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The Concept of Freedom in American Literature at the Dawn of the Nation

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The Concept of Freedom in American Literature at the Dawn of the Nation

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Liberal Arts
with concentration in American Studies
Department of Humanities & Cultural Studies
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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes American literature dedicated to the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and the events which led to it. The overarching goal of the analysis is to lay out a coherent account of the concept of freedom in American literature of that time period. To reach this goal I will use *The Second Treatise of Government* by John Locke as a main philosophical text, which outlines the key elements of political freedom. As main literature pieces of the selected time period, *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine and *The Liberty Song* were chosen. I will also use multiple songs by various authors where different aspects of the issue are being touched upon. The research shows that different parts of this thesis were covered separately by numerous authors. This thesis attempts to establish the connection between major philosophical, political and fictional texts in order to understand the general mood of the American people at the dawn of the nation. The people of the United States of America are being divided right now over major political, social and economy issues. That is why it is so important to look back at the beginning to try and see what united these people in the first place, on which principles people stood, on which they chose to live by, and for which they were ready to die.

INTRODUCTION

The overarching goal of my thesis is to show how political philosophy is disseminated among the common folk, how complicated ideas about freedom and government building are spread through simpler literature – political pamphlets and patriotic songs around the period of the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783). I turn to popular prose and songs from that period, because unlike the philosophical works which represent the ideas of the elite, the prose and poetry has more direct influence on the feelings, beliefs and values of the folk. It was a great privilege to be able to read works of John Locke, Thomas Hobbs, Robert Filmer, William Barclay. However, through listening and singing to those songs, people would internalize complex philosophical structures in much simpler relatable terms. I plan to show it, illustrating with examples from the literature, how the presence of freedom affects the formation of civic society. With my findings I will demonstrate that Liberty (freedom in its political and civic sense), which was put as the second unalienable right in the Declaration of Independence, was a core value to the commonwealth. I will try to prove that freedom is not something spontaneously constructed by the government once and for all, but it is a long arduous process, which requires the continuous and relentless engagement of the people. Freedom as an idea has been constructed not only by the statesmen in the Congress but also by the people in their bedrooms, plantations, in the picket lines, battlefields, taverns and voting places. After all, if it was not the case, it would not become “the land of the free and the home of the brave”.

My thesis will have two parts. In the first part, I will describe the basic philosophical framework concerning liberty and freedom as constructed by 17th century philosopher John Locke. I will examine how freedom was defined particularly by John Locke, as he was the most influential political philosopher for the early American period. The second part will closely examine a couple of popular literary works and analyze them in terms of their concepts of freedom, relating them back to their elite, philosophical counterpart. I will turn my attention to a political pamphlet *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine, mainly because of its extraordinary popularity at that time and its pioneer role in American patriotic literature. I will also do a close reading of a fiction text, *The Liberty Song* by John Dickinson. This piece was selected for its novelty and popularity as well. Both of these writings serve as a perfect example of how Lockean idea of political freedom (and everything upon which it relies) were omnipresent in political writings of the time around the American Revolutionary War.

The reason why I am focusing on the period of the American Revolution and a couple of decades prior, is because people start to pay attention to freedom, value it, along with trying to articulate it, both when society tries to define itself and also when it faces the threat of losing freedom. Therefore, the main focus of my thesis will be the timeframe around the early American period. The time when the future United States of America fought for the right to be an independent nation, against the hegemony of the British Empire; the establishment of the new government, restructure of the relationship between the government and the people.

But before we dive into the main body, I need to set some limitations to the topic of my discussion, explain what sources I will be using and why; and which aspects of that time will be left unexplored. Firstly, I should explain that every time I will be using the term “freedom” or “liberty” I will mean the same thing – a political aspect of freedom, a term which signifies a type

of relationship between people and the government. Neither at the time of John Locke, my first major source, nor at the time of the American Revolution, these two terms were as separate as they are now. “Liberty” and “freedom” were used interchangeably, which will be shown in the subsequent chapters.

Secondly, as main sources for my project I have picked *The Second Treatise of Government* by John Locke, *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine and *The Liberty Song* by John Dickinson. The Second Treatise of Government provides a philosophical cornerstone for this thesis, as it does for the structure of the U.S. government and the principles that it stands on. Nonetheless, Locke was not the only major influencer for the definition of the American concept of freedom. Other people of the Enlightenment certainly had their part in shaping the colonial, and then American, political thought: David Hume spent a lot of ink to define whether people are free in their actions; Thomas Hobbes worked a lot on defining government, its role and what relationship do people have with their absolute ruler; or Jean Jacques Rousseau, who also set his account of social contract, society, state of Nature and property – all relevant issues for our discussion. However, Lockean ideas were proven to be more viable for the documents upon which the U.S. still operates to this day. For example, Hume was not incorporated because he mostly philosophizes about different aspects of freedom, which is discussed in the following chapters: in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* he is concerned with metaphysics of liberty and its compatibility with necessity. Hobbes did not fit properly into the project mostly because of his confidence in the absolute ruler. Rousseau’s ideas were not used mainly because he argued in *The Social Contract* that private property is not an inalienable right within the society. I am not trying to diminish their ideas and their impact on the development of the western civilization and the U.S. in particular, but unfortunately the number of pages is limited, and I would rather concentrate on one major text than cover the

bits of all of these fundamental works using exponentially more secondary sources to analyze them.

As for the Paine's *Common Sense* the text was chosen because of how widespread it was at the time (and remains rather popular even today). Also, because it was the first political pamphlet that boldly called for the Independence, while also mirroring Lockean ideas, and proposing a rather detailed schematic of the future American government. Moreover, *Common Sense* serves a triple purpose – (1) alike *Second Treatise*, it is a political work that represents an account of freedom, (2) retrospectively it can be viewed as an account of freedom represented in the American literature, (3) and, because of its popularity among the commonwealth, it is the account of freedom (and everything that it is built upon), which became prevalent and helped to forge the American nation.

Decision to do a close reading of *The Liberty Song* by Dickinson was based partly on the character of the author and on the merits of the song. To put it briefly, Dickinson was not only proclaiming ideas in his song or his political prose (as in *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*), but when the time came, he became a soldier and fought for the ideas that he genuinely believed in. So, when in the song the verse talks about willingness to die for freedom, the author means it. To set the author's figure aside, the song captures the time when it was written and the mood of the people (as Dickinson was an elected official on multiple occasions). The song was also extremely popular – was published in different colonies, issued in three different additions (see Appendices), and was mocked by the British, as they composed a deriding version of it. At last, it was one of the first songs, which were composed as a response to the events which are regarded as a starting point for the American Revolution.

Thirdly, now, that we have established what type of freedom will be discussed on the following pages, as well as the main sources were justified, it is time to discuss the limitations of this paper according to the main goal. This thesis is foremost a philological work, as it tries to show what concept of freedom is in the Revolutionary period and how it is represented in American literature – *Common Sense* serves as a prominent example of the political literature and *The Liberty Song* represents a work of fiction. Furthermore, a large variety of songs are being injected into the first two chapters on Locke and Paine, to illustrate that their ideas were living outside their texts and influenced a much larger number of people. This thesis is not trying to be a comprehensive account of the taken time period, nor it tries to engage into disputes among the politicians about what exactly type of government they should erect. I am mostly paying attention to the ideas that were prominent enough, so they were represented in the patriotic songs, were a part of a public discussion, not only among the delegates of different Congresses.

Another important issue that is largely omitted in this project is the huge gap between proclaimed freedom and actual freedom that different groups of society had in the colonies or achieved even after the Revolution. Although *The Second Treatise of Government*, among other texts of the Enlightenment, expresses respect for the person's property and for the Natural law, it did not preclude colonists from slaughtering Native Americans or taking away their land. It was also a mundane thing for them to own slaves. Even Locke himself, while working on *The Second Treatise*, wrote a Constitution for the colony of Carolina, which allowed to have slaves and have absolute power and authority over them¹. Neither Native Americans, nor black people were able

¹ Lepore, Jill. *These Truths: a History of the United States*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2019. pp. 61-62

to enjoy freedom, which were proclaimed by Locke, Paine, Dickinson or even the U.S. Constitution.

This hypocrisy, especially from the modern point of view, was not exclusive towards non-white peoples. Neither women of the colonies could exercise their, supposedly innate, freedom on par with men. *The Second Treatise of Government* does not explicitly say that women should be excluded from the public sphere, nor it tries to claim that women cannot own private property. Although, there are clues that illustrate women's state at the time. For example, Locke lays out what kind of relationship and responsibilities should be between the family members. At first, he says that children should listen to and revere both parents equally. However, he later clarifies that in an argument between a husband and his wife, the last word should be of a husband's, as he is "abler and stronger"². So, basically, women's position and wellbeing rely only on the good will of her husband. And this state of affairs, unprotected by law, can lead to a rather quandary. I am touching upon this because women did not have any rights or protection under the law and were completely excluded from the public sphere until 1920, when they got the right to vote. Hence, got the representation, which they were entitled to for their taxation – exactly what the colonists fought for, back during the American Revolution.

All these people were excluded from exercising in full the type of freedom which was proclaimed by different political figures of the time, the one that got mirrored in the patriotic songs during the revolutionary events. Even a quick glance at the history will show the discrepancy between the idealistic ideas of freedom and the reality of oppression. These are all important issues,

² John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. from *The Works of John Locke. A New Edition, Corrected*. In Ten Volumes. Vol. V. London: Printed for Thomas Tegg; W. Sharpe and Son; G. Offor; G. and J. Robinson; J. Evans and Co.: Also R. Griffin and Co. Glasgow; and J. Gumming, Dublin. 1823. p. 139

but those idealistic ideas incentivized the Forefathers to construct the U.S. Constitution in such way, that people did not need to change it in order to include previously excluded groups – just interpret the words differently and specify what was needed. That is why I will be focusing on that idealistic overarching concept of freedom, which we can see in the texts of the Enlightenment, in the late Colonial period and the times of the American Revolutionary War. As that concept of freedom, although allowed people to abuse it, enthroned this country to be the leader and protector of the free world.

Today, the United States as well as the whole world, is standing in the middle of another power struggle between the two civilizations, systems of morals and the worldview – Democracy and Totalitarianism. Which is exactly why we should look back at the time when the American nation was first born and began its journey to become the leader of the free world. What was driving those people in the end of the 18th century to become an independent nation from the British Empire, what was their motivation for going to battle, what were they thinking plowing their land, looking at the flag, humming the revolutionary song? What were their morals, which brought the nation to the point that we are now? I will try to define on what values did the people were standing. The sense of freedom is shaped by other ethical norms and sets of values, such as respect for another person's life and property, trust in people with whom you interact every day, common value of honesty. By sharing those beliefs and values people create the common ground, a community of people with whom you empathize. It all leads to the shared sense of the future, to willingness to stand for that future, sacrifice for it – this is how the nation is being born. And especially in the times of uncertainty like today we should go back and remind ourselves of what brought us together, do we still share those core beliefs and values, what are we standing for, why are we still together and should we?

CHAPTER 1:

LOCKE ON FREEDOM

In the *Second Treatise of Government*, John Locke gives a solid account of how government should function, its limitations, the rights of citizens, and the ends of government. He articulates the roots of freedom, different types of it, what it means to be free in a society, what obligations people have for protecting and insuring their freedom, what threatens their freedom and what may happen if one society positions itself in the state of war against another one. His treatise is of interest in our work because we can see on what grounds the people of America started to have quarrels with Britain and eventually decided to declare independence. I discuss Locke and his views because he is one of the most influential thinkers for the formation of the United States government system. His Essay is also pertinent because the delegates from the colonies for the Continental congress opposing Stamp Act and Townshend Act were drawing their arguments specifically from *Second Treatise of Government*. One of those delegates was John Dickinson, a lawyer, politician and an author of *The Liberty Song* – one of the very first patriotic American songs, which will be discussed in its own chapter.

In this section, I will try to give a comprehensive summary of Locke's views on the government and commonwealth relevant to the issue of this research, the concept of freedom in terms of the relationship between the people and the government. First, I will briefly outline how, according to Locke, people form society, for what purposes, and what consequences they face in terms of the issue of Natural rights. Second, I discuss the concept of freedom as it was understood

by John Locke. Where does freedom stem from, the meaning of it under the Natural law and the laws of the commonwealth. This chapter will serve as an outline of Locke's ideas about freedom, which will help to provide the context for the chapter with a close reading of the main fiction text for this thesis – *The Liberty Song*. So, some of the ideas will be additionally covered in a direct connection with that song, e.g. the logic behind representation of the people, why the colonists thought that unjust taxation turns people from Freemen into slaves, and the natural right of the people to rebel against the government. Also, as I discuss Locke's ideas, I will provide fragments from different popular songs of the Revolutionary era to support the relevance of his ideas and to illustrate how his ideas, expressed in form of political philosophy essay and meant for selected highly educated group, are conveyed through art to the common folk.

Locke develops his argument about the politic society in the context of traditional Christian ideas about the Garden of Eden and the earliest chapters of Genesis. God created people and in their original state, people were perfectly free in their actions; they could dispose of themselves and their possessions however they wanted, bounded only by the “law of Nature”, one of the central concepts of Locke's works, which has existed before Locke and meant that there are certain moral rules which are applicable to all people³.

“what estate all men are naturally in, and that is, a state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of Nature, without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man.”⁴

³ Although, Natural law is not just setting the extent of the application of rules, covering all people. It also involves a set of claims about the natural order of the world as ordained by God. Natural law represents a rational order in accord with God's plan.

⁴ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. from *The Works of John Locke. A New Edition, Corrected*. In Ten Volumes. Vol. V. London: Printed for Thomas Tegg; W. Sharpe and Son; G. Offor; G. and J. Robinson; J. Evans and Co.: Also R. Griffin and Co. Glasgow; and J. Gumming, Dublin. 1823. p. 106

There was no one to command over people except for God. Everyone was created equal in the state of Nature: not in the terms of physical strength or mental capacity, but without subordination or subjection. People were brought into this world as the same species and rank, without subordination or subjection to live using all the God-given abilities of mind and body. However, people differ in those qualities and abilities that they are born with and which they develop along the course of life. Person's age, acquired knowledge and skills, mental capacity and virtues can give one person a certain advantage⁵. Although Locke does not mention it, gender may also contribute to having a precedencey.

So, the state of Nature is limited only by the command not to harm another person's life, health, liberty or possessions. God has created people and everything around, thus everything including people is His property, so no one can destroy what He created. The only excuse to take someone's life or do some damage to their body or goods is to protect oneself from the offender, the person who broke this fundamental law of Nature for their own pleasure. And as the offender broke that law, that person declared to live by another law, contradicting the law of Nature⁶. That person should be punished, not only for transgressing against a particular person's life and well-being, but for going against the whole system set up by God. If this trespassing were to be left unpunished, it would mean that this law of Nature is in vain. In other words, everyone should live equally by this same law of Nature and punish evil, because, otherwise, everyone will do as they please and it will be impossible to ensure peace and safety. The clear disadvantage of such a system is that people are not great at unbiased judgement, especially when it comes to dealing with their

⁵ *Two Treatises of Government*. p. 127

⁶ Unlike the laws of physics, the Natural law is a set of moral truths, thus it can be transgressed.

own desires, property, and actions. People tend to judge in their own favor, or in favor of their relatives or friends, as opposed to a less known person or a complete stranger. In order to restrain such partiality, Locke argues that God has urged people to erect a government, where (ideally) representatives of the people express their general concerns and not their personal interests, and where cases are judged by impartial people, who are distant from both sides of the matter. A deep reverence for the law and incentive to oppose the lawless acts can be found in many patriotic songs from the period of the American revolution or the events that predated it. One of the examples, which will be presented in this chapter, is *The New Massachusetts Liberty Song*, where from the first verse we can hear the call to oppose the Tyrants: *guard your Rights, Americans! nor stoop to lawless Sway*⁷.

Locke's argument is more or less as follows: the state of Nature ceases to exist and gives way to "the politic society", he explains, when people mutually agree to form/enter into a community that lives by the same rules, and that forms one body politic.

So, while there is a clear joy in the total freedom of the state of Nature, based simply on sole control over one's own possessions and the ability to punish transgressors of Natural law, it also has downsides. The main flaws of the state of Nature stem from its lack of stability, given the limited resources any individual has to actually protect their own property. That is, while one does, in fact, have unlimited rights to protect own property, the means available to any particular person are rather limited. In fact, Locke argues that these flaws are significant enough that people are compelled by necessity to eventually leave the state of Nature and unite into "politic society". When one joins a community, both the individual and the community grow stronger through

⁷ Lawrence, Vera B. *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents : Harmonies and Discords of the First Hundred Years*. Macmillan, New York, 1975., p. 37; by Dr. Joseph Warren (1770).

mutual support. So, the reason to join the politic society, according to Locke, stems from the necessity to protect one's possessions, life, and (ultimately) freedom⁸. Given this conception of the need for society, we can move on to discuss the concept of freedom in Locke's work, which will prove central to the idea of freedom in the popular songs to be discussed in the final chapter.

In order to provide an account of the concept of political freedom expressed in Locke's *The Second Treatise of Government*, we should first establish the meaning of freedom for Locke in general. Locke has dedicated a separate essay to theory of freedom, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. In this *Essay* he theorizes about the nature of personal freedom. Locke offered a connection between freedom and action and forbearance, stated the difference between motion and action, raised the question of free will and what it determines. He has had a major influence on research in psychology and philosophy on this account. To give the full account of personal freedom would mean to go far beyond the page limit and the topic of this thesis. I will state here concisely ideas the most pertinent for us.

Locke describes his idea of personal freedom in terms of ability to make or forbear from an action. This is how he puts it:

[T]he idea of liberty, is the idea of a power in any agent to do or forbear any action, according to the determination or thought of the mind, whereby either of them is preferred to the other;⁹

To paraphrase it, when a person has a choice to do something and/or withhold from an action and is able to act accordingly based on the inner thought process, such person is free. Firstly, worth noting that in Locke's texts there is no clear distinction between freedom and liberty, as we

⁸ *Two Treatises of Government*. p. 159-161

⁹ John Locke, *The Works of John Locke in Nine Volumes*, (London: Rivington, 1824 12th ed.). Vol. 1. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 225

tend to have now – using liberty in more political sense, and freedom as more connected to issues of human psychology and private life. This distinction has not been clear either in the times of the American Revolutionary war, as we can see from the songs. In the *American Freedom. A new Song* terms freedom and liberty are used almost back to back: ... 'tis Freedom that calls... in the first line, and ... 'tis Liberty calls... in the third line¹⁰.

Secondly, we should try to briefly unpack this definition of *Liberty* by providing some examples, which were used by Locke himself. The idea that the Agent has a Power to do or withhold from an action (i) means that a person locked in the room is not free in relation to leaving the room¹¹. Free action requires two components, mental and physical capacity. If an aforementioned person is able to wish to get out of the room and “command” the body to so, but cannot physically to do so – such person is not free in respect to leaving the room. This idea (i) also means that “when the Ball obeys the stroke of a Billiard-stick, it is not any action of the Ball, but bare passion”¹², as neither a ball, nor a cue has a power to act on their own, they are instruments in the hands of an Agent, who has the inner capacity and ability to make choices and act upon them. Or, to take another example, Locke writes, “[a] tennis-ball, whether in motion by the stroke of a racket, or lying still at rest, is not by any one taken to be a free agent”¹³. Hence, Locke distinguishes a motion and an action (or a lack of such). The fact that something is moving and affects other objects, does not mean that it acts (or does not move and forebears). Of course, it is

¹⁰ Lawrence, p. 55; here and further, if the author is not mentioned, then he is unknown, *North-Carolina Gazette* (July 7, 1775).

¹¹ More on this subject: Lowe 1986: p. 154–157; Stuart 2013: p. 420

¹² *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 222

¹³ *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 225

not nearly a comprehensive account of Lockean freedom, but it helps to establish some basic definitions and set the common understanding of the ideas explored below. That free will exists and people have an inherent potential to act freely, make their own choices according to the circumstances, is essential to Locke's conception of political freedom.

As we move from general potential for freedom to how freedom affects human lives and what it matters in relationships with other people, Locke described freedom as a fundamental right. He explains that if someone can take another person's freedom, he can take everything else from them.

He that in the state of Nature would take away the freedom that belongs to any one in that state must necessarily be supposed to have a design to take away everything else, that freedom being the foundation of all the rest;¹⁴

The root of the fundamentality of this right can be explained in different ways. Firstly, since God created people as equals, this implies that no one has jurisdiction or dominion over another. Thus, the freedom is an ability to act according only to own will, without the will or authority of another person. A second explanation is founded on the idea that, as God created people, we are all his property and so only He could take away what was given – life, possessions, or freedom. Thirdly, the idea of freedom is tightly connected with the philosophy of property, as possessions. Locke in the *Second Treatise of Government* argues that something becomes a person's property when it was obtained by the means of person's labor¹⁵. If a person belongs only to themselves (besides God), and not to someone else, then every ability, capacity, and skill that

¹⁴ *Two Treatises of Government*. p. 112

¹⁵ Although, it does not apply to slaves, as their lives and the products of their labor belong to their master. Nor to servants or employees later on, as they are working on behalf of the master/employer.

they have in their body is also their property, and thus mixing the work of their skilled hands with objects from Nature, i.e. in common possession, makes it their property¹⁶. So, from Locke's arguments it can be inferred that people are free because even if persons were not their own people, as God created them, people own themselves because while growing up they constantly mix the labor of their bodies with different objects to take care of themselves – they mature, learn and evolve by interacting with the world. Hence, they produce themselves as they are, annexing themselves from the default state in which they are being born, from the state of Nature.

But, no matter the reason why people are all born free and equal, either because of God, labor or both, we need to establish what does it actually mean to have freedom. There were multiple active notions of freedom or liberty during Locke's period. For instance, Locke mentions the definition of freedom of another British thinker of that time, Robert Filmer, who wrote that "A liberty for every one to do what he lists, to live as he pleases, and not to be tied by any laws." But neither Locke, nor the American society at large, really agreed with this view on the issue. Locke was convinced that freedom of people under the government or "liberty" means that everybody who is a part of society has no other restrictions or dominion upon them besides the legitimately created laws of that community. That is, laws must come from the legislative power that all the members of the society agreed to and put their trust into¹⁷. Liberty is not about acting as you please,

¹⁶ One of the reasons Locke pays so much attention to the idea of communal possession of land and the legal mechanism of making it one's property, was the Enclosure movement. It was a background process, taking part all over the Europe since 12th century, of consolidating communal lands into private fields. Beforehand, the land was private, when it was used during growing season; but other time it considered an occupied land for the purposes of the community, largely as a grazing for the village livestock.

¹⁷ The idea of people agreeing to the common laws can be traced to Thomas Hobbes' "social contract theory". Hobbs and Locke both point out that this agreement, although at first explicit, is implicit for the future generations and everyone who joins the society after its creation. The mere living and usage of the social goods is considered to be a consent to the laws of the society.

but to act in accordance to certain rules, common for every member of that society¹⁸. Locke believed that in the state of Nature people are governed by the law of reason, which restricts them from wrongdoing and channels them into general good, thus gives people freedom. Freedom derives from law not because it restricts you from acting in some way, but because it restricts others from harming you, your life, and your possessions. So, liberty, as an ability to form rules and stick to them, is something that defines humanity.

For liberty is to be free from restraint and violence from others, which cannot be where there is no law; ... But a liberty [means – MP] to dispose and order freely as he lists his person, actions, possessions, and his whole property within the allowance of those laws under which he is, and therein not to be subject to the arbitrary will of another, but freely follow his own.¹⁹

Although this ability to erect personal restrictions for the common good, a secure and prosperous commonwealth, is innate, the actual capability to do so is not – it is something that comes with tutelage, age, and experience. People are born with a potential to be free, but they are not free until they learn this law of reason and how to live by it, as no one can be bound by the law which they are unable to understand and follow

For God having given man an understanding to direct his actions, has allowed him a freedom of will and liberty of acting, as properly belonging thereunto within the bounds of that law he is under. But whilst he is in an estate wherein he has no understanding of his own to direct his will, he is not to have any will of his own to follow.²⁰

¹⁸ *Two Treatises of Government*. p. 114

¹⁹ *Two Treatises of Government*. p. 128

²⁰ *Two Treatises of Government*. p. 128

For as long as a person has no understanding of the law under which he operates, nor the limitations and consequences of own actions, he should not be viewed as a free person. Only after learning the limitations of the law, or, after reaching a certain age in which it is presumed that a person knows the limits of the law, the limits of one's freedom, a person steps out of control of their parents into the realm of the common law of reason, with all the consequences and benefits – having property safe while abiding the law and being subjected to punishment for crossing the law. So, children are not considered fully free if there is no freedom without the restrictions, without the law, at least until they reach the age of reason, and can understand the law. In the state of Nature, it is the ability to use reason which allows people to exercise their freedom, but once people leave this state for the political society they apply reason, which they all share, to create common laws in order to secure their ends of such political alliance. In other words, people are building the laws of the commonwealth on top of the Natural laws, which requires knowledge of those Natural laws and the limitations of own actions.

We should now turn to the purpose of the civil society and its means, as it is directly relevant for the topic of our discussion, freedom in a relationship of people with their government. Explaining the logic behind Lockean civil society is tantamount to explaining the concept of freedom. If the civil society is founded on freedom and freedom can only be achieved and practiced through laws, then it is important to understand the ends of these laws, what do they protect and what rights do they give. This strong connection between the law and freedom can be seen in the patriotic songs of the American revolutionary war period. One of such examples would be a victory song from 1781 where *Laws, Rights, and Liberty* were put unified as something indissoluble.

The deed is done.
America triumphs free;
Laws, Rights, and Liberty

The war has been won and now America triumphs free, but what does it mean? It means that now the American people had their own laws, rights and liberties guaranteed by their own government; and that this triad has the most importance in this victory²¹.

Although this particular project is not the place for in depth analysis of all the Locke's ideas on government, it will prove useful to touch upon key points in his logic in order to understand the deeper meaning of verses in the revolutionary song, which will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter. Some of these points will be expanded when we take a closer look at that song.

For John Locke, the end goal for any civil society is the preservation of property. As he defines multiple times throughout his essay himself, one's property is a person's "life, liberty, and estate" (or goods/possessions):

By property I must be understood here, as in other places, to mean that property which men have in their persons as well as goods²².

Note first that the widespread definition of the word property has significantly changed since that time: today, the term property is more commonly used to refer to either, (a) something owned or possessed, or, (b) the exclusive right to possess, enjoy, and dispose of a thing and so on²³. However, the etymology dictionary shows that "property" was largely used to refer to the "nature, quality, individuality, peculiarity" of some object (that is, the properties of ice vs those of

²¹ Lawrence, p. 92; *New-Jersey Journal* (December 26, 1781).

²² *Two Treatises of Government*. p. 181

²³ "Property." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/property>. Accessed 17 Feb. 2020.

water), and only since 17th century has the meaning of a “possession, thing owned” gained popularity.

The umbrella term of property used to refer to one’s life, liberty, and possessions, instead of just possessions, makes it clearer why it had so much importance for Locke and the American forefathers²⁴. Property referred to exactly those things that would be valuable for any person. Given this understanding, the goal of Lockean society is not for the sake of preserving a piece of land or some possessions, but, indeed, for the sake of their very lives, well-being, as well as their ability to act freely and safely without fear of the arbitrary power of another person. According to Locke, in the state of Nature people also had the right of property; and, moreover, they had the complete right to punish any offender violating this right as they saw fit, even by death. However, in the state of Nature people are left alone to face any offender. Thus, in order to increase one’s chances for survival and to preserve one’s property, people quit the state of Nature and enter political society. By doing so, they gain security and stability in their lives by establishing/agreeing to common laws, and which regulate property relations and systems of persecution and punishment. Of course, in so doing they also give up their Natural right to punish offenders by private judgement, and it is vital to political society. Locke emphasizes the point throughout the Essay that there can be no political society without the common law, and all the members of that society must transfer their right to punish the offender, as they see fit, to the community – “... there only, is political society where every one of the members hath quitted this natural power, resigned it up

²⁴ It also sheds light on the unwillingness to keep the originally intended phrase in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, “Life, Liberty and Property”. At least partially it might have been to avoid ambiguity whether slaves are legal or not. However, using the Lockean definition of property it hints on the possibility that it was done to avoid a redundancy in phrasing. If we decipher the phrase “Life, Liberty and Property” with Lockean definition of property it turns into “Life, Liberty and Life, Liberty, and Possessions”, not the most eloquent phrasing. The phrase “Pursuit of happiness” therefore makes harder to tie it to justification of having slaves, while encouraging people to channel their energy in terms of the law and for the sake of two previous rights – Life and Liberty.

into the hands of the community in all cases...”²⁵. He advocates that it is vital to the commonwealth to have the right to make laws, and the power to punish any offender either from within or outside of the society. Otherwise, it is no different than the state of Nature where everybody is on their own, subjected to the arbitrary power of another person. Whether not everyone follows the rules of the society, such transgressors become an arbitrary power from which people are trying to protect themselves by uniting into society. No one can be above the law of the commonwealth of which they are a part.²⁶

Such emphasis on the obedience to the law can be spotted throughout the era of the revolutionary war. The incentive to abide the law can be seen as early as 1765, when in a rather lengthy poem-cantata *Liberty, Property, and no Excise* – the Stamp Act, an oppressive British taxation measure, and its authors was mocked and scorned for transgressing the law; calling the British villains and tyrants²⁷. Another example would be a song from the late 1770s, where a harsh treatment of Quakers by Patriots is despised, because Quakers were pacifists, tried to stay out of the war not supporting any side, which regarded by Patriots as an act of collaboration with the British. The song’s structure emphasizes the point; every verse calls out something wrong that Patriots did and ends with a variation of a phrase: If that is the freedom that we are fighting for, we do not need it. *A New Song* reprimands Patriots for being hypocritical for, apparently, not giving the Quakers a fair trial. The words of the song are even stronger because some Patriot critiques harsh treatment of the Quakers by own people, it shows that for the people who lived in that time

²⁵ *Two Treatises of Government*. p. 141

²⁶ *Two Treatises of Government*. p. 145

²⁷ Lawrence, p. 16; *The Boston-Gazette, and Country Journal* (1765)

the law was of utmost importance in the connection to freedom²⁸. Another example is from a victory song of 1787 *The Grand Constitution: Or, The Palladium of Columbia: A New Federal Song*. The whole song praises the victory, forecasts prosperity and economy growth. But the most relevant part for us is that the chorus line *Our Freedom we've won, and the prize let's maintain* explains why the people should revere the wise Constitution, the highest law. The lines *From ruin – their [commonwealth] judgment and wisdom well aim'd, Our Liberty, laws, and our credit reclaim'd*, also show how intertwined the law, liberty and commonweal were. The lines from the next verse only reinforce this point *Here Plenty and Order and Freedom shall dwell, ... Independence and culture shall graciously smile*. That freedom and prosperity come from the *Order*. Where *Order* represents the idea of everyone in the society obeying the same set of laws established by the Constitution²⁹.

Which brings us back to the idea of equality under the law, and its connection to monarchy. Unlike Thomas Paine, whose views are discussed in the following chapter, Locke does not stigmatize the monarchy as entirely unsuited to civil society, although he argues that an *absolute* monarchy is inconsistent with civil society. If people are born equal, this would mean that each person, whether in the state of Nature or in political society, must abide the established law among the members of the society. However, an absolute monarchy infringes this scheme as it puts a monarch above the law³⁰. Thus, it creates conditions for using absolute power for self-enrichment,

²⁸ Lawrence, p. 74; Joseph Stansbury (1770s).

²⁹ Lawrence, p. 101; *Massachusetts Centinel* (October 6, 1787).

³⁰ Although other political philosophers, like Thomas Hobbes and William Barclay were giving the monarch much more authority, still they were leaving the people a right to disobey the sovereign's commands for self-defense when their lives were in danger.

not for the good of the governed people³¹. Even if the laws are being made by representatives of the people, and quarrels between the commoners are judged fairly, these laws regulate only subjects, not the monarch. Civil society can function properly only when everybody lives by the same rules; otherwise it is no better than the state of Nature where nothing is certain, and everyone takes care only of themselves.

Constitutional monarchies, on the other hand, where the head of the state is bound by the same laws as his subjects, ought to be considered as an acceptable form of government, if it satisfies the will of the commonwealth. Governments are created with a certain incentive. If it is to protect the community from conquerors, monarchy, as a type of government where the strongest and bravest person of the community has power to lead people in war, then it is a good form of government, as it serves the purpose of government – the preservation of property³². Locke argues that most monarchies started as elective³³, motivated by this logic, but that, over time, people grew careless and the monarch would grow in strength, to the point where the position is hereditary, and the monarch considered divine. As said before, when people enter civil society, they give up certain rights to the people from the commonwealth that they see most fit to erect and execute the laws for the preservation of property, the common good. Monarchy, as any other government, functions along the same rules – if a government acts in the interest of its people, if it fulfills the wishes of the majority which entrusted it with power, all the members of the commonwealth ought to respect the government. When the government should overstep its boundaries, and neglect or oppose its just ends, people, according to Locke, have the right to rebel and to demand the power entrusted

³¹ *Two Treatises of Government*. p. 143

³² *Two Treatises of Government*. p. 141

³³ *Two Treatises of Government*. p. 150

in that government be given back in order to place it in the hands of new people, whom they see most apt to attain the desired safety and security.

Thus, the right to rebel is tightly connected to people's liberty. When they enter the commonwealth and give up their Natural rights to judge the offender and execute their judgement as they see fit, they give up the right for free, uncontrolled action. In exchange they get the assurance that the system, the representatives of the commonwealth, to whom they have transferred their power, will give them security and safety. When the government breaks this trust, citizens are being left with no guarantees, and they are thus left in the hands of arbitrary power, in a lawless system. In fact, this is even worse than the state of Nature, because in the state of nature individuals have their own freedom, which was given away entering the society.

This right to rebel is widely represented in various patriotic songs of the American revolutionary war. For example, the song *Tea Destroyed by Indians* commemorates the events of The Boston Tea Party, including these lines:

Must we be still – and live on Blood-bought Ground,
And not oppose the Tyrants cursed found?
We Scorn the thought – our views are well refin'd
We Scorn those slavish shackles of the Mind,
“We’ve Souls that were not made to be confin’d.”

The author is resolute to stand their ground against the oppressor He does not want to be an obedient and silent slave, but expresses a strong will to protect own freedom even if the price is their lives, as the chorus follows: *Bostonian’s SONS keep up your Courage good, / Or Dye, like Martyrs in fair Free-born Blood*³⁴.

³⁴ Lawrence, p. 44; December 1773.

A similar incentive an author gives in a song following the Boston Massacre, as he urges the living to avenge the dead, rebel against the Tyrant and this event of carnage. Moreover, the author includes a warning from the deceased “*Revenge us, or live to be Slaves*”. Which transforms the right to rebel to a duty. If the living want to preserve the law and liberty, they must protect it by rebellion as a last resort³⁵. Another song from the pre-war period expresses the popular opinion of the public. It expresses the reverence for the King and their loyalty, but only until the King is loyal to them. As when *Prince* will turn to a *Tyrant*, people will be ready to *defend our Liberty, / As long as we can stand.*, and that *we’ll defend our Liberty, / As long as we can stand.*, and only death will stop us: *and rather bleed, and die, / Than lose our Liberty*. All these sacrifices can be made for the cause of *Liberty* but while singing about fight for *Liberty* they remember that *Liberty* is not something abstract but very real, as it ensures their *Property*³⁶.

The people of the colonies exercised their right to fight against Tyranny and as a result of the escalation of the conflict – to separate themselves from Britain and declare Independence. They have joined the colonies and become their citizens, agreeing to the laws of that commonwealth, but after the series of unjust legislative acts the tension grew stronger. The people, as we will observe in following chapters, tried to oppose peacefully, engage in Congresses, writing objections to the Parliament, appealing to the King. People tried to work within the law, through their elected delegates. However, all the negotiations were futile and when they approached the bifurcation point – the colonists chose freedom. They used their Natural right to rebel, written down by thinkers like John Locke and popularized through patriotic songs. It was the dawn of the nation.

³⁵ Lawrence, p. 48; *Newport Mercury* (March 14, 1774).

³⁶ Lawrence, p. 51; 1770s.

CHAPTER 2:
THOMAS PAINE ON FREEDOM

Common Sense was written by Thomas Paine in 1775-1776³⁷. It was the most widely circulated pamphlet of the American Revolution; during the year 1776 alone, 100,000 copies were sold³⁸. It was one of the first pamphlets that baldly denounced British monarchy and called for independence. Its wild popularity and influence on the people got the attention of George Washington, who wrote in one of his letters, “By private letters which I have lately received from Virginia, I find that ‘Common Sense’ is working a powerful change there in the minds of many men”³⁹. One of the most recent descriptions of *Common Sense* was made by a Pulitzer prize in history recipient Dr. Gordon S. Wood, who called it “the most incendiary and popular pamphlet of the entire revolutionary era”⁴⁰. The fact that such a widespread pamphlet has a call for independence as its cornerstone, makes it a necessary piece for this thesis. Thomas Paine cherished liberty deeply, and for him this idea was embodied in a government set down upon certain

³⁷ Foner, Philip S., ed., *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, 2 vols (New York: Citadel Press, 1969).

³⁸ Foot, Michael; Kramnick, Isaac, eds. *The Thomas Paine Reader*, Penguin Classics, 1987. p. 10

³⁹ Sparks, Jared, editor, *The Writings of George Washington*, twelve volumes, New York, 1848, vol. III, p. 347; Benson J. Lossing, *Washington and the American Republic*, 3 volumes, New York, vol. II, p. 12

⁴⁰ Wood, Gordon S. *The American Revolution: A History*, 2002. p. 55

principals. As in the previous chapter on Locke, we follow Paine, who does not distinguish “liberty” and “freedom” in his writing.⁴¹

In this chapter we will discuss *Common Sense* from the perspective of liberty and independence. We will outline first the definition of government for Paine, and how the most optimal government is formed. Second, we turn to describing one by one Paine’s reasons for gaining independence from Britain in order to erect own government, starting with the inherently wrong type of government of Britain, going through various justifications. Also, as in my first chapter about Locke on freedom, I include patriotic songs from the revolutionary time period, the same will be done here to add more weight to Paine’s ideas, to show the prevalence of the expressed views among the population.

Before we dive into analysis of the text, a couple of notes should be made. First, in this chapter we will use the same terminology as *Common Sense*, e.g., Great Britain will be called Britain or England, the U.S.A. will be called (the) colonies or (the) continent, and Americans will be used to refer to the European settlers of the continent of North America. Second, in this chapter I will try to show how the ideas that were promoted by John Locke influenced political philosophy in America, and one of the first and the most popular American patriotic pamphlet *Common Sense* seems best suited for this purpose. We will see how Lockean concepts of freedom are reflected in Paine’s writing, and, as Lockean “freedom” is expressed in terms of Natural law, society, government, and the responsibility of people to check their government, we will discuss the corresponding ideas in Paine. It is also important to keep in mind the purpose of the *Common Sense* and its target audience. It was written in the first year of war and was meant mainly for the

⁴¹ The most obvious example would be him using phrase “religious liberty”⁴¹ and a several pages later says that the future American government should secure freedom of religion. *Common Sense*, p. 19

people to raise their spirit, convince soldiers to fight, justify their sacrifice and outline the end goal – the erection of own independent and just government.

My primary concern is to show how his ideas are similar to those of Locke, and how they are reflected in patriotic songs, and thus I will not investigate the (often important) differences between Locke's and Paine's views. However, there is a major difference in Locke's and Paine's views that should be addressed. It is important paying attention to this difference, as it is also can be seen in patriotic songs of the selected period. Paine, unlike Locke, does not pay a lot of attention to the property rights. As we will see in this chapter, Paine argues for independence because he despises monarchy, because he thinks that it is the best for the people of the colonies, and for several other reasons, but security of people's property (in Lockean terms) is not the main one. Although, Paine argues that the purpose of the government is securing freedom and property⁴², but he mostly means 'property' as 'possessions', not as an umbrella term for personality and possessions. Apparently, at the time of the American Revolution, this aspect of Lockean ideas did not gain as much popularity as the other ideas. The supporting evidence can be the shortage of representation of this idea in the patriotic songs. 'Property' seems to be only used to signify 'possessions' throughout the revolutionary events – both before and at the time of the war⁴³.

Thomas Paine opens *Common Sense* with a clear distinction between society and government, as he argues they have different origins and ways of leading people to happiness:

[Society and government] have different origins. Society is produced by our wants and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections, the latter

⁴² Foner, Philip S., ed., *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, 2 vols (New York: Citadel Press, 1969). Vol 1., *Common Sense*, p. 29

⁴³ Lawrence, p. 16, p. 51

negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher⁴⁴.

Paine favors society, as for him it is a blessing, while any government is a necessary evil. A government is tolerable when it is at its best, when it serves the purposes of the society, and satisfies interests of the people. If the government abandons its purpose, and imposes suffering and misery on its people, it becomes even worse than the state of no government at all, partly because of the understanding that people themselves created the tools of own distress: “our calamity is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer”⁴⁵.

Thomas Paine has no illusions about people’s general qualities, as he writes that whether “the impulses of conscience [were] clear, uniform and irresistibly obeyed” people would not need some artificial structure, government, to police the society and protect it from external threats. However, people generally tend to transgress the law of Nature, to phrase it in Lockean terms, so people have to give up some of their rights to the government in order to secure the rest of it. Paine believes that the whole purpose of the government is security of the people who create it – security of their property in its broad meaning discussed in the previous chapter⁴⁶.

After brief establishment of the qualities and purposes of the government, Paine attempts to explain the origins of the government as an institution, and how he imagines the logic behind its creation. It is important to outlay this idea here because it shows the belief of the equality among the people in the society and serves as one of the main arguments for the innate falseness of the British monarchy and justifies separation from Britain.

⁴⁴ *Common Sense*, p. 4

⁴⁵ *Ibid*

⁴⁶ *Common Sense*, p. 5

Through the course of his explanation, we stumble upon the first direct usage of the term ‘liberty’. Paine uses this term in the expression “state of natural liberty,”⁴⁷ referring to the time when people had no government, hence had no restrictions upon them⁴⁸ – just some people, living not far from each other but on their own, in the middle of nowhere, without any contacts to other possible similar clusters of people. He claims that all the societies started in this state. But, the common cause of a better life, happiness, and by necessity, slowly and steadily brings them together, as it is harder for one person in the wild to survive than for a group of people, where they can diversify tasks and look after each other⁴⁹. As people come together, first their population will be rather small, and all these people will be driven by the same goals, connected to each other by strong ties of necessity and common moral virtues such that they will operate on the basis of what is called by Locke and Paine a state of natural liberty and equality⁵⁰. Accordingly, it is much easier to establish ground rules in a smaller group rather than in a larger one. People in a tighter community have a clearer understanding of why they all live together and what goals they are pursuing – to protect their property; help each other to build houses, grow crops, hunt etc. Because people in such small communities know each other, they much more likely relate to each other, sympathize, and thus are less likely to harm one another. However, as their number will grow, they inevitably lose such close ties to other members of society. To compensate for this “defect of moral virtue”⁵¹, they would have to form a government to regulate this growing settlement. At first all

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Which is, again, a very similar usage of ‘liberty’ to Locke’s, as it was discussed in the previous chapter.

⁴⁹ *Common Sense*, p. 5-6

⁵⁰ *Common Sense*, p. 5

⁵¹ Ibid

the members will take part in the meetings to make and enforce the laws, regulations, and punishments. Every adult member will be able to take part in these meetings as it their natural right⁵². But as the colony increases in number and the territory, it will be inconvenient to gather all the people in the same place and at every occasion. So, at this point people will delegate their legislative right to a selected group of people from the whole society. These people are supposed to represent concerns of the electoral group. As the whole body is small, these people will be easier to appoint, but as the colony grows bigger it will be convenient to divide the whole into the parts, where each part will elect their own representative or several ones. The problem will be to make the elected officials thoroughly represent concerns of the electors, so the elections will be held rather often. The idea behind frequent exchanges of the elected is so more people will go to these meetings, make connections with the representatives of other parts of the colony and then come back to their part sharing their knowledge, interest in other parts of the community, hence they all will preserve the sense of unity and common cause, which is the true guaranty of the strength of government and the happiness of the governed. Paine emphasizes the point that the government rises because a large number of people cannot form strong enough connections between each other in order to treat everyone on the basis of moral virtue. So, people have to establish governments so it can provide them with laws and means to uphold them – to ensure freedom and security of the commonwealth.⁵³

⁵² To follow Locke's chain of thought – all the people are created equal, so when they first create the society, everyone has the same right to suggest how this society should function

⁵³ As Paine describes this and other social processes it should be made clear that in his actual text, he uses words “men” or “man” where I use the word “persons” or “people”. We should be conscious of that time period excluding women from the government building and social sphere (as well as children, slaves and people who were not allowed to vote). So, as the language represents reality, Paine uses “men” for all human beings participating in social life (free men). In the same way now, as women are free to participate on par with men in all, meaningful for the government building, social interactions, I think it is appropriate to adapt this archaic phrasing of the 18th century into modern social context – use person(s) or people instead of man or men when it is applicable.

Such elaboration of Paine's idea about government is important as it was crucial for his cause to explain to his audience how just societies are created – on the principals of equality and fair representation. From the point of view of the colonists, the British government was lacking both of those principles, and unfair representation became one of the reasons for the war. I am also trying to show which ideas about government and its functioning were disseminated. Because people would read or hear Paine's reasoning and form their own view on the subject, his pamphlet offers a link between the politics of the day and the wider culture. And later, after the war people would act accordingly, expecting from their own government to uphold these principles. Moreover, some of those people would become a part of the government and will be aware of what people expect them to do and how to behave. I am trying to show how Paine educates people about their role in the society. The basic idea is that people have certain duties in their lives – electors should elect their representatives responsibly, while those elected are being such temporarily and are accountable for their actions to their electors. Such understanding of personal responsibility and accountability predisposes the commonwealth to respect erected institutions and abide the law. And it is exactly the attitude which makes it possible to exercise the Lockean type of freedom, as his idea of freedom is deeply imbedded into feeling of personal responsibility and following the law.

Thomas Paine believed that the type of government that he has described would be the most likely to ensure the “strength of government, and the happiness of the governed”⁵⁴. This is where we begin to compare the British government and Paine's vision of the future U.S. government. He believed that governments should be as simple as possible, as “the more simple

⁵⁴ *Common Sense*, p.6

any thing is, the less liable it is to be disordered, and the easier repaired when disordered”⁵⁵. To the contrast of the type of government of the Great Britain, which was rather convoluted, according to Paine. He then goes into an argument about how unjust the system of having the Commons, the Peers and the King was; how it only creates opportunities for corruption, thus paralyzes the ability of institutions to check each other. We are not going to restate the argument, but we mention it because Paine tries to persuade his audience that this state of affairs is an absurdity⁵⁶. For example he mocks monarchy by asking a rhetorical question: if the kings’ power is from God then why cannot we trust him and need other institutions to check him? Paine implies that if the King is appointed by God he should be seen as a perfect ruler and should not be checked by other institutions, while it is clearly not the case⁵⁷. Paine argues that such amalgam of power by king, lords and Commons in British government is conditioned rather by national pride for having such government than by reason⁵⁸.

The lack of reason and excessive complexity, however, are just some of the arguments against the British government and for independence. The next reason to proclaim independence and erect own government similar to the outlined in the beginning of the chapter, is the inherited sinfulness of the monarchy and the hereditary succession. Although absolute governments, monarchies among them, are simple, which is an advantage according to Paine’s logic, at the same time they are a “disgrace to human nature”. When there is one ruler above the society everyone

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ *Common Sense*, p. 7

⁵⁷ *Common Sense*, p. 8

⁵⁸ *Common Sense*, pp. 8-9

knows whom to blame and praise in the case of a secure and prosperous life or pain and misery⁵⁹. But this is where the advantages of the monarchy end. Paine's arguments against monarchy are based on his reason and on Scripture. When Paine pulls his argument from the Bible, he uses 1 Samuel 8, when people came to Samuel and asked him for a king and God warned them not to ask for one:

“This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

Paine also turns to Judges 8:22-23, where people asked Gideon, their protector, to rule over them and after him his posterity: “Rule over us – you, your son and your grandson – because you have saved us from the hand of Midian”, to what he replied “I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The Lord will rule over you.” In other words, Paine is confident that it is explicitly written in the Bible that monarchy is a sin, as well as hereditary rulership. Although Paine uses the Holy Word to strengthen his argument, he also explains the logic behind it. Any kind of monarchy equates to idolatry, praying to the false god, which clearly is a major sin.

⁵⁹ *Common Sense*, p. 7

Using God's name for the self-interest was an integral part of reasoning of that time. The same rhetoric can be observed in many of the patriotic songs of that time. "Heav'n-born freedom fires us all,"⁶⁰ says one song, while another is dedicated to St. Tammany, an American Saint⁶¹, who preached about standing against tyranny⁶².

Aside from religious reasons, Paine stands against monarchy because he is opposed to hereditary succession for it is against Natural law⁶³. As all people are originally equal, no one should, by birth, have the right to put themselves and their family in perpetual preference over everyone else, forever. As Paine meditates, even if people gathered and appointed a man to rule over them for his merits, how could people expect his descendants to be as worthy, wise, kind or strong? To let his kin to rule unelected, would be robbing future generations of their right to elect their ruler, as it was done by the first electors, their ancestors⁶⁴.

Paine even refutes the claim, which apparently was popular at that time, that monarchies bring peace to the people and countries. Although he agrees that people in England are much safer than in other countries of Europe, he points out that it is the republics like Holland and Switzerland that are always at peace, while it was England who had "eight civil wars and nineteen rebellions" under thirty kings and two minors⁶⁵. Paine seems to despise monarchy, and the English monarchy

⁶⁰ Lawrence, p. 63; Jonathan Mitchel Sewall, *Virginia Gazette* (February 24, 1776).

⁶¹ Lawrence, p. 65; John Leacock, *Pennsylvania Evening Post* (April 30, 1776).

⁶² It is interesting, though, that at one point the divine origin of monarch's power was mocked, and yet George Washington was praised in the same manner as the British praised George III. The American authors were proclaiming George Washington – *Godlike*, among others, in a song to the tune of "*God Save the King*" (1788). See Lawrence, p. 96

⁶³ *Common Sense*, p. 13

⁶⁴ *Common Sense*, p. 14

⁶⁵ *Common Sense*, p. 15

in particular, for its inherent injustice and predisposition to corruption. Under the Constitution it should be a Republic, but as Paine sees it, the King corrupted the Commons and took away their power, so now it is almost the same as absolute monarchy in Spain or France⁶⁶. This account of the English monarchy is important for this thesis as it helps to shape our understanding of the concept of freedom at that time, as bound up with questions about the legitimacy of monarchical rule, and discussions about its justification or lack thereof. Paine's argumentation here is from the contrary – he tries to show what type of government the colonists should not erect. As we established in the previous chapter on John Locke's philosophy, freedom is impossible without everyone's equality under the law. Thomas Paine expresses similar ideas. He mocks and scorns English monarchy for being oppressive and tyrannical, which contradicts the idea of freedom.

Before the war had begun, songs like *The New Massachusetts Liberty Song* proclaimed that “*Torn from a world of Tyrants, beneath this western Sky, / We form'd a new Dominion, a Land of Liberty;*”, juxtaposing a world of tyranny (Britain) and a land of liberty (America)⁶⁷. After the beginning of the war there was no shortage of calling the British “*tyrants*” and their actions as oppression. The lines from *American Freedom* is just one example. The first stanza ends with the line “*The Tyrants are seized on, they die*” apparently from the hands of Patriots, who are following the call of *Liberty, Honour and Virtue*. While the second stanza contrasts oppression, which “*all Happiness sours*” with freedom that “*gives a relish to Mirth*”⁶⁸.

As Paine laid out his account of monarchy's natural inadmissibility, he moves from this exposition, and tries to explain why the American people must become independent from Britain.

⁶⁶ *Common Sense*, p. 16

⁶⁷ Lawrence, p.37; Dr. Joseph Warren, *North American Almanack* (1770).

⁶⁸ Lawrence, p. 55; *North-Carolina Gazette* (July 7, 1775).

Paine presents, as he calls it, “simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense”⁶⁹ about reasons for the continent and people of America become independent from England. At first, Paine dismantles the argument that England, being the mother-country, must be revered and hung on to. At that time, ties to England were strong, both economically and culturally; also, people on the North American continent who were of English descent had no reasons to see themselves as not English – so, for those people it seemed inadmissible to break that bond. However, Paine did not see it that way and approached this concern from different angles.

Thomas Paine claimed that England could not be rightfully called a mother country because in Pennsylvania, the colony where he wrote *Common Sense*, the population was less than one third of English descent⁷⁰. It was not just England, but all of Europe that was a parent to America⁷¹. Paine mentions that a lot of people who came to America from different places in Europe were fleeing troubles, even persecution – to them this new continent became an asylum with civil and religious liberties. And now England was trying to impose the very same sort of tyranny from which people were hiding in America in the first place. Even the fact that the colonies were ruled at the moment by Britain, did not, according to Paine, mean that things should stay the same – as Britain itself in current dynasty is governed by the descendent of the French, William the Conqueror, as well as half of the peers are descendants from France, which under same reasoning would mean that Britain and France should be one country ruled by the French. Now, strictly speaking, not all of this is entirely historically correct, but what matters for our purposes is the

⁶⁹ *Common Sense*, p. 17

⁷⁰ *Common Sense*, p. 20

⁷¹ Although, there is no actual evidence that what Paine is claiming was factual, what matters is that he is trying by all means to distance the population of the colonies and the English people, as he is trying to build an independent country. More on population: Thomas L. Purvis, *The European Ancestry of the United States Population*, William & Mary Quarterly, LXI (1984): pp. 85–101

rhetoric of Paine, the ideas that he was disseminating. And the grain of doubt that the British government was legitimate should have made it easier for people to fight. Besides, the argument about Britain being a bad mother-country were prevalent in the patriotic songs of that time. For instance, Benjamin Franklin supposedly⁷² wrote a song called *The Mother Country* (circa 1771) mocking Britain for being an abusive mother:

We have an old Mother that peevish is grown,
She snubs us like Children that scarce walk alone;
She forgets we're grown up and have Sense of our own;

But if prior to the war it was common to soften satire with words like “*But still an old Mother should have due respect*”, the songs composed during the war were not so restrained⁷³. A song from 1776, *The Heads* describes American-British relationship in a more macabre way.

On Britannia's bosom sweet liberty smil'd,
The Parent grew strong whilst she Foster'd the Child;
Ill treating her offspring, a fever she bread,
Which contracted her limbs, and distracted her head.
Derry down &c.
She learned state doctors, your labors are vain,
Proceeding by bleeding to settle her brain;
Much less can your art the lost members restore,
Amputation must follow, perhaps something more.⁷⁴

⁷² The song has survived in his handwriting but there is no proof that Franklin composed it himself.

⁷³ Lawrence, p. 43; Benjamin Franklin (c. 1771).

⁷⁴ Lawrence, p. 70; *Pennsylvania Evening Post* (April 17, 1777).

After the beginning of the war the American people did not have to qualify their artistic expression with praises for Britain and the King. They were not critiquing own government anymore but deriding the enemy.

Thomas Paine was writing this pamphlet at the time of war already, so he was adamant in his position; however there still were people who saw the path of separation as too radical and were inclined for reconciliation on just terms. To those people Paine also had a reply. He argued that it is nature of the monarchy for the king to have all the power in his hands. So, Britain will never stop trying to trample the liberty of America: the laws will continue to be imposed on the colonies without their consent⁷⁵. Britain might reconcile on new terms while feeling American strength, but the situation will change step by step as people calm down and become busy again in their routine, and the King will work his way back with subtlety, as British could not accomplish things by force. Besides, Paine tries to convince his audience that more fair taxation is not the endgame for the war but the ability to make laws without the approval of the King. And as power of the lawmaking will always be in the hands of the king, we, argues Paine, will not be able to provide new immigrants the most basic right that any government owes to its people – security and confidence in tomorrow. People with property will see the lack of stability and stay away, and the existing settlers will seek a safer place from where to conduct their business⁷⁶.

We see a mirror of these ideas in the popular songs of the period. In them we see that the people of the colonies revered laws in their patriotic songs. Patriots glorified the first Continental Congress of 1774 that opposed the Coercive Acts⁷⁷

⁷⁵ *Common Sense*, p. 25

⁷⁶ *Common Sense*, p. 26

⁷⁷ Passed by the British Parliament in 1774 as a response to the Boston Tea Party

The Delegates have met
For wisdom or renown'd,
Freedom we may expect
From politics profound;
Illustr'ous Congress! May each name
Be crowned with immortal fame!⁷⁸

While the Loyalists with the same sentiment for the law urged people to “*Arise! shake off the Congress yoke; / Act as Freeman becomes*”⁷⁹. The fact that we see the same veneration for the law in both Patriots and Loyalists only proves that the Lockean ideas were deeply imbedded into people’s vision of how society should operate – according to the law. The problem was that each group saw the opponent as a transgressor of that law.

The main reason Paine uses against reconciliation is that independence is more likely to secure peace between the colonies and with other countries⁸⁰. Thousands of people have already suffered from the war and to reconcile now will be asking those who lost their relatives and property, who shed their own blood to protect what is theirs, to just forgive and forget about it. For Paine the point of no return arrived with the Battles of Lexington and Concord, which occurred on the 19th of April 1775. This was a starting point for the American Revolutionary War, as British troops tried to regain the military supplies stored at Concord by the patriots, which resulted in a massive confrontation and heavy casualties on the both sides. Paine emphasized that after that battle, reconciliation was no longer possible, and urged people in passionate yet reasonable speech

⁷⁸ Lawrence, p. 49; *The New Liberty Song, Massachusetts Spy* (September 1774).

⁷⁹ Lawrence, p. 49; unidentified source (September 1774).

⁸⁰ *Common Sense*, p. 26

to understand that. He also reminds people that it was the same government which earlier brought 15,000 people in Boston to the brink of starvation, referring to the reaction of Parliament to the Boston Tea Party, closing Boston's harbor. In Paine's view, the government, which deals with its own people in such manner does not deserve to be obeyed or recognized. Paine turns to Milton's poetry to seal the point: "never can true reconciliation grow where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep"⁸¹. Reconciliation was not an option for Paine, as he believed that such actions will inevitably lead to tension within the society contempt towards the British government, which will lead to civil wars. But if all the colonies separate, and then formed a national government together, as equals, it would lead to peace: "where there are no distinctions, there can be no superiority; perfect equality affords no temptation"⁸². Once again Paine emphasizes how harmful monarchical governments are, compared to republican ones. He champions republican governments as being formed on natural principals, as all the people there are equal under the law (an important prerequisite for freedom). Thus, Paine claims, people in the state of such equality within the country have less temptation to fight with each other and to enter the rupture with foreign governments, providing as an example republic of Holland and Switzerland⁸³.

Paine compels people to seize the moment and establish independence now while they can. While there are enough reasonable and educated people to form the government; enough people willing to fight against British and for independence; enough skillful and experienced commanders to lead the resistance, because if they choose to reconcile now, in 50 years people will not be so urged to fight. But even suppose people will be willing to fight, there will be no one to lead them,

⁸¹ Milton, John. *Milton's Paradise lost*. A new edition, by Richard Bentley, D.D. London, 1732. p. 108

⁸² *Common Sense*, p. 27

⁸³ *Common Sense*, p. 26

nor to train them, as British will take all the prospective leaders from the area, while older ones will die away⁸⁴. There is another important factor, according to Paine: if American people hesitate to proclaim independence and form the proper republican government – some charismatic person might appear and lead the nation solely and later trick people into recreating exactly the type of the government from which they were trying to escape⁸⁵. Paine also warns that the king and his adherents will try to divide and bring quarrel between the colonies, so they could not stay as a united front in the face of English soldiers. In order to prevent that, Paine urged his contemporaries to form a government of their own as quickly as possible, to form a Constitution, and to omit all the mistakes of the existing ones. Paine even outlined the structure of the future government that he sees to be just, where the main principle is the equal representation of domestic continental interests of all the colonies. The main concerns of a such government should be securing freedom and property of the people; while the whole trajectory of its course should move in direction of establishing “the greatest sum of individual happiness, with the least national expense”⁸⁶. Freedom and security of property can only be achieved by establishing the highest power of the law. Paine wants America to be a free country, so he states that “in America the law is king. For as in absolute governments the king is law, so in free countries the law ought to be king; and there ought to be no other”. It is very much in line with Locke’s philosophy about everyone in the society possessing equality under the law and how people delegate their rights to the government in order to preserve their property; but despite the authority that the government holds over the commonwealth, the

⁸⁴ *Common Sense*, p. 42

⁸⁵ *Common Sense*, pp. 29-30

⁸⁶ *Common Sense*, p. 29

power can be reverted to the people if the government is transgressing the law and placed into new hands⁸⁷. For both Locke and Paine, then, the law is of the utmost importance for a free society.

This sentiment is also present in patriotic songs. After the Continental Congress proclaimed the United Colonies free and independent States⁸⁸, one song overtly stated that “*George is King no more*”, that “*God is our King*” now and prayed

O may He deigned to bless
The great and each Congress,
Of this land.
With wisdom from on high,
And unanimity,
To save our liberty
Nobly to stand.

The praise of the legislature appears to be high, as well as the incentive for everybody to unite around it to protect the liberty which stems from the law and the protection of *just rights*⁸⁹. The veneration for the law is enormous, deeper than for any earthly power. Law is not something made by humans, it was given by God himself. There is a strong connection between commonwealth law and Ten Commandments, although not explicit.

One of the components of the law-abiding government, according to Paine, is for government to be local. If we look back to the structure of the natural government described in the beginning, Paine pays a lot of attention to the colonial government being local. Behind his words there is simple reasoning – only people from the certain territory can represent that territory in a

⁸⁷ *Two Treatises of Government*, p. 213

⁸⁸ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, no. 2480, 3 July. 1776, p. [2]

⁸⁹ Lawrence, p. 66; *New-York Packet* (August 1, 1776).

national government. This why he does not oppose George III being a king of Britain but is against him ruling over the colonies. Paine is saying that because the king has never lived in colonies and does not know nor understand its realities, he cannot rule over them, nor can the Parliament, which does not represent the interests of the American people. Paine pushes further and writes that Britain has always been and will always represent and protect its own interests, disregarding the interests of the Continent. She will only protect interests of the Continent, when it will be profitable to her. Here, Paine is consonant with Locke about the importance of just representation of the people in the government⁹⁰.

An important step in protecting own American interests will be creating a “Declaration for Independence”, argues Paine. Such document, when signed and presented to other countries, will only help America’s state. Without it, countries like Spain and France would be more reluctant to help colonies, as countries will see the people of America only as rebels, hence as an inner state matter, where they have no business⁹¹. In addition, without clear statement from the colonies that they no longer are/want to be the part of Britain, France or Spain have nothing to gain from helping the colonies, as they will see the chance for reconciliation of colonies with Britain; so why would they want to risk strengthening their enemy? The last but not the least reason for such document would be the change of status quo in relation to other countries, as the colonies will want to establish peaceful connections and enter new trade relations on new, independent terms, not as a proxy but an independent and equal partner.

Paine provides a rather lengthy but very coherent account of the course for independence. He tries to convince his audience that it is inevitable and just the matter of time and cost. That the

⁹⁰ *Two Treatises of Government*, pp. 174-175

⁹¹ *Common Sense*, p. 39

American people will either consolidate and fight for it now, or the historical process will force them to do so later in time but probably at a greater expense. Paine sees local people gathering together in order to establish their own government based on the principles of just representation for the sake of security and wellbeing, as a natural process. We paid so much attention to it because for him that is what freedom is, and so it became for thousands of people who read it and were persuaded by it. By reading between the lines we can see that liberty, a socio-political aspect of freedom, is being able to form own government which will represent interests of the commonwealth, protect their property in a very broad sense – material goods and the self, as religious beliefs and other inherited rights discussed in the previous chapter dedicated to John Locke’s views on the issue. For Thomas Paine, as well as for Locke, liberty is a constructive concept. He does not see independence from Britain as the goal in itself. It is just a step towards a true goal of forming a new government, which fairly represents local people. This government should uphold the law and provide security for life, freedom and possessions.

Thomas Paine wrote *Common Sense* a hundred years after Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government* using a different genre and style. However, he kept the same ideas of freedom that were captured in Locke’s writings at the end of the 17th century. But now they began to spread in the particular American context through such pamphlets as *Common Sense*. And, as I have tried to show in this and the previous chapter, these ideas were also disseminated through various patriotic songs which mirror the ideas and language expressed by these philosophers. A new American political ethos is emerging from both political philosophy and popular discourses.

Now, that we have established the main ideas which helped to shape the understanding of concept of freedom of that time period, we can now move to the close reading of *The Liberty Song* by John Dickinson, one of the most prominent patriotic fiction pieces of the American

revolutionary era. This analysis will show a coherent account of freedom that was thriving in the American literature at that time, how many complicated ideas the song carries and what ideals promote.

CHAPTER 3:
THE LIBERTY SONG BY JOHN DICKINSON

In this chapter we will do a close reading of one of the first (perhaps even *the* first) patriotic songs created in and for the people in what would become the United States of America, when it was still a British Colony: *The Liberty Song* by John Dickinson.

Before we dive into the analysis of how this song represents a vision of freedom, we need to pay attention to the history of its creation. This song was written in 1768 by John Dickinson in Pennsylvania, who wrote it as a poetic response to the Townshend Acts of 1767. The Townshend Acts were another of a series of taxes imposed by the British crown on the Colonies. Such taxes applied to numerous products, such as paint, lead, glass, paper, and tea, which all had to be imported from Britain. The song quickly became popular, in part because Dickinson wrote its melody based on the widely known anthem of the British Royal Navy, “*Heart of Oak*”, which itself was written in 1759 to commemorate the three great victories of that year in the Seven Year’s War (1756-1763). John Dickinson loosely adapted the lyrics with the help of his friend Arthur Lee, later a renowned American diplomat in the American Revolutionary War. The song spread like wildfire, and in the first three months of its publication, *The Liberty Song* was reprinted in more than 11 major newspapers, including in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. Just to focus on one example of the song’s reach, the Boston Gazette newspaper, where the song was originally published, had a weekly output of around 2000 copies. The song even gets noted in the diary of John Adams, where he mentioned that he had a

dinner at a tavern, and everyone was singing *The Liberty Song*. Another indication of its popularity was that the British made a mockery song out of *The Liberty Song* – changed the words so they could make fun of the Americans⁹². The irony of course was that *The Liberty Song* was initially based on the wildly popular British Navy song, as mentioned above. I will take a closer look both at the mocking British response to *The Liberty Song* as well as to the original *Heart of Oak* below. Finally, the song has even been featured in recent popular media, appearing in the *John Adams* (2008) HBO mini-series.

It is important to note that Dickinson was a renowned lawyer, Assemblyman, and Delegate of Pennsylvania and Delaware on multiple occasions. Dickinson was immersed in colonial American society, and, as such, he must have known the general mood and views of people, both through his private legislative work and as an elected official. In other words, Dickinson had a line on the zeitgeist, and thus it is safe to say he captured aspects of it in *The Liberty Song*. Thus, this song can be used to understand certain values of Americans of that time period. For instance, the song is now known best for the one of the first written statements of a fundamental attitude that would be central to the burgeoning American nation, namely, the idea that ‘united we stand, divided we fall’. This idea is so deeply embedded into American society’s idea of itself that a related idea is still engraved on the US coins: “E pluribus unum”, “from many, one”, an idea that different people from different background should unite for the greater good, and stand as a united front against injustice. As *The Liberty Song* was written right after British Empire levied new taxes on the Colonies, Dickinson urges people to unite against tyrannous acts, do not let “stain with

⁹² Lawrence, p. 30; *Boston Evening-Post* (September 26, 1768).

dishonor America's name". He mentions "worthy forefathers"⁹³ (meaning ancestors in general) and how people should remember them and protect everything that they gave to the people: land and freedom⁹⁴. There are words about the great support for "Laws" and "Justice", which shows not only the will to fight, but also a belief that the nation was fighting to protect something, to protect the law, the government⁹⁵. There is a strong emphasis on a willingness to die rather than to be subjected to servitude, as a lack of freedom is much worse than pain.

We will also analyze in depth the changed version of this song published in 1770. Two important differences in the second version include, first, less emphasis on money, as it was no longer a reaction merely to unfair taxation but based on more abstract moral values like the concept of freedom. The second key difference is found in the last stanza, where the poem is changed to no longer be apologetic towards the Empire, and clearly signifying a breaking point – "Come swallow your bumpers, ye Tories" instead of "This bumper I crown for our Sovereign's health". There is a lot to unpack in this song, especially by contextualizing it in terms of philosophical, legislative, and historical texts.

As we start our analysis from the first stanza and move slowly down, I will first discuss the more formal aspects of the song – its structure, its motives, and how its style and grammar play a role in communicating the song's message. Afterwards I will discuss some of the ideas expressed in the verses in the context of the ideas of John Locke and Thomas Paine, discussed in earlier chapters. We should also keep in mind the fact of how the song would be sung at that time. Today, songs are mostly private: listened to through earbuds, so no one can hear what anyone else is

⁹³ Once again, we can see how the language is gendered. Only men could be active participators in the social life; only men owned land, so only they regarded as ancestors worthy of praise.

⁹⁴ Although, an argument can be made that the land was stolen from the indigenous people.

⁹⁵ Not necessarily the British government, but the idea of it, its institutions, order and security which it brings.

listening to. However, this was not the case in 1768, where many if not most songs had a purpose in accompanying a certain kind of activity, especially folk songs. In particular, military songs were often sung in a group for the purpose of emotional bonding, as well as to help make time fly faster and make labor less boring. *The Liberty Song* was a marching song, so it was perfect for raising the spirit of patriotism, convincing the folk to fight for the cause. Another advantage of the marching song was that the music is usually simple, as the main thing that it must have is a certain rhythm, a certain beat. So, anyone could sing it and play it on drums, for example, or even set the rhythm with banging one's fist over the table, as people most certainly were doing in taverns and other public locations where the song was sung. Thus, the fact that the song belongs to the genre of the marching songs should not be overlooked, as this song people would sing not only in peaceful places, but also while sitting in the trenches, marching into the battle. Later it would be used to raise the spirits of soldiers, urge them to fight, and to remind them what they were fighting for. Thus, John Dickinson was quite clever in basing his song on the navy march.

This initial line sets up an atmosphere of togetherness: "Come, join, Hand in Hand, brave Americans all...". The emphasis urges unity and friendship, the literal holding of one another's hands while defending one's beliefs. Here, again, the song alludes to soldiers who march shoulder to shoulder, hand to hand in synchrony. However, it does not specifically appeal to soldiers, but rather to all 'brave Americans', even to people not fighting at the front, those who could not leave their homes but could contribute to the cause in some other way – donating food and material goods. Furthermore, if we take into account the fact that *The Liberty Song* was written a couple of years before the Revolutionary war, we could look at the song as the attempt to consolidate the attitudes of the as of yet peaceful citizenry against the unjust taxation without proper representation, and to take care of the matter with diplomacy. It is likely that John Dickinson

thought that putting his dissatisfaction with British policy into a song would make a strong statement, one that would necessitate some sort of response by the British. The fact that he appropriated the victory song of the British Navy, the branch of the army which largely helped to enforce the order and policies in the region, and published it first in Boston, the biggest port city of the time where the large part of that navy was stationed, is also an essential part of his statement.

The first line sets the tone for the whole song, urging Americans to unite and act together. This is, in fact, even visible on the level of grammar. The whole song is organized around the idea of a shared identity as Americans. This is clear in the phrases that signify plurality, the most prominent examples the following: “Come, join ... brave Americans all...”; “In Freedom we’re born, and in Freedom we’ll live”; “Our worthy Forefathers”; “By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall”. The first and second plural pronouns like ‘we’ and ‘you(r)’ are meant to inspire a sense of solidarity. The song also accomplishes this uniting goal by making a strong connection between past, present, and future. There is strong emphasis on the ancestors of the singers, their forefathers⁹⁶. The fact that their forefathers came there and worked on that land is the main sentimental argument for why their indignation is just – “Our worthy forefathers...”. This feeling of unity in the song is certainly helpful for building a strong resistance morale, but it also reflects Locke’s assumptions about how people unite into community under common interests, visions of the present and future. As people stop contributing to society and start minding only own business society dissolves and with society government dissolves also⁹⁷.

⁹⁶ Worth noting that neither this, nor other songs of that time ever acknowledge the existence of the indigenous people and how “the forefathers” got the land their land in the first place.

⁹⁷ *Two Treatises of Government*, pp. 197-198

Although, it is not explicitly said in *The Liberty Song*, the reason why it was written was because people refused to pay taxes to the government where they are not represented on the basis that this was a fundamentally unjust system. This is reflected in that famous political slogan from the period: *No taxation without representation*. The song was written based off of this fundamental idea, so in order to understand the further claims in the song, this underlying one should be addressed first. First, we need to briefly review what liberty is in Lockean political theory, and in the ideas of Paine. Liberty is impossible without laws, which channel the free will of the people for the common good. Locke argued, as outlined in the previous chapter, that people leave the state of Nature and create/enter the political society together in order to protect their property. Paine spends a lot of ink explaining this process, arguing that people represent their own interests in their community, while this community is relatively small. But once it grows larger, it becomes impossible for everybody to participate in policy making, and thus people must elect their representatives. According to Paine, each local community should elect a representative, so that he would represent it in the commonwealth. In this way, the interests of everyone are accounted for, no matter how far they live from the gathering of the council (or however such a gathering of electives might be named)⁹⁸.

Discussing this issue, John Locke notes that nothing stays the same – some people get rich, some go poor, power being passed to other hands, trade grows or plummets in the region, cities flourish at first but then decay⁹⁹. Along with these changes, there are also shifts in demography, and with the change of population, representatives should also change, as different people have different interests. All areas should be fairly represented, and this representation should be altered

⁹⁸ *Common Sense*, p. 6

⁹⁹ *Two Treatises of Government*. pp. 173-175

according to the preestablished law. Since the people of the America believed in this principle, although they might not be able to explain it as eloquently as did Locke, they grew quite upset when their government from overseas started to tax them without taking into the account their interests, but only for own profit – robbing them of their property, of their liberty.

Moving along to the lyrics of *The Liberty Song*, the first stanza and chorus convey the following information: Liberty calls upon people to resist the tyrant in his attempt to collect unjust taxes. So, when people sing about the government using its power to impose unjust laws, they sing about an assault on their liberty. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, according to Locke (and to social contract theory more generally), people have a right to resist and rebel, to take away the power from their rulers and representatives, when they see such a gross misuse of power. That is, the consent of the people plays a fundamental role in the justification and functioning of the government. Laws are passed, cases ruled upon, taxes laid – but these are only possible and just with consent of the commonwealth. Speaking of taxes, Locke states that whether a person is a part of the society, they should contribute to it, in order to sustain it – “governments cannot be supported without great charge, and it is fit every one who enjoys his share of the protection should pay out of his estate his proportion for the maintenance of it”, which provides this security for their property in its broader term of life, liberty and possessions. However, if such taxation is seen unjust, collected without consent of the people – it “invades the fundamental law of property, and subverts the end of government”¹⁰⁰, as here the fundamental law of property means its inalienability, and the end of government is the common good secured by protecting property. In this chain of thought, the government which imposes unjust taxation, mainly because of the absence of representation in the Parliament, is breaking the law. As the law is the main thing that

¹⁰⁰ *Two Treatises of Government*, p. 166

unites people into a state, such an act becomes the very expression of arbitrary power for which people fled the state of Nature (and their unjust European countries) – it is the beginning of tyranny. While John Locke wrote the *Second Treatise* as an attempt at a piece of political philosophy that was timeless and a universally applicable, Thomas Paine was focused on current and pressing matters. For him, the mere fact that the monarchy was hereditary was enough reason to call the king illegitimate. Note that while the Lockean idea of property rights seems central to the Liberty Song, we do not see Paine’s sentiment on the monarchy here expressed. However, we do see another one, namely, Paine’s idea that the whole government of Britain was corrupt because of the way it was constructed¹⁰¹. It was not functioning right, was not capable of securing the interests of the people, hence people were right to resist; here views of Locke and Paine align with each other. So, it does not matter, whose critique you choose to justify the response of the American people to the “tyrannical acts” of Britain, Locke’s or Paine’s, it will not acquit the British ruling.

Let us expand a bit more on the chorus: “Our purses are ready. Steady, friends, steady; Not as slaves, but as Freemen our money we’ll give.” The song was published in 1768, seven years before Americans were forced into a bifurcation point by the British army. People were not yet thinking about separating to form their own state, which is evident by the absence of such claims, and praises for the idea of Britannia as being just overall, found in the last verse of the original song.

This bumper I crown for our Sovereign’s health,
And this for Britannia’s glory and wealth;
That wealth and that glory immortal may be,
If She is but Just, and if we are but Free

¹⁰¹ *Common Sense*, p. 7

People were dissatisfied with the policy and wanted the laws to be just again, not to separate entirely from the mother country. As the lyrics go, people were willing to support the government, respecting its power by paying their taxes, giving their fair share of their possessions that they gained under the state's protection: "Our purses are ready... our money we'll give." But the important thing is that people wanted to restore justice, they were willing to give government what was reasonable, what corresponded with the benefits that they received from the state. Dickinson makes the same parallel as Locke – if government passes acts and collects taxes (property) without people's consent, it is robbing them of their liberty.

As we establish this connection between property¹⁰² and freedom as an umbrella term and its component, lines from the second stanza: "Thro' oceans to deserts for Freedom they [forefathers – M.P.] came, And dying, bequeath'd us their freedom and fame," does not sound as high and abstract rhetoric, but as something rooted deeply in the reality. Freedom was not something shapeless and obscure, as a breath of fresh air in the middle of the crop field. No, it was an understanding, a trust that after occupying a certain piece of land and toiling on it – no one can come and simply take it away by force, that on this new continent the arbitrary force does not have any power, that it is the land where everyone is equal under the law; that after their death they will be able to pass all the goods to their children and that no one will stay unpunished if they try to encroach on that right. This belief can be traced again to the *Second Treatise*:

190. Every man is born with a double right. First, a right of freedom to his person, which no other man has a power over, but the free disposal of it lies in himself. Secondly, a right before any other man, to inherit, with his brethren, his father's goods¹⁰³.

¹⁰²Locke's common word use – life, liberty and possessions

¹⁰³ *Two Treatises of Government*, p. 189

Here, Locke expands on everything he said before about preservation of property being the cornerstone of any political society. In this passage and elsewhere in the *Second Treatise*, he explains that even when people are unjustly conquered by another government – they and their descendants still have rights for that land and possessions of their parents, people always have the right to shake off the yoke of any usurper or tyrant. The fact that a government has the power to do keep people in check does not mean the it is just. And if a government, even just at first, takes away this right on property from people, if it acts without consent of its people, such a government puts itself in the position where the people “are not in the state of free men, but are direct slaves under the force of war”¹⁰⁴.

This sentiment grows stronger in the next verse, where the emphasis is on the obstacles the forefathers had to overcome and the labor they had to put in, so their posterity could piously keep it and thrive. These lines bring us back to the fundamental idea discussed earlier in the thesis of how property (in this case meaning possessions) becomes such. Recall that Locke argued that,

every man has a “property” in his own “person.” This nobody has any right to but himself. The “labour” of his body and the “work” of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever, then, he removes out of the state that Nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with it, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property¹⁰⁵.

The assumption here is that if every person is born free, belonging only to oneself, then the capacity of one’s own body and mind is being only of own disposal. So, one can turn objects from the State of Nature into one’s own possession by using one’s own labour – adding to no one’s object something from self. Let us say that, for instance, there is a wild apple tree in a middle of

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ *Two Treatises of Government*, p. 116

the field, which belongs to nobody. The moment a person uses their “labour” of their body and the “work” of their hands to pick an apple from a branch of that tree, it belongs to that person, because this individual has added something of their own to what was simply a natural object before. After this, the property is sacred (metaphorically speaking) and no one can take it away without breaking the Natural law.

Note further that the stanza which was not included in the original version from 1768, adds to this message of the importance of property, and which focuses on labor and possessions:

How sweet are the labors that Freeman endure,
That *they* shall enjoy all the Profit, secure –
No more such sweet Labors Americans know
If Britons shall *reap* what Americans *sow*.

In other words, the target here is specifically unjust taxation. A couple of years prior to Townshend Acts, the delegates of the 13 colonies gathered together for the Stamp Act Congress to develop an answer to the Britain for the unjust taxation of Stamp Act, as viewed by the colonists. The delegates were concerned with justifying the rights of the colonists to tax themselves, one of the rights that Locke emphasized in the *Second Treatise of Government*, and they specifically derived their arguments from his essays¹⁰⁶. Further, the last line of the stanza can be taken almost literally, as the merchants during the Congress argued that as most of the means for merchants were local, sending these taxes overseas was “absolutely impracticable”¹⁰⁷. Meaning, that the American people would produce goods with local supplies and instead of investing those money in local economy by paying local taxes, British would export those taxes out of the colonies.

¹⁰⁶ Weslager, C. A.. *The Stamp Act Congress: With an Exact Copy of the Complete Journal*. University of Delaware Press, Newark, 1976. p. 131

¹⁰⁷ Weslager, C. A., p. 142

The next stanza is pertinent to this discussion, and begins “*Then join hand in hand, brave Americans all, By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall*”. It represents the idea of uniting for the common cause, an idea that Thomas Paine will make famous in America. He will urge people to understand that this fight is inevitable, that reconciliation would be impossible. Paine also scorned those who advocated for the opposite.

Men of passive tempers look somewhat lightly over the offences of Great Britain, and, still hoping for the best, are apt to call out, Come, come, we shall be friends again for all this. ... But if you say, you can still pass the violations over, then I ask, hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and yourself the ruined and wretched survivor? If you have not, then are you not a judge of those who have. But if you have, and can still shake hands with the murderers, then are you unworthy the name of husband, father, friend, or lover, and whatever may be your rank or title in life, you have the heart of a coward, and the spirit of a sycophant¹⁰⁸.

Another idea stands behind the words of Dickinson and Paine. “But submitting to the laws of any country, living quietly and enjoying privileges and protection under them, makes not a man a member of that society; ... Nothing can make any man so but his actually entering into it by positive engagement and express promise and compact”¹⁰⁹. It is active and constant contribution to the society, makes someone a true citizen, at least in a moral sense. Which means that people should show where they stand on this issue of taxation, as it concerns everybody, one way or another.

¹⁰⁸ *Common Sense*, pp. 22-23

¹⁰⁹ *Two Treatises of Government*, p. 158

Note that Dickinson and Paine were writing based on different events (Townshend Act and the war, respectively), and therefore argued for different things. The former was advocating unity as a means for securing a more independent local legislature and for local tax collection, long before the war broke out. Meanwhile the latter was writing right after the war had begun, and the stakes were much higher. But they were both drawing from the same philosophical idea about how the government should be based on the active support of every individual. Once again, a community can only justly operate when there is a consent of every adult member of that community. However, as noted above, when the community grows big enough, not everyone can directly participate, and, moreover, it becomes close to impossible to pass any laws or reach the agreement on any issue unanimously. Thus, since people entering the community have delegated their right to act to representatives of the community as one body, the just option is that the consent of the majority, as representing a greater force, becomes enough for just action¹¹⁰. Importantly, as Locke argues, this type of action includes the right to override the existing government by the majority of the people¹¹¹.

The next to the last verse of *The Liberty Song* shows great veneration for the Law (even writing it using an upper-case letter). However, it also makes a clear connection between the Law and Freedom. If the laws are not upheld, the verse implies, it means that we are not free, and Dickinson argues that we (Americans) would rather die than live in servitude. We have already seen this sentiment expressing the importance of freedom and our inherent right to it, in connection to ideas of John Locke and Thomas Paine. However, when Dickinson speaks about the law, he does not mean only the Natural Law or the Law of Reason, he also means the law of the country

¹¹⁰ *Two Treatises of Government*, p. 146

¹¹¹ *Two Treatises of Government*, p. 213

that they live in and to which he swore to abide not only as a citizen, but as a lawyer and elected politician. In the Stamp Act Congress, mentioned above, one of the main concerns of the delegates was to ensure that they built their defense on existing legislation. One of the delegates, Christopher Gadsden, argued that they must appeal to the fact that they were all descendants of the English, hence had all the same inherent rights as those back in England. This meant that the Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights of 1689 applied to them too¹¹². It was a real struggle to recognize the legislative right of the Parliament, on the one hand, and to argue against its right to tax the colonies without their consent, on the other.

John Dickinson, along with the other delegates, firmly argued that the colonies should stay under the jurisdiction of Great Britain, as it was the general view of their constituents throughout the colonies¹¹³. Which brings us to the original last stanza from the 1768 and how it was changed in the 1770 version¹¹⁴.

1768 Version	1770 Version
<p>This bumper I crown for our Sovereign’s health, And this for Britannia’s glory and wealth; That wealth and that glory immortal may be, If She is but Just, and if we are but Free.</p> <p>Chorus: In Freedom we’re born and in Freedom we’ll live. Our purses are ready. Steady, friends, steady; Not as slaves, but as Freemen our money we’ll give.</p>	<p>Come swallow your bumpers, ye Tories, and roar, That the sons of fair freedom are hampered once more; But know that no cut-throats our spirits can tame, Nor a host of oppressors shall smother the flame.</p> <p>Chorus: In Freedom we’re born, and, like sons of the brave, Will never surrender, But swear to defend her; And scorn to survive, if unable to save.</p>

¹¹² Weslager, C. A., p. 134

¹¹³ Weslager, C. A., p. 128

¹¹⁴ Elson, Louis C., and Arthur Elson. *The History of American Music*. Macmillan, New York, 1925. pp. 142-143. The original source: *Bickerstaff’s Boston Almanac*, May 1770

The last stanza of *The Liberty Song* 1768 version acted to soften the previous verses and to reassure the Crown that there was no disdain or disrespect for Britain and its laws; rather, this was just a matter of peaceful protest on one particular issue. With this last verse the author emphasizes that they were still humble subjects of the Sovereign, able to express dissatisfaction only because they were a Free people under a Just government. However, after the Boston massacre (March 5th, 1770), tensions grew stronger, and there was no longer any place for veneration, and so the verse was changed to reflect the harsher, more aggressive relationship between colony and motherland. Britannia was not rendered as Just, nor was there an appeal to raise a glass for the Sovereign's health; instead it was suggested to eat that "bumper", and the loyalists were called cut-throats and host of oppressors, where oppressors are apparently the British establishment – the regular army, local appointees, Parliament, and the King. In the 1770 version, the chorus was also changed, as it was no longer only about unjust taxes. Instead, sentiment had shifted from the willingness to pay taxes consensually, to the readiness to defend their freedom with their life. This, as it turns out, was what would happen four years later at the Battles of Lexington and Concord.

The point is that American sense of freedom was built upon responsibility for own actions and necessity to limit oneself for the good of the community; the laws of Britain, where liberty and property played a big role; the Natural law and the laws of Reason, which were cornerstones for the government laws. Freedom was not some amorphous abstract spirit or feeling, urging people to do whatever they wanted and fight against any limitations. The idea behind freedom was to recognize own limitations and limitations of other people, understand that actions have consequences, realize personal responsibility for own future before using community as a safety net, form government for protection but relying mostly on own resources and the help of the community.

In the beginning of this close reading I have mentioned that the song pays a lot of attention to the ancestors. Singing this song, people would establish a strong connection with their past, standing their ground in the present, and aiming for a free future. Having this foundation in mind, they were willing to negotiate at first, based on the rights they believed they had. As different taxes were piling on, and as Britain did not yield, and was not willing to negotiate, people were left with less choice to act. But they wanted to preserve all the good that Britain gave them, among which was strong feeling of constructive freedom – aimed for the building of government and the preservation of property. As Thomas Paine argued, the American people had a unique chance to proclaim Independence and erect a just government with fair representation of the local people. And the people at the helm of the colonies had a similar sense that Independence was not the goal of their revolution, but just a beginning. So, through the pamphlets, essays, letters, songs and poetry published and disseminated among the general public, they were educating common folk about the past, present and the future. There are no sentiments that we should stop paying taxes or stop following the law, indeed, that would be an impediment to the colonists' ideas of what was good and valuable. On the contrary, the song speaks about the importance of keeping justice and upholding the law, about working hard to honor the ancestors and for the sake of posterity; and most importantly about the unquestionable right for property. This strong connection with the past and thrive for the better just future is strongly represented in the American revolutionary songs, which helped to build a country which already exists for about 250 years, improving every day.

CONCLUSION

The concept of freedom was widely represented in American literature around the Revolutionary War. This concept, as it was shown in this thesis, is rather complex, as it relies on other philosophical ideas that has shaped people's worldview. It was based, firstly, on the idea that people have free will, which we have explored a bit in the first chapter on Locke. Other ideas are secondary but equally important. Freedom is an innate capability, although people have to learn what does it mean to be free within the society. It is crucial to be aware that freedom is tightly connected with personal responsibility for own actions. Such knowledge comes only with experience, as person has to learn that actions have consequences and that there are limitations to your actions because you cannot infringe other people's rights with your actions. There are certain boundaries within which you are free to operate and exercise your free will without harming anyone. Only coming of age allows one to enter society and exercise one's rights in full – which presumes that a person had enough time to understand how the society works and how one can fit in and be able to contribute to it positively. However, ability to fully exercise own rights comes with a price. People entering the society are bound to contribute actively to it, and also keep their representatives in check. It is people's duty to make sure their government acts in their interest by means provided by law. Moreover, people can revolt against the government if the legal actions has proven to be useless.

We do not know what the percentage of people actually believed in Lockean ideas on society and government, how many people at the time would be able to explain the philosophical

reasoning behind the war and why they had to erect their own government or why they became a separate nation. But we do know what ideas were popularized through political pamphlets and patriotic songs. Common folk was not offered complex justifications of whether they had free will. It was “explained” to them, that in order to get rid of unjust taxations alike Stamp Act and Townshend Act, they had to do something about it. People sent their representatives for the Congress and the delegates tried to reason with the King and the Parliament – people tried to check their government in a legal way. As those attempts failed eventually, and first shots were fired, people resorted to violence. As tension progressed, gradually people have lost the reverence to the king and monarchy, but they have not lost belief in the principals that the British proclaimed – freedom and everything what it stands for. Through pamphlets and songs, complex ideas were disseminated in a much simpler fashion. It does not even matter whether people understood everything what Thomas Paine was writing and what people themselves were singing – people were absorbing those ideas anyway. Even today, with widespread higher education and close to 100% literacy rates, general public can doubtfully explain intelligently their political or economic views, but they believe in those regardless, because of what they hear and see on the media or because of word of mouth. What matters is that centuries after, we can see the results of such advocacy. One year into the war *The Declaration of Independence* proclaimed the main values of the newborn country – Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. A decade and a half later, the Lockean ideas were secured in *The Constitution* and *The Bill of Rights*. Ideas that were emphasized in this work were protected by the First, Second and Fifth Amendment – free exercise of religion, freedom of speech, freedom to oppose the government; security of life, liberty and property.

That is true that at the time far from everybody could exercise proclaimed freedom. Those rights were a privilege of males with certain amount of property. Women, black people, indigenous

people, servants were excluded from voting, public participation, from owning property. In fact, some people were property, which blatantly contradicted *The U.S. Constitution*. Nevertheless, as the times have been changing, the morale has been changing too. Governed by the same ideas, first excluded groups were gaining the rights promised by the Constitution to everybody. A lot has been achieved to ensure the equality of exercising those rights. But at the same time there is still a lot to be done. Which is why people should not forget the principle on which this country was based on – rule of the law. The only thing that ensures freedom is the law and everyone, including government officials, should remember that. Only abiding the law, the society can secure the Lockean freedom. Without it, societies return to the natural state, where no one is safe, and freedom is just the ability to do whatever one pleases.

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APPENDIX A:

THE LIBERTY SONG BY JOHN DICKINSON, JULY 4-12, 1768

(THE PENNSYLVANIA CHRONICLE)

Come, join Hand in Hand, brave AMERICANS all,
And rouse your bold Hearts at fair LIBERTY's call;
No *tyrannous Acts* shall suppress your *just Claim*,
Or stain with *Dishonor* AMERICA's Name.

Chorus:

In FREEDOM we're BORN, and in FREEDOM we'll LIVE.
Our Purses are ready,
Steady, Friends, steady,
Not as SLAVES, but as FREEMEN our Money we'll give.

Our worthy *Forefathers* – let's give them a Cheer –
To *Climates unknown* did courageously steer;
Thro' *Oceans* to *Deserts* for *Freedom* they came,
And dying, bequeath'd us their *Freedom* and *Fame* –

Chorus

Their generous Bosoms all Dangers despis'd,
So *highly*, so *wisely*, their BIRTHRIGHTS they priz'd;
We'll keep what they gave, we will piously keep,
Nor frustrate their Toils on the Land and the Deep.

Chorus

The Tree their own Hands had to LIBERTY rear'd,
They liv'd to behold growing strong and rever'd;
With Transport then cry'd, "Now our Wishes we gain,
For our Children shall gather the Fruits of our Pain."

Chorus

How *sweet* are the Labors that Freeman endure,
That *they* shall enjoy all the Profit, secure –

No more such sweet Labors AMERICANS know,
If Britons shall *reap* what Americans *sow*.

Chorus

Swarms of *Placemen* and *Pensioners* soon will appear,
Like Locusts deforming the Charms of the Year;
Suns vainly will rise, Showers vainly descend,
If *we are to drudge* for what *others* shall *spend*.

Chorus

Then join Hand in Hand brave AMERICANS all,
By *uniting* we stand, by *dividing* we fall;
IN SO RIGHTEOUS A CAUSE let us hope to succeed,
For Heaven approves of each generous Deed. –

Chorus

All Ages shall speak with *Amaze* and *Applause*,
Of the *Courage* we'll shew IN SUPPORT OF OUR LAWS;
To DIE we can *bear*, but to serve we *disdain*.
For SHAME is to Freemen more dreadful than PAIN.

Chorus

This Bumper I crown for our SOVEREIGN's Health,
And this for BRITANNIA's Glory and Wealth;
That Wealth and that Glory immortal may be,
If *she* is but *just*, and if *we* are but *free*. –

Chorus

APENDIX B:

THE LIBERTY SONG BY JOHN DICKINSON, AUGUST 29 – SEPTEMBER 5, 1768

(THE BOSTON CHRONICLE)

COME, join hand in hand brave AMERICANS all,
And rouse your bold hearts at fair LIBERTY's call;
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just claim,
Or stain with dishonor AMERICA's name.

Chorus:

In *FREEDOM* we're born, and in *FREEDOM* we'll live,
Our Purses are ready,
Steady, Friends, steady,
Not as SLAVES, but as FREEMEN our Money we'll give.

Our worthy Forefathers – Let's give them a cheer –
To Climates unknown did courageously steer;
Thro' Oceans to Deserts for FREEDOM they came,
And dying, bequeath'd us their FREEDOM and Fame.

Chorus

Their generous bosoms all dangers despis'd,
So highly, so wisely, their *Birthrights* they priz'd;
We'll keep what they gave, we will piously keep,
Nor frustrate their toils on the land and the deep –

Chorus

The Tree their own Hands had to LIBERTY rear'd;
They liv'd to behold growing strong and rever'd;
With Transport then cry'd, "Now our Wishes we gain,
For our children shall gather the fruits of our pain" –

Chorus

Swarms of Placemen and Pensioners soon will appear
Like Locusts deforming the Charms of the Year;

Suns vainly will rise, Showers vainly descend,
If we are to drudge for what others shall spend.

Chorus

Then join Hand in Hand brave AMERICANS all,
By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall;
IN so RIGHTEOUS a Cause let us hope to succeed,
For Heaven approves of each generous Deed.

Chorus

All Ages shall speak with Amaze and Applause,
Of the Courage we'll shew in support of our LAWS;
To die we can bear – but to serve we disdain.
For Shame is to FREEDOM more dreadful than pain.

Chorus

This Bumper I crown for our Sovereign's Health,
And this for Britannia's Glory and wealth;
That Wealth and that glory immortal may be,
If She is but JUST – and if we are but FREE.

Chorus

APENDIX C:

THE LIBERTY SONG BY JOHN DICKINSON, MAY 1770

(BICKERSTAFF'S BOSTON ALMANAC)

THE MASSACHUSSETS SONG OF LIBERTY

COME, join hand in hand brave AMERICANS all,
And rouse your bold hearts at fair LIBERTY's call;
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just claim,
Or stain with dishonor AMERICA's name.

Chorus:

In FREEDOM we're born, and, like sons of the brave,
Will never surrender, But swear to defend her;
And scorn to survive, if unable to save.

Our worthy Forefathers – Let's give them a cheer –
To Climates unknown did courageously steer;
Thro' Oceans to Deserts for FREEDOM they came,
And dying, bequeath'd us their FREEDOM and Fame.

Chorus

Their generous bosoms all dangers despis'd,
So highly, so wisely, their *Birthrights* they priz'd;
We'll keep what they gave, we will piously keep,
Nor frustrate their toils on the land and the deep –

Chorus

The Tree their own Hands had to LIBERTY rear'd;
They liv'd to behold growing strong and rever'd;
With Transport then cry'd, "Now our Wishes we gain,
For our children shall gather the fruits of our pain" –

Chorus

Swarms of Placemen and Pensioners soon will appear

Like Locusts deforming the Charms of the Year;
Suns vainly will rise, Showers vainly descend,
If we are to drudge for what others shall spend.

Chorus

Then join Hand in Hand brave AMERICANS all,
By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall;
IN so RIGHTEOUS a Cause let us hope to succeed,
For Heaven approves of each generous Deed.

Chorus

All Ages shall speak with Amaze and Applause,
Of the Courage we'll shew in support of our LAWS;
To die we can bear – but to serve we disdain.
For Shame is to FREEDOM more dreadful than pain.

Chorus

Come swallow your bumpers, ye Tories, and roar,
That the sons of fair freedom are hampered once more;
But know that no cut-throats our spirits can tame,
Nor a host of oppressors shall smother the flame.

Chorus