to his maker” (Chauncy 142), government would be unnecessary but because of sin, “government is rendered a matter of necessity” (Chauncy 143) since without civil rule “every one might do that which was right in his own eyes, without restraint from humane laws, there would not be safety any where on this earth,” and “no man,” he concludes “would be secure in

the enjoyment, either of his liberty, or property, or life” (Chancy 142). Witherspoon blends the two men’s belief that a corrupt foundation and sin necessitated government and emphasis Coleman’s argument that moral depravity would destroy the people, telling his listeners in 1776 when he preached his first political sermon, “The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men”, at Princeton, that he was convinced that corrupt foundations would destroy even the greatest, most just government and that civil and religious liberty were bound together such that if one went, the other was bound to follow shortly (Witherspoon 549). This last point was also echoed, nearly with the same wording, by Hamilton in his infamous “A Full Vindication of the Measures of the Congress, &c.”, his first response to Seabury, when he asks the farmers if they believe they can be certain of “hav[ing] the free enjoyment of your religion long?” (Hamilton 11) and reminds them that “civil and religious liberty always go together” (Hamilton 11) so that if one’s foundation is destroyed, the other will fall too.

The ideas that Colman and others preached early on about religious liberty trickled down to civil liberty naturally, and when confronted with an assault on the second, the clergy and the political figures alike realized their forebearers knew what they spoke of in claiming that the two could not be separated. Jefferson, in his “A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom”, wrote that he believed to protect one demanded a protection of the first because the two went together. A respect for one, he and others believed, naturally led to a respect for the other, while dismantling of either heralded the destruction of the other. The various colonies’ own governing bodies added to the vocal support for the views on government’s purpose. Jefferson’s bill is just one example of such a government motion, but there were also official proclamations from governing bodies that offered further support to the concepts these men discussed. Other anonymous writers chose to make this clear in a variety of other ways. One of the more interesting anonymous

writers to enter the discussion makes it clear that tyranny stemmed, in his mind, from anti-Christian, demonic spirits in an imagined dialogue between King George and the Devil, where the Devil encourages George III to deal with the colonies using an iron fist on a religious and civil level to force them to grovel at his feet. The writer imagines George III telling the Devil that “I have deceived my people with a show of religion (this proves I am no fool in hypocrisy); and at the same time have practiced every iniquity, have employed such men in public office as were thy faithful servants—and my head is full of schemes and my heart full of malice for every evil work. . . . I have the heart of a tyrant” (“A Dialogue Between the Devil and King George III, Tyrant of Britain” 693). Here, the principle that was espoused by much of the other political writers is revealed in its opposite. George was an irreligious, hypocritical tyrant who cared little for the good of his people and wished only to see America groveling at his feet. Good civil leaders are ones who are moral and honest, caring for the good of their people instead of attempting to subjugate them. As noted previously, this view was held in common by those supporting the Revolution. To varying degrees, the writers supported the idea that government’s purpose was the defense of its people’s rights and well-being, not to make itself as rich and powerful as possible. The examples offered above are only a few of those who built upon the original ideas of the early pastors to create the unique rhetoric of the Revolutionary War, but they represent well both the war’s pastors and civil figures’ stances on the issue of government’s purpose being the protection of its people’s rights, not the enrichment of the State.

In most respects, the various preachers were approaching the duty of government and the origin of its right to authority in a very similar way, but there were some that spoke about it in a slightly different way. While it is unclear why, precisely, they chose to tackle the issue of government, authority, and submission differently than their predecessors, they did, and in doing

so, they paved the way for the pastors during the Revolution who would meld arguments from both groups of early pastors to create a full-bodied argument for resistance to tyranny. The two figures who seem to lead the discussion in a slightly different direction here are Wise and Williams, not surprisingly given that the two are the most radical of those discussing the issue of government's role in society. Wise took the stance that government was not ordained by God in any particular form but was rather an institution more generally demanded by how God had made man because of his need for protection, self-advancement or "self-love" as Wise called it, and harmony with his fellow man (Wise 37). On this basis, he argued, "the End of all good Government is to Cultivate Humanity, and Promote the happiness of all, and the good of every Man in all his Rights, his Life, Liberty, Estate, Honour, &c. without injury or abuse done to any" (Wise 63). Williams would argue a similar point to Wise, claiming that man's status as a rational creature and natural law were the basis for claiming that government should be instituted to act only to promote the happiness of the individuals within society and to protect rights to life, liberty, and property. He, like Wise, departs from the common argument of the day found in Colman and the earlier pastors, who generally claimed that God instituted government as a pillar of support for society. They believed government sprang not from a divine, direct command, but from necessity because of how God had created man. While this distinction may seem to be splitting hairs, it was this basis that allowed the two men to dissent from the usual opinion more vigorously in claiming that the people had a right to institute any form of government that would achieve its proper ends and to remove that which did not. In this, they are two of the forerunners for the Revolutionary War rhetoric from the pulpit, where it became incredibly common to view government as an institution as necessary and springing from natural and revealed law but to view individual leaders as deposable and resistible when they failed to perform the function

government ought. Arguing this demanded a blending of claims like Coleman's that government as an institution was God-given but individual rulers were not and claims from Williams and Wise that natural law dictated government could be set up or removed by the people at will if it abused the authority they had given it. Perhaps it seems a minor distinction, but it was a powerful one that changed the course of the discussion away from unlimited submission to firm resistance to tyrants.

This concern with rights to life, liberty, and property—sometimes even at the expense of some part of society if it came to a clash between one group wishing to rob another of those rights—and an emphasis upon government's limited role as the protector of those rights trickled down into both the political and religious rhetoric of the Revolution much like the earlier noted concern about religious freedom being lost did. The most famous author to echo these stances was Thomas Jefferson when he penned the Declaration of Independence and wrote that “all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness” (Jefferson 19), but others also argued for this view of matters. Notice that Hamilton also picks up the refrain, claiming that “the clear voice of natural justice” (Hamilton 2) and “fundamental principles of the English constitution” (Hamilton 2) were in the favor of the colonists because they demonstrated that “when the subject is not represented” (Hamilton 2), “the idea of legislation, or taxation...is inconsistent” (Hamilton 2) with the possession of just authority to tax or legislate (Hamilton 2). He offers up Boston, whose ports were sealed up at the time thanks to Britain's show of force to subdue them, as an example of the sort of response received when petitions were made respectfully to Britain, and on the basis of repeated abuses, he asks his fellow colonists “[a]re you willing then to be slaves without a single struggle? Will you give up your freedom, or, which is the same thing, will you resign all

security for your life and property, rather than endure some small present inconveniencies?” (Hamilton 10). Note that these men echo Williams’ earlier argument that government was intended for the defense of man’s rights to life, liberty, and property, a point that Wise had also made earlier still. Like Williams and Wise, Hamilton and Jefferson focus on those three rights as the ones inalienable.

Joining the earlier voices, pastor John Allen—who was one of the Revolutionary-generation clergy—asks the people if they intend to stand by while King George III makes their judges dependent on the crown’s pay, pointing out to them that this will lead to judges doing “as the ministry directs them”, which will inevitable lead to the question “where then are your rights? Where is the security of your lives, or your property?” (Allen 319). Nor was he alone in his concerns over Britain’s actions and the security of his people’s rights to life and property. Witherspoon also struck on the issue of the people’s rights and the justice of the cause for them, reminding the people in his 1776 sermon that “the cause in which America is now in arms, is the cause of justice, of liberty, and of human nature” (Witherspoon 549), at the same time warning them once again—as so many before him had—that if civil liberty were sacrificed, religious liberty would follow, and the right of conscience would be given up as well. Adding to these individuals’ voices, the local governments worked to issue their own proclamations on the matter.

Just as Wise and Williams had claimed that the people were the origin of the government’s power, Colman that they were there to protect the people’s rights and rule justly, and Blackstone that they were to see to the wants and fears of the people, these governments step in and back up these statements with language echoing that of Jefferson, Hamilton, Allen, and Witherspoon. Consider, for example, that the Massachusetts Bay’s General Court wrote that “the

happiness of the people is the sole end of government, so the consent of the people is the only foundation of it, in reason, morality, and the natural fitness of things” (General Court of Massachusetts Bay 240). On this basis, “every act of government, every exercise of sovereignty, against or without the consent of the people, is injustice, usurpation, and tyranny” (General Court of Massachusetts Bay 240). Their focus was on consent and the happiness of the people as the point of government, echoing earlier points made by Wise, Williams, Blackstone, Coleman, and others, and it was a refrain that Hamilton, Jefferson, and others also echoed. As Edmund Burke once wrote of the colonies, they were a liberty-minded people but also an English people, wed to the idea of liberty according to English principles and ideals (Burke 208), and he accredited this freedom-mindedness to the concern with religion (Burke 208), much as Hamilton struck on that point earlier, asking the farmers about the security of religious freedoms after they have sacrificed the civil ones (Hamilton 11). So the pastors and the civil leaders of the Revolution make the same argument and propose the same questions about the security of life, liberty, and property if encroachments upon their rights were suffered to continue, and they do so on the firm foundation of the decades of pastors prior who were preaching much the same message and laying the theological framework for it to explode onto the practical stage of cultural and political life in Revolutionary War America.

Repentance and Obedience to God

While many voices focused on the role of government, defining tyranny, and the source of governmental authority, others were focusing on the issues of repentance and obedience to God, both before and during the war. Some of these voices are the same ones examined in the previous section, and some were focused entirely upon dealing with repentance and obedience

within the churches of the colonies rather than on the conflict with England as a primary issue. These sorts of appeals to the people for repentance and obedience to God began during the Great Awakening and the French and Indian War. During that time, there was not only a great deal of spiritual reawakening and accompanying concern with the states of souls, but also a great deal of fear, particularly in New England, that France might win and establish religious tyranny in the form of the Catholic church being established to the expulsion of every other Protestant sect. As a strongly Reformation-oriented people for the most part, this real fear concerned the American colonists and caused them to worry that their very lives might be at risk even after the war if France won.

However, themes of repentance in sermons were not relegated to ones dealing with the French and Indian War. It was traditional to preach on repentance and revival on civically commanded days of fasting and prayer, where a preacher would address the people and the civic leaders. It was also common to find these themes in sermons preached at times when local government officials were engaging in morally reprehensible, biblically condemned behavior. This common thread in the sermons and political writings of the day was actually much more important than is often realized, even in writings by religious scholars. While a great deal of attention is often paid to other aspects of preaching, whether it is the rhetorical issue of submission they had to overcome—a topic for discussion in a moment—or on the rhetoric of Revolution more broadly, not much is paid to the many exhortations to repent, obey God, and pray for the new nation.

However, these were so critical that the public proclamations from colonies' governing bodies for days of repentance, thanksgiving, or fasting and prayer were commonplace occurrences in the political works preserved from the period. Not only were they commonplace

in the public arena, but pastors commonly preached sermons for those days and for other occasions reminding the people of their duty not to allow sin to sully God's favor upon the colonies. In part, this was due to the revival of religious fervor during the Great Awakening just before the Revolution. The people and their religious and civil leaders genuinely had a concern with ensuring that God smiled on them in both a broad and a specific sense. However, there was also a very real rhetorical aspect to this focus, and the preachers and public figures were hardly shy about making it clear.

George Whitfield, in a sermon titled "Britain's Mercies, and Britain's Duty" preached on the occasion of a recent victory against the French, acknowledges the possibility that even those he considers immoral in the highest degree might be instruments of judgment on them for their own iniquity, stating, "they may for a time be dreadful instruments of scourging us" (Whitfield 135), and Joseph Sewall joins him in such a cautioning to his listeners in his sermon "Nineveh's Repentance and Deliverance," given before the governor and army of his colony on election day, reminding his listeners that "true religion lays the surest foundation of a people's prosperity" (Sewall 43) but "abounding iniquity will be the destruction of the people" (Sewall 43) if they do not repent. Samuel Dunbar joins the clergy touching on this issue in his sermon "The Presence of God with his People, their only Safety and Happiness", preached in 1760, when he reminds his listeners that the relational presence of God is two-sided: it is with those who are obedient and removed from the unrepentant. He attributes their victories and prosperity to the fact that the people "like godly Asa, cried to the Lord our God" (Dunbar 212), "fasted and wept, and made supplication to him" (Dunbar 212), all of which Dunbar believes were the reason that God did not turn away from their prayers or withhold his mercy but instead "maintained our right" (Dunbar 212), giving them a number of significant successes in a row. He is joined by

Witherspoon in 1776, who tells his listeners that their liberty going forward, both through winning the war and through whatever government they established, would depend more on their character as a nation and their true repentance and conviction of their need for redemption and obedience to God than it would on the particular form they might choose to set up when they reached the point of instituting a new government. In fact, Witherspoon bluntly tells his audience that “a good form of government may hold the rotten materials together for some time, but beyond a certain pitch, even the best constitution will be ineffectual, and slavery must ensue” (Witherspoon 553), and he is joined in making the point that arrogance, lack of repentance, or failure to obey God’s principles would lead to defeat by Dunbar, who told his listeners that “we have need [still] of the divine presence and help” (Dunbar 213) and “[t]he presence of God is as necessary for the success of our arms this year, as it was with the last” (Dunbar 213), so the people should be careful “not to forfeit it by any sinful departure from God” (Dunbar 213). Dunbar may have been speaking of the French and Indian War, but Witherspoon picked up the same refrain in 1776, showing that he, like Dunbar and others mentioned here, understood that if victory led to arrogance, lack of repentance, and failure to obey God’s principles, no form of government would ever be good enough to secure triumph for the cause of liberty. It was on this warning that the war would officially open a few months later in the year of 1776 with the Declaration of Independence’s bold assertion of the colonies’ right to be independent from Britain due to British abuses.

Witherspoon and Dunbar may issue the clearest warnings on this issue, but they were in good company. The Massachusetts Bay Legislature joined them in this admonishment to the people, telling them “we doubt not but that humble exertions, under the smiles of Heaven, will insure that success and freedom due to the wise man and patriot” (Massachusetts Bay Legislature

242) and that they “earnestly exhort” (Massachusetts Bay Legislature 242) the colonists “to contribute all within [their] power to the encouragement of those virtues for which the Supreme Being has declared that he will bestow his blessing upon a nation, and to the discouragement of those vices for which he overturns kingdoms in his wrath, and that all proper tunes and seasons [they] seek to him, by prayer and supplication, for deliverance from the calamities of war, duly considering that, without his powerful aid and gracious interposition, all [their] endeavors must prove abortive and vain” (Massachusetts Bay Legislature 242). Echoing the Massachusetts Bay Legislature, the Massachusetts Bay General Court issued a proclamation imploring the citizens to disdain immorality and anything that could be considered ungodly, reminding them to give thanks to God with the utmost assurance that He would defend them, and Witherspoon similarly told his listeners that the best friend to American liberty is the one who is “most sincere and active in promoting true and undefiled religion, and who sets himself with the greatest firmness to bear down profanity and immorality of every kind” (Witherspoon 554). Their views on the importance of obedience to God and repentance for any sort of sinful actions were not pulled from a vacuum any more than the earlier views on government were. They were following in the footsteps of other men, like Whitfield or Edwards, who also strenuously called the people to repentance. While Whitfield was preaching at a time when France, not England, was the focus of anti-tyrannical rhetoric, he still called upon the people—who were in the midst of the French and Indian War then—to repent and not to do anything that might cause God’s displeasure to fall upon them. In examining this theme in the writings circulating throughout the colonies, it does seem that this is linked directly to the preaching in the decades prior to the war. Most of the secular sources that the early pastors drew on and few, if any, of those drawn on by the key political writers of the Revolution hold little weight on the matter of repentance, whether because

they left it to the pulpits since pastors were handling it well enough or because they simply viewed it as a tangent unimportant to the political exegeses they were writing. As such, it seems fair to claim that the parallels—of which I have presented just a few—here are drawn directly from the pulpit's history of preaching it and the influences of the Great Awakening or Scottish Enlightenment. While the influences may have varied, it does seem apparent that the religious sources were the originators of this focus on repentance and obedience to curry God's favor instead of His wrath. This was not a concern that earlier political and secular writers that the Founders drew upon appear to possess to any great degree, if at all.

Appeals to Britain's Better Nature

Here, while the parallels can obviously be drawn between the religious and secular rhetoric, it bears noting that we cannot be certain who influenced whom. It is likely that both groups adopted similar language and made appeals of similar sorts because they shared common grievances. These sorts of appeals show mainly in the sermons from the years just before the physical war and in the political writings from the same period. These were most often written during the years when the colonies were trying to avoid war, not during the years of the war itself, and they appear to be one of the colonies' last-ditch efforts to avoid the need to declare independence and, by extension, embroil themselves in a civil war with their fellow British and British American citizens.

This is the one area where they do not seem to be building on the previous generations, pastoral or otherwise. Instead, it seems that both groups draw more on the principle of using emotion to appeal to a listener—a concept which traces all the way back to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*—and an ancient practice of making appeals based upon a list of grievances. The

arguments seem to stem nearly entirely from the hope that individuals—though perhaps not the entirety of the English government—might be persuaded to act with more consideration and favor toward the colonies. The opening letter from John Allen’s “An Oration Upon the Beauties of Liberty”, addressed to the Earl of Dartmouth, and the anonymous author of “Defensive Arms Vindicated” are good examples of writers who did such a thing. Allen actually addresses a letter to the key political figure in England he is appealing to, and the anonymous author of “Defensive Arms Vindicated” concerns himself primarily with indirectly proving the unreasonableness of the stance Britain was taking. The approach taken in “Defensive Arms Vindicated” is actually the more common of the two, and Allen also employs it in the sermon that follows his appeal to Dartmouth. The Declaration of Independence is the most famous document of this sort, following in the footsteps of sermons like Allen’s and other similar declarations from individual colonies. It is to these sorts of pamphlets, letters, and documents that Jefferson refers when he writes that “We have warned them [their British countrymen in England] from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend a jurisdiction over these our states” (Jefferson 23). Allen writes to the Earl of Dartmouth with both a rebuke—which is more inline with the anonymous author and the various declarations from the colonies or from writers like Hamilton—and an exhortation. Allen asks the earl if “any one that fears God, loves his neighbour as himself (which is the true scripture-mark of a Christian), will oppress his fellow-creatures? If they will, where are the beauties of Christianity?” (Allen 305), and follows it up with his appeal to the earl’s sense of justice, asking him if he would “like to be fetter’d with irons, and drag’d three thousand miles, in a hell upon earth? No! but in a hell upon water, to take your trial?” (Allen 306) like the Americans were. He asks him if this was not “contrary to the spirit of the law, and the rights of an Englishman,” (Allen 306) and points out that despite the fact that it was indeed contrary to the

law's spirit and an Englishman's rights, the earl had "given direction, as the king's agent or the agent of the ministry to destroy the laws of the Americans" (Allen 306). This behavior, Allen believed, would bring God's judgment down on the heads of the English monarch and those backing the tyrannical behavior, something that echoes other preachers who had pointed out that the just end of tyranny is the overthrow of that system in favor of another form of government better suited to the people's protection and their free exercise of their rights. The anonymous author of "Defensive Arms Vindicated," who went by A True Lover of Liberty, hammers home this same point in similar language, stating that he viewed it as expected and lawful that the people should take up "the use of defensive arms against tyrants and tyranny, whenever they shall endeavour to deprive a people of their liberty and property" ("Defensive Arms Vindicated" 717). Both men attempt to appeal to the colonists to fight against the abuses of Britain and are joined later by voices like Hamilton or Jefferson, but both do so with clear intent to prove to the dissenting voices from Britain and British America that the colonists are only asking what is reasonable. In essence, these were appeals to reason and, by extension, to the better nature of those who were in disagreement with the Revolutionary cause—Tory and Englishmen alike. These sorts of appeals were made regularly in attempts to solve the dispute without war, and they were one more step on the journey from rhetorical war to physical war in the end. The king's choice to ignore such appeals and the hardheartedness of his advisors, such as the Earl of Dartmouth aforementioned, were the reason, in large part for the end result of the conflict in war.

Resistance and Nonsubmission to Tyranny

This point was brushed upon in brief in the earlier theme, but it warrants its own section because this theme had less to do with appeals to reason and Britain's better nature and much

more to do with an appeal to the colonists to resist tyranny and refuse to submit. It is here that we see the true brilliance of both religious and secular voices because, as mentioned in the literature review, one key issue that the colonies had to overcome to start a Revolution was the rhetorical problem of submission to authority in Scripture. This was not a point they could simply ignore because it was ingrained into the culture and into the religious spirit of the people decades prior. It was a formidable issue to deal with, and they needed a great deal of theological and rhetorical brilliance to overcome it in a way that would be convincing to men and women who had spent their entire lives hearing from the pulpit that total submission to authority—no matter how dreadful—was a command from Heaven. Such a belief could not be side-stepped or ignored, and the writers of the Revolution and preachers in the decades just before the war stepped up to the challenge admirably.

The earliest arguments surrounding this theme came from Wise and Williams. The nuances of their views on government allowed the beginnings of an argument for resisting tyranny because Wise made the claim that the form of government was up to the people and could be abolished to return them to a state of nature up until such a point as they chose to institute another form better suited to their needs (Wise 33-40), while Williams was arguing that government originated in the people for the purpose of defending their rights to life, liberty, and property and that they were limited in scope by man's very nature and what he must rightfully give up when joining a civil society, which Williams believed was only "so much liberty...as is necessary to secure those ends" (Williams 59) and that anything more was a crime against nature. Others would pick up natural law as a defense as well, relying on the groundwork that Williams, Wise, and Blackstone laid for it as the visible, natural manifestation of God's intent for man and man's nature to help them prove that tyranny was an aberration of an institution that

natural law and revealed law demanded. Colman is one of the earliest examples of pastors who picked this thread up and ran with it, claiming that honor was due to “worthy rulers” (Colman 21), and Allen joins him in 1772 to argue that God never intended the people to be servants to rulers and attacking King George because he thought too highly of himself and refused to “see the reason of all his people’s hard speeches, and unkindness to him” was his departure “from the royal standard” (Allen 316). Allen goes further than Colman does, representing the final shift from the middle ground Colman offers of submission to worthy rulers to the Revolutionary stance of nonsubmission in the face of tyranny, and he points out that the king has no right to be furious with the colonies for their lack of submission when that “free and affectionate people lay their grievances, with tears, at his feet, praying for years past, for redress” (Allen 317) to no effect. He boldly concludes that the king should not be surprised to receive the same response Rehoboam received from his people after he chose to play the tyrant. Allen and Colman both imply that failure to submit to unworthy rulers is not a failure to obey God’s law, and Allen even states outright “that it is not rebellion to oppose any king, ministry, or governor that destroys by any violence or authority whatever, the rights of the people” (Allen 323). Colman reminds his listeners that “order & rule was before” (Colman 19) the “spirit of tyranny, and the lust of dominion” (Colman 19) that began with Lamech and Nimrod. Following on the heels of Wise, Williams, Allen, and Colman, Abraham Keteltas preached on the issue of tyranny and God’s defense of his people in the face of it in his sermon “God Arising and Pleading His People’s Cause”, preached on October 5th of 1777; here he claims that God pled His people’s cause “in a generally and particular manner” (Keteltas 589) by forbidding “all injustice, oppression, tyranny, murder, theft, plunder, adultery, slander, false witness, unjustly coveting our neighbour’s property” (Keteltas 589). He builds mostly on the ideas of Colman in this respect by claiming

that tyranny is in fact a perversion of God's order, but he takes it a step further and numbers it among the things God forbids for the protection of His people. Including it on such a list makes Keteltas's sermon the most daring of all because in so doing, he makes it not merely a matter of government overreaching its boundaries in a rational sense but a grievous act of unrighteousness forbidden by God. This echoes Wise's claims that man is a free entity that cannot be justly subjugated to another man without consent—the definition of tyranny—and Williams' argument that a government that goes beyond its bounds is in fact committing a grave sin against nature.

Both Wise and Williams believed that any laws that went against nature were invalid at a primary level, both as crimes against God's order and as purely unacceptable on the basis of reason. Blackstone, similarly, joined them in claiming that “no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this [natural law]” (Blackstone 2) and that any valid laws derive “all their force, and all their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original” (Blackstone 2). Keteltas makes this claim more powerfully by placing tyranny and oppression on the list of things God forbids, but he is in essence making the same point that his predecessors did: tyranny is an aberration that God either rebukes and wars against or else forbids entirely. Given that, then, Keteltas like the others concluded that “that the cause of this American continent, against the measures of a cruel, bloody, and vindictive ministry, is the cause of God” (Keteltas 595). This marks a distinct shift in the argument to the stance taken more frequently during the war itself. Up until this point, others had argued that tyranny was a perversion of God's order, and some had argued that it was no crime to fight back, but they had not been implying on any broadscale basis that revolt was a cause God could smile on. This was a crucial point to make, however, because to a people concerned with God's favor, it would not be enough merely to know that God did not frown upon or entirely forbid revolt. It was necessary to prove too that He gave His blessing to it.

Keteltas and Allen are the first clear examples of this rhetorical statement in this form, but they are joined by contemporary John Witherspoon, as well, who told his listeners in his 1776 sermon that if they remained as they had been, humble and obedient, they could expect God to defend them because “the cause in which America is now in arms, is the cause of justice, of liberty, and of human nature” (Witherspoon 549). He also echoes Keteltas and Allen in observing that God’s hand had been on the colonies, giving them “the singular interposition of Providence hitherto, in behalf of the American colonies” (Witherspoon 546), a point he issued with a reminder to take care that they did not allow vengeance and resentment to become their cause instead of “the measures of self-defence” (Witherspoon 537) he had spoken of earlier on in the sermon, when he called their response both “necessary and laudable” (Witherspoon 537).

This sort of rhetorical stance on tyranny and nonsubmission trickles down into the rhetoric of the political writers later on as well, as has been the case in many of the other themes. It should be noted here that while the pastors were the best-known early voices for this position and offered the political writers a common theological framework to argue upon, this is one instance where it is clear that there was a blending of religious and secular influences, not purely religious ones from the colonies. With that in mind, there are many notable instances of this position cropping up throughout the political writings. Most of the Founders took this position, with Witherspoon being one such example and Hamilton and Jefferson two others who were vocal about this point. Hamilton, in usual fiery fashion, opens his first response to Seabury with an attack on Seabury for his “violent antipathy” (Hamilton 1) to the “natural rights of mankind” (Hamilton 1) and “to common sense and common modesty” (Hamilton 1). He echoes points from Keteltas and Allen in his focus on natural rights and his disdain for his opponent’s claim “that it is a Christian duty to submit to be plundered of all we have, merely because some of our

fellow-subjects are wicked enough to require it of us” (Hamilton 1). He reminds his readers that “Americans are intitled to freedom” (Hamilton 1), on the basis that “all men have one common original” (Hamilton 1), a concept which is deeply entrenched in the preaching of Wise and echoed down through generations of pastors until it comes out here. He is joined in this claim by Jefferson, who claimed that the colonies’ resistance were predicated upon the “many unwarrantable encroachments and usurpations...upon those rights which God and the laws have given equally and independently to all” (Jefferson 105) and that “all men are created equal,” (Jefferson 19) with rights that were “inherent and inalienable,” (Jefferson 19) “endowed by their creator” (Jefferson 19). In the famous piece “A Constitutional Answer to Wesley’s Calm Address”, the authorship of which is uncertain but sometimes attributed to journalist John Almon, the author joins Jefferson and Hamilton in claiming that Britain’s encroachments on their liberties were absurd on the basis of nature, reason, and right. He adds to the discussion with the statement that if the colonists had indeed ceded political power, they had to have had it to begin with because they could not give what was not theirs to give (“A Constitutional Answer to Wesley’s Calm Address” 428). He echoes the claims of Wise and Williams that government if it failed to perform its duty could be removed and replaced with some other form or, if adequate, merely different officials, stating that “what is given, if abused may surely be resumed” (“A Constitutional Answer to Wesley’s Calm Address” 428). The author of “Defensive Arms Vindicated” also joins this part of the conversation with the point that “if we may judge from the success of our arms, we may rationally conclude that heaven approves of our undertaking, and that the God of battle has gone forth with our armies” (“Defensive Arms Vindicated” 720), echoing the clergy’s claims that defending against tyranny was a cause God heralded and favored, not just one He allowed as acceptable.

Once again, individuals were not the only voices in this litany of arguments. Hamilton, Jefferson, and the author of “A Constitutional Answer to Wesley’s Calm Address” are joined by the General Court of Massachusetts Bay, which put out a proclamation that stated that “the consent of the people is the only foundation of [government], in reason, morality, and the natural fitness of things” (General Court of Massachusetts Bay 240), returning once again to the argument that the clergy had been making regarding natural law and order as a basis for tyranny as an unnatural perversion to be resisted.

Together, the Revolution’s religious and political writers offer up a stunning defense of resistance to tyranny on the basis that natural law made all men equal, made government a natural institution for the protection of men’s natural right to life, liberty, and property, and made tyranny a perversion of the natural order because it denies the equal nature of men and government’s proper role in society. Using a combination of theology and rhetoric, they turned revolt into a cause God would smile upon so long as the colonists were fighting in self-defense against tyrants and did not themselves become consumed with the lust for vengeance. Together, they presented the Revolution as a righteous cause on the basis of the “laws of nature and of nature’s God” (Jefferson 19). This proved an effective common approach to the issue of submission versus non-submission, as evidenced by the numbers who joined the fight after the clergy preached messages of this sort. Those who grasped hold of the message and were in favor of liberty wanted to fight for the cause with the knowledge that God was on their side, and together, the clergy and the political leaders offered them solid arguments that changed the course of history and the perspective of the world on the matter of liberty and tyranny.

Chapter Three: Comparing Language and Approach

Here, our attention shifts from a focus on common threads in arguments to the terminology and approaches more broadly in order to demonstrate the impact the sermons had on political language during the Revolution. Once again, the aim here is not to prove that these were the sole influences, but instead to bring them back into the discussion alongside the political sources to demonstrate that they did influence the work as much as, perhaps at times more than, the political theorists from previous centuries. While common themes may at times be explained away by scholars seeking to focus on secular influences as pastors drawing on secular sources that would later become popular in the political circles as well, comparisons in language and approach may be more difficult to explain except by direct influence at points due to the strong parallels in terminology. Still, in the interest of fairness to all of the influences involved, some of the common language still results from the clergy drawing on secular and religious influences and popularizing both within the general discourse in the decades leading up to the Founding, when the key political figures and writers would draw on both sets of influences to craft their arguments. As such, I still maintain that the influence may not be the sole influence on the similarities in language or approach. The influences are very often a circular matter of discussion, with both spheres influencing one another at different points and taking turns in which is doing the influencing and which is being influenced.

Common terminology

In this section, the oldest sermon presented in the earlier portion of the discussion is one of the ones that had the greatest impact on some of the common terminology between both sermons and political rhetoric. John Wise's sermon formed the basis for the opening statements

of the Declaration of Independence and seems to have influenced the opening of the Constitution as well, in some respects. In this, it is difficult to say for certain that Wise was the only influence, but he was one of the first Americans recorded making these sorts of arguments, and some scholars and writers, like Barton and Mackaye, have noted him as a likely influence. This understanding of Wise's connection to Jefferson makes some sense given the wide circulation of Wise's sermon during this period, circulation which it owed to the Sons of Liberty. However, whether Wise was the only influence or merely the first to forward the notions Jefferson presents, the parallels between the two men's uses of terminology are undeniable and intriguing to note.

Parallels between Wise's Sermon and Jefferson's Declaration of Independence

In John Wise's foundational discussion before he went into the right order of church government, there is a discussion of equality that is very similar to Jefferson's. He noted that natural fitness for government did not make a man rightfully the master of another without any compact and, quoting Uplian, that "by a Natural Right all Men are born free; and nature having set all Men upon a Level and made them Equals" (Wise 43), a statement which is strikingly similar to Jefferson's later statement that "all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights" (Jefferson 19). Wise began the discussion on the issue of equality and rights for the colonies well before Jefferson had the final word on it, but equality and rights weren't the only areas the two held in common.

Just a few pages after his claim that men were born free by natural right and were equal to all others as such, Wise claims that "the first Humane Subject and Original of Civil Power is the People" (Wise 44), and that "power returns to the People again" (Wise 44) when the "subject

of sovereign power” (Wise 44) no longer exists. Jefferson echoes him on this point too, writing that governments derived “their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed” (Jefferson 19), but he does take it a step further than Wise did, building off the ideas of his predecessor to arrive at the conclusion that if the people are free to set up another form of government more suitable to them after the previous ruler or system have been abolished and if government is instituted to secure the individual’s rights, then “whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government” (Jefferson 19). Note that Wise also claimed that government was formed on the basis of natural law and the inclination to self-preservation or advancement, sociableness to protect one’s interest, and a general concern with the welfare of mankind to further the common good as a mutual benefit to oneself and others (Wise 36-37). Wise describes the goal of government with the statement that because man has the right by nature to “judge for himself, viz., What shall be most for his Behoof, Happiness, and Well-Being” (Wise 39), when he “has resigned himself with all his Rights for the sake of a Civil State” (Wise 39), that right to liberty and equality ought to be “cherished, and preserved to the highest degree, as will consist with all just distinctions amongst Men of Honour, and shall be agreeable with the publick Good” (Wise 39), and he is joined by Jefferson, who describes the same more concisely, stating that because “all men are created equal” (Jefferson 19) and “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness” (Jefferson 19), “governments are instituted among men” (Jefferson 19) in order to protect or “secure these Rights” (Jefferson 19). In this manner, he parallels Wise’s points from the sermon he wrote in 1744 very well. Wise uses many more words to say this, and Jefferson distills the words down to give the colonies a

document that is still studied and cherished today, in part because of the meaning and in part because of the eloquence with which he made these points.

Parallels Between Wise's Sermon and the Constitution

Notice next that the Constitution itself also contains parallels to Wise's work on the issue of government and its goals. Wise described the point of instituting new government as being done by the people to institute whatever new form of government may seem best suited or to return to a natural state if it seemed the best option. This point is paralleled in the opening paragraph of the Constitution, where the writers not only state that their purpose is to do just that but also use similar concepts and language to that used by Wise in describing what a government should do. These parallels in language demonstrate, once again, the manner in which the political writings pulled from the religious ones, which were in turn pulling on earlier secular and religious works themselves. The Constitution's preamble states, "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America" (Constitution 59). Note the following parallels in what Wise said government should do and what the Constitution proposes to achieve and do. Wise said that "[a]" Civil State is a Compound Moral Person. Whose Will (united by those Covenants before passed) is the Will of all; to the end it may Use, and Apply the strength and riches of Private Persons towards maintaining the Common Peace, Security, and Well-Being of all" (Wise 45) and that "...there will be need of a New Covenant, whereby those on whom Sovereignty is conferred, engage to take care of the Common Peace, and Welfare" (Wise 45). In view of this, the parallels here

become clear, given that one of the key things that the preamble says the writers wanted to accomplish was the forming of a “more perfect Union” or the covenant that Wise refers to. Wise understood that after a specific form of government was settled upon, the people needed to draw up a new contract that would bind the sovereign powers to the limits prescribed by the people and bind the people to obedience so long as the contract was followed appropriately and still in place between civil authority and the people. The Constitution, as this first statement says, was written solely to lay out and establish the ability of the “more perfect Union” (Constitution 59) to do all of the things that the writers of the Constitution wanted to achieve: “establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity” (Constitution 59). The document itself parallels with Wise’s teaching on the issue of forming a new government, with the last step being to form that “new covenant” (Wise 45). The document is both a statement of the ends of government as they saw it—which provides one parallel with Wise’s teaching on the subject—and a literal embodiment of the process Wise promoted in his sermon.

The parallels run deeper though. There is the common description of the point of instituting a new form of government: it is for the common defense, the promotion of the people’s welfare or well-being, and to offer peace or domestic tranquility. The terminology is strikingly similar despite the span of years between the two documents. Further parallels may also be seen in how Wise conceived of government’s constitution or structure when it is aligned with God’s order and how the Framers wrote the Constitution and settled on divisions within the new form of government. Wise’s explanation of the anatomy of government claimed that government could be broken down to legislative, judiciary, and executive or administrative. He recognized all of these as key powers stemming from the power of sovereignty granted by the people to the

rulers. Two of them would become two branches of our new government, and the others were granted to different branches or, in the case of appointing magistrates, to several. The original form of government instituted during the majority of the war had not possessed many of these powers and had thus failed, so the Framers turned to a variety of sources to look for the best form of government. They drew their inspirations from some of the same historical sources Wise looks at, such as the Athenians' democratic system. While this parallel is not precisely one of language or terminology, the principles on which Wise believed government's sovereign power must run are still reflected in the Constitution, though it must be admitted here that the parallels cannot be proven to have been drawn from Wise's work entirely, at least.

It is well-known that the Framers were well-educated men, with most of them being well-read or else reading vastly and carefully after being appointed to handle this task of forming the new covenant between people and sovereign powers. They were well-acquainted with ancient history, looking at the structure and end of both the Roman empire and the Greek democracies as undesirable and seeking something that was in-between. In doing this, they drew on a great many sources, with religious exegeses being only one part of their knowledge and source material. It is clear in looking at the parallels and language in the Declaration of Independence that Jefferson, at least, was very familiar with Wise's sermon, as were most of the others who had been involved with the war's earliest roots—particularly those from the Sons of Liberty, who were responsible for reprinting and distributing this sermon. However, it would be unfounded to claim all inspiration and roots came from Wise's work, and that is not the point being made here.

Parallels in Language about Government's Purpose and Source of Power

Looking at the primary source material more broadly, though, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are not the only documents with visible parallels with Wise's work or with other religious primary sources from the time. Turning the focus back onto the selections examined in the paper earlier, we find more striking similarities in language. Many of the individuals examined earlier offer us examples of common terminology surround rights, freedom, and the reasons for revolution. Among these individuals, Hamilton, Jefferson, the anonymous author "A Constitutional Answer to Wesley's Calm Address," Chauncy, Madison, and Allen offer us some of the best examples of paralleled terminology. Chauncy provides a natural starting point for the discussion of similarities in language because he came before the rest and is building off the same ideas and language usage that Wise had in his own sermon. On the matter of government's purpose, Chauncy stated that it was for mankind's general good to avoid confusion and disorder and "to guard men's lives; to secure their rights; to defend their properties and liberties; to make their way to justice easy...to maintain peace and good order" (Chauncy 145). Chauncy is joined by the General Court of Massachusetts Bay, who issued a proclamation regarding government and freedom in the same year the Declaration of Independence, in which they wrote "as the happiness of the people is the sole end of government, so the consent of the people is the only foundation of it, in reason, morality, and the natural fitness of things" (General Court of Massachusetts Bay 240). Once again, there is a focus on the concept of the people's good as the sole end of government. This same language shows up once again in "A Constitutional Answer to Wesley's Calm Address," when the anonymous author writes against Wesley's arguments regarding the Americans' lack of rights, claiming that "[n]o

Englishman ever ceded, to the parliament, a power over his life, liberty, and property” (“A Constitutional Answer to Wesley’s Calm Address” 428). This author too picks up the common language about life, liberty, and property as the part of government to protect, focusing in on the nuance of whether the colonists as Englishmen had given up those rights in exchange for the protections and privileges that being English granted under their government. Others took to showing the opposite of this principle as demonic and anti-Christian in order to prove the righteousness of a system that put the people’s good and happiness first. The piece “A Dialogue Between the Devil and George III Tyrant of Britain” offers us one of the few existing examples of such, and the anonymous author uses the form of dialogue to show the ugliness of tyranny—which the author clearly believed could be seen in the words of the devil to George in the play when he told George III, “A king dependent on the people is no monarch” (“A Dialogue Between the Devil, and George III, Tyrant of Britain” 691), a point that flies in the face of all that the Revolutionary writers in America at the time believed constituted good government. He adds to it George’s comment that he had “at a moderate computation...destroyed at least fifty thousand people” (“A Dialogue Between the Devil, and George III, Tyrant of Britain” 693) and had “destroyed the happiness of fifty thousand more,” (“A Dialogue Between the Devil, and George III, Tyrant of Britain” 693) a point which echoes the focus on the happiness of the people that the others emphasize as the goal of good government. Hamilton adds his voice to the conversation with a discussion on freedom versus slavery, claiming that the difference was that “In the former state, a man is governed by the laws to which he has given his consent, either in person, or by his representative: In the latter, he is governed by the will of another” (Hamilton 1), which adds another layer to the conversation while still echoing the concern that the others had with consent and the freedom of the people. He further parallels the language with the statement

that “in the one case his life and property are his own, in the other they depend upon the pleasure of a master” (Hamilton 1), and it was, according to Hamilton, “easy to discern which of these two states is preferable” (Hamilton 1). Here too, he is occupied with the matter of life and property as pivotal pieces to man as a free entity rather than an enslaved one and indicates his belief was, like the others, that a good government with preservation of man’s freedom—which he understood to be a preservation of his property and life—was far preferable to one that could command both of its subjects at will. The author of “A Constitutional Answer to Wesley’s Calm Address” offers another comment on the matter, reminding his readers that “[a] man has a natural right to the possessions of his parents, or to those which he has obtained by his own labour... A man has a natural right to life and liberty...” (“A Constitutional Answer to Wesley’s Calm Address” 429). The author continues on further to lay out some of the freedoms or rights that men do not cede, which were life, liberty, and the right of property within a civil society, demonstrating once again the intent focus that the authors of the decades before the war and during the war itself had upon rights to life, liberty, and property and government’s duty to protect all three. As Chauncy eloquently put it, government was crucial as an instrument for the protection of the three because “[w]as there no civil rule among men, but every one might do that which was right in his own eyes, without restraint from humane laws, there would not be safety any where on this earth,” (Chauncy 143) and without that restraint and safety, “[n]o man would be secure in the enjoyment, either of his liberty, or property, or life” (Chauncy 143). Here, again, there is the common terminology of government as an institution to protect man’s rights and enjoyment of those rights to life, liberty, and property (which the Framers replaced with pursuit of happiness as a more fundamental right necessary to mankind and his enjoyment of any property he might come by). Notice here Chauncy’s conclusion on the subject of government as

a general institution, which sums up what the others who followed in his footsteps would say; “[i]t [government] is for the general good of mankind; to keep confusion and disorder out of the world; to guard men’s lives; to secure their rights; to defend their properties and liberties; to make their way to justice easy,” (Chauncy 145) and, Chauncy concludes, “in a word, to maintain peace and good order, and, in general, to promote the public welfare, in all instances, so far as they are able” (Chauncy 145). Once again, the common language of “peace and good order”, “justice”, “protection or securing of men’s rights”, “public welfare”, and the “defense of liberty” shows up in Chauncy’s discourse, just as it did in Wise’s, Hamilton’s, the General Court of Massachusetts’s, and others’ writings.

Parallels in Language on Separation of Powers and the Preservation of Liberty

In Chauncy’s piece, we also find another interesting point that is paralleled in how the Founders chose to structure government within the Constitution and their reasoning for doing so. He frames their arguments with the statement that “they [rulers] must be just in the *use of their power*; confining it within the limits prescribed in the constitution they are under” (Chauncy 146). This could be of any sort and limit without any further context, but Chauncy adds an important note that puts into clear, precise language exactly what the Framers said the reason for separation of powers in the Constitution was, claiming that “this [respect for jurisdiction of each branch and the care not to usurp another branch’s authority] [is] an important point of justice, where the constitution is branched into several parts, and the power originally lodged in it, is divided, in certain measures, to each part, in order to preserve a balance in the whole,” (Chauncy 146) and when this is the case, he says that officials “in either branch of the government, are bounded by the constitution, and obliged to keep within the proper limits assigned to them; never

clashing in the exercise of their power, never encroaching upon the rights of each other, in any shape, or under any pretence whatever” (Chauncy 146). Of course, the Framers did not claim that one branch’s violation of another’s rights would be unjust in the forthright manner with which Chauncy does, but it was clear they intended for each branch to view it as such. As Jefferson puts it in “Query 13” of his “Notes on the State of Virginia”, when “all the powers of government, legislative, executive, and judiciary, result to the legislative body,” (Jefferson 245) that is “precisely the definition of despotic government. It will be no alleviation that these powers will be exercised by a plurality of hands, and not by a single one. 173 despots would surely be as oppressive as one,” (Jefferson 245) and so, on this account, he said, “[T]hat convention, which passed the ordinance of government, laid its foundation on this basis, that the legislative, executive, and judiciary departments should be separate and distinct, so that no person should exercise the powers of more than one of them at the same time” (Jefferson 245). Madison, who is often credited with much of the work in this area of the Constitution, had a great deal to say about how the Constitution in fact supported this separation. His entire essay “Federalist No. 47” dealt with this very issue. He opens it with the strong statement that “[o]ne of the principal objections inculcated by the more respectable adversaries to the constitution, is its supposed violation of the political maxim, that the legislative, executive and judiciary departments ought to be separate and distinct. Were the federal constitution therefore really chargeable,” said Madison, “with this accumulation of power or with a mixture of powers having a dangerous tendency to such an accumulation, no further arguments would be necessary to inspire a universal reprobation of the system. I persuade myself however, that it will be made apparent to every one, that the charge cannot be supported, and that the maxim on which it relies, has been totally misconceived and misapplied” (Madison “Federalist No. 47”). Madison notes in the

further comments on the political maxim he has referred to that it is drawn from Montesquieu, so again, the aim here is not to claim that these parallels originated in the sermons in every case or even that they originated in the sermons at all. In this case, it seems clear that Framers were drawing on a secular philosopher for the quote they held to, at the very least, but the same ideas were being discussed in the pulpits as well, as in the case of Chauncy's sermon, which makes clear what the Founders were relying upon to protect the "designed balance" (Chauncy 147). The two groups were discussing the same thing but from slightly different angles. Hamilton sums up what Chauncy, Madison, and Jefferson were all discussing in yet another parallel to Chauncy's work, one that is a bit closer to Chauncy's point while still retaining the point that government should not be mixing together the branches. He states, "In a civil society, it is the duty of each particular branch to promote, not only the good of the whole community, but the good of every other particular branch" (Hamilton 3). This first part of his point nicely parallels the point that rulers, according to Chauncy, have a duty to remain within the limitations prescribed to them, but it also takes it further in stating that they also have a duty to support the other branches, not just to avoid "encroaching upon the rights of each other" (Chauncy 146) or "clashing in the exercise of their power" (Chauncy 146). Hamilton follows up the first point with the following statement: "If one part endeavours to violate the rights of another, the rest ought to assist in preventing the injury: When they do not, but remain neutral, they are deficient in their duty, and may be regarded, in some measure, as accomplices" (Hamilton 3). In this last statement, he makes it clear what he and other Framers were aiming at in designing the government to have three separate branches. Each was meant to regard it as their duty to protect their own power and to fight back against the injustice of another branch's attempts to violate their or another branch's rights or granted powers. This parallels both Chauncy's call on civil authorities to avoid clashing

with the other branches in exercise of power or encroaching on the others' powers and the other Framers' goals to prevent tyranny through distributing the powers between branches to create a more just balance of power.

Parallels in Language on Tyranny and Nonsubmission

Next there is the parallel in language regarding tyrants. Turning once again to the sermons first, notice that in Chauncy's sermon, he deals with this in clear, unequivocal language, telling his readers that "should they [the rulers] be so unadvised, as grosly to abuse their power; applying it to the purposes of tyranny and oppression, rather than to serve the good ends of government, it ought to be taken out of their hands, that they might no longer be under advantages to injure their brethren of the same community" (Chauncy 153). In later years, closer to the war itself, the language in John Allen's address to the Earl of Dartmouth parallels the language when he points out that the king's "attempt to destroy the rights of the people—destroys his right as king to reign over them, for according to his coronation oath, he has no longer a right to the British crown or throne, than he maintains inviolable firm the laws and rights of the people" (Allen 307). Like Chauncy, he clearly believed that tyranny invalidated the right of the ruler to continue ruling, and the threat to remove the king from power is clear. Similar language is utilized in the Declaration of Independence before Jefferson launches into the unaddressed and often exacerbated grievances of the colonies against the king, stating that "when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security" (Jefferson 19). Similar to Chauncy on this point, Jefferson claims it is the just, rightful, and dutiful thing to remove tyrants

from their position rather than allow them to continue to abuse those under their control. He also mimicks in part Allen's stance in stating that the persistent abuse makes the design toward tyranny clear and that the throwing off of such tyrannizing is expected and natural.

Parallels in Language on the Justice of the American Cause

Yet another parallel exists between sermons and political writings in the rhetorical language surrounding the war they were finally pushed to. Many sermons described it as just and implored the people to stand up only for the just cause, not allowing anger or malice to enter into the picture. They also often made the point that civil liberty was pivotal to protect religious rights. To the Revolutionary writers, the American cause was inextricably tied to the cause of justice and to the protection of both civil and religious liberties. The importance of religion to them comes out in the emphasis that both civil and religious writers placed on the intertwining of the two with the cause of justice in their defense of the Revolution. Witherspoon provides one straightforward example of it, stating that "the cause in which America is now engaged, is the cause of justice, of liberty, and of human nature. . . . The knowledge of God and his truths have from the beginning of the world been chiefly, if not entirely, confined to those parts of the earth where some degree of liberty and political justice were to be seen, and great," he says, "were the difficulties with which they had to struggle from the imperfection of human society, and the unjust decisions of usurped authority. There is not a single instance in history in which civil liberty was lost, and religious liberty preserved entire. If therefore we yield up our temporal property, we at the same time deliver the conscience into bondage" (Witherspoon 549). Moses Mather opens his anonymously published "America's Appeal to the Impartial World" with a statement on both the justice of their fight and the intertwined demand that they give up both

civil and religious liberty. He wrote of the times they were enduring that “we are called upon to surrender our liberties, our religion, and country; or defend them at the point of the sword, against those, that were our friends, our brethren, and allies ... Nothing,” Mather claimed, “will inspire our councils with unanimity, our resolves with firmness, and render the exertions, the noble struggles of a brave, free and injured people, bold, rapid and irresistible, like a right understanding of the necessity and rectitude of the defence, we are compelled to make, in this unnatural contention” (Mather 443). Here, Mather’s language echoes Witherspoon’s in presenting the war as for a just and necessary cause, the people as defending liberty both civic and religious, and the boldness of the people. Neither author viewed the Revolutionaries as fighting back without reluctance or as a people driven by revenge. Further, Mather’s wording, also echoes that of earlier sections where the writers—both religious and civic—wrote of the reluctance and prudence of the resistance.

Civil pieces echo Witherspoon and Mather’s presentation of the colonies’ cause as just, and at times also echo the connection between the loss of civil liberty and the loss of religious liberties soon after. Turning back to Hamilton, parallels can again be seen in his work. He warns his readers of the same thing that Witherspoon did, telling his readers that “being ruined by taxes is not the worst you have to fear. ... How can any of you be sure you would have the free enjoyment of your religion long? Would you put your religion in the power of any set of men living? Remember, civil and religious liberty always go together, if the foundation of the one be sapped, the other will fall of course. (Hamilton 11) To Hamilton, as to Witherspoon, the two were inextricably intertwined. Loss of one would mean the loss of the other in quick succession, and we see this mirrored understanding in the similar language that the two use to describe the situation. Hamilton tells his readers, just as Witherspoon had his listeners that their lives,

property, and religion were in danger. (Hamilton 11) He is joined in his language regarding liberty and the cause of justice by Jefferson. In The Declaration of Independence, Jefferson also presents the cause as just and right, going so far as to state that it was the “duty” of the people “to throw off such Government” (Jefferson 19) as proved tyrannical and harmful to the people’s rights. After he lays out the grievances, he closes with an examination of the heart of the people behind his declaration, this time turning the common description of the colonies’ cause as just and grand into a rebuke against their countrymen for refusing to support them or heed their appeals, stating that the colonists had “appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity,” (Jefferson 23), but “they too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace, Friends. (Jefferson 23). He offers yet one more voice in the litany of those who present the cause as one that is just and necessary.

A final, interesting example of such language comes from the anonymous author of “A Dialogue Between the Devil and George III, Tyrant of England” who, in usual form, demonstrates the opposite of what he and the others considered justice in the devil’s speech to King George III. He approaches the issue differently than the other authors have because he uses the same terms but puts them into the language of the devil, who views them with disgust and anger, a fitting response that vividly depicts the author’s belief that only the evil and tyrannical would war against or slander the colonies in their cause. By assigning to the Devil the ravings against the colonies’ purposes, the author was able to present it as good and just, much like all the others had but with a much stronger, vivid presentation. The devil gives testimony to the importance that the American colonies placed on liberty, stating that the continent of America was “inhabited with a brave and enterprising people” (“A Dialogue Between the Devil and

George III” 701) and “enthusiastic in religion and liberty,” (“A Dialogue Between the Devil and George III” 701), bringing the reader back once again to the connections between religion and liberty and the justice of the cause. He further hammers in this point with the Devil’s claim that “[i]n their public writings, speeches and transactions, they stamp glory on religion and liberty, and aim to make them both eternal” (“A Dialogue Between the Devil and George III” 701). Here, independence, liberty, and religion go hand in hand in every case. The author’s method of showcasing the cause in the language of the other writers is all the more brilliant because the Devil never attempts to paint the cause as unjust or unvirtuous. Instead, it is painted as good, right, and just, all reasons which the Devil hates it.

Common rhetorical approaches to the conflict and views of England

The final point of commonality to consider is the rhetorical approach both groups used in dealing with the conflict and their views of England. Here, it will be helpful to recall the section on the historical backdrop where the point was made that the clergy’s rhetorical stances were being shaped by both secular and religious sources, with Milton and Locke being two who were extremely influential in shaping the discussion on the point of tyranny. Many of them were taking the same rhetorical stances that Milton had in his work during the English Civil War, and Locke’s views were also particularly popular. In the secular American political scene, writers were drawing from the religious teachings and secular sources like Locke or Montesquieu to define their political ideals and arguments. As such, it is hardly a surprise to find there are commonalities in approach given that each was drawing from the other in some form or another.

War as Necessary, Righteous, and Biblical

With that understanding established, the first rhetorical approach they had in common was to present the war as a righteous cause and the colonists' cause as both necessary by way of natural right and biblically supported on the grounds of tyranny. This was touched upon earlier in discussing common themes, but this was more than a mere theme. It was very particular rhetorical device designed to convince the people to join the cause. As mentioned in the literature review section, one of the greatest rhetorical problems facing the Revolutionaries was to convince people to go against the religious status quo and Biblical precepts that seemed to demand unlimited submission to authorities. Earlier, we examined some of the ways that they did this, but they relied mainly on redefining government and authority and on showing from patterns in Scripture what authority should look like.

Pastors provided the theological grounding for this rhetorical stance, and secular writers built upon them with other secular philosophers drawn into the mix. It is essential to this particular rhetorical approach to understand that the orators from both groups were drawing on English literature and Scripture, as were their opponents. Who did it best would determine who won the support of the people. That was what made the fight before the physical war a rhetorical war rather than a literal one. As discussed earlier, natural law provided a very important argument for both sides. It blended the secular aspects of law with the theological aspects of the argument, giving both groups a powerful weapon in their arsenal. Natural law allowed them to argue three important rhetorical points: authority was vested in the people and granted to the rulers, that authority when abused could be reclaimed or removed, and good government was a righteous aim as well as a right and a duty. These three pivotal arguments that both sides made

rested predominantly on earlier authors' arguments regarding natural law, taking their readers and listeners in the 18th century all the way back to the ideas of Milton, Wise, and others from that era. The rhetorical shift they were attempting had already happened once in England, when Milton had challenged the divine right of the king in the case of King Charles Stewart, a challenge which resulted in Charles's beheading.

Note that this revolution was still on the minds of the writers and clergy during the Revolution, as demonstrated by Allen's remarks in his opening letter from "An Oration Upon the Beauties of Liberty". "For violating the people's rights, Charles Stewart, king of England, lost his head, and if another king, who is more solemnly bound than ever Charles Stewart, was, should tread in the same steps, what can he expect?" (Allen 307). Nor was Allen the only one with the English Civil War and the implications of that war for the fight against tyranny civilly and religiously on his mind in addressing the events of the day. Note that the author of the *Dialogue Between the Devil and George III, Tyrant of Britain* also weaves reference to the event into the dialogue, including both Charles I and his son Charles II in the Devil's dialogue. The Devil rebukes George sharply, telling him that "instead of showing the spirit of a lion, you have the head of a goat and the heart of a sheep; and if you don't pursue your plan until the work is complete, by the ghost of Nero, I hope the English will play Charles with you," ("Dialogue Between the Devil and George III, Tyrant of Britain" 692) and that unlike George III, "Charles 2d did eminent service by swearing; his example made a whole nation swearers, and greatly advanced my kingdom" ("Dialogue Between the Devil and George III, Tyrant of Britain" 695). Nor was this the only example of awareness of what had happened to past rulers for tyrannizing their people. This particular event and the rhetoric used by the English—particularly by Milton—then to overthrow a centuries old belief in the divine right of kings was in many ways the first

trial at such an attempt. It was successful, and in the following century, American ministers and political leaders picked up the battle that Milton and others had begun and finished in England by taking Charles' head and exiling his son, Charles II. Often, they did so using exactly the same arguments that Milton established and by blending those arguments with new proofs from their contemporaries in philosophy and theology.

Such rhetoric was radical and revolutionary in America in that time, just as it had been in England, and it was a fairly novel idea, but the rhetorical approach of using Scripture and secular sources to reason against the divine right of kings and tyranny was remarkable both in its clarity and in its success.

Listing of Grievances and Attempts at Reconciliation

This second rhetorical approach was once again used by both sides. Here, they used the old tradition in rhetoric of presenting a list of grievances against the other side and demonstrating adequate attempts at petitioning for redress. This method proved successful because it reminded the people of the many times they had pleaded for a legal and magnanimous resolution to their grievances and the many times they were sorely abused for the attempt. It was also successful rhetorically because it established the colonists firmly as the innocent and injured party with every right, legally and rationally, to demand a separation and take action for self-preservation if England would not heed them. This is extremely popular in both sermons and political pamphlets. Note that Hamilton uses this in his essay in statements such as “the persons who will be distressed by the methods we are using for our own protection, have by their neutrality [ignoring the evils of their rulers against the colonies] first committed a breach of an obligation, similar to that which bound us to consult their emolument, it is plain, the obligation upon us is

annulled, and we are blameless in what we are about to do” (Hamilton 4). Another example he offers up is that of Boston, reminding his readers that Boston’s port had been blockaded and an army planted in their city all because “a small number of people, provoked by an open and dangerous attack upon their liberties, destroyed a parcel of Tea belonging to the East India Company” (Hamilton 11), a statement that demonstrates the absurdity and arbitrariness of the response offered to the actions the colonists took, legal or not. Allen follows suit and reminds the people of all they have tried to redress the grievances, stating “For what can he judge, when a free and affectionate people, lay their grievances, with tears, at his feet, praying, for years past, for redress? And yet he will not hear them!!! Or if he does, he answers them like Rehoboam—roughly” (Allen 317), and then he offers a rhetorical question as he asks, “What can he expect, but Rehoboam’s revolution?” (Allen 317). Then there is the most famous example of this rhetorical strategy is the Declaration of Independence. It seems fitting to close this discussion on parallels between civil and religious rhetorical strategies here with the list of grievances Jefferson gave. This document was the final note in the song of revolution for this nation, and as such, it bears closer examination of the full list. This version of the Declaration of Independence examined comes directly from Jefferson’s autobiography and therefore may include some language that did not end up in the official document; it also includes two grievances that Jefferson wished to include but which were removed by the Continental Congress to keep the peace between the majority of the colonies and the one or two who disagreed with those specific grievances.

To prove this [the long train of abuses endured patiently by the colonists] let facts be submitted to a candid world for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unsullied by falsehood.

He has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome & necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate & pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; & when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them, & formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly & continually for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time after such dissolutions to cause others to be elected, whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise, the state remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without & convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, & raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has suffered the administration of justice totally to cease in some of these states refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made our judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, & the amount & payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices by a self assumed power and sent hither swarms of new officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us in times of peace standing armies and ships of war without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of, & superior to the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions & unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; for protecting them by a mock-trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states; for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world; for imposing taxes on us without our consent; for depriving us of the benefits of trial by jury; for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences; for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging it's boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these states; for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments; for suspending our own legislatures, & declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here withdrawing his governors, and declaring us out of his allegiance & protection.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, & destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation & tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, & conditions of existence.

He has incited treasonable insurrections of our fellow-citizens, with the allurements of forfeiture & confiscation of our property.

He has waged cruel war against human nature itself violating it's most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of INFIDEL powers, is the warfare of the CHRISTIAN king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he also obtruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the LIBERTIES of one people, with the crimes which he urges them to commit against the LIVES of another. (Jefferson 19-22)

He closes out with a final grievance, not against the king, but against the English people themselves.

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend a jurisdiction over these our states. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration & settlement here, no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension: that these were effected at the expense of our blood & treasure, unassisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain: that in constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted one common king, thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league & amity with them: but that submission to their parliament was no part of our constitution, nor ever in idea, if history may be credited: and, we appealed to their native justice and magnanimity as well as to the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which were likely to interrupt our connection and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice & of consanguinity, and when occasions have been given them, by the regular course of their laws, of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony, they have, by their free election, re-established them in power. At this very time too they are permitting their chief magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch & foreign mercenaries to invade & destroy us. (Jefferson 22-23)

If these grievances sound familiar, it is because many of the same grievances show up in the sermons examined earlier and in many of the secular political writings also examined. Jefferson brings together the rhetorical device of grievance and petition with the rhetorical device of presenting the colonies on the side of justice and innocence in one of the most powerful political documents in history, providing every scholar today with a concise statement of what the

rhetorical and physical wars were really about. He was the culmination of everything the colonists had been trying to work through in the years leading up to the war, the culmination of the most important parts of both religious and civil rhetoric surrounding tyranny, and the culmination of the time in which the colonists bore with Britain's oppressions for the hope of peace. His declaration was the final spark that lit the flame of Revolution, but behind him stood the revolutionaries of both the civil and religious spheres from decades past and contemporary times, and with the multitude of witnesses to stand up, the people joined the cause against tyranny and fought a war that went down in history as the dawn of freedom in America.

Chapter Four: Drawing It All Together

Further Study and the Importance of These Sorts of Studies to Grasping the Roots

As mentioned in the introduction, there is a great deal left to explore regarding this pivotal rhetorical event in American history. Many scholars have made important contributions to both sides of the discussion, and some have begun to bridge the divide to begin examining the intersection between the two as this paper sought to do. However, many more studies are needed, particularly ones that examine the intersections between the political rhetoric of both secular and religious groups. Until these studies are brought into the discussion, understanding the roots of the war's rhetorical movement will remain elusive for anyone studying only one side of the discussion.

There are many areas that this paper could not explore, such as the English Civil War's rhetoric and its impact on the American Revolutionaries or the Scottish Enlightenment. One thing that becomes increasingly clear the more I delve into this topic is that it is one of interdisciplinary significance. It is impossible to narrow it down to a single field and state that the field is the only one we need to study. Similarly, it is impossible to understand the movement if it is viewed in a vacuum. It is tempting for scholars of rhetoric to narrow their focus onto one subject so closely that the rest is excluded. Given the vast nature of the study, this is an understandable temptation. It would be difficult to gain a minute understanding of every influence on the period even in a lifetime of study, so it is reasonable that scholars focus their attentions on one specific area in order to gain mastery there.

This does become problematic, though, if scholars remain in that lane with blinders on and never seek to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the rhetorical moment or movement they are studying in relation to other moments or movements around it. An in-depth knowledge of these related moments is not needed, but a basic understanding of what happened and why ought to be had in order to grasp how one's own field relates. Sometimes, we as scholars tend to forget that studying the American Revolution does not mean we can exclude other portions of history from that exploration. It was not an event that stood on its own; prior movements had an impact. In order to understand our own field, we must broaden the scope to understand that impact. We do not have to become experts in the Scottish Enlightenment as well to understand the roots of the American Revolution's rhetorical movement, but we do need to have some basic understanding of the prior movement if we want to grasp the one we *are* studying.

My encouragement here in this closing chapter is first for scholars to join me in attempting to broaden the scope so that we can better grasp the full range of influences on this period's rhetorical movement. We become so narrowly focused that we often miss that full range to play only one note, and others follow in our footsteps. We are encouraged within the scholarly community, particularly for a thesis like this one or for a dissertation, to narrow our focus. That is not poor advice and is essential to writing anything. The scope must be defined. It is not my intent here to blame individual scholars for doing this. However, with such a vast array of influences to study and so many scholars studying it in the secular world, it seems reasonable to think that more blended approaches, such as the two papers covered at the end of my own literature review, should be more common. It seems rational to think that more people would narrow their focus in on the combination of sources when the primary source records are so

intertwined themselves. That is not, however, what seems to be happening. Secular scholars and religious scholars alike seem to narrow their lane so much that as a whole group, they end up excluding areas that should be in the scope of the scholarship as a broad community. Individuals may focus only on one thing to the exclusion of others out of necessity, but the entire community should be providing a rich examination of all influences, not the ones cherry picked based on the community's preference. Doing this encourages less and less scholarship of an interdisciplinary nature or utilizing a blended approach. It makes new scholars feel that there is an established set of source material they may use if they want to fit into one community or the other, and to go outside of it feels dangerous and tenuous. For those seeking to enter the halls of scholarship, it is tempting to remain in the lane established for the community as a whole that they wish to enter to the exclusion of material that they might otherwise have considered. Worse still, it can lead to blinders on the new scholars too. They might not avoid the material out of fear that the community will reject them; they may avoid it because it never occurs to them to go looking for material in support of their topic in the sources from the other community. It is not necessarily an active, concerted effort on the part of individuals to waylay discussion and redirect it away from a particular set of influences, but the end result of a community that insists on narrowing the scope to only one set of influences deemed *the* key influences or the only acceptable and acknowledged set of influences is a community whose scholarship is anemic and deficient at a broader level. It leaves out part of the narrative on either side, whether by active intent or by innocent lack of awareness in new scholars entering the community due to the community's failure previously to discuss or acknowledge other influences. A detail-oriented approach is not a bad thing on an individual level, but it is a problem when we as scholarly communities do not step out of the mold at times to conduct a broader exploration alongside our more detail-oriented,

microscopic examinations. It is imperative to our understanding that we sometimes remember to step outside of our bubble to connect our work more clearly with the big picture lest we cause other scholars to narrow the focus too much or our readers to misunderstand the nature and extent of the influence our area of study had on that broader picture.

As scholars, we have made it our lifelong pursuit to study and to acquire knowledge first and then, secondarily, to pass it on to others—whoever those others may be. That is a worthy goal, and it is one we all should take seriously. However, we ought to take care that in that second stage of passing that knowledge on, we do it in a way that reveals the scope of our own work, its full implications, and what we are not able to establish with what we are sharing. Too often, caught up by our own excitement over our area of research, we forget that last, and as noted in the introductory chapter, this can create a serious problem because, in our enthusiasm, we may lead readers to believe that our research establishes more than it does. Worse still, we may lead other scholars to believe the same and encourage them to put blinders on, avoiding the areas of influence or research that we couldn't delve into but deem equally important to the study. We give a false impression of the importance our studied influences may have had on the event in question if we fail to acknowledge the areas of research and influence that we could not cover. Laying claim to our accomplishments is no more important than admitting to the claims we cannot establish—regardless of whether we would like to or not. I have striven to do this in my own work by admitting to both what is outside the paper's scope—things I may know but do not have room to share—and what I cannot prove—things which I do not know or do not yet have enough evidence to claim in any confidence, and I would like to encourage others to do the same as we are all seeking to explore the Revolutionary War as a rhetorical movement. Together,

we can all contribute something critical to the discussion while reminding our readers that we do not have all the answers and that it is necessary to continue studying, both for us and for them.

Taking a Blended Approach to the Narrative

Here, I would like to take a moment to encourage fellow scholars and those who will follow after us to do something that seems, so far, rare in both religious and secular scholarly communities. Take a blended approach to the narrative. By this, I mean to take the primary sources in their entirety as your textbook on the movement. Read what others have to say, but compare it to what you are seeing in the sources themselves. Look for all the influences first, not just those your community traditionally focuses on, and then choose which ones you are able to focus upon for the scope of your work. Never take someone else's word for it, and do not focus your research purely on either secular or religious sources. Use both. The sources are intricately intertwined; separating them only harms your ability to explain and grasp the rhetorical movement.

First and foremost, scholars are supposed to be learners and studiers of the truth. This means that we must owe our allegiance to that truth, whatever it is, before any desired narrative or outcome. It does not matter which side of the story you are on—secular or sacred. As a scholar, each of us has a duty to the truth that goes beyond what we might prefer the truth to be. We have a duty to speak it honestly. This means we must go beyond merely being honest about our area of study and what we have found. It means that if we have found that other areas of study influence our own area, we acknowledge those influences honestly—even when we may not like that they were influences or it may seem to weaken our own area's importance. This will not mean we spend the whole paper going in a thousand directions to trace every influence; if we

did that, we would have to spend the rest of our lives writing that paper and would still not have done with it when that life came to an end. However, it does mean taking the time to acknowledge that the scope is broader than our little area of discussion. It does mean that we acknowledge sources from both sides of the discussion—religious and secular—wherever relevant. It means we give more than a passing mention to both sides where they are significant to our topic. It should not matter to use whether the truth comes from a secular source or a religious one. The point should be to give credit where it is due, not to lead a reader to assume ours is the only area of influence that matters, whether by conscious intent or by mistake. We have a duty to have the integrity to acknowledge when sources we might not prefer to see as origin points were the original of the arguments we are now studying.

For this study, I have tried to do that as much as I could with the historical backdrop period in mentioning that the influence on the early pastors came from both secular and religious sources even though this paper establishes that those pastors were the major influence on a great deal of the political rhetoric in the Revolution. Even there, I have sought to acknowledge any points where it cannot be conclusively proven that the political writers were drawing from a given pastoral source exclusively. By doing so, I hope that readers—both fellow scholars and the public—will realize what can be proven and what cannot with what I have presented, thereby offering a broader, more realistic view of how my research fits in. It is this that I would encourage fellow scholars to do. Take a blended approach. In doing so, all of us will be better able to contribute to each other's grasp of the field and to the public's knowledge on the wider movement. Let us take care not to engage, intentionally or by accident, in a plagiarism of ideas where we cut out the original source of the idea and assign it to a source more suited to our side of the discussion's preferences. We may not mean to do this, but when our entire circle of

scholarship fails to study an entire area of influence—particularly if it is an area that influenced the areas we do study—that is what we do. It is dangerous to do such a thing, and it destroys any hope of our grasping the movement’s roots. Nor is it honest. Our integrity as scholars is rooted in our honesty about our area of expertise and what we know regarding it; let us not destroy that integrity by refusing or simply failing through neglect to take a balanced, blended approach to the narrative that can acknowledge both sets of sources where they were influential without bias to one or the other based upon personal preferences.

The Importance to the American Evangelical Church

Here, I want to turn my attention to the importance of the project to the American church. While this project has significance to the scholarly community as a bridge between the two sides of scholarship, it also has great significance to the American Evangelical church. Often in these circles, the Revolution is looked back upon with wistful fondness or bold passion. We want to be like *that* church, influencing the politics and culture in a manner that produced a radical conception of liberty that created an experiment never before imagined in history. In the North, we can’t even imagine having such an influence however passionate we may be about it. In the South, there is still a culture of Christianity and a strong influence, but even that is nowhere close to the influence of the church in New England during the Revolutionary War. People often pay lip service to the old ways and attend church because it is the thing to do and expected in their way of life, something which is one step ahead of the North where those people simply don’t attend at all. Many still possess fervor in the South for the Judeo-Christian principles we were founding on, but the battle that was lost in the North is now on the doorstep of the South, and if care is not taken with respect to the church’s approach to that battle, it will be lost there, just as it

was lost in the portion of the country I grew up in. Unfortunately, however fond we are of the past, we seem to have a fundamental misunderstanding of what it was the church then did to gain that influence. If we want to have and retain that influence toward a society built on morality and Judeo-Christian values surrounding freedom and government, we are going to need to understand how it was gained and the nature of it.

This paper was unable to explore every aspect of the influence the pastors and their work had. It was not the focus, really, of the work. However, I hope that through examining the themes and language of the sermons it will become readily apparent that the pastors focused first on teaching the theological basis of liberty to *believers* not on changing the culture directly. While their work often dealt with matters of politics, it began with pastors grounding themselves in a study of philosophy and theology and then teaching the people the same. Only after the people had a solid grasp of the two did the pastors delve into the way that both applied to politics and culture. If we place politics and culture at the center of our preaching today instead of the Bible, theology, and philosophy, we invert the structure that the early American church used.

This paper and other studies of the political sermons of this period are pivotal to the church's understanding of the movement because they demonstrate to us exactly what and how pastors were preaching to have such an impact on so many minds. First and foremost, they were preaching Scripture. Not political agendas, not philosophical opinions. Scripture. While it is important we also recognize that politics had a place in the pulpit, even openly political sermons began first with a non-political, strict examination of the passages that the preacher hoped to build upon later in making his point about the political situation. The Scripture and theology were the foundation, not politics. Politics and culture provided one of many areas of life that they applied Scripture to, but let us be careful not to make politics and culture the primary that they

built upon instead of theology itself. Here, we examined only the sermons that dealt with the intersection between faith and civic duties. However, there are many more sermons to study that dealt with other issues, and even in this selection, some such as the sermon on Nineveh, show us that the focus was first on the spiritual condition of both the people and the civil leaders and then on effecting political change. Even John Witherspoon, the Founding Father who was responsible for much of the country's early monetary and fiscal policies, told the people in his 1776 sermon that his concern was first with their souls and spiritual understanding, not with the politics of the day. In fact, he told his listeners that he only chose to speak up about the political scene from the pulpit because he believed that where civil liberty went, there religious liberty would follow. He viewed it as an important topic precisely because he believed the Bible had a great deal to say about the current situation and because he believed the security of his people's ability to worship in spirit and in truth relied upon securing their civil liberties first.

The American evangelical church can learn from this to put an end to the backwards approach we have been taking in order to adopt the approach these pastors took. We took the approach these Revolutionary church leaders had and have turned it on its head to worry about the secular world before we worry about the spiritual condition of our own pew-dwellers. That is a recipe for failure, not success. It must start within, and a serious consideration of the rhetorical movement in Revolutionary America demonstrates that is precisely how the movement came about. Before the war there was revival. That revival paved the way for the change in sentiment and religious perspective that Adams refers to in his letter to Hezekiah Niles in February 1818. It was that perspective shift Adams credits with bringing about the physical war.

If the church truly believes as so many of the Founders did that where civil liberty goes religious liberty follows, then we *must* take up the mantle left to us and start focusing on our job.

Our job is not to turn the government into an institution that respects our rights. As Americans following after our forebearers, we are grateful to have that privilege through our election process. However, our forebearers were also guaranteed a right to liberty that was then stolen from them, and they still recognized that their focus had to be on the people's minds and hearts, not on the political machine. They dealt with the Bible, the heart of man, and how man viewed the world as a churchgoer first. Then they applied theology to the political scene to make practical application. They did not begin with the politics and shore up their politics with Scripture. Those who did that were on the opposite side of the Revolution, in most cases. That was the approach of the majority of the Anglican church's clergy because to err in political allegiance with the king was to commit a grave religious sin against the church. The Revolutionary pastors understood that their allegiance stood first with Scripture and then with whichever political movement most aligned with their understanding of Scripture; that was why they joined the Revolution. They did not join the Revolution without Scriptural backing and then go in search of the theological grounds for it after.

If this study establishes anything for the church, it should be that the shift in rhetoric followed the change in hearts. When hearts were cold in the church, the pastors were preaching the concepts of liberty and repentance in relation to the colonies, not England. When hearts began to warm and change began, the pastors shifted slightly to focus on a continuance of the right attitude in the people and on the appropriate response to the tyranny beginning to appear from England. When hearts were turned fully toward what was good and right, pastors began to urge them not to do anything that would turn away God's blessing and then to preach against tyranny and abuse as a perversion of the rightful authority they had spent decades preaching about. We can learn from this that the concern must first be with God's laws and precepts and

then, only after those are firmly established in our churchgoers' minds, on how they may be practically applied to the culture and political scene of the day. To invert this is to see the abysmal failure of the church and its utter lack of any true power because, ultimately, her power rests in her ability to spread the Word of God to a blind, dark, lost world, not in her ability to lobby and shout over the voices of those clamoring for wickedness. They clamor for it the same as they did in the days of our forefathers, and the response of our forefathers was to deal with a cold, dead church that allowed it before they turned their attention to the political structure that enforced it. It does us no good to turn our attention to the political and cultural machines that allow tyranny and destruction of our core principles if the body that has historically done the most to defend against both stands aside and shrugs. That is what the Founders realized. That is what these pastors realized. It is what we too need to realize now, before it is too late.

The church today, particularly in the North and Midwest, has lost much of the influence they once had in many ways because they chose to subvert the order of things. Souls come first. If we attempt to build a godly system of government upon a rotten society, we will fail. If we attempt to clean up culture without addressing the foul spring of culture's rotten ideals within the hearts of the people, we will fail. God gave us one imperative in the Gospels. It was not to fix culture or government. It was to reach souls. That is what these pastors started with, and it was on this foundation of souls reached and shaken to the core that the Revolutionary pastors built. If we want the influence they had, we would do well to study not just what has been examined in this paper regarding what they were preaching but to go further and examine the movement as a whole and the shift in the hearts of the people to understand what our mission ought to be and how we ought to go about it. We have ample examples of our duty and the appropriate approach all throughout Scripture and history. We have only to stop ignoring it, clean house, and then

shine as the light we were called to be if we wish to see a similar outpouring of God's power on us.

Perhaps we can save a nation that is headed to destruction. Perhaps not. That is not our goal, though. Our aim is to reach the cold hearts of our own people first and then to reach the hearts of the lost around us. True, we are doing so in a less religious setting than the Revolutionary pastors were. It makes it much harder in some ways because our culture is often hostile even to the veneer of religion. In other ways, we have it easier. In the days of the Revolution when everyone went to church and had a semblance of holiness, it was much harder to convince them of the need for true change; they were good enough as they were in their opinions. Today, even in some of the more religiously minded segments of America, thousands have never even heard that there is a Savior and thousands have seen the hopelessness of living in depravity. They are much quicker to see the need for truth and meaning in many ways, and this makes our job easier in so many cases. Sharing and then praying for God to enact a change is often easier with those who know they would be a sinner under God's law than with those who believe they have it all sorted out.

We should not discount God's ability to reach our generation in the same way He reached theirs, but if we want Him to do it, then we need to make sure we are not the cause for Him to withhold His grace. We must stop using manmade constructs to try to force the change that was the natural outpouring of a repentant people and faithful preachers of God's Word acting in accord with their natures. Focus on obedience and repentance for past disobedience, then when that has come, worry about preaching on how to apply theology and Scripture to the political issues of the day. That is the message that we see in the early rhetoric of the Revolutionary period. Repent and obey. Pray. Uphold righteous authority. Then, in the final stages, resist

tyrants who seek to pervert God's natural order and preach on how all that went before now relates to the political and cultural situations we face. We cannot start with "resist" when it is the final stage, not the foundation. To do so is to build on sand, and we can expect nothing but that the ocean of culture and tyrannical inclination will wash the house away. Build the foundation first. We must make sure we are not in the way of God's outflow of grace if we wish any hope for our nation. The message to the church here is "get out of the way." Make repentance and personal faith in God's redemptive power the focus of both life and outreach, and then get out of the way to let God move. Don't put politics and cultural issues first if God's help in the battle is truly the aim. That is the significance of this project for the American Evangelical church. It is a call to us to repent and obey just as the pastors issued that call to their own congregations, and then it is a plea to engage in a more Biblical way that puts the foundation where it belongs—the God who will fight the battle. If we heed the call, we too can see the power of God in a way we once felt might be firmly relegated to the past and impossible today.

Further Areas for Study and Consideration

Finally, I want to close with a brief overview of areas that need further study and consideration. As I mentioned early on in this thesis, there are many areas I was unable to explore in this paper. These areas, such as the Scottish Enlightenment or English Civil War, are equally deserving of study as they relate to the Revolutionary War particularly. However, I think there is more study needed on the topic this paper did cover as well. I sought to establish here that there was an influence by showing the rhetorical shift in the sermons, which predates the same shift in the secular movement. This, I believe, has been well-proven by now. However, what remains to be shown fully is the extent and nature of that influence. More study could be

done on who influenced these pastors, how natural law came to be a major force in the colonies within the pulpit, and how far the influence extends.

It would also be useful to consider what the Founders themselves had to say about the nature of the influence. Here, the goal was only to demonstrate parallels and connections, not to prove that all those parallels were present due to a religious influence. However, given the number of close friendships between pastoral figures or war chaplains and various Founders, it would bear further consideration to explore those connections to understand the nature of the influence from the perspective of those Founders who did have close friendships like this.

Another pivotal area connected with friendships that bears further study would be the connections between various Founders and pastoral figures as mentors. There are several well-known Founders who sat under the preaching of influential pastors from the generation just before the war, and some, such as Patrick Henry, credit those pastors for influencing their oratory and developing their grasp of public speaking. Examining such connections could uncover pivotal information about the influence pastors and their sermon rhetoric exerted over the political leaders of the war generation.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, further study of the Bible as an influential text common to both groups is needed. One of the studies reviewed in this paper's literature review delved into this connection very strongly, establishing how it was used by the Revolution's political writers, but more studies of similar nature are needed to examine the text that both sides used. Some of the commonalities may be explained by a more fundamental influence than sermons on political speech or political speech on sermons; they may have a common grounding in the text that both studied and used to ground arguments. As such, studying the King James Version specifically alongside the rhetoric from both religious and secular groups would allow a

better grasp of the extent to which the fundamental text common to both groups influenced them independent of the other.

All of these areas are ones in need of more study from a blended perspective that gives voice to the plethora of influences that shaped the country's birth. I would encourage scholars reading this to go beyond what I have done here to offer the academic community and the public more research on these areas that seem, to date, relatively neglected in scholarship from a blended, unbiased perspective. I hope that this study will spark many others like it in the future, and I look forward to seeing how others in scholarly circles will build out the body of research on the Revolution that we have now to include more interdisciplinary and blended studies of the movement.

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