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**Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine: Their Life, Work, and
Role in the American Revolution**

Diplomová práce

Bc. Bogdan Heinz

Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Matthew Sweney, Ph.D.

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| Bc. HEINZ Bogdan | Okružní 466, Orlová - Lutyně | F170477 |

TÉMA ČESKY:

Benjamin Franklin a Thomas Paine: život, dílo a role v Americké revoluci

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Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine: Their Life, Work and Role in the American Revolution

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PhDr. Matthew Sweney, Ph.D. - KAA

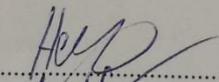
ZÁSADY PRO VYPRACOVÁNÍ:

Cílem práce je představení dvou politických filozofů, autorů a revolucionářů, jejichž život a dílo měly zásadní vliv na Americkou revoluci: Benjamina Franklina a Thomase Painea. Práce se zaměří na život, práci a názory těchto autorů, přiblíží rovněž jejich vztah a vzájemný vliv. V neposlední řadě se zaměří na roli, jakou tyto dvě osobnosti sehrály v Americké Revoluci, a bude rovněž pojednávat o samotném konfliktu.

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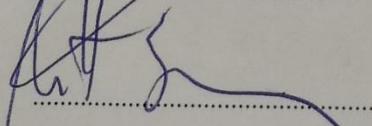
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Content

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Introduction..... | 7 |
| 2. Benjamin Franklin – Life..... | 9 |
| 2.1 Franklin’s Views on Religion..... | 9 |
| 2.2 Service for the Good of the Public..... | 11 |
| 2.3 Self-improvement and Virtues..... | 13 |
| 2.4 Science and Inventions..... | 15 |
| 2.5 Franklin’s Faults..... | 16 |
| 2.6 Franklin’s Political Activities before the American Revolution..... | 19 |
| 2.7 Franklin’s Political Activities during the American Revolution..... | 22 |
| 3. Benjamin Franklin – Works..... | 26 |
| 3.1 Silence Dogood Letters (1722)..... | 26 |
| 3.2 <i>Poor Richard’s Almanack</i> (1732 to 1758)..... | 28 |
| 3.3 <i>The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin</i> (1791)..... | 30 |
| 3.4 Political Satires..... | 33 |
| 3.5 Miscellaneous..... | 35 |
| 4. Thomas Paine – Life..... | 37 |
| 4.1 Paine’s Views on Religion..... | 37 |
| 4.2 Radicalism..... | 38 |
| 4.3 Republicanism..... | 41 |
| 4.4 Science..... | 43 |
| 4.5 Paine’s Political Activities during the American Revolution..... | 43 |
| 4.6 Paine’s Political Activities after the American Revolution..... | 47 |
| 4.7 Paine’s Faults..... | 49 |
| 5. Thomas Paine – Works..... | 51 |
| 5.1 <i>Common Sense</i> (1776)..... | 51 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 5.2 <i>The Crisis</i> series (1776 to 1783) | 53 |
| 5.3 <i>Rights of Man</i> (1791) | 56 |
| 5.4 <i>The Age of Reason</i> (1794, 1795, 1807)..... | 58 |
| 5.5 <i>Agrarian Justice</i> (1797) | 59 |
| 5.6 Miscellaneous | 60 |
| 6. Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine Compared | 62 |
| 6.1 Deism and Radicalism | 62 |
| 6.2 Views on Reconciliation..... | 64 |
| 6.3 The Role of Science..... | 66 |
| 6.4 Involvement and Impact | 67 |
| 7. Conclusion | 70 |
| Resumé..... | 72 |
| Works Cited..... | 73 |
| Anotace | 76 |
| Abstract..... | 76 |

1. Introduction

The American Revolution is one of the most widely discussed and analysed events of modern history. It was a precursor to other revolutionary movements in the 18th and the 19th centuries, an event which would come to shape the distribution of power in the modern world. It brought the establishment of a new major country—the United States of America—and also helped spark worldwide debates regarding the government of people and their natural rights. It marks the appearance of a politically conscious and powerful working class and is a beginning of the fall in prominence of the aristocratic class. The revolution was an embodiment of the ideas of Enlightenment, an intellectual movement which centred on the concepts of liberty, democratic government, tolerance, scientific progress, and individual freedom.

The origins of the revolution can be traced back to the second half of the 17th century. Great Britain, eager to earn profits through regulation of its colonial trade, began to impose taxes on the American colonists. These actions gradually came to be considered unjust by the colonists and, connected with their growing notion of national identity, being forced into wars they did not want to participate in, and the growing harshness of the taxes intended to stifle the power of the colonies, a division began to appear between the colonies and their mother country. Increasingly severe taxes, together with an increase of popularity of the ideas of Enlightenment, new concepts regarding government, rights of people, liberty, etc., led to the increase of hostility between the two sides. The conflict would manifest itself through protests and riots at first, but gradually developed into violent skirmishes and, finally, a full-scale war which began in 1775.

The American Revolution was also an event which saw the rise of various different prominent statesmen and politicians, many of whom would later come to be described as “The Founding Fathers of the United States”. These people, albeit often differing with respect to political matters, advocating different ideas, and also differing with respect to the ultimate impact they had on the revolution, can be said to be largely responsible for its outcome. This thesis focuses on two such personas: Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine.

The first two chapters of the thesis focus on Benjamin Franklin and his personal role in the conflict. The primary goal of the thesis is not to give a chronological account of his life, but rather introduce and focus on certain characteristics and personal traits which seem to have had a major impact on how the revolution developed. Apart from

such traits and life in general, the thesis also gives account of Franklin's literary work, focusing on such publications which seem to have had the largest influence on the American public at the time.

The following two chapters focus on another prominent revolutionary, Thomas Paine. He seems to have been a completely different person than Franklin, and yet his role seems to be at least equally critical. As in the case of the previous chapters, the thesis focuses on certain prominent characteristics and personal traits which had an influence on Paine's life as well as his subsequent role in the revolutionary movement. Again, the thesis also introduces and analyses his work, focusing on such aspects which the author became famous for, and attempting to critically evaluate the effect of his publications on the American colonies.

Finally, the goal of the last chapter is to compare the two authors by analysing the differences and similarities found not only in their work, but also their lives. Specific attention is given to such details which caused that their respective contributions were largely different. The thesis proceeds to give a summary of the roles of the two revolutionaries and also attempts to state which of them was ultimately more vital to the development of the American Revolution.

2. Benjamin Franklin – Life

Benjamin Franklin was a complex man of many talents. Born in Boston in 1706 to a family of candle- and soap-makers, he slowly began to make his mark by becoming a successful, influential, and widely respected person. His remarkable complexity makes any attempts of labelling him incredibly difficult. At various stages of his life, he was a businessman, scientist, printer's apprentice, statesman, diplomat, inventor, civic activist, or writer. When he died in 1790, he had already achieved fame and respect and had won global admiration. It seems safe to say that his influence was caused by a variety of factors present not only in his works, but also characterizing him as a person. They seem to have helped him influence others, gained him wealth and fame and, finally, ensured that he had a crucial role in the American Revolution. What also seems important is the fact that these factors do not seem to work in isolation, but rather create a complex body of interconnections, each having influence on the other, and having various degrees of importance with respect to their role in Franklin's endeavours leading towards the American independence.

2.1 Franklin's Views on Religion

Franklin seems to have developed his own opinion regarding religion very early in his life. Brought up in a deeply religious family and originally intended to become a clergyman, he soon began to find faults in the religious teachings he received. In *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (1793), Franklin states that he began to have doubts about several points of religion as soon as he was 15 years old. He says that his doubts of the Revelation were caused by some books against deism which were supposed to refute it, but had quite the opposite effect on him.¹ He thus became a deist² very early in his life.

Russell B. Goodman characterizes Franklin's attitude towards God as disengagement, by which he means Franklin's belief that he does not have to follow

¹ Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 55.

² Deism: a movement or a system of thought emphasizing natural religion, emphasizing morality, and in the 18th century denying the interference of the Creator with the laws of the universe. (source: "Deism," Merriam-Webster, accessed May 2, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/deism>.)

anything else except for his own curiosity and invention.³ This belief directly contrasts with the religious sentiments prevalent in his era (Puritan, Presbyterian) as rejecting the concepts of divine revelation and direct intervention of God in human affairs was frowned upon and, in some cases, seen as atheism. However, as Franklin rose in prominence later in his life, and became a benefactor of various religious institutions, this does not seem to have had any detrimental consequences for him.

The fact that Benjamin Franklin was a deist does not mean he was a non-believer. He himself states in his autobiography that in spite of finding some dogmas dubious and thus not attending public assemblies of the Church, he believed in the existence of God and, most importantly, that the best service a person can do to God is to serve mankind.⁴ Franklin was a pragmatist—even though he did not agree with the dogmas, he could see the *utility* of religion.⁵

This particular attitude towards religion demonstrated itself on many occasions in his life and seems to have had various different implications, some of them critical. Goodman uses Franklin's "Remarks Concerning the Savages of Northern America" (1784) as an argument towards the fact that Franklin, in spite of his concerns with many aspects of public life, definitely did not concern himself with religious dogma.⁶ This seems to be a plausible view as there is no evidence of such a behaviour neither in his personal correspondence, nor his works. For Franklin, religion was merely a tool, not the end. His utilitarian approach also manifests itself in the fact that he contributed towards building a preaching house in 1740 for all the denominations present in Pennsylvania, showing his preoccupation with personal as well as religious freedom.

He remained a pragmatic deist all through his life. This can be proved by some of his letters, e.g. a letter he sent to Thomas Jefferson in 1787 concerning the prayers in the American Congress in which he states that perhaps praying before negotiations, as the members of the convention did during the conflict with Britain, might help them solve the problems they were facing at the time.⁷ The fact that he suggested praying as a way

³ Russell B. Goodman, *American Philosophy before Pragmatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 50.

⁴ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 78.

⁵ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 79.

⁶ Goodman, *American Philosophy before Pragmatism*, 56.

⁷ Benjamin Franklin, "Motion for Prayers in the Convention," in *Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1997), 398.

of reaching consensus among the members of the Congress seems to prove that Franklin was ready to employ religion to reach predominantly pragmatic goals. Another, quite peculiar, case is a letter he sent to Ezra Stiles in 1790, the year he died. He does not only restate his deist beliefs, but also mentions that Stiles was the first person who asked him a question regarding his religious beliefs.⁸

It seems possible to say that the implications his religious beliefs had on his life and, subsequently, the American Revolution, are more than marginal. By clearly separating religion and political life, allowing it to have a symbolic meaning and a pragmatic role only, he did not have to concern himself with “external factors” connected with belonging to particular religious denominations which could otherwise affect his decisions or influence him in other ways. What is more, one could say that Franklin was able to see the harmful consequences of religion in politics for himself when the Quakers in the Pennsylvania Assembly, whose religious beliefs forbid them from participating in wars, blocked necessary military reforms in the late 1740s, effectively making Pennsylvania vulnerable to enemy attacks.

Furthermore, Franklin’s belief of “not being impeded by God” seems to have showed him a way towards self-fulfilment not only in his scientific pursuits, but also in something he himself called “public service” (which also included making his scientific inventions available to everyone). And, since in his own eyes “public service” meant improving the lives of citizens in every way imaginable, including freeing them from the oppression of unlawful governments, there seems to be a connection, albeit indirect, between his religious beliefs and his role as a revolutionist.

2.2 Service for the Good of the Public

For Franklin, service to the public seems to have been the chief means of self-fulfilment. The start of his actions as a social reformer can be traced back to the time when he was 16, working as an apprentice for his brother in Boston. When James Franklin refused to allow his brother, Benjamin, to be published in his newspaper called *The New-England Courant* (first published in 1721), young Franklin wrote a series of letters to him under the pseudonym of Silence Dogood and got published this way. It seems possible to consider the third letter a prelude to all of his actions later in his life.

⁸ Benjamin Franklin, “To Ezra Stiles,” in *Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1997), 439.

He states his intention of doing “all that lies in his way for the service of his countrymen.”⁹ These letters also display other qualities typically associated with Franklin such as his concern with freedom of speech, liberty, or public health. They are analysed later in this thesis.

It was stated before that all Franklin’s crucial characteristics seem to be interconnected in some way. The connection between deism and public service seems to lie in the fact that for Franklin, the best way to worship God was by being useful to humankind. And again, as in the case of his attitude towards religion, he seems to have employed highly pragmatic methods to achieve this particular goal. Before he became involved in politics, Franklin devoted his life to improving his own conditions as well as the life of other Pennsylvanians/Americans.

The *Pennsylvania Gazette* (first published in 1728) was one of the crucial tools in his arsenal. Bought from a rival printer in 1729, its usefulness was proved soon afterwards. Running his own newspaper allowed Franklin to publish articles designed to turn the attention of the public towards an issue he wanted to discuss, and, consequently, to establish a various range of institutions around the city, including a subscription library, a hospital, an academy, a preacher house, and a fire-fighting company. These particular instances of public service not only infused Franklin with pride, but also, as Edmund S. Morgan puts it, seem to have granted him political experience useful not only in his future projects, but also in his later career as a statesman.¹⁰ Given the fact that ensuring public support for his projects seems somewhat connected with seeking support for political matters, it seems possible to support such a statement. In the eyes of the colonists, his wide-known successes and inventiveness in public life seem to have made him a suitable candidate for representing their interests.

The establishment of various institutions throughout the city of Pennsylvania is connected with another creation of Franklin: The Junto. It was a club of like-minded people, formed in 1727 (when Franklin was 21 years old), its members being meticulously handpicked. The group discussed various issues among their ranks such as the establishment of aforementioned institutions, and it usually was the members of the Junto (or its later adjacent organizations) who collected money for such endeavours. If

⁹ Benjamin Franklin, “Silence Dogood, No. 3,” accessed April 17, 2018, <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

¹⁰ Edmund S. Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2002), 57.

one considers the Junto as an act of public service (as its members were devoted to it), it is possible to see several important aspects which had a far-reaching influence on Franklin's life. In two of the four initiation questions for the Junto,¹¹ it is possible to see aspects which characterize Franklin and the enlightened thinking of the time: concern with a service to mankind, as well as with just liberties of the people.¹² As the American Revolution was, in the eyes of the revolutionists, a fight for liberty and justice, it seems possible to say that Franklin's group not only significantly helped improve life in Pennsylvania, but also played a part in forming the public opinion at the time, helping raise the awareness of its rights.

It seems plausible to say that there indeed exists a connection between Franklin's acts of public service and the revolution itself, despite being an indirect one. As the Junto was heavily involved in the public life of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and, consequently, the other colonies as well (as Franklin worked with other printers throughout the colonies), it is possible to say that its policies, infused with the already mentioned ideas of Enlightenment, had a role in shaping the consciousness of the public. Finally, as some of the ideas behind the revolution were similar to the already mentioned standpoints of the Junto, the connection indeed seems present.

2.3 Self-improvement and Virtues

A deep-rooted desire for self-improvement is another of the key characteristics of Benjamin Franklin. He demonstrated his devotion to improving himself as well as others on many occasions and this desire also serves as a link between him and Thomas Paine. For Franklin, it seems to have had various different implications: it does not only reveal itself as a desire to attain virtues and moral perfection, but also in a broader sense, in accordance with the ideas of the Enlightenment period. Again, as the gradual shift from religion and gradually increasing interest in social and natural sciences is in accordance with Franklin's own opinions concerning the topic, it seems rather obvious that these aspects are interconnected. Furthermore, the desire to improve oneself as well as the lives

¹¹ The four initiation questions: 1. Have you met with any thing in the author you last read, remarkable, or suitable to be communicated to the Junto? ... 2. Have you lately heard how any present rich man, here or elsewhere, got his estate? ... 3. Do you think of any thing at present, in which the Junto may be serviceable to mankind? ... Have you lately observed any defect in the laws of your country, of which it would be proper to move the legislature for an amendment?

¹² Goodman, *American Philosophy before Pragmatism*, 58.

of others (bettering the conditions of humankind in general was one of the principles of Enlightenment) can be seen as a case of service to the public as well.

Franklin's road towards self-improvement began early in his youth. His schooling unfinished, he seems to have felt a strong need to learn as much as he could by himself by reading books. As he worked as an apprentice printer for his brother, he had access to many books the others did not, and he seems to have taken full advantage of this privilege. In his autobiography, Franklin states that reading was what improved his mind significantly, and possibly had an influence on him being a person whose advice was sought by many.¹³ In another part of his autobiography, he states that the library he helped to establish provided him with "further means of improvement by constant study,"¹⁴ therefore it seems evident that knowledge and books were aspects he valued very highly. His desire for personal improvement and corresponding hunger for knowledge continued all throughout his life.

Russell B. Goodman states that Franklin did not have a unified moral code, but rather a set of instructions on how to live, and a collection of virtues to live by and to teach others to live by as well.¹⁵ This seems a plausible view, as the aforementioned virtues and ways to live by can be found in some of his most important works, such as *The Poor Richard's Almanack* (1733–1758) or his own autobiography. The various different editions of the almanac are full of pragmatic maxims on how people can improve themselves as well as their lives in general. These include, among many other, maxims on virtue, such as "The excellency of hogs is fatness, of men virtue."¹⁶ In his autobiography, he gives a concise list of virtues (including e.g. silence, resolution, or industry) and also devises a pragmatic approach for achieving moral perfection.¹⁷ This deep concern with improvement of one's own mind as well as the minds and lives of others seems to betray a selfless man concerned with the well-being of his fellow countrymen, a quality which seems to associate Franklin directly with the Enlightenment thinking.

¹³ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 54.

¹⁴ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 77.

¹⁵ Goodman, *American Philosophy before Pragmatism*, 68.

¹⁶ Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1736*, in *Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1997), 461.

¹⁷ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 80.

Again, as in the case of the previous subchapter, a direct link between Franklin's self-improvement and its role in the revolution seems to be missing. However, if we look at the matter from a more general point of view, namely from the point of view of the Enlightenment, it seems clear that in this case, Franklin embodies some of its central ideas: self-improvement, desire to improve mankind in general, and concern with liberties and rights. And as the Enlightenment ideals were the key causes of all the revolutions of the era, it seems possible to think that the concepts of self-improvement and the American Revolution could be connected at least indirectly.

2.4 Science and Inventions

When it comes to the Enlightenment, Franklin also displayed other qualities directly or indirectly associated with it. As said by Morgan, throughout his whole life, Franklin displayed an "insatiable curiosity" about the world around him.¹⁸ Given the vast amount of his scientific discoveries and the frequency with which he mentions this particular field of human activity in his letters, there hardly seems to be a reason to doubt the credibility of Morgan's opinion.

Benjamin Franklin's curious nature, connected with the fact that he always wanted to know why things were as they were, seems to have led him on the path of discovery very early in his life. Furthermore, as was stated before, he was concerned with improving the conditions of mankind in general. This had beneficial consequences for the countrymen he was trying to help—he never wanted any money for his inventions. Being a mankind-loving pragmatic, he states that "as we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours, and this we should do freely and generously."¹⁹

Franklin himself gives us a proof of his interest in the scientific world in his own autobiography. He says that when he was presented with some experiments with electricity for the first time, the topic being new to him, he was very pleased and quickly took the opportunity to do some of his own when he got the chance.²⁰ This eagerness to learn new things and discover how other ones work was perhaps a key element in what

¹⁸ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 4.

¹⁹ Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography*, part 3, quoted in Edmund S. Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2002), 28.

²⁰ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 54.

made him a famous and respected scientist in his time. It was the experiments on electricity what won him the British Royal Society's Copley Medal in 1753. He also became a member of the society in 1756, which seems rather important, because he was one of the first colonists to become one.

Apart from experiments with electricity, which yielded results such as the lightning rod, the discovery of positive and negative charges or the discovery of the nature of electricity in general, Franklin also invented many devices and allowed the public to use them freely, demonstrating his devotion to the service to mankind. These include the glass harmonica, Franklin stove, or bifocal glasses. He also studied fields such as meteorology, population studies, and oceanography, conducted experiments with oil on water, studied the currents of the ocean, tried to design better ship hulls, and many others.

Although certainly useful to the public of his era and cementing Franklin's reputation as an enlightened persona, it is difficult to see direct links between this particular aspect of Franklin's life and the American Revolution. None of his inventions played a direct role in it. What is more, in a letter to Cadwallader Colden written in 1750, Franklin himself diminished the importance of scientific discoveries compared to public service. He states that the experiments are mere "philosophical amusements" and that the proper importance of one's actions lies elsewhere.²¹ This seems to show that in spite of being fond of his work in the field of natural sciences, he was of the opinion that some fields were more important than others. However, his scientific pursuits did perhaps play a very small role, as they made him famous; and without fame, respect, and prominence, he would hardly be able to achieve what he did for the American colonies.

2.5 Franklin's Faults

Although Benjamin Franklin did indeed have many qualities which could be perceived as good and beneficial not only to him, but also to the American public, he was by no means a perfect and flawless man. Throughout his life, he seems to have made several mistakes not only political, but also personal. Some of them are acknowledged by

²¹ Benjamin Franklin, "To Cadwallader Colden," 1750, accessed April 8, 2018, <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

him in his own autobiography where he calls them his “errata”.²² Some of them, however, can be seen only when subjected to a more thorough analysis.

Although not being a fault per se, this seems to be a good place to mention the fact that even though Franklin presented himself as a virtuous man of high morals and a strict moral code, he did not always cling to it, especially in his later years. In his *American Philosophy before Pragmatism*, Russell B. Goodman mentions the discrepancies between Franklin’s moral code and what he actually did, and also expresses his curiosity with respect to the fact that his autobiography might have painted a slightly different picture, had Franklin finished it.²³ Goodman seems to have a good point because during his later years, Franklin was morbidly obese and suffered from the very consequences of harmful lifestyle which he tried to warn against in his *Poor Richard’s Almanack*: gout and kidney stones. This seems to have happened especially during his stay in France between 1776 and 1785. There are also many letters from that period, exchanged with his female admirers, serving as a proof of Franklin’s not-so-strict-anymore moral and sexual codes. Furthermore, despite his alleged lifelong battle with it, Franklin seems to openly admit that he was never able to overcome his pride.²⁴

It was mentioned before that Benjamin Franklin’s actions were often, if not always, ruled by pragmatism. This preoccupation with the utility of one’s actions seems to have had such effect that Franklin seems almost without feelings, or at least does not openly show them. In his autobiography, he scarcely mentions them, does not talk about his feelings towards his wife, children, or friends, always focusing on utility. It seems difficult to say if Franklin suppressed his feelings, did not have them at all, or chose to hide them. However, his personal correspondence with ladies of the French court does seem to indicate that he was not as cold and calculated a man as he presented himself. Finally, it seems impossible to judge what he must have felt when his first son died, or when he met his illegitimate son in England in 1785, whom he used to value very highly, but who chose to back the British during the Revolutionary War. Franklin allegedly recorded the event without any comment.²⁵

²² They were mostly caused by his inexperience as a youngster and had predominantly financial consequences.

²³ Goodman, *American Philosophy before Pragmatism*, 72.

²⁴ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 90.

²⁵ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 299.

Another of Franklin's limitations seems to be the fact that he was not able to perceive beauty, as Kenneth Silverman argues in his introduction to Franklin's autobiography.²⁶ It is possible to support this claim with the fact that in his "Information to Those Who Would Remove to America" (published in 1782), he strongly discourages artists from coming to the country,²⁷ unable to see the benefits they might bring to the newly formed nation. Furthermore, based on his autobiography, it is possible to say that Franklin saw his shortcomings as a poet from early on and thus decided to focus on prose rather than verse.

There are also at least two cases in which Franklin displayed attitudes strictly contrasting with his concern with people's liberties. He came to regret both of these cases later on in his life. In 1751, he showed clear signs of ethnocentrism when he openly spoke against German immigrants in his "Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc." (1751). He used a derogative term to name them.²⁸ These would later be used against him during his political campaign in 1760s. The second case is Franklin's attitude towards slaves. He himself was a slave owner for a very long time, but gradually came to condemn the practice. The first instance of this change can be detected in 1751 in his already mentioned "Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, Etc." where he seems to condemn the practice, albeit on the grounds of economy.²⁹ He gradually came to rethink his attitudes, however, and finally became a prominent abolitionist, publishing "An Address to the Public; from the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery" (1789), in which he hopes that the attention to emancipated blacks becomes a matter of national policy.³⁰ He also became the first president of the Pennsylvania Abolitionist Society.

These faults do not seem to have had a major impact on any of Franklin's political activities closely related to the American Revolution. However, apart from the already

²⁶ Kenneth Silverman, introduction to *The Autobiography and Other Writings*, ed. Kenneth Silverman (London: Penguin, 1986), xiii.

²⁷ Benjamin Franklin, "Information to Those Who Would Remove to America," in *The Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1997), 237.

²⁸ To be precise, he called them "Palatine boors swarming our settlements"

²⁹ Goodman, *American Philosophy before Pragmatism*, 76.

³⁰ Benjamin Franklin, "An Address to the Public; From the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage," in *The Autobiography and Other Writings* (London: Penguin, 1986), 245.

mentioned mistakes and shortcomings, Franklin also seems to have committed several errors during his political career. They are discussed in the following two subchapters.

2.6 Franklin's Political Activities before the American Revolution

Having retired from the printing business in 1747, Franklin quickly became involved in politics. He was already quite famous for his scientific work and it seems to be a factor which highly contributed to the quick rise of his fame and popularity in Pennsylvania. For him, political involvement seems to have been a mere extension of what he perceived as public service. His first major political task came in 1747 when he helped establish a local militia against the French threat.³¹ Franklin had to somehow circumvent the issue of having Quakers in the provincial government who caused a paradoxical situation: the province was rich but defenceless due to the religious beliefs of the denomination. His efforts were successful and, as Edmund S. Morgan puts it, it was a first state-making activity for Franklin, which clearly demonstrated his democratic beliefs and common-sense approach.³² Again, as in various other cases, Franklin seems to show early signs of the qualities which made him a remarkable diplomat and revolutionist later in his life.

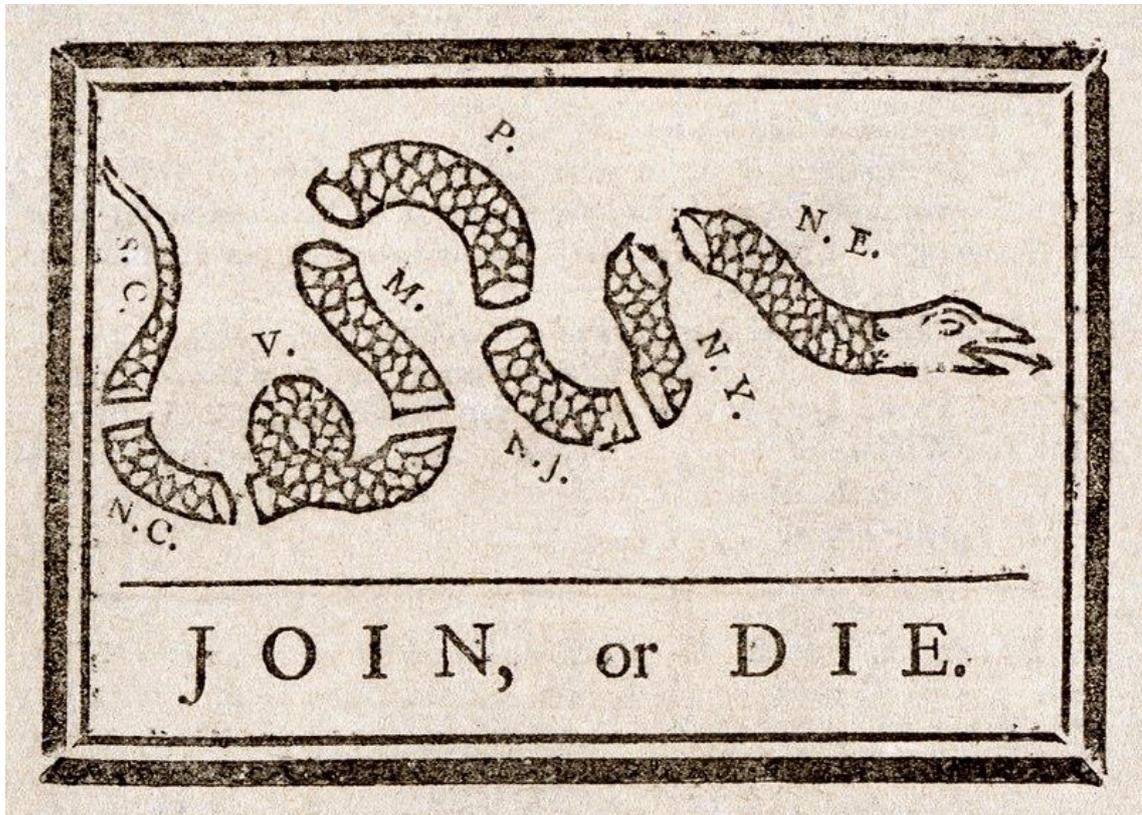
Influenced by his growing concerns with the French and Indian threat to his country in the early 1750s, Franklin designed a plan which would become almost prophetic and immensely important for the colonies some 25 years later: The Albany Plan of 1751. It was a call for unification of the colonies which were facing a common threat, and it displayed highly democratic principles: the colonies were supposed to keep their own governments while under the supervision of a central government consisting of their own representatives. However, as Franklin was still a loyalist and a monarchist at the time, he did not forget to include the royal governing power in his plan. In the end, however, it would prove to be one of the first cases in which he was forced to doubt the effectiveness of being governed by the British, as they rejected the plan, for fear that it would lead to American independence.³³ It seems possible to say that the vision of a union would not only seem to have critical implications for the future due to its striking similarity to the

³¹ During the Seven Years' War, which was a global war between European powers led by the Kingdoms of France and Great Britain, taking place between 1756 until 1763.

³² Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 67.

³³ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 90.

Constitution and Articles of Confederation, but its rejection at the time would prove to be one of the first instances in which Franklin would begin to doubt the utility of his, and the colonies', allegiance to the British Crown.



JOIN, or DIE. The first American political cartoon, published by Franklin in *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1754. Originally a call for unification during the Seven Years' War against the French and Indian threat, it would later become recycled as a call for unification during the American Revolution.

(Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Join,_or_Die#/media/File:Benjamin_Franklin_-_Join_or_Die.jpg)

Indeed, the 1750s seem to be the time when Franklin began to reconsider the relationship between the colonies and England. While he would remain a royalist until the late 1760 and would still openly display his desire of maintaining the union in the early 1770s, he nevertheless seems to have felt troubled by the unlimited, and unjustified, power the Crown had over the colonies.³⁴ It also seems clear that he was growing increasingly frustrated, and that he believed that it was a time which would have critical implications in the future—in his own autobiography, he states his belief that if both the Pennsylvanian and English governments adopted the Albany Plan of Union, there would

³⁴ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 98.

not be the need of British troops in the colonies, no further taxation would be needed, and thus no revolution would take place.³⁵

To add to the growing problems with the British, Franklin had to contend with the problems arising from the proprietary government of his province, represented by the Penn family. As the owners of the province, they actively blocked its taxation, (the reason of the taxation being getting funds to buy provisions necessary for its defence) because they did not want to have their own lands taxed. For Franklin, whose actions seem to have been based predominantly on the common good, this was unacceptable, and he seems to have been very angry about it, and wasted a lot of energy on the quarrel.³⁶ As his anger was quite evident, it is possible to see that the presence of a proprietary power in the colony was another reason which perhaps prompted Franklin towards considering a unified government without any external influences.

This fight with the proprietors would prove quite lengthy. Franklin was sent to England by the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1757 solely to protest against the power the Penns had over the colony. He would stay there until 1762. His sole desire seems to have been to obtain equal terms for what he perceived to be two parts of one large empire.³⁷ However, as he held no official power, he was able to do next to nothing to change the situation. It seems possible to say that the feeling of helplessness, as well as being subjected to the corrupt English politics, were another factor due to which Franklin began to drop his Englishness and started to develop patriotic feelings.

The entire Penn affair would prove to be one of his major political mistakes. Upon his arrival back in Philadelphia in 1762, he resumed his long-term quarrel with the proprietors. This quarrel would make him many political enemies in the province, establish him as a leader of the Quaker party, and ultimately lead to him not being elected to the Pennsylvanian Assembly in 1764. Franklin, always calm, calculated, and acting in a serious manner, seems to have been affected by the Penns so much that he fell into a “prolonged fit of political blindness.”³⁸ It seems to be possible to support such an opinion because Franklin, perhaps blinded by his hatred towards the proprietors, advocated for the replacement of the proprietor government with direct English control. The

³⁵ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 127.

³⁶ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 102.

³⁷ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 107.

³⁸ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 130.

Pennsylvanians did not seem to approve of his opinion on this particular matter as they were fearful of a further loss of their rights.

Franklin returned to England in 1764, originally sent on a similar mission as before. However, it would soon change, thanks to the events of 1765, which will be discussed in the following subchapter. Although his first major political mission to England was not a success, it seems that it had several important implications not only for Franklin himself, but also for the future of the colonies. In spite of his frustration caused by the English parliament, Franklin enjoyed his visit to England, travelling, making many acquaintances, joining various small clubs, and dining with famous people of the era. This seems to have made him appreciate what he perceived as his “mother country”, and was perhaps the reason why, in spite of all his frustrations with the royal government and his later attacks on the royal dominion, he remained a hopeful loyalist for such a long time.

2.7 Franklin’s Political Activities during the American Revolution

While Benjamin Franklin was on his second mission in London, the British Parliament passed an act which would later be labelled as a first direct step towards the war: The Stamp Act of 1765. The act imposed a direct tax on the colonies, ordering them to print on a special kind of paper with a distinctive revenue stamp. Franklin seemed to be aware of the fact that it would cause great commotion in the colonies, and tried to persuade the British Parliament to repeal it. However, as Morgan states, it is possible to say that it caused him to make another political mistake by underestimating just how much would the Americans riot.³⁹ In spite of working against it, he appointed one of his friends to oversee the act. This action was seen almost as a betrayal by his countrymen. This seems to demonstrate the fact that prior to the revolutionary war, there was a growing difference of opinions between Franklin and the American public, the probable causes being not only Franklin’s absence from the colonies, but also his love for England, evident from his autobiography as well as his personal correspondence. The act was finally repealed in 1766, however, not before causing riots, protests, and prompting the colonies to unite against what they perceived as a violation of their rights as Englishmen.

³⁹ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 152.

The British continued their efforts to tax the colonies by introducing the so called Townshend Acts⁴⁰ in 1767. As before, riots and unrest followed, and the American merchants became united in their efforts of boycotting goods coming from England, i.e. the non-importation movement. This, and the following two years, seem to be the time when Franklin finally came to reconsider his attitudes and began to think that Americans simply cannot be governed by the English. In a letter to a friend, regarding the Townshend Acts, he states that he loves England very much, but he also sees that Americans cannot be forced to bear any arbitrary power, and that a split is inevitable.⁴¹ What is more, Franklin seems to have supported the actions of Bostonian merchants who were boycotting British goods. The unrest resulting from the quarrel between the two sides about the rights to tax continued until 1770 when the Townshend Acts were repealed, albeit partially. However, by that time the damage seemed to be already done, as John Adams, one of the so-called Founding Fathers of the United States, reflected: “The revolution was already in the hearts and minds of the people.”⁴²

In spite of his growing disgust with the English parliament, Franklin continued his attempts to prevent an outright war. In the first half of 1770s, he would continually try to persuade the British government to take a different course of action. However, his efforts seem to have been largely unsuccessful. What is more, he was ridiculed, denounced, and even blamed for being the sole cause of England’s problems in America.⁴³ This, however, does not seem to be based on mere speculations, as Franklin did have a prominent role in the so-called Hutchinson Letters Affair.⁴⁴ The British continued to levy additional taxes on the colonies, a fact which caused more riots, leading to the famous events of

⁴⁰ Named after Charles Townshend, who was the Chancellor of the Exchequer, they were a series of acts taxing various different commodities, but, more importantly, served as a proof that the British Parliament thought that it had the right to tax the American colonies.

⁴¹ Benjamin Franklin, “To Lord Kames,” 1767, accessed April 7, 2018, <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

⁴² Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 188.

⁴³ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 202.

⁴⁴ Franklin somehow managed to obtain the private correspondence of Thomas Hutchinson and Andrew Oliver, the governors of Massachusetts, in which they promoted the rights of the British to tax and punish the province. Its publication increased tensions in the colonies, and the reaction of the British parliament seems to have been one of the chief factors which caused Franklin to abandon his monarchist principles.

The Boston Tea Party⁴⁵ in 1773. A combination of these events seems to have been a breaking point for Franklin, a point when he finally became a patriot. His personal correspondence from the time seems to prove this as he even started to use the pronouns such as “we” or “our” specifically with respect to the American nation.⁴⁶

It seems almost paradoxical that Franklin, in spite of his hopes and efforts to maintain a union between the colonies and England, came to be perceived as one of the main causes of the revolution. He was a monarchist for a very long time and tried to persuade the Parliament to see the matter his way. As was said before, proofs of these actions can be seen not only in his autobiography, but also in various cases of his personal correspondence. It seems plausible to say that the British parliament, actively trying to suppress the colonies and also trying to confirm its dominion over them, saw Franklin as a strong and independent persona who came “from there” and advocated a cause which the parliament thought not to be there in the first place. To them, the “rebellious subjects” were Franklin, and thus they seemed to have disregarded all of his opinions which later proved to be well-founded.

When Franklin returned to the colonies in 1775, the Revolutionary War had already begun. At that time, he directly participated in an event which would come to be essential for the new American nation—the publishing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Franklin was among the five men⁴⁷ who drafted and presented the Declaration and it is reported that he made several small, but ultimately crucial, changes to it.⁴⁸ This action seems to have cemented his role as “the American” not just in the colonies, but also in the entire world, and made him an ideal candidate for another political mission which he began in 1776.

Beginning in 1776, Franklin would spend the next nine years as an ambassador to France. His mission was to secure a military alliance as well as funding for the war for independence. He proved to be largely successful in his task, acquiring loans worth millions of livres without which the Americans would not be able to continue fighting.

⁴⁵ The Boston Tea Party was an organized destruction of British-taxed tea, a result of the American protest against one of the taxation acts. The British responded with further restrictions on American trade, which would later prove to be a factor escalating the start of hostilities between the colonies and the British Kingdom.

⁴⁶ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 221.

⁴⁷ Robert Livingston, Thomas Jefferson, Roger Sherman, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin.

⁴⁸ Goodman, *American Philosophy before Pragmatism*, 80–81.

Despite having the full power of the American Congress,⁴⁹ his efforts seem to have been hampered somewhat not only by the Congress itself, but also by some American politicians which the Congress send to help him but who seem to have caused more harm than good. However, his fame, eloquence, and the fact that he was universally liked by the French, seem to have helped him overcome those obstacles.

When the British were defeated in America in 1781, Franklin became one of the people responsible for negotiating a peace treaty with England. As before, the Congress sent other politicians to help him and in spite of the fact that “some of them caused him more difficulty than the ministers of all the great powers combined,”⁵⁰ he was able to negotiate the Treaty of Paris in 1783, thus ending the revolutionary war. Franklin therefore seems to have had a chief role not only in securing money and military help for the American campaign, but also in subsequent peace negotiations and the official birth of the American nation. As he seems to have loved France, and was loved there in return, he hesitated to return to the country whose independence he helped to secure, but finally did so in 1785.

It thus seems plausible to say that Benjamin Franklin’s activities during the American Revolution were crucial for its outcome, if slightly ambivalent. For a long time, he remained a monarchist, trying to save the union of England and the colonies, but at the same time, remained an advocate solely of the American cause. After the beginning of the war, however, he seems to have adopted a strictly patriotic stance and had a chief role not only in publishing the Declaration of Independence, but also securing necessary funds and alliances for his home country in France. Finally, he also played a crucial part in the formal end of the hostilities with England, securing a profitable peace treaty for the United States of America.

⁴⁹ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 252.

⁵⁰ Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*, 279.

3. Benjamin Franklin – Works

For Franklin, writing seems to have been a crucial means which he used for a multitude of purposes. Devoted to his service to the public, concerned about its health, political liberties, and well-being in general, he produced many works concerned with bettering the condition of humanity. He put his ownership of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and the fact that he was a printer in general to good use, publishing many pamphlets or articles aimed at exerting influence on the people of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the American colonies in general. This approach seems to have had deeply pragmatic roots: he often utilized it as means of preparing the public for a change he had envisioned, or simply to direct the attention to an issue he thought important and also which he thought deserved correcting. Franklin's language generally seems to be clear, concise, and easy to understand, a fact which seems logical when one considers that he wanted to address as wide a public as possible. He also often employs wit, satire, and in some cases, irony.

3.1 Silence Dogood Letters (1722)

The Silence Dogood Letters, published in the *New-England Courant* in 1722 by Benjamin Franklin's brother, James, seem to be a rather curious example of how relatively mature Franklin's views seemed to be even at a young age. As James Franklin did not want to publish his brother's works, Benjamin wrote the letters under the pseudonym of Silence Dogood when he was only 16 years old. He began the first letters with a general introduction to who Silence Dogood was, but later on he moved to much more serious topics.

Some of the topics he presents in the letters seem slightly trivial, for example his horriification with a particular piece of Bostonian fashion, the hoop petticoat. Other letters contain, for example, his criticism addressed to Harvard College where, according to Franklin, people did not learn anything. This particular case might be connected with the fact that Franklin later helped establish the Academy and College of Pennsylvania which would later become the University of Pennsylvania. It thus seems possible to see this as a complaint which was later turned into an act of public service.

In other letters, Franklin gives his opinions on various different matters. Letter number 9 seems to be a warning against the dangers of religion and it seems to display his deistic, as well as pragmatic, attitudes. Some letters serve as a promotion of local American poets, other educate the public about the effects of alcohol and the peculiarity

of the fact that there are many diminutive terms for the state of “being drunk”. Interestingly, in a predominantly patriarchal society, he vouches for equality between men and women (although in vices), which makes him a proto-feminist of sorts.⁵¹ Some letters, however, seem to hold peculiar importance with respect to the events which would later shape the future of Franklin’s country.

In letter 3, Franklin clearly states his resolution to serve his fellow countrymen to the best of his abilities.⁵² This can be seen as the earliest proof of his lifelong devotion to public service, devotion which would later develop into political service to the newly arising nation. Furthermore, in letter 2, Franklin (Dogood) declares himself a mortal enemy to arbitrary government and unlimited power.⁵³ It seems possible to say that he was sensitive to political injustice from early on and actively took the role of a self-appointed protector of the public, a role which would also give shape to his future actions.

Perhaps the most curious of the letters is letter number 8. In this particular case, Franklin seems to stress the importance of freedom of speech, liberty, and personal thought. This seems to have important implications because as he wrote this while being only 16 years old, he seems to have embodied the principles of free and just governments, a notion he would become concerned and associated with much later in his life, early in his youth. Furthermore, the letter seems to display highly democratic principles. Franklin sees government as “attendance of the trustees of the people upon the interest and affairs of the people.”⁵⁴

Exactly how much importance these letters have with respect to the revolution seems difficult to say. What seems important, however, is the fact that Franklin embodied democratic principles early in his youth and was apparently concerned with the topic to such an extent that he felt the need of directing the attention of the public to it. And, as

⁵¹ Benjamin Franklin’s concern with equality between men and women can also be seen in “The Speech of Polly Baker” (1747) which is a defence of a woman blamed for having illegitimate children while the guilt of the fathers is largely ignored.

⁵² Benjamin Franklin, “Silence Dogood, No. 3,” accessed April 17, 2018, <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

⁵³ Benjamin Franklin, “Silence Dogood, No. 2,” accessed April 17, 2018, <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

⁵⁴ Benjamin Franklin, “Silence Dogood, No. 8,” accessed April 17, 2018, <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

the *New-England Courant* was rather influential in Boston and widely read, it seems possible that these letters did indeed have, albeit perhaps only a small, role in making the American public aware of the concepts Franklin thought important for a normal society.

3.2 Poor Richard's Almanack (1732 to 1758)

Poor Richard's Almanack was an almanac published by Franklin continually from 1733 to 1758, once every year. The content varied with each successive edition, but some aspects remained the same. Each edition of the almanac contained a varying number of maxims on various different topics, some editions also contained information on meteorology, scientific discoveries, or even foreign countries. In the prefaces for the almanacs, Franklin, under the pseudonym of Richard Saunders, usually expressed gratitude regarding the fact that the almanac sold very well, and his hopes that the almanac would continue to be liked by the people. It was a social project which brought Franklin great pleasure, as he himself stated that he enjoyed its popularity immensely.⁵⁵

The various different editions of the book are mainly comprised of short, striking maxims in form of declarative sentences. However, each edition has a preface addressed directly to the reader by Saunders (or his wife) where the language seems normal, almost conversational. Franklin also seems to have used the language of praise, employing complimentary terms to show his appreciation of various different famous people. Finally, the author seems to have employed persuasive language to exert influence on the American readership.

In case of this particular work, Franklin clearly shows his concern with various different aspects of well-being of his fellow countrymen. The maxims include his opinions on a plethora of issues including health, marriage, life in general, personal conduct, possessions, governors, or wealth. Some of the maxims might be perceived as sexist in today's world, others have become immortalized, such as:

“Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy wealthy and wise.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard Improved, 1758*, in *Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1997), 555.

⁵⁶ Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1735*, in *Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1997), 458.

However, whether this particular maxim was authored by Franklin is uncertain, as in the 1747's edition, he freely admits that he borrowed many of the maxims from different sources.⁵⁷

Exerting influence on the common public, however, was not the only purpose of the almanac. Especially in the later editions, Franklin praises scientists and philosophers such as Nicolaus Copernikus, Isaac Newton, Francis Bacon, and John Locke. The prefaces are also a place where he talks about an imagined dispute with other almanac writers, and the futility of it, which possibly had roots in his real-life experiences. Franklin also shows his grasp of foreign languages as some of the maxims are written in Latin, German, or French.

As for the importance of the almanac with respect to the American Revolution, it seems plausible to say that it could have had a role in forming the opinion of the public regarding its liberties and rights, or at least play a part in the public becoming aware of it. In his maxims, Franklin did not omit themes and topics such as unjust kings, governors and governments, people's liberties, or power. Some of the examples include:

“He that cannot obey, cannot command.”⁵⁸

“Sell not virtue to purchase wealth, nor Liberty to purchase power.”⁵⁹

“The Good-will of the Governed will be starv'd, if not fed by the good Deeds of the Governors.”⁶⁰

“The royal Crown cures not the Head-ache.”⁶¹

Given the developments after Franklin ceased to publish the almanac, the first and the third maxims seem to be worth some special consideration. As the issues which lead to the revolution include the American problem with the British government unable to judge correctly and listen to their needs, and also imposing crippling taxes without the

⁵⁷ Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1747*, in *Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1997), 499.

⁵⁸ Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1734*, in *Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1997), 452.

⁵⁹ Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanack, 1738*, in *Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1997), 468.

⁶⁰ Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard Improved, 1753*, in *Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1997), 539.

⁶¹ Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard Improved, 1757*, in *Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1997), 552.

consent of the Americans (which can be seen as “bad deeds”), it seems possible to say that the publishing of the maxims is a kind of a prelude to what would happen later in the colonies. However, saying that these cases had any direct role would be a gross overestimation. On the other hand, it seems possible to say that as the almanac had a role in forming the public consciousness. It might have had a small role in making the Americans aware of their universal rights, and, consequently, of their perceived infringement.

3.3 The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (1791)

Benjamin Franklin’s account of his own life is probably one of the best, if necessarily subjective, publications concerning his own life, experiences, and opinions. In spite of being an unfinished work, thus missing some of the crucial years with respect to the American Revolution, it seems to give a clear view of how the author chose to lead his life, what motivated his actions, what virtues he tried to live by, and also what errors he committed throughout his life.

The autobiography has four parts, each concerned with a different period of the author’s life. Starting with his birth and ending much later, at the time when Franklin was busy with his first political actions, it seems to give the reader enough information to see why the author became a crucial figure in the years leading towards the revolution. The style of the book seems concise and calm, being a retrospective recollection of the author’s life with a distinct absence of any fervent arguments or bitter comments on what the author had experienced throughout his life.

One of the main characteristics, about which Franklin writes on multiple occasions in his autobiography, is his desire to be a reasonable person, concerned with a pragmatic desire for self-improvement for the sake of his peers. He mentions his love of books to which he had more access than any other ordinary American as he was an apprentice to his brother, a printer, before he ran away and started working in Philadelphia. As he rose in influence, he started to gain access to more and more books, a fact which he seems to have considered beneficial as it not only gave him more knowledge, but also made him more popular. He himself stated that thanks to reading, his mind was much better than the minds of others.⁶²

⁶² Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 56.

He also states that his own attitude opened many doors for him. This fact seems to have had serious consequences for his later political life. Franklin does not seem to give a particular account of why he was liked so much. He only comments that he saw his character was very good and given the benefits, he wanted to keep it and preserve it as much as possible.⁶³ And it seems to have worked rather well because he was generally liked not only during his war mission to France, but also before the war, in England, in spite of the fact that his political opponents considered him (ironically) directly responsible for the unrest that was arising in the colonies. The fact that he was loved in America was evident on many occasions, especially during his returns to his home Pennsylvania in his later years which were always accompanied by cheering crowds.

Franklin seems to have been a good and keen listener, always trying to understand the other person's motives and ideas. At various points in his autobiography, he gives account of how his conversations with people, together with reading, improved his own mind in a significant way. His early years seem to have been the time when he gained his first experiences with discussion and persuasion. He stresses the importance of the already mentioned Junto, originally set up for "mutual improvement," but later developing into an association which influenced the establishment of many institutions throughout the city of Pennsylvania, its chief goals being the search for truth and utility.⁶⁴ The skills Franklin thus gained without a doubt had a role later in his life, especially when he had to use his eloquence to obtain loans from the French government so that the colonies could sustain themselves during the revolutionary war, or during the English-American peace negotiations of 1782 and 1783.

The autobiography is also a place where Franklin expresses his own attitude towards many aspects which became characteristic for him, namely his public service, scientific pursuits, his concern with virtues and moral perfection, his already mentioned attitude towards religion, and many others. All of these aspects, including the ones mentioned in previous paragraphs, seem to somehow include one crucial characteristic which Franklin clearly expresses via the following words, uttered with respect to the growing number of people he came into contact with: "These friends were of great use to me."⁶⁵ Using these words, he seems to betray the fact that he adopted a purely pragmatic

⁶³ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 56.

⁶⁴ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 57.

⁶⁵ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 54.

approach, the traces of which can be seen almost everywhere in his life. Putting the utility of everything first does not only place Franklin among the ranks of the philosophers of the Enlightenment era, but also seems to have had a role in politics, where Franklin often abandoned his own beliefs for the sake of those which would be better for the public good.

When it comes to aspects with a possible influence or role in the revolution, it seems possible to detect some. Franklin demonstrates his deep distaste with arbitrary power, which would later be recognised as the British dominion over the colonies, when his brother was imprisoned in Boston due to publishing a piece of evidence against the governors at the time. He also mentions his own observations on history from 1731 in which he shows signs of what he would later call “an unjust government”, such as that not many people serve in the public affairs for the good of mankind,⁶⁶ that many men act for their own self-interest, that these factors lead to confusion (which leads to revolutions), and that he thinks it is a good occasion for forming a unified country with a just government led by virtue.⁶⁷ Although slightly contrived, this attitude not only shows his interest in a just government, but also the virtues which should characterize such a one.

Franklin also gives his account of the defeat of the British general Edward Braddock, a military leader who led the British and colonial troops to a crushing defeat in 1755 during the Seven Years’ War. More importantly, he states that this apparent uselessness of the English regular army was the first hint that the Americans would perhaps do better if they governed themselves.⁶⁸ The final pages of the autobiography seem to be full of Franklin’s distaste with indecisive British lords whom he perceived as bad governors, unable to assess correctly what the colonies actually needed.

In spite of the fact that the autobiography could not have possibly had a direct role in the revolution itself, it seems to serve as a rather good demonstration of Franklin’s thoughts and feelings concerning aspects which became closely associated with him, as well as those of his personal characteristics which did affect the American Revolution itself.

⁶⁶ The evidence of which he later felt for himself during his stay in London in the second half of the 1760s, dealing with the corrupt British government while trying to prevent the Revolutionary War.

⁶⁷ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 91.

⁶⁸ Franklin, *The Autobiography*, 138.

3.4 Political Satires

For a variety of reasons, political satires are a curious part of Benjamin Franklin's portfolio. He seems to stray somewhat from his usual, highly informative and concise language and employs biting, highly sarcastic one to achieve his goals. Franklin's satires seem to be a very good example of what means the author employed when he wanted to attack someone or something: he almost never attacked the person or concept in question directly, but employed elevated wit, satire, and easy to understand indirectness instead. For the purposes of this thesis, the most interesting of Franklin's satires seem to be a newspaper article called "Rattle-Snakes for Felons" (1751), a warning to the English called "Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One" (1773), and a fake foreign communiqué called "An Edict by the King of Prussia" (1773).

The trio of satires was chosen as it seems to demonstrate clearly Benjamin Franklin's growing distaste with the English government. "Rattle-Snakes for Felons" seems to be an early example of such a distaste. Written during the Seven Years' War, it is an attack on a particular practice of the British Parliament: sending felons and convicts to the colonies under the pretext of improving their population. Franklin seems to have shown his distaste with such actions by employing false complimentary language to thank the British for their efforts, and offers something in return. He offers that as a sign of mutual goodwill, rattlesnakes are to be transported to England and placed in various prominent places in London, including the gardens of prominent Parliamentary officials, "for to them we are *most particularly* obliged".⁶⁹ This seems to indicate that in spite of being a monarchist at the time, Franklin did not hesitate to point out what he considered unjust conduct by the mother country, and even direct the attention of the public to the issue, making it aware of such practices. This seems particularly true given the fact that the article was published in *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, a newspaper with a large American readership.

"Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One" seems quite different to "Rattle-Snakes for Felons". The language lacks its complimentary aspect and humorous wit and instead seems hard, factual, and increasingly ironic. It is a list of twenty clues as for what the English Parliament should do to lose the American colonies, a list of actions which the British, in fact, were already conducting at the time. It also serves as

⁶⁹ Benjamin Franklin, "Felons and Rattlesnakes," accessed April 15, 2018, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-04-02-0040>.

a proof of Franklin's shift towards patriotism: he talks about separation, warns the addressees of its possibility, and points out the irrationality of the Crown's actions. The author also seems to have included a case of personal grievance in the satire as he states that treating anyone who comes to London to complain about the oppression with disrespect and delays "will have an admirable effect every way".⁷⁰ It seems possible to treat such a comment as a direct complaint as for how Benjamin Franklin was being treated in London during his political mission in the first half of the 1770s. It was printed in a London newspaper called the *Public Advertiser* (1752–1793) in 1773, two years before the revolutionary war, and its goal was to persuade the public of England of the misconduct of their government. It seems to prove that to alleviate the tensions and end the unjust treatment, Franklin did not hesitate to address the people of the country responsible and thus employed all the means at his disposal to work for the American cause.

"An Edict by the King of Prussia" seems to be similar to the satire mentioned in the previous paragraph but seems to employ a language even more harsh. It is a fake edict by the Prussian king who seemingly extends his rule over the British based on the fact that they were, in fact, descendants of German immigrants. Franklin, assuming the role of the king, forbids the English from such actions that were already mirrored in the actions of the British, such as trade and manufacturing restrictions, coal mining, or ban on exportation. The language of the edict seems to be much stronger, demonstrated by the fact that Franklin, while expressing his disbelief of how Great Britain treats its colonies, calls their government "arbitrary and TYRRANICAL"⁷¹ As before, the edict was published in the *Public Advertiser* and seems to demonstrate Franklin's devotion to the American cause, but also his growing resentment towards the English Parliament.

Benjamin Franklin's political satires thus seem to prove two major points about the author. They demonstrate his devotion to the American cause, seemingly unhampered by him considering himself a monarchist for a long time, and also demonstrate a fact that he did not hesitate in his attempts to influence not only the American, but also the English public. The satires also show his gradual shift towards patriotism and also seem to give a

⁷⁰ Benjamin Franklin, "Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One," accessed April 10, 2017, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-20-02-0213>.

⁷¹ Benjamin Franklin, "An Edict by the King of Prussia," accessed April 9, 2017, <http://explorepahistory.com/odocument.php?docId=1-4-2D9>.

hint as for why Franklin did so: given the ignorance and mistreatment he was subjected to during his political mission to England in the early 1770s, it seems rather clear why he would turn away from the British.

3.5 Miscellaneous

Apart from the aforementioned works, Benjamin Franklin also wrote many other publications with less direct importance with respect to the matters of the American Revolution. Much of his literary activity seems to have been influenced by his devotion to public service, science, and local matters, including minor political ones or matters of public health. True to his desire to better the conditions of the citizens of the colonies, Franklin collaborated on a series of letters under the pen name of the Busy-Body, published in an American newspaper called *The American Weekly Mercury* in 1729. Franklin also published many humorous articles addressed to the general public, e.g. “Advice to a Friend on Choosing a Mistress” (1745) and “The Way to Wealth” (1758), or showed his distaste with drunkenness by publishing “The Drinker’s Dictionary” (1737), a series of 200+ ways to describe the state of being drunk. The scope of his interest seems to have also included popular entertainment, proved by the publication of *The Morals of Chess* (1786).

Experiments and Observations on Electricity (1751), a collection of Benjamin Franklin’s letters on specific scientific matters, can be considered a prime example of his interest in science. The author also seems to have utilized his ownership of *Pennsylvania Gazette* to publish a series of articles on other scientific experiments as well as observations. When it comes to science, however, his devotion to the matter can be seen clearly in his personal correspondence. Benjamin Franklin seems to have exchanged quite a lot of letters with European scientists, a fact which contributed to making him famous and respected on the old continent.⁷²

When it comes to personal correspondence, there is a large number of Franklin’s letters available to the public. In general, his letters seem to prove his devotion to the American cause, his love of science, and his preoccupation with public matters. Benjamin Franklin exchanged letters with friends, politicians, family members, prominent scientists and, in some cases, female admirers. They often serve as insights into his mind during

⁷² Bernard Cohen, *Benjamin Franklin’s Science* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1990), 28.

particular instances of his political service. On other occasions, they can be considered as comments on various matters Franklin encountered during his life.

To summarize, Benjamin Franklin's lesser works seem to prove a couple of key points for this thesis and for a subsequent comparison with Thomas Paine. Franklin seems to have been involved in American colonial matters basically all throughout his life, assuming the role not just of a politician and a voice of the colonies in England, but also the role of a prominent public figure concerned with minor local American matters. They also seem to prove that he was an enlightened persona with a large scope of interest and that his activity was always aimed at public service.

4. Thomas Paine – Life

The life of Thomas Paine seems to have been one of a man who rose from obscurity into international prominence, only to fall back into obscurity again. Having spent an unremarkable first half of his life in England, Paine moved to the American colonies when they were on the brink of a revolutionary war. It was his actions that contributed significantly to how the events of the American Revolution unfolded. Paine directly participated not only in the American struggle for independence, but also in the revolutionary movements in England and France in the 1790s. He also became widely known for his opinions on governments, hereditary monarchies, the rights of people, and religion. Throughout his life, Paine seems to have demonstrated a set of qualities and convictions which would prove to have an immense role in the revolutionary events which accompanied him all throughout his life. The goal of this chapter is to analyse these key characteristics, argue their impact on the revolutionary movement, and also give an account of Paine's activities not only during the American Revolution itself, but also after the American colonies obtained their independence.

4.1 Paine's Views on Religion

Deism seems to have been one of, if not the prevalent, attitude towards religion among the intellectuals of the Enlightenment era. This was the case of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine was no exception.⁷³ Eric Foner seems to think that Paine desired not to be perceived neither as a member of any religious denomination, nor of any political party, and that it marked him as a classless intellectual.⁷⁴ This seems quite accurate. However, it seems impossible to describe Paine as “fully classless” as he did associate with the poor and the craftsmen class during his life. It also seems possible to add that deism is almost a natural consequence of such a behaviour as an allegiance to any religious denominations would necessarily change Paine's views and would not be compatible with his cosmopolitanism and his general desire to do “public good” outside of any religious convictions. Paine's deism, however, seems to have interlocked with his radicalism, discussed in the following subchapter, in such a way that it would come to have somewhat detrimental consequences for his life.

⁷³ A comparison of Franklin and Paine, including their religious views, is done in a later chapter.

⁷⁴ Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 99.

When he began his career of a revolutionary in 1776, it seems clear that Paine adopted a pragmatic approach with respect to deism. In *Common Sense* (1776), his first political pamphlet of major importance, he seems to break his own rules by quoting the Bible extensively. It seems possible to attribute this action to the fact that Paine was well aware of the fact that Americans were religious and that there existed a large variety of religious denominations in the soon-to-be country. He thus used religious arguments to argue his point on matters he saw more pressing—the major goals of *Common Sense* were to argue against the hereditary monarchy and to put forward the concept of independence. However, it seems clear that this action was only temporary and opportunistic. When one of Paine’s contemporaries pointed out that his religious reasoning was somewhat strange, he assured him that he was not fond of religious writings at all and that he wanted to attack religion at some point later in his life.⁷⁵

And he indeed seems to have done so. During his time in France in the 1790s, Paine wrote *The Age of Reason* (1794) with a second part published in 1795. It was not only a summary of the author’s religious beliefs, but also an attack on certain religious hallmarks present in all denominations of Christianity.⁷⁶ The pamphlet seems to have had one major effect—in spite of stating that he believed in one God, Paine began to be seen as an enemy to religion which in turn made many people hostile towards him. *The Age of Reason* was seen as outrageous even by a considerable number of Americans.

It therefore seems that in Thomas Paine’s case, deism proved to be a double-edged sword. On one hand, his comprehensible attitude with respect to religion and a decision not to be a part of any religious denomination seemingly enabled him to pursue his political views without any external influence and thus were a factor in Paine’s involvement in the American Revolution. However, his deism also caused him difficulties later in his life as the blatant attack on religion was not well-received and saw Paine’s reputation fall into obscurity.

4.2 Radicalism

One of the essential characteristics of Paine seems to be his radicalism. It seems to present itself in all of his five major works and it also seems to assume different forms: fervent argumentation, spirited attacks on established norms, and promotion of new and

⁷⁵ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 81.

⁷⁶ Specific properties of the pamphlet are presented in chapter 5.

thought-provoking ideas. Throughout his life, Paine did not hesitate to attack neither religion and religious institutions, nor monarchies or prominent personas. It was also radicalism which caused Paine many problems. For his vicious attacks against the British monarchy, he was sentenced to death in England in 1792. He also got arrested in France in 1793, spending one year in prison and narrowly escaping execution. Finally, his radical denouncement of religion and attacks on the Bible and Christianity later in his life saw his reputation fall in countries where he seems to have been revered before. However, it was also radicalism which got him noticed, brought him worldwide fame, and ensured the importance of his role in the American Revolution.

Exactly how Thomas Paine became a radical activist seems rather unclear. He arrived in America in 1774 (aged 37) and by 1776, he had already published *Common Sense*, his first famous political pamphlet. It seems clear that the roots of his radicalism must be found in the first half of his life spent in England. In his book called *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (1976), Eric Foner seems to argue that Paine's shift towards radicalism was caused by his contact with radical English thinkers, particularly in the town of Lewes and in London. He also suggests that there might be a connection between Paine's radicalism and his interest in science. In spite of the fact that these arguments seem adequate, not much is known about Paine's life before he moved to America, and Foner seems fully aware of the fact and its implications. From what is known, however, it seems possible to argue that there might have been additional factors involved in this shift.

The first half of Paine's life cannot be called an immense success. He was trained to be a stay-maker.⁷⁷ However, Paine allegedly disliked the profession, which might explain why his business failed when he tried to work for himself. At a different point in his life, he also set up a tobacco shop, but that failed, too. Paine also worked at various places as a minor government official collecting taxes, duties, and customs. He was dismissed from these positions, too, and multiple times. Finally, he also worked as a teacher in London, earning very little money and living on the edge of poverty. It seems possible to say that these experiences did not only leave him frustrated and seeking self-fulfilment, but also forced him to experience what the English government was

⁷⁷ A stay-maker was a person who, among other things, made corsets. This fact was often used against Thomas Paine later in his life when his political opponents attempted to ridicule him because of it. However, it seems that Paine did not actually produce stays for corsets, but for ships.

actually like as he lived in places where “the inequities of the system of Parliamentary representation and the dominance of the landed aristocracy in political life were all too apparent.”⁷⁸ It seems possible that this fact, together with a string of professional failures, might have contributed to Paine’s growing distaste with England and thus prompting him to turn towards radicalism.

As for personal life, it seems safe to say that Thomas Paine was not able to find consolation there, either. His first wife died in childbirth, one year after their marriage. His second marriage was unhappy, he and his wife separated before his move to America in 1774, and it also meant that he almost went bankrupt. Finally, while still in England, Paine undertook his first, albeit minor, political mission. He advocated for a pay rise for himself and his fellow excise collectors, but was ultimately unsuccessful. This, however, was another instance of him being subjected to the rigidity and apparent backwardness of the English political system, which might have had a role in him becoming a radical.

Looking critically at what is known of the first half of Thomas Paine’s life, it seems safe to say that he was frustrated. A string of failures, political and personal, might have formed him into a man with a deep distaste of his country, eager to prove himself, and show his worth. One could argue that it was all the aforementioned factors combined, together with him being subjected to English politics, what caused him to eagerly accept a chance for a fresh, new start in America. And, finally, it seems possible to say that when he saw his new life threatened in 1775 by the very country he had grown to loathe, one could see why he became a radical advocate of his new world.

Finally, it is possible to find causes of Thomas Paine’s radicalism also in the first two years he spent in Philadelphia. He was able to establish contact with radical groups largely thanks to Franklin, who provided him with letters of introduction.⁷⁹ As was mentioned before, it is possible to say that he arrived frustrated due to his experience with the British and began to make acquaintances who had pro-separation and anti-British tendencies. Furthermore, he associated himself with the tradesmen’s class (the craftsmen) who were slowly becoming aware of their power and also the political injustice they were subjected to due to their almost non-existent representation in the government at the time.

Whatever the case may be, it seems clear to say that radicalism was what he became known for, a factor which made his works famous and influential. It was also a

⁷⁸ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 4.

⁷⁹ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 16.

chief cause of his subsequent political downfall and a source of the hardships he had to endure during the final years of his life. Paine's radicalism, combined with his common-sense approach, careful and simple construction of arguments, personal wit, and conviction, seems to have had a key role in persuading the American public to accept the ideas of independence, split with the English monarchy, and form a republic.

4.3 Republicanism

Paine's call for the establishment of a republican government became one of the hallmarks of his works as well as his political activities. He seems to have been an enemy of hereditary monarchies, any form of artificial power, and an advocate of a free state governed by its inhabitants alone all throughout his political career. The fact that Thomas Paine considered republicanism a crucial point on the road to independence seems to be proved by himself as he stated that if the independence was not followed by the establishment of a republic, and something resembling the English government would be established instead, the independence would hardly have mattered to him.⁸⁰ It also seems possible to say that as with the ideas of independence, Paine can be credited with a role in sparking the republican debate as the issue did not seem to be discussed in the colonies before he managed to direct the attention of the public towards it.

One of the ways Thomas Paine's republicanism seems to manifest itself is by denouncing all the forms of hereditary monarchy as a government type, together with providing a plethora of reasons as for why it is unreasonable, unjust, and unnatural. These can be found mainly in *Common Sense* (1776), discussed in the following chapter. Paine also felt no class allegiance but associated himself with the craftsmen whom he considered the backbone of the republican government, as opposed to the rich strata which did not have a role in the manufacture of the colonies but held political power. This seems to prove a stark contrast between the English monarchical government and what Paine envisioned for the American colonies.

As for how the republic should look like in particular, Thomas Paine did not seem to leave many clear-cut ideas. Apart from general notions of equality of rights and opportunities, freedom, democratic participation in the government, and universal rights to vote, Paine did not seem to consider extensively how an actual republican government should look like, providing simply a general outline and leaving the debate to his political

⁸⁰ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 75.

allies instead. Eric Foner argues that Paine's approach might have been caused by two reasons: that he was primarily a revolutionary pamphleteer, not a politician, and that he advocated for as simple a government as possible.⁸¹ This seems to be essentially correct as Paine's works are full of principles (or denunciation thereof) and calls for action rather than practical advice or hints.

To further understand the notion of a simple government and Paine's conviction that a republican government is the only just and correct one, one can examine the views expressed by Paine in *Common Sense*. He argues that the need for a government is caused by a society which has evolved to such an extent that it cannot ensure its own safety and thus agrees on establishing a governing body which would include all of its inhabitants. The key role of a republic, according to Paine, is ensuring the safety and freedom of the people who participate in it. According to him, all of the citizens should participate in the government, with regular elections to be held, and its structure should not favour any particular classes while at the same time being as simple as possible.

Paine would later rethink his opinion regarding universal rights to vote and participate in the elections somewhat as he could see that the election of many members who did not have any experience with government matters dramatically altered the political situation in Pennsylvania, with slightly problematic consequences, i.e. the newly elected members were unable to assess correctly what the province actually needed. However, he seems to have remained a lifelong enemy of rights to vote based on property. Finally, to extend his republican views, Paine also seems to have been an advocate of strong federal government, unifying the republican states under one structure, thus ensuring their strength and place in the world of empires.⁸²

To summarize, the impact of Paine's republican views on the revolution itself seems to have been more than marginal. This seems to have been caused by the fact that his views were, in fact, principles, and that the American public was able to associate with them thanks to the arguments Paine presented in *Common Sense*. Common Americans were given reasons to understand why they should govern themselves and not be governed by a foreign power far away. Furthermore, Paine seems to have managed to persuade them why it is in their common interest to establish such a government which would ensure the participation of all strata of people in the national matters.

⁸¹ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 90.

⁸² Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 191.

4.4 Science

Apart from extensive political activities, Thomas Paine was also interested in science and scientific inventions. During the American Revolution, Philadelphia seems to have been the centre of American scientific exploits, much of which can be attributed to the work of Benjamin Franklin. It also seems correct to point out the fact that the group of people Paine associated himself with, the craftsmen, seem to have been very fond of science. Many of its members owned books. Given the fact that as a representative of the Enlightenment philosophy which, apart from many other matters, advocated for scientific progress and the use of reason, it is not surprising that Paine would associate himself with such a group.

Some of Paine's inventions include a smokeless candle or a special type of crane. He also experimented with gunpowder. However, his most important invention seems to have been a design for an iron bridge. Its construction would also prompt him to travel to Europe in 1787 in order to promote it. His stay would ultimately span 15 years as he became involved in the French Revolution in the process. The bridge was completed in England in 1796. It seems quite ironical that a promotion trip for a scientific invention would ensure Paine's participation in another revolutionary event, in spite of the fact that after the American Revolution, Paine allegedly wanted to settle down and devote his life to scientific pursuits.⁸³

Although Paine's scientific pursuits did not ultimately have a direct role in the American Revolution, they seem to cement his place as a philosopher of the Enlightenment era. Also, by an ironical twist of fate, it was the promotion of a scientific invention which prompted Paine to travel to Europe in 1787, a trip from which he would not return until 1802, publishing some of his most important works and becoming involved in revolutionary movements in England and France in the process.

4.5 Paine's Political Activities during the American Revolution

As soon as Paine arrived in Philadelphia in 1774, he seems to have assumed an active role in local politics. Thanks to his acquaintance with Benjamin Franklin, Paine was immediately able to secure a position from which he was able to publish in local newspapers. He spent the first two years trying to understand the local situation, learning

⁸³ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 204.

the specifics of Philadelphia's changing politics, and developing his own views. His immediate as well as subsequent successes can be attributed to him associating himself with the local craftsmen who were slowly becoming a major political factor and would prove to be a key driving force towards independence. Their desire for equality, inherent nationalism, and the fact that they viewed themselves as the "voice of the people" seem to have ensured their influence on the Revolution.⁸⁴ What is more, they viewed Paine, who was formerly a craftsman himself, as one of their own.

In 1776, Thomas Paine assumed a direct role in the revolution by publishing *Common Sense*. Before considering its importance, however, it needs to be said that it seems unclear to what extent the inhabitants of the colonies were considering the idea of independence before 1776. In his book called *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1992), Bernard Bailyn seems to claim that the idea of the revolution slowly began to emerge in the 1760s and was connected with the American struggle against the attempts of the British to deprive them of their liberty.⁸⁵ As was quoted before, John Adams, one of the most prominent politicians of that time, thought that the revolution had already found its way into the consciousness of the people and thus seems to agree with Bailyn. Foner, on the contrary, seems to think that the issue was not discussed extensively before 1776.⁸⁶ Whatever the case may be, it seems correct to say that the colonies needed an easily comprehensible proof which would justify the desire for independence. It also seems safe to say that Paine provided the colonies with what was needed.

The impact of *Common Sense* seems to have been immense. It is said that it sold 150 000 copies in America alone, was read among all the social classes in all the colonies, and it also prompted many people to give support to the notion of independence.⁸⁷ There can be hardly any doubt that the pamphlet sparked a national debate and that its contents were read and discussed virtually everywhere. What therefore seems safe to say is that Paine assumed a direct role by directing the consciousness of the American public towards the issues at hand, perhaps even helping to start the debate in the first place. Due to many aspects of the pamphlet (discussed in chapter 5), Paine seems to have helped

⁸⁴ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 41.

⁸⁵ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap, 1992), 144.

⁸⁶ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 77.

⁸⁷ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 79.

persuade a major part of Americans that independence was an option and, consequently, the only option.

It was *Common Sense* that ensured Paine's fame and role as a revolutionary, but he did not stop in 1776. Between 1776 and 1783, he published many newspaper articles and other pamphlets, the key purpose of which seems to have been strengthening the independence tendencies and also lifting the spirits of the newly developing nation at war. It seems possible to argue that this was his key contribution to the development of the American Revolution, strengthened by the fact that Paine's works were immensely popular among the Americans. However, from his position of a prominent revolutionary and a radical, Paine also engaged in the internal affairs of the wartime colonies.

Paine's political activities during the revolution can be said to be stemming from some of the already mentioned key convictions and characteristics of his persona. His association with working-class radicals⁸⁸, together with his early conviction that all the inhabitants should have a role in the government, were key factors which lead to a complete change of the government of Pennsylvania in 1776. However, Paine later came to regret his early convictions as it meant that many people with no experience in politics whatsoever were elected into the government of the colony. He also seems to have had a key role in drafting the new constitution of Pennsylvania in 1776 which was said to be the most radically democratic constitution of all the colonies at war.⁸⁹ As no other constitution at the time gave the right to vote to so many people, this seems rather accurate. To summarize, Paine's importance seems to lie in two factors: not only did he help to raise a cry for independence among the Americans, he also seems to have ensured that the class of people who were inclined the most towards it found themselves directly governing the commonwealth.

Thomas Paine also engaged in various debates on the topics of economy. The notion of property was an aspect about which the radicals seem to have argued among themselves. Many thought egalitarianism and equality should also extend to property. This seems to have angered the rich of Pennsylvania, who feared the loss of their possessions. This growing tension between the richest and the politically conscious

⁸⁸ Most of them were craftsmen, artisans, and members of the lower class. Their position was also strengthened by the fact that the American militia, fighting the English colonial troops, was formed mostly out of their ranks.

⁸⁹ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 131.

working class seem to be a basis of another of Paine's contributions to the revolution. He did not adopt any stance but tried to persuade both sides to work together, thus serving as a unifying factor.⁹⁰ His desire to unify the nation also manifests itself in his wartime pamphlets as they seem to be a clear example of his desire to see the colonists united against their common enemy, not quarrelling about internal matters.

There was one matter of economy which seems to have caused Paine a dilemma. During the war, the prices of virtually everything rose exponentially, partly as a natural consequence of the war, but also due to the merchants trying to profit from the war. A question of whether to regulate the prices, or leave the trade as it was, arose. At first, Paine seems to have supported the price regulation movement as it were the working class masses who supported it, it would lessen the suffering of the poor (with whom Paine sympathized), and it would also bring relief to the American military troops. However, he seems to have realized later that artificial price regulations would be in conflict with some of his key convictions such as freedom or equality of opportunity and thus shifted towards the notion of a free, unregulated market.

The later stages of the Revolutionary War saw Paine withdraw somewhat from the political scene. Foner argues that having achieved what he wanted, he seems to have slowly turned towards political conservatism.⁹¹ This seems rather accurate as around 1780, Thomas Paine even began to associate with some whom he would call his political enemies early during the revolution, namely the representatives of the rich, merchant strata. He continued to support the war effort, even travelling to France in an attempt to secure funding for the revolution, but did not seem to continue his radicalism in politics. Finally, he broke away from the people whom he helped acquire a major political role and also reconsidered his views regarding the government, adopting a viewpoint that the lower-class masses should not have so much power in the matters of the country, promoting a bicameral government consisting of two houses instead of a single-house government, a concept which he advocated earlier.

In spite of rethinking his convictions in the final years of the revolution, it seems safe to say that these actions did not affect its outcome in any way as Paine's work was already done. He managed to rouse the American public from a relative passivity on political matters, introduced a thought that independence was an option, and also

⁹⁰ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 142.

⁹¹ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 183.

constantly tried to unite the nation against the common enemy by trying to find solutions to conflicts regarding internal matters. Finally, he helped orchestrate a complete turnaround in Pennsylvania politics, giving power to people who previously had none. All the aforementioned factors seem to prove that Paine had a direct role in the revolution, and also that his role was crucial.

4.6 Paine's Political Activities after the American Revolution

After the American Revolution, Thomas Paine continued to be involved in the internal matters of the United States, albeit mostly on the grounds of economy. However, he soon became actively involved in another major event—the French Revolution. The event begun in 1789 and once again saw Paine adopt the life of a revolutionary. His defence of the revolutionary tendencies in France also had an impact on political life in the country he was born in, England. In general, it is possible to see Paine's political activities in the 1790s are an extension of the qualities and convictions he displayed during the American Revolution, but he also seems to have broached new subjects which would ultimately have negative consequences for his life.

The publishing of *Rights of Man* in 1791 seems to have had a double effect on Paine's life. Bearing many similarities to *Common Sense*, it seems to have had a profound effect both on French as well as British audiences. In Paine's former country, the pamphlet prompted the establishment of radical societies by which he was seen as a heroic figure.⁹² Consequently, the English ruling classes saw Paine as a threat not only because his works were spreading revolutionary anti-monarchic tendencies, but also offered a replacement for the system of English government at the time. It is thus not surprising that the British took active steps to silence Paine, sentencing him to death in 1792, and ending the radical tendencies by 1795 by acts designed specifically to dissolve the radical groups and ensure that governments were not a topic of public discussion anymore. He was thus banned from England, but at the same time his reputation as a revolutionary seems to have risen.

By the time of his death sentence, Paine had already lived in France for a couple of years. He assumed a role he was familiar with, namely that of a revolutionary, an enemy to hereditary monarchy, and an advocate of the rights of people and their liberties. Being a prominent person, he was given a seat in the revolutionary government. However,

⁹² Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 224.

it seems rather impossible to call Paine's efforts in France a success, chiefly because the events in the country had quite a different outcome than those in the former colonies, and also because many of Paine's proposals were simply not implemented by the French. This seems to have been caused by many factors, the chief of which could be Paine's lack of knowledge of French, his misunderstanding of the affairs (he did not associate with the main driving force of the revolution, the craftsmen, as he did in the colonies), and his inability to understand the situation which was changing all the time, favouring different groups of revolutionaries at different points of the French Revolution.

It seems safe to say that these factors contributed to Paine being imprisoned and almost executed as he came to be seen as an enemy by one of the "rival" factions which later assumed power in France. He was imprisoned in 1793 and released in 1794. Furthermore, he made himself hostile to many by trying to prevent the execution of Louis XVI. This was also the time when his reputation in the USA began to fall, for two main reasons: Paine openly attacked George Washington for being the cause of his imprisonment, also calling him a traitor and an imposter for refusing to help France. Paine saw it as a betrayal, for without France's funding, the American Revolution could not have been won. It was also the time when Paine published *The Age of Reason* (1794, 1795), an open attack on religion and a justification of deism. Both of these events saw Paine fall in the eyes of ordinary Americans and when he returned to the country in 1802, many of his former friends refused to meet him, afraid to be associated with a person perceived as "infidel" by the inhabitants who still considered religious dogmas sacred. In the second part of the 1790s, Paine continued to support the French cause despite being increasingly disillusioned with how the events in France unfolded.

After his return to America, Paine continued to attack Washington and defend the views he presented in *The Age of Reason* which saw his reputation fall even more. Paine's death in 1809 went largely unnoticed and unmentioned on by the American public, the reason of which seem to be the fact that most Americans came to resent him for his opinion on religion. To summarize, it seems possible to say that after the revolution, Paine continued to stay true to his ideals, considering the French Revolution as a theatre where his services could be made useful once more. However, his denouncement of all religions seems to have had a profoundly negative consequences on his life and meant that he died in relative obscurity.

4.7 Paine's Faults

When it comes to Thomas Paine's faults, it seems rather difficult to give a particular outline to any of them, for the following reasons: most of his personal correspondence got destroyed in a fire, rendering an insight into his mind rather difficult; he also did not produce an autobiography, as Franklin did, in which he would name his characteristics which he perceived as shortcomings. In spite of these factors, however, it seems possible to detect some areas in which Paine was lacking, and also some characteristics which caused him trouble.

Thomas Paine's largest shortcoming is perhaps him being largely unclear on how a democratic government should look like, connected with the fact that he held a naively utopian view concerning the American republic. The fact that he roused the sentiments of the inhabitants of the colonies, propelling them towards independence and persuading them that they should be the ones who should govern the provinces, and did not provide any practical advice as for how to achieve such a feat, can be seen as lacking. Paine also seems to have displayed a certain degree of naivety by believing that mere democratic principles are immediately an improvement over being ruled by a monarchy, and retaining a utopian view concerning the American matters for a relatively long time. He was ultimately forced to alter his views regarding the matters such as universal suffrage and absolute equality in political matters, but not before these issues proved to be problematic for the governors of the newly established American union. It seems safe to argue that had Paine thought about the matters of the government more, and had he proposed a logical system, making use of his position of prominence, it would lessen the tensions in the country and make the political debate during and immediately after the revolution significantly easier.

Furthermore, Paine seems to have displayed an ultimately detrimental dose of ignorance during his stay in France. This also seems connected with his idealistic view of democratic and revolutionary principles. Taking part in the French revolution, he associated himself with the rich social class, did not come into contact with the public masses who were the actual moving force of the revolution, and, perhaps most importantly, did not know the French language. It seems possible to call these actions reckless as Paine must have been very well aware of the danger he voluntarily put himself into, not to mention that he had experience with the people who actually played an active role in the revolution—the craftsmen, and knew of their resentment of the rich. His

unpremeditated actions seem to have been a major factor causing his imprisonment and the subsequent execution which he narrowly escaped.

Finally, it would seem almost improbable to say that given his experience, Paine underestimated the power of masses, but he indeed seems to have done so by his attacks on religion present in *The Age of Reason*. The author seems to have committed an error of judgement regarding how the public would react to such an attack, and not just the public—his former political allies and friends, too. His denouncement of religion and subsequent defence of his arguments made him many enemies, barred him from any further political involvement, and destroyed the reputation he gained throughout his life. It needs to be pointed out at this point that Paine should indeed be praised for staying true to his convictions. However, being acquainted with the religious situation in America (and the entire world), it also seems possible to argue that the author, regardless of his intentions, should have known what the publication would cause and perhaps should have even seen that it would have negative consequences on his legacy.

To summarize, it seems rather difficult to determine the role of the suggested faults in the American Revolution. One could argue that had Paine provided the American public with an idea of how a democratic government should look like, the political situation in the colonies during the war would have been made easier. As Paine was directly responsible for rousing the public and spreading democratic tendencies, it almost seems as his obligation. Furthermore, a better insight into the French Revolution would have spared him the troubles and the later disillusionment he had to endure, and perhaps even enable him to give a relevant advice based on his experience as a revolutionary from the United States of America. Finally, perhaps a more sensitive approach to the topic of religion would have made more people consider his ideas instead of calling him an infidel and an enemy to all religion.

5. Thomas Paine – Works

Compared to Benjamin Franklin, and discounting his minor pamphleteer activity in England, Thomas Paine’s literary career began relatively late, in 1776. While Franklin began writing as a teenager, Paine was already 39 years old when his first major work was published. This, however, did not seem to have stopped him from publishing a series of writings which would come to have an immense impact not only on the American Revolution, but also the French one. All of Thomas Paine’s works seem to display certain common characteristics: a simple, concise, and easily comprehensible style, frequent usage of questions, strong argumentation, and usage of common sense and reason. A combination of the aforementioned factors seems to have ensured that his works were widely read and were also translated into many languages. Paine’s works also seem to embody the critical thinking of the Enlightenment era as the scope of his literary activity does not only include liberty and rights of the people, but also religious, economic, and various other topics. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce his major writings, analyse their role in the American Revolution, and also examine those written after it and how they fit into the historical period.

5.1 Common Sense (1776)

Common Sense was a pamphlet published at the very beginning of the military hostilities between the colonies and England. Its impact proved to be so immense that many scholars, including Sidney Hook, argue that it is Thomas Paine who should be called “The Father of American Independence.”⁹³ Given its popularity, the number of copies sold,⁹⁴ and the effect it had on the American public, it is possible to see why Hook would think so. The pamphlet came to be seen as crucial not only for the American Revolution, but also for the French one. Paine seems to have predicted this as he argues that “The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind.”⁹⁵

Originally, Thomas Paine did not want his name to be associated with the publication. It seems possible to argue that he did so for a couple of reasons: he might have been unsure of the conclusion of the hostilities, unsure of the pamphlet’s reception, and, being his first literary work, unsure of its qualities. Additionally, it is possible to say

⁹³ Sidney Hook, introduction to *The Essential Thomas Paine* (New York: Mentor Book, 1969), ix.

⁹⁴ Around 100 000 copies in the first three months after publication.

⁹⁵ Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, in *Rights of Man; Common Sense* (London: Campbell, 1994), 249.

that such an action stemmed from Paine's Enlightenment principles as he did not want to accept any money for the pamphlet.

Divided into four parts, the pamphlet puts forward arguments in favour of the American independence, employing a spirited language. As the title of the work itself suggests, the argumentation present in the work seems very simple, concise, and easy to understand. It seems possible to think this particular aspect as one of the key reasons of its popularity—the fact that it could be read and understood by common people. The pamphlet serves as a proof of Paine's skill as a propagandist—his arguments indeed seem to embody the principles of common sense.

In the first two chapters, Paine gives the reader his opinion on governments in general. He argues that the chief motivation for one is the safety of the inhabitants, and the simpler the government is, the better. At this point, Paine also viciously attacks the English government as being way too complicated, absurd, and obsolete. He also argues in many ways against the power of kings, justifying his argumentation by providing examples from the Jewish religious writings, and even going as far as calling kings “ruffians”⁹⁶ for their questionable motives. Paine sums up his arguments against the monarchy by illustrating the supposed stupidity of hereditary monarchy, explaining in common words how it does not represent, or even understand, the needs of common people as well as by diverting the attention of the readers to the fact that a king becomes one without any merits, solely on the basis of being born one. By providing arguments of such nature, it seems clear that Paine tries to persuade the American public that it is virtually impossible for the English monarchy to govern the colonies in an effective way.

The third chapter deals solely with the American cause. As in the previous ones, Paine uses spirited and easy to understand arguments to justify what he wants the public to know. Again, he argues against the power of the king, stating that his objective is to keep America poor and easily controllable. He does not seem to believe that there are any options for the colonies other than independence as he states that “reconciliation and ruin are clearly related.”⁹⁷ He does not just put forward his own arguments, however. He provides many loyalist arguments in favour of the continuation of American dependence on Britain and attempts to refute them. To name one, he attempts to lessen the importance of the fact that Britain had protected the colonies with its army by stating that it was only

⁹⁶ Paine, *Common Sense*, 262.

⁹⁷ Paine, *Common Sense*, 275.

due to property and that, in turn, the Americans had to send troops to British wars they knew nothing about and did not want to participate in.

The fourth chapter again seems to be a collection of arguments towards independence on Britain, this time based on the grounds of commerce. Paine contrasts the vastness of American resources with the relatively low amount of the British ones, using it as an argument towards the fact that Americans are destined to win the war. At this point, he also tries to calm down the public by stating that the times are indeed difficult, but will prove much easier very soon.⁹⁸ Paine also later added an appendix to the pamphlet in which he comments on the king's speech, published on the very day of the publication of the pamphlet. The king denounced the Americans as rebels, a fact which Paine in turn uses as an example of the incompetence of the monarchy. Finally, he tries to rebuke the Quakers who argued in favour of peace at any cost, stating his belief that politics and religion should not be mixed.

It seems rather clear that the pamphlet's impact on the American public was immense. The relative simplicity and "common sense" of the arguments seem to have influenced the American public in such a way that it disposed of any doubts as for whether the independence was the correct course of action. What is more, the timing of the pamphlet seems to have been crucial, too, as it was published very shortly after the commencement of the hostilities when a vast number of the American population still had its doubts about the success of the revolution. Finally, the fact that the pamphlet played a key role in the French Revolution, too, seems to be a final proof of its importance.

5.2 *The Crisis* series (1776 to 1783)

Thomas Paine continued his attempts to bolster the American wartime morale by publishing a series of sixteen pamphlets, the first of which would come to be called *The American Crisis*. The bulk of the pamphlets were published in 1776 and 1777. As in the case of *Common Sense*, Paine's chief motivation for writing such a series seems to have been his desire to justify the American fight for independence, a desire to persuade those still hesitant to support the revolution, and also to improve the morale of the American fighting forces. However, it seems plausible to say that these are not the only goals as the pamphlets are concerned with various other topics and have different

⁹⁸ Paine, *Common Sense*, 291.

addressees. What is also different (compared to *Common Sense*) is the larger variety of approaches Paine adopted to find justification of the war for independence.

The evidence of Paine's desire to lift the soldiers' spirits (and, consequently, the spirits of the American nation) can be seen in the very first pamphlet: "These are the times that try men's souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."⁹⁹ Upon consideration of the fact that Paine wrote the pamphlet as the American colonial army was losing the war, his motives seem quite clear. Paine also tries to portray himself as one of the direct participants of the struggle by informing the reader of his involvement in the military operations. The rest of the first pamphlet seems to be a repetition of various different points used to justify the American cause, many of them similar to the ones present in *Common Sense*.

The second pamphlet (as well as the fifth) is addressed directly to the commander of the British forces, Lord Richard Howe. Paine seems to question Howe's actions and also firmly restates his belief concerning the American victory: "The United States of America will sound as pompously in the world or in history, as "the kingdom of Great Britain."¹⁰⁰ In the pamphlets addressed to other persons such as George III of Britain, Paine generally considers their actions or statements, tries to reason with them, and, finally, tries to refute their claims, often ridiculing them in the process. This seems to show that Paine did not hesitate to employ new means to achieve his goals, namely to persuade the American public that the revolution is a just cause. There are also many other pamphlets addressed directly to various individuals, but also, for example, the people of America or England in general.

However, in despite being a fervent advocate of the revolution, Paine seems to have remained a thoughtful person. He does not simply provide instances of patriotic discourse, he also analyses the financial situation of the colonies and England and compares their taxation systems. He provides a list of taxes, depicting England in a rather unfavourable light, and proceeds to compare its system with revenues in America. Naturally, the numbers greatly favour the independence of the colonies, and Paine provides this comment on the matter: "Can it then be a question, whether it is best to raise

⁹⁹ Thomas Paine, *The Crisis No. I*, in *The Essential Thomas Paine* (New York: Mentor Book, 1969), 75.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Paine, *The Crisis No. II*, accessed April 20, 2018, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Crisis_No._II

two millions to defend the country, and govern it ourselves, and only three quarters of a million afterwards, or pay six millions to have it conquered, and let the enemy govern it?"¹⁰¹ It seems uncertain whether the numbers Paine works with are true or contrived. As the main purpose of *The American Crisis* series seems to be propaganda, it is probably safer to argue in favour of the second option. Whatever the case may be, it seems clear that to add strength to his independence arguments, Paine did not only attack the actions of the English monarchy, but also did not hesitate to provide arguments based on economy.

This thoughtful approach and a large variety of spheres Thomas Paine works in is to be found in other pamphlets, too. At one point, the author tries to lessen the importance of American military losses and defeats, arguing that losses of grounds and cities will not weaken the colonies because they are simply too large and powerful. He tries to bolster the morale of the Americans by stating that the colonies are not alone anymore and that the proclamation of their independence brought them new allies (France, Spain). Finally, in the last pamphlet of the series, Paine advises the new nation to stay vigilant and cautious, in spite of their victory, arguing that adapting to and accepting the new situation will be a gradual and lengthy process.¹⁰² It seems possible to say that Paine had the urge to write about as many aspects connected with the revolution as possible, and that their sheer amount added credibility to his arguments.

To conclude, it seems possible to say that *The American Crisis* did have a significant role in the American conflict. It was topical, the bulk of the series was published at the time when the colonies were beginning to make their stand, and it was aimed directly at the participants with an apparent hope of bolstering the morale of the fighting forces, persuading those still hesitant to support the cause, and also ridiculing the British monarchy and providing strong arguments against the justification of their rule over Americans. Furthermore, it seems to have profited from the popularity of *Common Sense*, bearing many similarities and adopting many successful, and proven, approaches.

¹⁰¹ Thomas Paine, *The Crisis No. IX*, accessed April 20, 2018, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Crisis_No._IX

¹⁰² Thomas Paine, *The Crisis No. XIII*, accessed April 20, 2018, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Crisis_No._XIII

5.3 Rights of Man (1791)

The American Revolution was not the only major political event in which Thomas Paine was actively involved. The author also participated in the French Revolution (1789 to 1799). As he already demonstrated during the American fight for independence, Paine seems to have felt the need to defend the revolution, and did so by publishing *Rights of Man*. It contains many aspects already known from Paine's previous works as well as a confirmation of his Deistic beliefs. It was written as a reaction to Edmund Burke's¹⁰³ *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) which was a conservative attack aimed against the revolution. Burke argued that the revolution was destined to be futile and ultimately harmful, advocated a gradual approach to changing governments, and tried to refute many rights which Paine considered self-evident and central.

The book consists of two parts, both with prefaces to different people. Paine seems to have desired to employ the help of famous personas associated with independence movements. The entire pamphlet is dedicated to George Washington whom Paine seems to consider an embodiment of the principles on which a just government is built. In the second preface, Paine addresses the Marquis de Lafayette, a French aristocrat who had a crucial role in the American Revolutionary War, and tries to urge him to take part in revolutionary activities once more.

The first part of the book is constructed as a polemic with Burke. Before he even starts presenting his counterarguments, Paine indirectly accuses Edmund Burke of being a person whose business is to artificially keep conflicts between countries, spread prejudice, and ignorance.¹⁰⁴ This seems to set the tone of the book from the very beginning: Paine provides commentary on many of Burke's arguments and tries to refute them, utilizing many techniques similar to those used in *Common Sense* and *The American Crisis*. It also seems correct to point out that some of Burke's arguments might have been skewed by Paine for the sake of defending what he believed to be a just cause.

To name some of the arguments, Paine seems to laugh at Burke's alleged refusal of acceptance of the rights of people to choose and overthrow their own government, ridiculing the notion that according to Burke, people can fight to determine that they have

¹⁰³ Edmund Burke (1730 – 1797) was an Irish member of the Whig party, a member of the House of Commons between 1766 and 1794. He was an author, a philosopher, known for his conservative theories.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, in *Rights of Man; Common Sense* (London: Campbell, 1994), 7.

no such rights, and calling him a “paradoxical genius.”¹⁰⁵ Paine also argues that no government can last forever, that hereditary power is essentially nonsensical, and that the revolution is a natural consequence of the people becoming aware of their rights and is thus something entirely natural. It is thus possible to say that *Rights of Man* is to a great extent a repetition of principles Paine advocates for in his works concerning the American Revolution.

The author also seems to think that the events surrounding the storming of the Bastille in 1789 are quite significant as he sees the event as a symbolic beginning and the “high altar and castle of despotism” a “good place to start.”¹⁰⁶ When one considers the Boston Tea Party of 1773 or the skirmishes in Lexington and Concord in 1775, it seems clear why the author thinks so—the significance of a symbolic beginning of the hostilities was proved during the American Revolution as the aforementioned events became symbols of the American resistance. The importance of part one also seems to lie in the fact that it includes the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens,” published by the French National Constituent Assembly in 1789.

In the second part, the polemic with Burke continues, albeit not in such fervent a way as in part one. Paine spends a lot of time contemplating the old and new governments as well as constitutions. This seems to be connected with the author’s belief that by attempting to ridicule the French Constitution, Burke only wanted to hide the defects of the British one.¹⁰⁷ Part two also seems to be a good proof of Paine’s direct connection with Enlightenment as he does not only advocate for the French cause, and propose a change to the English constitution, but also offers his remarks on how to improve the situation of the entire European continent. Such remarks include Paine’s remarks on commerce, the increase of which he does not attribute to any political actions but, on the contrary, to the lack of them.¹⁰⁸

To summarize, *Rights of Man* seems to confirm a couple of points about Thomas Paine. It serves as a proof that he was not blind to the struggles of other nations other than the American one and did not hesitate to offer his help. It also seems to be a further confirmation of Paine’s Deistic beliefs as well as his opinions on liberty, governments,

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, 10.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, 26.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, 11.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, 182.

and rights of the people. Finally, in a broader sense, it seems to cement Paine's position among the most prominent philosophers of the Enlightenment era as the scope of his concern did not include just England and France, but the entire European continent.

5.4 *The Age of Reason* (1794, 1795, 1807)

If *Common Sense* brought Thomas Paine fame, it can be said that *The Age of Reason* made him infamous. Written in part during his imprisonment in France, the book seems to serve as an extension of the author's life creed, something what he himself called "the last offering to his fellow citizens of all nations".¹⁰⁹ It is also, however, a strong attack on religion in general. The author stated that he was prompted to write the pamphlet as a warning against the rise of atheism in France. This would become quite ironical due to how the pamphlet was received. As in his previous works, Paine seems to employ simple language, a straightforward style, and seemingly common-sense arguments in his attempts to persuade "common readers" of his beliefs.

The pamphlet seems to have gained immediate popularity throughout the world. However, the strong anti-religious language and somewhat disrespectful attitude towards what many considered to be "sacred truths" made Thomas Paine many enemies. Its popularity ultimately seems to have had negative consequences for its author: it sparked hostility and universal outrage, destroying Paine's public image and ensuring that the last years of his life were not happy. Even his political friends from the American Revolution turned away from him when he refused to abandon his deistic principles.

Paine seems to employ his usual straightforward narrative in order to magnify the effect of his views. The book is not, however, a mere attempt at justification of his beliefs through reason. Paine also gives an account of certain episodes of his life in France, contemplates on the power of God, or the nature of religious writings. In the second part, the author proceeds to analyse the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, employing common-sense arguments and reason again to undermine their credibility. Finally, Paine also uses quotations from the Bible in an attempt to prove that deism is the only correct approach to religion there is.

To summarize, in spite of the fact that the pamphlet was not written as an attempt to spark any revolutions, it does seem to be another case of depiction of Paine's key

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*, in *Collected Writings / Thomas Paine*, ed. Eric Foner (New York, N.Y.: The Library of America, 1995), 665.

characteristics. It seems to prove, as the aforementioned works did, too, that the author was driven predominantly by what he would call reason, employing easily understandable arguments. It also serves as a proof of the author's desire for his works to be universal, without the exclusion of any classes. Finally, it seems to cement Paine's position as a citizen of the world, employed in something he himself called "public good".

5.5 Agrarian Justice (1797)

Agrarian Justice was Thomas Paine's final major work. It was published as a reaction to a sermon of an English priest who intended to praise the wisdom of God in creating both the poor and the rich. As a mortal enemy to any arbitrary distinctions based on wealth, Paine seems to have felt the need to publish his work in spite of his original reluctance caused by the fact that the revolution in France was not yet finished. Paine employs his usual style of persuasive argumentation. However, the language used seems much more factual than that in his other works, the narrative is not so fervent, and there also seems to be a distinct lack of questions.

The pamphlet is centred on the concept of private land. Paine seems to argue that private land ownership is an unnatural state as all humans are entitled to the land they were given by God and ownership stems only from the value of improvement of its cultivation.¹¹⁰ He thus proposes that in order to compensate other people for the fact that they are deprived of such ownership, the landlords should pay an annual land tax. Paine also gives practical examples of how such a fund should be created, even providing calculations on how much money could be collected this way.

Furthermore, Paine seems to have devised something which could be called a social system: he proposed that the major part of the money collected should be distributed among the old in the form of annual payments and some of it given to citizens when they reach adulthood, in the form of a single payment. Paine also seems to show his concern for the poorest and the most vulnerable social strata here as he argues that the remainder of money should be distributed among the blind and the disabled.¹¹¹ Finally, Paine also gives a detailed step-by-step plan as for how such a plan should be executed.

¹¹⁰ Thomas Paine, *Agrarian Justice*, in *Collected Writings / Thomas Paine*, ed. Eric Foner (New York, N.Y.: The Library of America, 1995), 398.

¹¹¹ Thomas Paine, *Agrarian Justice*, 405.

It seems relevant to point out at this point the differences between how Paine approached the matters of government and how he approached the matters of economy. The author's plan regarding the fund seems to be far more elaborate than his views regarding the government as he does not provide many practical ideas regarding the creation of a democratic republic. This is also true for his other economic concerns as he was actively engaged in the matters of free trade during the American Revolution, and also by his participation in the discussions regarding the first bank in Philadelphia. As was said before, it is possible to argue that this was due to Paine's views on government being primarily principles, and that his primary desire was to see the power reside in the hands of the citizens, not the hands of a hereditary monarchy.

In summary, *Agrarian Justice* seems to prove a couple of points about Paine. It shows his distaste with what he would call arbitrary power (represented here by private land ownership), arbitrary distinctions between classes, and also his concerns for the poor and disabled. Finally, as Paine's desire seems to be that all the citizens benefit from such a scheme, it seems to embody the ideals of Enlightenment by bettering the general condition of humanity and also shows Paine's preoccupation with economic matters.

5.6 Miscellaneous

Apart from his five major works, Paine is also credited with many lesser publications, namely newspaper articles, comments on certain events, shorter pamphlets, or speeches. There also seem to exist some letters. However, their number is somewhat limited as the bulk of Paine's personal correspondence was allegedly destroyed in a fire. The surviving ones, however, give an account of Paine's correspondence with some of the most prominent Americans such as George Washington, and, in this particular case, show the deterioration of their relationship. These publications seem to provide a good, if necessarily limited, insight into Paine's personality, and also serve as an extension of his major works as they often share the same goals and concerns. Finally, these lesser works seem to share the simple, matter-of-fact style displayed by his major publications.

To give an example, Paine's engagement in internal matters can clearly be seen in *Public Good* (1780), a pamphlet written as an analysis of the claims of Virginia and the United States to the empty territories in the American west. Paine proceeds to resolve the issue in favour of the claim of the states and in doing so, displays certain characteristics which all his works have in common: coherent argumentation, thorough analysis, and

persuasive language. Paine proceeds to refute the Virginian arguments, arguing that as they base them on a charter from 1609, they confirm they are still a part of the British Crown, or, in fact, a London company.¹¹² This seems to be another case of Paine's preoccupation with the matters of the citizens of the American colonies, using his prominence to advocate the cause of the entire union.

Apart from pamphlets, Paine also seems to have felt the need to defend not only ideas present in his works but, on some occasions, his own persona as well. During his revolutionary activities in France, he presented the French National Assembly (whom he was a member of) with speeches on various different topics, expressing his views on, for example, the execution of certain prominent politicians, his views on the revolution in general, and many others. Paine's newspaper articles also demonstrate his concerns about economic matters as the topics he engaged in seem to range from attacks on paper money to re-establishment of commerce with England.

As for a direct role in the American Revolution, Paine seems to present the ideas found in *Common Sense* and *The Crisis* pamphlets in a series of letters called "The Forester's Letters". They were written between April and May 1776, two months after Paine published *Common Sense*, and were a reaction to someone publishing letters advocating reconciliation with the Crown. As was the case of Paine's early revolutionary pamphlets, he seems to have expressed his own views on such ideas by employing common sense and matter-of-fact arguments to rebut any possibility of reconciliation with England.

¹¹² Thomas Paine, *Public Good*, in *Collected Writings / Thomas Paine*, ed. Eric Foner (New York, N.Y.: The Library of America, 1995), 267.

6. Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine Compared

As the preceding chapters tried to prove, both Thomas Paine and Benjamin Franklin managed to contribute to the outcome of the American Revolution in a significant way. Their respective contributions, however, seem to differ with respect to the way they opted to direct their actions and possibly also with respect to the ultimate impact of these actions. The goal of this chapter is to juxtapose different elements connected with their contributions, analyse them, point out crucial Paine's and Franklin's differences, and finally take a stance as for which of these two authors was ultimately more important to the course of the American Revolution.

6.1 Deism and Radicalism

When it comes to religious beliefs, both Paine and Franklin seem to have been deists. Their shared belief in God as an entity not influencing the world directly anymore, together with an opinion that God is an entity which should be praised by doing public good, is also connected with basic concepts of Enlightenment and also seems to liberate them from restraints which would otherwise be imposed upon them by belonging to any particular religious denomination. Both Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine also seem to have employed religion in a pragmatic way—Franklin through his belief that religion was an important part of a healthy society (he demonstrated it, for example, by supporting the establishment of halls for preachers in Pennsylvania), Paine by employing religious arguments in his *Common Sense* to persuade the American public of the need of independence.

However, there seems to be an aspect which separates the two men. In Paine's case, deism later seems to have connected with a quality he does not seem to share with Franklin, or not to such an extent: his radicalism. Franklin seems to have been much more mild-mannered, thoughtful, and considerate which seems to have helped him win public acclaim and achieve a status of a generally likable person. He even spent his time with priests; which seems to suggest that in spite of his religious views, he did not have a problem with associating himself with the members of the clergy and was in turn liked by them. He also seems to have realized that an open attack on religion would have disastrous consequences and thus had kept his religious convictions largely to himself.

Thomas Paine, on the other hand, did not seem to hesitate to vehemently rebut and rebuke religious dogmas and doctrines. *The Age of Reason* is indeed an attack on religion,

and not just Christianity—Paine claims that all religions are essentially evil and unnecessary. It seems possible to say that this demonstrates a crucial difference between the two men. Paine did not hesitate to put in danger, and ultimately ruin, his reputation by expressing what the thought was right in an attempt to change the global mode of thinking which favoured the belief in God as an active deity. On the other hand, it can be argued that Franklin realized that to keep the power he had over the public, and consequently his influence, he needs to preserve his reputation, and thus did not attack religion in any way.

The differences between the two men, arisen against the backbone of deism, seem to show a couple more points about Paine and Franklin. Eric Foner seems to think that while Paine was a good revolutionary, he was a terrible politician.¹¹³ Furthermore, John Adams, one of Paine's contemporaries, stated that Paine, above all else, was better at destroying rather than building.¹¹⁴ Both of these views seems rather plausible and can be strengthened by the already mentioned fact that Paine did not think much about governments and was acting primarily on principles. He saw the English government as unjust and wanted to cut any ties with it; he was not predominantly concerned with what would happen next. The impact of *Common Sense* on the American public seems to prove this even further, and so does the publishing of *The Age of Reason*.

Franklin, on the other hand, does not seem to have been as radically disposed as Paine did. Although there seem to exist some exceptions, particularly Franklin's satires such as "Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One" and "An Edict by the King of Prussia" in which he basically calls the English tyrants, his contribution was, in a way, much more reserved and low-key. In comparison to Paine, they lack Paine's radical approach and severity. It needs to be said, however, that this did not seem to have any influence on how Franklin was perceived by the American public. Furthermore, the fact that Franklin was not as radical as Paine does not seem to diminish his role in the revolution. It only seems to show that the importance of his contribution lies elsewhere.

To summarize, both Paine and Franklin were deists, free from religious dogma and thus morally free to engage in actions they saw beneficial to the public. They also seem to have been able to employ religion to help their contributions towards the

¹¹³ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 212.

¹¹⁴ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 122.

revolution, albeit in different ways. However, the later developments seem to prove Paine's radical dispositions, a point in which there seems to be a difference between the two men. To Paine, his radicalism seems to have been a key contributing factor to his rise as well as his downfall. Franklin, on the other hand, was never a radical, his public acclaim stemming from the reputation he had built throughout his life and also his public service to the people of the colonies.

6.2 Views on Reconciliation

Reconciliation of the American colonies with the British crown was a major point of difference between Thomas Paine and Benjamin Franklin, despite manifesting itself at different points of the development of tensions. For a very long time, Franklin seems to have remained a monarchist/unionist, advocating a joint British-American empire and stressing the importance of a continuous cooperation between England and the colonies. Franklin seems to have centred his political missions in England around that notion, in his attempts to persuade the English Parliament of the futility of taxing the colonies, and stressing the need of representation of the colonies in the Parliament.

It seems almost paradoxical that a person whose primary conviction was to prevent war by keeping the two sides united would later become credited with the United States of America gaining their independence, but Franklin seems to have achieved it. It seems possible to say that he, in spite of his beliefs in the union, was a loud representative of the American cause in England, and was thus seen as an embodiment of the developing American identity not only by the colonists, but also by the statesmen in England. Franklin's active role in the American politics seems to have been another contributing factor.

Thomas Paine, on the other hand, never seems to have been an advocate of the reconciliation. It seems possible to argue that he, in fact, centred all of his political activities on the impossibility thereof. There are no signs whatsoever of beliefs that maintaining a union between the British and the Americans was beneficial, or even a possibility. In Franklin's case, monarchism can be proved by many of his letters or passages from his autobiography; Paine's work, on the other hand, seems to be built on the very notion that reconciliation was in fact impossible. *Common Sense* and *The Crisis* series seems to prove such sentiments. The author did not just provide arguments as for why reconciliation was impossible; he attacked the notion of the hereditary monarchy

itself, attacking the very nature of the system. Indeed, Paine would go as far as dismissing the notion of reconciliation as a “fallacious dream”.¹¹⁵

It needs to be said, however, that both Paine and Franklin would later come to advocate a common cause, namely the separation. Franklin seems to have been prompted to do so due to the failure of his mission in England in the 1760s and the early 1770s. The ignorance of English Parliament members with respect to the American cause seems to have made him lean increasingly towards independence. In Paine’s case, there is no such change: he was never convinced that reconciliation was possible or plausible. It therefore seems possible to offer the following conclusion: while Franklin thought of himself as of a representative of the American cause, he was not a patriot from the start; he had to become one. Paine’s patriotism, on the other hand, was evident from the very beginning. He had always been a patriot. His pamphlets published between 1776 and 1780 as well as his political activities (discussed in previous chapters) seem to prove such a conclusion.

These differences in the approach to reconciliation seem to have ensured that Franklin and Paine had different roles in the American Revolution. On one hand, in Benjamin Franklin’s case, the role seems to have been gradual, steadily developing towards the notion of independence. It was said before that Franklin, in spite of being a monarchist, felt himself a citizen of America and was therefore advocating the cause of his fellow countrymen. He seems to have devoted his life to bettering the life of Americans—by his acts of public service, by publishing *Poor Richard’s Almanack*, by being a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, and by many other already mentioned activities. This was done long before the revolution itself. He therefore does not seem to have been a revolutionary at first, but he was American all the time, contributing towards the emergence of the concept of a new nation and by his devotion to the cause become considered one of its key representatives.

On the other hand, Paine’s outright dismissal of any possibility of reconciliation seems to have caused that his role in the revolution was much more direct, clear-cut, and immediate. Paine set out to employ his eloquence and writing skills in persuading the Americans that independence was right and just, thus causing an immediate reaction and altering the sentiments of the public which was still hesitant to support the cause at the onset of the hostilities. Even though Franklin would later share Paine’s view that the

¹¹⁵ Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, 272.

colonies needed to become independent, he would never assume such a direct role as Paine did.

To conclude, Benjamin Franklin's long-standing opinion that a union between the two countries was maintainable, connected with his lifetime devotion to the cause of the colonies, seems to have meant that his contribution was steady, and low-key. However, in spite of the previously mentioned factors, he seems to have remained vital with respect to the emergence of the notion of the American nation. Paine's resolute resentment of the union, on the other hand, meant that he assumed a direct role immediately after the onset of the hostilities, ensuring that he was seen as a prominent revolutionary without any scruples.

6.3 The Role of Science

Both men seem to have proved that they were ardent scientists. Throughout his life, Franklin kept himself occupied with various different kinds of scientific work. He is known especially for his experiments with electricity, but also as an inventor of the lightning rod, Franklin stove, of bifocal glasses. Furthermore, he kept correspondence with other world-famous scientists and even became the first American member of the British Royal Society. Paine's scientific contribution was not so vast. He did, however, invent an iron bridge which was successfully built in England. It was also mentioned that after the American Revolution, Paine wanted to devote his life to science. Both men were also actively supporting scientific research and activities in Philadelphia, Franklin even funded some small local scientifically-conscious societies.

The effect such activities had on the lives of the two authors seems to be rather profound. Thomas Paine himself stated that his spirit was lifted by science.¹¹⁶ Throughout his autobiography, Franklin gives many examples of why he himself benefited from his scientific pursuits. Both men seem to have been of the opinion that science helped them to look beyond the problems of everyday life, enabled them to get a broader perspective regarding the matters they were concerned with, and provided them with a much-needed respite from everyday matters. It seems possible to say that this, connected with the fact that people with scientific interests were usually fond of liberty, might have helped shape their actions in such a way that they were much more effective and thus had a larger

¹¹⁶ Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 6.

impact on the revolution. With some notable exceptions,¹¹⁷ Paine and Franklin tended not to get entangled in minor quarrels, always trying to see the bigger picture.

In Benjamin Franklin's case, scientific exploits also meant fame, a factor which he seems to have benefited from throughout his whole life. His inventions brought him great esteem and international fame and were thus key factors in ensuring he was respected not only by his political allies, but also opponents. This respect seems to have been one of the causes of why his opinions were listened to, why he was influential, and why he was seen as an ideal representative of the emerging American nation abroad. The fame of Thomas Paine, on the other hand, does not seem to have come from his scientific activities, but chiefly from his high-profile position of a prominent revolutionary.

To summarize, science seems to have been a moderate factor in shaping Paine's and Franklin's contribution to the revolution. They themselves commented on its benefits to them, and it is also possible to detect other implications such interests had with respect to their lives. It seems difficult to speculate about the degree their interest in science changed their perspectives on the matters they were predominantly concerned with, but as they themselves stated that science was an important factor, it seems safe to say that there indeed is a connection. Such activities also seem to betray curious, open-minded personas, a characteristic seemingly shared by all the prominent philosophers of the Enlightenment era. Finally, especially in Franklin's case, his early successes in science brought him fame, a fact which ensured that his opinions were listened to, and regarded highly by his contemporaries.

6.4 Involvement and Impact

It seems rather difficult to say which of these two had a bigger impact on the developments of the revolution and subsequent American independence. This is mainly due to a major difference not only in time, but also in nature of their involvement. In his introduction to *The Essential Thomas Paine*, Sidney Hook seems to favour Thomas Paine as "the father" of the revolution,¹¹⁸ the main one. Edmund S. Morgan, on the other hand, credits Benjamin Franklin with such a title. It seems rather misguided to award such a

¹¹⁷ Franklin did spend a lot of energy on his quarrel with the Proprietary party of Pennsylvania in the 1760s, an action which seems to have clouded his judgement somewhat. Paine, on the other hand, spent a lot of time on a seemingly pointless quarrel with American merchants in the late 1770s.

¹¹⁸ Sidney Hook, introduction to *The Essential Thomas Paine* (New York: Mentor Book, 1969), ix.

denotation to any of the two, because it would necessarily mean denying such a title to the other.

The key cause of the difference of their roles seems to be the fact that Paine only travelled to the American colonies in 1774, one year before the revolution. Franklin, on the other hand, spend his childhood and a major part of his life there. He was, in fact, an American, all throughout his life involved in local affairs both on economic as well as political grounds, and made his mark by trying to serve the American public by improving its general conditions. Although he was a monarchist for most of his life, his public service also seems to have included his attempts to persuade the British Parliament of their misguided actions towards the colonies, especially when it comes to taxation. This, connected with his previous actions and fame he had already gained in the colonies, seems to have caused that he was seen as a vocal defender of the American affairs not only by his countrymen, but also the British. His involvement and impact seem to stem from his lifelong devotion to American affairs and his long-standing views on liberty and personal freedom. Finally, when the American Revolution began, Paine assumed a role of an ambassador, serving the American cause in France and being crucial in providing the colonies with the much-needed funds to finance the war effort.

Paine, on the other hand, was largely uninvolved in the American affairs before the revolution. It therefore seems unwise to compare their roles and impacts directly. Paine only became prominent in 1776 by publishing *Common Sense* and by altering the political situation in Pennsylvania, but when he did so, his role seems to have been immediate and direct. As his works caused the American public to lean towards the notion of independence, it also seems possible to call his role crucial. Paine was primarily a revolutionary, his role stemming mainly from his efforts concerned with rousing the American public and destroying established norms. Furthermore, Paine was also directly involved in the war, serving as aide de camp with a prominent general of the American military forces, Nathanael Greene. Compared to Franklin, Paine's involvement in the American affairs seems to have been much shorter, but also much more intense.

As it further proves the difference of nature of their roles in the American Revolution, it also seems right to comment on the kind of impact they had on the French one. Paine, as in the case of the American one, was involved directly, traveling to Paris and taking part in the events. However misguided his actions might have been, it seems to prove that Paine was a man of action with an evident desire to be directly involved. Franklin, on the other hand, could not have taken part in the events of the French

Revolution as he died in 1790. However, he does seem to have had a significant impact on it. During his political mission to France between 1776 and 1783, Franklin managed to secure large sums of money to finance the American cause. This virtually caused the French government to go bankrupt, the ensuing lack of funds seen as one of the key causes of why the French Revolution started in the first place.

To summarize, it seems rather impossible to say which of these two men was more vital to the course of the American Revolution. Their roles were much different, and calling one “the father of the American Revolution” almost seems as insulting the other. Given the fact that Franklin can be credited with representing the American cause all throughout his life, and Paine mainly with rousing the public and giving it a final push toward accepting the notion of independence, it seems possible to offer the following conclusion: while Thomas Paine was a better revolutionary than Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Franklin was a much better and a much more complex representative of the American cause and thus a better American.

7. Conclusion

As was proved in the preceding chapters, the roles Thomas Paine and Benjamin Franklin had in the American Revolution were significant. Both of them were seen as key defenders of the American cause during the war. Furthermore, they left behind them a vast literary legacy, their works proving their devotion to the American cause, advocating the concepts of personal freedom, liberty, rights of the people, just governments, and freedom of speech. They were also actively interested in science, their scientific work falling into the category of what they would call “public service”.

Paine and Franklin seem to have shared many characteristics seemingly common to the philosophers of the Enlightenment era, but also had many differences. They shared their views on religion, the advantages of science, and crucially, they shared a belief concerned with the American colonies governing themselves. They also had similar opinions on commerce, shared a concern for the condition of poor people, and were against large concentrations of wealth. Both of them also tried to reach as large audiences as possible by publishing many works connected with such themes.

The key difference between the two men, however, was not only the nature of their involvement, but also its timespan. Franklin’s impact seems to have been long-term and gradual due to the fact that he spent a major part of his productive life in the colonies themselves. He came to be seen as a representative of the American nation and was thus respected and highly regarded. Paine, on the other hand, did not take part in the events preceding the onset of the American Revolution, but when the hostilities started, proved to be of immense value to the advocates of independence by giving voice to the notion and reshaping the consciousness of the American public, introducing the idea that independence was the only option. His role, albeit shorter than that of Franklin, was much more direct and immediate.

It is mainly due to such differences that it seems impossible to give a verdict on which of these men was more vital to the revolution. The roles of Paine and Franklin were of different nature, both had impact in different areas. Paine ultimately came to be perceived as a troublemaker, a prototypical revolutionary, his work based primarily on principles. Franklin, on the other hand, displayed a lifelong devotion to the American cause, being its early advocate and directing his work to the English Parliament, trying to persuade it of the futility of its actions with regards to the unfair treatment of the colonies.

It is because of these differences that the impact of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine ought to be considered as having effect in two predominantly different domains. Thomas Paine helped stir the sentiments of the American public, caused a change in the government of the province of Pennsylvania, and was a prominent defender of the revolutionary war, a patriot-writer. It thus seems possible to consider him a better revolutionary than Franklin. Benjamin Franklin, on the other hand, came to be seen as “the American”, not only in the colonies themselves, but in England and France as well. His chief contribution seems to lie in giving shape to the concept of the American nation and slowly and gradually working for its benefit, awakening it to its rights in the process. It thus seems possible to say that he was a better American.

Resumé

Tato diplomová práce se věnuje dvěma významným postavám americké historie, konkrétně Benjaminu Franklinovi a Thomasi Paineovi. Zkoumá rovněž jejich roli v Americké revoluci. První část práce je zaměřena právě na Franklina, a to jak na jeho život, tak na dílo. Cílem práce není primárně představit chronologický průběh Franklinova života, ale zaměřit se na prvky, které jej činily významným a které způsobily, že se Franklin mohl těšit velké přízni a rovněž hrál významnou roli v Americké revoluci. Dá se říci, že se Benjamin Franklin aktivně zúčastnil procesu uvědomění americké společnosti, práce se proto zaměřuje na prvky s ním spojené. Práce dále zkoumá jeho dílo, komentuje jeho styl, zaměření a dopad na americkou veřejnost. Specifický důraz je kladen na prvky, u kterých je možné dokázat souvislost s revolucí.

Ačkoliv hrál Benjamin Franklin v Americké revoluci velmi důležitou roli, zcela jistě nebyl jediným, kdo na ní měl zásluhu. Druhá část práce se proto obdobným způsobem věnuje Thomasi Paineovi, revolucionáři, který má stejně jako Franklin zásluhy na americké nezávislosti, ale jehož příspěvek byl zcela jiný, než Franklinův. Práce opět zkoumá Paineovy stěžejní charakteristiky a na jejich pozadí komentuje revolucionářův život. Ve srovnání s Franklinem se Paine připojil k revolučnímu hnutí relativně pozdě, avšak jeho přínos byl přímější a důraznější. Práce si proto klade na úkol co nejlépe přiblížit Paineovy aktivity v průběhu revoluce, jak rovněž jeho aktivity po vzniku USA. Státníkovo dílo je zkoumáno podobným způsobem jako Franklinovo, větší důraz je však kladen na jeho mezinárodní přesah.

Poslední část práce se věnuje přímému srovnání těchto dvou politiků a autorů. Pozornost je věnována jak věcem, na kterých se shodli, ale rovněž rozdílům, které zapříčinily to, že byl jejich přínos k americkému revolučnímu hnutí zcela odlišný. Právě obrovské rozdíly v revolučních aktivitách těchto dvou politiků jsou příčinou toho, že se zdá nemožné objektivně posoudit, kdo z nich měl na revoluci větší podíl. Zdá se však, že určité důsledky vyvodit lze: Franklinova celoživotní práce pro americkou věc a jeho role jakožto reprezentanta a obránce práv amerických kolonií z něj činí lepšího Američana, kdežto Paine, jehož primární zásluhy spočívají v tom, že se mu podařilo přesvědčit americkou společnost o nutnosti vyhlášení nezávislosti na Velké Británii, z něj činí lepšího revolucionáře.

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Anotace

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Cílem této práce je seznámit čtenáře se dvěma významnými postavami Americké revoluce, konkrétně s Benjaminem Franklinem a Thomasem Painem. Práce se zaměřuje nejen na život, ale rovněž na dílo těchto dvou státníků a revolucionářů. Specifický důraz je kladen na ta díla a prvky životů těchto dvou autorů, které sehrály významnou roli v Americké revoluci. Práce se v neposlední řadě věnuje také specifickým vlivu, jaký tito revolucionáři měli na revoluční dění, a snaží se jejich příspěvek srovnat.

Klíčová slova: Benjamin Franklin; Thomas Paine; Americká revoluce; Americká válka za nezávislost

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to familiarize the reader with two essential personas of the American Revolution, namely with Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine. The thesis deals not only with the lives, but also with the works of these two statesmen and revolutionaries. The thesis focuses especially on such works and aspects of the authors' lives that played a significant role in the American Revolution. The thesis also deals with the specifics of the influence the two revolutionaries had on the events and tries to compare their contribution.

Keywords: Benjamin Franklin; Thomas Paine; American Revolution; American Revolutionary War