

*PUBLIC QUARRELLING IN THE ROMANTIC  
PERIOD: THE RHETORICAL STYLES OF JOHN  
BURGOYNE, THOMAS PAINE, WILLIAM COBBETT,  
AND PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY*

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of Nottingham Trent University  
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

September 2014

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## Abstract

This thesis focuses on the concept and style of quarrelling in the writings of four British Romantic authors: General John Burgoyne (1722-1792), Thomas Paine (1737-1809), William Cobbett (1763-1835), and Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822). All four authors engaged in radical writing about war, politics and various controversial social issues during the American War of Independence and the Regency period (1811-1820). This study situates their political arguments in the historical context and the political discourse of the time. It demonstrates how their style of arguing is particularly aptly described by the term 'quarrelling' because of the combination of personal motives, interests and conflicts with the discussion of larger public problems during this turbulent historical period. I start with a discussion of General Burgoyne's pamphlets, through which he sought both to justify the political decision of the surrender of British troops at Saratoga and to clear his name of accusations of being personally responsible for losing the war. I compare Burgoyne's suppression of anger and use of a polite style of arguing to Thomas Paine's gradual transition from a humble quarrelling approach in his pamphlet *The Case of the Officers of Excise* to a more openly angry and sarcastic attitude in his later works in support of America's independence. Paine's predominantly rational and objective rhetoric is then contrasted to William Cobbett's cantankerous attitude in his pamphlets, letters and his own newspaper *The Political Register*, through which he conducted polemical battles blending public issues with personal conflicts. Finally, the thesis compares the rhetorical devices of quarrelling exemplified in the political prose of Burgoyne, Paine and Cobbett to the use of poetry for the purposes of political quarrelling by Shelley. In this wide range of quarrelling attitudes, the thesis outlines the fluctuation between personal emotions, in particular anger, and an objective or polite tone in the written quarrels of each author, as well as between these authors. It thus demonstrates how their stylistic choices were affected by their social positions and circumstances and the different audiences they were addressing. The comparison of these four authors' methods of combining personal and public arguing aims to give a sense of how quarrels were conducted within the public sphere in the Romantic period.

## **Acknowledgments**

My thanks are due first and foremost to my supervisors Dr Carl Thompson and Dr Anna Ball.

I thank Dr Thompson for stepping in at a crucial moment in my writing, and being a model supervisor, who helped me with his wise feedback and perseverance, giving me the confidence to complete my thesis.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr Ball, who has made me feel that I am not on my own, and with her encouragement has made what appeared impossible possible to achieve. All the support you gave me in order to help me finish my thesis will not be forgotten.

I would like to thank Professor David Worrall for his patient guidance in identifying my topic, and strengthening my knowledge of the links of history and politics to literature.

My thanks also go to Dr Julian North for her initial support at the early development of my research.

I would like to thank Dr Bernard Beatty, whose earliest advice contributed to shaping my idea of quarrelling.

I am grateful to Dr Teresa Grant, who encouraged me to carry on with my work and to do a PhD.

I would like to express my gratitude to the librarians at the libraries of Nottingham Trent University, University of Leicester, De Montfort University and the British Library for providing me with resources and for the wonderful facilities that enabled me to conduct my research.

My thanks to my loved friends in Leicester and in Libya, who stood beside me and encouraged me with their kind words: Fatima, Sammy, Rasha,, Wafa, Deborah, Marion, Muna, Wafa, Shazia, Dawn, Naima, and Amina, and my special thanks go to my precious friend Irina, whose support came from a pure heart and endless kindness.

To my beloved injured country, which I saw torn by war as I was writing my thesis, I say there is light after dark, there is blessing after patience, may Allah save you for your sons and daughters.

Thanks and blessings to my beloved nieces and nephews, who always raise their little hands to the sky and ask Allah to help me finish soon.

Thanks to my sisters for their thoughts.

To my wonderful brothers, Ibrahim, Youssof, Hassan and Hussain, who supported me from day one of my PhD years: I want to tell them that it happened because of them. And to my sisters-in-law for their kind support.

To the soul of my heart, my sister Nadra, I say it could not be done without your love, tender voice and firm confidence.

To my mother who had unlimited faith that I could achieve her wishes, I tell her that her prayer has been always with me helping me to get there. I tell her that I dedicate this work to her and to my father. May you both be in a better place and I pray as always to be blessed that you are my parents who taught me the way to success is through patience and endless trust in Allah.

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## **Introduction**

This thesis explores the concept of quarrelling in the writings of four British Romantic authors who engaged in writing about war, politics and various controversial social issues. It closely analyses different types of dispute as an important element in the writings of General John Burgoyne (1723-1792), Thomas Paine (1737-1809), William Cobbett (1763-1835), and Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822). The study investigates differences and similarities in these authors' strategies of quarrelling across different genres of writing, such as pamphlets, letters, essays, parliamentary papers, newspapers, and poetry. Each of these forms of writings will be analysed as a means of conveying political arguments. This research illuminates significant connections between these authors' political quarrels, as all of them belonged to the radical tradition, responded to some of the same political events, resisted the misuse of power, criticized the government's disinformation of the public and all wrote during the reign of King George III. This thesis thus examines mainly political works produced between the American War of Independence and the end of the Regency period (1776-1820) in which quarrels appear as a significant literary device. This turbulent period was characterized by political controversies, and accordingly, a comparison of these authors' works will reveal the various strategies through which they quarrelled. In each chapter of this thesis there will be an investigation of the methods of quarrelling that these authors adopted in order to convince, argue, fight, or criticize what the political system imposed on them and the public.

This study will also work towards a clearer understanding of the type of issues that were considered polemical or quarrelsome in Georgian society. The thesis will focus on political pamphlets and literary works which were influenced by personal and public quarrels as a particular medium of expression during war and other disruptive political events such as biased elections, imprisonments of political activists, and public protests. The analysis will reveal how these works were often considered controversial by different sectors of the general public. By comparing different strategies through which each author quarrels, the study will reveal the quarrelling style of radical authors, and explore how these writers influenced the political discourse of that period. The overall aim of this thesis is to investigate how

Romantic authors constructed their polemical voice within their political quarrels, and what similarities and differences there were in the ways that these four authors conveyed their quarrels to the public.

There is a body of work that discusses the radical and political language employed during the revolutionary periods, including E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*,<sup>1</sup> J. R. Dinwiddy, *Radicalism and Reform in Britain, 1780-1850*,<sup>2</sup> Olivia Smith, *The Politics of Language 1791-1819*,<sup>3</sup> Ian Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, Politics and the People, 1790-1860*,<sup>4</sup> and Andrew M. Stauffer's *Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism*.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, there is a recent wave of research that focuses specifically on Romantic conflicts between rivals in cultural, social and political dialogues. Recent works in this field play significant role in exploring the conduct of various Romantic disputes. Mark Schoenfield's *British Periodicals and Romantic Identity: The Literary lower Empire* investigates the way the Romantic authors were manipulated by magazine reviewers such as the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Quarterly Review*, and *Blackwood's Magazine*. Schoenfield's book also shows how those periodicals aimed to influence the public opinion and dominate the literature of the period by putting pressure on Romantic authors both on political and individual terms. Schoenfield highlights what Romantic authors like Cobbett, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey thought of the 'reviewing industry'<sup>6</sup> as they refused to tolerate their opponents' manipulative manner. They did not allow their reviewers to harm and destroy their relationship with their readers.<sup>7</sup> Richard Cronin's *Paper Pellets: British Literary Culture after Waterloo* focuses on the decade after 1815 in the aftermath of Napoleonic war when British literary culture went through a polemical period when literary critics were judged by their political opinions and connections to journals such as the Scottish *Edinburgh Review*

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<sup>1</sup> E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Victor Gollancz, 1963; repr. London: Penguin, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> J. R. Dinwiddy, *Radicalism and Reform in Britain, 1780-1850* (London: Hambledon, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Olivia Smith, *The Politics of Language 1791-1819* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> Ian Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, Politics and the People, 1790-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Andrew M. Stauffer, *Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Mark Schoenfield, *British Periodicals and Romantic Identity: The 'Literary Lower Empire'* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 16.



or London's *Quarterly*.<sup>8</sup> Cronin examines the intense conflicts in the period which consisted of personal and public attacks and responses in the periodical writings and literary works, including those between Romantic authors, especially Lord Byron's outrageous attack with others against the 'school of women poets that he had himself done much to inspire'.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, David Stewart's *Romantic Magazine and Metropolitan Literary Culture* examines the decade after the Napoleonic wars, 1815-1825, in which periodicals invaded the print market.<sup>10</sup> Stewart describes how the *Gentlemen's Magazine* and the *London Magazine* competed in the printing arena as they 'adopted a miscellaneous format, mixing current events, poetry, queries about scientific discoveries, and selected reviews of recently published works'.<sup>11</sup> These massive productions must have created rivals because those magazines challenged each other and argued with each other through their publications. Also, Kim Wheatley discusses the issue of personal conflicts in the early nineteenth-century in *Romantic Feuds: Transcending the Age of Personality*.<sup>12</sup> The book captures series of disputes including for example, the anti-Romantic reviews such as *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review*. Similar to Cronin's work, Wheatley investigates the hostilities behind the attacks and the defences that occurred between Romantics and their reviewers.<sup>13</sup> Whereas Cronin examines the aggressive attacks between literary authors and their engagement in the culture which erupted in an unfriendly literary atmosphere between periodicals in the period in relation to gender and class, however, Wheatley focuses on Romantic rhetorical responses to periodical criticism. In similar terms, this thesis will show the personal and political conflicts inherent in the writings of Romantic authors. Those attacks, I suggest, created a territory for quarrelling which had personal and public aspects and which exhibit various rhetorical styles and focus on political and cultural issues. As such this study locates itself within this field of research, because it traces a link between the Romantic authors' personal attitudes in their deliberate writing styles of arguing publicly against their opponents, while also seeking to expand this exciting emergent body of

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Cronin, *Paper Pellets: British Literary Culture after Waterloo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>10</sup> David Stewart, *Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture* (Basingstoke; Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Kim Wheatley, *Romantic Feuds: Transcending the 'Age of Personality'* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

research through a particular focus on form, style and rhetoric, as well as an emphasis on the interrelationship between the personal and political as shaping forces in many of the authors' quarrels.

A glimpse of the issues discussed in the recent critical trend reveals a large number of 'combats' such as the debates between Romantic authors in relation to cultural and literary disputes in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The recent works seem to stress the idea of 'sensibility'<sup>14</sup> especially when this term was referring to 'emotional receptivity'.<sup>15</sup> As sensibility had a profound connection towards all classes and genders in the Romantic culture, I trace in this thesis the rhetorical attitudes of the Romantic authors who quarrelled in order to direct the public opinions with passionate and yet rational arguments. The works of the authors which I mentioned above discuss examples of significant debates that occurred between Romantic authors themselves and that of the periodical press which influenced the readers and 'divid[ed] them into types that mirrored the genres of literature'.<sup>16</sup> Schoenfield highlights how the periodical press sought to have a strong influence on the public through the opinions of the 'reviewing industry'<sup>17</sup> which aimed to intervene in the relationship between towards Romantic author and their readers,<sup>18</sup> including the authors' individual identities in public and political images. Schoenfield examines Byron's reaction when his social image was attacked by the periodical press.<sup>19</sup> By stating that Byron 'constructed his public persona through tactical engagements and uncertainties, developing a simulacrum of inevitability from a situation of unease',<sup>20</sup> Schoenfield shows Byron's personal determination to protect his reputation. In the episodes which I will discuss in this thesis, I will show a similar reaction in the Romantic authors who confronted their opponents' unreal claims which were aimed to destroy their public images.

The same recognition of fights that took place in periodicals appears in Stewart's study, especially in his chapter 'Fighting Style: The Magazine Market',

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<sup>14</sup> Julie Ellison, 'Sensibility', in *A Handbook of Romanticism Studies*, ed. by Joel Faflak and Julia M. Wright (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 37-53 (p. 39).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>16</sup> Schoenfield, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

where he emphasises the growth of writing for magazines by paying attention to both genders including writers and their audience. Stewart aims to investigate the strength of the magazines of the Romantic period, because they were ‘divided along sectarian lines’,<sup>21</sup> and social and political classes.<sup>22</sup> Stewart finds that ‘many magazines in this period sought to create divisions, and to cleave readerships from the mass of reading public.’<sup>23</sup> This stresses that the periodical culture was competing for the audience’s attention, however their writings remained loyal to a particular ‘political faction’.<sup>24</sup> In the same way as Stewart suggests the existence of identifiable divisions created through the *Political Register* and *The Examiner*,<sup>25</sup> this thesis will focus on how each author attempted to conduct quarrels using periodicals. Examples include Cobbett’s publication of his own periodical, the *Political Register*, and Shelley’s attempt to publish his political works through *The Examiner*. These two periodicals were involved with the working class audience and other radical groups that were keen to change the politics in the country. So, these two periodicals and their audiences are representatives of political factions which Stewart refers to. In Cobbett’s case, he expanded his readership to all classes in the society in order to contribute personally for the public, as he objected to the magazines that supported the political system catering to the interests of the aristocratic and the ministerial groups.

Again, Schoenfield and Wheatley focus their attention on a similar topic, as they notice how periodicals constructed their political and literary arguments of a disputable nature in favour of political organization. This study highlights the authors’ awareness of the negative responses from the political organizations such as the periodicals or individual political opponents. Cronin also looks at examples of personal and public disputes and finds that in the Romantic period there was often confusion between the author as a person and the character of the author as it was represented in his writings. He believes that mixing up the two made an impact on the private and public lives of the Romantic authors. In Cronin’s opinion, the lack of distinction between the writer and his publications harmed many authors such as Lord Byron who experienced a ‘mix-up’ between his personal life and what his

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<sup>21</sup> Stewart, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

writing revealed about his character, particularly *Childe Harold*.<sup>26</sup> Thus, Cronin insists that ‘the conflation of the two is unwarranted and has been particularly damaging in Byron’s case’.<sup>27</sup> This topic is similar to the focus of my thesis on personal and public involvement in quarrelling in the four authors’ case studies. For example, Shelley wrote his poem *The Mask of Anarchy* from the perspective of the first person, and the editor of *The Examiner* wanted to protect Shelley exactly for this similar reason which was that the people might not be able to distinguish between the man and the lyrical speaker in the poem which was written in a biographical way. I will consider how Cronin’s distinction between the two related meanings of the word personality in the period is inscrutable, because of the failure to notice the ‘connection between writers’ minds and writers’ bodies’.<sup>28</sup> I follow Cronin’s path of investigating the personal connection between the Romantic author and his public voice in the literary work. In this way I examine the notion of the personal motivations for public quarrels that existed to protect the masses. Wheatley examines the squabbling of the Romantic authors by recognising their artistic presence in a combination of ‘political, commercial, psychological, and artistic motives, as well as by the exigencies of periodical form’.<sup>29</sup> Wheatley finds that the Romantic authors were engaged in writing exchanges which prove the quarrelling conduct. My approach is closest to Wheatley’s recognition of the Romantic feuds, as I examine the examples of the strategies of political quarrelling which was aimed to challenge the public in the Romantic period and inspired them to aim for effective political changes. I aim to examine other Romantic authors’ works and how their rhetorical styles developed from the early and later writings of the same author. Schoenfield interprets Byron’s voice as a voice ‘armed with satire’;<sup>30</sup> similarly my thesis investigates the public voice of the four authors in terms of hostility, satire, or intimacy.

All this research seems to identify a concern with public and political issues in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the Romantic authors were in dialogue with the press, and that they published their own views and responded to their opponents, and as a result, they generated wider debates in society and a

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<sup>26</sup> Cronin, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>29</sup> Wheatley, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Schoenfield, p. 8.

periodical. This research aims to enable the modern reader to understand the personal and political elements of Romantic authors' quarrels and the rhetorical styles they developed in their arguments with their political opponents.

The emphasis of my study will be specifically on the subject and means of quarrelling as represented by these major radical authors. Contextualizing the works of these authors within the existing critical framework of Romantic Studies, especially the political writings, is a major goal of this thesis. Although these authors have been written on by a number of contemporary critics, whose arguments will play a part in this research, the four authors that this thesis investigates have rarely been compared to one another. This thesis seeks to construct a new dialogue between these four authors of the radical tradition, and, by focusing on the concept of quarrelling, to reveal significant parallels between their works. Additionally, this study includes genres which have sometimes been overlooked by academic scholarship, such as letters and pamphlets by Burgoyne, Paine, and Cobbett, correspondence and political poetry by Shelley, and published letters in newspapers by Cobbett and Shelley.<sup>31</sup> Thus, this study seeks to extend current treatments of radical Romantic authors by identifying an important dialogue around the concept of quarrelling.

The authors explored over the course of this study each employ distinctive literary strategies in their work, ranging from direct criticism to rhetorical strategies such as metaphor. Elsewhere, they masked their emotions beneath very rational arguments against the political situation in order to raise public awareness of wider political conflicts such as revolutions, protests, and war against tyranny and corruption. The radical arguments that were presented in these writings indicate that Romantic authors controlled their emotions through their writings for the public in order to make their quarrel a means of conveying their political views. This thesis will argue that these authors' personal disagreements with their opponents were represented through public quarrels by which they established themselves as radical opponents to political situations around them by creating different personae and

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<sup>31</sup> These sources were accessed through the library of Nottingham Trent University databases. A collection of *Cobbett's Political Register* is also provided by the University of Leicester, which also holds two volumes of Shelley's letters: *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones (1964). Additionally, an original copy of Shelley's *Mask of Anarchy* was consulted at the British Library.

distinctive voices. Thus we see an increasing relationship between the political and personal surfacing through these authors' quarrels.

### **Towards a Definition of 'Quarrelling'**

This study focuses on the concept of 'quarrelling' — yet the exact definition of that term is itself the subject of much controversy. Quarrelling has often been defined in relation to the idea of disagreement. Samuel Johnson's dictionary is a good place to start when defining the concept of quarrelling in the Romantic period as it provides various meanings of the word *quarrel* at the time when these authors wrote their political texts. Johnson offered the following definitions: firstly, 'to quarrel' means 'to debate', 'to scuffle', and 'to squabble'. Secondly, to quarrel means 'to fall into variance' between two parties when they have different opinions. Thirdly, it means 'to fight' or to be engaged in 'combat'. Lastly, to quarrel was defined as 'to find a fault' or 'to pick objections'.<sup>32</sup> All these meanings to some extent contribute to the definition of 'quarrel' given by the Oxford English Dictionary: 'a dispute or argument; a violent contention or altercation with another person, or between persons.'<sup>33</sup> This disagreement could be motivated by personal or public issues. The concept of quarrelling is particularly significant in these four authors' works because it reflects the way in which they provoked public discussions of social and political issues. It can be seen to apply to Burgoyne's writings in which he sought to draw public attention to the issues that brought him to resign after the ministry refused to investigate his military case by a court-martial. The definition of quarrelling provided by Samuel Johnson, particularly in relation to its definition as an act of 'squabbling', draws attention to the personal element of quarrelling. This thesis utilises the concept of quarrelling in order to reveal the personal emotions which often underpin public discourse. Quarrelling in this context could also relate to political criticism of the government's way of handling the political opposition and the reformers' public opinions. It shows how the authors sometimes employed their writing in order to create public confrontations, as well as for the sake of their own personal belligerent impulses.

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<sup>32</sup> Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (A Digital Edition of the 1755 Classic) <<http://www.johnsonsdictionaryonline.com>>

<sup>33</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 27 January 2015]

Quarrelling in the writings of these authors also fits with the idea of ‘falling into variance,’ because they used their texts to express widely different opinions from those of their opponents. Their writings became a form of combat in which the opponents expressed their disagreements with each other. Cobbett, for example, expressed his differing opinions from those of politicians by deciding to publish his own newspaper, through which he found a means to fight over ideas and issues. In this way, quarrelling can be seen to be a very flexible term that applies to many different forms of argument in which these authors were involved. The analysis of these authors’ arguments will seek to identify the concept of quarrelling within shared radical contexts.

All of the authors examined in this study considered the lack of liberty and political choice to be important issues against which they had to fight. Therefore, they challenged major institutions such as the monarchy, government, and religion. This thesis suggests that they avoided representing themselves as public leaders but their being so involved in writing about political issues and social circumstances inevitably encouraged the public to perceive them as intellectual leaders and authorities. Quarrelling appeared to be the main and only weapon they were able to employ against their opponents, as public opinion had the capacity to threaten the stability of their enemies. Yet, despite this wide public audience, many authors’ quarrels with these various institutions remained very personal. Although the political environment in England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was not supportive of the radical authors’ political aims, it enabled them to create a new political platform on which they became the spokesmen for the ordinary people. The authors witnessed the American Revolution, and French Revolution and they had seen the impacts those revolutions left on Britain as the public suffered the pressure of poverty and high taxes as a result of the British policies in and outside the country.

Each chapter also raises a number of further questions about quarrelling, specifically related to the means through which quarrels were conveyed, stoked or moderated. These include: how did Romantic authors construct their polemical voice in their political quarrels? What were the similarities and differences in the ways that these four authors conveyed their quarrels to the public, and finally, to what extent

did these authors appear tolerant of the political situation or seek to hide their anger when they argued publicly?

### **The Context to Quarrelling in the Romantic Period**

The word 'quarrel' seems to have been used in political discourse in order to describe a style of writing that spans different genres. It was employed in politics as well as in social contexts in order to describe a mode of combat, debate, or a 'falling into variance' between opponents. It seems to have a strong interpersonal meaning too, placing the focus on the interaction between two or more people rather than on the issue which the quarrel was about. The term quarrelling has been applied to public arguments in the Romantic period before. As early as the mid-nineteenth century, William Graham Sumner's 'Politics in America, 1776-1876' in *The North American Review* discussed American political history as a form of quarrelling between 'the leading men of 1787-88'.<sup>34</sup> In addition, Cobbett used the term 'quarrel' to describe the public dispute between English Prime Minister William Pitt and Henry Addington, Lord of the Treasury in their struggle for influence in the government in Cobbett's *Weekly Political Register* (1805). Cobbett explained the cause of the quarrel in his newspaper by offering his own opinion about the political participants: 'Mr Addington and his adherents, have a very good ground of quarrel with those who staid behind them in place'.<sup>35</sup> Thus, Cobbett showed how the political aims of some members of parliament fell into variance because of their own personal political interests. Quarrelling was an important theme in Cobbett's own writings, and his own personal quarrels were published in *The Examiner* under the title '*Mr Cobbett and Sir F. Burdett*',<sup>36</sup> which indicates the history of their dispute. Another example of personal conflict in politics represented in Cobbett's *Weekly Political Register* was that which took place between Lord Grenville and Addington.

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<sup>34</sup> W. G. Sumner, 'Art. II.- Politics in America, 1776-1876', *North American Review*, 122.250 (1876), 47-87 (p. 54), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25109961>> [accessed 23 August 2013]

<sup>35</sup> William Cobbett, 'Summary of Politics: Family Reconciliation', *Cobbett's Political Register*, 5 January 1805, pp. 13-32 (p. 29).

<sup>36</sup> 'Mr. Cobbett and Sir F. Burdett,' *The Political Examiner* 17 February 1822, in *British Newspapers 1600-1950* <[http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE\\_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=BB3200976918&contentSet=LTO&source=gale](http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=BB3200976918&contentSet=LTO&source=gale)> [accessed 28 September 2014]



In Grenville's own words: 'While my quarrel with Addington becomes more serious, all the motives which made Pitt and me differ in opinion and conduct daily decrease.'<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, in his letter to the Prince of Regent in 1811, Cobbett applied the term to the sphere of international relations between countries, arguing that England's disputes with France had 'nothing to do with [their] quarrel with a third party [America]'.<sup>38</sup>

While the quarrels that emerged in these authors' works often surfaced around each other's points of views on the political situation in the country and Europe, it is interesting to note that they also stemmed from their personal links to the political and aristocratic system, and to other cultural circles in which they were involved. One such example of this emerges in the quarrelsome relationship we see between John Keats and Lord Byron. Byron had sought to destroy Keats's political and poetic talents and yet he wondered about his fragility, he commented that 'Keats was "snuff'd out by an article"'<sup>39</sup> after other criticisms occurred against Keats' poem *Endymion* (1818). Lynda Pratt describes this criticism as an 'internal conflict'<sup>40</sup> between the intellectuals, and it also created further quarrels as Byron was criticised by many for his aggressive comment. Schoenfield refers to Keats's death as evidence of an existing battle between Romantic authors and their reviewers, but he believes in Byron's understanding of 'particularity of individual identity,'<sup>41</sup> a 'self-knowledge'<sup>42</sup> that is aware of the existing truth and manages not to repeat the differences which could increase the unfriendly attacks against the author.<sup>43</sup> In this period, reviewers and periodicals like the '*Whig Edinburgh* and the *Tory Quarterly*'<sup>44</sup> expressed political opinions and were also able to convey personal attacks. The attacks on Keats for his *Endymion* by leading newspapers like *The Examiner* and *The Quarterly Review* became a contentious topic among Keats'

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<sup>37</sup> William Cobbett, 'Intercepted Letter: Of Lord Grenville', *Cobbett's Political Register*, 6 October 1804, pp. 532-34 (p. 532).

<sup>38</sup> William Cobbett, 'To the Prince Regent: On the Dispute with America, Letter II', *Cobbett's Political Register*, 7 October 1811, pp. 289-98 (p. 295).

<sup>39</sup> Nicholas Roe, *John Keats: A New Life* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 276.

<sup>40</sup> Lynda Pratt, 'Epic', in *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. by Nicholas Roe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 332-49 (p. 347).

<sup>41</sup> Schoenfield, p. 176.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 176-77.

<sup>44</sup> Steven E. Jones, 'Satire', in *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. by Nicholas Roe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 390-408 (p. 394).

critical contemporaries. Shelley, for example, criticised their attacks on Keats by writing his tribute to the young poet through his poem *Adonais* in 1821 after Keats' death. Recent articles such as Christopher Rovee's 'Trashing Keats',<sup>45</sup> and Jacques Khalip's 'Virtual Conduct: Disinterested Agency in Hazlitt and Keats'<sup>46</sup> also explore this form of literary dispute in terms which can be related to the idea of quarrelling. On the whole, though, while existing scholarly materials on the Romantic period explore a wide range of subjects associated with the idea of quarrelling, such as politics, war, literature, and society, quarrelling has not been studied in depth as a topic of its own right.

### **Rhetorical Technique and Quarrelling**

It is possible to link the concept of quarrelling to broader traditions in rhetorical practice, of which the authors under consideration within this thesis would have been aware. Rhetoric was developed as an art and subject of study in ancient Greece, and then Rome. Rhetoric is defined as 'the systematization of natural eloquence'<sup>47</sup> and its style varies according to the 'occasion [and] the criterion of true excellence in oratory'.<sup>48</sup> Romantic authors often drew on the rhetorical devices that originated in the works of key classical figures like Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. There is no doubt that Romantic authors like Burgoyne and Shelley were educated people who had access to learning about the Greek and Roman classical traditions at school, or through their readings of classics which provided plenty of examples of early cultures.<sup>49</sup> Burgoyne, for example, was educated at Westminster School, and he was an 'army officer, politician, and playwright'.<sup>50</sup> Michael O' Neill states that Shelley learned Latin and Greek, which developed his poetic ability since the age of six and

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<sup>45</sup> Christopher Rovee, 'Trashing Keats', *ELH*, 75.4 (2008), 993-1022, in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy3.lib.le.ac.uk/stable/2765464>> [accessed 20 May 2012].

<sup>46</sup> Jacques Khalip, 'Virtual Conduct: Disinterested Agency in Hazlitt and Keats', *ELH*, 73.4 (2006), 885-912, in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30030042>> [accessed 24 July 2012].

<sup>47</sup> Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 115.

<sup>49</sup> Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>50</sup> Max M. Mintz, 'Burgoyne, John (1723-1792)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4013>> [accessed 10 September 2013].

he was already an established poet when he attended University College in 1810.<sup>51</sup> In contrast, less educated Romantic and radical authors such as Paine and Cobbett depended on their own experiences as they belonged to a new trend of political engagement of common people in the 1790s, which was regarded as a form of popular radicalism and which ‘gave a clear signal to the government that the people had begun to represent themselves as a body politic’.<sup>52</sup> These kinds of radical authors disputed through various other forms such as pamphlets, newspapers, painting, and poetry.

Many radical Romantic authors borrowed their rhetorical strategies from the classical traditions in order to effectively argue their points in ‘natural eloquence’ and explain them to the public. Politicians in the House of Commons such as Edmund Burke, William Pitt, and Charles Fox argued in a rhetorical language when they aimed to achieve their political goals. Burke’s comment on the public in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) provoked a major dispute among radicals and the society at large at this time, including Thomas Spence, who considered Burke’s description of the people as a ‘swinish multitude’ as an assault and accordingly Spence published his periodical *Pig’s Meat: or, Lessons for the Swinish Multitude*.<sup>53</sup> Thus we see that the late eighteenth century was an era of conflict in which radical authors used rhetorical devices and style in order to portray their political ideas and their anger to the public sphere, to such an extent that their works were sometimes considered to be seditious. Under the act of sedition,<sup>54</sup> radicals suffered accusations of seditious libel and reformers received unfair trials because of their radical opinions. They continued acting against the political regimes by producing literary works that sought to effect political change.

Radical authors sought to attract audiences by employing different forms through which to express their political ideas. For example, French political orators followed the model of Cicero’s political rhetoric<sup>55</sup> during the waves of the

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<sup>51</sup> Michael O’Neill, ‘Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1792-1822)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25312>> [accessed 10 September 2014].

<sup>52</sup> Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature*, p. 26.

<sup>53</sup> David Worrall, *Radical Culture: Discourse, Resistance and Surveillance, 1790-1820* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), p. 22.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>55</sup> Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 397.

revolutionary conflict which initiated a political response by the intellectuals in Britain, who shared the idea of enlightening the public sphere about what was happening in and outside the country. Also, British political rhetoric as a culture had already adopted the techniques of Cicero and political orators in the British parliament like Burke, Pitt, Fox, and Sheridan followed Cicero's manner.<sup>56</sup> Further expressions of public political rhetoric also appeared in other forms in this period – for example, in the radical cartoons of George Cruikshank which were produced during the Peterloo Massacre and became well-known to the public.<sup>57</sup> In response to the same event, Henry Hunt, a radical orator, was arrested with other speakers,<sup>58</sup> because the government feared their outspoken rhetorical manner. These radicals employed their writings to act together on the educated and illiterate elites. Indeed, Shelley's poem *The Mask of Anarchy* was intended for the ordinary people who could understand and remember the popular ballad that represented the acts of the authorities. Shelley seemed to have adopted the 'mask',<sup>59</sup> which ordinary people were familiar with by wearing it through their local rioting, and he showed that the masks in his poem were also worn by the oppressors. Shelley used several devices in his poem that were much easier for people to remember such as the use of allegory. In another poetic example, Shelley addressed the educated elite through his sonnet *England in 1819* because it had rhetorical and poetic devices such as metaphors, irony and analogy, which described intellectual and radical ideas. Thus we see radical and quarrelsome rhetoric emerging across different forms and playing a significant role in public debate during this period. Over the course of this thesis, each of the chapters will show how each of the four radical authors adopted different rhetorical literary devices, including simile, irony, satire, metaphor, metonymy, repetition, tone, allegory, persona, personification, and point of view, in order to indicate the authors' various attitudes as each of them intended to persuade his audience of his own particular stance on the political and public conflict in which he was involved.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 397.

<sup>57</sup> Ashley J. Cross, "'What a World We Make the Oppressor and the Oppressed': George Cruikshank, Percy Shelley, and the Gendering of Revolution in 1819", *ELH*, 71.1 (2004), 167-207 (p. 168), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30029926>> [accessed 13 May 2011].

<sup>58</sup> Stephen C. Behrendt, ed., *Percy Bysshe Shelley* (New York: Longman, 2010), p. 74.

<sup>59</sup> H. T. Dickinson, *Politics of the People in the Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Macmillan Press, 1995), p. 145.

Contemporary critics have examined radical political debates and how Romantic culture engaged with political conflict. The recurrence of sedition trials against radicals, such as that of Paine, who was convicted for his publication of *The Rights of Man* in 1792<sup>60</sup> and the trial against Thomas Spence in 1808,<sup>61</sup> and the public outrage these trials provoked, emphasised the continuing conflict between government repression and popular resistance at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the later political publications in that period showed the relationship between historical political ideologies of Romantic and radical culture to earlier political discourse which was carried out by older radicals. Kathleen Wilson in *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* states that ‘political discourse in a decade of war and empire-building was both complex and innovative, providing materials out of which loyalist and radical political agendas under George III would be constructed’.<sup>62</sup> It is the intention of this thesis to explore the development of this political discourse in greater detail by focusing on the specific quarrels in which each of the four authors considered across these chapters were engaged.

### **The Authors in Context**

The structure of this thesis follows the chronological order of historical events and circumstances that the four authors addressed in their writings. A separate chapter will be devoted to each of the authors in this study, investigating primary sources by the authors themselves, as well as works with which their opponents responded as part of their public quarrels. The authors explored in this study often responded to the same historical events, but from different perspectives, which influenced the style of their quarrelling. The thesis will also address the rhetorical responses that emerged through pamphlets, newspapers, essays, letters and poetry, which represented the social and political conflicts in the period.

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<sup>60</sup> Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature*, p. 21.

<sup>61</sup> Alex Benchimol, *Intellectual Politics and Cultural Conflict in the Romantic Period* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p.11.

<sup>62</sup> Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 201.

These authors will be brought together in this thesis for several reasons. Firstly, Burgoyne, Paine, Cobbett, and Shelley were involved in politics and government from the beginning of their careers and none of them supported the government by the end. Thus it is possible to trace certain comparisons between these authors' political positions. So, too, is it possible to locate these authors within similar political contexts. The first half of the thesis introduces the works of Burgoyne and Paine, who both wrote during the American War of Independence, while the second half focuses on how Cobbett and Shelley reacted to political unrest throughout the Regency period (1811-1820). In this context, quarrelling became an instrument for these authors to defend the public from what they considered a mistreatment of ordinary people through government policies that resulted in unjust wars, excessive taxations and civil unrest. Each chapter, however, also seeks to identify the specific forms and modes of quarrelling adopted by each author in order to argue their case.

The first chapter shows that Burgoyne's works reflected his position as an English General fighting against American independence, who, however, needed to justify to the ministry his military surrender to the American army. Burgoyne's language was thus influenced by his political and social position. The way he represented his campaign to his constituency showed his tendency to squabble with his enemies in order to protect his reputation, but at the same time he spoke politely to win the decision makers' sympathy and support through this political crisis. On the other hand, in order to solve his own crisis after the failure of the campaign for which he was personally blamed, Burgoyne sought to share his anger with the public and aimed to relay their reaction to the ministry as his letter addressed the fate of the British army prisoners in America.

This first chapter examines in some detail Burgoyne's political quarrels with the War Office and the ministry over charges of neglect following his defeat at the battle of Saratoga on 13 October 1777. The main aim is to analyse Burgoyne's *A Letter to his Constituents, upon his Late Resignation, with the Correspondences between the Secretaries of War and him, Relative to his return to America* (1779) in order to explore how Burgoyne used the pamphlet form to defend himself, relying on his politeness as a means to draw the public to his side, and representing his enemies in a negative way without openly causing offence. The chapter offers a sense of Burgoyne's personal dispute with his opponents by examining the context of his

earlier position in the government and demonstrating how the events which led to the failure of the campaign triggered this conflict. Besides the analysis of the *Letter to his Constituents*, the chapter will investigate *A State of the Expedition from Canada as laid before the House of Commons by Lieutenant-General Burgoyne, and Verified by Evidence; with a Collection of Authentic Documents, and an Addition of many circumstances which were prevented from Appearing before the House by the Propagation of Parliament. Writing and Collected by himself, and Dedicated to the Officer of the Army he Commanded* (1780), and other authors' pamphlets on the subject of Burgoyne's defeat, writing in response to his publication. The purposes of analysing these other materials is to obtain an overview of Burgoyne's defeat and to reveal how it instigated quarrels in the writings of Burgoyne's political opponents.

The second chapter discusses Paine's publications in America. During Burgoyne's campaign in the north, Paine wrote his pamphlet, *Common Sense* (1776), to encourage American rebellion against British rule. America was an appropriate place for Paine to disseminate his political teachings, because it was perceived as a new country in which social hierarchies were less divisive than those in Britain. As a publisher for his own work, Paine expressed his political views more freely unlike someone such as Burgoyne, for example, whose direct involvement with the government placed him under the threat of prosecution. During the conflict between the two nations, Paine's political voice targeted the acts of the British political oligarchy and he urged people to protect their land. Such a radical call for disloyalty to the British monarchy was met with passionate responses. Harvey J. Kaye argues that Paine's *Common Sense* 'shocked people and drove many of them to reaffirm their British ties. Yet it inspired many more to declare for independence'.<sup>63</sup> Such publications by Paine during the War of Independence motivated people to seek to drive out the British troops.

The chapter will also examine examples of quarrelling in two other much debated pamphlets by Paine: *The Case of the Officers of Excise, with Remarks on the Qualifications of Officers, and on the Numerous Evils arising to the Revenue, from Insufficiency of the Present Salary. Humbly addressed to the Members of both Houses of Parliament* (1772) and the first part of *The Rights of Man* (1791).

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<sup>63</sup> Harvey J. Kaye, *Thomas Paine and the Promise of America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005), p. 17.

Discussing these three works in the chronological order of their publication, and contextualizing them in the personal circumstances of Paine's quarrelling, this chapter will present Paine's gradual adoption of a belligerent rhetorical voice that represented his political views in defence of various groups who were unjustly treated by the British government. These groups included the excise officers, to whom Paine belonged for some time, the Americans struggling for their independence, and the ordinary people striving for liberty.

Paine has been widely discussed among scholars as a revolutionary author. However, this study will investigate the quarrelsome nature that can be observed through his apparently straightforward and neutral tone of voice. A recent piece of research by Edward Larkin, *Thomas Paine and Literature of Revolution* (2005), has examined Paine's polemical style and attitude towards the public. Larkin mainly studies the political issues within the 'republican public sphere'<sup>64</sup> in America through an account of the controversial publication of *Common Sense*. Also, while Larkin describes Paine's unwillingness to argue with his opponents,<sup>65</sup> this thesis suggests that Paine's works disputed the acceptance of the political powers of his enemies, and also seeks to find traces of Paine's personal attitudes and emotions, especially anger, in his work. Another text which serves as a starting point for this chapter is John Keane's *Tom Paine: A Political Life* (1995), which offers an account of Paine's personal and public conflicts and how he made both 'friends and enemies'.<sup>66</sup> This chapter will explore public quarrelling within Paine's three works mentioned above in order to interpret the expression of anger by a revolutionary author like Paine, which he mediated through politeness or through an instructive tone in his radical teaching. In his representation of the split between the monarchy and society, Paine developed a distinctive manner of quarrelling which could be characterised as a rational style that also drew on literary devices such as irony and satire.

The third chapter starts with a presentation of a unique perspective on war as it discusses Cobbett's personal experience as a soldier in his early pamphlet *The Soldier's Friend; or, Considerations on the Late Pretended Argument of the*

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<sup>64</sup> Edward Larkin, *Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 50.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.151.

<sup>66</sup> John Keane, ed. *Tom Paine: A Political Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 1995; repr.1996), p. 123.



*Subsistence of the Private Soldier* in 1792. Cobbett's pamphlet was one of the critical works of the 1790s that aimed to stand against 'the brutality of military flogging'<sup>67</sup> and to improve the situation of low-rank soldiers in the army. Through a mix of implicit facts and hidden frustration, Cobbett presented a direct comparison between the soldiers' salaries and those of their officers, yet his emotional attitude towards the two parties remains detectable in his writing. After returning from the army which was responsible for peacekeeping at the borders between Canada and America after American independence, Cobbett decided to produce his political pamphlet in order to tell the British public about the illegitimate acts of some officers in the army. Cobbett's work was published anonymously because he expected he might be liable to prosecution under military law if he revealed his authorship. Unlike Burgoyne, Cobbett seemingly had little to lose because he was an ordinary soldier who had the chance to be raised from a clerk, and then gained the rank of corporal, and soon after became sergeant major.<sup>68</sup> These positions gave Cobbett the opportunity to understand military institutions, but not the ability to change them. Cobbett was determined to leave the army after noticing the army officers with whom he worked were deceiving the public about the average annual fees paid to the regular army of the country. Cobbett addressed his pamphlet mainly to the public seeking their support, but at the same time he wished that both the government and the parliament would cooperate to stop those existing cases of corruption in the military institution. Cobbett revealed his concerns as an ordinary soldier, and argued from an officer's point of view who disapproved of his fellow officers' wrongful acts. Later, however, during his stay in America, Cobbett stood up for his country and defended all governmental policies enacted after the American War of Independence, which made him an opponent of Paine's political views in the late of 1790s. Cobbett and Paine had different positions on the revolution in France, too. However, Cobbett and Paine also shared similar experiences; for example, they both suffered imprisonment, and also witnessed and denounced the terrifying scenes of hangings of the prisoners at the Newgate prison, where Cobbett was held, and in Luxembourg prison in France where Paine was imprisoned. The two authors

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<sup>67</sup> E. E. Steiner, 'Separating the Soldier from the Citizen: Ideology and Criticism of Corporal Punishment in the British Armies, 1790-1815', *Social History*, 8.1 (1983), 19-35 (p. 23), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy4.lib.le.ac.uk/stable/4285217>> [accessed 15 May 2013].

<sup>68</sup> Ian Dyck, 'Cobbett, William (1763-1835)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5734?docPos=1>> [Accessed 10 September 2014].

managed to write while they were in prison, and similar experiences between Paine and Cobbett accounted for some similarities in their political arguments in relation to the sufferings of the ordinary people. Thus the chapter presents an interesting point of comparison with the previous chapter, and focuses on examples of Cobbett's manner of writing after his return to England in 1802. Cobbett's writing changed its direction through his *Weekly Political Register*, a newspaper he founded himself, and which became an anti-government publication.

The chapter will also introduce Cobbett's *Peter Porcupine* 1794-1799, which he wrote during his time in America as a means to support his country's politics. *Peter Porcupine* will not be the focus of the argument, but presenting it will help explain Cobbett's political position after his return to England when he started his *Political Register* 1802-1835. The focus will be on Cobbett's personal commitment to the working class and his public anger which was voiced in different forms from his *Weekly Political Register*. The analysis will examine Cobbett's striving for political change and for 'Reform'<sup>69</sup> which aimed to improve the well-being of the middle classes of England<sup>70</sup> in the government. The chapter will explore the radical political arguments in Cobbett's writings, such as his attacks on the 'aristocratical faction'<sup>71</sup> in society, through which he revealed how they dealt with traders and merchants. Cobbett's other arguments were related to the situation in his country, especially after the war with France, when people suffered 'food shortages and social disturbances',<sup>72</sup> in addition to the high taxes imposed on them.<sup>73</sup> In his *Weekly Political Register* in 1819, Cobbett addressed the issue of the financial system that made people suffer. He attacked the politicians in England and demonstrated that people were 'banished to foreign lands'<sup>74</sup> in despair because of poverty. An important secondary source which this chapter will draw on is Leonora Nattrass's *William Cobbett: The Politics of Style*,<sup>75</sup> in which she argues that the ideological

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<sup>69</sup> William Cobbett, 'To the Middle Classes of England'. *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 13 November 1819, pp. 353-75 (p. 353).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 358.

<sup>71</sup> William Cobbett, 'To Major Cartwright: Letter V', *Cobbett's Political Register*, 5 January 1818, pp. 257-88 (p. 258).

<sup>72</sup> Ian Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, Politics and the People, 1790-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). p.64.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>74</sup> Cobbett, 'To the Middle Classes of England', p. 354.

<sup>75</sup> Leonora Nattrass, *William Cobbett: The Politics of Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

paradoxes and problems of Cobbett's lifetime are reflected in his style. Similar to the other chapters, this chapter will argue that some of Cobbett's personal experiences of outrage had an impact on the issues that he was engaged with through his political struggle. It will analyse the development of Cobbett's public persona in the various types of quarrels he conducted in his newspaper that played a central role in society, especially when it came to defending the working classes.

The fourth chapter in this thesis will show Shelley's engagement with this political situation through his writing. In particular, it examines Shelley's poetic quarrels in response to the Peterloo Massacre in St Peter's Fields in Manchester in 1819, particularly within his poem *The Mask of Anarchy*, his letter to *The Examiner* in 1819, and his sonnet *England in 1819*. In these works Shelley attacked the government and its oppression of the working class, and argued for political change. Shelley opposed the king's ruling system and those close to him who crushed the rights of the working class people. Shelley employed a critical voice against the ruling system in order to encourage people to resist the tyranny of the king's government. His position as a poet allowed him to talk to the public in a direct manner as he made use of the familiar form of the popular ballad in his poem *The Mask of Anarchy*. Also in response to the same political situation, Shelley used other forms such as the letter to the editor of *the Examiner* and his sonnet, *England in 1819*, which I will discuss in detail in the fourth chapter.

Additionally, this chapter will touch on the indirect dialogue that Shelley had with other radical authors including Paine and Cobbett, whose works also may have served as a model for Shelley's own personal quarrels and public disputes in support of the common man. The most obvious similarity in the attacks of these authors is that they openly defame their enemies in order to encourage both the radical intellectuals and the working class people to stand up to their oppressors. Shelley's works also create the opportunity to investigate how other radical thinkers responded to the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester. One such radical author is Thomas Wooler who 'played a key role in creating the climactic event of 1819, the mass meeting at St. Peter's Field, Manchester which became immortalised as 'the Peterloo'.<sup>76</sup> Wooler

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<sup>76</sup> Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature*, p. 94.

called the government ‘bloodthirsty’,<sup>77</sup> and spread the news of Peterloo in his newspaper *Black Dwarf* (1817-1824). The chapter will explain the reaction in *The Examiner* by showing the opinion of its editor Hunt in 1832, while also referring to Shelley’s other correspondences with his friends. This chapter will engage with works by modern critics who have offered various approaches to Shelley’s anger: an essential aspect of Shelley’s quarrelling style. In his article ‘Celestial Temper: Shelley and the Masks of Anger’, Andrew M. Stauffer treats Shelley’s anger as ‘an important tool (or weapon), a needful torch for burning in order that the work of building utopia might begin’.<sup>78</sup> Stauffer elaborates on the significance of extreme emotion in Shelley’s poetry by arguing that Shelley was:

confronted with an imagination capable of containing poetic creativity and vengeful rage within the same persona. Shelley implicitly wonders about the place of anger in his own mind and work: what does it mean for a poet to put aside his lyre and pick up a knife or a scourge?<sup>79</sup>

This question of how Shelley uses his poetic creativity to express ‘vengeful rage’ will be a central question in this chapter. Stephen C. Behrendt, cited in Paley, has found an ‘ambivalence of voice [that] is potentially dangerous, for the poem implicitly condoned a variety of the violence it explicitly condemns’.<sup>80</sup> Behrendt’s view on the poem echoes Hunt’s fear that Shelley’s message might be misunderstood by the public and lead to unexpected results. My thesis suggests the suffering and poverty at the Peterloo event provoked a strong emotional reaction from Shelley and in order for him to protect the public from a revolution of blood and unrest he aimed to moderate public anger through poetry. Stauffer and Behrendt share the idea of poetic fluctuation between hiding and revealing the confrontational voice which may bring harm to the public in Shelley’s particular work, *The Mask of Anarchy*. However, this chapter will show that Shelley adopted a quarrelsome manner in order to bring about a positive social effect by expressing his outrage partially through his poem and making room for a degree of public anger but trying to keep it within certain limits.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>78</sup> Andrew M. Stauffer, ‘“Celestial Temper”: Shelley and the Masks of Anger’, *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 49 (2000), 138-61 (pp. 140-41), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy4.lib.le.ac.uk/stable/3021305>> [accessed 26 June 2012].

<sup>79</sup> Andrew M. Stauffer, *Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism*, p. 112.

<sup>80</sup> Morton D. Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium in English Romantic Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), p. 245.

Collectively, these chapters seek to provide a better sense of how quarrels were conducted through textual mediums within the public sphere during the Romantic period. The analysis will show how self-presentation in arguments changed according to the authors' various circumstances and purposes, sometimes under conditions of personal threat and with the need for self-justification (as with Burgoyne), or sometimes with the purpose of mediating and transforming public conflict (as with Shelley). The study will reveal the tension between the expression of personal feelings and social matters in public quarrels, especially anger, and the different methods of checking these feelings, such as the use of politeness as a discursive strategy within the polemical writing of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the thesis seeks to identify a significant but often overlooked feature of radical Romantic authors' engagement with the world around them: that is, their desire not simply to articulate radical views or to offer poetic sentiments, but to instigate quarrels in their work, through which they sought to bring about a response in their readers as well as their enemies, and ultimately sought to change the world around them through their writing.

## Chapter 1:

### Burgoyne's Quarrels with Military and Political Circumstances

This chapter explores General John Burgoyne's methods of quarrelling within his political writings to his opponents, including those in parliament and in the British War Office, after his surrender at Saratoga in 1777. The charges raised against Burgoyne after he lost his campaign were reflected in his attitude towards his political opponents and required of him to control and adjust his political tone in his responses to his enemies and through his writings to other political peers and general public from whom he sought support. The analysis will focus on a selection of pamphlets by Burgoyne: firstly, *The Substance of General Burgoyne's Speeches, on Mr. Vyner's Motion on the 26<sup>th</sup> May; and Mr. Hartley's Motion on the 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1778. With an Appendix, containing General Washington's Letter to General Burgoyne* (1778); secondly, *A Letter from Lieut. Gen. Burgoyne To His Constituents Upon His Late Resignation With The Correspondences Between The Secretaries Of War And Him, Relative To His Return To America* (1779); and thirdly, *A State of the Expedition from Canada, as Laid Before the House of Commons, by Lieutenant-General Burgoyne, and Verified By Evidence; With a Collection of Authentic Documents and an Addition of Many Circumstances which were Prevented from Appearing Before the House by the Prorogation of Parliament* (1780). These three works by Burgoyne were addressed to different audiences. The first work, which appeared in 1778, was addressed to the members of parliament, while his letter to his constituents in 1779 aimed to address the general public, and his last address in 1780 was directed at Major General Phillips and other officers who served under Burgoyne's command. In the chapter, I will discuss Burgoyne's last pamphlet after showing some examples of attacks against him. In this way I aim to re-create the written quarrels which Burgoyne was involved in, and I consider his pamphlet as a response to the criticism he received. In presenting these three examples of Burgoyne's addressees, I will reveal his distinctive quarrelling discourse through which, despite expressing his strong feelings, he nevertheless preserved a manner of arguing which observed the formal rules of politeness by his social position. It was his position as a member in the parliament which enabled him to address higher ranks of his country, but that did not prevent him from facing the political charges

and difficulties caused by his opponents. For example, his political opponents prevented him from pursuing his request in order to meet the King personally and clear his name. Such negative and unexpected reactions from Burgoyne's political peers suggested a cause of inevitable anger for Burgoyne.

Through these three different works, Burgoyne managed to address various sectors of the British public who needed an explanation for the defeat of the British army in America. In these works, Burgoyne most prominently argued against the charges of handing the British troops to their enemy in America after signing the convention which he believed would protect the troops. Consequently, this chapter will show that Burgoyne's political debates were strongly motivated by personal defence, and that many of his personal criticisms of his country's political mismanagement in America in 1777 were provoked by his defeat and the accusations against him. Burgoyne fought against the government's War Office because they considered the defeat at Saratoga his own personal responsibility. This chapter will therefore explore the various self-defensive rhetorical strategies that he employed. These included the adoption of a radical position, the construction of a polemical persona who argued against his opponents, yet also, at times, the use of a friendly tone towards the public in order to win their support, and elsewhere, diplomatic and polite language in order to convince his opponents and make them reinvestigate and reconsider his loyal military services to his country. Thus, through close attention to Burgoyne's pamphlets, and by considering some of the responses that they incited, the chapter will demonstrate the variety of rhetorical forms and styles that Burgoyne employed as a means to quarrel with those who attacked and condemned him, and will consider to what purposes, and with what effects, his writing incited conflict.

General John Burgoyne (1724-1792) was an army officer, politician, and playwright who rose to some public prominence for both his writing, and his political misfortunes.<sup>1</sup> Burgoyne played a significant role in the military expedition of 1776-1777, which aimed to bring the American colonists under the British crown. He was charged with the task of protecting the north from reinvasion by the rebels.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Max M. Mintz, 'Burgoyne, John (1723-1792)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4013>> [accessed 10 September 2013]

<sup>2</sup> William Digby, *The British Invasion from the North: The Campaigns of Generals Carleton and Burgoyne from Canada, 1776-1777, with the Journal of Lieut. William Digby of the 53D, or Shropshire Regiment of Foot*, Illustrated with Historical Notes by James Phinney Bax, Munsell's

However, his military campaign did not go well and on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1777 at Saratoga (an area in the east of the New York State), Burgoyne surrendered over 5,000 members of the English troops, and signed a convention which gave the British soldiers as well as the hired European troops ‘the right to return to Europe or exchange with Patriots of equal rank, thus allowing them to fight once more.’<sup>3</sup> On his return to England, Burgoyne’s esteem with the British public changed rapidly. Before the war Burgoyne had written a successful comic play of two acts, *The Maid of the Oaks* (1774), performed at the Theatre Royal and in Drury-Lane from 1775 and revived until 1793, when it was expanded into five acts. Besides his literary fame, Burgoyne commanded respect and recognition not only from his fellow countrymen who supported his early involvement in the war, but also from his political opponents at home.

Following his defeat at Saratoga, however, Burgoyne came under attack by many political figures who expressed their condemnation of Burgoyne through their writing. We see this, for example, in Sir John Dalrymple’s *A Reply to Lieutenant General Burgoyne’s Letter to His Constituents* (1779), the anonymous response from An Englishman: *A Letter to Lieut. Gen. Burgoyne, on His Letter to his Constituents* (1779), and an anonymous reply, entitled *A Brief Examination of the Plan and Conduct of the Northern Expedition in America, in 1777: and of the Surrender of the Army under the Commander of Lieutenant-General Burgoyne* (1779). The latter pamphlet provided detailed information on what exactly had happened in the northern expedition that led the British army to the defeat at Saratoga. The attacks criticised Burgoyne’s conduct, surrender, and lastly his signing of a convention with the enemy without informing the ministry at home. The attacks on Burgoyne continued even after 1779, for example in the anonymous pamphlet *Essay on Modern Martyrs: with A Letter to General Burgoyne* in 1780, which examined Burgoyne’s argument with the government. Another aggressive attack appeared in *The Detail and Conduct of the American War, under Generals Gage, Howe, Burgoyne, and Vice Admiral Lord Howe: with a Very Full and Correct State of the Whole of Evidence, as Given before a Committee of the House of Commons: and the*

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Historical Series, XVI (Albany, N. Y.: Joel Munsell’s Son, 1887), pp. 1-292 (p. vii)  
 <<https://archive.org/details/britishinvasionf00digb>> [accessed 22 May 2012].

<sup>3</sup> Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789*, rev. edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 87.



*Celebrated Fugitive Pieces, Which Are Said to Have Given Rise to That Important Enquiry. With the Whole Exhibiting a Circumstantial, Connected and Complete History of the Real Causes, Rise, Progress and Present State of the American Rebellion* in 1780. The author of this pamphlet, who was also unknown, was obviously against Burgoyne's refusal to join the 'captive army'.<sup>4</sup>

The difficult political position in which Burgoyne found himself forced him to draw on his literary skills in order to defend himself. He also made use of his personal connections to the political elite. As such, Burgoyne was able to respond to the accusations against him through the speeches and enquiries delivered to parliament around the issue of his return to the country and leaving the British army prisoners in America. Burgoyne did not avoid direct arguments with his opponents, but he aimed to vindicate himself through squabbling with his accusers by delivering direct speeches to them during their presence in the parliament. At the same time, he acted carefully under the rules of his profession and political position when he addressed his prosecutors. Also, Burgoyne adjusted his tone depending on his addressees. He demonstrated his anger against those who held him responsible for correcting the mistakes of his prosecutors in his work, *The Substance of General Burgoyne's Speeches* (1778), but he used a more polite language when he spoke to his constituents in his second pamphlet. The following section of this chapter will therefore focus on Burgoyne's speeches in the parliament which were demanded by his position. It will explore Burgoyne's defence of his own honour in his quarrels with his opponents.

### **Burgoyne's Style of Defence and Combat in *The Substance of General Burgoyne's Speeches***

It seemed obvious that Burgoyne's being in the country was one of the most problematic issues the ministry had to deal with; therefore, the War Office sent further orders to him advising him to join the troops in America. Burgoyne was

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<sup>4</sup> *The Detail and Conduct of the American War, under Generals Gage, Howe, Burgoyne, and Vice Admiral Lord Howe: with a Very Full and Correct State of the whole of Evidence, as Given before a Committee of the House of Commons: and the Celebrated Fugitive Pieces, which are said to have given Rise to that Important Enquiry. With the whole Exhibiting a Circumstantial, Connected and Complete History of the Real Causes, Rise, Progress and Present State of the American Rebellion* (London: 1780), p. 175, in ECCO [accessed 18 June 2012].

released on parole to return to England in order to answer the charges against his conduct. He arrived on 13 May 1778. His requests to meet the king and have a court martial were refused.<sup>5</sup> On 5 June he was ordered to go back to Boston in America,<sup>6</sup> as soon as his health would allow him to leave Bath Waters.<sup>7</sup> Yet, Burgoyne stayed in the country and continued exchanging correspondence with the War Office in relation to their official request for him to return to America.

The months following Burgoyne's return to England were full of controversies. For example, Burgoyne attempted to deliver speeches to parliament in 1778 in order to defend himself. The *News: Public Adviser* on May 27, 1778, suggested that Burgoyne admitted his guilt through the Echo of the public Voice, which says, the Saratoga Surrender of a whole British Army was ignominious and disgraceful to the Voice of England, and to all Europe,<sup>8</sup> and suggested that through his openness with the public, Burgoyne aimed to get a fair trial. Such an attack through political newspapers was an example of the political criticism launched by the print industry which served the government, and other class circles. Contemporary critics like Cronin, Stewart, and Schoenfield also discuss this kind of press attack in their works. It seems that the political attacks were also taking place through the manipulative voices of critics against the authors in the period who expressed radical opinions in their literary works. In Burgoyne's case, he remained engaged in combat with his opponents through the publication of further works that sought to provide clear evidence for his innocence. For example, Burgoyne aimed for his publications to prove his sincerity towards his country by showing details of his actions and responsible behaviour towards his soldiers. He defended the captured army in his speech to the parliament and expressed his respectful opinion on their bravery, and he implicitly referred to the action of surrendering them as a sincere

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<sup>5</sup> Mintz, n. p.

<sup>6</sup> John Burgoyne, *A State of the Expedition from Canada as laid before the House of Commons by Lieutenant-General Burgoyne, and Verified by Evidence; with a Collection of Authentic Documents, and an Additional of many circumstances which were prevented from Appearing before the House by the Propagation of Parliament. Writing and Collected by himself, and Dedicated to the Officer of the Army he Commanded* (London: 1780), p.134, in ECCO [accessed 15 August 2011].

<sup>7</sup> John Burgoyne, *A Letter From Lieut. Gen. Burgoyne to his Constituents, Upon His Late Resignation; With the Correspondences Between The Secretaries of War and Him, Relative To His Return To America* (London: 1779), p. 21, in ECCO [accessed 19 February 2011].

<sup>8</sup> 'News', *Public Advertiser*, 27 May 1778, in *British Newspapers 1600-1950* <<http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?&enlarge=&source=gale&prodId=BNWS&userGroupName=nottstrent&tabID=T012&docPage=article&docId=Z2001164377&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>> [accessed 26 September 2014].

support in order to protect them.<sup>9</sup> As a result of the political pressure placed upon him, Burgoyne constructed his argument against his opponents in epistolary form, which he published as a public means to defend his honour. Thus epistolary correspondence became a mode of quarrelling with his opponents.

For example, Burgoyne's early pamphlet *The Substance of General Burgoyne's Speeches*, which was published in 1778 and addressed to political audiences in the parliament, included a letter which General Washington sent to him on 11 March 1778, after his imprisonment with his troops in America. Burgoyne had sought 'his support to an application'<sup>10</sup> from Washington in order to return to England for health reasons and to argue his case after the Saratoga defeat. Burgoyne was clearly therefore trying to draw new allies into his quarrel with the government. The second publication of Burgoyne: *Letter from General Burgoyne to his Constituents* (1779) was addressed to the public elite which included the clergy and other voters of the town of Preston in 1779. The third work of Burgoyne: *State of the Expedition* (1780), meanwhile, was aimed at the army group which served under his command, together with General Phillips and other officers during the campaign. Throughout these three publications, Burgoyne aimed to find an effective way of examining his military campaign and justifying his political status. These publications also, however, generated argumentative responses.

In all his pamphlets Burgoyne aimed to convince the public that his being amongst them was only to defend the troops who suffered under the convention. Guiding his audience, Burgoyne clarified how the process of attacking him would help his enemies to 'establish new, dangerous, unmilitary and unconditional powers for themselves'.<sup>11</sup> Burgoyne wanted his speeches in parliament to assume a public dimension, because as he stated in *Substance of Burgoyne's Speeches* he had prepared papers 'of the utmost importance to the state, to parliament, and to the public.'<sup>12</sup> His opponents in the government aimed to find faults in his campaign. They, for example, accused him of ordering his troops to burn the country while they

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<sup>9</sup> John Burgoyne, *The Substance of General Burgoyne's Speeches, on Mr. Vyner's Motion on the 26<sup>th</sup> May; and Mr. Hartley's Motion on the 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1778. With an Appendix, Containing General Washington's Letter to General Burgoyne* (London: 1778), p. 32, in ECCO [accessed 28 April 2011].

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to his Constituents*, p. 29.

<sup>12</sup> Burgoyne, *Substance of General Burgoyne's Speeches*, p. 3.

were approaching Saratoga.<sup>13</sup> His response to that claim was straightforward and he stated that it was a false accusation, though he did not deny a fire accident which happened at Saratoga district, which was controlled by an American Major. Thus Burgoyne used his publications as a means to dispute the evidence presented against him. Moreover, Burgoyne acted with great confidence by insisting on an open enquiry to examine all the papers which were provided to the parliament in relation to the campaign. Following the reasons for return, Burgoyne began to show the importance of his being back was related not so much to his personal issues as with ‘the honour of the nation.’<sup>14</sup> He told the parliament: ‘The troops have undergone hardships and trials of patience as severe, through of a different nature, as any they experienced in the conflicts of the campaign.’<sup>15</sup> However, the *Public Adviser* disputed this view and provided their own doubtful opinion on Burgoyne whose

coming home, was upon his proposal, he never was considered by the convention of Saratoga was a prisoner, but his proposal to come home, was to return, if required by the congress, provided the terms of convention should be protracted beyond the probable time. He came to do justice to himself, and his follow Soldiers, Sufferers under a Convention signed by his Hand.<sup>16</sup>

This appeared during the time when Burgoyne was giving his answers to the parliament’s questions around the surrender of the army in May 26<sup>th</sup> 1778.

Burgoyne, however, displayed immense politeness in his response to this accusation in his *Letter to his Constituents and State of Expedition*, in which he told his audience that his duty was for ‘the state, to the army, and to[him]self’.<sup>17</sup> By stating his commitments in that order, Burgoyne announced with a serious tone the love and respect he owed towards his country and its soldiers, which he placed above the esteem which he held for himself.

In *The Substance of General Burgoyne’s Speeches*, Burgoyne represented his gratitude to his audience because he aimed to keep a friendly voice to help them realise his honesty:

But, Sir, accustomed as I have been to be indulged by the house upon every occasion; and confident, as I ought to be, upon one where their

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> ‘News’, *Public Advertiser*, 27 May 1778.

<sup>17</sup> Burgoyne, *Substance of General Burgoyne’s Speeches*, p. 12.

indulgence is justice, I find cause in my own mind, in entering upon so complicated a subject, to implore anew, the fullest scope to their patience and candour, for a man, whose faculties, far too weak for such shocks, are almost unhinged by a succession of difficulties abroad, [...].<sup>18</sup>

Burgoyne seemed to consider the use of a polite tone as a way of convincing his addressees. He asked them indirectly to justify him, as their ‘justice’ had indulged him before. His polite tone was constructed by his mentioning of positive qualities, such as ‘candour’ and ‘patience’, aiming to both praise his addressees, and to encourage them to demonstrate these qualities in hearing his case. At the same time, he presented himself as ‘weak’ and vulnerable, thus implicitly recognising his addressees position of greater power, and thus seeking their protection, even though they were his peers in parliament. This treatment of his audience, which included his opponents, was an example of how Burgoyne moderated his anger at being accused, and sought a positive response from them. This position is in contrast with his more open expression of anger against those he considered his opponents in his later writings.

Later in the pamphlet, when addressing his audience, Burgoyne expressly distinguished between two groups: the ministers and his fellow soldiers. As he suspected that the ministers were among his main accusers, he asked them to put themselves in the same position as himself in a tone which was both challenging and emotional:

I would ask the ministers themselves, what would be their feelings, if, after an unsuccessful undertaking of high trust and importance, and debarred, by an interdiction, from the presence of their Sovereign, [...] what would be their feelings if refused also an appeal to their country?<sup>19</sup>

By using the word ‘feeling’, the speaker’s persona directs the audience’s attention to the emotional side of his plight and asks for their sympathy. When Burgoyne addressed the second group of his audience, his fellow officers, there is a distinct change to a more intimate tone, as he calls them ‘my brother-officers.’<sup>20</sup> Burgoyne invokes both their understanding of his situation, and their professional knowledge

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

in order to gain support for his case. The difference in Burgoyne's addressees to his listeners indicated a subtlety in his approach to different audiences.

This difference deepened when he described the reasons behind his return to England, as he repeated the word 'ministers' saying: 'I mean not to particularize ministers, or ministers of ministers— but among those men [...]'.<sup>21</sup> Here, Burgoyne uses anadiplosis in order to emphasise the word 'ministers' and in doing so, he expresses a sense of anxiety and frustration at their general behaviour and bureaucracy. Elsewhere, he displays a use of irony in his comment about the letter sent to him by George Washington after he 'asked [General Washington] for his support to an application that could interfere with the public duties,'<sup>22</sup> in relation to Burgoyne himself and his army's situation. He stated that 'I think this letter, though from an enemy, does honour to the human heart.'<sup>23</sup> With that challenging remark, Burgoyne sought to satirise his own government which did not provide him and his men with any tender support.

In contrast with these scathing rhetorical strategies, though, Burgoyne also employed a gentler tone through which he sought to construct his own character as a respectable man who sought to protect his soldiers, and he frequently referred to the idea of a 'supreme honour'<sup>24</sup> in his arguments. One of the recurring themes in many places of his argument was his survival after the captivity in America 'with an enriched personality'.<sup>25</sup> That aspect of Burgoyne had appeared even in the letter which his enemy provided as evidence of permission for his return to his country. He aimed to explain the inadequacy of the criticism against him through his account of the campaign which he submitted to the public and to the parliament after his return from America.<sup>26</sup> Representing such an unexpected letter from his enemy which 'sympathize[d] with [his] feelings, as a soldier, the unavoidable difficulties of whose situation forbid his success [...]'<sup>27</sup> indicated how Burgoyne sought to embarrass those opponents in his country who failed to support him by placing himself on the

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 4-5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>24</sup> Robert W. Jones, *Literature, Gender and Politics in Britain during the War for America 1770-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 103.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>26</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to his Constituents*, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Burgoyne, *Substance of General Burgoyne's Speeches*, p. 44.

moral high-ground. He also insisted repeatedly on his innocence.<sup>28</sup> Eventually, though, his mode of address to the public became less measured and he could not hide his irritated and angry voice. For example, he stated that his opponents ‘cannot deprive [him] of a qualification to sit here; they cannot strip [him] [...] of the confidence of his constituents to seat him [...], ( nor they can strip him from doing his duty)’.<sup>29</sup> The criticisms that Burgoyne believed were essentially meant to devalue his political participation encouraged him to use his rhetorical skills in order to assert his own ability to continue in the parliament and defend himself. His keenness to defend himself against the wishes of his opponents assumed an increasingly aggressive tone, which we see in his use of repetitive denials such as ‘cannot deprive [...], they cannot strip’.<sup>30</sup>

### **Burgoyne’s Defence of His Honour in His Letter to His Constituents**

Robert W. Jones argues that ‘Burgoyne relied upon the patrician ideal of honour and, in a more daring move, the language of sensibility’.<sup>31</sup> Jones seems to highlight two major characteristics of Burgoyne’s manner of quarrelling: his pursuit of defending his honour as an aristocratic person who ‘had [him]self prepared a motion for an address to the king’,<sup>32</sup> and his use of the language of intimacy with which he addressed his readers. On the level of the language of sensibility, we see this in the instance when Burgoyne stated that ‘[his] resignation in particular was made upon the impulse of honour as it struck [his] own breast’.<sup>33</sup> We also see his polite manner in action when he addressed his constituents in an intimate language through which he aimed to win their support. By using polite language, he challenged his opponents and drew the public attention towards him as a respectable political figure.

Dissatisfied with the lack of progress with the parliament, Burgoyne sought to defend his honour by seeking the support of the wider public. He published the private letters that were sent to him from the War Office in his pamphlet: *A Letter from Lieut. Gen. Burgoyne to his Constituents* as a tactic to strengthen his position

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 42.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>31</sup> Jones, p. 85.

<sup>32</sup> Burgoyne, *The Substance of General Burgoyne’s Speeches*, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to his Constituents*, p.18.

against his opponents and thus aim to defend his political honour. He aimed to reveal to ordinary people the full details of official communications in relation to this issue and to provide evidence of his own experience of the 'hostility'<sup>34</sup> of the government. Based on his refusal to obey the order and return to America, Burgoyne was 'accused of shrinking from the common captivity',<sup>35</sup> as he put it in his *A State of the Expedition from Canada*.

With his pamphlet *A Letter from Lieut. Gen. Burgoyne to his Constituents*, containing the correspondences of the War Office between 1778-79, Burgoyne intended to proclaim his urgent need to have a legitimate tribunal after he was told that he should undergo a parliamentary inquiry in order to explain his conduct in America. Burgoyne's letter to his constituents had six editions in 1779. This distribution of the pamphlet to such a large public shows how widely it was read across Britain. Thus we see the importance of publication as a means for Burgoyne to sustain his quarrel with the War Office, and to build public support. He also sought to appeal to other audiences through the publication of particular letters. With his letter to his constituents, Burgoyne included two of his correspondences with Lord Barrington and Mr Charles Jenkinson. Those letters demonstrated how the military and political situation was tightening around Burgoyne and how his loyalty towards his country was challenged. The letters implied that Burgoyne was accused of great personal responsibility for the political hostilities between Britain and America.

Burgoyne's publication of the letters from the War Office could be seen as a rebellious action. Burgoyne's refusal to attend his duty in America was also against the decision of the War Office in England. As a consequence of those actions, Burgoyne had to face various allegations, including those outlined in Lord Barrington's letter to him, which he published in his pamphlet. Lord Barrington was a war officer who sent Burgoyne a letter recommending him a quick return to America. The letter was brief but precise, as it referred to Burgoyne's earlier letter to Howe in which he told Howe about his short stay at Bath to improve his health. By passing such a note to Burgoyne, Lord Barrington aimed to show how carefully the

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>35</sup> Burgoyne, *A State of the Expedition from Canada*, p. 1.



War Office had examined circumstances of his being in England, though Barrington in fact dated the letter incorrectly: perhaps evidence of the lack of fastidiousness that Burgoyne felt was being applied to his case. Burgoyne offered a prompt reply on June 22, 1778 stating in a clear voice that ‘the purposes intimated for my present attendance in America, would, I fear, be very different from services’.<sup>36</sup>

Lord Barrington’s letter may have been something of a surprise for Burgoyne, because Burgoyne had already informed the ministry of the reasons behind his return. For example, Burgoyne told Lord George Germain, the Secretary of State, in a letter from Albany dated 20 October 1777 about what happened to the troops, and how he was deprived of help.<sup>37</sup> Yet, adopting a more serious tone towards the behaviour of the ministry, Burgoyne insisted in the letter that the king should know that there was ‘special reason upon which [he] chiefly rest at present’,<sup>38</sup> and that ‘was a vindication of [his] honour’.<sup>39</sup> The question of honour was extremely important to Burgoyne; as Jones suggests, there was a strong ‘connection between injury and honour’,<sup>40</sup> and while Burgoyne’s letter to Lord Barrington was concerned partly about the kind of treatment he would receive after his return to the country, it also showed Burgoyne’s own personal worries about his own character and future in his country if he was misunderstood, because of the misrepresentations of the duties he provided to the country.

Another example of Burgoyne’s strategy of revealing private letters was his letter from Charles Jenkinson (1729–1808), later Earl of Liverpool, who was Secretary of War in the North administration. In his letter dated 24 September 1779, Jenkinson presented to Burgoyne the reasons of his accusation after his return to England:

I AM commanded by the King to acquaint you, that your not returning to America, and joining the troops, prisoners under the convention of Saratoga, is considered as a neglect of duty, and

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<sup>36</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to his Constituents*, p. 23.

<sup>37</sup> Burgoyne, *State of the Expedition*, p. iii.

<sup>38</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to his Constituents*, p. 24.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>40</sup> Jones, p. 92.

disobedience of orders, transmitted to you by the Secretary at War, in his letter of 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1778.<sup>41</sup>

The condemnation of Burgoyne's presence in England put further strain on him as he had to explain to the parliament, the King, and the public why he had returned while his troops were still held prisoners in America. The publication of such important correspondences could show that Burgoyne was using them as a means of putting pressure on the King, the ministry, and the government. Burgoyne aimed to clarify to the King and his ministry through his *Letter to his Constituents* his own replies and to show the reasons why he refused to obey the ministry's orders to return to America and 'joining the troops'.<sup>42</sup> In his reply to Mr Jenkinson's letter on 9 October 1779 Burgoyne insisted that his military rank would allow him to be judged by a court-martial which would enable him to prove his innocence.<sup>43</sup> Even so, the reply from the War Office was a confusing one as they accepted Burgoyne's resignation of his command<sup>44</sup> but refused a court-martial due to his disobedience of his military employments.<sup>45</sup> This polemical situation was caused by the unexpected turn of events as Britain's position in the war deteriorated after the Saratoga defeat. Authors from both Houses wrote pamphlets in order to explain the reason for the loss of America, as the 'failure has been owing to the ignorance of Ministry, or the incapacity of Generals'.<sup>46</sup> Tensions rose inside Parliament, especially against the performance of General Burgoyne in the battlefield.

Such publications indicate the way in which the political establishment sought to win the support of the British citizens by making them condemn Burgoyne as the leader of the campaign which ended in defeat. Burgoyne therefore sought to transform the quarrel between himself and his opponents into a public combat against the political system in Britain as his character was destroyed by their disregard of the difficulties he and his troops suffered from the whole expedition in America. In my analysis, I will show how his publications were used as evidence to make the public share his personal quarrel.

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<sup>41</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to his Constituents*, p. 26.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Galloway, *Considerations upon the American Enquiry* (London: 1779), pp. 12-13. Google ebook.

One particular source of conflict emerged over a decision that Burgoyne had made during the war, to sign what became known as the Saratoga Convention with the American Commander, Major General Horatio Gates. The Convention had seemed a beneficial act in Burgoyne's eyes, because it favoured his soldiers: they would not be considered war prisoners according to the agreement of withdrawing them to Europe and not returning to America. Yet, after his return home in 1779 he learnt from Mr Jenkinson that Congress had changed their demand.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the Congress 'refused to ratify terms for the capitulation of [his] army',<sup>48</sup> and the British government refused to 'regard [them] as representative of an independent nation'.<sup>49</sup> Late in 1783 the requirements of exchanging the war prisoners succeeded,<sup>50</sup> as Britain had to accept the terms in order to bring its soldiers back home and accept its loss of its land in the Atlantic. Besides the military threat from France and Spain which Britain experienced after its loss of the American colonies after the defeat at Saratoga, the country also faced the impact of the military cost and the division of the political views in the parliaments.<sup>51</sup> Burgoyne must have realised the danger he was in as a man of war and a general, so he sought to position himself very carefully in the public's eyes through his correspondence with the War Office.

Mr Jenkinson's letter of 24 September 1779 had aimed to point out his disagreement with Burgoyne's decision not to return to America, and not to be with the rest of the captured British troops held under the obligations of Saratoga convention. This refusal of Burgoyne was 'considered as a neglect of duty and disobedience of orders'.<sup>52</sup> Burgoyne replied to Mr Jenkinson's letter on 9 October 1779. He considered the letter he received to be a sign of accusation against him, therefore, he wrote: 'Under this sense of my past situation, your letter stated to be written by the King's command, cannot but affect me most painfully.'<sup>53</sup> It seemed

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<sup>47</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to his Constituents*, p. 34.

<sup>48</sup> Harry M. Ward, Review of *Escape in America: The British Convention Prisoners, 1777-1783* by Richard Sampson (Chippenham: Picton Publishing, 1995) and *Yankee Sailors in British Gaols: Prisoners of War at Forton and Mill, 1777-1783* by Sheldon S. Cohen (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third series 53.3 (1996), 668-670 (p.165) in *JSTOR* <<http://jstor.org/stable/2947223>> [accessed 26 September 2012].

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 668.

<sup>50</sup> Turk McCleskey, Review of *Escape to America: The British Convention Prisoners 1777-1783* by Richard Sampson, *The Journal of Military History*, 60.1 (1996), 156-57(165), in *JSTOR* <<http://jstor.com/stable/2944456>> [accessed 26 September 2012].

<sup>51</sup> Jones, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to his Constituents*, p. 26.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

that the polemical situation made Burgoyne aware of the attitude required of him, and as a result he sought ‘to rework that honourable character in ways that made it coincident with pity as well as admiration’.<sup>54</sup> The way he was received, indicated to Burgoyne the precariousness of his situation as he was led to realize that the defeat was widely viewed as his own fault. He understood from the correspondences of the War Office that the ministry was ignoring the seriousness of his condition. His opponents thought that it was just an excuse for him to stay in England and they ironically suggested that ‘all the northern part of America is much healthier than England.’<sup>55</sup> Thus, he provided his pamphlet *The Substance of General Burgoyne’s Speeches* in 1779 with a copy of a letter written by General Washington in March 1778 as evidence to show his addressees that his war enemy was more understanding than them. Washington’s letter showed that he was aware of Burgoyne’s ‘ill health, the anxieties of captivity, and the painful sensibility for a reputation [...]’.<sup>56</sup> Again, in his other pamphlet, *A Letter from Lieut. Gen. Burgoyne to His Constituents*, Burgoyne included a letter sent to him on October 1779 by the Secretary of the War Office, Lord Barrington, who informed him that they knew from his letter to William Howe on 9 April 1778 that he would return to serve again when his health improved.<sup>57</sup> By providing these two correspondences, Burgoyne aimed to show his innocence by both presenting himself as a victim, and claiming the status of an honourable man. He said that his presence in England was to clear his name. He stated that he had returned to England in order

to vindicate my own honour, the honour of the British troops, and of those of his Majesty’s allies, under my late command, from the most base and barbarous aspersions, that ever forged against innocent men, by malignity supported by power.<sup>58</sup>

While Burgoyne did not wish to make his quarrel with the authorities seem overly personal, he was unable to disguise his anxiety and his eagerness ‘to vindicate [his] own honour’ reveals some of the personal concern that was invested in this battle. Yet, in order to hide that personal element, Burgoyne associated himself with all of the honest men and troops in his country. He sought to divert attention from the

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<sup>54</sup> Jones, p. 93.

<sup>55</sup> *The Detail and Conduct of the American War*, p. 175.

<sup>56</sup> Burgoyne, *Substance of General Burgoyne’s Speeches*, n. p.

<sup>57</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to his Constituents*, p. 21.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

outcome of his expedition to the way in which his conduct was being received in Britain. He believed that he had not received justified treatment so he aimed to ally himself with the 'innocent men' who were under his command. Using that connection between him and the troops he commanded, Burgoyne's demands for justice assumed a connection with the treatment of the soldiers. So Burgoyne seemed to be speaking on their behalf, too, when he replied angrily and delivered a firm message in his statement:

I am unable to conceive by what possible construction it can be considered as disobedience, that I have not fulfilled an optional condition; and I am ready, and desirous to meet the judgment of a proper tribunal upon that, as upon every other part of my conduct.<sup>59</sup>

In this quote Burgoyne's voice was straightforwardly claimed that there were no grounds for categorizing his actions as 'disobedience'. This implies his argumentative style against his accusers from the ministry, because he disagreed with their decision of not allowing him to be convicted by a 'proper tribunal', which the speaker considered as his right to know. Burgoyne objected to his ministry's disapproving manner of response and doubted their 'judgement' to be fair. Responding to such accusation, Burgoyne's firm, honourable voice was intended to show the ministry's injustice, because they did not allow him to have a proper tribunal in his country. Allowing all that to be seen by the general public, Burgoyne again gave the War Office a furious reply and stated that their request contained a grave, but unjustified message:

The punishment implied in the order referred to, you will observe, Sir, is unusual as well as cruel. Whether the ministers of the crown, can legally order a British subject into captivity either at home or abroad without trial; or whether they can compel an officer by virtue of his general military obedience, to deliver himself to the prison of the enemy, without any requisition on their part, is (to say nothing stronger of it) matter of serious doubt.<sup>60</sup>

Burgoyne aimed to draw the attention of his readers including his accusers towards the political quarrel he was facing. By speaking directly to his own opponents through his reply and presenting the argument to their peers in the parliament, Burgoyne felt encouraged to express his personal anger against their decision to send him back to America. Here, his voice became critical to the authority and he stated

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

aggressively his interpretation for the way they treated him. He considered his prosecutors' behaviour as 'unusual as well as cruel' 'punishment'. The explicit rhetorical style which the speaker expressed could have allowed his addressees to count him as their opponent, but at the same time the hostile use of words was imposed on him in order to defend his future position as an equal member in the parliament.

Burgoyne was deeply disappointed at those who criticised his staying in England. As a result he tried to target those who attacked him not by deluding them, but through explaining the fact that his return to America in itself would be absolute defeat, because it would not help captured troops. His objection to the idea of returning to America was because their order did not contain military service. Saying that enabled Burgoyne to show his knowledge of both the political and military situation which the ministry failed to deliver to the general public. He declared to Jenkinson 9 October 1779:

On pretence of military obedience, I am ordered to the only part of the world in which I can do no military service. An enemy's prison is not the King's garrison, nor is any thing to be done or suffered there, any part of an officer's duty; so far from it that implies a direct incapacity for any military function.<sup>61</sup>

Burgoyne wanted to make it clear how he and his army would be in a weak situation if he went back. He explained that he would end up in prison, and like his soldiers, he would lose his personal capability to give any military orders to fight for they had no arms. Thus he attempted to cast himself as an honourable leader, thinking of his men until the last.

Burgoyne wanted to make the War Office and the king aware of his case before any further official actions would be taken against him. He believed that other ministers planned to destroy his person and reputation. Burgoyne saw no justice from the authority, as they only raised against him 'dangerous, unmilitary and unconstitutional powers',<sup>62</sup> which his opponents established for themselves around the King. Burgoyne aimed to show his accusers that he knew that they planned to put the blame of the defeat only on him:

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

I am deprived of a court-martial upon my conduct in America, because I am not supposed to be amenable to the justice of the kingdom: and the King is told I have disobeyed his orders, in the very same breath that I am stated not to be accountable to him: by this doctrine it seems supposed, that I am not capable of receiving orders for the purposes of public justice or public service, but am perfectly subject to all such as have a tendency to my own destruction.<sup>63</sup>

Burgoyne's letters therefore became a public stage on which he could broadcast the ill-treatment he was receiving at the hands of the War Office. He also, in this letter, sought to bypass the War Office and appeal to the king himself, asking 'his Majesty and firmly demand of his councils, trial by a court-martial'.<sup>64</sup> He also wanted the king to accept his resignation 'of his appointment upon the American staff; of the queen's regiment of light dragoons; and of the government of Fort William, humbly desiring only to reserve [his] rank as a lieutenant-general in the army to render [him] the more clearly amenable to a court-martial hereafter, and to enable [him] to fulfil [his] personal faith'.<sup>65</sup> Here, we see Burgoyne's tone is not quarrelsome but rather, appealing to the king on the grounds of his 'humble' and 'faithful' nature as an honourable servant.

On 15 October 1779, the War Office sent Burgoyne a reply<sup>66</sup> in order to indicate that the King had looked at Burgoyne's request. The King decided that Burgoyne should not undergo a military tribunal and he should hand himself to the power of the Congress. In addition, the king did not encourage the idea that Burgoyne might have to stay under those circumstances to serve in the country with his military rank.<sup>67</sup> Then, strikingly, the letter ended with the most devastating news about his military service as the king accepted his resignation. It was clear from such a quick reaction from the king that Burgoyne's service was not appreciated and his character was severely condemned.

Although the king's response was remarkably aggressive, as his formal order of outraged tone had reinforced his ministry's accusations, Burgoyne's voice was more prepared to explain his personal disagreement. In relation to the King's order, Burgoyne became more determined to refuse the orders and not allow the General

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

Officers and the King to decide his military future or ruin his reputation. The sudden shock to Burgoyne's expectations provoked him to express the anger which he had controlled since his arrival. He wrote to Jenkinson: 'I must persist in denying, that I have received any other order, than an order subject to my own discretion.'<sup>68</sup> He then added: 'I must persist in my claim to a court-martial.'<sup>69</sup> By the end of his letter he stated: 'I apprehend that if I am not subject to a trial for breach of orders, it implies that I am not subject to the orders themselves.'<sup>70</sup> Burgoyne sought the attention of his audiences to notice his opponents' idea of depriving him of having a court-martial; at the same time he was accusing the king and his advisers of destroying his career. Burgoyne's persona aimed to show the irrationality of his opponents' expectations, by directly announcing his refusal to satisfy their demands. He felt that the request of his opponents was only intended as a malicious accusation which gave them the chance to humiliate him.<sup>71</sup> His remarks against the humiliation which the ministry put him through reveal his disappointment with his critics. Yet, he intelligently maintained a tone of extreme respect and loyalty to his Majesty. Burgoyne sought to reinforce his polite tone towards the King by trying to show that the King was unlike those ministers. He also did not want to give up his quarrel, because he believed that he had 'reason to complain heavily of his Majesty's Ministers'.<sup>72</sup>

At the same time, Burgoyne presented an pessimistic mood about the support of the Crown, as he associated the King with his own personal enemies who he referred to as 'the King's Ministers',<sup>73</sup> 'the King's government',<sup>74</sup> and 'the King's servants'.<sup>75</sup> However, his tone in talking about the crown changed when he mentioned 'the King', to the military officers, because he was aware of the emotional impact that mentioning the King could have on his fellow officers. In order to keep their trust in the King's justice, he had to hide the personal doubts to which he had openly referred his constituents a year before. For example, he told his

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 15.



constituents that ‘the King’s ear secured against [him]’,<sup>76</sup> and with this carefully chosen synecdoche, Burgoyne represented the idea that the king’s attention was led by outsiders who wanted to harm Burgoyne. The use of the word ‘ear’ showed that Burgoyne’s opponents were very close to the King and could whisper into his ear to make him disagree with Burgoyne. Here, Burgoyne enabled the reader to sense both his anger and disappointment towards the ministry and the king.

Burgoyne displayed different rhetorical strategies in his *Letter to His Constituents* (1779), in which he replied to the personal allegations he received after his military defeat. Burgoyne addressed his *Letter to his Constituents* particularly to clergymen and other voters of the town of Preston to inform them about his resignation from his membership as a candidate for the town which he gained after being a member of the House of Commons for many years.<sup>77</sup> Burgoyne published his *Letter to his Constituents* in order to explain his situation as he came under political attacks from different opponents including members of the public who supported the British war against America.

Burgoyne aimed at first to show the causes which made him decide to withdraw from his position in the parliament. Secondly, he wanted to explain the personal intentions by which he served his country. Third, Burgoyne aimed to give details related to the treatment he received since his return. Burgoyne developed his argument in response to the questions he received in the House of Commons in 1778, which led him to believe that he ‘was a marked victim to bear the sins that do not belong to [him]’.<sup>78</sup> Even though we see Burgoyne assuming the position of a victim in this statement, we also hear the way in which his voice remained brave even then when he thought himself a persecuted man.<sup>79</sup>

One of the tactics that Burgoyne employed in order to gain allies among the public was to use his pamphlets to inform them of all the services he made to the country and its politics over the years, and by doing so he limited the grounds on which he was open to attack by his opponents, particularly those who were originally against the British American war. Burgoyne told the public about his career even

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-2.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

before he had joined the army, and so he sought to appeal to them on personal grounds. By laying open his personal history and problems to the people of his country, he tried to make them understand the challenges he had faced during his military campaign. Burgoyne also sought to draw attention to the serving years of his employment as a major-general in the state. He emphasized his voluntary and immediate response when he was called to join the service in America in 1775.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, he presented his constituents with practical evidence which he had collected during his service in America about how he wanted to prevent the country from entering the war before returning to England in 1775.<sup>81</sup> Even after his return home during the winter of that year, Burgoyne was ready to obey and join the troops that embarked for Canada and New York in the next campaign in 1776.<sup>82</sup> Burgoyne mainly wanted to show his obedience to the King's orders.<sup>83</sup> By making such a point he aimed to make his opponents look back to his past and focus on the situations which were honourable to him.

However, he was sure that his persecutors would not pay enough attention to his past voluntary work for the King and for his country when he was ready to support the campaign to establish a military power in America and suppress the colonies in 1775. He felt their only concern was to put the blame on him for losing the colonies. In his letter, he deliberately stated his involvement in the British war against America in 1775-1776 when his zeal emerged as he joined General Thomas Gage, the commander in America, to end the rebels' fighting and to restore peace in the American province.<sup>84</sup> His aim was to stop his enemies from any attack against his own military services and show them that the fault was of the ministry was larger than he could have controlled.

Preparing for a political debate was a chance for Burgoyne to emphasise his honesty and make people deflect their criticism against his accusers. Burgoyne's friendly tone towards his addressees enabled him to present moves such as his own resignation through his letter to appear as a personal sacrifice. He declared to his constituency:

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>84</sup> Mintz, n. p.

Conscious of my integrity, I abandoned my public accounts to the rigorous scrutiny of office ; and I took occasion publically to declare, that should it still be thought expedient to deliver me back to the enemy, and positive order should be sent me for that purpose, I should , as far as in me lay, obey it.<sup>85</sup>

By adopting an intimate persona for his audiences, Burgoyne gave important details in relation to his personal and political decision not to return to America. Burgoyne's response to the issue of his return employed an honest tone. Thus, he aimed to affect the public and make them oppose the military orders which would hand him to 'the enemy'. He wanted to show his supporters and opponents his last plan to put things in order for his career, and he explained that the decision to withdraw from his position was made upon noticing the different way his conduct was represented at home since his arrival when he was handed an order to 'prepare himself for an enquiry',<sup>86</sup> which made him feel that his hard work did not count as he could not be a 'master of the secret and political circumstances',<sup>87</sup> that prevented his military plans from being adopted.<sup>88</sup> By speaking so frankly about the inquiry into his campaign after his return, Burgoyne sought to ally the public to his own personal experience of the injustice he had faced.

Through his correspondence with the War Office, then, which was published in his pamphlets, Burgoyne demonstrated a ready willingness to fight his corner and to quarrel with the authorities at all levels, including through polite disagreement with the king. Burgoyne refused to back down, and by making his quarrels with the War Office public, Burgoyne sought to avoid being made a scape-goat for wider military failures by revealing his disagreement with the government to a wider public. Whether or not his quarrelsome correspondence was a successful strategy of self-defence remains debatable, though, as Burgoyne was later faced with many other conflicts.

### **The Political Response to Burgoyne's Defeat**

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<sup>85</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to his Constituents*, p. 14.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

In order to understand the battle that Burgoyne faced to defend his actions, it is important to understand the wider responses that his actions received in the press. In addition to the pamphlets that criticized Burgoyne's return, newspapers also published their own questions and criticisms of the northern campaign at the time of the campaign. The responses of the press conveyed different reactions to Burgoyne's campaign. On the one hand, for some time during the northern campaign of Howe and Burgoyne, the press expressed uncertainty at the actions of the British army. For example, twentieth-century critic Solomon Lutnick mentions that 'London became more nervous in the summer of 1777 as the reports from across the Atlantic became less frequent.'<sup>89</sup> The public were unable to see what happened as the ministry in England blocked information about it. Thus Lutnick emphasises the public's anxiety at the limits placed on their knowledge of the campaign. Burgoyne was aiming to correct the mistakes made by 'the ministers of the crown',<sup>90</sup> which 'coul[d] legally order a British Subject into captivity either at home or abroad without trial'.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, the public knew about the opposition to the British presence in America. During the campaign of 1776 which was led by General Howe, it was reported in the *London Evening Post* that Washington wrote to Howe and warned him that 'he would not surrender New-York', and if he was 'unsuccessful, [he] would set fire to the town.'<sup>92</sup> Such a statement had its impact on the leaders of the campaign and made them aware that any decision to continue the fight would cost the lives of the British soldiers. Later in January 1778, the *General Evening Post* reported a similar statement from the American leader in an *Extract of a Letter from New-York* that Burgoyne was warned by Washington that he should surrender himself to a treaty and the warning indicated that 'it was not possible for [the British troops] to hold out much longer'.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Solomon Lutnick, *The American Revolution and the British Press 1775-1783* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1967), p. 102.

<sup>90</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to Constituents*, p. 28.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>92</sup> 'News', *London Evening Post*, 12-15 October 1776, in *British Newspapers 1600-1950* <[http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE\\_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2000694917&contentSet=LTO&source=gale](http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2000694917&contentSet=LTO&source=gale)> [accessed 26 September 2014].

<sup>93</sup> 'News', *General Evening Post*, 17-20 January 1778, in *British Newspapers 1600-1950* <[http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE\\_DOCUMENT&us](http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&us)

As the reports of Burgoyne's defeat reached England, the *London Chronicle* commented on the public's reaction by saying that the news 'produced a revolution in the minds of many'.<sup>94</sup> Here, by 'many', the press was referring to the commercial agents and businesses in Europe and political commissioners. Yet, there was some support for Burgoyne from the opposition and from those who wanted to understand what exactly went wrong in the campaign as they believed that it was not fair to put the whole blame on Burgoyne alone. For example, the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* stated that General Burgoyne was 'deprived of all support, and he and his army were made prisoners'.<sup>95</sup> So, some newspapers lamented the end of Burgoyne's campaign and stated that

all the misfortunes and disgrace which followed the affair of Saratoga, as well in the fields as elsewhere, were, in his opinion, to be solely attributed to the carrying on the campaign to the south ward<sup>96</sup>

The criticism was aimed against a third group of the army which was commanded by General Guy Carleton (1724-1808),<sup>97</sup> and by General Burgoyne who would come from Canada and push towards the south near Hudson and join William Howe,<sup>98</sup> and lead their army towards New York.

The reasons for Burgoyne's return to parliament were clear on his side, and the newspapers reported his cooperation, giving full details on his military conduct. The newspaper explained how Burgoyne 'expressed a wish that the enquiry might be general, and might take in the whole of the American War, including his expedition and the surrender of his army at Saratoga'.<sup>99</sup> It seems that some of the press helped

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erGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2000455347&contentSet=LTO&source=gale > [accessed 26 September 2014].

<sup>94</sup> 'News', *London Chronicle*, 26-28 January 1779, in *British Newspapers 1600-1950* <[http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE\\_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2000569568&contentSet=LTO&source=gale](http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2000569568&contentSet=LTO&source=gale)> [accessed 26 September 2014].

<sup>95</sup> 'News', *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 18 February 1779, in *British Newspapers 1600-1950* <[http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE\\_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2000388901&contentSet=LTO&source=gale](http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2000388901&contentSet=LTO&source=gale)> [accessed 26 September 2014].

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, n. p.

<sup>97</sup> James Sturgis, 'Carleton, Guy, first Baron Dorchester (1724-1808)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4674>> [accessed 11 September 2014].

<sup>98</sup> Stephen Conway, 'British Governments and the Conduct of the American War', in *Britain and the American Revolution*, ed. by H.T. Dickinson (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 155-79 (p. 160).

<sup>99</sup> 'News', *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 18 February 1779, in *British Newspapers 1600-1950*

Burgoyne to gain the public support he sought when he published ‘an account of the campaign, in the part where [he] commanded’,<sup>100</sup> and ‘submitted to the public in detail of the facts proved before Parliament, and in other authentic documents’.<sup>101</sup> As Burgoyne was defending himself, he criticized those who condemned his actions through the war and how the political system had betrayed him. Linking the policy of war and the political system was a way of expressing his personal anger. Those arguments revealed Burgoyne’s radicalised opinions through which he stated to his constituents his anxiety in relation to ‘the state of the nation, in its wars; in its negotiations; in its concerns with its remaining colonies; or in the internal policy and government of these kingdoms [...]’.<sup>102</sup> Burgoyne strongly disapproved of the political state of his country and how its ruling system had a negative impact on its colonies and its public at home. These announcements showed that Burgoyne’s opinion after his campaign would not be similar to his military obedience before he led his army to America in 1776.

There were also further political replies to Burgoyne’s debates, written by court writers who worked on behalf of the government. According to the writings of authors who wrote against the war, the North administration faced several arguments and debates, especially as ‘after Saratoga the confidence of most of the ruling establishment that untrained colonial levies could not withstand a professional British army began to erode’.<sup>103</sup> North’s administration had a chance to rescue its desperate situation by expanding its power depending on ‘a variety of court writers of late, writing for pay, not for immortality; that it is become the unavoidable duty of every free member of the empire, to counteract the obvious intention of their writings’.<sup>104</sup> Burgoyne disapproved of such political writings and he believed that

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<[http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE\\_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2000851106&contentSet=LTO&source=gale](http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2000851106&contentSet=LTO&source=gale)> [accessed 26 September 2014].

<sup>100</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to his Constituents*, p. 6.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>103</sup> Peter Whiteley, *Lord North: The Prime Minister Who Lost America* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1996), p. 173.

<sup>104</sup> *The Case Stated on Philosophical Ground, between Great Britain and her Colonies: or the Analogy between States and Individuals, Respecting the Term of Political Adulthood, Pointed Out.* (London: 1777), (pp. 69-70) in ECCO [accessed 25 June 2012].

the anonymous attackers ‘lose half their gall when the object of it is not personally and directly in question’.<sup>105</sup>

One prominent attack on Burgoyne was authored by John Dalrymple (1726-1810). Sir John Dalrymple of Cousland, was a fourth Baronet, a lawyer, and a historian and was well connected to noble and intellectual society. He first established his political reputation when he broke with Henry Dundas, a Scottish politician who refused to support Dalrymple for election in 1760. Under North’s ministry, Dalrymple led a political project between 1775 and 1778 in support of Roman Catholics, which aimed to demonstrate to North that negotiating with Catholics in England would help the ministry at elections. He considered that positive support towards the Catholics would help their recruitment for the American war.<sup>106</sup> Accordingly, the role which Dalrymple took during the British and American War showed his strong relations with the ministry and the importance of his political judgment. Thus, when Burgoyne returned to England in 1778, Dalrymple was already someone who had political disputes and deep understanding of the ministerial doctrine. Dalrymple criticised Burgoyne’s *Letter to his Constituents* and he believed that Burgoyne’s manner left the impression that he was a victim whose ‘disappointment and despair’,<sup>107</sup> was caused by the faults of others.

The dispute against the return of General Burgoyne, who had left the British Military Forces in the hands of the American rebels, had also caught the attention of the opponents of Burgoyne’s party. Mainly, Dalrymple was against Burgoyne’s return home while his soldiers were still in the hands of the enemy. Dalrymple expressed his anger at Burgoyne’s return. He found it hard to find satisfaction in what Burgoyne told his constituents as he asked Burgoyne: ‘What may really be the nature of your orders I will not pretend to determine. Nor indeed is it necessary at present.’<sup>108</sup> The quote indicates that there were further allegations against Burgoyne that Dalrymple wanted to examine, but he gave priority to the issue of surrendering the troops and did not mention the instructions the officers gave during the

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<sup>105</sup> Burgoyne, *State of the Expedition*, p. 4.

<sup>106</sup> Nicholas Philipson, ‘Dalrymple, Sir John, of Cousland, Fourth Baronet (1726-1810)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7055>> [accessed 11 September 2014].

<sup>107</sup> John Dalrymple, *A Reply to Lieutenant General Burgoyne’s Letter to his Constituents* (London: 1779), p.4., in *ECCO* [accessed 18 August 2012].

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

campaign. Here, Dalrymple suggested that the persecutors should investigate the reasons behind involving the ‘army in inextricable ruin’.<sup>109</sup> Following other accusations, Dalrymple disputed Burgoyne’s decision to dispatch Colonel Baum with 500 men to fight against the enemy, while he knew the potential risk Baum might face. Then, he sent Colonel Breyman with another corps at Batten Kill to support Baum.<sup>110</sup> Unfortunately, the enemy attacked Colonel Baum before his corps got any reinforcement. Baum was wounded; his soldiers were defeated and taken prisoner. Colonel Breyman was then attacked upon arrival at the scene and he had to retreat, leaving behind him two pieces of artillery.<sup>111</sup> Instead of making things better, the situation started to narrow against Burgoyne’s military movement as the enemy became more able to plan a proper attack. Burgoyne was in a very dangerous location both from Hudson’s river and the land, as the roads were destroyed by the Rebels.<sup>112</sup>

Dalrymple tried to build his own argument against Burgoyne by trying to draw the public into judging the General according to the orders his Cabinet gave him during the late events of the campaign. Dalrymple stated: ‘it was hoped, by those who had planned the expedition that the most decisive advantage would attend the first efforts of so powerful a force.’<sup>113</sup> Dalrymple made a mistake in his appraisal of Burgoyne’s campaign; he related the plan of the expedition to a third party. He intended to tell the public that the mistake of losing Saratoga was Burgoyne’s. However, Dalrymple contradicted himself as he exaggerated the support Burgoyne had been given in response to his expedition. Dalrymple’s implied tone aimed to accuse Burgoyne of having beneficial effects upon the American inhabitants in order to reduce the resistance ‘by inducing the friends of the Government to declare themselves, when they beheld a force in which they might place confidence’.<sup>114</sup> By making such claims to the public, Dalrymple sought to attack Burgoyne.

Yet, Dalrymple also acknowledged Burgoyne’s military abilities and qualifications in leading the troops. Dalrymple tried to be diplomatic in places as his political persona sought to avoid any quarrel that could involve him in attacks of a

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 9.



personal dimension against his opponent. In relation to the court-martial requested by Burgoyne, Dalrymple stated the necessity for Burgoyne's case to be tried 'under a suspicion of misconduct'.<sup>115</sup> Dalrymple explained to Burgoyne how it would be impossible for him to be tried by a court martial as Burgoyne was still under the requirements to deliver himself again to the Congress.<sup>116</sup> Yet, Dalrymple's insistence that Burgoyne should not ask for a court martial, could suggest that Dalrymple was also trying to hide his own ambition to prevent Burgoyne from convincing the parliament to consider that particular request. Also, Dalrymple sarcastically stated that 'the sentence of a court martial will determine faithfully upon merits, and restore him to honour or doom him to disgrace'.<sup>117</sup> Then, Dalrymple gave Burgoyne two explicit reasons that he could not have a court martial: firstly because such a trial would need witnesses of the conduct who were in that time held prisoners, and there was no way of bringing them back or proceeding the trial without them. Secondly, it would be difficult to pronounce a sentence or condemn him, for the fact that Burgoyne still belonged to the American Congress as a military prisoner.<sup>118</sup> For these two reasons, Dalrymple believed that it was not possible for Burgoyne to be tried in his country. Dalrymple seemed to justify how such problematic situation of Burgoyne allowed him to be angry and frustrated with Burgoyne's request and with anyone who sought to give Burgoyne the chance to have a trial. It seems that Dalrymple's message was also addressed to members of parliament as well as to Burgoyne as he stated that if the trial would take place under those circumstances, the case would be a 'very infringement of the law of nations'.<sup>119</sup> He also indicated to Burgoyne that his stay in the country would answer 'no effectual purpose'.<sup>120</sup>

Dalrymple also retaliated against Burgoyne's criticism of the Secretary of State's manner when the latter informed Burgoyne to prepare for an enquiry on his conduct on the day of Burgoyne's arrival from America. Dalrymple disputed the charges that Burgoyne made against the secretary, though he was also evasive about the matter. He told Burgoyne that they were all persuaded that his 'feelings appear to

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 18-19.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

be unusually irritated'.<sup>121</sup> Dalrymple here implicitly showed his audience that it was inappropriate for the charge against the Secretary to be considered politically because it was based only on Burgoyne's personal allegations. Dalrymple wanted to indicate to Burgoyne the certainty of his guilt, as he said that the Secretary had the right and the responsibility to hold information on important matters.<sup>122</sup> By saying that Dalrymple indicated to Burgoyne that the Secretary behaved in a normal way to someone such as Burgoyne who 'had delivered up [his] sword to the enemy',<sup>123</sup> he suggested that the whole nation would agree to his treatment towards him. With that kind of statement, Dalrymple employed a bitter tone to weaken Burgoyne's character in the opinion of the public.

The persona that Dalrymple adopted in his writing sought to show the public his instinctive realization that Burgoyne had done a passionate and brave job for the country, but he was also willing to turn against Burgoyne and accused him of being an enemy to himself.<sup>124</sup> For example, he acknowledged the progress Burgoyne made at the beginning of his campaign, but still brought up the issue of surrendering the troops in order to evaluate Burgoyne's acts. He recalled several of Burgoyne's good acts too, not because he wanted to correct himself, but to show the huge difference that occurred after Burgoyne's 'greatest zeal'.<sup>125</sup> So, Dalrymple confessed that Burgoyne has 'manifested the greatest zeal for the cause of [his] counter',<sup>126</sup> besides, he showed 'the most determined bravery in fighting her battles'.<sup>127</sup> Dalrymple also showed empathy with how Burgoyne must be feeling, imagining him to be

sensible of having lost an army; of having depressed the hopes of your country; of having elated the spirit of her enemies; of having terminated a career most brilliant in its commencement by a very fatal disaster.<sup>128</sup>

Despite his empathy, though, Dalrymple also implied a kind of political criticism in his reply. He knew how it could be harmful and embarrassing for Burgoyne to raise the issue of Burgoyne's failure. He aimed to make Burgoyne hopeless and useless

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 4-5.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

because of his previous defeat. For example, Dalrymple aimed to point out his failure by telling Burgoyne that he was unprepared for the difficulties, and he was 'ignorant of the true state of [his] situation'.<sup>129</sup> Even a writer who seemed, on the surface, to be sympathetic towards Burgoyne can therefore be interpreted as criticising his actions.

A further interesting criticism of Burgoyne emerged in the anonymously authored *An Englishman's Reply* in 1779. This reply was anonymous perhaps to imply that the reply in the pamphlet was made on behalf of all Englishmen. The author adopted a similar position to Burgoyne as his intension was to support the crown, the country, and the public. The reply of the Englishman criticised the treaty between Burgoyne and Gates, the Rebel Leader. He also condemned the imprisonment of the British troops in the hands of the rebels which he believed astonished the monarchy and the public. The author tried to accuse Burgoyne of surrendering the British troops, and he said that such action had never happened before by any Commander or loyal General.<sup>130</sup> By introducing such a statement against Burgoyne, the Englishman marked Burgoyne's surrender as an unfortunate historical event for all of England. He suggested to Burgoyne that he should return to America, but he warned him to consider facing challenges against his character and his country. The author stated to Burgoyne: 'if they have acquitted you of these engagements, no ill consequence can attend your going back; if they are still binding, your own honour, if not that of the nation, is concerned in your fulfilling them.'<sup>131</sup> This note represented an unfair statement against Burgoyne as it implied there must have been an agreement between him and the Americans. He told Burgoyne that he should not be scared of going back to America, because he would not be in danger at the hands of the courts. Furthermore, the Englishman aimed to turn public opinion against Burgoyne by telling him that he no longer deserved to carry the British sword, aiming to put the blame only on him. The author attempted to use the same strategies as Burgoyne in order to suggest that the public, England, and the Crown had the most significant union. The attacker disapproved of Burgoyne and told him that his conflict was made by the 'miserable reflection that [had] been endangered, if

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 12-13.

<sup>130</sup> An Englishman, *A letter to Lieut. Gen. Burgoyne on his letter to his constituents* (London: 1779), p.10, in *ECCO* [accessed 28 August 2012].

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

not effected, the ruin of [his]’.<sup>132</sup> The letter of the Englishman carried a metaphorical threat when it said that Burgoyne’s action of laying down his arms ‘was not *virtually*, but *actually* broken over [his] head’.<sup>133</sup>

Burgoyne stated in his *Letter to his Constituents* that his request to resign was a result of his own sentiments. In reply, the Englishman, in a sarcastic tone, enquired if those personal sentiments of Burgoyne had existed before the Saratoga convention. That enquiry of the Englishman showed that he doubted Burgoyne’s emotional response, and ironically suggested to him that his country still asked him for another duty which he should obey.<sup>134</sup> The Englishman took into account Burgoyne’s very important notion of obeying the sovereignty of his government, but he criticised Burgoyne’s refusal to go back to America, as the Englishman believed that it was not necessary for Burgoyne to stay in the country as the investigation would be carried in the office. The author of this pamphlet believed that it was an unusual thing indeed for an army officer to take his case *publicly to declare*<sup>135</sup> that he was to be ‘*delivered up to the enemy*’,<sup>136</sup> seemingly forgetting that he had engaged himself with the enemy from the first hand.

In addition, the Englishman did not only depend on the actions of the Saratoga convention, but he looked closely at some of Burgoyne’s actions after it. He depicted, for example, evidence from Burgoyne’s letter on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 1778 in which Burgoyne considered his army would not find disgrace in his return.<sup>137</sup> The Englishman considered this matter was ‘absurd propositions’<sup>138</sup> and thus the author could not see the wisdom of surrendering the ‘whole army prisoners to the Rebels’,<sup>139</sup> and yet considering it as a ‘necessary measure’.<sup>140</sup> Burgoyne’s remarks in his letter were placed under great scrutiny by the Englishman who promised his readers that he would ‘remove the evil impressions’,<sup>141</sup> which Burgoyne put around the members of the parliament. The Englishman from the very beginning was

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

prepared to attack Burgoyne and tried to turn all the members of the administration against him. For example, he questioned the originality and the legality of Burgoyne's seat in the parliament from the first hand. That distrust in Burgoyne's position was only to make him weak and consider his claims against his opponents.

It seemed very usual of Burgoyne's opponents to attack the same topics. Dalrymple's reply addressed some similar issues to the response of the Englishman's reply to Burgoyne in 1779. The Englishman from the very beginning claimed that Burgoyne had interests for the election. He believed that the 'truth, justice, or candour',<sup>142</sup> was 'misrepresented',<sup>143</sup> for Burgoyne's especial aim to save himself a future place in the parliament. Similarly, Dalrymple declared in his reply to Burgoyne that: 'your talents not exactly fitted to parliamentary debate, were hitherto the causes why every public attempt to justify yourself had been attended with inconsiderable success.'<sup>144</sup> Another important issue that attracted the Englishman's attention was Burgoyne's attack against the Secretary of State. Like Dalrymple, the author of this response disagreed with Burgoyne and considered his attacks on the ministry to be false. The Englishman insisted that Burgoyne's treaty with the Rebels was a questionable matter, and he also gave reasons for the precaution the Secretary made against handing over weapons and soldiers to an opposition army.<sup>145</sup> The king's ministers according to the Englishman had the right to investigate the treaty, because in case of a 'refusal to ratify it, would put extreme danger the lives of all those who were thus unhappily placed with their reach'.<sup>146</sup> The Englishman suggested Burgoyne to consider his claims carefully against the ministry which acted as it should for a necessary protection, and therefore Burgoyne's announcement against the authority of his country would be considered as 'unworthy notice'.<sup>147</sup>

Burgoyne was also attacked in another pamphlet entitled: *A Brief Examination of the Plan and Conduct of the Northern Expedition in America 1777. And of the Surrender of the Army under the Command of Lieutenant-General Burgoyne* (1779). Although the author related the misconduct only to Burgoyne, still he asked him publically to explain the mistake of losing the Northern campaign

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

which simply in his view was not the Ministry's fault as Burgoyne suggested in his letter. The author's aim was to examine the weaker aspects of the campaign which led to the Convention. As with the other opponents of Burgoyne, the author was frustrated by Burgoyne's presence in the country after the Congress 'determined not to fulfil the agreement'.<sup>148</sup>

The author attacked Burgoyne's way of leading the army 'without any scale',<sup>149</sup> as he did not see what could happen to his troops, yet he continued to carry out the plan to pass the North River. The pamphlet investigated carefully the conditions under which Burgoyne was fighting and the orders he was giving. He followed Burgoyne's order on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September when the British troops were closer to Saratoga. Burgoyne was blamed for his act of dividing the troops even after realizing that neither Howe nor Clinton could come and rescue him. He was informed that no supplies could reach him before 12<sup>th</sup> of October. The author asked:

What reason was there then why they should not be divided into eight or ten different columns, under the command of approved good officers four days bread in their blankets.<sup>150</sup>

Yet, Burgoyne stated clearly the challenge he faced when he was examining his own plan.<sup>151</sup> Even though Burgoyne made his decision to face his enemy he remained divided between the hope of being helped by his friends and retreating towards Canada.<sup>152</sup>

Burgoyne's opponent had already related the act of signing the convention with the enemy to the reputation of the country. He accused Burgoyne of humiliating the nation for his own safety and honour 'after having reduced the honor of the nation, and the reputation of the British Soldiery to the lowest state of humiliation'.<sup>153</sup> With such temper, the author aimed to turn the public opinion against him, and probably to take the attention of the public away from the ministry. The author set very aggressive remarks against Burgoyne and asked him to go back to America by saying:

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<sup>148</sup> *A Brief Examination of the Plan and Conduct of the Northern Expedition in America, in 1777, and of the Surrender of the Army under the Command of Lieutenant-General Burgoyne* (London: 1779), (p.27) in ECCO [accessed 20 June 2012].

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

*For shame, Sir! Consider you are still in the service, and though you have lost all estimation as a GENERAL, do not render yourself despicable as a MAN. Fly to your proper situation, lest the world should suspect that the soreness you once felt on the subject of honor has grown to the last insensibility of mortification, and that you are now become callous [...].*<sup>154</sup>

The author here treated Burgoyne as an enemy to the country and to himself. He emphasised the shame Burgoyne had brought to the country. Yet, that kind of judgment increased doubts about the way the ministry really aimed to destroy the character of Burgoyne who signed the convention to save the lives of the British troops at the end.

Burgoyne faced another complaint against his conduct in *Reflections: On Gen. Burgoyne's conduct Since his return to England* which was written in *The Detail and Conduct of the American War, under Generals Gage, Howe, Burgoyne, and Vice Admiral Lord Howe: with a Very Full and Correct State of the whole of Evidence, as Given before a Committee of the House of Commons: and the Celebrated Fugitive Pieces, which are said to have given Rise to that Important Enquiry. With the whole Exhibiting a Circumstantial, Connected and Complete History of the Real Causes, Rise, Progress and Present State of the American Rebellion* in 1780. *Reflections* started with very significant points that made Burgoyne look to be a defeated General who brought 'disgrace and misfortune'<sup>155</sup> upon himself. First, Burgoyne's refusal to join the captive army and staying in the country for health reasons was considered as evidence of his attempt to escape responsibility, or more precisely it was a sign of contributing 'to the consolation of that army'.<sup>156</sup> Second, the author wanted to show the final decision of the government in relation to Burgoyne's operation in America, which stated that 'a court martial could not exist as the general was a prisoner under the convention'.<sup>157</sup> Third, the author aimed to show that any kind of claim Burgoyne made against the ministry were illegitimate and fallacious arguments.

All of these attacks on Burgoyne demonstrate that pamphlets became an important medium through which political combat was played out. Writers

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., pp. 27-28.

<sup>155</sup> *The Detail and Conduct of the American War*, p. 175.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

frequently attacked Burgoyne, and it is for this reason that he also employed writing as a way of defending himself and of fighting back in his political quarrels.

### **Burgoyne's Change of Tone for His Fellow Soldiers**

The aggressive attacks which Burgoyne received might have been a factor in his change of his addressee in his final pamphlet. It was not only the public that Burgoyne wanted to convince of his innocence, though. He continued to try to convince his opponents as well as his supporters of his explanation about his surrendering of the British troops. We see this in the last statements of Burgoyne in 1780, which he addressed to different audiences from those he addressed in 1778 and 1779. He compiled a significant pamphlet addressed to those who participated with him through the campaign; major general Phillips, other officers who served under his command, and also the general public. By presenting such a detailed work about his campaign, Burgoyne aimed to show his respect towards his addressees and colleagues. He also indicated that he aimed to show the truth as it was 'the defence of [their] honour and [his] own',<sup>158</sup> and in this way, he sought to build an alliance between them. He started his pamphlet in a polite and intimate voice, stating: 'Gentlemen, [...] we are mutual and peculiar sufferers by the event of the campaign in 1777.'<sup>159</sup> He employed an intimate tone because such a style could be convincing to those who were concerned about the loss of the war and of the colonies. By using the emotive terms 'mutual' and 'sufferers', Burgoyne reminded them when they all fought for one cause and suffered similar pains, linking it to the current situation in which they shared a common problem. By calling them sufferers, he turned the focus entirely on his audience in order to make them aware that unfairness was imposed on all of them. Then, Burgoyne assured his addressees from the very beginning of his trust in them, and he requested them to give him further support as they 'were witnesses and judges of [his] actions'.<sup>160</sup> Burgoyne's shift from considering his addressees as mutual sufferers to positioning them as witnesses and judges demonstrates Burgoyne's desire to change their perspective on him, and attempted to persuade his intended readers that he trusted only their authority over him. In order

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<sup>158</sup> Burgoyne, *State of the Expedition*, p. iv.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. iii.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. iii.



to win his debate, Burgoyne did not only give them power over himself, but he also gave them a broad perspective on the event. For example, he did not deliver to them a proper public speech before that date, but he told them with the most respectful and friendly tone that he ‘[had] omitted no occasion of expressing in Parliament, in correspondences, and in conversation—the fullest approbation of [their] services’.<sup>161</sup> Such delayed action of addressing the officers could possibly show Burgoyne’s concentration on squabbling with his real enemies rather than those who were mutual allies. It could also indicate that Burgoyne did not have any doubts about the sincere relationship between him and his military friends. Burgoyne was humble and polite when he spoke to those who served under his command and in this way, he showed he did not want to make himself superior to them when he defended them and the captive soldiers in the parliament. His polite attitude emerged in the way he called them to be his judges - though their positioning as such also encouraged them to call into question the authority of the other courts who were charged with the task of judging him more officially.

Yet, Burgoyne was willing to show his gratitude to the soldiers in order to regain the support of the crown. He also disapproved of the response of the authorities towards him, instead seeking to ‘throw [him]self upon [the] judgment of [his] conduct as a friend’.<sup>162</sup> Burgoyne intended to refer to the King, because he was aware as an army officer of the importance of acknowledging unlimited respect for his King. His polite reference could be seen as a strategic way of gaining the trust of his fellow soldiers and of the king. Although Burgoyne experienced harsh treatment from the crown, he had to continue to express his feelings towards it in a polite manner, as members of the army were not able to reject the crown. Thus in order to gain the support of his fellow officers, Burgoyne had to choose his tone very carefully when speaking about the king.

We also see Burgoyne’s carefully calculated tone in the way that Burgoyne wanted to protect his own character as an officer, yet was also forced to show how he was different from other officers who had similarly fallen into variance with the system. In his speech to his fellow officers, Burgoyne stated the clear difference

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p. iii.

<sup>162</sup> Burgoyne, *State of the Expedition*, p. iv.

between his ‘political transaction’,<sup>163</sup> and his ‘military conduct’,<sup>164</sup> because he wanted to distinguish himself from other ‘Parliament [...] army officers’,<sup>165</sup> who had ‘withdrawn themselves from their employment’,<sup>166</sup> because they could not ‘hold with security to their honour, or benefit to the state’.<sup>167</sup> Revealing such a fact publically to his fellow officers did not mean, as he explained, that he wanted ‘to disturb the zeal of those who [were] [...] employed’,<sup>168</sup> in the military. Nonetheless, Burgoyne’s tone could have been moderated by his wish to keep his position, as he stated to his fellow officers that ‘honourable men [need] to occupy their places’.<sup>169</sup> Moreover, Burgoyne could not deny his personal quarrels with the prejudice of the power,<sup>170</sup> so he told both the public and the officers that he ‘attend[ed] a struggle with power’.<sup>171</sup> He indicated to his audience how that struggle occurred ‘under the conditional order’,<sup>172</sup> when the parliamentary power denied him a court-martial.<sup>173</sup> Burgoyne was not allowed to see the king until he heard from parliament, though most importantly that could not be decided while Burgoyne was still considered as a prisoner of war.<sup>174</sup> As a result, Burgoyne decided to resign, but wishing to win the quarrel he chose to be outspoken to explain the debates he had with his opponents. Burgoyne aimed to persuade his audience that those who were in the ministry enjoyed too much power. He designed specific replies against his enemies who deprived him of a court-martial and accused him of being ‘guilty of disobedience to the King’s orders’.<sup>175</sup> In order to defend himself Burgoyne sought to challenge the ‘definitions of obedience [...]’.<sup>176</sup> which the ministry adopted. In his closing statement within the pamphlet, he adopted a parallel syntactic structure to provide a damning condemnation of his enemies, and to show them as opposed to the king:

[...] And the minister who first shakes that happy confidence; who turns military command to political craft; who dares to use his

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. v.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. v.

<sup>165</sup> Jones, p. 19.

<sup>166</sup> Burgoyne, *State of the Expedition*, p. v.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. v.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. iv.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. vi.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. iii.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. viii.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>174</sup> *The Detail and Conduct of the American War*, p. 175.

<sup>175</sup> Burgoyne, *State of the Expedition*, p. 184.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

gracious Sovereign's name as an engine of state, to glut his own anger, or to remove his own fears, he is amongst the worst enemies to that Sovereign.<sup>177</sup>

Burgoyne spoke disapprovingly of the acts of the people at the ministerial office who had the ability to create safe political conditions for themselves in order to protect their own positions, and who he saw as exercising '[...] *an order of vindictive punishment*'<sup>178</sup> to widen the 'disgrace'<sup>179</sup> against him.

Through his pamphlets, then, we see Burgoyne employing a careful choice of language and tone to address different audiences in order either to make allies or to try to convince his enemies of the justice of his cause. We see him writing in a way that is sometimes defensive and sometimes full of anger, thus showing that tone is a very important tool in Burgoyne's quarrels.

Over the course of this chapter, we have seen how the political situation developed after Burgoyne's return to England and how he was involved in an unexpected political conflict. There was a great deal of criticism of Burgoyne's presence in England, as the British troops were left in the enemy's hands. Losing support of the people back home was the last thing Burgoyne would have wanted, but if that disagreement of the public came from the influence of those who were his opponents in the parliament, it only could show how difficult it was for him to get the support of the public. The war correspondences gave Burgoyne a chance to take necessary information he needed from the ministry and enabled him to prepare his arguments in order to defend himself before appearing in the parliament. We see him using different quarrelling devices in order to attempt to gain justice. When Burgoyne's opponents were aiming to charge him, he retaliated by addressing the public in order to make them witness the unfairness of the political system in his country. Burgoyne's self-defence created political disagreements which involved the political elites in England and America after the most influential military defeat of the British army led by Burgoyne at Saratoga, when Britain lost its colonies in America.

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

Burgoyne's pamphlets reveal significant connections between each other in terms of his manner of quarrelling. All Burgoyne's pamphlets shared one main political theme: his defence of himself against the government's charges of treason. Burgoyne's responses were arranged according to the political hierarchy, as he started by addressing top politicians inside the parliament in his first pamphlet, and then directed his attention to his closer political peers; before turning his sights to his constituents in his second pamphlet, including private correspondences with the war officers. The last group of addressees included broader audiences starting from his fellow army officers. In all his pamphlets Burgoyne maintained a direct and respectful attitude towards his audience and slightly varied his use of tropes depending on who he was addressing, because he was keen to protect his own name by showing his sincerity and honesty. Although Burgoyne sought to intensify his argument with the government by extending it to the public, and addressing both his soldiers and civilians, in an intimate tone, his military and political position required him to use a particular language of respect through which he demonstrated that he valued his service to the political system. Through this way of responding, particularly in counting his own success and the duties he committed toward his country, the reader could sense Burgoyne's anger and disappointment towards his government and the king. He disapproved of their political actions towards him, yet he used different sources to create a reliable honourable persona which even some of his enemies respected.

The claims of Burgoyne's opponents suggested that he chose to sign the convention at Saratoga only for his own personal safety. Such criticism, which was presented to the public, caused Burgoyne to realise the amount of tension he was facing against his own character in his country. Knowing the developments of those claims after his second pamphlet, *Letter to his Constituents*, Burgoyne must have prepared his last pamphlet with great care in order to catch the attention and the support of his audiences and to convince them of his honesty. The replies to Burgoyne indicated how his main argument around his persecution revealed other political issues which he might not have planned to raise, but the fear of his opponents from having a public quarrel increased because Burgoyne's argumentative manner and tactical political approaches would draw further public attention to his cause. Burgoyne's clear manner of informing the public of 'the state of things there,

very different from the ideas which (it is now known, from the line taken by the Secretary of State in the Late enquiry) were prevalent in the governing Council of this kingdom',<sup>180</sup> suggested Burgoyne's determination use in his self-defence evidence which would expose his opponents misrepresentation of the events of the war. The aggressive replies of the War Office to Burgoyne as a war General who had been supporting and obeying the sovereignty of his country also revealed the unbalanced relations between the citizens and government. As such, the quarrelsome responses of Burgoyne's opponents presented him with the opportunity to retaliate, and to gain sympathy for his cause. Ironically, those attacks seemed to enable Burgoyne to fight to regain his place for the parliament, as he joined the anti-war group; thus through his quarrels, Burgoyne was able to make his point and to turn the political table against his enemies by revealing the mistakes of the ministry.

In this chapter I have analysed a style of quarrelling which was influenced by the author's political position within the government. Because of this position, Burgoyne's rhetorical style in his pamphlets showed more strategic quarrelling manners against his opponents. In the next chapter, I will contrast this manner of quarrelling with another type of argumentative discourse by an author who was not part of the ruling establishment, and who enjoyed (and won for himself) a much greater degree of political freedom. Analysing the style of Thomas Paine, I will demonstrate how he developed as a political figure, initially closer in terms of manner to Burgoyne, then later on becoming radicalised.

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<sup>180</sup> Burgoyne, *Letter to His Constituents*, p. 8.

## Chapter 2:

### Thomas Paine's Political Discourse for the Public

A comparison of Burgoyne's and Thomas Paine's political works reveals some similarities between them. They both used similar genre in order to show their political arguments to their audiences. Paine also started his political conflict in his pamphlet *Common Sense* in 1776, close to the year of Saratoga battle defeat in 1777 led by General Burgoyne. Thus, the political context of this chapter refers to a similar period of time when the war of the battlefield transferred to aggressive language between political opponents, a process which is metaphorically described by Stauffer as rational conflict expressed 'in the war of words'.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will examine Thomas Paine's argumentative strategies when opposing the existing powers that dominated his society. Paine directed his quarrel against the oppressors by using both rational and emotional language that aimed to explain his radical solutions for the oppressed. Of Paine's many works, this chapter will focus on only three controversial texts which exemplify the concept of quarrelling best: *The Case of the Officers of Excise, with Remarks on the Qualifications of Officers, and on the Numerous Evils arising to the Revenue, from Insufficiency of the Present Salary. Humbly addressed to the Members of both Houses of Parliament* (1772), *Common Sense* (1776), and *The Rights of Man* (1791). It will analyse them as examples of political discourse that illustrate his use of rhetorical devices. *The Age of Reason* (1795-96), perhaps the most famous of Paine's works, will remain out of the scope of this chapter in order to maintain the focus on more obvious political quarrelling. The chapter investigates how Paine's argumentative style included using persuasion and criticism in his debate of the political issues of his time. It shows how Paine expressed his radical views with an instructive political voice that aimed for a wider audience than his primary addressees. Although Paine's works have been widely discussed, this chapter will reveal the under-analysed development of Paine's attitudes and style of public quarrelling in his writings through the years of political conflict in Britain, Europe, and America at the end of the eighteenth century. I will start with a discussion of Paine's defence of the case of the excise officers, demonstrating his adoption of a humble tone to gain the support of his addressees in

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew M. Stauffer, *Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 64.

the parliament. I will then compare his style in the *Case of the Officers of Excise* to his manner of arguing in his pamphlet *Common Sense* to show how *Common Sense* presented a change in Paine's expression of his political views, and how Paine found a more independent political voice which was openly critical of the government. Finally, this chapter will consider the development of a personal dimension of public quarrelling in the pamphlet *The Rights of Man* between Paine and Edmund Burke on a highly significant political issue: the French Revolution. I will argue that in this pamphlet Paine adopted a more explicit and ironic manner of conducting a personal quarrel and attacking his individual opponent, whom he perceived as an embodiment of tyrannical forms of government.

The quarrel discussed in the previous chapter showed how Burgoyne was forced into a dispute in order to justify himself to the public. In his quarrel, Burgoyne showed his disappointment in the political system which failed to justify him. Unlike Burgoyne, Paine revealed his disagreement with the political system that failed to treat its citizens justly. The obvious contrast between Burgoyne and Paine appeared in their acts during the American War of Independence: Burgoyne led the British Army to win back the colonies, but Paine pursued a controversial debate against the British presence in America. Yet, the resemblance between Paine's quarrel and Burgoyne's is visible in their personal turn towards the public when they discovered that they were let down by the government. Burgoyne's response in criticizing his political opponents was controlled by his position as a party member and an army officer. Paine struggled against the same power that could prosecute him if he made his debate fairly aggressive while he was supporting the excisemen whose wages were very low. Paine's political opinions became more rational, passionate and significantly hostile in order to influence the public to resist the rules of the oppressor. Even though the issues that interested Burgoyne were fundamentally personal, his way of addressing the public bears similarity to Paine's because it served as an important way to attack his opponents.

### **Paine's Diplomatic Defence of the Excisemen**

In his early life, Paine worked as a stay maker, a seaman, teacher, and an excise officer. During the time of writing the *Case of the Officers of Excise*, Paine himself

had been working as an excise man for nearly a decade. Paine had waited for a very long time to get a job as an excise officer. After working for a few years he was charged with failing to check some goods which needed stamping.<sup>2</sup> The accusation against Paine was a frequent charge that people in his job received.<sup>3</sup> A. J. Ayer explains that such complaint 'was due to the fact that more work was expected of excisemen than they could conscientiously carry out'.<sup>4</sup> Paine's pamphlet to the parliament, in which he shared his views on the difficult living standards of the ordinary officers, showed his moral character and his personal political opinions. I suggest that Paine's address to parliament on behalf of the excisemen, despite his own troubled position, was the beginning of Paine's personal ambition to become part of the political elite, an ambition that he would pursue further, especially through his writings in America. Paine's championing of the case of the excise officers occasionally gave an impression of his indignation, as well as his bravery to reveal the conditions of the excisemen such as poverty and corruption. This section of the chapter will explore the way in which Paine used a predominantly neutral factual tone and respectful attitudes when addressing the parliamentarians, but at certain points engaged in criticism of the situation of the excisemen.

In his pamphlet *The Case of the Officers of Excise*, Paine presented a straightforward argument to both Houses of Parliament for the need of fair payments to the excise officers. Paine addressed his pamphlet to the higher political elite in the country. Paine's persona in the pamphlet indicated his concerns about the risks of poverty that the excise officers were facing and he asked for their salary to be raised. However, he did not take the risk of starting an open quarrel, because he was aware that his addressees were the ones who received the advantage of the excise officers' money, and also that they were the ones who had the power to decide their fate. In his book, *The Eighteenth Century Constitution 1688-1815*, E. Neville Williams explains how the ministers in the House of Lords had their 'right to offer the Crown advice even if they were not in the government'.<sup>5</sup> The members of parliament who were able to advise the Crown were humbly asked by Paine to consider the wages of the excisemen, because they were in danger of poverty. No doubt, Paine knew the

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<sup>2</sup> A. J. Ayer, *Thomas Paine* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> E. Neville Williams, comp., *The Eighteenth Century Constitution 1688-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 136.



Lords had an ‘exclusive power of initiating financial measures’.<sup>6</sup> Thus, he composed his pamphlet by showing cautiously but persuasively his own opinion to the authority. Paine addressed the members of parliament in a respectful tone of praise, which indicated his awareness of the sensitiveness of the political situation under discussion, which needed their attention and support. At the same time, this self-proclaimed ‘humble’ attitude of addressing the parliament was aimed to make the audience feel the immense sense of responsibility that lay upon them.

Paine’s manner of discussing the case of the officers showed that he supported them, but his way of restraining his personal aggression against the government could explain his goal to win his argument, or to protect his social position, or both. Yet, his tone showed more respect to the excisemen than his listeners in the parliament through his use of rhetorical strategies such as his use of metaphor, repetition, and antithesis to express his opinion. Moreover, on the behalf of the excise officers, Paine developed his polemical struggle at a risk. Paine’s political discussion indicated his personal hopes that his government would provide the poor officers, including himself, with a higher salary that would provide a greater sense of dignity as he aimed for a ‘better Security of the Revenue, the Relief of the Officers, or both’.<sup>7</sup> Raising such an issue while Britain was struggling with its colonies could have indicated to the parliament, the excise officers, and the general public, an additional attempt to destabilise the situation inside the country while the parliament had to deal with other political issues in relation to the British policies outside the country. Such a presentation of the controversial issues of the excise officers who needed justice could have been considered a potentially damaging threat to the country’s policies towards its people.

Although Paine’s original addressees in his pamphlet *The Case of the Officers of Excise* were the parliamentary members, it was intended to reach the excise officers and the general public. Paine approached the subject of the excise officers in a manner which he himself repeatedly described as ‘humble’.<sup>8</sup> He wanted his application of addressing the officers’ case to be considered by people in the

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Paine, *The Case of the Officers of Excise, with Remarks on the Qualifications of Officers, and on the Numerous Evils arising to the Revenue, from Insufficiency of the Present Salary* (Lewes: 1772), p. iv, in ECCO [accessed 18 February 2013].

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. iii.

parliament ‘previous to the presentation’<sup>9</sup> of the excise officers’ petition. By describing the consideration of this issue as ‘highly necessary’,<sup>10</sup> Paine aimed to highlight the urgency of the issue as an objective fact rather than a personal opinion. He created the impression that this potentially quarrelsome issue was factual and thus impersonal by using impersonal syntactic constructions such as the passive voice: as in ‘it has been judged’, as well as the sentences, ‘there are some cases’, and ‘it is strong evidence’.<sup>11</sup> He justified his discussion of the matter in Parliament by stating:

There are some Cases so singularly reasonable, that the more they are considered, the more Weight they obtain. It is a strong Evidence both of simplicity, and honest Confidence, when Petitioners in any Case, ground their Hopes of Relief, on having their Case fully and perfectly known and understood.<sup>12</sup>

As this quotation demonstrates, Paine spoke to his audiences in a high formal tone in order to show his dedicated knowledge of the state of the officers’ case. Paine’s choice of formal vocabulary from the political and legal sphere, including words like ‘cases’, ‘evidence’ and ‘petitioners’ gave the impression that he was presenting a rational argument, which would be more fitting to the context and the audience and thus more persuasive than a personal appeal. Through his formal tone he presented a rational argument which combined logic and general wisdom about the case of the officers. His neutral voice and his presentation of the case as ‘reasonable’ indirectly characterised his audience of parliamentarians as rational and competent judges, aiming to win their support. Thus he seemed to leave the issue in the judgment of his audience, while he manipulated their rational judgement by considering that any argument beyond what he stated would be inadequate.

Paine also employed a lexis of trust in his work, evident in his use of words like ‘simplicity’, and ‘honest confidence’ which were used with the hope that they could persuade his audiences to supply a positive response to the petitioners. The reference to honesty and confidence might be interpreted as a call to the audience’s moral feelings and their superior position of duty towards those under their power. In addition, the description of the excisemen’s approach as simple could be interpreted

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. iii.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. iii.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. iii.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. iii.

as indirectly making a contrast with the parliamentarians, who Paine treated as wise people who could make logical judgement, though at the same time he was trying to guide that judgement for the benefit of the excise officers.

The speaker recognised the authority of the audience he addressed and thus he humbly invited them to exercise their superior power:

Simple as this Subject may appear at first, it is a Matter, in my humble Opinion, not unworthy a parliamentary Attention. 'Tis a Subject interwoven with a Variety of Reasons from different Causes. New Matter will arise on every Thought.<sup>13</sup>

The emphasis on the 'Variety of Reasons indicated the need for the attention of the parliamentary members as wise responsible people. This kind of strategic rhetoric could show the way he aimed to mediate the political problem diplomatically as his approach showed his confidence that the parliament's neglect of the case of the low wages could be rectified.

The insistence on the factuality of the argument, and on the humility of the speaker also had another strategic function. As Paine showed the difficulties that the officers had to go through with a very low salary, he indirectly criticised the audience's neglect of this issue. He was at the same time careful not to use harsh words which indicated his anger. For example, he said 'where Facts are sufficient, Arguments are useless'.<sup>14</sup> Through claims like this Paine reinforced his idea of making a factual case which, as he first suggested in the introduction, masked his personal opinion on a subject in which he had a strong personal interest due to his being an exciseman himself: an attitude which could help him keep his job and protect himself. Another aspect of Paine's manner could be seen in his personal support of the excisemen as he hoped that parliament would take action to help the officers without exacerbating the problem and delaying financial support. The reason behind pronouncing such a short, yet informative statement might show Paine's awareness that the government might have already known about its own mistakes against its citizens. Paine did not want to turn his argument into a full-blown quarrel in which he could lose his right to make any further argument and he skilfully explained this a few pages later by stating that 'no argument can satisfy the feeling

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. iii.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

of Hunger, or abate of the Edge of Appetite',<sup>15</sup> thus alerting his audience to his precarious position. At this point the parliament would not consider that he had bad intentions, but rather, would understand that he was obliged to express what the excisemen experienced as a result of the low salary. Here, the parliament was forced to realise the fact that 'Hunger' for a citizen in the Kingdom would mean the government's neglect for its own people. Paine's main goal was to make the parliament members realize the existence of hunger in the lives of some poor officers.

During his argument Paine included other audiences, like the 'Wealthy and Humane',<sup>16</sup> and the King, who did not seem to be his main addressees, but addressing those people in such contexts seemed to show Paine's personal appeal for general generosity. He developed his subtle quarrel through the text gradually and widened the circle of the opponents by naming them beside his audiences of the parliament and wrote: 'To the Wealthy and Humane, it is a matter worthy of Concern, that their Affluence should become Misfortunes of others.'<sup>17</sup> The voice unexpectedly showed a direct attack against the addressees, but even so, it indicated that they were not necessarily aware of the problems their wealth had caused in society and Paine was only trying to inform them. Further on in the pamphlet, Paine indirectly involved the king as he stated:

There is one general allowed Truth, which will always operate in their Favour, which is, that no Set of Men under his Majesty, earn their Salary with any Comparison of Labour and fatigue with that of the Officers of Excise.<sup>18</sup>

In the above statement, Paine focused mainly on the question of pay, but his mentioning of 'his Majesty,' however indirectly, may be interpreted as a request to the king to care and take action in order to solve the issue and help to increase the salary of the excise officers which 'created frequent Contentions between Parishes, in which the Officer, though the innocent and unconcerned Cause of the Quarrel, has been the greater Sufferer'.<sup>19</sup> Yet, Paine strengthened his argument in order to gain support for the interest of the Excisemen by his polite style as he did not simply

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

make his pamphlet look like an attack, because he included the words ‘generously and Humanely’<sup>20</sup> as he addressed ‘the Honourable House of commons’.<sup>21</sup>

Paine’s persona also addressed other audiences like the excise officers themselves and the public who wanted to be informed about the progress of the issue of their salaries. Within his pamphlet, he sought to enlighten them on ‘the connection between poverty and petty dishonesty, if not actual crime’.<sup>22</sup> Paine’s personal knowledge of his government’s management of the trade caused him frustration as he himself endured poverty and saw how it could lead to corruption. Therefore he stated: ‘Every considerate Mind must allow, that Poverty and Opportunity corrupt many an honest Man.’<sup>23</sup> Paine himself saw how the government increased the number of excise officers to catch illegal trade, but he also noticed the way those officers accepted bribes and saw this as the result of their poverty.<sup>24</sup> Paine was angry as he saw such acts were taking place under the government, thus he strictly reminded the parliament of the high expectation of the people to their government, for example, when he told the authority his thoughts on the corruption of principles he began with the phrase: ‘It has always been the Wisdom of the Government’, thus appealing to their sense of authority and prestige. Paine’s aim was to teach his audience the need to improve the lives of the excisemen by saying that ‘the most effectual Method to keep Men honest, is to enable them to live so’.<sup>25</sup>

Paine’s pamphlet helped the public to learn about the political and public dimensions of an issue about which they seemed largely ignorant. He managed to make the case significant not only for his initial audiences, but also for both the officers and the public. When Paine made a list of expenses those excise officers needed to deal with in their daily and monthly routine, he mentioned the major things for which they had to pay great amounts of money. He illustrated the way the ordinary officers spend their fifty pounds a year:<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Audrey Williamson, *Thomas Paine: His Life, Work and Times* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), p. 51.

<sup>23</sup> Paine, *The Case of the Officers of Excise*, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> John Keane, ed. *Tom Paine: A Political Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 1995; repr. 1996), pp. 56-57.

<sup>25</sup> Paine, *The Case of the Officers of Excise*, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

The excessive dearness of House-rent, the great Burthen of Rates and Taxes, and the excessive Price of all the Necessaries of Life, in the Cities and large Horse-keeping.<sup>27</sup>

The speaker wanted to show the necessity of his disagreements about the existing problems the excise officers faced even from between themselves. Though Paine did not want to highlight his own personal connection to the issue in his argument, nonetheless, his use of technical detail clearly indicated his familiarity with the circumstances of other officers as he said:

A few officers who are stationed along the Coast, may sometimes have the good Fortune to fall in with a Seizure of contraband Goods, and yet, that frequently at the Hazard of their Lives: But the inland Officers can have no such opportunities.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, Paine's concern was about solving the problem of those officers who struggled with the high costs of living. That affiliation with their polemical and poor situation revealed a hidden attitude in Paine's critical tone towards his intended audiences, while he was strengthening his close considered attitude of pity. For example, he inquired about any change that could happen to the officers' status if their salaries increased. He stated:

If the Increase of Money in the Kingdom is one Cause of the high Price of Provisions, the Case of the Excise-Officers is peculiarly pitiable No Increase comes to them — They are shut out from the general Blessing—<sup>29</sup>

The continuing request for improving the situation of the officers reappeared, but this time it was mentioned with a hint against the behaviour of the politicians even though there were not any hostile obvious words or phrases. He let his opinion come slightly through stating the action of preventing the officers from 'the general Blessing',<sup>30</sup> as 'the money of the kingdom increased double, the Salary would in Value be reduced one half. Every Step upwards, is a Step downwards with them'.<sup>31</sup> The persona aimed to create a feeling of guilt in the listeners' minds by drawing on language with religious overtones that appealed to their sense of moral duty. In support for the low ranked and poor officers, Paine employed two contradictory

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

tropes to create a straightforward description by his use of phrases such as 'upwards', and 'downwards'. The voice started to become more resilient as it moved onto questions of justice about the excisemen's case. In order to state the truth about the noticeable 'Inconveniencies which affected'<sup>32</sup> the excise officers and caused them suffering, Paine stated the gravity of the excisemen's situation very clearly:

There is one general allowed truth, which will always operate in their Favour, which is, that no St of Men under his Majesty, earn their Salary with any Comparison of Labour and Fatigue with that of the Officers of Excise.<sup>33</sup>

Thus he showed that the excisemen's situation was one of extreme injustice.

Paine's defence of the excisemen thus engaged with parliamentary members, the wealthy and humane, excise officers, general public, and the king. However, his diplomatic, sometimes deferential language means we perhaps cannot describe this defence as a typical quarrel. Paine's language was strategically restrained in the pamphlet, particularly in the way he showed plenty of respect to the parliamentarians as they were his main addressees, and potential allies. He also sought to defend his position as a respectable middle class person. He stated that 'no man enters into the Excise with any higher Expectation than the competent Maintenance; but not to find even that can produce nothing but corruption, collusion, and neglect'.<sup>34</sup> In this way, Paine's defence of the excisemen, while also a personal struggle, shows none of the aggression or self-defensiveness of Burgoyne's arguments. While he challenged the government, he did so in order to highlight a big political problem which had its impact on social and religious aspects of social life because of the insufficient salary generated corruption and poverty, but he did so with considerable restraint and dignity.

### **Paine's Quarrels over American Independence**

Later in his career Paine adopted a different style of quarrelling and adopted an angrier tone towards his opponents. The changes in his manner of quarrelling can be observed in his publication *Common Sense*, in which he took the side of the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

Americans during their struggle for independence. Paine addressed his *Common Sense* mainly to the American people in order to encourage them to fight against the British monarchy. The style of Paine's argument provided clear statements to enable his ordinary audiences to follow his political views. In *Common Sense*, Paine managed to show that he and his audiences shared the idea of revolution which was the absolute aim of Americans. *Common Sense* deepened the need for independence from Britain, because the author's argumentative attitude explicitly revealed the unfavourable political situation under the British government and how it could be improved if the Americans all joined the battle against their enemy. For example, he assured them that the 'Declaration For Independence'<sup>35</sup> was the right way to solve their problems. Paine's angry tone against British tyranny was in stark contrast with the moderate and friendly approach he used towards the American revolutionaries.

Paine continued his attempt to be impersonal in his argument so that his quarrel appeared strong because it was related to a public matter. He developed a public persona which maintained a rational approach in a similar way as he had arranged the public quarrel in *The Case of the Officers of Excise*. However, there were significant differences from the way Paine presented his style of quarrel here. First, Paine's dispute became much more obvious, as he clearly defined that he was against 'government' in general and in particular the government in Britain. Those members of the government were in many ways the same opponents as the ones in *The Case of the Officers of Excise*. However, while in his previous pamphlet Paine addressed them directly with some degree of politeness and respect in order to convince them of his argument, in *Common Sense*, he excluded them from his audience and spoke about them in the third person in order to express his radicalised view. For example, as he spoke about England as a parent country and stated in an outraged tone that 'the phrase of a parent or a mother country applied to England only, as being false, selfish, narrow and ungenerous'.<sup>36</sup> Another difference between Paine's early pamphlet and his later one seemed to be in his use of a more openly angry tone, so even though he was claiming that he wants to keep his quarrelling impersonal, actually he much more often revealed his personal rage.

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<sup>35</sup> Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (London: 1776), p.43, in *ECCO* [accessed 25 February 2013].

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.



Paine started with a brief remark to show that his argument would be focused on the government and comment on the English constitution. Paine believed that those two powers were ‘complex’, because of their ‘component parts’.<sup>37</sup> These two subjects were important for Paine, because they indicated an optimistic future for his audience that would be different from their present state under the ruling government of Britain. The persona foresaw a possible change was likely to happen after the separation from Britain. Paine was aware that his discussion was controversial; therefore, he acknowledged to the common reader that there was confusion created by some writers about the relation between the ideas of government and society. Paine aimed to explain that difference to his addressees. Therefore, Paine explained early in his pamphlet the main contrast between them as he stated that ‘society in every state is blessing, but Government even in its best state is but a necessary evil’.<sup>38</sup> Here, Paine created a rational argument by starting to show the general distinction between society and government in order to prove how Britain’s domination should be overthrown. Paine’s way of investigating the connection between those two concepts and trying to explain them showed his concern that people were wrongly informed by his opponents, who included authors hired by the government. Kathleen Wilson identifies the authors paid by North’s ministry, as follows: Samuel Johnson, John Shebbear, James Macpherson, Sir John Dalrymple, William Knox and Israel Mauduit.<sup>39</sup> Writers paid by the government were harshly criticised in an anonymous work of the time called *The Case Stated on Philosophical Ground between Great Britain and Her States and Individuals, Respecting the Term of Political Adulthood, Pointed Out*. The author of this work exposed Dr Johnson’s writing in support of Lord North as ruining Johnson’s talent and reputation:

How has the sublime ethic philosopher fallen into the selfish mediocrity of politics! How has the admirable critic, and classical wit, sunk in the vacuum of a court! Hid himself behind the shadow of Lord North, in a voluntary eclipse, whose brightness, primary and diffusive, might have illuminated a whole kingdom, and thrown even a court into shade!<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England 1715-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 241.

<sup>40</sup> *The Case Stated on Philosophical Ground, between Great Britain and her Colonies: or the Analogy between States and Individuals, Respecting the Term of Political Adulthood, Pointed Out*. (London: 1777), p.70, in ECCO [accessed 25 June 2012].

The rhetoric of this argument combines the political combat with praise of Johnson's style. In this quote, metaphors of brightness and darkness are used to depict Johnson's betrayal of his responsibility as an influential figure and writer. According to this anonymous author's opinion Johnson misused his ability to show the truth and helped strengthen the power of the government instead of bringing political enlightenment.

Paine believed that some writers presented different notions from the right ones, thus he developed a conflicting argument by challenging his audiences and inviting them to think rationally about what they have been told. He intended to motivate them as he stated that 'not thinking a Thing *wrong*, gives it a superficial appearance of being *right*'.<sup>41</sup> Paine was aware that he needed to win a larger audience, so his statement implied that he was confident that if his audiences and his enemies were to think rationally they would understand that his position was the right one.

A similar argument to Paine's interpretation of the government's wicked acts took place in the British parliament as opponents to the British colonies in America believed that when a colony became too remote, it would be difficult to control. In Britain, the negotiations over the colonies resulted in many different opinions. Edmund Burke (1729/30–1797), politician and author,<sup>42</sup> was one of the parliamentary members who criticized the poor treatment of the colonies. For example, in 1775, Burke presented his document on conciliation with the American colonies. He warned the parliament that by imposing high taxes on the colonies, his government would have gone too far. Burke took action and raised his concern about the unfair charges that Britain was attempting to ask for; taxes which the colonies were actually unable to give. Burke challenged his peers by asking them: 'Is it not the same virtue which does everything for us here in England?'<sup>43</sup> Burke criticized the principles of his government as he believed that they were all aware of the inequality of benefits between England and its colonies. Burke's attitude revealed a similar view against imposing strict revenue on the ordinary citizens of the colonies, though

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<sup>41</sup> Paine, *Common Sense*, n. p.

<sup>42</sup> Paul Langford, 'Burke, Edmund (1729/30-1797),' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4019>> [accessed 20 September 2014].

<sup>43</sup> J. S. Millward, ed., *Portraits and Documents: Eighteenth Century 1714-1783* (London: Hutchinson Education, 1962), p. 133.

his style of writing was much more consciously rhetorical than Paine's plain style of address. Burke, though, did not state an openly hostile attack against the parliament, but he advised it to keep its power over the colonies without causing any kind of unrest. Clearly, this kind of political and argumentative strategy is similar to what Kathleen Wilson refers to as the anti-war writer attacking problems like illegitimate government measures, and the increased corruption of the parliamentary power.<sup>44</sup> Wilson also points towards other opinions like that of Lord North whose interest was aimed at keeping those colonies under British control. Wilson reveals the rhetorical language of some politicians which was adopted from that of the 'radical opponents to popularize an alternative culture of patriotism'.<sup>45</sup> Wilson states the way North employed that language to ensure the support of the loyalists in the American colonies, as she quoted North's phrase when he declared that 'the American war was "the war of the people."' <sup>46</sup>

Paine's *Common Sense* drew responses from both the general public and others in politics. For example, a comment by an old officer appeared in the *Public Advertiser* in 1776, expressing a controversial opinion about the pamphlet. On the one hand, the officer expressed his anger to his addressee; Lord George Germain and accused him of representing the *Common Sense* as evidence that 'the Americans were aiming at Independence'.<sup>47</sup> In this way, according to the officer view, Germain justified the military violence against the Americans who in the speaker's opinion were thus pushed to fight in their own defence. The officer criticized the actions of the British troops in America, and he considered their actions a reason to support the anonymous writer of *Common Sense*. He said that the pamphlet had already tried to convince 'the Americans, that it is their Interest to become independent'.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, the officer praised the manner of encouragement in the pamphlet which

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<sup>44</sup> Wilson, p. 249.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 279.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 279.

<sup>47</sup> 'News', *Public Advertiser*, 11 May 1776, in *British Newspapers 1600-1950*

<[http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE\\_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2001158828&contentSet=LTO&source=gale](http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2001158828&contentSet=LTO&source=gale)> [accessed 26 September 2014].

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., n. p.

‘has done, exert such force of Argument such Power of Persuasion, to effect that which is already effected?’<sup>49</sup>

Paine continued to emphasise the main point of his argument about the conflict with Britain. He told his audience that

I am clearly, positively, and conscientiously persuaded that 'tis the true interest of this continent to be so; that every thing short of that is mere patchwork, that it can afford no lasting felicity,— that it is leaving the sword to our children, and shrinking back at a time, when a little more, a little farther, would have rendered this continent the glory of the earth.<sup>50</sup>

The speaker used the singular pronoun and simultaneously followed it with three adverbs in order to describe the extent of his own personal conviction. The optimism created by the persona was important as the speaker introduced the idea of defending the continent by making it a simple achievement. The speaker aimed to convince his addressees to engage with this struggle, so he used a strong emotional diction which connected this large political cause with the future happiness of their children. The positivity of the speaker was intended to demand a rapid response from his fellow citizens, as Paine stated it only demanded them to go a ‘little more, a little farther’. By repeating the adverb ‘little’, the aim was to show how close the people were to the glory of independence.

In order to make his argument convincing for his addressees who were traders and the wealthy, he stated very clearly that ‘the trade of America goes to ruin, *because of her connection with Britain*’.<sup>51</sup> Paine’s statement was direct and it showed the areas that were affected by such a connection. Paine protested against the difficulties created against the traders. Paine’s strategy to increase public anger was not only aimed towards the traders themselves, but also at public affairs which suffered even from ‘a temporary stoppage of trade’,<sup>52</sup> because of the stamp-act repeal<sup>53</sup> and the inconveniences caused by the existing engagement with Britain. After showing his audience the logic behind independence, Paine aimed to make sure that all the American public heard his demand. He made a bold statement

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., n. p.

<sup>50</sup> Paine, *Common Sense*, p. 26.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

regarding the futility of the battle against independence: ‘if the whole Continent must take up arms, if every man must be a soldier, ’tis scarcely worth our while to fight against a contemptible ministry only.’<sup>54</sup> Paine encouraged his audience to take up arms against one enemy not only ‘for repeal of the acts’,<sup>55</sup> but also for their land. Paine’s willingness to enforce the complexity of the conflict between the Americans and their enemy could be seen in the structure of the following sentence as he attempted to influence his addressees. He stated:

Dearly, dearly, do we pay for the repeal of the acts, if that is all we fight for; for in a just estimation, ’tis as great a folly to pay a Bunker-hill price for law as for land.<sup>56</sup>

Paine started with the repetition of the adverb ‘dearly’, in an unusual position at the beginning of the sentence thus putting strong emphasis on the metaphorical price that they would have to pay if they only fight for a partial improvement of the law, rather than for complete independence. Paine’s quarrel used rhetorical methods similar to the classical tradition as he oratorically asked several questions in relation to the people’s circumstance after the war started. For example, he inquired:

Hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and yourself the ruined and wretched survivor? If you have not, then are you not a judge of those who have. But if you have, and still can shake hands with the murderers, then are you unworthy the name of husband, father, friend, or lover [...].<sup>57</sup>

The voice here spoke on behalf of those who suffered due to the war. By presenting a series of substantial questions about the sufferings which the enemy caused by their violence against the innocent, the voice requested emotional support from its addressees. The audience were present in the speaker’s mind throughout the pamphlet, but he intentionally and directly spoke to them as main addressees at this particular point. On this specific topic, Paine seemed also to take the side of those sufferers who were his main audience from the beginning and he showed that his quarrel was against the murderers. He represented those who started war as murderers in order to raise a public outrage. In addition, he employed the metaphor

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

of shaking hands between his intended audience and his enemy in order to show them that any engagement with the opponent would deprive them of public support. The speaker depicted the impact of the conflict in the battle between the owners of the country and their murderers and by doing so he enabled the American people to engage themselves in the same fight. This invitation to a public anger also became united with the speaker's personal indignation.

Paine showed his ability to act as a rational teacher in several places in the pamphlet. One such example appears at the beginning of the introduction:

Some writers have so confounded society with government, as to leave a little or no distinction between them; whereas, they are not only different, but they have different origins. Society is produced by our affections, the latter negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher.<sup>58</sup>

In the above quotation, Paine distinguished between the government and society. Paine's style indicated logical comparison between what effect the society and the government have on the people. The author's voice showed a rational and impersonal style by introducing different rhetorical devices like the opposition of the subjects, 'society', and 'government', which is developed further in the syntactic parallelism of clauses in the last three sentences, emphasising the contrast between the two ideas. Moreover, the voice was addressed to the public, as it included the possessive pronoun 'our' by which the addressees were encouraged to evaluate the general idea of the speaker.

Paine's ideas about society in *Common Sense* seemed to be connected with those of Anthony Ashley, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) the author of a collected treatise, the *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* in 1711<sup>59</sup> which discussed society during the eighteenth century. Shaftesbury presented the ideal meaning of the

Sense of Publick weal, and of Common Interest; Love of the community or Society, Natural affection, Humanity, obligingness, or that sort of Civility which rises from a just Sense of the common

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Anthony Ashley Cooper, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinion, Times*, ed. by Philip Ayres, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), I, p. xiii.

Rights of Mankind, and the natural Equality there is amongst those of the same Species.<sup>60</sup>

Shaftesbury's argument was like Paine's because he showed his sympathy towards society. For Paine the foundation of America was an important opportunity to start a new society and he continued his quarrel for several years through a serious discussion of the war in his publication of *The American Crisis* (1776-1783). Shaftesbury's observations provided interesting comparison with Paine's argument in his pamphlet in relation to the concept of society that differed from the government. Paine expressed some ideas which mirrored the way Shaftesbury connected to the society or the country as a whole. Shaftesbury made a contribution to the need of common rights such as those introduced by Paine in his *Common Sense*. For example, Shaftesbury indicated in his Treatise II that there were some matters that appear naturally as a country becomes a huge Empire, and those issues reflect on the people of those countries. Shaftesbury illustrated:

When the Society grows vast, and bulky: And powerful States have found other Advantages in the Colonys Abroad, than merely that of having Elbow-room at Home, or extending their Dominion into distant Countrys. Vast Empires are in many respects unnatural: but particularly in this, That be they ever so well constituted, the Affairs of many must, in such Governments, turn upon a very few; and the Relation be less sensible, and in a manner lost, between the Magistrate and People.<sup>61</sup>

The quote above demonstrates that society and the state had different characteristics. The society became weaker, while the state was stronger and as a result their relation started having less sense. Shaftesbury showed society's awareness of the tension in the eighteenth century about the impact of creating large empires. The view of Shaftesbury, which he discussed nearly fifty years before Paine, was reflected in Paine's *Common Sense*. In the pamphlet, Paine like Shaftesbury showed the awareness of the unnatural powers of the spreading Empire. Paine believed that the increase of the colony would harm the public because such a political circumstance creates problems like when the government start to argue 'the number of the representatives, and that the increase of every part of the colony'.<sup>62</sup> Paine criticised

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>62</sup> Paine, *Common Sense*, p.3.

the government in general because of its 'inability of moral virtue to govern the world'.<sup>63</sup>

Paine fought against the creation of Monarchy, and he used reasons from nature and religion in order to show his audience the apparent difference between the natural and unnatural creations. He criticised the irrational institution of the Monarchy and he contrasted its existence to the natural and rational concepts; for example, he stated:

But there is another and greater distinction for which no truly natural or religious reason can be assigned, and that is, the distinction of Men into KINGS and SUBJECTS, Male and female are the distinctions of nature, good and bad the distinction of Heaven; but how a race of Men came into the World so exalted above the rest, and distinguish like some new species, is worth enquiring into, and whether they are the means of happiness or misery to mankind.<sup>64</sup>

Paine spoke to people rationally and helped them to investigate the distinction between kings and subjects, contrasting this to the distinction between male and female in nature. By grounding his argument in universal knowledge, Paine aimed to give his argument the appearance of fact, and invited the audience to question the 'natural' hierarchies that had evolved in society. Thus although employing a logical and reasoned tone, Paine encouraged his audience to ask radical questions.

At some places in his political dispute in relation to the American cause, Paine imbued his rhetoric with an assertive tone and showed his personal opinion explicitly and strongly. In *Common Sense*, Paine expressed his thoughts without fear. His political reaction towards America showed that he was no longer scared of his persecutors. For example, he showed his personal decision in relation to the American political issue with England by reminding them of all the efforts towards the political reconciliation:

Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy, from different motives, and with various designs; but all have been ineffectual, and the period of debate is closed. Arms as the

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 7.



last resource decide the contest; the appeal was the choice of the King, and the continent has accepted the challenge.<sup>65</sup>

Here, Paine acknowledged to the readers that efforts had been made in order to solve the American struggle with England. He also recognised all the political arguments which involved men of all ranks, referring to those politicians, writers, political representatives in America, clergy men, and even the general public in both countries who addressed the British relations with its colonies. A work like that of John Dalrymple's *An Address of the People of Great Britain to the Inhabitants of America*, which is discussed in greater detail below,<sup>66</sup> was an essential example of those writings of reconciliation. The tone in the quote showed that the speaker lost interest in those 'ineffectual' attempts, so he stated that the time of those kinds of debates had ended. Paine's statement showed the implied meaning of starting the war, but he intentionally showed his addressees that such a choice was in fact aimed at by the king. By adding further information in which the persona blamed the king for the war, the speaker aimed to create more aggression against the British hostility in the colonies.

In America, *Common Sense* was received zealously as it was read among Washington's soldiers in their leisure time.<sup>67</sup> It encouraged the rebels led by George Washington who considered the war to be the most important time for America because it was about victory and independence. There was a clear difference between Washington's way of quarrelling to encourage intolerance against his enemies in the battlefield, and the argumentative ways in the writings such as that of Paine in discussing the same theme of the war in *Common Sense*. For example, Washington's addressees were to his army whose 'honour and [...] success'<sup>68</sup> their country depended on. Washington shouldered a great responsibility for his army in the War of Independence, which could be seen in his quarrelling manner and his encouragement of the bravery of his soldiers. Paine took a different route in order to reach the national and international understanding. Paine needed to stir the hearts which Washington might fail to encourage in the battle. By writing his *Common*

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>66</sup> John Dalrymple, *An Address of the People of Great Britain to the Inhabitants of America* (London: 1775), in *ECCO* [accessed 18 August 2012].

<sup>67</sup> Keane, p. 140.

<sup>68</sup> Millward, p. 141.

*Sense*, Paine aimed to convince every man to take up arms and contribute to the freedom of the country.

The political discourse during wartime could be described as quarrelling, especially that of Washington who aimed to encourage his soldiers to fight back. Washington's quarrelling attitude was less sophisticated than that of Paine who was trying to persuade his addressees of the fundamental reasons of why they needed to separate from England. Washington's statements when he spoke to his audiences were short. He imparted military confidence and he tried to show the main reason of that war, stating: 'Remember, Officers and soldiers, that you are freemen, fighting for the blessings of liberty; [...]'.<sup>69</sup> In addition, Washington reminded his army of the necessity of fighting, telling them that if they die they will be distinguished by 'immortal honour'.<sup>70</sup> Paine's *Common Sense* also spoke about the same issues; war and liberty, and like Washington, Paine addressed both the soldiers and the ordinary Americans. Washington, unlike Paine, needed to win every battle in practice. His language did not convey a personal quarrel to the public; instead he made the public quarrel with the enemy at war personal and related it to every American soldier in the battlefield. For example, Washington warned his soldiers, 'if any man attempt to skulk, lie down or retreat without orders, he be instantly shot down as an example.'<sup>71</sup> Yet, if they die for the cause of their country, he insisted that 'they will by a glorious victory save their country'.<sup>72</sup> Washington was concerned about 'glorious victory', and 'being honourably noticed'.<sup>73</sup> He had to be careful to present the invasion in negative terms, which needed to be resisted. Paine's manner was different from that of Washington, because the latter's style showed firm orders towards acting bravely in the battlefield. Washington's voice indicated how he employed a merciless attitude against those who escape the fighting. Paine sought to convince his audience to become engaged in the combat by the power of argument rather than threat.

Paine opposed the political views defending the current state of the British - American relationship. He created a closer relation with his addressees by establishing friendly communication with them, as he directly told them what he

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p.141.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p.141.

heard and what his comment about it. While sharing with them his personal point of view, he used the pronoun ‘I’ as in the following quote which also showed the speaker’s confidence:

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America hath flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, that the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness and will always have the same effect— Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument...But even this is admitting more than is true, for I answer, roundly, that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power taken any notice of her.<sup>74</sup>

Paine aimed to show the general public and his political opponents that his view was objective, yet he tried to reflect their ‘fallacious’ argument which contradicted with his own personal interpretation. Paine’s quarrel aimed to oppose the argument of those who believe that America was supported by Britain. In doing so he aimed to encourage his audience to show the King that they ‘[had] accepted the challenge’<sup>75</sup> for their country and were ready make it stand independently, without Britain.

Paine did not use a personal tone when he started his pamphlet, then as his argument developed he illustrated the reasons behind his own personal opinion of considering the separation from Britain especially after the British hostility caused bloodshed in American cities where a group of seventy men who placed themselves under the new radical establishment to free America, met six hundred British soldiers coming from Boston in a battle at Lexington, and that fight became the starting point of the revolutionary war.<sup>76</sup> In trying to persuade them of the necessity of American Independence, Paine stated to his audience:

No man was a warmer wisher for reconciliation than myself, before the fatal 19<sup>th</sup> of April 1775, but the moment the event of that day was made known I rejected the hardened, sullen tempered Pharoah of England for ever; and disdain the wretch, that with the pretended title of FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his soul.<sup>77</sup>

In the above quote, Paine indicated that he did not initially want to separate from Britain, but the reactions to the revolutionaries provoked his angry response and

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<sup>74</sup> Paine, *Common Sense*, p. 18.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>76</sup> Anne Todd, *The Revolutionary War* (Minnesota: Capstone Press, 2001), pp. 16-17.

<sup>77</sup> Paine, *Common Sense*, pp. 26-27.

caused him to openly reject his enemy's aggressive attitudes against America. Paine aimed to reveal to all his audience including his opponents that his combat became eternal and 'for ever'. In the first part, Paine used a metaphor in order to show the extreme cruelty of the king of England in which the king had a similar attitude towards his people as that of Pharoah whose hostility caused Moses to flee Egypt in order to find peace. By drawing here on biblical references, in the use of the term 'Pharoah', which made the Americans seem like the oppressed Israelites, Paine was appealing to religious ideologies that many would have shared at this point. Furthermore, with even stronger anger, Paine condemned the god-like role that the king had adopted, describing the term 'father' as a 'pretended title'. Additionally, the last part of Paine's statement employed alliteration in his use of sibilance, through the sound 'S' in 'slaughter', 'sleep' and 'soul'. Those repeated sounds implied a repeated carelessness of the King towards his people and provided a dramatic finish to his statement.

The frustration of losing America caused criticism against the government as a writer for the *Public Advertiser* commented on the reactions that might protest against the *Common Sense*:

Do you, my lord, expend so many thousands of the public money, in hiring writers and circulating pamphlets, to give the people the opinion of public measures which you think already entertain?<sup>78</sup>

Here, the writer confirmed the government's attempts to gain public favour by attacking Paine for his publication. Paine received criticism from figures such as James Chalmers (1742-1810), an editor and printer of *Aberdeen Journal*, who was trained as a journalist in London and Cambridge,<sup>79</sup> John Dalrymple, and James Honey. Even though *Common Sense* was written to encourage the American inhabitants to split their connection with Britain, opponents in America and England Paine's views condemned Paine's attacks on the British ruling government and the king. Chalmers replied to Paine's *Common Sense* in his pamphlet: *Plain Truth*;

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<sup>78</sup> 'News', *Public Advertiser*, 11 May 1776, in *British Newspapers 1600-1950*

<[http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE\\_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2001158828&contentSet=LTO&source=gale](http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNWS&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=nottstrent&docPage=article&docId=Z2001158828&contentSet=LTO&source=gale)> [accessed 26 September 2014].

<sup>79</sup> L. Brake and M. Demoor, eds, *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism* (London: Academia Press, 2009), p. 104.

*Addressed to the inhabitants of America, Containing Remarks on a Late pamphlet, Entitled Common Sense* (1776).

Chalmers stated in his introduction that Paine's pamphlet could bring the country to 'Ruin, Horror, and Desolation',<sup>80</sup> and accordingly he emphasised how American independence was inadequate because 'the interest of Britain and America are so nearly related and their commercial felicity so independent upon reciprocity of kindness to each other'.<sup>81</sup> As Paine involved the public and intended to discuss every detail of the issue in order to convince his readers, Chalmers too aimed to show his concern about America and how the Americans should not ruin the good-terms relationship they enjoyed with Britain. Knowing that the British government had reacted badly against its colonies, Paine's attacker was aware that Paine's *Common Sense* might have already influenced his addressees; therefore, Chalmers chose to disagree with Paine about the future of America without Britain and not about their present situation or what led them to start the war. Chalmers stated that the Kingdom was 'a perfect Bee-hive',<sup>82</sup> and it contained more wealth than the rest of Europe.<sup>83</sup> He also declared that 'Great Britain could equip fleets, sufficiently formidable, to contend with all the naval force, that could, or would act against her'.<sup>84</sup> He emphasised Britain's ability to defeat any force that opposes her was indicated by Paine when he questioned the manipulating attitude of the power of 'parent, or a mother country'.<sup>85</sup>

Paine's audience were also addressed in sentimental language in other works such as Dalrymple's pamphlet of 1775. Dalrymple was a political rival who acted against the unrest, and addressed the American public as friends of Britain. After the parliament imposed some 'regulations'<sup>86</sup> on the town of Boston, Dalrymple intended to explain the parliament's moral duty towards the Americans saying that the 'parliament left an open door for reconciliation'.<sup>87</sup> Yet, he ended his kind statement by suggesting the disturbance came from the people of that town as he inquired: 'If

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<sup>80</sup> James Chalmers, *Plain Truth; Addressed to the Inhabitants of America, Containing Remarks on a Late pamphlet, Entitled Common Sense* (London: 1776), in ECCO [accessed 20 May 2013].

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-33.

<sup>85</sup> Paine, *Common Sense*, p. 19.

<sup>86</sup> Dalrymple, *The Address of the People of Great Britain to the Inhabitants of America*, p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

the people of Boston would not enter, who has been in the fault?’<sup>88</sup> In doing so, Dalrymple made Paine’s task more challenging, simply because the American inhabitants were told by Dalrymple that their congress proposed ‘the resolution not to export or import’.<sup>89</sup> The British, according to Dalrymple ‘forgive, the two modes, by which [the American] Congress proposes to disappoint the wishes of Britain for the good of America; the one threatens war, the other a suspension of trade’.<sup>90</sup> Thus, it was still a very hard time for the Continental Congress which was formed on September 1774.<sup>91</sup> In addition, Peter G. Thomas suggests that the ‘American attitudes were complex and even contradictory’,<sup>92</sup> because ‘some colonists welcomed a Congress as a more moderate alternative to a prompt trade boycott, others of more radical bent thought it a path to colonial unity, and there were conservatives who therefore refused to participate’.<sup>93</sup>

Despite the complexity of American attitudes, it is clear that Paine once again employed a rational, logical tone in order to engage in the larger battle being fought over American independence. In this writing, though, he was addressing a different audience and so he used different types of rhetorical strategies that would appeal to their own knowledge and understanding of the world. Paine showed himself to be a very adaptable author when writing for different political causes he believed in.

### **Paine’s Quarrels with Burke**

While Paine mostly quarrelled over large political events in his work, he also engaged in textual quarrels over political ideas expressed by other authors. His most famous work in which we see this appear is *The Rights of Man*. Paine published his work *The Rights of Man* into two parts. It was a political response to Burke, a Whig party member. Burke published his political opinion on the French Revolution in his pamphlet *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in 1790. Burke’s political opinion was criticized by Paine’s *The Rights of Man* in 1791, and again in *The Rights of Man*

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>91</sup> Peter D. G. Thomas, *Revolution in America: Britain & the Colonies 1763-1776* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992), p. 45.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

edition in 1792, which responded to his publication of *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* in 1791. The main focus in this last part of this chapter is Paine's quarrelling style in his personal reply to Burke over his political writings. Paine's response reflected a development in his political argument and showed the increase of personal anger towards political debates. The following argument will investigate the political quarrel that occurred in Paine's first pamphlet *The Rights of Man* as a determined reply to Burke's *Reflections*. The focus will explain that the personal element in Paine's quarrel with Burke appeared in rhetorical form, through techniques such as rational political contrast and ironical style. In order to defeat his enemy, Paine sought to appeal to the public in order to make them share his personal hostility.

The origin of *Reflections*, as Burke revealed, was a correspondence between him and a young French man who asked him for his opinion about the political change in France. Burke aimed to express his views about the circumstance in France in a form of a letter in response to this young man, but he realized that his discussion of such sentiments caused him to take a further step and distribute the substance of his argument to a wider audience.<sup>94</sup> Burke's thoughts about the revolution in France seemed to be based on a precise contrast between the British constitution and the events in France. Paine was inspired by the American Revolution and thus he had concerns that his opponent's opinion on the revolution in France would affect people's thoughts about American liberty. Paine's *The Rights of Man* in 1791 was designed to be a response to Burke, but his political discourse was expanded to address the general public. Both authors' political replies showed different personal and political criticisms to different political powers.

While in *Common Sense* Paine tried to refrain from causing offence, but still expressed an opinion on those who did not hold acceptable views,<sup>95</sup> in *The Rights of Man*, he became more open to quarrel as a means to express his criticism. In *Common Sense* he was motivated to quarrel against those who 'cannot see'.<sup>96</sup> Yet, *The Rights of Man* particularly was a criticism of one author's attack against the

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<sup>94</sup> Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London in a letter Intended to have been Sent to a gentleman in Paris* (London: 1790), pp. iii-iv.

<sup>95</sup> Paine, *Common Sense*, p. 23.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

revolutionary movement in France. Such political reaction of Paine in replying to his opponent in a political pamphlet reveals his use of the pamphlet form as a different method of fighting a public battle through a personal quarrel. As Larkin suggests, he ‘insist[ed] on personalizing his interventions in the public arena.’<sup>97</sup> Unlike *The Case of the Excise Officers* and *Common Sense*, *The Rights of Man* was addressed to one opponent and more often Paine repeated his rival by name. In *The Case of the Excise Officers*, Paine did not attack his opponent directly, because his intention was aimed to convince his main opponents to do justice. In *Common Sense*, Paine’s style was often very rational and that attitude enabled him to be impersonal. Paine’s role was different in *The Rights of Man*, because his personal opinion was mixed with the feeling of the public. Thus, as he replied to his opponent, he imbued his argument with a more explicit angry tone.

In *The Rights of Man*, Paine rejected Burke’s views against the French Revolution. Paine’s pamphlet against Burke’s *Reflections* indicated his personal commitment for the revolutions against Monarchy and government as he stressed in his *Common Sense* when he defended the American Revolution. Paine’s voice in *The Rights of Man*, regardless to his aggressiveness towards his opponent, it was about emphasizing his personal political opinion to all mankind. It seems that Paine also aimed to be favoured by his political peers in America and he reminded them of their shared political views. He dedicated *The Rights of Man* to George Washington, the president of the United States of America. Paine stated: ‘I PRESENT you a small Treatise defence of those Principles of Freedom which your exemplary Virtue hath so eminently contributed to establish.’<sup>98</sup> Paine’s political approach as he involved Washington indicated a strong personal intimacy between them as they both believed in the rights of mankind. Paine’s intention in replying to Burke was previously decided as he promised his friends that he would answer Burke’s pamphlet.<sup>99</sup> Such an intention made it possible to predict that Paine was aiming to create a personal dispute.

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<sup>97</sup> Edward Larkin, *Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 151.

<sup>98</sup> Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man: Being an Answer to Mr Burke’s Attack on the French Revolution* (London: 1791), Google ebook.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. vii-viii.



Burke previously supported the American Revolution, but his publication of his political pamphlet *Reflections* showed a change in his political views. *Reflections* showed Burke's disapproval of the revolution in France which Paine was strongly supporting. Burke's political reaction to explicit attacks on the events in France provoked Paine's anger. Burke's attack started as he denied the existence of two clubs in his country which interfered in French affairs.<sup>100</sup> He believed that those clubs did not exist in Britain, so he stated to his audience:

The National Assembly of France has given importance to these gentlemen by adopting them; and they return the favour, by acting as a sort of sub-committee in England for extending the principles of the National Assembly.<sup>101</sup>

Burke went on in squabbling against the origins of those clubs as charitable clubs.<sup>102</sup> He drew back his claims by stating that he did not want to speak about a foreign country without expressing the authority of his government.<sup>103</sup> With this kind of comment on a highly political issue Burke showed his close connection to the state.

Later, the style of Paine's reply to Burke indicated what Larkin suggests about his way of making 'a wide popular audience'.<sup>104</sup> Paine's argument against Burke showed that he used it as a chance to display his political opinions for the public. For example, Paine stated his opinion against the assumption of Burke and that of the English parliament. Burke was against the French revolution and the National Assembly,<sup>105</sup> thus Paine intended to express his disagreement with him by condemning the obsessive belief of his opponent in keeping the political powers over people. Paine's directness in opposing that power showed his great support of the people by rejecting their oppressors. Paine expressed his negative tone through his response to Burke to guide the intention of the public towards a serious political issue. Paine wrote his view on the matter by stating:

There never did, there never will, and there never can exist a parliament, or any description of men, or any generation of men, in

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>101</sup> Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 4.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>104</sup> Larkin, p. 1.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

any country, possessed of the right or power of binding and controuling posterity to the "end of time."<sup>106</sup>

The quote reflected a decisive personal opinion through Paine's repetition of 'there never', which was followed by past tense, future, and a tense which indicated a perennial impossibility. Paine repeated 'never' to convey his absolute certainty of opinion. Also, the repetition could affirm a similar response that echoed public decisions which were made in the past and people would continue to refuse it until the end. The persona was relatively angry and he refused to accept the parliamentary power at any time. The angry statements indicated the emotional involvement of the speaker, as he described Burke's debate as 'outrageous abuse on the French Revolution, and the principles of Liberty, it is an imposition on the rest of the world'.<sup>107</sup> This statement represented a continuing combat and a firm response against the controlling powers which aimed to oppose the idea of the 'revolution and the principles of Liberty'. Paine suggested that Burke's abuse was intended to be imposed on the rest of the world.

In writing in response to Burke, Paine showed a more expressive style of quarrelling. He expanded his opposition to Burke into a broader defence of the 'rights of man' and perhaps because of the huge implications of this quarrel, Paine argued in a more forceful and angry style of writing. Paine enforced his criticism against Burke's political argument in his *Reflections*; he stated that 'a greater absurdity cannot present itself to the understanding of a man, than what Mr Burke offers to his readers'.<sup>108</sup> Paine created a ludicrous scene as he criticized the way Burke set his argument. He added that Burke told his audience: 'he tells them, and he tells the world to come, that a certain body of men, who existed a hundred years ago, made a law'.<sup>109</sup> He aimed to show how Burke was unable to realise that his political 'assumption',<sup>110</sup> belonged to the past and trying to impose them again on people 'show[ed], that the rights of man were but imperfectly understood at the revolution'.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>107</sup> Paine, *Rights of Man*, p. viii.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

Over the course of this chapter, we have seen many different styles employed in Paine's political quarrels. Paine adjusted his style of quarrelling according to the nature of political events. In his early pamphlet in relation to the excise officers, Paine presented a very carefully reasoned and cautiously phrased argument designed to be read by both Houses of the parliament. Through his debate, Paine portrayed the conflicting situation of the exisemen as they struggled against poverty. Paine's address to a higher political rank indicated his personal ambition to make changes for the poor officers. In contrast, his *Common Sense* spoke to a larger audience and aimed to help the Americans to be freed from their tyranny. This text made Paine an influential radical figure in America, and a targeted enemy by his accusers in England. Paine's pamphlet raised the attention of the American public, but it created a controversy in British politics. However, Paine's *Common Sense* indicated a direct engagement in a political combat. He explained to his addressees that he was against British rule of America. In this pamphlet Paine also showed restraint in his style of writing and employed logic and rationality in order to appeal to his audience. He also drew on references his audience would know like biblical figures, in order to appeal to their moral sense. In *The Rights of Man*, however, Paine defended the French Revolution and the even wider political implications of this. He engaged himself in the most personal of all combat in this text which enabled him to combat Burke's ideas and to appeal to a large audience. This chapter shows Paine's style of writing change as his audience expands. His initial caution when dealing with matters very close to home turn into anger at larger issues later on and we see this through his changes in rhetoric. So we see that each of Paine's works examined in this study could be considered as a different kind of political battle, fought through changing strategies.

As this chapter has demonstrated, there are significant similarities in the way that Burgoyne's and Paine's political quarrels unfolded and intensified, despite the fact that the two authors occupied different social positions and faced different expectations from their audiences. Paine's writing of the first pamphlet to the parliament about the *Case of the Officers of Excise* and Burgoyne's writing of his early pamphlet to the people in the parliament were closer to one another, because through these particular pamphlets, both Burgoyne and Paine aimed to reach a parliamentary solution before taking their disagreements to further audiences and

addressees. Both authors started by addressing specific groups before moving to address the wider audiences of the general public. Moreover, expanding their audiences seemed to be one of the political strategies that the pamphlets enabled the authors to achieve. Burgoyne and Paine had something in common as they were both disappointed by the controlling political system. The neglect of the parliament in both cases of the two early pamphlets of Burgoyne and Paine, caused them to employ further political debates in order to investigate and direct the political opinions of the general public.

Paine's quarrelsome writing style in his later works presented him as very outspoken, and he was able to adopt such a tone because he was independent from any type of social or political groups such as those to which Burgoyne belonged. Paine did not always reveal his personal motives behind his writings of the political pamphlet, unlike Burgoyne, who in all his pamphlets focused on his own personal deeds for the political system which betrayed him. Paine was able to imply his emotions in a seemingly flat and rational tone. When Burgoyne needed to choose specific groups to argue his case in order to secure his public character, Paine used his public voice by applying it directly against his political enemies not only by naming them but by challenging them in political debates as he responded to Burke in his *Rights of Man*.

In the following chapter, I will examine yet another manner of quarrelling, which combined features of the two extreme positions of quarrelling exemplified in my discussion of General Burgoyne and Thomas Paine. The style adopted by the writer in the third case study, William Cobbett, combined patriotism and certain respect for authority (especially that of the king) with political independence and carving his new path for expressing new and radical views. Similar to Burgoyne and Paine, Cobbett produced a political pamphlet, *The Soldier's Friend*, at the very early stage of his writing which had similar examples of polite style and straight forward manner to Burgoyne and Paine's first pamphlets. The similarity between Burgoyne and Cobbett appeared in their criticism of the government's actions, but not of the king. Unlike Burgoyne and Paine, Cobbett did not reveal his authorship of his first pamphlet, because of his position and his fear of prosecution. Cobbett's later writings showed a more independent and a stronger tone from those of Paine.

However, he kept great respect of the sovereign which Paine's writings totally lacked.

## Chapter 3:

### **Anger and Politeness in the Political Quarrels of William Cobbett**

In the current chapter, I argue that Cobbett's political career was influenced by his personal and public disagreements. While chapter one and two explained the circumstances around the American War of Independence, exploring how Burgoyne defended his loss of the 1777 campaign and Paine defended the freedom of America, this chapter discusses Cobbett's specific style of political quarrelling in the context of the difficult economic conditions in England in the aftermath of the war, when oligarchs dominated and suppressed the sudden changes in the country during the reign of George III. This chapter will illustrate the similarities and differences of Cobbett's manner of quarrelling to those of Burgoyne and Paine, in terms of tactics of quarrelling, such as the use of politeness or the expression of anger. My reading of Cobbett will help to investigate how he managed to address various readerships that ranged from the working-class audiences to the royal family. Cobbett's publications on current events in his periodical, the *Political Register*, I suggest, became a historical and cultural reference that informed the public about the political actions and the social transformations the country was experiencing. I will show how Cobbett maintained a strong relationship with the ordinary public while he aggressively confronted the actions of some political reformers and opponents.

The chapter investigates Cobbett's methods of quarrelling with his opponents, and the different ways that he attacked his enemies through various forms of argumentative writings, such as letters, pamphlets, and newspapers. It outlines the development of Cobbett's political views, and the manner in which he expressed them, starting with his political texts between 1792-1800 in which he expressed his opposition to the new American leaders and defended the King's sovereignty. The chapter considers Cobbett's views against the political situation in England as the country tried to heal from war. Cobbett became a radical author opposing the government's treatment towards working class people in England, and engaged in a political quarrel with his opponents who included army officers, law officers, priests, and members of the parliament— individuals in positions of power who were all involved in some form of corruption in Cobbett's opinion. Cobbett expressed his radical views for the first time when he wrote against the flogging in the army in

1809. As a result of his criticism, Cobbett was imprisoned for two years in Newgate prison in 1810 and was discharged in 1812. Cobbett became one of the government's opponents after his release as he became a radical reformer.<sup>1</sup> According to Nattrass, the time when Cobbett's *Political Register* was most widely read was in 1816 and 1817. By that time, Cobbett's political views had 'swung leftwards'<sup>2</sup> and Cobbett enjoyed the attention of both 'refined classes'<sup>3</sup> whom his earlier more conservative writings had attracted and the working classes for which he produced cheap prints of the leading article of the *Political Register*.<sup>4</sup> As Nattrass observes, 'at this time, in other words, Cobbett was read by everyone from government ministers to ploughboys.'<sup>5</sup> Also, she explains, Cobbett's influential writings which addressed the lower classes contributed to the government's introduction of legislation against the freedom of speech of the press. In order to protect himself from the threat of new imprisonment and to be able to continue his political combat, Cobbett moved to America in 1817.<sup>6</sup>

### **Cobbett's Major Works**

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Cobbett's arguments in his letters, and also early pamphlets, such as *The Soldier's Friend* (1792), and the *Political Register*, a periodical which he started publishing in 1802 after refusing to establish a pro-government newspaper under the guidance of the Parliamentary Administration. As the issue of Cobbett's notorious anger is a fundamental part of this chapter, I will first focus on the events of the proposed court martial as an important start of Cobbett's calls for justice. Then, the chapter will examine Cobbett's early personal quarrel pamphlet; *The Soldier's Friend* (1792) which showed his radical views. In *The Soldier's Friend* Cobbett expressed his 'passionate indictment of the harsh treatment and poor pay of the common soldier'.<sup>7</sup> Cobbett published his pamphlet

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<sup>1</sup> Leonora Nattrass, *William Cobbett: The Politics of Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 3-4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ian Dyck 'Cobbett, William (1763–1835),' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [accessed 10 September 2014].

anonymously after he was discharged from his military services in 1791.<sup>8</sup> At this stage, he did not feel safe enough to confess his authorship. William Hazlitt noticed that Cobbett admitted writing the old radical work only later in his life.<sup>9</sup> I will refer to his *Peter Porcupine* (1794-1799), the main work which Cobbett wrote in America after his escape from England for political reasons in 1792. In that period, under the pen-name Peter Porcupine,<sup>10</sup> he published a collection of twelve volumes in *Porcupine's Works*. Those publications of Cobbett were against the French Revolution in 1793.<sup>11</sup> There will be an extensive discussion of Cobbett's *Political Register* (1802-1835). Here, the focus will be on Cobbett's writings in this newspaper only between 1800 and 1819, as this particular period provides plenty of examples of Cobbett's political and social quarrelling. However, I will also refer to some later publications of the *Political Register* which are outside of the selected period in this chapter but which refer to and re-examine earlier events in Cobbett's career. In this part, the thesis will be analysing examples from Cobbett's epistolary works and rhetorical strategies in his political writings. Cobbett addressed his letters in the *Political Register* to different people; he wrote to his friends, addressing residents of particular parts of the country on topics of local importance, and to the royal family. In those letters he complained about the state of the country, the way the government made its decisions in relation to war, economics, and politics. Cobbett also included his own battle with the government, especially that of his time when he was prosecuted and imprisoned.

When analysing his political quarrels in the *Political Register*, the chapter will investigate further examples of Cobbett's political and personal resistance represented through public quarrels such as his second radical engagement in 1809 after he criticized the flogging of the soldiers. Also, I will consider examples from other years of *Cobbett's Political Register* in relation to similar personal arguments with which he aimed to engage the public. Cobbett's publication kept historical records of the events and manners of those with whom he interacted. Cobbett's writing in his weekly newspaper gave the readers an alternative to newspapers supported by the government. Cobbett's openness about political issues showed

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., n. p.

<sup>9</sup> William Hazlitt, 'Character of Cobbett', in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. by P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1931), VIII, pp. 52-53.

<sup>10</sup> Dyck, n. p.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., n. p.



respect for and support of the public. The way his work lasted during his time abroad indicated his dedication to his countrymen. It also showed how his readers were interested to hear the opinion of one of their countrymen. His continuous involvement with contemporary issues in the social and political life of his country suggested a lasting relationship with the labouring classes, which started with his early pamphlet, *The Soldier's Friend*.

In this chapter, I will also be referring to Cobbett's letters, for example letters addressed to Edward Thornton who was a secretary at the British Embassy in America. A collection of those letters were published in *William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*: written in the years 1797 to 1800 (1937). In addition, I will be using a number of public and private letters which Cobbett published in his *Political Register*, especially those which he wrote during his radical years and included a political quarrel.

In some parts of the argument, I will rely on biographies such as *William Cobbett: Englishman: A Biography* by Antony Burton (1997) and *The Autobiography of William Cobbett*, edited by William Reitzel (1967). James Sambrook stated in his book *William Cobbett* (1973), that Reitzel's autobiography brings 'together the autobiographical parts of Cobbett's writings to form the best available 'Life.'<sup>12</sup> This autobiography explained major events from Cobbett's personal life, his involvement with the political situation, and how he commented on important occasions in his life in his own writings. For this reason I use this book as a credible source of information about Cobbett's life and his political views.

### **Cobbett's Military Concerns**

Cobbett registered in the military in 1783, and after his first year 'was stationed at Chatham, where he worked at his military exercises and read voraciously'.<sup>13</sup> Cobbett devoted himself to his job as he put his learning alongside his military employment. Accordingly, he had the chance to be raised from a clerk to the rank of corporal, and soon became sergeant major.<sup>14</sup> His quick progress indicated that Cobbett devoted

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<sup>12</sup> James Sambrook, *William Cobbett* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 215.

<sup>13</sup> Dyck, n. p.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., n. p.

himself to what was required in his service as a soldier. He joined the army in his early twenties, becoming a member of ‘His Majesty’s 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, and joined those soldiers who went to Canada’.<sup>15</sup> Cobbett was enlisted after the Peace Agreement at Versailles,<sup>16</sup> in 1784. His joining the army might be interpreted as evidence of his early support to the King. He served at the border between Canada and America for seven years to protect those ‘loyalists who had fled from the colonies as a result of the war of independence’.<sup>17</sup> As a soldier, Cobbett shared the despair of his fellow soldiers and he noticed ‘instances of peculation by the officers at his regiment’,<sup>18</sup> when he was in North America. Despite the diplomatic success of the peace agreement, the army faced hunger and bad living conditions. Sending troops to the other side of the Atlantic was a repetition of the mistake during the British-American War, especially the 1777 campaign led by Burgoyne, when the British army in America lacked sufficient food and equipment and faced difficult conditions. After the seven years of his military career, Cobbett left the army in 1791.<sup>19</sup> After Cobbett was discharged from the army, he wrote his pamphlet *The Soldier’s Friend* (1792).<sup>20</sup> Natrass considers Cobbett’s writing of the pamphlet as a sign of his radical views.<sup>21</sup> This early pamphlet of Cobbett discussed the corruption he noticed amongst the officers during his time in the regiment.

Cobbett did not have time to explain his reactions to the harsh circumstances he encountered with the other soldiers in 1785-1791 in Canada, because he escaped the Court-martial he had requested and went to America in 1792. Nine years after Cobbett returned to his country, he was able to explain in his *Political Register* in 1809 what exactly happened during the years when he served in the army. In 1809, Cobbett aimed to explain to his audience ‘the falsehood, the malice, and the incomparable baseness of the Associates in Corruption’.<sup>22</sup> He based his personal

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<sup>15</sup> Anthony Burton, *William Cobbett, Englishman: A Biography* (London: Aurum Press, 1997), p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> George Spater, *William Cobbett: The Poor Man’s Friend*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), I, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Dyck, n.p.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, n.p.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, n.p.

<sup>21</sup> Natrass, p. 33.

<sup>22</sup> William Cobbett, ‘To the Independent People of Hampshire: The Court Martial’, *Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register*, 17 June 1809, pp. 897-919 (p. 898).

attacks against his accusers; those who stood against ‘Parliamentary Reform’,<sup>23</sup> and who published a false account of his court-martial of 1792. Thus, Cobbett wanted to stand against his personal attackers and fight against his accusers, so he openly represented them as public enemies, stating:

I am accusing the associates in corruption of various crimes against people. I am exposing their robberies to the people, and I am proposing the means of preventing such robberies in the future.<sup>24</sup>

Cobbett aimed to connect what happened to him in 1792 when he wanted ‘to bring certain officers to justice for having, in various ways, wronged both the public and the soldier’,<sup>25</sup> to what he encountered again in 1809, because the corruption association was still present in the country. Also, when Cobbett started with the first person pronoun in the above quotation and repeatedly emphasized it, he associated his personal suffering with that of society more broadly. By saying that he would stand on his own to defend the public, he navigated his way between public and private conflicts. It is noticeable for the reader here that Cobbett considered his fight with his enemies to be for a public reason. His anger at the acts of the officers in the army prompted him to begin a quarrel. For example, he ‘began to collect materials for an exposure, upon [his] return to England’,<sup>26</sup> as he considered the importance of gathering evidence to support his case in front of the court. As he explained in the *Political Register*, he personally investigated some ‘regimental books, rolls, and other documents’.<sup>27</sup>

One of the parallels between Cobbett’s and Burgoyne’s situations of conflict is that Burgoyne was involved in a similar incident when he needed to collect evidence to justify his surrender at Saratoga in 1777. Burgoyne needed to provide a full account of what had happened during his military operations which ended in surrendering the British soldiers to the American army. Burgoyne had to address the parliament and explain his decision in order to avoid military prosecution. On the 19<sup>th</sup> December 1791, as Serjeant Major of the regiment in Canada, Cobbett received

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 897.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 897.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 900.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 902.

<sup>27</sup> William Reitzel, ed., *The Autobiography of William Cobbett* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), p. 48.

the discharge letter which he had asked for from his major, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, saying:

WILLIAM COBBETT, Serjeant Major [...] has served honestly and faithfully for the space of eight years, nearly seven of which he has been non-commissioned officer, and of that time he has been five years Serjeant Major to the regiment; but having very earnestly applied for his discharge, he, in consideration of his good behaviour, and the services he has rendered the regiment, is hereby discharged.<sup>28</sup>

Yet in 1809, Cobbett felt that he was wrongly understood by the public, because of the way his enemies presented him in the account of a Court-Martial which was launched by the army in 1792. For some years after his return to his country in 1800 Cobbett was protected because he kept up his support for the government. In 1809, Cobbett reminded his readers of the way his enemies renewed their criticism against him following a republication of an account of Cobbett's trial which '*left [him] for execution*'.<sup>29</sup> Cobbett showed a similar concern with convincing his audience to Burgoyne's quarrels. Both felt the need to provide their audiences with evidence of their honesty. Cobbett was prepared with some materials that proved the mischievous acts of some officers. He took extracts from books, and kept all the documents with the help of an honest corporal.<sup>30</sup> Then he wrote to the Secretary at War; Sir George Yonge on 14<sup>th</sup> of January, describing his situation, and enclosed a letter to the King.<sup>31</sup> His publication of Lord Fitzgerald's letter was another strategy to assure his audience of his conscientious performance of his duties as a soldier.

Similar to Paine's experience when he was a stamp officer and discovered fraud by other officers, Cobbett witnessed unlawful acts by army officers and this was the reason for his leaving the army.<sup>32</sup> Paine argued against high taxes before leaving England in 1774, and when he arrived in America, Paine opposed even more strongly the political regime. Paine freed himself from his dependence on government and started to attack it from abroad. Like Paine, Cobbett became an opponent to his government, yet he remained respectful of the King's sovereignty in the early 1800s. However, while Paine defended his fellow excise officers and aimed to improve their situation by asking for an increase of their salaries, Cobbett accused

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<sup>28</sup> Cobbett, 'To the Independent People of Hampshire: The Court Martial', pp. 897-919 (p. 900).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 898.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 902.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 903.

<sup>32</sup> Reitzel, p. 46.

the army officers of corruption and prepared evidence to prove that their actions were illegal. Cobbett asked for a court martial for officers including himself, but when it was launched, he decided to avoid it, because he was not sure it would be a fair trial, especially after all the preceding delays which was made by the army ministry. Thus he fled to France and then to America in 1792. The situation was as Anthony Burton described:

there was no accuser, no one to argue the case and the officers were duly acquitted. The judge advocate general declared there was no case to answer and that, in all probability, this was an example of a malicious prosecution.<sup>33</sup>

In the same year, when Cobbett left France in order to escape the events of the French Revolution, Paine's concern for the revolution made him get involved in the French national assembly during which he was given French citizenship.<sup>34</sup> Both Cobbett and Paine suffered imprisonment and witnessed the terrifying scenes of the hanging of prisoners: at the Newgate prison where Cobbett was held, and in Luxembourg prison in France where Paine was imprisoned. The two authors managed to write when they were inside the prison, as Cobbett wrote for the *Political Register* in the years 1810-1812, and Paine wrote the first of his pamphlet *Age of Reason* in 1793-1794.

What could have been the cause behind Cobbett's concern at the army, and what pushed him to write the pamphlet on the soldiers in 1792? Perhaps Cobbett was encouraged to write his pamphlet because he noticed the increasing number of army soldiers as the French Revolution of 1789 created a 'motivated citizen soldier fighting on behalf of his country rather than territorial gain'.<sup>35</sup> Cobbett's discussion of the army did not include only the hard experience of the soldiers, but also revealed other cases of corruption. Before Cobbett came to his complaint about the army officers who misused their power and mistreated their fellow countrymen soldiers, he indicated that it was love and respect to his country that made him join the army in the first place. For his comfort, and after all those years of quitting the army, Cobbett remembered sadly in 1809 his leaving of the army to which he thought he

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<sup>33</sup> Burton, p. 29.

<sup>34</sup> Bernard Vincent, *The Transatlantic Republican: Thomas Paine and the Age of Revolutions* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 2005), p. 87.

<sup>35</sup> Nicholas Roe, ed., *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 19.

was ‘more attached than any man that ever lived in the world’.<sup>36</sup> Being part of the army for Cobbett was a sign of respect and dignity as his hard work and honesty was paid back by his rank being raised from a corporal to a sergeant in less than two years.<sup>37</sup> However, despite his respect for the army, he needed to expose the hardships that soldiers were forced to bear. Evidence for his personal experience of these difficulties could be found in a letter Cobbett wrote to his friend Thornton on his way from America to England. The letter revealed important information related to his early life as a soldier in Halifax. Cobbett wrote that when he was ‘a soldier on fatigue’,<sup>38</sup> he helped ‘to drag the baggage from the wharf to the Barracks; and when my wife was here last, she was employed in assisting her poor mother to wash soldier’s shirts!’<sup>39</sup> This could suggest Cobbett’s personal experience which included the suffering and hardships of himself and his own family. We see Cobbett’s concerns at these works surfacing specifically in a number of his publications, which this chapter will now examine.

### **Cobbett’s Political Debate in *The Soldier’s Friend* (1792)**

Cobbett’s first political dispute appeared in his anonymous publication of *The Soldier’s Friend; or, Considerations on the Late Pretended Augmentation of the Substance of the Private Soldier* (1792). Cobbett’s pamphlet was an example of socially significant intervention, because he raised a very basic but important issue which was neglected by the ministry and ignored by the army officers. Similar to Paine’s pamphlet on the excise officers, Cobbett’s aim was to make observations on the alterations in the soldiers’ pay<sup>40</sup> in order to show that he was outraged by the way the soldiers were treated. Writing *The Soldier’s Friend* was an opportunity for him to launch a quarrel against the ministry whose unjust policy controlled the courts, parliament, and the House of Commons. Cobbett’s quarrel was not limited to members of the House of Commons, but included soldiers and common people who

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<sup>36</sup> Cobbett, ‘To the Independent People of Hampshire: The Court Martial’, pp. 897-919 (p. 900).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 901.

<sup>38</sup> William Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton: written in the years 1797 to 1800*, ed. by an introduction & notes by G. D. H. Cole (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 101.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>40</sup> William Cobbett, *The Soldier’s Friend; or, Considerations on the Late Pretended Argument of the Subsistence of the Private Soldier* (London: 1792), p. 3.

would accept without questioning the proposed orders. His manner was straightforward and his anger was obvious, because he was under pressure to warn the people about the current difficulties of their soldiers. Cobbett proposed to his readers that he would make some observations connected to the changes made against fair payment to the soldiers. He ensured the readers that he 'sh[ould] discover a little better information on the subject than the Secretary of War'.<sup>41</sup> Cobbett's indignation against the people occurred because they were still unaware of the fixed law of extracting their money. In the pamphlet, Cobbett preceded his attack on his real enemies who represented the 'act of the parliament, [and] the law of the land'.<sup>42</sup> Cobbett aimed his anger at those whose passiveness he had not anticipated.

Cobbett did not reveal his authorship of the pamphlet *The Soldier's Friend*, possibly for fear of the government's reaction. He admitted to writing the pamphlet only when he was certain he would not be prosecuted. This shows that Cobbett was aware of what Cronin sees as political condemnation of some private writings of Romantic authors in that period of unrest that could damage the individual character of the author.<sup>43</sup> His revelation came when the law in England gave rights to the radicals after 1820s. However, he asserted his own resistance to the actions of his fellow officers who received bad treatment. His pamphlet indicated his sympathy towards his fellow soldiers. The eight-year military service gave him a chance to assess the extent of the abuse of power by the fellow officers. *The Soldier's Friend* indicated Cobbett's early realization of the need for reform and the need of supporting common people which would develop later in his life. The events around Cobbett's accusation of the officers, and his attempt to launch the court-martial affected him personally and caused a dramatic change in his future political involvements in America and later in England.

In his pamphlet Cobbett paid attention to the common people as he wrote in the introductory paragraph in a desperate tone that 'the People, [he was] much afraid, are satisfied'<sup>44</sup> with the economic situation in the country. Cobbett wanted common people to question the causes behind the desperate financial conditions which the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> Richard Cronin, *Paper Pellets: British Literary Culture after Waterloo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 42-43.

<sup>44</sup> Cobbett, *The Soldier's Friend*, p. 3.

Army was in.<sup>45</sup> Cobbett's way of putting his attention on 'the People', made his start very strong and attractive to the reader's attention, because it implied that the people were making a mistake by not being aware of the present situation in their country. By making 'the people' his main concern, Cobbett drew his audience, the ordinary people and the private soldiers, to his side. His aim was not to express his own personal fear to people directly, but to indirectly claim their support for 'the pay of the Private Soldiers',<sup>46</sup> and to discuss 'the present reduction of the foot forces',<sup>47</sup> which was presented to them 'as an act of economy'.<sup>48</sup> After showing that his main concern was 'the people', Cobbett wrote addressing the public: 'I am much afraid, are satisfied with this: I say I am afraid of it, for I shall always be sorry to see them satisfied with any thing [short of the truth]'.<sup>49</sup> Here, Cobbett used the pronoun 'I' to show the people his personal concern about their situation, and he linked his fear to himself not to indicate that he is superior to them, but to imply that he knew and experienced hard situations in order to justify his concerns and show the seriousness of the situation. Simultaneously, Cobbett represents himself as one of them by using the pronoun 'our', as when he states that 'the situation of the Privates in our marching regiments of foot was really so miserable'.<sup>50</sup> Cobbett specified the pronoun 'our' in order to show his sense of belonging with the soldiers. Besides, the use of the pronoun 'I' emphasized that he was himself a soldier, and when he added 'our' he represented all the ordinary soldiers as agreeing on one opinion which must be shared by the people. So the use of 'I', and 'our', transformed his personal fear into a public one, and matched his private misery and personal suffering with that of everyone in the public who experienced the situation as a soldier, or who were 'satisfied with any thing short of truth',<sup>51</sup> about the 'military affairs'.<sup>52</sup> Lynne Lemrow offers a similar example of Cobbett's way of representing his engagement when he used the pronoun 'we' to create 'intimacy with the reader and the sense of a community oppression, an important point to remember when assessing his impact

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-4.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 1-4.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 4.



on the lower classes'.<sup>53</sup> Besides, the title *The Soldier's Friend* could be interpreted as Cobbett's attempt to moderate his quarrel, making the pamphlet appear to be as advice from an acquaintance. He focused on raising people's awareness, encouraging them to question the information provided by the army establishment. The friend of the soldier succeeded in catching the attention of his audience and making his argument appear friendly and sensitive, yet critical, evident when he wrote: 'we shall not be surprised to find them satisfied with the plausible delusions held out to them the general public, who had limited knowledge of military matters.'<sup>54</sup>

The subject of defending the soldiers was very important to Cobbett, because he had personal experience and knowledge of events which he witnessed during his service to the regiment as a clerk. Cobbett saw suspicious acts like when:

the Quarter Master, who had the issuing of men's provisions to them, *kept about a fourth part of it to himself*. This, the old serjeants told me, had been the case *for many years*; and, they were quite astonished and terrified at the idea of my complaining of it.<sup>55</sup>

Here we see Cobbett criticising the military system itself, rather than the governing authorities. Elsewhere, though, he spoke to the decision makers such as the Secretary of War and the parliament to imply that he was aware of the faults of the soldiers, and his pamphlet was aimed to make the public recognize the true extent of economic corruption. A key example of how Cobbett handled the issue of the soldiers' low payment is evident in *The Soldier's Friend*, where Cobbett criticised the Secretary of War's observation about the poor payment of the soldiers. The Secretary did not defend the soldiers' situation but only commented very briefly on it in the House of Commons in February 1792, saying that it had been 'extremely hard',<sup>56</sup> and acknowledging that in the previous years, a soldier's expenses were only eighteen pence. Cobbett criticised the Secretary of War's way of dealing with the issue, which he felt needed to get attention and solutions.

Having been a soldier himself, Cobbett was aware of the potential consequences of disagreeing with military officers. Cobbett did not reveal his name

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<sup>53</sup> Lynne Lemrow, 'William Cobbett's Journalism for the Lower Orders', *Victorian Periodical Review*, 15.1 (1982), p. 16, in JSTOR <<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy3.lib.le.ac.uk/stable/20082016>> [accessed 30 May 2013].

<sup>54</sup> Cobbett, *The Soldier's Friend*, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> Cobbett, 'To the Independent People of Hampshire: The Court Martial', pp. 897-919 (p. 902).

<sup>56</sup> Cobbett, *The Soldier's Friend*, p. 6.

as the author of the pamphlet, but he wanted only to show the public the details which were hard for them to discover by themselves regarding the issue of the soldiers' pay which had unjustly continued for years. By raising such an issue, especially when its consequences were known and feared by the existing sergeants, Cobbett made himself an enemy of those who were corrupt within the military. Additionally, by revealing what was happening to the soldiers' pay to the public, Cobbett made his own decision to stand against the masters in the army in order to reveal the truth to them. He was prepared with evidence to fight against those who might oppose him. His first attempt in this quarrel was to request a court-martial, and his second act was to write *The Soldier's Friend*. The delay of response from the war office seemed to be a method of retaliation which caused Cobbett to be 'very impatient, and, indeed, to be very suspicious'.<sup>57</sup> Those two events in Cobbett's military life, his writing of the pamphlet, and his being hurt by the injustice in the military courts in his country, made a convincing case for him to carry on his personal quarrel when he returned to England in 1800, but by different means. As Nattrass explains, 'Cobbett was obliged to modify his literary style upon his return to England.'<sup>58</sup> Cobbett's decision to accuse the officers was an indication that the personal quarrel was coming from inside the army, from a person who served and knew the military establishment, but in order to emphasize his objection, Cobbett needed a 'witness',<sup>59</sup> in order to prove his evidence.

Cobbett's essential aim was that his readers needed to know his opponent, because the opponent was greatly respected by them and they did not have any doubt about the support of the Secretary of War at the parliament. Cobbett appealed to the soldiers not to obey his enemies, the officers whom he referred to as '*the Aristocracy of the Army*',<sup>60</sup> who had connections with the '*ruling Faction*' in the country.<sup>61</sup> His way of considering the officers as the aristocracy of the army made his complaint more serious against the officers, because it could affect the public as the aristocratic title was not supposed to exist within the army. Those kind of 'aristocratic' officers then existed against the people's wish, and they connected themselves to the ruling party as the rest remain poor. He directly depicted two groups in the society together;

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<sup>57</sup> Cobbett, 'To the Independent People of Hampshire: The Court Martial', pp. 897-919 (p. 903).

<sup>58</sup> Nattrass, p. 61.

<sup>59</sup> Cobbett, 'To the Independent People of Hampshire: The Court Martial', pp. 897-919 (p. 902).

<sup>60</sup> Cobbett, *The Soldier's Friend*, p. 17.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

the ruling class and the army officers appeared to him as one strong group which put itself above the ordinary people and the private soldiers in the country.

Hence, Cobbett discussed how the private soldiers received less money than they used to get, besides the bad conditions of their clothing and food. The soldiers were paid ‘only eighteen pence or two shillings a week for [their] subsistence’.<sup>62</sup> Cobbett’s manner was the opposite to the vague and general comment given by the Secretary of War, as Cobbett provided more specific details, and invited the readers to form their opinions and understand what was going on with the money of the soldiers. On the contrary, the response of the Secretary of War did not suggest any blame or give any impression of willingness to investigate the problem of what caused the hardship of the soldiers which he admitted ‘[had] *of late years so happened*’.<sup>63</sup> In order to show the neglect of the military establishment, Cobbett intended to quote from the War Secretary’s comment in the House of Commons as the latter said that the pay of the soldier according to

the late regulation [...] was made adequate to the subsistence the common Soldier *formerly enjoyed*, an object which he was confident would meet with the warm approbation of every man.<sup>64</sup>

Cobbett was outraged by such a denial by the man who was responsible for the soldiers’ affairs, so he directed an insulting reply to the Secretary, asking him: ‘are you not mad indeed, or do you but counterfeit?’ Here Cobbett did not control his anger and seemed willing to invite other people in the House of Commons to get angry too, but said that ‘any weakness or absurdity of theirs could at this day possibly create the least astonishment, one might think wonderful Members should sit, and silently hear their understandings thus insulted’.<sup>65</sup> Here we see Cobbett using an emotional and challenging manner of address that verges on abuse, which was designed to prompt a response from the War Secretary. Cobbett was upset by those members in the House of Commons who did not react and he was not sure that they would swing an opinion against the Secretary’s comment on the reduction of the

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

soldier's pay. Therefore, Cobbett allied himself to the Private soldiers and the common people, asking them to form their own judgment for themselves.<sup>66</sup>

Cobbett repeated in six different parts in his pamphlet the exact expressions used by the Secretary of War in order to draw attention to his attitude. He repeated the phrase 'it has so happened', for example when he wrote: "'it has "so happened" that the hand of power made another dive into the national purse, in order — not to add what a Soldier ought to have received [...].'"<sup>67</sup> By placing the remark in quotation marks, Cobbett drew attention to the passive, disengaged nature of the phrase and suggested that it showed a lack of commitment or engagement with the issue. Thus Cobbett returned to criticize the same person who represented his enemies and the whole system which failed to prosecute the criminals. Cobbett retold the people the exact words the House of Commons heard, but to which they did not react, and thus their silence proved a further reason for Cobbett's attack. Cobbett showed his mockery of the system by saying: 'not one of the offenders have been brought to justice for this disobedience, even now it is fully discovered',<sup>68</sup> even though 'it has so happened.' His attack on the system and on those who represented it was insulting. As Lemrow notices, Cobbett's attitude in the political letters 'had no respect [and] range in tone from mockery and sarcasm to seething anger',<sup>69</sup> and the same observation, I propose, is also valid for this pamphlet when he addressed the system. For example, Cobbett intended to embarrass the War Secretary who failed to give an explanation of the reasons for the problem of the soldiers' pay by stating to the readers a direct explanation with a strong accusation:

This was, and this is the law of this land; but it has "so happened," that the commanding Officers of regiments have, "of late years," been above the law.<sup>70</sup>

That law, Cobbett believed, did not protect the people nor the soldiers, because the people paid the soldiers to defend them, but the soldiers did not get this money.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, Cobbett aimed to show that his angry passions enabled him to stand against the Secretary of War without being terrified of him or of any power of the

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>69</sup> Lemrow, p. 19.

<sup>70</sup> Cobbett, *The Soldier's Friend*, p. 11.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

law. He implicitly suggested to the public that the lack of details in the Secretary's speech could be due to his personal involvement in the issue of the poor payment the soldiers were given. Yet, for Cobbett it was different: 'though the Secretary at War had his reasons for not entering into an explanation of this secret, I have none, and therefore I shall do it immediately.'<sup>72</sup> Saying that, Cobbett cast doubts on the acts of the military establishment and showed the importance of immediate action.

As a result, Cobbett saw that he, the people, and the soldiers had one enemy. It was obvious that Cobbett was trying to show the public the suffering of the soldiers who only received sixpence a week instead of receiving three shillings a week.<sup>73</sup> Through his investigation into the expenses of the soldier, Cobbett gave a detailed comment on the payments which indicated that he knew exactly what the soldiers were experiencing as a result of their poor payments. His voice was authoritative, and it came from his experience of two different positions in the army: the first voice came from a soldier who was forced to live on little money and used to fight with hunger,<sup>74</sup> and the second voice came from someone who was in a higher position who witnessed how the officers obliged the soldiers 'to purchase articles of dress unheard of in former Armies, all far too expensive and most of them totally useless'.<sup>75</sup> These two statements indicated the anger and the personal difficulties experienced by Cobbett and even by the soldiers, because Cobbett tried to voice their hardships.

Although Cobbett's argument appeared to be against the Secretary of War, Cobbett seemed to attack him primarily because the Secretary was unable to indicate the reasons behind the reduction of the soldiers' salary. Cobbett used that occasion as a method to reveal further issues, including other enemies, about whom he said: 'the world is often deceived in those jovial, honest looking fellows, the Officers of the Army.'<sup>76</sup> Then, in order to build the trust between him and the public he emphasized that he knew them, and could also mention those officers to them. By doing that he asserted the need to reveal the officers' names, and raised the awareness of the public so they felt the importance of discovering those who deceived them. Cobbett

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-13.

gave himself the personal right to reveal the group of officers which caused harm to the soldiers' lives, but he made it clear that that group was his enemy too by saying that 'every one, who is in the least acquainted with the Army, knows that the expenditure of the Soldier's arrears is not left to himself'.<sup>77</sup> The context of the officers' wrongful actions was a main goal for Cobbett to reveal, as Cobbett was aware of the need to provide evidence for his accusation. He was confident that he could show his knowledge about what was happening. Thus, at first he indicated that he could name the officers, and then added that he 'heard of some tender conscience Officers, who, to avoid the sin of extortion, have charged their men no more for articles'. Cobbett was angry that those officers managed to deceive the tradesmen by their false principles, and as a result of their action, they received a '*discount*'<sup>78</sup> from the tradesmen.

When Cobbett realized that 'the act of Parliament, made to guard the rights of the Soldiers',<sup>79</sup> was ineffective, he sought to clarify the 'rational method of putting things to rights',<sup>80</sup> as he was sure that such law had not existed before. Here, it is notable that Cobbett was speaking publicly in order to announce the new rights of the soldiers whom he failed to defend through the court martial. The first official point by Cobbett was about 'bringing the Officers to justice';<sup>81</sup> the second legitimate right referred to 'enforcing obedience in future to the Mutiny Act'.<sup>82</sup> These two goals were so important for Cobbett to accomplish, before telling the people further secrets he found by his personal investigation. While he claimed his two requests from his enemy, he also had in mind the importance that the public and the soldiers understand his message, as he told the soldiers: 'it particularly becomes you, the British Soldier, to look upon this matter in its proper light.'<sup>83</sup> Here, the example indicates that Cobbett was not only focussing on his enemy, as Lemrow noticed in Cobbett's way of changing his letters according to his addressees.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, he also seems to sought to encourage the soldiers themselves to support his cause, suggesting that this would be 'becoming' to their military standing.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>84</sup> Lemrow, p. 19.

Nattrass highlighted the similarity of Cobbett's strategies of persuasion to that of a 'Socratic dialogue, which implies the kind of invitation to judge freely',<sup>85</sup> by the readers. Nonetheless, Cobbett's manner of postponing more news showed his struggle to produce a thorough investigation and to bring appropriate proof which would enable him to gain the trust of the public. Revealing the evidence was an important strategy to support his quarrel with corruption in the army. He did this by producing detailed facts to show the level of corruption:

You were always allowed three shillings a week by Law of the land, and you will get no more now; and therefore, you are to look upon the abovementioned 23,000l per annum as extorted from your countrymen and friends.<sup>86</sup>

Cobbett aimed to persuade the soldiers, and he made a contrast between them and their officers, for example by revealing how the military law of flogging would be applied to the soldiers if they took a penny, while in contrast: 'here you see your officers have been guilty of the practice for years, and now is found out, not a hair of one of their heads is touched.'<sup>87</sup> With his focus on the different reaction of military law, Cobbett showed his sympathy towards the soldiers, while he was conveying abhorrence against the officers. Furthermore, for the sake of the poor soldiers, Cobbett aimed to make his attack against the power of the king which seemed hard to change, because for many years 'soldiers are taught to believe every thing they receive, a gift from the Crown'.<sup>88</sup> Their ignorance of the truths that had been concealed from them increased Cobbett's anger as he told them:

I feel an indignation at this I cannot describe. – I would have you consider the nature of your situation, I would have you know that you are not the servant of *one man* only; a British Soldier never can be that.<sup>89</sup>

Cobbett started his pamphlet with fear when he said 'I am much afraid', and ended it with a strong feeling of 'indignation' that exceeded the capacities of language. Cobbett's choice of words such as being afraid and or unable to describe his outrage implies his emotional quarrel which was the reason behind his personal decision to reveal to them what they did not know and to encourage them not to be satisfied with

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<sup>85</sup> Nattrass, p. 141.

<sup>86</sup> Cobbett, *The Soldier's Friend*, p. 19.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

what they were taught to accept. Cobbett focused on the truth which the soldiers did not know. He wanted the public and the soldiers to be aware of their own rights, but if they failed to understand his message, they would increase his indignation because of their belief that everything they got was a gift and not '[their] property, confirmed to [them] by Acts of the Legislature of [their] country'.<sup>90</sup> In this way, we see Cobbett quarrelling at once with corruption within the army, and with the governmental structures that enabled this to take place. His tone is very passionate and shows his personal investment in the cause, as a former soldier himself.

### **Cobbett's Personal and Political Quarrels in America (1792-1800)**

In 1792 Cobbett went to France and intended to stay, but the news of war arrived in the country so Cobbett decided to go to America.<sup>91</sup> In America, Cobbett started to write under a pen-name, Peter Porcupine,<sup>92</sup> under which he published *Porcupine's Works* which 'appeared in 1801, in twelve volumes, published by Cobbett and Morgan'.<sup>93</sup> *Peter Porcupine* included Cobbett's condemnation of the French Revolution.<sup>94</sup> Those publications of Cobbett were against the democratic and republican concepts underpinning the French Revolution in 1793.<sup>95</sup> Cobbett fought against the division between two main parts in America: the Federalists who supported the economic interests of and had a good relationship with England, and the Democrats who supported the French Revolution.<sup>96</sup> Besides, Cobbett succeeded in publishing his own writings and defending his country's policies.<sup>97</sup> Cobbett settled in Philadelphia, and he started a bookshop in July 1796.<sup>98</sup> He kept his work going even though he knew that his business was targeted in America by his opponents. Cobbett began by defending the principles of his own country and king. For example, he did not want 'to see *power*, collected together at the expense of Great Britain, to be turned against Great Britain'<sup>99</sup> by America. Cobbett disagreed with many ideas debated in the new America, and he kept his loyalty towards his country in a foreign country which protected him from a possible prosecution in 1793.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>91</sup> Reitzel, p. 55.

<sup>92</sup> Dyck, n. p.

<sup>93</sup> Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*, p. 90.

<sup>94</sup> Dyck, n. p.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., n. p.

<sup>96</sup> Asa Briggs, *William Cobbett* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 17-18.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>98</sup> Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*, p. xii.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 46.



During his early years in America, Cobbett's connection with some loyalists explained his understanding of the feelings of the people who were not prepared to forget the king and their loss of their connection with the mother country. Therefore, Cobbett insisted on supporting those thousands of people in America by encouraging them to watch his weekly exhibition in which he showed his enemies his opinion of the king. Cobbett wrote that with such an act he meant to 'put the courage and powers of [his] enemies to the test'.<sup>100</sup> He saw that the quarrel was not over yet between the countries, as the instance of people purchasing a picture of General Howe's victory from him showed signs of disagreements across America between the general public.<sup>101</sup> Cobbett indicated in his later writings that '[...] hearing [his] country attacked, [he] became her defender through thick and thin'.<sup>102</sup> James Grande, John Stevenson and Richard Thomas explain Cobbett's support to his country in America, and how his 'print celebrating the British naval victory over the French on the 1 June 1794,'<sup>103</sup> 'aroused strong opposition amongst many Americans'.<sup>104</sup> Cobbett put the blame of their involvement against their country on Paine and other authors who were against the British ruling in America.<sup>105</sup>

Cobbett's first contribution towards his country appeared in 1794, when he produced his *Observations on the Emigration of Dr Joseph Priestly, and on the Several Addresses Delivered to him on his Arrival at New York*.<sup>106</sup> Priestley fled to America, 'from the growing persecution of Radical opinion in England',<sup>107</sup> and his political actions were criticized by Cobbett in a series of Open Letter to Priestley.<sup>108</sup> Cobbett also published the *Porcupine Gazette*, a daily newspaper<sup>109</sup> from 1797 until he returned to England in 1800. In this particular newspaper, Cobbett attacked public figures whose opinions were opposite to his, like Dr. Benjamin Rush (1745-1813),<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Reitzel, p. 67.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>102</sup> William Cobbett, 'A New Year's Gift to Old George Rose', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 4 January 1817, pp. 2-32 (p. 6).

<sup>103</sup> James Grande, John Stevenson and Richard Thomas, eds, *The Opinions of William Cobbett* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 43.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>105</sup> Reitzel, p. 69.

<sup>106</sup> Natrass, p. 44.

<sup>107</sup> Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*, p. ix.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>109</sup> Natrass, p. 59.

<sup>110</sup> Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*, p. 32.

who worked for one year as Surgeon-General to the Armies in 1777.<sup>111</sup> Cobbett's paper was entitled *The American Rush-Light, by the help of which, wayward and disaffected Britons may see a complete specimen of the Baseness, Dishonesty, Ingratitude and Perfidy, of Republicans, and of the Profligacy, Injustice and Tyranny of Republican Governments*.<sup>112</sup> Cobbett showed his disapproval of the opposition by direct criticism. The quarrel between Cobbett and his enemies in America was public as he faced trials like the one took place in 1797 between him and McKean.<sup>113</sup> Cobbett seemed to act purposefully, posing as a serious threat to his enemies in America, because he considered it crucial to defend his country. He described himself when he was in America as being 'monstrously proud',<sup>114</sup> of the English laws. Cobbett's strategies in America suggested that he sought to maintain the influence of his country among the loyalists, but he failed to accept that his country had suffered military defeat.

Cobbett succeeded in drawing a circle of close friends to his side when he was in America; they supported him and his political views during his quarrels with his opponents. John Morgan was Cobbett's agent in Philadelphia, and later his bookseller partner<sup>115</sup> in London. Cobbett used to receive extracts from Morgan on the 'British act of Parliament'.<sup>116</sup> Also, Edward Tilghman was a lawyer in Philadelphia<sup>117</sup> who supported Cobbett in his case against Rush, and advised him to 'leave the United States at once',<sup>118</sup> when Cobbett 'was prosecuted in the courts of Pennsylvania'.<sup>119</sup> Cobbett encountered a 'quarrel with Chief Justice McKean',<sup>120</sup> who supported Rush, and was accused by Cobbett of his 'brutality and injustice to American loyalists'.<sup>121</sup> During this quarrel, his persecutors fined him 5,000 dollars, as he showed his anger at this defeat when he wrote to Thornton: 'I sh[ould] take by way of revenge [...], and the villain shall not enjoy his prize in peace. I shall find the

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. xix.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>113</sup> Edward Irving Carlyle, *William Cobbett: A Study of His Life as Shown in His Writings* (Montana: Kessinger, 2012), p. 24.

<sup>114</sup> William Cobbett, *Selections from Cobbett's Political Works*, ed. by John M. Cobbett and James P. Cobbett (London, 1835), p. 155. Google ebook.

<sup>115</sup> Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*, p. 90.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

means of reaching him be I wherever I may.’<sup>122</sup> The gravity of this fine shows the seriousness of the quarrels that Cobbett entered into, and how much was at stake for him personally within these quarrels.

Cobbett was engaged in several kinds of works such as political, social, and economic writings. However, the main part of my chapter will focus on his political works, especially those after his return to England in 1800. It would be hard to understand Cobbett’s political aims without exploring his writings before he started the *Political Register*. Cobbett continued to produce his *Political Register* including the debates about the parliament’s raising of taxes. From the 1820s until 1835 Cobbett released political debates to the public and encouraged people to stand against the aristocracy by his discussion of financial issues in relation for labouring class conditions.

### **Cobbett’s Return to England for a Political Combat**

Cobbett returned to England in 1800 after being in exile from 1792. When he returned, Cobbett was preparing evidence for his application to the court martial, through which he intended to bring the accused officers to justice, but he realized that ‘the books and the documents had been left in possession of the accused’ and he had to complain to the Judge Advocate and carry on his fight with similar ‘indignation’<sup>123</sup> that he felt before. During that difficult time, Cobbett knew that there ‘was a design to prosecute [him] for *sedition*’,<sup>124</sup> so he decided to make a fast decision about whether to stay and face the planned trial or flee the country for his personal safety. Accusing intellectuals of sedition seemed to be one of the government’s weapons. Cobbett like many other such as Paine were accused under the sedition act. Paine’s *Rights of Man* in 1790s was an example of a text that resulted in the author being accused of sedition. Another example of this act occurred in John Reeves’ anonymous pamphlet *Thoughts on the English Government: Letter the First*, dated 29 October 1795 in which he stated that ‘the

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>123</sup> Cobbett, *The Soldier’s Friend*, p. 21.

<sup>124</sup> Cobbett, ‘To the Independent People of Hampshire: The Court Martial’, pp. 897-919 (p. 905).

British government was essentially monarchical, but in 1796 the jury thought that Reeves did not have libellous motivation.<sup>125</sup>

Despite the threat of sedition, Cobbett was prepared to instigate another quarrel if he had to, because the federal oppression that he encountered in America had made him ready for other ‘adventures.’<sup>126</sup> This also suggests that he did not know what was waiting for him in his country, and if he would be encountering political challenges. Perhaps his experience in America changed him and prepared him not to make his conduct polite, as, for example, he wrote: ‘God knows I have done nothing to be afraid or ashamed of, but innocence and honourable conduct are no protection to me, in this country.’<sup>127</sup> Although this quotation shows Cobbett’s disappointment about his life in America, it revealed his apparent hunger to enter into further quarrels. He was back in the country after the American War of Independence ended, so he had left another kind of quarrel between those who fought for power in America such as the Federalists and the Democratic parties. He was in England when the king’s troops were fighting against American independence, and also when they were seeking to win the war against Napoleon. The way the government received Cobbett echoed the reception of Burgoyne on his return from America in 1777, because they were both received by prominent government officials. The government considered Cobbett so important, because he had defended the British colonies in America. However, unlike Burgoyne, who was accused of treason immediately after his arrival in the country, Cobbett returned as a victorious figure. The government knew that his pen was a great support to them in *Peter Porcupine* publication series. Thus Cobbett occupied a very different position in his quarrel from that of Burgoyne. His support from the government meant that he was at once in a safer position and more likely for his opinions to be respected, while he was also in some ways more at risk because he needed to hide his dissent from the government so that he would not fall out of favour. This can be seen as one reason that he used a pen-name.

Burgoyne and Cobbett provide a good case for contrast and comparison. Both of these authors served in the military overseas. Both Burgoyne and Cobbett’s

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<sup>125</sup> Philip Schofield, ‘Reeves, John (1752-1829),’ in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23306>> [accessed 29 September 2014].

<sup>126</sup> Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*, p. 96.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

return from the other side of the Atlantic was highly important for the British ministry, because it gave them a clearer idea of the British performance in America and it helped them prove their progress to the British people at home. Burgoyne's arrival was controversial, because he had to explain the reasons for his defeat and surrender. In contrast, Cobbett's return was considered useful by the government, because they wanted to enlist his writing to serve their agenda better at home. For example, Cobbett revealed in 1834 that he was advised by Reeves, one of the government writers who had visited him while he was at Newgate prison, and asked about what kind of course Cobbett was intending 'to take with the Minister-people'.<sup>128</sup> Reeves enjoyed the approval of the government and he 'was appointed king's printer [...] [and] from 1800 he was one of the treasurers for the literary fund and superintendent of aliens (1803–14)'.<sup>129</sup> He died in 1829. Thus, Cobbett's way of revealing what happened between him and Reeves showed implicitly how Cobbett was aware of the government's practice of accusing the authors, so he did not mention their conversation when Reeves was still working for the government. Cobbett protected Reeves from the government, and he revealed his true opinion against the Ministers and the government only later. During his visit, Reeves explained his experience as a government author to Cobbett, and told him that he must realize that there were two 'distinct courses [...] one is to *kiss* their — , and the other is to *kick* 'them' [...] you must [...] do what you like'.<sup>130</sup> Cobbett answered Reeves confidently that '[he] *shall kick*'.<sup>131</sup> Here, we see Cobbett's naturally combative nature and his readiness for quarrel. Reeves wished Cobbett well in his choice, but he emphasized to Cobbett that he '[would] have a rough time of it'.<sup>132</sup> Reeves was against the French Revolution, so he published anti-revolutionary pamphlets. Nonetheless, he announced some of his political views in a series of publications entitled *Thoughts on the English Government* (1795), then, the House of Commons prosecuted him in 1796.<sup>133</sup> However, he remained connected with the Anti-Jacobin group. Reeves mediated between the Government and Cobbett and his

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<sup>128</sup> William Cobbett, 'Mr Harvey', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 1 February 1834, pp. 291-96 (London: the author, 1834; repr. in *Radical Periodicals of Great Britain*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Reprint Corporation, 1971), p. 295.

<sup>129</sup> Schofield, n. p.

<sup>130</sup> Cobbett, 'Mr Harvey' pp. 291-96 (p. 295).

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>133</sup> Schofield, n. p.

interference protected Cobbett from suffering a harder prosecution than going to jail.<sup>134</sup> By the time of Cobbett's return, the government had already established its own list of political authors; like: 'John Reeves, John Bowles, John Gifford, William Gifford, Sir Frederic Eden, [...] and others'.<sup>135</sup> Cobbett stated in his autobiography that '[his] opinions were [his] own'.<sup>136</sup> He emphasized that he did not have any connection with the Ministry or with any party.<sup>137</sup> Yet, he supported the authority of the sovereign in his country and attacked the monarchy's enemies, especially those of England's monarchy.<sup>138</sup> Thus we see Cobbett occupying a complex position within his quarrels, where he sometimes stands in opposition to authority, and sometimes defends it.

Burgoyne's conduct in America showed his long-term commitment to his country and its sovereign. Similarly, Cobbett's stand in order to defend his country and his King in writings also indicated the strength in the relationship between Cobbett and his government from abroad. Yet, Cobbett and Burgoyne came from vastly different backgrounds. Cobbett was from a poor family and enlisted in the army first for his love for his country and its king, and presumably to get to a position in the army of the country he loved. Cobbett astonished his government by his strong writings which were in defence of his country during his time in America. Burgoyne, as an army General, showed a similar effort to convince the War Office and the parliament of his ability to plan for regaining America after the British government there was threatened by the rebellious war. Burgoyne and Cobbett had different political backgrounds, however. Burgoyne was a Whig, but he served in the army during the Tory government, was educated at the school of Westminster, trained in the army to become lieutenant-colonel, and was a member of parliament. Cobbett, in contrast, started as a ploughboy. He went to school for a short period, and then was taught by his father. His reading enabled him to become an office clerk when he was in the army. According to the social division discussed by Sambrook, which showed the differences between the poor and the wealthy people in England, Cobbett belonged to the 'lower orders'.<sup>139</sup> Those groups Sambrook stated 'had no

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<sup>134</sup> Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*, p. 80.

<sup>135</sup> Retzeil, p. 82.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>139</sup> Sambrook, *William Cobbett*, p. 3.

place of their own in politics; they existed to be ruled'.<sup>140</sup> Sambrook noticed that the 'middle ranks',<sup>141</sup> were considered to be aristocratic wealthy people. Burgoyne seemed to belong to those groups as his action of joining the parliamentary elections when he already owned his position in the army. However, it is interesting to note that however persuasive Burgoyne tried to make his writing, it did not win favour with the government due to his actions in America. In contrast, despite his lowly beginnings, Cobbett's positive writing resulted in him being perceived as a government agent who deserved a good position for his loyalty. It is therefore ironic that Cobbett would later use the same writing skills that had elevated him to a position of privilege in order to produce rebellious writings that supported the lower classes.

Cobbett's ideas were close to those of the Federalists. He considered himself to be pro-British and anti-French. Consequently, he wrote about twelve volumes by 1801 in which he debated the revolution in France, and the relationship between the Democrats, and the Republicans.<sup>142</sup> Cobbett had an independent opinion even though the things he discussed in his writings had been addressed by other writers. Cobbett returned to London in July 1800,<sup>143</sup> when the government was putting substantial pressure on authors to ease the worst situation it faced after the war. Cobbett revealed that the government offered the authors who write for its interests a scrip of a hundred pound or two to insure them.<sup>144</sup> When it was a big chance for Cobbett to support his government, however, he chose to write his own paper instead.

Cobbett made his opinions clear in his letters to the readers of the *Political Register* newspaper in 1800. Cobbett was received as a political author whose government valued him greatly when he came back from America in 1800. Nonetheless, he wrote that he did not want to undermine the main cause of the public, by stating to the readers of the *Register* that he '[has] never written merely for sake of gain'.<sup>145</sup> He stated that he wanted 'to take a part in the war of politics',<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>142</sup> Dyck, n. p.

<sup>143</sup> Reitzel, p. 75.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>145</sup> Lewis Melville, ed., *Life and Letters of William Cobbett*, 2 vols (London: John Lane Company, 1913), p. 45.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

which emphasized his aim to express a quarrelling attitude in his writing. Cobbett seemed to have already made his personal decision to fight his political combat that involved persuasion, accusation, and truth, even before leaving America. He wrote to Thornton in 1800 that ‘*truth*, is the very thing to be kept out of sight, and I am conscious, that every effort will be made to effect the object’,<sup>147</sup> and he believed that ‘weaker proofs would satisfy men far less suspicious and much more innocent’,<sup>148</sup> Later in his *Political Register* in 1834 Cobbett wrote that his friend Reeves, who used to write for the government, had left him two hundred thousand pounds. Cobbett wrote of how he saw his own future would outlive Reeves, as in his own writings he had ‘led a happier! life than REEVES’,<sup>149</sup> who had only ever worked as a government writer. Cobbett’s own words suggest that he was looking for a longer term of happiness that would bring him honour and respect which the government authors would be able to have only for a short time, while their government was in power. Cobbett believed that ‘[his] name w[ould] be remembered, and frequently in men’s mouths, for ages yet to come’.<sup>150</sup> Thus, the reader would realize the true reason behind Cobbett’s refusal to join other government authors for money, as he suggested that his motive was instead to fight for longer-lasting forms of justice and ‘truth’. In thinking about how Cobbett might have understood the idea of ‘truth’, I suggest we can turn to James Mulvihill where he quoted Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s understanding of truth in his work, *The Friend*: ‘how far can we legitimately offer light and hope to others? Rather than prescribing laws, Petrarch promises only “to set forth the law of my own Mind.”’<sup>151</sup> Similarly, we can see that Cobbett’s search for the truth was also governed by his desire to set out the law of his own mind, in order to offer ‘light and hope’ to others.

The discussion above shows that Cobbett was ready to face political quarrels in England after 1800 for the sake of his own independence. He resisted the writers who were against parliamentary reform, those who gave him their approval, and he also resisted the support of all the men who were in power.<sup>152</sup> Cobbett refused to

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<sup>147</sup> Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*, p. 45.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>149</sup> Cobbett, ‘Mr Harvey’, pp. 291-96 (p. 295).

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>151</sup> James Mulvihill, *Upstart Talents: Rhetoric and the Career of Reason in English Romantic Discourse, 1790-1820* (Newark: Delaware University Press, 2004), p. 22.

<sup>152</sup> Cobbett, ‘To the Independent People of Hampshire: Letter II’, *Cobbett’s Political Register*, 20 May 1809, pp. 773-82 (p. 777).



write under any patronage, because he found ‘the candour, the truth, the honesty’<sup>153</sup> of writers who received such support to be dubious. Doing so, Cobbett suggested his readers should consider the opinion his enemies had of him as he refused his government’s offers when he was in America and refused them again when they renewed them upon his return.<sup>154</sup> Cobbett stated to his friend Thornton his view that he must admit that ‘[he was] totally independent’.<sup>155</sup> For Cobbett, independence seemed to be an important situation which he himself could be proud of, and which should be valued by others. His interpretation of the government’s offer was met with his ‘great objections to [his] accepting [...]’.<sup>156</sup> He affirmed that his rejection to join that administration was to avoid any accusation against him from his enemies both in America and in England.<sup>157</sup> Nattrass asserts that ‘the government’s attempt to reward him for his writings in favour of war is often seen as a reason for his movement towards opposition’,<sup>158</sup> after his return in 1800. With this refusal of William Pitt’s proposal, Cobbett drew a line between his early support for the government and his new approach of revealing to the public the political fight for power. He attacked those who were not concerned about the suffering of the working classes who were forced to pay extortionate taxes. Cobbett criticised the ways the country was governed. He tried to reach common people by showing particular examples of corruption and bribery in the government. Cobbett’s quarrelling attitude appeared in many forms (such as letters of others as well as his own), addressing particular individuals and groups by criticising them or advising them. Cobbett stated with great pride his own combat and achievements through his independent authorship and also showed his personal resentment against his enemies after writing for thirty two years in his *Political Register* that he had ‘numerous and powerful enemies, and [had] them still but [he] trust[ed] that [...] no man ever even attempted to do [him] series injustice without receiving punishment from [him] of some sort or other, and in a greater or less degree’.<sup>159</sup>

Cobbett opposed the system and he showed his indignation through his various writings by which he addressed the people in his country, attacking the

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 777

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 777.

<sup>155</sup> Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*, p. 110.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>158</sup> Nattrass, p. 89.

<sup>159</sup> Cobbett, ‘Mr Harvey’, pp. 291-96 (p. 296).

voting system, and the economy. Cobbett wrote letters to important characters including those in the royal family, such as he letters *To his Royal Highness Prince of Regent*, discussing the country affairs, and his letter *To The RT. Hon. William Pitt, On the Causes of the Decline of Great Britain*. In his letter to Pitt, Cobbett raised his concern about the danger faced by the country because of relying on decisions in the parliament such as a peace treaty or taking the country to war with France without thinking of how to protect the country in 1804. In addition, it was his central aim to write in detail in his *Political Register* and to be close to the public. Cobbett wrote letters addressing the people in general, as well as addressing specific cities and regions in the country, such as his letters *To the Independent People of Hampshire* in 1809, in which Cobbett complained about the acts of his enemies in London who he indicated were also the enemies of the people. He argued that they should have no place in politics as they carried attacks on him and neglected the real enemy of the country. He charged his enemies and considered them to be ‘*Public Robbers*’,<sup>160</sup> and ‘*hypocritical Villains*’,<sup>161</sup> in his writings when he was at Newgate prison in 1810. Another important letter by which Cobbett addressed a segment of the public was *To the Men of Kent* in 1816 in which he argued against the voting system. Again, in his *Summary of Politics*, he discussed further issues in the country and its relations with other countries in Europe. Cobbett committed his writings to fighting against his enemies, and he was determined to make his voice heard by all in order to defeat his opponents and show them that the public was aware of their dangerous plans.

Although Cobbett’s being in America from 1792 to 1800 was controversial, his return to America in 1816 as a radical was even more problematic, because at that time Cobbett was recognized as an opponent of his own government’s policy. The way Cobbett acted in America before 1800s, of which I will provide more details later, illustrated his initial personal sympathy towards his country’s government and King. Cobbett explained the respect and the gratitude his government offered him on his return in 1800, as he met with very high government representatives like the government authors William Gifford, Chalmers and Reeves. Also, he met other political figures such as Pitt, Canning, Windham, Thomas Raikes

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<sup>160</sup> William Cobbett, ‘English Liberty of the Press’, *Cobbett’s Political Register*, 18 July 1812, pp. 65-92 (p.72).

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

the bank director, and others.<sup>162</sup> Cobbett stated in his letter to his friend that all the people he met were 'pleased to express their hearty approbation, and even their admiration, of [his] conduct'.<sup>163</sup>

Later, however, Cobbett, like Burgoyne, expressed his mistrust of the rulers in his writings. Accordingly, both authors decided to form their own personal opinions and engage in political quarrels. It seemed that many political authors in that time were aware of the government's dishonest attitudes with the people, thus some politicians and some army officers participated in the political interrogation against the lawmakers in their country. For example, in 1798, the politician Sir Francis Burdett argued in favour of 'anti-establishment politics on the need to protect individuals put upon by those in power'.<sup>164</sup> Also, in 1804, an army officer, Sir Robert Thomas Wilson, issued an *Inquiry into the present state of the military force of the British empire with a view to its reorganization*.<sup>165</sup> Wilson disputed publicly the harsh treatment in the army and was supported by Burdett.<sup>166</sup> Thus Cobbett was not alone in quarrelling with the government on such matters.

Like Burgoyne and Paine's radical responses to the ministry and the King's reaction to the war between England and America, Cobbett chose to become independent as he realized that resuming a new war with France would bring chances for corruption linked to the Revolution and Napoleonic Wars.<sup>167</sup> Constantly, he fought against the ministry during the later years of the Napoleonic War (1811-1815), as the ruling class did not 'attempt to make any change'<sup>168</sup> to their misuse of power. As a reaction to the war between England and France, for example, Cobbett was concerned about the hardships affecting England, which 'w [ere] caused by the curtailed production of exports goods in consequence of British, French, American trade embargoes'.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*, p. 109.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>164</sup> Marc Baer, 'Burdett, Sir Francis, Fifth Baronet (1770–1844)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3962>> [accessed 6 May 2013].

<sup>165</sup> R. H. Vetch; and rev. by Gordon L. Teffeteller, 'Wilson, Sir Robert Thomas (1777-1849)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/29686>> [accessed 29 September 2014].

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., n. p.

<sup>167</sup> Grande, Stevenson and Thomas, p. 25.

<sup>168</sup> Reitzel, p. 137.

<sup>169</sup> Spater, p. 409.

Cobbett realized that people's obedience was actually 'of fear and not of love,'<sup>170</sup> during the 1800s. On another occasion Cobbett showed similar concerns about the nation's unquestioning acceptance of government policies to his American friend when they met at Newgate prison in 1809, stating: 'This nation is drunk, it is as mad as a March hare, and mad it will be till this beastly frolic (the war) is over.'<sup>171</sup> Cobbett became concerned as he watched the state of his country which 'the Ministry of the day,' only seemed to dominate.<sup>172</sup> Like other Englishmen who shared his radical views on reform, Cobbett 'saw that the difficulties of the country and their own burdens still went on increasing'.<sup>173</sup> Others such as Major John Cartwright (1740-1824) expressed similar opinions in his work, *Take your Choice* which was published in 1776. Cartwright based his views on 'democratic and representative government'.<sup>174</sup> Additionally, Richard Price (1723-91), a radical reformer, expressed his views in his *Observations on Civil Liberty, the Principles of the Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America* (1776).<sup>175</sup> Such authors could have influenced Cobbett since he wrote letters to Cartwright complaining to him about his personal quarrels with some reformers such as Burdett.

### **The Strengthening of Cobbett's Resentment**

When Cobbett returned to England, his opponent writers accused him of attacking his country when he was writing in America<sup>176</sup> and Cobbett faced a serious decision about who he would support, and whether he would follow his personal feelings towards the truth or the personal interest of gaining money. During his time in America, he was engaged with other personal quarrels as he believed that his political writing was not treated fairly by the American government.<sup>177</sup> Pitt's ministry could not risk losing such a good fighter on their behalf. After Cobbett was

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<sup>170</sup> Reitzel, p. 139.

<sup>171</sup> William Cobbett, 'To Mr Brougham, on his Doctrine, Relative to the Privilege of Parliament with Regard to Publications Respecting the Reports of the Speeches Made in the Two Houses', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 20 July 1822, pp. 129-61 (p. 146).

<sup>172</sup> Reitzel, p. 138.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>174</sup> James Sambrook, *The Eighteenth Century: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature 1700-1789* (London: Longman, 1993), p. 114.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>176</sup> Cobbett, 'To the Independent People of Hampshire: Letter II', pp. 773-82 (p. 777).

<sup>177</sup> Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*, p. 48.

back, Lord Grenville the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs offered him the opportunity to join one of the two important government papers; *The True Briton*, and *The Sun*, but Cobbett refused their offer, and so he became suspicious for the government.<sup>178</sup> Cobbett explained that the government made him offers, but he did not accept them because he questioned the honesty of writing under any ‘particular patronage’,<sup>179</sup> such as that support which came from Mr Thomas Canning,<sup>180</sup> when he was under Secretary of State in Pitt’s ministry’.<sup>181</sup> Cobbett’s reaction towards the offers which his government presented was defiant, because he considered them immoral. Such acts of rulers were always against Cobbett’s personal principles, and they helped Cobbett in making his list of his new enemies in his own country.

However, Cobbett was still regarded by many people, including British and Americans he met in America, as an agent for the British government.<sup>182</sup> Cobbett’s early support of the government created problems for him when he returned from America. Even on his second return from America in 1817, the shadow of being a secret agent did not disappear. As John Gardner argued, ‘Cobbett is caught between the radicals and the government, leaving him exposed to charges that he could be working for either.’<sup>183</sup> Cobbett expressed the challenges he faced in America to his supporters like Thornton, to whom he wrote negatively of ‘the suspicious and malignant wretches’<sup>184</sup> who refused to trust him. It is noticeable here how Cobbett was annoyed with his opponents and how he wanted to inveigh against their false claims that he accepted ‘British Gold’,<sup>185</sup> from the authorities. However, Cobbett stated upon his early return in 1800, when he had great respect for the authority and Sovereign,<sup>186</sup> that he ‘set out as a sort of self-dependent politician’.<sup>187</sup> With this attitude Cobbett started to express his own opinions freely, using as a major outlet his *Political Register*, which he founded in 1802. Hence, the change in his political views provoked doubts in former as well as in his enemies. He definitely knew the

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<sup>178</sup> Reitzel, pp. 80-81.

<sup>179</sup> Cobbett, ‘To the Independent People of Hampshire: Letter II’, pp. 773-82 (p. 777).

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p. 777.

<sup>181</sup> ‘To the Independent People of Hampshire: The Court Martial’, pp. 897-919 (p. 909).

<sup>182</sup> Reitzel, p. 70.

<sup>183</sup> John Gardner, ‘William Cobbett the Spy?’, *Romanticism*, 18.1 (2012), 30-40 (p. 31) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/rom.2012.0062>>

<sup>184</sup> Cobbett, *Letters from William Cobbett to Edward Thornton*, p. 96.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>186</sup> Reitzel, p. 87.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

task would be hard, but it would get him closer to the readers, especially if he showed them the political news that they could not talk about in public or that they had no access to. He recognised that his task was difficult, but set out on it nevertheless.

Cobbett encountered outrage upon his return to England. Nattrass noticed a parallel attitude of umbrage in *The Soldier's Friend* and his work *Paper Against Gold* in 1810-1811.<sup>188</sup> Cobbett's commitment towards his country created a hostile environment against him personally as his 'office was wrecked because the Register supported the continuance of war'.<sup>189</sup> Cobbett observed the aggressive manner of quarrelling between two conflicting groups, as he explained to his friend James Mathieu in July 19<sup>th</sup> in 1793 that '[e]very time the newspapers arrive, the aristocrats and democrats have a decent quarrel to the admiration of all the little boys in town [...] God preserve you from the political pest. Let them fight and tear one another's eyes out.'<sup>190</sup> In his letter to the readers of the *Register* on July 9<sup>th</sup> 1812, Cobbett described similar evidence of aggression in British politics. He told his readers then that he wrote 'upon political subjects or, more correcting speaking, to take a part in the war of politics'.<sup>191</sup> Acting in the war of politics helped Cobbett to protect the people who needed to be involved with the making of the policy in the country. Therefore, I would suggest that Cobbett adopted new strategies for his political quarrels with those who had different political views. Cobbett aimed to explain his views to the public in order to make them aware of the political environment of their country.

Cobbett developed his quarrel by using various strategies. In particular, he appealed for his readers' attention and patience, writing, in his letter to his friends and fellow country-men in 1818:

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<sup>188</sup> Nattrass, p. 35.

<sup>189</sup> E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Victor Gollancz, 1963; repr. London: Penguin, 1991), p. 492.

<sup>190</sup> Burton, p. 39.

<sup>191</sup> Melville, p. 45.

If you cannot find patience to read, how am I to find patience to write, about these unjust, these insolent, these corrupt and profligate doings? We must bridle our passions. If our blood does boil, we must give it time to cool.<sup>192</sup>

His second parliamentary reform letter in 1809 was entitled, *To the Independent People of Hampshire*, and in this particular letter, Cobbett displayed some contradictory attitudes towards the persons of in the ministry, such as blame, support, praise, and accusation. These different techniques were made in order to manipulate the government from different angles. For example, when Cobbett was in America, his opponents at home refused to give him a chance to participate in the reform in his country. The governmental newspapers, as he reported, chose an extract from his writings in order to put blame on him, quoting: '*For my part. I am no friend of the English, I wish their island was sunk to the bottom of the sea.*'<sup>193</sup> Cobbett indicated that they added their opinion to guide the readers and explained that Cobbett had ill intentions and he 'should wish for a Reform that would lead to a revolution'.<sup>194</sup> Then, on his return, he got support and 'received marks of approbation'<sup>195</sup> that honoured him. On his return, Cobbett had a welcoming meeting by the politicians and they offered him the chance to write for the government. Furthermore, Cobbett was praised for his 'writings in America'<sup>196</sup> in the House of Commons, and it was stated that he deserved a statue of gold.<sup>197</sup> Cobbett therefore mocked the government's inconsistency when they criticised him in later years, and he insisted that the parties and the government did not have any reason to accuse him.<sup>198</sup> He argued that 'they knew where [he] was and all about [him] *while [he] was in America [...]*'.<sup>199</sup> He wanted to show his readers that his opponents were able to prosecute him 'immediately upon [his] return [...]'.<sup>200</sup> Here, then, we see Cobbett emerging as an opponent of the government, while also striving to protect his own position within a new type of political quarrel.

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<sup>192</sup> Cobbett, 'Letter III, to Messrs. Benbow, Evans Senr. Evans Junr, John Robert, John Smith, Francis Ward, John Jonson, John Knight, Samuel Brown, John Baguelly, and the Best of those, Who Have Acted the Same Noble Act', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 20 June 1818, pp. 699-725 (p. 714).

<sup>193</sup> Cobbett, 'To the Independent People of Hampshire: Letter II', pp. 773-82 (p. 777)..

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 777.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 777.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 777.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 777.

<sup>198</sup> Cobbett, 'To the Independent People of Hampshire: The Court Martial', pp. 897-919 (p. 909).

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 909.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 909.

### Language and Tactics in the *Political Register*

Cobbett discussed chronic polemical issues that existed in the society and that is why he often addressed them in several consecutive editions on his *Political Register*. Cobbett created an argumentative atmosphere for readers. This method of dispute was very different from the quarrelling through complete pieces of writings such as pamphlets or poems. While those single works were more focused and aimed to present a condensed and complete argument, Cobbett's serial engagement with political issues allowed him to include a number of details as well as to reprint extensively the quarrels of others in his *Political Register* over three decades.

The subjects which Cobbett wrote about were of great importance to his readers, because he discussed current political and economic affairs. On 9th May 1808, Cobbett wrote to his friend John Wright that he was not keen to join the parliament as his friend Francis Burdett suggested, because he wanted to have the advantage to 'give [his] sincere and unbiased opinions upon all that passes which appears worthy of particular notice'.<sup>201</sup> Obviously, Cobbett aimed to show his experience as he acknowledged in his *Political Register* about his way of helping the historians to find information from the written texts which were 'relative to feelings, opinions, and the facts of the times'.<sup>202</sup> Cobbett expressed his disapproval of the ministry in polite language, but nevertheless his criticism was honest and discussed real issues.<sup>203</sup> In addition, Cobbett used simple language that commented on people's sufferings. One of his tactics for instance was his decision to reduce the price of his *Register* in order to make it available for all readers during the difficult time in 1816 such as 'food riots'.<sup>204</sup>

He realized how important it was to gain public support and one strategy to achieve it was his explanation of how he engaged with some political issues in relation to the statesmen, such as the members of the parliament and the magistrates. Cobbett was aware of the public interest in those who controlled the state, and he

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<sup>201</sup> Melville, p. 17.

<sup>202</sup> William Cobbett, 'Cobbett's Spirit of the Public Journals, for the Year 1804', *Cobbett's Political Register*, 26 January 1805, pp. 117-21 (p. 120).

<sup>203</sup> Reitzel, p. 92.

<sup>204</sup> Reitzel, pp. 141-42.



believed that publishing letters like those between Lord Castlereagh and Thomas Canning would put the blame on the ‘servants of the king; these men, who had on their side a majority of the House of Commons’.<sup>205</sup> Drawing readers’ attention to the politicians of his country, Cobbett aimed to create a space in his newspaper for a quarrel which included the public and the politicians. Cobbett participated in initiating that quarrel between those two parties by making his audience aware of the way the politicians deceived them. The politicians were well aware of Cobbett’s reports in his private *Political Register*, so they followed his attacks in order to protect themselves. Cobbett recalled ‘the cause of that persecution of opinions, which invariably increased as the old governments felt their dangers increased. The persecution was the effect of fear’.<sup>206</sup>

Cobbett knew that his readers were of different types. The first group he targeted consisted of the poor, and ‘the labouring classes’,<sup>207</sup> with whom he believed that he shared common aims. The second group included ‘the government, the parliament, the rich’,<sup>208</sup> whom Cobbett accused of exploiting society. The warm welcome which Cobbett received on the day of his release from prison in July 1812 showed him that he was right to consider the labouring classes the largest group of his supporters. The intimate relationship between Cobbett and his readers continued in later years. For example, in 1816 when Cobbett was impoverished and had to sell his land, he saw that all poor men like him ‘[were] full of fear’.<sup>209</sup> Cobbett observed that the government did not try to help and remained ‘deaf to the voice of experience’.<sup>210</sup> The large number of copies which he sold suggests that his readers took great interest in the debates presented by Cobbett.

On 20<sup>th</sup> December 1818, Cobbett thanked those who supported him at a meeting in Stockport. Cobbett titled his letter in a way that would draw his enemies’ attention: ‘On the means of destroying the tyranny’.<sup>211</sup> It is worth noticing here the

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<sup>205</sup> William Cobbett, ‘Summary of Politics’, *Cobbett’s Political Register*, 14 October 1809, pp. 513-17 (pp. 515-16).

<sup>206</sup> Reizel, p. 138.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130-31.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>211</sup> William Cobbett, ‘To the Rev. Joseph Harrison, and the Gentlemen Assembled at the Stockport Meeting, on the 28<sup>th</sup> Day of September, 1818 on the Sure Means of Destroying the Tyranny’, *Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register*, 20 February 1819, pp. 667-98 (p. 667).

two sides of the message that Cobbett aimed to deliver: his gratitude to the supporters, and the existence of his enemies. This is an example of how Cobbett involved others in his own personal quarrel and had intentions to make the fight public through his discussions in his letter. Furthermore, Cobbett was honoured to see that his friends recognized his intentions to serve the country.<sup>212</sup> Yet, as being an opponent against those who accused him, Cobbett emphasised that people like Thomas Jonathan Wooler (1786-1853), a journalist and radical,<sup>213</sup> and the Whig tried to destroy his reputation when he was in prison.<sup>214</sup> Cobbett told his friends of Stockport that his enemies aimed to destroy him, as Wooler called him, ‘hypocrite, deserter, foolish old man.’<sup>215</sup> Cobbett considered that his enemies’ behaviour revealed their envy, and gave himself the right to hate and contend against those ‘wretches’.<sup>216</sup> Drawing attention to the personal quarrels that Cobbett chose to reveal to his audiences, Leslie Stephen argues that ‘with Cobbett to quarrel was to expand into gross personal abuse’.<sup>217</sup>

Stephen presents Cobbett as an opportunist and coward, unlike other radical reformers who ‘stood their ground, were tried and acquitted and imprisoned’.<sup>218</sup> However, Cobbett’s actions showed his commitment to his cause, as he openly criticized the flogging of English soldiers at Ely in 1809. He wrote later that his ‘crime was expressing [his] indignation at the *flogging of Englishmen under a guard of German bayonets*’.<sup>219</sup> Cobbett was sentenced for two years from 1810-1812 in Newgate prison. He had to pay a fine of a thousand pounds, and his printer, publisher and bookseller were prosecuted and imprisoned too.<sup>220</sup> Cobbett expressed his indignation against the system when he was sentenced in 1810 for two years in prison, and in a letter to his children he wrote, “be you *good children*, and we shall

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid., p. 668.

<sup>213</sup> James Epstein, ‘Wooler, Thomas Jonathan (1786?-1853)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/29952> [accessed 29 September 2014].

<sup>214</sup> Cobbett, ‘To the Rev. Joseph Harrison’, pp. 667-98 (p. 670).

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p. 670.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., p. 671.

<sup>217</sup> Leslie Stephen, ‘William Cobbett’, *New Review*, 9.54 (1893), 482-93, (p. 485) in *British Periodicals*

<<http://ezproxy.lib.le.ac.uk/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy4.lib.le.ac.uk/docview/6658277/flash/1?accountid=7420>> [accessed 22 May 2013].

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., p. 484.

<sup>219</sup> William Cobbett, ‘To the Yeomanry Cavalry’, *Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register*, 19 October 1822, pp. 129-71 (p. 145).

<sup>220</sup> Reitzel, p. 117.

all have ample revenge.”<sup>221</sup> On another occasion in his autobiography Cobbett reported a conversation with his American friend in which he said that ‘the only mode of proceeding to get satisfaction requires great patience’.<sup>222</sup> These two examples indicate Cobbett’s language tactics which varied between seeking revenge and applying patience in dealing with his persecutors who aimed to silence him. Even after the difficult years of the war between 1811-1815, Cobbett continued his tactic of patience as can be seen in his letter to his friend Hunt about the wrong actions of the government in 1818, and he again suggested:

Let us wait, then, with patience, for two years more; but, let us keep our eye steadily fixed on the movements of the Ministry and the Bank [...], if they *do not* pay in cash at the end of two years more, then, what they ought to pass for I shall leave my readers to decide.<sup>223</sup>

This quotation demonstrates how Cobbett chose to keep the quarrel personal and limited by remaining patient for some time. However, he was prepared to make the quarrel public by involving his readers if the problem continued.

In his later years, Cobbett became concerned about the misrepresentation of people’s opinions in his country. For example in 1816-17, he noticed cases of exclusion of ‘officers of the navy and army, and other persons in public employ, from giving their voice’,<sup>224</sup> in voting whether to sign a congratulatory address to the Royal family. The incident happened in the county of Kent.<sup>225</sup> Cobbett expressed his anger as he discovered that the policy used the same form of discrimination that emerged in the 1780s during the election when the soldiers were obliged to vote like their officers of the ‘Upper Cover party’.<sup>226</sup> Cobbett wrote to the people of Kent on 13 July 1816: ‘I can by no means allow, that it is fair for them to shut out, or to attempt to overawe, any part of the people.’<sup>227</sup> Cobbett’s goal, however, was not disappoint people, but to encourage them through his dispute. He discouraged

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<sup>221</sup> Cobbett, ‘To the Yeomanry Cavalry’, *Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register*, 19 October 1822, pp. 129-71 (p. 146).

<sup>222</sup> Cobbett, ‘To Mr Brougham’, pp. 129-61 (pp. 146-47).

<sup>223</sup> William Cobbett, ‘To Henry Hunt, Esq, Letter V’, *Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register*, 19 September 1818, pp. 121-52 (p. 130).

<sup>224</sup> William Cobbett, ‘To the Men of Kent, Letter II. On the Subject of the Proposed and Rejected Congratulatory Addresses to the Royal family’, *Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register*, 13 July 1816, pp. 33-40 (p. 35)

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>226</sup> Burton, p. 25.

<sup>227</sup> Cobbett, ‘To the Men of Kent, Letter II’, pp. 33-40 (p. 35).

violence during the votes, but he created a popular disagreement against practice because he believed that it would be more effective than a personal quarrel.

In his letter, *To the Men of Kent*,<sup>228</sup> Cobbett was grateful to a young man who during the meeting shouted ‘*where is the majority*’,<sup>229</sup> referring to the soldiers who were not included. By emphasizing that personal reaction of that man and other people’s reactions such as those presented in an ‘article of *complaint*’,<sup>230</sup> Cobbett showed his support for the personal reactions of that man as well as other people’s reactions and so he emphasised the importance of personal participation in quarrelling. By showing his respect for this person’s reaction Cobbett demonstrated that there was awareness among the citizens of Kent who were able to ‘*feel* upon the subject’,<sup>231</sup> even if they were not able to act. Thus Cobbett used this example to create barriers between him and his enemies while building a relationship with his readers from the lower class. He encouraged members of the public to engage actively in quarrels with the authorities, and continued to do so himself.

### **Cobbett’s Battle with Corruption**

According to James Sambrook, Cobbett read Paine’s *The Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance* (1796), and used those ideas of Paine in his own publication in the *Political Register* entitled ‘Paper against Gold’ when the government ‘stopped gold payments in 1797’.<sup>232</sup> It was July 1797 when the bank notes were considered as the currency for gold was not easy to get as a result of war.<sup>233</sup> Edward Irving refers to Cobbett’s involvement in 1810 and 1811 ‘on the financial state of the nation’,<sup>234</sup> as Cobbett’s articles on ‘Paper against Gold’ appeared to attract the attention of the state after the ‘contribution to the bullion controversy’<sup>235</sup> which was written in an essay by David Ricardo in 1809. The essay of the wealthy politician, Ricardo, caused the interest ‘of leading political and intellectual figures’<sup>236</sup> in the country to resolutions of the Bullion Committee which

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>232</sup> Sambrook, *William Cobbett*, p. 70.

<sup>233</sup> Carlyle, p. 54.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>235</sup> Terry Peach, ‘Ricardo, David (1772-1823)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23471>> [accessed 28 September 2014].

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., n. p.

supported the ‘resumption of cash payments as a suitable remedy for the inconvenience consequent on the depreciation’,<sup>237</sup> of gold and silver. Yet, during that event, Cobbett revealed more personal revenge against the government by producing his essays against paper money. He told his American friend who visited him in Newgate that his writing against the government would be the product of this imprisonment.<sup>238</sup> Cobbett then wanted to show his enemies who put him in prison that they could not ‘press [him] down’.<sup>239</sup> He asserted to his friend that as he would stand against them again, he would be able to tell them: ‘this is what I got for my having been sentenced to Newgate’.<sup>240</sup> Cobbett’s approach here carried strong undertones of revenge against his opponents and at the same time he wanted his supporters to see his commitment to his political combat. Cobbett built an alliance between himself and other oppressed political thinkers by naming the judges ‘Gibbs, Ellenborough, and their associates’,<sup>241</sup> like Thomas Erskine who put him into Newgate prison, who were the same ones who had also imprisoned other radicals. For example the radical, John Horne Tooke and other prisoners were charged with high treason in 1794.<sup>242</sup> According to Cobbett, corruption had to be exposed to the public. One strategy which Cobbett chose to employ was to reveal his own personal quarrel with those who were involved in corruption especially ‘by the means of their system of *paper-money*’,<sup>243</sup> in the years of war, in order ‘to keep on foot and well armed and paid, a great army, and a numerous band of spies and witnesses sufficient to watch both the people and the soldiers’.<sup>244</sup> Cobbett believed that the increase of the paper money would create a decline in the currency, and the country would not be able to have ‘the growth of commercial transaction in the country’.<sup>245</sup>

I will focus on one particular text that exemplifies Cobbett’s methods of arguing against corruption. Mulvihill demonstrates that ‘Cobbett’s *Weekly Political*

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<sup>237</sup> Carlyle, p. 54.

<sup>238</sup> Cobbett, ‘To Mr Brougham’, pp. 129-61 (p.148).

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>242</sup> Michael T. Davis, ‘Tooke, John Horne (1736-1812)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27545>> [accessed 29 September 2014].

<sup>243</sup> William Cobbett, ‘Letter C, to the Freeman City of Coventry: On the Profound Ignorance of Those Who Have Had the Management of the Nation’s Affairs for Many Years Past’, *Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register*, 9 May 1818, pp. 507-32 (p. 523).

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., p. 523.

<sup>245</sup> Carlyle, p. 55.

*Register* become known for its loud campaign against old Corruption'.<sup>246</sup> When Cobbett wrote a letter to his countrymen before his leave to America in 1817, he said to them: 'my main object will be to combat Corruption.'<sup>247</sup> In May 1818, he wrote a letter to the people of the city of Coventry which he published in his *Political Register*. Cobbett aimed to discuss 'the profound *IGNORANCE* of those who have had the management of the nation's affairs for many years past'.<sup>248</sup> He argued that 'the paper has no value in itself such as gold has [and] it will not fetch any thing now in any foreign country'.<sup>249</sup> Cobbett explained the issue of the paper-money to his audience because he cared for them; he considered that the battle between him and corruption was an old one. Cobbett started from a particular occasion of corruption, and identified it as just one example of a broader and much longer lasting social problem. He presented his own political activity in terms of quarrelling: as an old battle against corruption. Cobbett aimed to ensure that he gained the satisfaction and the understanding of his countrymen, so he formulated his message according to the rules of politeness at the time. He always tried to deal with his anger. Lewis Melville notices that Cobbett 'would tone down some sentences that he had written in the heat of composition, and more than once he wrote to Wright telling him to be sure to read the proofs carefully, and soften any expressions that he deemed too strongly'.<sup>250</sup> However, Cobbett knew his opponents would not rest until they stopped his writings. He stated that:

it was by *my pen* that Corruption was unveiled, exposed, degraded, and driven to arm herself with the dungeon and halter. You must be well assured, that; either by false witness, or by an act of disguised tyranny, she would have stopped the movement of that pen.<sup>251</sup>

Cobbett's fight with Corruption continued after he went to America: '[he would] still make her feel what it is to have opposed to her a man, who, though single-handed, has knowledge, zeal, and indefatigable industry and perseverance at his command'.<sup>252</sup> Cobbett aimed to outline the difference between him as a gifted and zealous author, and that of his rival.

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<sup>246</sup> Mulvihill, p. 162.

<sup>247</sup> Cobbett, *Selections from Cobbett's Political Works*, p. 200.

<sup>248</sup> Cobbett, 'Letter C, to the Freeman City of Coventry', pp. 507-32 (p. 507).

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 523.

<sup>250</sup> Melville, p. 31.

<sup>251</sup> Cobbett, 'Letter C, to the Freeman City of Coventry', pp. 507-32 (p. 531).

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 531.

Cobbett's letter contains imagery that aimed to make his enemies fear his pen. He personified 'Corruption' as a means of representing all those who were guilty within one figure, including particular enemies of whom he wrote of 'my hatred of the Borough villains, and my anxious desire to assist in the infliction of vengeance on them'.<sup>253</sup> Moreover, the description he gave of the fight between him and Corruption represented it as a quarrel between two old enemies. Even though he was away on another continent, Cobbett stated that '[he would] still haunt her; still trouble her; still annoy her and keep alive the spirit against her [...]'.<sup>254</sup> All the verbs used by Cobbett here exemplify quarrelling, and express his anger with various cases of injustice. He intended to keep up a fight that was meant to be watched by his supporters. Furthermore, Cobbett asked his readers to copy and read his publications, because that would:

keep up this combat so steadily. And, when you have thought, think of what I should be able to do, if placed in parliament by *you*. As my *private interests*, they will never occupy much of my thoughts.<sup>255</sup>

Here, we see how Cobbett's quarrels referred to a private conflict that was expanded into the public realm. When Cobbett mentioned in the letter his '*private interests*',<sup>256</sup> he simplified the meaning of quarrelling in the context of the private attacks against him by those who also intended to haunt, trouble, and annoy him. Thus, the implicit message Cobbett intended was to show the fight between him and Corruption was for the sake of the public. Cobbett wanted his readers to recognize his personal suffering as he had to leave his own country and for their sake he accepted long-term combat with his enemies. In 1817, Cobbett found himself again threatened with prosecution so he decided to go to America, and on March that year he wrote his *Taking Leave of Countrymen*, wherein he gave the causes that drove him from England.<sup>257</sup> Cobbett wished for the men of his country to know that the purpose of his leave was that he had to make his choice 'between *silence* and *retreat*'.<sup>258</sup> Here, Cobbett wanted them to know that he considered his retreat from the country to be

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<sup>253</sup> William Cobbett, 'To Messrs. Johnson, Baguley, and Drummond, On their Imprisonment, and on the Line of Conduct Which they ought to Pursue; and on Political Shoy-hoys', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 14 August 1819, pp.1-32 (p. 11).

<sup>254</sup> Cobbett, 'Letter C, to the Freeman City of Coventry', pp. 507-32 (p. 531).

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 531-32.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 531.

<sup>257</sup> William Cobbett, 'Mr Cobbett's Taking Leave of His Countrymen', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 28 March 1817, pp. 1-29 (p. 1).

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

the lesser of the two evils and would mean that he did not have to remain silent. He explained to them that he intended to leave, because ‘the laws have been passed to take away the personal safety of every man’.<sup>259</sup> Therefore, Cobbett expressed his fear to his countrymen from his prosecutors who would silence him if he decided to stay. He explained to them that he could write freely from America, and with clear way of addressing the people as his only acquaintances in the country who deserve his trust, Cobbett told them: ‘You, my good and faithful countrymen, shall be able to read what I write.’<sup>260</sup>

His attitude was polite, because he still emphasized that he would not impose himself in the elections, but he would reconsider joining the parliament if the public ask him. Cobbett aimed to make a political point and that was in relation to the importance of the public choice of their representative candidate. When Cobbett delivered such a message, he achieved a victory which was confirmed by the practice of the public, even though the results were not as high as Cobbett’s expectation.

Cobbett experienced more quarrels with those who represented corruption. Cobbett asked his supporters to get ready to fight back. Cobbett described his enemies as ‘the hiring crew’<sup>261</sup> that failed to answer him through the press, who manipulated him and put him under pressure. Cobbett could not ignore their threatening in which he was put into the fear of ‘the Westminster Address’,<sup>262</sup> which represented the ministry and its terror of ‘the dungeon’.<sup>263</sup> Cobbett showed his personal suffering caused by the intimidating treatment of his opponents. When he wanted to explain his true feelings to his friends, he must have known that his enemies would read what they ‘were unable to answer with pen’.<sup>264</sup> He indicated to his readers that the press in his country was monitored and ‘the magistrates and parsons have long had great sway in these rooms, and have kept out of them, very frequently every work that they dislike’.<sup>265</sup> Cobbett exemplified the fight he was having with his enemies with a story; he told all his readers, friends and foes, about ‘some sudden quarrel between a Butcher and the servant of a West-country

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>265</sup> Cobbett, *Selections from Cobbett’s Political Works*, p. 177.



Grazier'.<sup>266</sup> He used this conflict as an allegory of his own personal battle with his opponents. When the fight intensified, the Butcher '*drew out his knife*'<sup>267</sup> against the Grazier, and the latter turned about and came back to continue the fight, until 'he gave the butcher a blow upon the wrist which brought his knife to the ground'.<sup>268</sup> His method here had symbolic parallels with his own situation with his enemies. He represents himself as the Grazier who is threatened by the butcher, who wants to kill his stock and take it for himself. The Butcher is a negative image of the government authors who wish to destroy the work that Cobbett has carefully tended and reared, just as the Grazier rears his herd. Cobbett's representation of himself as the Grazier connects him with the ordinary people engaged in ordinary work. So, his defence of himself within his writing is like his attempt to dash the Butcher's knife to the ground. Cobbett used similar metaphors in other texts; for example, in his *Weekly Political Register*, he suggested the story as an example of the suppression he himself suffered which was caused by his enemies' knives. The reader was expected to recognise and to visualise the reason for mentioning the story and he would visualise Cobbett's next move to overcome his attacker in the fight. In 1804, he began to attack the Ministry.<sup>269</sup> As a result, the independence of the *Register* annoyed the government. Lewis Melville suggested that the paper's independence put the *Register* 'in the side of the government, and the Law officers of the Crown were on the watch to find something in that periodical that would enable them to proceed against the editor.'<sup>270</sup> Yet, Cobbett hoped that the public would realize that his combat with corruption was not different from what corruption tried with them, so they must be aware that Cobbett was sharing the same experience. He stated to the people that 'Corruption has put on her armour and drawn her dagger. We must, therefor, fall back and cover ourselves in a way so as to be able to fight her upon more equal terms.'<sup>271</sup> Thus the Grazier in the above allegory comes to stand for both Cobbett, and the people.

Despite this implied connection, Cobbett presented his argument with the government as a personal quarrel in his writing and this enabled him to protect the

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<sup>266</sup> Cobbett, 'Mr Cobbett's Taking Leave of His Countrymen', 1-29 (p. 23).

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>269</sup> Thompson, p. 497.

<sup>270</sup> Melville, p. 31.

<sup>271</sup> Cobbett, *Selections from Cobbett's Political Works*, p. 199.

public by focusing the attentions of the authorities on only him. Cobbett experienced a real conflict with the government after he published an article on the flogging of the soldiers in Ely, 1809. His writing of the article became an occasion for the government to prosecute him. However, he felt that ‘they feel the deep wounds [he] ha[s] given them; and they lose sight of everything but revenge’.<sup>272</sup> This indicates that when Cobbett revealed the truth to the public, he became the enemy of the government. Telling the public what was going on behind the government’s knowledge, Cobbett knew that his attack would not be forgiven, because the government would look for a way to heal its wounds. The government’s magistrates who disliked Cobbett’s political works planned for their revenge, as the Register ‘has long been punished from the most of [the public places]’,<sup>273</sup> and the stamps became hugely expensive.<sup>274</sup>

The ‘political subjects’<sup>275</sup> were tested by Cobbett’s observations and his own analysis of some political and social acts which were performed by members of parliament. For example, he noticed that the rewards which the government offered him when he came back from America in 1800 were huge, and that made him suspicious of the government’s motives. Although this event may not appear significant to spectators, it had a profound effect on him. He made this personal incident the occasion for starting a public quarrel with the government, because he perceived it as part of the government’s oppression. He wrote for the public in order to keep the spirit of freedom alive<sup>276</sup> against ‘tyranny’, and he assured them that he would win their freedom back, as throughout history ‘if tyrants have oppressed [their] country at many former periods, they always met, first or last, with a spirit of resistance.’<sup>277</sup> Thus we see him adopting a strident position against all forms of corruption in his writing, and encouraging the public to do the same.

### **Cobbett’s Devotion to Radicalism and the Public**

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<sup>272</sup> Melville, p. 42.

<sup>273</sup> Cobbett, *Selections from Cobbett’s Political Works*, p. 177.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>275</sup> Melville, p. 45.

<sup>276</sup> Cobbett, ‘Letter C, to the Freeman City of Coventry’, pp. 507-32 (p. 529).

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 529.

In many places in Cobbett's letters one could see how he involved in his personal issues both his closer allies and the general public. He aimed to reveal secret relations inside the reformers' movement by publishing his exchange of letters with both his friends and his enemies. Examples of such letters can be found in his correspondences with radical friends like Henry Hunt and John Cartwright. He used his *Political Register* as a means to publicize his private discussions of political opinions. In a letter to Jack Harrow in 1819, for example, Cobbett criticised some members of parliament including those reformers who detached themselves from the interests of common people and instead joined 'The Boroughmongers', who were 'those persons (some Lords, some Baronets, and some Esquires [...])',<sup>278</sup> who filled, or nominated other to fill, seats in the House of Commons. Cobbett's letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> December 1818 to Cartwright discussed his disapproval of the way Sir Francis Burdett, a Baronet and reformer who was the president of the meeting at the Crown and Anchor Tavern where the reformers of Hampden Clubs meet,<sup>279</sup> treated Hunt at an official dinner at Westminster.<sup>280</sup> Hunt, as a parliamentary candidate, wanted to expose Burdett as a mountebank.<sup>281</sup> As a result of that act, Hunt was asked by Burdett to withdraw.<sup>282</sup> Cobbett showed his personal anger against Burdett's abuse of power and expressed his anxiety that if such actions took place in parliament, then the people would not have any trust in those who already have seats.<sup>283</sup> Such political communications might not otherwise be known to the public. This is why Cobbett aimed to show the baronet's personal hostility against Hunt whose presence in that meeting had the purpose of representing the people. Thus we see Cobbett using his writing as a means to reveal other political conflicts to the public.

In what follows I will focus on extracts from Cleary's letter to Hunt from 10<sup>th</sup> October 1817 which Cobbett included in his letter to Cartwright because he believed it should be made public. I will show how the personal element was of concern for Cleary in relation to politics, but Cleary failed to realize the importance of the opinions of the public as he comments on the trial of the men in Derby. Those men

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<sup>278</sup> William Cobbett, 'To Jack Harrow, an English Labourer', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 9 January 1819, pp. 473-90 (p. 474).

<sup>279</sup> Melville, p. 74.

<sup>280</sup> William Cobbett, 'To John Cartwright, Esq. Letter X', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 26 December 1818, pp. 409-40 (p. 409).

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., p. 418.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., p. 418.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., p. 418.

were ordinary people who demanded ‘*their rights by force of arms*,’<sup>284</sup> and they were tried on June 1819. For example, Cleary revealed that he and a few of his friends decided not ‘to attempt public subscription for the present’,<sup>285</sup> in relation to the case of the trial. He explained two reasons: one was that ‘THE MAJOR HAS STRONG REASONS AGAINST IT’,<sup>286</sup> and the other was that the ‘*reformers, [were] far from wishing to countenance or identify [themselves] with men guilty of murder, robbery, or riot*’.<sup>287</sup> Cobbett condemned the hanging of the prisoners at Derby. He questioned if the ‘men are defeated in their attempt to resist; they ought to be hanged as criminals’.<sup>288</sup> Cleary focused only on the general impression the reformers wanted to give of themselves, and on their need to protect their reputation by avoiding involvement in the court’s decisions. By publishing Cleary’s letter to Hunt, Cobbett exposed Cleary’s reaction as unacceptable and he paid great respect to the poor men who were put on trial, criticising unfair charges against them. Cobbett aimed to support the poor prisoners to change the unfair laws which he himself experienced when he was imprisoned for two years. Cobbett found complaints in the correspondences sent to him which was dated to October 1817. The letters were from prisoners who wanted Cobbett to hear about ‘their sufferings’.<sup>289</sup> Cobbett referred to that oppressive law by which ‘the State Prisoners’<sup>290</sup> suffered a ‘horrible treatment’,<sup>291</sup> and he advised the prisoners ‘TO REMAIN IN ENGLAND’,<sup>292</sup> and then added, ‘we must have JUSTICE.’<sup>293</sup> He expressed his anger against the hypocrisy shown towards the reformers as they stood against oppression. Another example of Cobbett’s anger in response to the treatment of the reformers was the increase in the correspondence from the state prisoners to Cobbett. They wrote to Cobbett, because they wanted people to know about their situations which inflamed Cobbett’s tension against the reformers like Burdett, as he said: ‘— If Sir Francis

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<sup>284</sup> Thomas Cleary, *A Letter to Major Cartwright: In Justification of the Writer’s Conduct at the Late Elections for Westminster: And, in Answer to the Calumnies Spoken and Published Against Him by Cobbett, Hunt, and Thelwall; and Certain Members of Mr. Hobhouse’s Committee* (London: 1819), p. 11. Google ebook.

<sup>285</sup> Cobbett, ‘To John Cartwright, Esq. Letter X’, pp. 409-40 (p. 420).

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., p. 420.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., p. 420.

<sup>288</sup> Cleary, p. 11.

<sup>289</sup> William Cobbett, ‘To Henry Hunt, ESQ, Letter III’, *Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register*, 11 April 1818, pp. 411-42. (p. 441).

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., p. 441.

Burdett had, as was his duty, *visited these prisoners*, they need not have had all the trouble in applying to me.<sup>294</sup> The reason that Cobbett encouraged the prisoners to stay came from his own personal experience when his leaving of the country helped his opponents to argue against him. It is interesting to note, then, that Cobbett encouraged a sense of commitment in those who wrote to him that he had not always shown in his own actions.

Cobbett and Cleary disagreed about the rights of the prosecuted men. It was the political opponents' doctrines that caused his quarrel. Cobbett wrote later in 1822: 'It is with their doctrines I quarrel, and I now wish, as I have ever done, *to discuss those doctrines argumentatively*, and not vituperatively.'<sup>295</sup> Cleary tried to show that he understood what it meant when people are united and demand their rights,<sup>296</sup> but he insisted that the acts of those men were 'violent and imprudent'.<sup>297</sup> Cleary put the whole blame on those men and believed that it was because of such acts that people like him were unable to have their lives and liberties protected by the law. He also considered that they were the cause of Cobbett's expatriation.<sup>298</sup> Cleary wanted to show his personal refusal of the acts of those men from Derby, because he wanted to emphasize that his opinion as a political member agreed with the law of the country. Cleary expressed his anger as he wrote to Hunt: 'I COULD ALMOST HANG THEM MYSELF.'<sup>299</sup> Cobbett thought Cleary was wrong and aimed to point out that Cleary needed to acknowledge the real reasons behind his expatriation. Those reasons were linked to Cobbett's political position in the country as he was targeted by the government after he showed his refusal against the suspension of the Act of Habeas Corpus in his *Two Penny* in 1817 pamphlet. Cobbett felt that he was under the threat of imprisonment as the ministries like Lord Sidmouth who confessed that 'the pamphlet had been submitted to the law-officers'.<sup>300</sup>

The difference between his goal and Cleary's was that Cobbett wanted to defend the interests of the majority of the public, while Cleary supported the

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<sup>294</sup> Ibid., p. 442.

<sup>295</sup> William Cobbett, 'To Mr Canning', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 7 September 1822, pp. 577-640 (p. 591).

<sup>296</sup> Cobbett, 'To John Cartwright, Esq. Letter X', pp. 409-40 (p. 420).

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., p. 420.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., p. 420.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., p. 420.

<sup>300</sup> Cobbett, *Selections from Cobbett's Political Works*, p. 180.

minority of that particular group of reformers and their political goals. Cobbett's readers were informed in January of the same year (1818) about how both the party of the previous Prime Minister William Pitt and that of his political opponent Fox 'hated all thought of election'.<sup>301</sup> Cobbett believed that the freedom of election was restricted when the 'thieves make a division of their booty; and a Westminster Election was become one of the most contemptible of all exhibitions'.<sup>302</sup> The fact that Cleary cared about the smallest group of reformers who gained power in the ministry annoyed Cobbett, because he realised that Cleary represented similar goals of a personal interests from politics. Cobbett published this old letter by Cleary to remind reformers and other members of the public of the need for fair elections in the country. Cobbett suggested that Cleary's treatment of the case of the Derby men could be a repetition of the action of 'the Baronet', on his 'desertion',<sup>303</sup> of the reformers' ideals. Cobbett expressed his indignation in his original letter to Cartwright in which he inserted Cleary's letter to Hunt. Cobbett wanted to show that his attack against the Baronet was not different from other reformers who also noticed Burdett's desertion of their cause.

The way Cobbett presented his letter to Cartwright showed his anger because he wanted to show the acts of those who caused his expatriation, especially since those persons were reformers and he had high expectations of them. Thus, Cobbett aimed to show how some reformers like Burdett failed to fulfil the principle of the reformers' movement. For example, when Cleary wrote to Hunt that the acts of the Derby prisoners were the reason for Cobbett's leaving his country, Cobbett wanted to correct Cleary and to explain that it was the mistakes of reformers such as Burdett's that caused him to go abroad. Cobbett explained that his life in England was destroyed by 'the tyranny of the Boroughmongers',<sup>304</sup> who sent him to Newgate prison in 1810. Besides, Cobbett wanted to show Burdett's avaricious manner in which he had used his own position, and how the thousands of pounds which he preferred to keep for the '*purity of election*', could have

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<sup>301</sup> Cobbett, 'To Henry Hunt, Esq. Of Middleton in the County of Southampton, Letter II, *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 17 January 1818, pp. 65-96 (p. 71).

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>303</sup> Cobbett, 'To John Cartwright, Esq. Letter X', pp. 409-40 (p. 424).

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., p. 438.

saved the Derbymen's lives and relieved the families of all the burgeoned men; and, if the Baronet had laid out ten thousand pounds in *this manner*, he would not have stood in the need of bribery at Westminster.<sup>305</sup>

Here, Cobbett demonstrated that defending the interests of the public was the right way for reformers to win the elections and not by bribing people at Westminster. Cobbett's remaining well connected to all the past acts of the reformers enabled him to remind them of ways of dealing with power. He emphasised to Cartwright that even though he was not in the country he still intended to return to it 'for the sake of assisting [his] country-men in their war against tyrants'.<sup>306</sup> As a result of the events that occurred in Derby, Cobbett showed his resentment against the political path his fellow reformers chose to take without being aware that they too contributed to the humiliation of the common people in the country.

Cobbett's arguments outlined in his letters showed the impact of personal quarrel that involved members from the political circle. He employed the epistolary form to enable him to focus on a specific political subject and to address a particular political person or persons. Moreover, Cobbett himself was accused by Cleary of having written a letter in 1809 to an unknown person, but Cobbett insisted that the letter was forged. Cleary claimed that Cobbett's 1809 letter was related to 'Hunt and his family affairs'.<sup>307</sup> By publishing his letter to Cartwright, Cobbett wanted to clarify his own views regarding the trial of the Derby men which seemed to be neglected by the law makers. Furthermore, Cobbett wanted Cleary's letter to Hunt to become public in order to make ordinary people aware of what was going on at the meetings of the 'Crown and Anchor Tavern', because Cobbett wanted to 'promote a subscription to defray the expenses of Feeing counsel to defend the prisoners prosecuted by the government for high treason at Derby'.<sup>308</sup> These last two attacks of Cobbett were against Cleary and Burdett and exemplified personal quarrels which played a significant role on the political stage. Revealing such abuses of political power showed Cobbett's needs to his readers' judgement. When Cobbett revealed Cleary's writings against him, he made his personal retaliation public involving personal acquaintance such as Hunt and Cartwright, as well as his broader audience.

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<sup>305</sup> Ibid., p. 424.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., p. 440.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., p. 432.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., p. 419.

The scope of the personal quarrel became even wider in the second attack against Cleary because the Derby men were members of the public. Cobbett used various methods to defend ordinary men and their families who suffered injustice similar to his own experience in Newgate prison. In one of his letters, he explained to his readers that if it had not been, ‘for the public cause, not a word should any of these vile attacks have drawn from me.’<sup>309</sup> Thus we see that Cobbett presented his quarrels as a means to defend the public, placing his sense of duty to them above all else. However, it is clear that there was also a personal dimension to them, as he fought against people who wronged him in their views against him, and was particularly interested in the cause of the prisoners due to his own experiences of prison.

This chapter has explored the different ways in which Cobbett argued. He spoke to different groups in society in different manners, showing the different methods he used in his personal and public political quarrels. Cobbett often appeared to rely upon personal tactics in dealing with his friends and enemies. For example, when his attitude was polite with his friends, he aimed to win their support. Yet, when Cobbett addressed his enemies he employed a very different tone and always aimed to reveal some unknown information to the reader in order to persuade them. Elsewhere, we see him using politeness through a vocabulary that emphasises courtesy and intimacy, even during his discourse with his opponents, and here, Cobbett’s focus was on gaining the support of the public rather than his enemy.

By addressing different people on various occasions, he enabled himself to demonstrate his personal opinions and to convince the public of a particular issue that concerned them. Cobbett was known for his numerous enemies and his aggressive attitude, but this chapter has also showed the role of politeness in some of Cobbett’s arguments. *The Soldier’s Friend*, which was Cobbett’s earliest political work, helps the modern reader to see this personal characteristic of Cobbett most clearly because it focussed on important issues that brought eighteenth-century society together through a tone that sought to stand up for the soldiers’ interests, as well as that of the public. Elsewhere, though, we see him employing a very different tone when addressing the persons who were connected to the problems in his society. For example, he employed an angry and aggressive tone when he presented the issue

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<sup>309</sup> Cobbett, ‘To the Independent People of Hampshire: The Court Martial’, pp. 897-919 (p. 918).



of corruption and it indicated that the aristocracy, the king, and the ordinary people were the cause of the poverty of the soldiers. It is also clear that there were many personal reasons that Cobbett sought to fight corruption. Cobbett's use of personal experiences such as the early event of the court martial, and his imprisonment at Newgate was a device with which to engage the public in wider debate about such matters. However, his other writings that happened in America had their own type of quarrel as Cobbett devoted that time purposely to public issues. His disagreement with some figures in America acted as excellent training for how to conduct combat in England. Here we see how some examples of personal quarrels showed how Cobbett aimed to make his attacks public. The examples of the political disagreement such as Cobbett's attacks against Cleary and Burdett revealed that Cobbett used them as a technique in order to focus the attention of the public on politics. Cobbett's choice of the epistolary form was a useful means to direct the interests of the public towards politics.

Cobbett's manner of quarrelling is distinctive when compared with that of Burgoyne in particular. Burgoyne always sought to exercise calmness when he spoke to his enemies, in order to persuade them of his correctness. In contrast, Cobbett's anger only increased when he addressed his opponents. We can perhaps suggest that this is because of the very different position that Cobbett occupied, having initially been favoured and trusted by the government. This position appears to have made it easier for him to later gain an audience for his dissent. Paine's approach to his opponents was also different from Cobbett's in the way that Paine cautiously avoided naming specific enemies. In contrast, Cobbett pointed directly towards who his enemies were, and named them directly. Thus we see that Cobbett's style of quarrelling was in many ways the most direct and abrasive of all the authors, but he was perhaps able to indulge in this style due to the privileged position he had occupied, and the way that he sometimes hid his identity behind his pen-name, and through living overseas.

Like Paine's first pamphlet, which asked for improvement to the wages for the excisemen, Cobbett's *The Soldier's Friend* was addressed to the parliamentary members from whom Cobbett requested fair wages for ordinary soldiers. Both authors used a polite tone, as they had strong personal aims that were hidden behind their public support to specific deprived groups of ordinary people. Nevertheless,

one obvious dissimilarity between these two pamphlets by Paine and Cobbett is that Paine wrote a deliberate and direct request to his parliamentary audiences who knew him, whereas Cobbett did not reveal his name to the audiences, because of his personal and political connection to the request of the court-martial in 1792.

Cobbett's prolific publications in the *Political Register* from 1802-1835 raised a considerable amount of polemical issues in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars. This particular political work of Cobbett's employed argumentative styles and employed quarrelling as a political tool. Reading the various rhetorical styles of Cobbett showed that he tried to influence all his readers of his own personal opinion. When Cobbett started his *Political Register*, he found a means to communicate vivid descriptions of his enemies' actions to his audience, such as through the image of Corruption. This fearless and satirical characterisation of different political figures had a tremendous influence on other Romantic authors such as Percy B. Shelley, who was directly influenced by Cobbett's political publications. The final chapter of this thesis is going to examine Shelley's rhetorical style in his political works. Like Cobbett's depiction of Corruption, Shelley portrayed in his poetry rhetorical images that reflected the brutal behaviour of the political opponents as the following chapter will illustrate.

## Chapter 4:

### Percy B. Shelley's Protests in Defence of the Public

This chapter shows how Percy B. Shelley's engagement in political quarrels took the form of angry protest against his opponents. In contrast with many of the other authors examined in this thesis, who often sought to employ rationality and reason to provide them with authority in their prose-based quarrels, Shelley presented his emotions through a poetic voice that showed unabashed rage towards the political powers on the occasion of the Peterloo Massacre of 1819. The present chapter investigates Shelley's writing style, especially in his works of 1819. It will consider Shelley's strategies of quarrelling as demonstrated in three texts he produced in response to Peterloo. The focus of my analysis will be on Shelley's methods of protest in dealing with the same political issue in three different forms of texts. These texts are the poetic works *The Mask of Anarchy* and *England in 1819*, and his epistolary narrative, *The Letter to The Examiner*. I will argue that in *The Mask of Anarchy*, Shelley adopted a style of quarrelling which aimed to capture public attention and to help the public identify their opponents. Shelley did this by producing his poem in the popular folk form of a ballad. By choosing this form, he aimed to help his ordinary addressees understand his guidance, seeking to educate them through the form of a traditional song with political images. His sonnet *England in 1819* had similar poetic devices to this poem, but it was written in a more sophisticated literary form, because it was not addressed to the popular public, but rather to literate and political groups. In this poem, Shelley strengthened his personal attacks against his enemy by using rational images to balance his anger and made use of the sonnet form in which the couplet captured his rational vision. Finally, the focus will be on Shelley's stylistic manner of quarrelling through the epistolary form in his *Letter to The Examiner*. Shelley continued to demonstrate his indignation in a different way here to present his political ideas. He used specific rhetorical strategies and adopted different voices in his letter in order to reach a more educated audience.

These political works of Shelley exemplify his approaches to quarrelling, his political values, his desire to support the working-classes and his radical ideas. Shelley argued against the political system which he felt destroyed the lives of the general public through poverty, corruption, and ignorance. My analysis of these

works will show an aspect of Shelley's writing which is different from the other authors I discussed in the previous chapters and which is related to the literary form in which his quarrelling was performed. Unlike the other authors in this thesis who published their own works, Shelley's political works appear more controversial because Shelley was forced to adhere to the pressures surrounding his need to gain publication of his work. Also, he was unable to engage in such immediate combat as the other authors because he was not able to gain such a swift sense of the public reaction to his political publications. These distinctions lead to some interesting differences in Shelley's methods of quarrelling.

Continuing the tradition from Paine and Cobbett, Shelley's manner of debating aimed to intervene between his opponents' actions and the public's reaction. The reason I apply the idea of the connection between political and personal quarrelling to Shelley's *The Mask of Anarchy* is that Shelley wrote it in response to a time of political and public crisis which affected working-class people, as well as himself. Shelley's poem illustrated people's sufferings which were caused by political hardships at the time of writing. Steven E. Jones asserts that

Shelley's pamphlets, essays, letters, and reviews from [1817-19] represent[ed] entangled themes of domestic affections and public reputation, home and inheritance, mourning and legal succession, blasphemy and prosecution, reform and oppression and the possibility of a popular revolution.<sup>1</sup>

Jones gives an appropriate indication of Shelley's personal interest in the political issues in his country, which were related to his radical views. In order to engage the general public in this quarrel, Shelley employed different rhetorical devices in his poem such as his way of creating a personal dialogue by invoking different addressees, including the general public. This is evident, for example, in the dialogue expressed by Mother Earth within the poem as she speaks to the 'Men of England, heirs of Glory | Heroes of unwritten story' (147-8). This voice appealed in a maternal manner to all the suffering masses in order to engage in political combat by explaining the desperate situation, evident when Mother Earth proclaims: 'All things have a home but one— | Thou, Oh, Englishman, hast none!' (203-4). Shelley had

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<sup>1</sup> Steven E. Jones, 'Politics and Satire', in *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Michael O'Neill and Anthony Howe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 184-62 (p. 150).

personal motives behind his political quarrels, but he devoted his argument to support the public at a time when the political situation in his country was unstable. He intentionally added a public dimension to his personal disagreements in order to gain the people's trust especially as he was not in the country when he wrote his political works against the government. It is also important to note that Shelley's work was influenced by that of other radicals. It is necessary to remember that Shelley was an avid reader of *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, as he continuously asked his friend Thomas Love Peacock through their correspondences to send him the news from England. In June 1819, Shelley stated in his letter to Peacock that 'Cobbett still more & more delights me, with all my horror of the sanguinary commonplaces of his creed'.<sup>2</sup> He therefore disliked the views of other radicals such as Burdett, whose political acts in the parliament knocked down the principles of leading figures of the radical group such as Paine and Cobbett, whose works Shelley liked.

I will draw parallels between Shelley's methods of quarrelling and those of Cobbett, as both authors were writing during the same period, and Shelley seems to have been influenced by his work. Thus, the discussion will explain Shelley's methods of quarrelling in his works, such as his adoption of a didactic tone when giving practical advice on how to defeat the enemy, presenting himself as an adviser for the reformists, and as a supporter of the working-classes. Like Cobbett, Shelley took on the public role of mediating the government's actions towards the protests, and the public in general, yet they were different in the persona they adopted towards their political enemies. Shelley's political quarrel during the same period would show the differences and the similarities with the previous political disagreements indicated in the preceding chapters. Indeed, in a letter to Charles Ollier in 1817, Shelley included Cobbett's name in the list of radicals like Sir Francis Burdett, Mr Walker (of Westminster), and Major Cartwright, to whom he wanted his publisher to send a copy of his revised work on *A proposal for Reform to the Vote Throughout the Kingdom, By the Hermit of Marlow*.<sup>3</sup> The radicalism of the views that Cobbett brought up in his prose writing can also be perceived in the way Shelley responded

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<sup>2</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), II, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), I, p. 532.

to the government's reaction against the peaceful demonstration in Manchester in 1819, which was guided by the radicals. Cobbett and Shelley were concerned about the political situation and so they encouraged the common people to join the radical reformers who aimed to improve the conditions of the working class.

### **Shelley's Response to the Peterloo Massacre of 1819**

The Peterloo Massacre on 16 August 1819 occurred when political activists including 'two clubs of female reformers'<sup>4</sup> came together with ordinary working-class people at St. Peter's Fields, near Manchester, because they wanted to demonstrate against 'the government's intransigence in the face of widespread calls for parliamentary reform to give greater representation to the working-class cities'.<sup>5</sup> Behrendt states that the participants political in the gathering were eager to hear the speech of the prominent radical figure Henry Hunt.<sup>6</sup> However, during this peaceful meeting some the protestors were killed and others injured by armed soldiers. Shelley's debate in the poem was provoked by the tragic state of the working-class community after this massacre. However, he also had other personal disagreements with particular individuals in the ministry, such as Eldon, who was involved in Shelley's family issues, and Viscount Castlereagh, who was Shelley's opponent from the time of the unrest in Ireland.<sup>7</sup> Within *The Mask of Anarchy*, Shelley aimed not to recall openly his own personal disagreements but rather enacted a different political fight with people with whom he himself had been in trouble before he left England. The event of Peterloo was provoked by the oligarchy, and this was an opportunity for Shelley to also seek revenge and unmask his enemies. Composing a poem against his old opponents might have helped him to express his own personal resistance to tyranny. His quarrel re-invoked his old hostile feelings and so Shelley resituated his personal fight as an open battle between the public and ruling classes. By addressing his opponents in a new context, Shelley was taking revenge, even blackening their names for his own personal interest. Yet, the public were important to Shelley and he knew that his quarrel against his opponents would justify his

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<sup>4</sup> Stephen C. Behrendt, ed., *Percy Bysshe Shelley* (New York: Longman, 2010), p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>7</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, 2nd edn (New York: Norton, 2002), p. 316.

resistance to tyranny. In *The Mask of Anarchy*, we therefore see that Shelley had a personal quarrel which overlapped with the public political dispute.

In 1819, there were several political responses in England to the government's oppression of peaceful radical meetings. Behrendt has suggested that Shelley was influenced by the political attacks that had also been made against the government by radical contemporaries like the artist Cruikshank and the journalist Wooler, who targeted the government in a political satire. *The Political House That Jack Built* (1819), written by William Hone, who was tried for his publication, included Cruikshank's cartoon 'image of mother and child to signify the oppressiveness of the current regime'.<sup>8</sup> The cartoon captured rather similar issues to those that Shelley showed in his political poem *The Mask of Anarchy*. Behrendt has noted that Shelley showed 'the same images and rhetoric'<sup>9</sup> in his works that explained the impact of the radicals around him.

Shelley expressed his initial response to the Manchester event to his publisher Ollier, stating that his 'indignation has not yet done boiling in [his] veins'.<sup>10</sup> The massacre had a strong impact on Shelley. He started writing his poem when he heard the news in Italy, and he sent it to England by 23 September 1819.<sup>11</sup> The short span of time between the Peterloo event and the completion of a long poem of over eighty stanzas showed the speed and determination of Shelley's reaction to the act of the government against the public's peaceful protest arranged by the reformers. In *The Mask of Anarchy*, Shelley aimed to mediate the crisis in his country in order to control public anger after the government's reaction had increased the tension between the reformers and the ruling class. This historical moment of the people's gathering against the government was important to the reformers, and Shelley wanted to protect the people and the reformers through his poem from losing their political battle after the Peterloo event in 1819. Shelley was informed through his correspondence with his friends that the political situation in his country was getting worse. He suffered from his isolation from England, both on a personal level because he was separated from his children, and on a political level

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<sup>8</sup> Ashley J. Cross, "'What a World We Make the Oppressor and the Oppressed': George Cruikshank, Percy Shelley, and the Gendering of Revolution in 1819", *ELH*, 71.1 (2004), 167-207 (p. 169), in *JSTOR* <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30029926>> [accessed 13 May 2011].

<sup>9</sup> Behrendt, p. 111.

<sup>10</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, II, p. 117.

<sup>11</sup> Behrendt, p. 84.

because it was difficult to keep up to date with the political news of the country. For example, he asked Peacock on 6 April 1818: ‘Pray tell us all the news, with regard {to} our own offspring whom we le{ft} at nurse in England; as well as those of our friends—Mention Cobbet & politics too.’<sup>12</sup> He then also wrote to Leigh Hunt in the period 14-18 November 1819: ‘[...] some day we shall all return from Italy.’<sup>13</sup>

In discussing the ‘Peterloo’ event Andrew Franta uses the term ‘quarrel’ to refer to the political disagreement between the government and ‘the reform-minded protesters’.<sup>14</sup> Franta applies the word to refer to a particular type of quarrel between the reformers by saying:

While political reformers quarrelled about what course of action to take, armed rebellion or continued nonviolent mass demonstration, the debate in Parliament moved quickly from whether or not the administration should investigate events in Manchester to how best to contain the radical response.<sup>15</sup>

Similar to this use of the word, the term ‘quarrel’, in *The Mask of Anarchy* refers to the frustrating disagreement between the poet’s radical beliefs and the state institutions, which, according to Shelley, form ‘Anarchy’;<sup>16</sup> as Morton D. Paley concludes, ‘Anarchy can personify the institution of the state.’<sup>17</sup>

I would suggest that Shelley’s rapid response was caused by his personal aim to retaliate against the establishment. Even though Shelley’s goal was to produce the poem for the sake of the public, he consciously pointed out his personal enemies. Shelley described his opponents in allegorical terms, giving them criminal labels such as Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy so that the public would make an association between their names and his classification whenever they heard of them or read about them in other political writings. He carried out an attack on specific political persons, for example, by attaching the label Fraud to John Scott, who was the Lord Chancellor who did not allow Shelley to take custody of his children from his first

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<sup>12</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, II, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Franta, ‘Shelley and the Poetics of Political Indirection’, *Poetics Today*, 22.4 (2009), 765-93, in *JSTOR* < <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40280556> > [accessed 20 March 2011].

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 765-93 (pp. 775-76).

<sup>16</sup> ‘The Mask of Anarchy’, in *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: Norton, 2002), pp. 317-29. All the quotes from *The Mask of Anarchy* and *England in 1819* are taken from this source.

<sup>17</sup> Morton D. Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium in English Romantic Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), p. 245.



wife Harriet. Shelley mentioned those opponents at the beginning of his poem and specified each opponent in a different stanza. Another group he targeted was comprised of authors employed by the government, because they supported its policy on the people.<sup>18</sup> He aimed to show that his writing was superior, as his criticism was told through the vision of poetry. Shelley must have been aware of the way the state employed some authors to evaluate literary works before they gave permission to release their works for the general public. He must also have been aware of how authors were prosecuted for their writings, of which Cobbett's imprisonment at Newgate prison for his article on the flogging of soldiers is a good example. When Leigh Hunt (Shelley's publisher) and Mary Shelley produced Shelley's poem for the first time in 1832 they agreed that Shelley had written the poem for the poor working classes who faced utter unfairness as workers and citizens. This kind of acknowledgment by the figures closest to Shelley gave the idea that the government would prevent such work from reaching the public, because of its explicit manner of public combat, if Hunt published it immediately. As commented on by Hunt, it 'would have got him cruelly misrepresented a few years back'.<sup>19</sup> The quote indicates Hunt and Mary Shelley's worries as they believed that if Hunt published Shelley's poem directly after the protest, it could have caused him to suffer misunderstanding from the people who in that time felt that 'Peterloo, with its stark evidence of violent repression, was a pivotal event in encouraging radical endorsements of right of armed resistance'.<sup>20</sup> Hunt believed the public 'had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kind-heartedness of the spirit that walked in this flaming robe of verse'.<sup>21</sup> Thus we see that an earlier publication of Shelley's poem was deemed to be dangerous, for both Shelley and for the society.

### **Shelley's Style and Tone in *The Mask of Anarchy***

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<sup>18</sup> Shelley knew that the government had its own writers. He told his publisher, when he was criticised by the *Quarterly Review*, that the article 'could not have been written by a favourer of Government, and a religionist'. Shelley, *The Letters*, II, p. 163.

<sup>19</sup> *The Masque of Anarchy: A Poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Leigh Hunt (London: Edward Moxon, 1832), p. vi.

<sup>20</sup> Kevin Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> *The Masque of Anarchy*, ed. by Leigh Hunt, p. vi.

The sincerity and kind-heartedness to which Hunt refers in his comment are reflected in *The Mask of Anarchy*. The poem presents a more diplomatic and sympathetic ways to solve the conflict between the working class and the rulers. In the following stanzas, it seems that the poetical voice was trying to mitigate the hardship the people went through, as it asked them for calm even though they were oppressed. Then, in the stanza following it, the poetic persona depicted a state of resistance:

And if then the tyrants dare  
Let them ride among you there,  
Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew,—  
What they like, let them do.  
(340-43)

with folded arms and steady eyes,  
And little fear, and less surprise  
Look upon them as they slay  
Till their rage has died away.<sup>22</sup>  
(344-47)

In these stanzas, Shelley encourages the public to remain passive in the face of the government's violent attack. However, the substance of such poetical argument in these two stanzas could be misunderstood as a refusal to stand firmly in defence of the ordinary people and could make the author a target of personal accusations by the public, whom he intended to help. Hunt was aware of the growing hostility of the government and of the fact that there were reasons for the people's anger, yet he considered that *The Mask of Anarchy* would provoke further opposition against Shelley. This is one reason why he delayed its publication.

Shelley's use of the personal pronoun 'I' in the poem can be interpreted autobiographically, rendering the poem itself an instrument in his personal and political struggles. The opening line, 'As I lay asleep in Italy' (1) metaphorically emphasizes the fact that the speaker was not in his country when the massacre took place. The speaker apparently wanted to show the public how much he cared for them, and that his being away did not prevent him from sharing the same experience with the public. The statement that the poetic speaker heard the voice from across the sea implies that the voice was loud – it is imagined as a cry from a large number of people, complaining from similar opponents as those who isolated Shelley through

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<sup>22</sup> 'The Mask of Anarchy', pp. 316-26.

persecution because of his radical opinion. The loud cry provided the effect of an experience shared between him and the public. It indicated the fact that everyone was affected by the government's policy, and suggested a congruence of both Shelley's and the public's sufferings.

In the same opening stanza, Shelley continued to impart the idea of his pure personal emotions towards the public by frequently implying his concern. The lyrical voice indicated the poet's anxiety even while he was sleeping: 'And with great power it led [him] | To walk in the visions of Poesy.' (3-4) In the first stanza, the poetic speaker positioned himself as someone led by an external power; this 'great power' led him to use his poetry as an instrument to fight those who would stand in his way. The power which caused Shelley to react against the opponents could be interpreted as his personal indignation, which he also expressed in his letter to his publisher on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1819: 'the torrent of my indignation have not yet done boiling in my veins.'<sup>23</sup> He directly went on to tell what he saw in his own visions which he hoped the public would share. Shelley intended to achieve his personal view to protect the middle class people from further political oppression which affected them as they tried to stand against their opponent peacefully at St. Peter's.

After establishing his solidarity with those who suffered from the government's mistreatment, the poetic speaker introduced those whom he perceived to be the common enemies to himself and the public. The choice of enemies demonstrated how Shelley's personal disagreement was with the ruling system in his country, and his enemy's act against the people at Peterloo in August 1819. Shelley guided the people and taught them how to overcome members of the government, who Shelley represented as their enemies in the poem. In order to make his poem accessible to a wide readership, he wrote his poem in ordinary language, as his poem sought to illustrate real actions and people. Shelley revealed those whom he considered to be the enemies by describing their appearances in the poetic speaker's visions, attaching particular names to the allegories of different crimes. In this way, he equated each person with a particular vice. For example:

I met Murder on the way—

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<sup>23</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, II, p. 117.

He had a mask like Castlereagh—  
Very smooth he looked, yet grim;  
Seven bloodhounds followed him:  
(5-8)

Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh was a ‘foreign secretary and leader of the house, 1812 -1822’.<sup>24</sup> Shelley’s opinion against Castlereagh appeared to be similar to that of other radicals, because Castlereagh was against the radical assemblies. Castlereagh became one of Shelley’s personal opponents because of his announcement to criminalise radical meetings, ‘prevent training of dissidents, and seize arms.’<sup>25</sup> Besides, Castlereagh might have been known to the public for ‘his bloody suppression of unrest in Ireland’.<sup>26</sup> Thus, when Shelley wrote that ‘[he] met Murder’, the audience are reminded of Castlereagh’s new decisions in his office such as his recommending of violent attacks at St Peter Fields. Shelley’s exposition of the names of government officials such as Castlereagh aimed to gain the trust of readers. He did not fear the political hierarchy in the country for its higher positions, but he presented himself as possessing the knowledge about their real appearances behind their public masks. The mask is a metaphor for the falseness he saw in the characteristics of those political opponents. In presenting the murderer as a third person, ‘he’, who was like Castlereagh, Shelley was able to describe a special connection between the ‘mask’ and falseness which was otherwise difficult for the general public to perceive. To strengthen his argument, Shelley needed to be precise about his opponent’s distinctive features and manners, thus informing people who he believed their shared opponent was. Thus his allegorical device extended to his opponents’ policies, for example Castlereagh’s leading role in the political crisis and action against the radicals and the poor people at the Peterloo attack, and his other political actions, like making European leaders follow his decision to postpone ending the slave trade.<sup>27</sup>

Shelley’s enemies wore the mask during their political battles, but his old quarrel with them enabled him to reveal their true identity beneath their mask. Shelley therefore assumed the position of a prophet within the poem as he could see

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<sup>24</sup> Roland Thorne, ‘Stewart, Robert, Viscount Castlereagh and second marquess of Londonderry (1769-1822)’ in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/26507>> [accessed 29 September 2014].

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, n. p.

<sup>26</sup> ‘The Mask of Anarchy’, p. 316.

<sup>27</sup> ‘The Mask of Anarchy’, p. 316.

‘through the mask’ which covered the respectable face. He showed that he knew the profound characteristics of the opponents, so he guided his own audience, who could not discover their enemies if they were masked. The mask plays a central role in the poem as Shelley continued using the same image when he revealed the other opponents. The mask in itself is unchangeable, but the person who wears it changes. The successive revelation of the political enemies made by the poetic voice had the effect of drawing the audience to suspect what was to come, because the poetical visions illustrated their current political events by associating them with general vices. The mask in the poem seemed to be used as a means to distinguish and reveal the enemies of the speaker. The motif of the mask that Shelley created in this context thus symbolised his enemies’ manner of hiding their real nature. The way Shelley illustrated the resemblances helped the reader to interpret the allegory clearly, so that Castlereagh could be seen as Murder, and Baron Eldon looked like Fraud.

It is possible to discern a close similarity between the way in which Cobbett formulated his criticism of corruption in his letters, and how Shelley portrayed his opponents in the poem - portraying figures such as Murder who wore a mask, while Fraud had on ‘an ermined gown’, (14) and there were little children who were around Fraud’s feet, ( 18-19) Hypocrisy who ‘clothed with the Bible’, (21) and Anarchy who rode on a white horse, and ‘wore a kingly crown’. (34) It seemed that Shelley shared the same cause as Cobbett and the same stylistic repertoire. Like Shelley’s, Cobbett’s style contained images full of metaphorical scenes and personification. Cobbett and Shelley aimed to make their readers aware that their writings were intended to make them realise the political situation around them by using memorable imagery.

Modern critics agree that 1819 was a revolutionary year for Shelley. For example, Behrendt explains Shelley’s awareness of ‘the climate of political unrest in England in 1819’.<sup>28</sup> Also, Paul Foot notices the inspiration that Shelley gained from the political events in the country in the same year.<sup>29</sup> Contemporary authors who produced the main works of that year had different political opinions, and also showed different reactions to political acts. For example, when Cobbett heard the news about his friends Johnson, Baguley and Drummond, who were imprisoned for

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<sup>28</sup> Behrendt, p. xix.

<sup>29</sup> Paul Foot, ‘Introduction’, *Shelley’s Revolutionary Year: Shelley’s Political Poems and the Essay: A Philosophical View of Reform*, ed. by Paul Foot (London: Redwords, 1990), p. 14.

political reasons in June 1819, he wrote to them that ‘the news did not surprise [him]; for such things have taken place, in all ages and in all countries, during the struggles of the oppressed against the oppressors’.<sup>30</sup> Cobbett encouraged that group of the political elite who were arrested by ‘the oppressors’<sup>31</sup> to be strong and to keep fighting even while in prison. In the letter, Cobbett wrote of the years he spent in prison and suggested his friends needed to go through the same experience in order to stay true to the cause. Unlike Cobbett, Shelley’s poetic speaker in *The Mask of Anarchy* conveyed surprise at hearing of the Peterloo massacre, and within the poem, one of the meanings of the metaphor of sleep when he hears the voice is that it is a state of unawareness. The poetic voice indicated how sensitive its owner was. The first two lines, ‘As I lay asleep in Italy | There came a voice from over the Sea’ (1-2),<sup>32</sup> show the poetic speaker’s ability to hear his countrymen’s voice even in his sleep, unprepared for the news. Behrendt explains that ‘Shelley threw himself into a frenzy of writing “exoteric” poems—topical, explicitly political, and confrontational’.<sup>33</sup> Behrendt suggests that Shelley planned to win his argument by making the poem ‘exoteric’ as a means for him to channel his personal anger by joining the public’s battle with those in power. Here, Shelley’s personal quarrel had a chance to be extended through his poem and become open to the public in order to help them to distinguish their enemies.

The events of 1819 led writers such as Shelley, and radical periodicals like *The Annual Register* and *The Examiner* to produce works of political consciousness that attempted to speak to the suffering working class. As Mary Shelley wrote in 1826, Shelley’s poem was ‘written in the first strong feelings excited by the cutting down of the people at Manchester in 1819’.<sup>34</sup> Shelley received information through *The Examiner*, which presented the situation of ‘the long irritated sufferings of the Reformers’.<sup>35</sup> He read the news ‘of the vicious attack upon the participants in a pro-reform demonstration at Manchester’<sup>36</sup> which Hunt wrote about in his article in the

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<sup>30</sup> William Cobbett, ‘To Messrs. Johnson, Baguley, and Drummond, On their Imprisonment, and on the Line of Conduct Which they ought to Pursue; and on Political Shoy-hoys’, *Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register*, 14 August 1819, pp.1-32 (p. 1).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> ‘The Mask of Anarchy’, pp. 316.-26.

<sup>33</sup> Behrendt, p. 74.

<sup>34</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Mask of Anarchy*, ed. by Donald H Reiman (London: Garland Publishing, 1985), p. vii.

<sup>35</sup> Behrendt, p. 103.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

newspaper. In reference to *The Mask of Anarchy* he wrote to his publisher, Charles Ollier on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1819:

I have only seen the extracts in the *Examiner*. They have some passages painfully beautiful. When I consider the vivid energy to which the minds of men are awakened in this age of ours, ought I not to congratulate myself that I am contemporary with names which are great, or will be great, or ought to be great?<sup>37</sup>

Shelley followed the news about the growing community of radicals and their movements in his country while he was in Italy. The quotation above exemplifies Shelley's pride in being a part of the events that were unfolding. He was proud of the developments and the awareness of his contemporaries. Also, he kept himself informed about what his opponents were writing in other newspapers which supported the government. Less than two months after he had written his poem, *The Mask of Anarchy*, Shelley wrote to Mr Ollier:

there is one very droll thing in the *Quarterly*. They say that "my chariot-wheels are broken." Heaven forbid! My chariot, you may tell them, was built by one of the best makers in Bond Street, and it has gone several thousand miles in perfect security.<sup>38</sup>

Even though Shelley was attacked by his opponents, he presented their comments as comic ones as the example in the letter above indicates. Yet, in the quote we also perceive Shelley's personal reply to his attackers. His quick response, even though through his friend, indicated that Shelley did not allow his opponent to win the argument against him. The *Quarterly Review* made an ironic association with Shelley's image of chariot wheels from his *Queen Mab*, where it was used as a metaphor for evil. In the response, Shelley undermined the judgements and the attacks of his enemies. He showed that he was aware of criticisms, and he implicitly indicated to Ollier that he would continue to write and educate people. This kind of personal reaction showed Shelley's desire to stand up to his opponents, despite the risk of persecution. These thoughts shared with his publisher are also evidence for the strong personal feelings of hatred which Shelley had for the representatives of the government and its policy. John Scott, Baron Eldon, who was Lord Chancellor, had made a decision in court to prevent Shelley from taking custody of his children

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<sup>37</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, II, p. 164.

<sup>38</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Essays and Letters by Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. with introduction by Ernest Rhys (London: Walter Scott, 1886), pp. 309-10.

from his first wife.<sup>39</sup> Shelley seemed to be considering that old dispute which appeared to be an internal personal motive expressed in *The Mask of Anarchy*.

The previous vision of Shelley's poetic persona represented him as honest, in contrast with those who were 'disguised'. He aimed at this time to reveal all his enemies who supported and caused 'Destruction' (26), but who were disguised as 'Bishops, lawyers, peers or spies' (29). Within the poem, the poetic persona repeatedly drew attention to the deceiving actions which the government and the magistrates commonly performed in their policies. In doing so, the poetic speaker supported his own fight against those he named as his opponents, whose political manners harmed the working class in his country. Here, Shelley strengthened his quarrelling attitude by using satire to show the ridiculous acts of his foes such as that of Eldon, the Lord Chancellor whom Shelley called Fraud because of the latter's way of deceiving people. The poetic persona addressed Eldon's way of influencing the public. Eldon's manner of cheating was uncovered by Shelley in the poem, when the lyrical voice did not show Eldon wearing a mask, but Fraud became a symbol of who Eldon really was. Fraud personified the law in England and the ground of justice in the country was like Shelley's enemy Eldon. The lyrical voice added another known characteristic of Eldon in order to achieve a similarity between Fraud and the actual political enemy, by describing Eldon's tears, which indicated his unrealistic action of weeping:

Next came Fraud, and he had on,

Like Eldon, an ermined gown;  
His big tears, for he wept well,  
Turned to mill-stones as they fell.  
(14-17)

In this stanza, Shelley revealed his negative emotions against his opponent which originated in a personal conflict. As I have shown earlier a similar example of the use of satire recurred when the poetic voice uncovered the acts of Lord Sidmouth such as his hiring secret agents who caused working class men to make 'illegal acts and then betrayed them to be hanged.'<sup>40</sup> Shelley condemned those actions which

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<sup>39</sup> *The Mask of Anarchy*, p. 316.

<sup>40</sup> *The Mask of Anarchy*, p. 317.



indicated the weakness of the institutions in the country even when they were defended by religion:

Clothed with the Bible; as with light,  
And the shadows of the night,  
Like Sidmouth, next Hypocrisy  
On a crocodile rode by  
(22-25)

By creating such a mocking image of a main figure in the government, Shelley displayed his readiness to attack his enemies openly. This approach also sought the trust of the audience, who might have had the will to speak, but feared the spies. Shelley established an alliance with the public by showing the listeners his ability to discover the disguised enemies and the oligarchy to whom the people bowed: ‘Anarchy, to Thee we bow, | Be thy name made holy now!’ (72-73). In the poem, the helpless people did not know that they were deceived as they ignorantly expressed their assurance to be obedient. The deceived public’s attitude is portrayed in the following stanza:

“We have waited, weak and lone  
For thy coming, Mighty One!  
Our purses are empty, our swords are cold,  
Give us glory, and blood, and gold.”  
(62-5)

The figure of Anarchy was presented as stealing people’s money and dealt with bribery as expressed in this stanza:

So he sent slaves before  
To seize upon the Bank and Tower,  
And was proceeding with intent  
To meet his pensioned Parliament  
(82-85)

The figure of ‘Anarchy’ resembled ‘King, and God, and Lord’ (71), thus the poetic persona revealed the mischievous acts of those enemies who existed in ‘his pensioned Parliament’.

Shelley represented the Peterloo battle as a conflict between the personifications of Hope and Anarchy. As the Peterloo event allowed the voice in the poem to be critical of the enemy, the poetic persona discovered a suitable way to

reveal the public quarrel which was an issue for a long time. There were some civilian victims among the protesters, yet Shelley insisted on the necessity of people's triumphing over their enemy. As I indicated earlier, Shelley used personification to represent various crimes, linking them to political figures who were often connected to an underlying personal quarrel he had with them. Shelley used the same device to dramatize the occasion as a whole. Even after Hope seemed defeated, she was saved by a Shape, which I interpret as a representation of thought because Shelley referred to it as a light which symbolizes a wakening guidance and a wiser change in order to help Hope reappear. Hope represents the people who were guided by the lyrical voice in the poem to follow 'science, poetry and thought | Are thy lamps, they make the lot' (251-52). The Shape appears as 'the light of the sunny rain' (113), and then she changes her action reflecting the poet's wish for political change. The Shape in the poem is a female figure which the poetic voice employed to fight threatening forces, as she herself produced the lights. This usage of a female figure has metaphorical connotations of the ability to give birth to a new thing. This Shape that Shelley introduced was associated with the hope that the public needed. Cobbett, however, introduced the female figures to represent 'Corruption' and 'Bribery', as he stated that they had 'sons and daughters'.<sup>41</sup> The image of the Shape appeared like 'a rushing light of clouds and splendour | A sense of awakening and thunder' (135-36), and as a result of her presence, she 'let the Assembly be | Of fearless and free' (262-63). Shelley sent his support as well as his ideas of a revolutionary thought which the people needed in order to protect Hope in the future.

When creating the image of Hope, Shelley had in mind a woman reformer who was killed during the protest. Ian Haywood agrees that the event of the death of Hope symbolises 'an actual female reformer'.<sup>42</sup> As Franta describes it: 'Shelley's foregrounding of the maid has less to do with the action she performs than with the sense in which she comes to stand as a self-conscious figure of interpretation.'<sup>43</sup> Shelley described Hope in the following stanza as:

When one fled past, a maniac maid,

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<sup>41</sup> William Cobbett, 'To John Cartwright, Esq., The Inflexible enemy of Tyranny on the Peace between England and America', *Cobbett's Political Register*, 7 January 1815, pp. 1-15 (p. 15).

<sup>42</sup> Ian Haywood, 'Shelley's Mask of Anarchy', in *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Philip Connell and Nigel Leask (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.148-73 (p. 160).

<sup>43</sup> Franta, p.780.

And her name was Hope, she said:  
But she looked more like Despair,  
And she cried out in the air:

(86-89)

Shelley was not able to prevent the reformer's violent death, but he sympathized with it and expressed his anger at her death within the poem, speaking of how her death brought about 'Misery' and 'Despair'. However, within the poem, we see Hope being saved by Shape, as described in the following stanza:

When between her and her foes  
A mist, a light, an image rose,  
Small at first, and weak, and frail  
Like the vapour of vale:

(102-5)

Thus, dissident thoughts fought for 'Hope' and tried to save her. Shelley invented 'Shape' in order to counteract the suffering of the figure 'Hope', whose metaphorical cry of misery and despair caused a sympathetic poetical creation. Shelley invented 'Shape' to connect it 'with liberty, inspiration, reason and revolutionary action.'<sup>44</sup> The character of Shape, however, also is a violent element though as it is associated with thunder: 'And speak in thunder to the sky' (109). Thus, Shape represents Shelley's anger as well as his revolutionary thoughts. Within the poem, Shelley stages a political fight between 'Anarchy' and 'Shape', as the latter tried to save 'Hope' the 'maiden most serene' (128) 'Anarchy' lay dead earth upon the earth—' (131). Shelley depicted a similar fight that I referred to when analysing Cobbett's personal quarrel with 'Corruption'. The difference between these personifications though is that Shelley sought to mask his own particular political concerns within the poem, presenting them as broader causes, while Cobbett deliberately explained that the fight he depicted in his prose was similar to his own personal fight with 'Corruption'.

Although Shelley disliked the ruling government, he sought to advocate only peaceful methods of resistance among the ordinary people. He explained his view in a letter he wrote to Leigh Hunt, in November 1819:

I fear that in England things will be carried violently by the rulers,  
and that they will not have learned to yield in time of the spirit of the

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<sup>44</sup> Haywood, 'Shelley's Mask of Anarchy', pp. 148-73 (p. 161).

age. The great thing to do is to hold the balance between popular impatience and tyrannical obstinacy; to inculcate with fervour both the right of resistance and the duty of forbearance. You know my principles incite me to take all the good I can get in politics, for ever aspiring to something more. I am one of those whom nothing will fully satisfy, but who am ready to be partially satisfied by all that is practicable. We shall see.<sup>45</sup>

The extract above shows that Shelley feared his opponents' violent actions against the ordinary people, so he sought to find a helpful means to solve the disagreement between the government and the people in a peaceful way governed by reason which he defined as 'practicable'. In the poem, Shelley depicted a non-violent approach to the conflict asking people to —

“Stand ye calm and resolute,  
Like a forest close and mute,  
With folded arms and looks which are  
Weapons of unvanquished war,  
(319-22)

The above stanza represents Shelley's personal tactic towards the enemy. He invites the people of England to consider quietness and to be strong. Through the image of a forest, Shelley implicitly depicted the unity between people and the firmness which would be their weapon and which would bring victory for them. Through the quote above, Shelley taught the people that resisting their enemy was about forbearance. This stanza indicates an example of how Shelley represents the same idea of the rational conflict which he developed in the letter. Yet, the differences between the letter and the stanza occur in the fact that the first quote communicates a personal and rational discussion between Shelley and Hunt only. The stanza is obviously in a poetic form addressed to larger audience among the ordinary public including intellectual and working class people. Moreover, the stanza recalls a similar example from Cobbett's letter from 30<sup>th</sup> June 1819, nearly two and a half months before Shelley wrote his poem. However, Cobbett's letter was addressed to a group of radical prisoners, to whom he appealed on the grounds of their 'coolness, patience, [and] sobriety'.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, II, p. 165.

<sup>46</sup> Cobbett, 'To Messrs. Johnson, Baguley, and Drummond', pp.1-32 (p. 6).

Despite the pacifist stance that Shelley adopts in the poem, some critics have suggested that we also see a sense of anger in the poem. We see that the poet's 'vision of anger was always doubled, as he cast a fierce eye on the object of his rage and a calm one on utopian resolutions to conflict'.<sup>47</sup>

Till as clouds grow on the blast,  
Like tower-crowned giants striding fast  
And glare with lightnings as they fly,  
And speak in thunder to the sky,  
(106-9)

It grew- a Shape arrayed in mail  
Brighter than the Viper's scale,  
And upborne on wings whose grain  
Was as the light of sunny rain.  
(110-13)

We see this double sense of anger and peace in the image of 'Shape'. 'Shape' is a pleasant and intellectual image, but it also speaks 'with lightnings as they fly' (108). It carries a threatening thunder, which could at the same time imply fear and conflict, but also a positive change for people. This contradictory nature of shape is represented by the oxymoron of sunny rain.

Morton D. Paley argues that the poem is 'contradictory, at war with itself, not entirely resolved'.<sup>48</sup> Paley focuses particularly on those angry emotions which contradict the poet's idea of peaceful resistance. The best example appears in the speech of the Mother Earth, when she asked her children "Men of England, heirs of Glory, to —

Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number  
Shake your chains to Earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you—  
Ye are many- they are few.  
(151-55)

Here, the poetical speaker tries to deal with the strong anger which increased and grew throughout the whole country which prompted the mother to speak through her enlightened powerful voice in order to help her children to 'rise'. The Earth's speech

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<sup>47</sup> Andrew M. Stauffer, *Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 111.

<sup>48</sup> Paley, p.245.

represents the poet's passion, because he intends for the argument to touch the hearts of his audience. Mother Earth gives her sons a mission that sounds like an urgent call for a war and asks them to 'Rise like lions after slumber'. Stauffer treats this stanza as an example of the poet's anger, as in the statement of the 'call to arms'<sup>49</sup> through the metaphorical cry of the earth. Furthermore, once the lions wake up from sleep, they are put in a similar situation to that of the lyrical speaker when a 'voice from over the Sea' (2) came to him and woke him up from his sleep. The lions and the poet became aware of the signs of the revolution at the same time which shows their relatedness: The poetic persona here makes a parallel between the poet's own awakening and that of the people. This similarity indicates how Shelley created a complete fusion of his personal and public quarrels. The comparison to lions suggests violent resistance, which is an expression of Shelley's anger and eagerness to intensify the political combat so that people become capable of defeating their enemy. Shelley spoke for his own personal wishes by using the Mother Earth figure, because of the advantages of attributing a motherly, honest, and sympathetic voice to her character. The mother's voice was used to inspire strong passions in people towards their country. The stanza also helped to reveal Shelley's personal frustration caused by his fear that the people would miss the chance of standing up for their country and bringing about political reform. Shelley repeats the same stanza at the end of the poem to clarify the need to overcome the opponents in the government by the people, so he ended the poem with the same imperative cry which called for public resistance.

In *The Mask of Anarchy*, we therefore see Shelley using many poetic techniques such as personification, allegory and metaphor in order to unmask the many wrongdoings and corruption of the government. The quarrels expressed in this poem are different from many other quarrels, though, because while it expresses angry feelings towards the government, it also encourages the ordinary people to stand firm and to remain peaceful during their quarrel with it. It shows Shelley addressing his own personal quarrels with the government through a much larger political cause through which he hoped he could bring about political change.

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<sup>49</sup> Stauffer, *Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism*, p.129.

### Shelley's Satirical Voice in *England in 1819*

*The Mask of Anarchy* was not published until 1832, because the publisher, Hunt 'thought that, if given to the public in 1819, it would have a very different effect from that for which the *poet* designed it'.<sup>50</sup> It seems that Hunt knew much more than Shelley about the people's political opinion after the eruption of the violence at Manchester. However, in the time when Shelley was waiting for the poem to be published, he wrote another poem against his opponents, and this poetic work captured specific examples of his personal opinion on the political public quarrel. He gave the English public a scathing portrait of the political circumstances in their country in 1819. The manner of arguing which Shelley employed in *England in 1819* involved similar risks as that in his poem against 'Anarchy' and so this sonnet was not published immediately either.

In *England in 1819*, Shelley employed the sonnet form in order to appeal to a more elevated audience than with the ballad *The Mask of Anarchy*, which was aimed at the ordinary people. In this sonnet, Shelley continued to target his enemies' attitudes publicly as they were responsible for the brutal acts people experienced at the Peterloo event. Shelley's indignation increased as the government continued its policy against the reformers even after its savage attack on them and the working class who were inspired by the radical views. *England in 1819* can be considered Shelley's second swift reaction against higher leaders, this time the king and the princes. Similar to his debate in *The Mask of Anarchy*, he argued against the political situation and exposed the failure of the leadership in the country. Following the political combat that occurred at Manchester, Shelley remained very critical of the killing of the innocent people at the event. It is striking that Shelley wrote another openly critical poem even though *The Mask of Anarchy* was not published. The appearance of a second poem on the same subject suggests this event was still present in the public memory and relevant to the political dispute. Such a political action in writing shows how enraged Shelley was by the events, that he wrote two poems so quickly on this topic in order to point out his disagreement with the political system in his country. Writing the poem seemed to be an achievement for

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<sup>50</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Mask of Anarchy Written on Occasion of the Massacre at Manchester: Facsimile of the Holograph MS*, ed. by H. Buxton Forman (London: Reeves and Turner, 1887), pp. 12-13.

Shelley, because even if the work did not reach his intended audience immediately during the event, it would at least for him be discussed with his friends and other close radical thinkers through their correspondences.

In *England in 1819*, the lyrical speaker aimed to find evidence in order to convince his audience, so he focused on the details which exemplify the actions of the king, who he represents as a tyrant. The voice in the sonnet carefully traced a political argument about specific enemies (the King and his sons) whom the public were unable to criticize, because of fear of prosecution. In the sonnet, Shelley seemed to carry on his dispute against the ramshackle political system. The style of the sonnet indicated that it was aimed at a more educated audience, as the political message was conveyed in a more complex manner. When Shelley attacked those responsible for the savage actions at Manchester, he demanded his addressees to take on an intellectual role against their opponents who killed liberty. In this sonnet, this act of killing liberty was referred to as 'liberticide'(8).<sup>51</sup> The voice presented a challenge to his educated addressees to defend liberty, which was a symbol for their political battle. Thus we see that the intended audience for the poem were other radicals who shared Shelley's views against the government's actions.

Shelley showed his concern about the destabilisation of the country caused by his opponents, whose policy destroyed the hopes of the radicals and the working class. However, in addition to describing the hopeless conditions of the public, the sonnet could also be seen as a kind of entertainment for the oppressed through its satirical language. The political combat in the sonnet took the form of direct juvenalian satire, in which the speaker employs a bitterly sarcastic style that reveals, in the words of Abrams,

modes of vice and error which are no less dangerous because they are ridiculous, and who undertakes to evoke from readers contempt, moral indignation, or an unillusioned sadness at the aberration of humanity.<sup>52</sup>

The voice in the sonnet insulted the king and his sons in order to encourage their opponents to act similarly. It also promoted the intellectual practice of free thought in order to help people to become resistant.

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<sup>51</sup> 'England in 1819' in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, pp. 326-27.

<sup>52</sup> M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th edn (Independence, KY: Heinle and Heinle, 1999), p. 277.



When Shelley wrote his sonnet, King George III was advanced in age and had been in control of the country for over fifty years as he came to power in the 1760s. Shelley begins the first line by pouring his scorn on the King as he writes: ‘An Old, mad, blind, despised and dying King’ (1). The voice here portrayed features about the king which were not acceptable representations in public discourse. King George had an illness which recent studies explained as porphyria, which causes ‘mental instability’.<sup>53</sup> Also, physicians recognised the connection between the king’s blindness and mental weakness. In 1817 the king was also diagnosed with deafness.<sup>54</sup> Shelley’s depiction was very close to the symptoms of the king’s illness, but his aim was deeper as he aimed to show the king’s incompetence, and so to criticise the political situation which the king had put his country through. For example, by describing the Monarch as being ‘old’, the poetical voice raised an important question about the long years in which the king lasted in power without improving the living conditions of the working-class people. By openly relating the political context to the acts of his opponent and calling them ‘mad,’ the lyrical speaker aimed to draw the simple conclusion for the people that their ruler was not able to make fair decisions for their future. Blindness, in reality, was an example of the symptoms of the king’s illness, but could also mean the king was metaphorically ‘blind’, as he chose not to see what was going on in his country as the opposition parties fought for their existence in the government and neglected the needs of the people. The king was even ‘despised’; the lyrical speaker used this word to show the lack of support for the king. ‘Dying’ emphasises that the king was unhealthy and unproductive. Thus, the poetical persona employed a bitterly satirical tone to expose the fact that the king’s poor personal condition operated as an allegory of the poor political health of his country.

We see this kind of negative criticism throughout the poem. The first quatrain portrayed the king and his sons with a sense of frustration and disgust. It invited all the readers to investigate the reality of the political situation as it focused on the

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<sup>53</sup> Cannon, John, ‘George III (1738-1820)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1054>> [accessed 20 May 2014].

<sup>54</sup> T. J. Peters and A. Beveridge, ‘Blindness, Deafness and Madness of King George III: Psychiatric Interactions’, *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 40.1 (2010), 81-85 (pp. 83-84)

royal family's acts. The following stanza uses a precise poetic choice of words in order to describe the king and the princes who failed to lead the public:

An Old, mad, blind, despised and dying King;  
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow  
Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring;  
Rulers who neither see nor feel nor know,  
(1-4)

These lines show an implicit comparison between the king's old age, blindness, madness, and dying status to that of the princes' state as they became an example of 'the dregs of their dull race'. The metaphorical implications of the word 'dregs' convey how useless the princes were, implying that they were the last part of something and of poor quality, and this deliberate choice of particular language also suggests the princes' behaviour was like that of their old, blind, and despised father, since they neither could see nor feel the suffering of the people. The idea of the princes as being from the same poor source or stock as their father implies that the king and his sons have similarly poor political attitudes. The lyrical speaker also aimed to undermine the king still further by strengthening his criticism with legal accusations such as the suggestion that the princes were illegitimate, represented through the term 'muddy spring', which suggests their origins are poor, and so they should not become heirs or politicians in the country. The princes from the 'muddy spring' were in fact similar to the king, so they deserved no respect or trust from the public. Here, we see the poetical persona establish a very direct and critical manner of quarrelling which the lyrical speaker in *The Mask of Anarchy* did not use.

Shelley's language against the Monarchy appeared to be more aggressive than that of Cobbett, because he criticised the king by implying that he was useless for the nation. Cobbett's attitude seemed to be more protective as he did not try to attack the king, but his insults against the Monarchy seemed to appear through his comments on other radicals such as John Reeves (referred to in chapter 3). Shelley portrayed the king and princes even more scornfully, particularly when they were depicted as leeches, because they depended on the general public's profits without considering their rights. The following stanza illustrates how the lyrical speaker tried to inflame the public's anger by emphasizing the fact that their rulers' 'leechlike' tendencies would not stop hurting the country and its people:

But leechlike to their fainting country cling  
 Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow  
 A people starved and stabbed in th'untilled field;  
 An army, whom liberticide and prey  
 (5-8)

These lines present the image of leechlike persons who are unable to see what their misuse of power created around them. The image of the leeches implied that the princes and their supporters' acts aimed only to use the country's money, bleeding the people dry. The speaker here used a metaphor in order to describe those who stole the public's money. The meaning behind 'till they drop' depicts both the princes' sense of greed as they will feed until they are sated, and also shows their carelessness, as their pockets were full with people's money. Here we see Shelley's poetic anger emerge through his aggressive satire through which he seeks to laugh at the princes who depend on the public money like leeches which live on other creatures' blood. The image that the audience needed to realise was that those princes were unaware of the destruction they caused to their country. Furthermore, dropping is an action which the poet metaphorically connected with unconscious conditions as the 'dying king' which was mentioned in the opening line. The two words, 'die' and 'drop' both indicate the inability to lead or be conscious. Also, the simile emphasized the weak situation of the country as its rulers 'drop, blind in blood', because the image is associated with uncontrolled power.

When the rulers' abuse of power caused suffering for the people as they were 'starved and stabbed in the 'untilled field' at Peterloo, the radicals created 'a fight against oppression'. Shelley's poetic voice attempted to point out the danger of the army due to their heartless action at Peterloo. Earlier in 1816, Cobbett sought to criticise 'the government and the army and the fleet'<sup>55</sup> on similar matters. Also, Ashley J. Cross indicates a similar opinion which was illustrated by the radical Cruikshank in his portrait: *'Death or Liberty! Or Britannia & Virtues of Constitution in Danger of Violation from the great Political Libertine, Radical Reform!'* Cruikshank's image reflected the government's actions as an attack against Britannia,<sup>56</sup> but Cruikshank satirically admitted in the portrait the reaction of 'the

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<sup>55</sup> William Cobbett, 'To The Reformers in General, and Particularly to Those, Who Have Come Forward, and Are Coming Forward, at Public Meetings', *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 26 October 1816, n. p., in *British Newspapers 1600-1950* [accessed 26 September 2014].

<sup>56</sup> Cross, p. 179.

radical reformers fighting for liberty, and liberty with the traditional values of the Regency government, represented by Britannia'.<sup>57</sup> The government, which had the people's trust during the Regency period, had, according to these critical voices, misrepresented the liberty of the British people. Shelley blamed the country's army and he showed his disapproval against them directly after he criticised the king and his sons, who he believed caused the army to harm people.

The third quatrain offers evidence of Shelley's effort to convince the ordinary people of the corruption of the authorities, and of the deceiving behaviour of the parliament which aimed to draw the public onto their side against the radical activists' doctrines. The lyrical voice challenged the authorities' methods, which sought to advantage the army, which is presented as harming radicals' ideals such as liberty. These lines carried out the attack on the ignorant rulers 'who wield' their power to 'slay' the public:

Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield;  
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;  
Religion Christless, Godless— a book sealed;  
A senate, Time's worst statute, unrepealed—  
(9-12)

The stanza highlighted important issues in relation to religion and belief, which were of very high value to the public. The damaged reputations of those who run the law in the country were expressed in the above lines, suggesting negative perceptions of the role of religion. Shelley tried to reach the public's minds. As Cross indicates, 'one of his main concerns was how to reach a popular audience.'<sup>58</sup>

The couplet concludes with the poet's optimistic feelings towards the contributions of the radicals. Shelley employed a didactic manner to convince his followers in the last two lines of what they could achieve through political combat:

Are graves from which a glorious Phantom may  
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.  
(13-14)

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<sup>57</sup> Cross, p. 180.

<sup>58</sup> Cross, p. 170.

Shelley's triumphant manner indicated his keenness to continue the dispute against the opponents. Shelley's use of the pronoun 'our' was intended to assure the addressees that he was allied to them. Yet, he also adopts the voice of a prophet as he speaks of the 'tempestuous day' being filled with light, making it seem as though he can see a brighter future ahead of them. Shelley's use of the possessive pronoun 'our' helped to identify a sense of poetic confidence in his vision of the 'glorious Phantom' that may rise before them. He used a similar image in his poem *The Mask of Anarchy*; for example he referred to 'Shape' coming in different images such as: 'vapour of a vale', (105) 'light of sunny rain', (113) and 'a shower of crimson dew' (117) to protect 'Hope' from destruction caused by Anarchy's appearance. The 'glorious Phantom' represents the hope of the people, but it suggests that the only option for them is to share the poet's hope 'to illumine' a 'tempestuous day'. In both examples Shelley emphasized the existence of a polemical radical voice whose enlightening concept could never be defeated by the government. The images of 'Shape' and 'glorious Phantom' suggest that the poet was attempting to imagine a new society being born from all the conflict which existed in his country. Although Shelley is often very critical in this poem, we also see him using a triumphant and positive manner of speaking in order to ally his readers with him in his quarrel.

### **Shelley's Direct Quarrelling in his Letter to *The Examiner***

Shelley's letter in November 1819 was addressed to Leigh Hunt, the editor of *The Examiner*. In this letter Shelley again continued his defence of the radicals and their supporters in the extremely volatile situation that hit them in 1819 after the peaceful protest at Manchester. Shelley's letter was intended to carry on a direct and open quarrel through the use of a narrative persona as he carried on the earlier dispute he had started in his poem *The Mask of Anarchy*. By using an epistolary form, Shelley continued to attack the opponents of liberty whose aggressiveness and injustice affected the lives of ordinary citizens. However, it took another political event as the basis of its quarrel.

This letter addressed the issue of the imprisonment of Richard Carlile<sup>59</sup> who was captured and faced illegal trial in 1819 because he ‘printed and published in 1818’<sup>60</sup> Thomas Paine’s works. Carlile began to earn money from publishing radical pamphlets and journals through his business.<sup>61</sup> In 1817, he had become a publisher for William T Sherwin’s *Weekly Political Register* which put him in danger of ‘prosecution in the event of the journal’s being found seditious’.<sup>62</sup>

The epistolary form used by Shelley was a remarkable example of political dialogue in support of the working-class people in his country. The letter showed that Shelley ‘protest[ed] about the sentencing to three years’ imprisonment of Richard Carlile on a charge of blasphemous libel’.<sup>63</sup> Shelley seemed to be aware his letter might ‘share the fate [...] of the “Masque of Anarchy”’.<sup>64</sup> By using this form, he sought to challenge the restrictions on publishing in England. We see these dangers being expressed by Cobbett who in his *Parliamentary History* publication in 1819 printed the House of Commons’ debates around requesting the king to allow restrictions on the publishers and the authors back in early 1800s.<sup>65</sup> I believe there are two different reasons that could explain why Shelley’s works were not published in England; first, I assume the direct attacks against members of the government, the law, the king and his sons were deemed to be very dangerous for him personally; and secondly, Hunt was ‘afraid of prosecution for sedition’.<sup>66</sup>

Daisy Hay discusses a particular tendency in Shelley’s letters. She notices Shelley’s engagement with the ‘illusory nature of the epistolary self’,<sup>67</sup> and its sense of being written for ‘idealized recipients’.<sup>68</sup> Hay focuses on some of Shelley’s letters

<sup>59</sup> ‘Richard Carlile’ was spelled as ‘Richard Carlilse’ in Shelley’s letter. See *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, II, p. 136.

<sup>60</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, II, p. 136.

<sup>61</sup> Philip W. Martin, ‘Carlile, Richard (1790-1843)’ in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4685>> [accessed 26 September 2014].

<sup>62</sup> Martin, n. p.

<sup>63</sup> Michael O’Neill, Introduction, in *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Michael O’Neill and Anthony Howe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1-14 (p. 14).

<sup>64</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, II, p. 152.

<sup>65</sup> William Cobbett, ‘Debate in the Common on the Report from the Secret Committee relative to Seditious Societies’, in *The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803*, ed. by John Wright (London: T. C. Hansard, 1819), pp. 984-98 (p. 988).

<sup>66</sup> Ira Livingston, *Arrow of Chaos: Romanticism and Postmodernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 57.

<sup>67</sup> Daisy Hay, ‘Shelley’s Letters’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Michael O’Neill and Anthony Howe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 208-22 (p. 208).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

like those which he wrote to his friends Hunt and Peacock,<sup>69</sup> and she explains the nature of Shelley's relation with them through letter writing. Through such investigation Hay concludes that 'epistolary techniques created an illusion of immediacy, but brought with them their own problems'.<sup>70</sup> Hay notices how Shelley changed his attitude in the letters according to his addressees, as they sometimes were treated as close friends and in other times were simply a vehicle for discussing public duty.<sup>71</sup> Perhaps the best example exists in Shelley's letter *To The Editor of The Examiner* which indicated that Shelley aimed his letter at the public despite sending it to his friend, as he put his friend under a sense of responsibility and duty towards the public. Hay focuses on the intimacy between Shelley and his addressee who, in the case of his letter to *The Examiner*, was Hunt. Hay studies Shelley's deep emotions as he was in exile and far from his friend and his country. Thus, Hay says that Shelley's writings to Hunt were 'a part of their private correspondence which put his conception of his interlocutor under strain',<sup>72</sup> particularly after the latter kept silent after receiving the poem *The Mask of Anarchy*. Shelley was anxious as he did not hear from Hunt so he wrote to him on 23 Dec 1819. 'My dear Hunt',<sup>73</sup> he started, 'why do not you write to us?'<sup>74</sup> Here, Shelley seemed to be missing Hunt's correspondence, but he also surely wanted to know about the politics of his country. Shelley's question could also be interpreted as a personal worry about the fate of the political works he sent to Hunt. Thus, he directly expressed his tension by saying:

What a state England is in! But you will never write politics. I don't wonder; but I wish then that you would write a paper in the *Examiner* on the actual state of the country, and what, under all the circumstances of conflicting passions and interests of men, we are to expect, [...].<sup>75</sup>

The above quote shows that Shelley was anxious about the political situation in his country; and it also indicates his excitement to read his friend's political works in support for the public, as well as indicating Hunt's reluctance to engage in this. It seems that Shelley realized that Hunt may again not publish this letter, because of its straightforward political stance. By telling Hunt 'we are to expect', the pronoun 'we'

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p.212.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.213.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p.212-13.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p.213.

<sup>73</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, II, p. 166.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

showed that Shelley aimed to encourage his friend that they had similar interests in the 'conflicting passions' and 'interests' of the other men in their country.

The approach that my analysis follows here would agree with the existence of the personal anxiety appearing in Shelley's letter to *The Examiner*. Yet, the main debate of this letter, I suggest, is completely political and its purpose was to support the personal anger of the author through directing his intention to the public response towards a political event which Shelley assumed must have had an impact on people's political opinion. When Shelley wrote to his editor Hunt, he started by informing him of his outraged reaction. 'My dear Friend', he began, 'the event of Carlile's trial has filled me with an indignation that will not & ought not be suppressed.'<sup>76</sup> The letter was sent on 3 November 1819, less than three months after Peterloo and nearly one and a half months after he composed his poem *The Mask of Anarchy*, which Hunt seemed reluctant to print. Hunt was told about a similar expression of Shelley's personal 'indignation', which was caused by his hearing the news of the persecution of Richard Carlile for his reprinting and publishing Paine's pamphlet *The Age of Reason*. On the one hand, Shelley appeared to hint through this epistolary discourse his personal disagreement with Hunt's unexplained refusal to print Shelley's poem. Shelley's quarrel here, then, was partly with his friend Hunt, as Shelley suggested that this time he would not allow anyone to suppress his indignation. On the other hand, such a heated start made it obligatory for Shelley to accomplish his political message through his letter. Thus once again, his personal concerns assume a public dimension within his quarrels. Shelley positioned the general public as central to his concern by referring to them at the very beginning of the letter, saying:

In the name of all we hope for in human nature what are the people of England about? Or rather how long will they, & those whose hereditary duty it is to lead them, endure the enormous outrages of which they are one day made the victim & the next the instrument?<sup>77</sup>

While Shelley still had limited access to information about his country, he felt the responsibility to lead the people as best he could before they became affected by other crises. Shelley seemed to direct his rhetorical question to all the public in order

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 136.



to encourage them to recognize their public duty towards their country. Shelley's direct question — 'what are the people of England about?' — showed his personal worry about the opinion of the general public during his time away from the country. This can also be read as a quarrelling tactic as his choice of words aimed to show his personal sympathy with the general public who 'endure[d] the enormous outrages', while also setting up a challenge to the existing situation through his use of a question. The question 'how long' and the verb 'endure' show that the voice in the letter is against the dispassionate behaviour which the government kept practicing on them. Shelley's reaction in his response in the letter showed his readiness to take the risk of composing a letter that instigated political combat rather than seeing the public as victims. It was the government's rule that caused Shelley to become a supposed threat to the 'peace' in his country by presenting his radical ideas. Shelley recognized the impact of public suppression on the general population and the danger their anger represented for the country. Perhaps, the experience of Manchester made Shelley even more determined to carry on his didactic tone which he practiced with his audience in his previous poems. Shelley had a double aim in his writings: both to express his anger against his opponents whenever he addressed their aggressive deeds that harmed the people in his country, while also to control other expressions of anger in order to protect the people from further violence and destruction. For example, Shelley carefully tried to decrease the anger of his addressees as he directed a friendly comment on how he began the letter which was

animated by the indignation [he] conceived on the first news of the event,' then he took the chance to show his tolerance with his opponents and said: 'I am convinced that it is every man's duty to {obey} an impulse so strong as mine is now to attm{pt the} repeal of construction of the law [...].'<sup>78</sup>

Shelley tried to make his disagreement appear as a personal dissatisfaction with the existing law. He aimed for his letter not only to support Carlile, but also to support the public in finding a path towards liberty by raising concerns on why the 'construction of the law' did not appear to be 'exercised according to the principles {of law})}''.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p 146-47.

In the letter, Shelley again addressed his view about the political event in Manchester. Knowing that Hunt did not publish Shelley's poem, one could infer that Shelley did not give up his hope that he would convey his political opinion on the event to the public during this second try. He mentioned in his letter the occasion of Peterloo, and then moved on to the conviction of Richard Carlile. The voice in the letter angrily condemned the government's attacks against the ordinary people at St Peter's Field:

First we hear that a troop of enraged master manufacturers are let loose with sharpened swords upon a multitude of their starving dependent & in spite of the remonstrances of the regular troops that they ride over them & massacre without distinction of sex or age. & cut off women's breasts & dash the heads of infants against the stones. Then comes information that a man has been found guilty of some inexplicable crime, which his prosecutors call blasphemy.<sup>80</sup>

In the quote above, the speaker builds a contrast between the troops and the protesters, and also contrasts the response to the crimes of the troops with Carlile's conviction. The polemical voice protests against the acts of the troops that disturbed a peaceful protest by their being 'enraged' and 'let loose'; terms which emphasise the mindless cruelty of the attackers who were not supposed to fight their own people. The power of the disagreement here shows a straightforward criticism against the enemy of the people who under the law of the state violated attacks against a peaceful crowd. These crimes are offset against Carlile's 'inexplicable crime', which he implies is not as serious as the actions of the army that have gone unpunished. Within the letter, Shelley built an argument in support of Carlile by referring to 'the spirit of law'.<sup>81</sup> Accordingly, the persona summarised the political reasons behind Carlile's prosecution which were not linked to Christian law as it was demonstrated, and it indicated that Carlile was made guilty of blasphemy. He aimed to discuss the illegality of prosecuting Carlile and asked for 'a new trial'.<sup>82</sup> He considered the previous trial in which Carlile was 'sentenced to six years in Dorchester prison'<sup>83</sup> to be unjustified. Shelley claimed that 'no honest Christian

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>83</sup> Martin, 'n. p..

would sit on such a Jury'.<sup>84</sup> He expected that the people in England would understand the value of their religion and that they would not allow the rulers to hide their interests behind it. Shelley revealed an important problem to his people who were not aware of what exactly was taking place inside the English courts. He wanted the press to uncover the political issues which affected their religion and lives. Crucially, he pointed out the hypocrisy of the legal system which committed appalling crimes and punished its ordinary citizen for moral lapses.

Shelley also attacked the morals of the Jury as he stated: 'the persons [who were] called upon to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused might be alive to a tender sympathy towards him.'<sup>85</sup> With this statement, Shelley questioned where the jury's morality and kindness lay. Shelley went on using his direct sarcastic mood against the Jury by accusing them of incapability to judge. He suggested 'that they might be incapable of knowing and weighing the merits of the case'.<sup>86</sup> Shelley here shed light upon the worst mistakes the law was committing. For instance, he doubted the power which was given to a Jury who were ignorant of the law. Shelley accused the Jury of using Carlile's conviction as an 'instrument for crushing a political enemy or rather they strike in his person at all their political enemies'.<sup>87</sup> He indicated how one person was used as an example to hold up before the public. Writing this kind of aggressive letter to the press indicated Shelley's determination to publicise certain thoughts that the public needed to be aware of, for instance, he told them that 'the prosecutors care little for religion, or care for it as it is the mask & the garment by which they are invested with the symbols of worldly power'.<sup>88</sup> Then, he told the people that their enemy would prevent them 'from obtaining a Reform in their oppressive government, & that consequently the government would be reformed, & the people would receive a just price for their labours'.<sup>89</sup> According to Shelley the inexperience of the members of the jury who were foreigners could result in 'letting

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<sup>84</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, II, p. 138.

<sup>85</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones, II, p. 137.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

the substance of justice escape'.<sup>90</sup> The jury's injustice was the reason for the suffering of people like Carlile who published the work to support his own family.<sup>91</sup>

Shelley's tone was derived I assume from a Cobbettian revolutionary mood. They both responded to the same political occasion of the Peterloo Massacre in 1819, and while Shelley was writing his poem *The Mask of Anarchy*, Cobbett wrote to Henry Hunt condemning the action of the government saying: 'That is, they would gladly thrive from high-prices, and grind down the poor, at the same time. They would gladly ride their "gavallary" horses, and shoot at the "disaffected"'.<sup>92</sup> Through the ballad form which made the poem appear like an epic political combat between Anarchy and the people, Shelley enabled his addressees to get an emotional satisfaction and revenge as his poem expressed the anger of the working-class and the reformers, whose 'conflicting passions and interests'<sup>93</sup> were his main concern. Like Cobbett, Shelley tended to defend the ordinary people in his *Letter to the Examiner* by expressing doubt at English law and its increasing cases of prosecutions. The intended goal was to show his opponents that citizens had lost trust in them.

This direct style of quarrelling is very different from Shelley's quarrels with the king and his sons in his sonnet *England in 1819*. Here, Shelley employed the lyrical voice and stayed behind it, speaking prophetically of the 'tempestuous day' (13-14) in which he was living. It is notable that Shelley used quite a different style of imagery from other authors such as Cobbett. Elsewhere in his writing, Cobbett used the image of combat between a butcher and a man with the stick, who was made to hit his enemy in order to keep him away. This kind of image was accessible to people. However, Shelley provided his ideas through poetical visions such as the glorious shining light which did not easily offer clear examples for the working-class people. Shelley's combat, however, explained the need for an emerging light in order to change the direction from a chaotic existence towards safe place in which the cruel law and its makers did not exist. Shelley represented that political change implicitly in the poem by creating 'Shape,' and in the sonnet by calling for a

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>92</sup> William Cobbett, 'Letter IX. To Henry Hunt, Esq.', Cobbett's Weekly Political Register, 28 August 1819, pp. 33-64 (p.34).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

‘glorious Phantom’ ‘to illumine’ the days of the suppressed people. Within his letters, though, we see Shelley adopting a different style as he explicitly emphasized to Hunt their radical choice had been made and that their ‘party will be that of liberty & of the oppressed.’<sup>94</sup>

In his *Letter to the Examiner*, Shelley raised the question of why Carlile republished Paine’s *The Age of Reason* that was written in the late eighteenth century. Shelley’s skilful tactic was to raise a question about the reason why this particular work by Paine was considered problematic, thus drawing comparisons between Paine’s times and the political situation of England in 1819 where it was possible to see the country as being ruled by a similarly tyrannical authority. The persona employed rhetorical questions to point out the speaker’s disagreement with the law by asking: ‘why not brand other works’,<sup>95</sup> and inquired why ‘this work of Paine’s’ should be treated especially harshly.<sup>96</sup> With these questions, Shelley echoed Paine himself who broke the law of the country when Paine published his work and as a result his work faced a great deal of attacks. The conflict was obvious between the reformers and the government, so Shelley feared that the enemy may convince ordinary people that the radicals were wrong. Shelley questioned the government’s actions which would easily change ‘especially if circumstances permitted them to trample & to outrage in secret’.<sup>97</sup> He was concerned about the danger that the people could be misled by the government. His emotional engagement inspired him to adopt a rational approach from books like *The Age of Reason* to persuade the people to establish new laws. Shelley was interested in Paine’s work because it demonstrated the rights of the people and encouraged them to think of outside the dominating laws of the government. He argued that

the great purpose of social life, for the sake of which we submit to so many sacrifices, is that each man be defended in doing that which he thinks fit for his own interest, provided that he injure no one.<sup>98</sup>

On another occasion Shelley used another tactic in which he satirised the government’s actions against Carlile. ‘The tyrants’ in the government were unable to

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<sup>94</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, , II, p. 148.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

realize the cruelty of convicting innocents which would raise the attention of ordinary citizens to inquire about the reasons behind their brutal actions. He considered the case of Carlile a lesson:

the tyrants should 'be taught to {realize} that all their endeavours to overwhelm their victims {by} poverty & immediate {result} of making [Carlile] comfortable in his circum{stanc}es, & attracting towards him the kind attentions {of g}ood men.<sup>99</sup>

Shelley then spoke to the public and wanted them to become stronger. He argued that the government was powerless because of the determination of the people who fought for a new reform to free the people in the whole country. He assured the victory for the people against their oppressors in the government as he continued his letter:

The oppressors dream that by the condemnation of Carlile they have obtained a partial victory of place in the balance - for such is the magic of success however wicked- against the approbation which they advised the Prince Regent to declare of the execrable enormities at Manchester. Let them be instructed to know their impotence; & let those who are exposed to their rage, who occupy the vanguard of the phalanx of their opponents see in the frank & spirited union of the advocates for Liberty, an asylum against every form in which oppression can be brought to bear against them.<sup>100</sup>

At the end of his letter Shelley seemed to overcome his sad and angry emotions in response to Carlile's conviction and reinterpreted it as a victory in order to support his argument. He suspended his anger which at the beginning of his letter he had said could not be suppressed. Then, he built a rational argument to expose the government's injustice and to represent the government as powerless despite its dominant position.

It seems that Shelley decided to end his letter in the same way he ended his two previous works. After condemning his opponents' increasing injustice, he returns to his addressees and speaks to them in a supportive manner. In his work, then, we see Shelley alternating between anger and positivity as he tried to gain allies among the public, and to instil positive and peaceful ideas in them. Ultimately

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 147-48.

it is this latter voice that dominates his works in 1819, as they display a positive intention which was based on logical and rational ideas.

The three works by Shelley discussed in this chapter illustrate how public issues became a medium through which Shelley could express his personal opposition to the government. Shelley's political works aimed to create a political reaction to the protests of the working classes and reformers. His use of poetry to engage in political quarrel is a distinctive feature of his work. The sonnet *England in 1819* demonstrated Shelley's methods of quarrelling according to his poetic capabilities. Some techniques in the sonnet differed from those of his poem *The Mask of Anarchy*. Even though both discussed similar political issues, in the sonnet he attacked his enemies in a more explicit manner. In *The Mask of Anarchy*, Shelley expressed his anger against his opponents with whom he had personal combat while trying to move the public to do justice for themselves by realizing the way to defeat their enemy. In the sonnet, he directed his attack against the king, his sons, and all the political peers as his indignation was still not under control. Yet, that satirical attack on the monarchy provided Shelley with the ability to stir up anger through his methods of quarrelling. Shelley's way of creating a personal dialogue invoked different addressees, including the general public. In contrast, Shelley's letter to *The Examiner* revealed his personal relations to ideas similar to those of the radicals. He expressed his personal indignation in order to inflame the public anger. However, it is interesting to note the difference between the poems and letter. Even though Shelley was aware of the political issues, his absence from the country put him at risk of criticism from both friends and enemies. Within these three works, we sense that Shelley perhaps showed an obvious personal fear which the other authors discussed in this thesis managed to hide or perhaps did not have due to their presence in the country and ability to quarrel with the authorities more directly. While his letter engaged in very direct quarrel, the poems employed many literary devices to hide his direct criticism. Within both the letter and the poems, though, we see that Shelley distinctively balanced his own personal expression of anger with a warning against the public unleashing their wrath against the government. So it is that we see that in his quarrels, Shelley alternated between an aggressive and a prophetic voice that sought to fight against the authorities, and that also sought to look ahead to a better future.

Shelley's poem *The Mask of Anarchy* and his *Letter to The Examiner* both illustrated his disapproval of the way the public was suppressed by the government at St Peter's Field. By employing a quarrelsome manner of writing, he sought to guide the public's response towards a strategic and rational attitude that mirrored the poetic persona of 'Shape'. Here, then, we see that the use of textual quarrelling is not always designed to produce a considered and rational response. This is closest in style to the writing of Cobbett, who also emphasised the need for patience in his readers. This is in stark contrast to the style of Paine and Burgoyne, however, who all sought to incite action and rebellion in their readers. As such, it is clear that a quarrelsome manner of writing is not always simply designed to stir rage; it might also be employed as a means of persuading an audience of the author's own views and feelings in the service of a peaceful and reasoned response. Thus we see that quarrelling, though a highly emotive mode of writing, does not have to be viewed as devoid of rationality.



## Conclusion

In his critical work *Paper Pellets*, Cronin presents the story of the duels between contributors to two rivalling magazines: John Scott the editor of *London Magazine*, and Jonathan Henry Christie, who Scott believed had links with the management of *Blackwood's*. Cronin aims to show some features of the vigorous argumentation in the print culture in the Romantic period which led to a real fight between the two authors as they exchanged fire with each other. Unlike other violent conflicts of the period, including the lethal duel over a literary quarrel between Scott and Christie in 1821, none of the authors examined within this thesis ever resorted to an exchange of gunfire, they nevertheless engaged in quarrels that, at times, put their political reputations and even their lives on the line in order to advance their particular political points. As such, this thesis has sought to reveal the particular styles of textual quarrelling employed by four Romantic authors: Burgoyne, Paine, Cobbett and Shelley. Consequently, it demonstrates that their work forms part of a wider backdrop of quarrelling and combat that took place between authors and public figures in the Romantic period. Nevertheless, the thesis has also sought to reveal many distinctive things about the particular quarrels in which they engaged, and the relationships between them, in a way that perhaps sets them apart from as well as connecting them to the wider culture of quarrelling at the time.

Over the course of the thesis, I have sought to demonstrate how these authors' diverse social and educational backgrounds and various degrees of connection or opposition to the British government and crown presented a wide range different forms of quarrelling over various historical events and issues spanning the period around the American War of Independence, the French Revolution, and the aftermath of these events in British and American politics and society. The authors' various backgrounds and circumstances could also account for some of the differences in their methods of conducting public arguments, in particular in terms of their choice of openly attacking their opponents or using the conventions of politeness, as well as in their selection of more or less elaborate literary figures and style.

My study complements an emerging body of work which seeks to emphasise the language of combat employed in the press culture of the Romantic period.

Central among these works is Stauffer's text *Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism*. I agree with Stauffer's evaluation of Shelley's anger, but my analysis of Shelley's concern for the public through his quarrels demonstrates a more balanced and less aggressive attitude than critics commonly associate with Shelley's poetical voice. My work has revealed specific personal motivations in the Romantic works I examine and the political views expressed by these rhetorical voices. In each chapter, the study showcased a distinctive kind of writing which the author used to illustrate his quarrel. By presenting these various different styles of quarrelling, this work has created further ways of understanding how quarrelling forms a central element of the political strategies of all the opponents. All these texts seem to support other current research which identifies the conflict in the Romantic period as a result of a turbulent political time. My focus, however, has been on the rhetorical styles of the period, which demonstrates the variety of ways in which Romantic authors sought to achieve their prime goals such as teaching the public their principles and winning over their political enemies.

Additionally, my research contributes to the studies of styles of disputes in the Romantic periodicals recently developed by Schoenfield and Stewart. While Schoenfield focuses on quarrelling mostly between literary and periodical writers, and Stewart discusses the expansion of the magazine writings which was known by its fighting style, my thesis analyses the styles of public dispute through pamphlets, letters, and poetry by authors who were concerned generally with political and social issues, and indeed, who have not received significant scholarly attention elsewhere. This study there expands upon existing studies of quarrelling through its attention to a wider range of textual forms, and as such, it testifies to the pervasiveness of quarrelling attitudes in Romantic writing. Furthermore, I study works which were published independently, or were not published in their time (like Shelley's poem *The Mask of Anarchy*, and his letter to *The Examiner*), which nevertheless reflect the same disputations. Collectively, therefore, these texts reveal the variety of different quarrelling styles and forms employed by authors in the era. Reading Burgoyne's pamphlets, speeches, and the responses to them, for example, showed how he was forced to try to convince his audience with polite style, because of his political position. Paine could afford to assume various manners of quarrelling ranging from satirical and outrageous attacks against his enemies to the use of illuminating

teaching voices to his public audience. Cobbett's courage to face his opponent, although he was fearful of persecution, indicated his personal ability to retaliate tactically against his old foes that were allegorically summed in the figure of Corruption. In the case of Shelley, the thesis discussed two different styles of writing of the same author as his letter to *The Examiner* was a continuation of the other genres in the preceding chapters and his sonnet and poem served as an example of political Romantic quarrelling through the medium of poetry. This study will help to introduce further research on the topic of the Romantic conflict. I add to the existing research different views and other examples of the various rhetorical styles that exist in the large range of Romantic literary writings on the subject of quarrelling.

This thesis has also sought to establish previously unrecognised connections between the context of Burgoyne's, Paine's, Cobbett's and Shelley's writings. All of them could be related to the radical movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as they argued with individual members or more general policies of the establishment. Further, because of the mass dissemination of knowledge and reading at that period, observed by contemporary critics such as Stauffer, Wheatley, Cronin, and Schoenfield, they all develop a command of both classical and popular forms and devices in conducting their quarrels. This thesis also identified the classical polemical devices utilised by these authors, including the rational structuring of arguments, as well as various devices which had become common in the field of literature, including alliterations metaphors, and satire. It also identified the devices which were used to portray controversial topics and were intended to make their arguments influential and convincing to their addressees. On some occasions, for example, the Romantic authors restrained their anger by employing rhetorical devices in order to prevent further public anger, and to prevent imprisonment, neglect, or attacks against their own characters. Through these rhetorical strategies, we come to understand how deeply all of these authors were invested in the political contexts they wrote about, and how urgently they needed to persuade the public of their own political positions.

The contrast between these four Romantic authors has revealed various styles of quarrelling in their writings. My work establishes that quarrelling in the Romantic period as exemplified by the various styles of these four Romantic authors, is a political diplomatic tool, and this notion chimes with Stauffer's claim that anger is a

‘a tool or weapon’.<sup>1</sup> While Romantic authors aimed to generate debates in society by publicising their political quarrels with opponents, they did not aim to stir anger in the public. This can be seen in the simultaneously harmless and aggressiveness of their language against the opponent on some occasions, for instance when each of the four authors depended on hope when they addressed the public, adopting tolerant positions towards the enemy in moments of outrageous anger through their metaphorical styles. The study also focuses on other examples such as hostility, satire, and politeness, which recent discussions on Romantic conflicts do not tend to locate alongside one another.

This thesis has also sought to establish the relationship between form and audience. In particular, it has scrutinised Shelley’s use of the ballad form: these were used mostly for the sake of making the radicals’ ideas accessible as well as convincing to common people, as the use of familiar language and cultural forms could give people a sense of empowerment and inclusion in their political ideas, which they strove for. This kind of language provided a powerful counterpoint to the vague or convoluted diction adopted by government officials, whom all four radical authors at certain points accused of manipulation or misinformation of the public. Thus, a common polemical approach which emerges in these four authors’ works is their use of simplified language, revelation of details of historical or personal events, in order to create an honest tone of voice and to demonstrate their respect to the public in order to gain their support, and in particular of the oppressed or disempowered sections of society.

Closely related to this sincerity of tone was another approach used on various occasions by all four authors: the open expression of emotion, and in particular anger and resentment at their opponents. Even with Burgoyne, the author who was most bound to using politeness by his position in relation to the government and by the scale of the historical responsibility attributed to him; there are clear instances of his open expression of anger. The other three authors, although vulnerable to political persecution, expressed their emotions freely, particularly by openly naming and using irony and satire to depict their opponents. Paine’s political writing appeared to be hostile towards his opponents through the way he depicted his enemy, especially

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew M. Stauffer, *Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 2.

in *The Rights of Man*, but his rational ideas showed his didactic manner toward the ordinary citizens. Shelley attacked his opponents through poetic means, by depicting them as allegorical figures of violence and death. Yet, this expression of anger, although visible, was always moderated in certain ways so as to achieve particular political goals. For example, both Cobbett and Shelley advised their readers to show patience and were against a violent revolt.

It has also been possible to trace a relationship between the use of form and the particular style of quarrelling adopted by each author. In the case of the pamphlets, such as those presented by Burgoyne, Paine's *The Case of the Officers of the Excise*, and Cobbett's *The Soldier's Friend*, the argument showed how the speaker tried to convince his audience of a political idea that could be difficult to speak about if it was expressed through other forms. It seemed the tone in those pamphlets involved a level of politeness, but at the same time the use of some rhetorical tropes raise the dispute in order to protect people, defence, or attack the addressees. The writings in such pamphlets showed that the authors created further disputes as they received different attacks. The thesis also discusses two types of letters: letters to friends, like Shelley's correspondence with Thomas Love Peacock and Charles Ollier; and letters to public figures or groups, for example Cobbett's letters which were published in the *Political Register*. Letters often openly displayed the dispute to other readers, and used straightforward, conversational language. Also, as they usually had a single addressee, they provided opportunities for focused attacks. Poetry provided a means of creating memorable and striking images which would influence political life and helped construct political meanings in the public sphere. This thesis looked closely at how these genres were adopted by the four Romantic authors under discussion, considering the connection between them, and revealing the motives, means and effects of quarrelling in the Romantic period.

The combination between personal circumstances and political agendas produces a pattern of quarrelling which becomes evident from the discussion which encompasses the chronological development of their written quarrels. This pattern includes an increasingly aggressive and openly critical tone towards their opponents in the works of Burgoyne, Paine and Cobbett, which coincides with their growing radicalisation over the years. Both Burgoyne and Cobbett set out as representatives and supporters of the government and the British monarchy, and defend their

country's dominance of America: Burgoyne engages in a literal battle for it, while Cobbett fights for it in his political works. Furthermore, a parallel can be drawn in the address to the potential opponents in the two earliest works by Burgoyne and Paine discussed in this thesis: *The Substance of General Burgoyne's Speeches* and *The Case of the Officers of the Excise*. In both cases, the two authors adopt a restrained and polite voice when speaking to their opponents, because although they implicate them in the issues for which they discuss, at the same time they aim to gain their support. Thus, as the discussion in Burgoyne's chapter demonstrates, in *The Substance of General Burgoyne's Speeches* he adopts a quarrelling persona who talks to his audience with praise and respect, and appeals to their sense of justice and to the duties which their position endows them with so that they can ensure his fair trial. Also, despite their opposing views, Burgoyne addresses the members of parliament as his peers, and thus seeks to confirm his position as part of the political elite. In a similar manner, Paine turns to the members of parliament in order to seek their assistance in increasing the excise men's salaries, by trying to evoke their moral qualities and their rationality, even though he implicitly accuses them of neglecting the impoverishment of the excise officers and being partly responsible for the corruption which their low salaries might provoke. Unlike Burgoyne, however, Paine adopts a humble persona, and praises his opponents implicitly by emphasising their superiority.

In all three cases, at the later stages of their writing careers, these authors adopt a more open and direct manner of accusing and attacking the government, and use satire, or allow for their anger against them to be openly expressed, thus also echoing or invoking the feelings of resentment of the public against the government, and openly showing their lower-class audiences that they are on their side.

While the thesis has focussed predominantly on style, it has also sought to reveal the political context to each of the works. In particular, it has shown how the public quarrelling of the four authors discussed here was always interrelated with personal conflicts or circumstances. Anger in the writings of General John Burgoyne, Thomas Paine, William Cobbett and Percy Bysshe Shelley was often motivated or influenced by a strong personal element, and the way they wrote and engaged the public was closely related to projects of extending their personal

quarrels to include the public, and engaging them with larger political issues, such as corruption, government neglect, or abuse of the working classes.

The implications of this thesis stretch beyond the immediate contexts of the four authors on which it has focused, however. Indeed, it is perhaps possible to suggest that these works establish a model for political combat that endures across the centuries. We can perhaps draw an analogy between the combative culture of this period and the present day, when the media plays a big role in sharing political views with the public by pitting political opponents against one another, in order to create a debate around a political issue. We might even say that today, political shows take the position of print culture in the Romantic period. An example here is an episode of the political show 'Question Time', which was broadcast in December 2014, in order to discuss current political matters which indicate the differences between the parties and how far their policy could help the public. I suggest that this kind of political talk is quite relevant to the context of duelling and to the topic of quarrelling, because they both involve facing the opponent in order to be engaged in combat, or to debate with those whom they differ. The show aimed to allow ordinary members of the public to question some politicians and probably like other political programmes was watched by people of all different classes in the country including the politicians too. The opponents on the show were of both genders and from different independent parties: the leader of the UKIP Independence Party Nigel Farage (MEP), Conservative Communities and Local Government Minister Penny Mordaunt (MP), a Labour Shadow International Development Secretary Mary Creagh (MP), *Sunday Times* Associate Editor and columnist Camilla Cavendish, and a comedian and campaigner Russell Brand.. Each political representative aimed to convince the public of their views - who were here present in the audience, rather than an imagined readership. In contrast to the Romantic quarrels, the panellists were not concerned with convincing the opponents, nor did they pay much attention to the language of respect, as they only focused on how to present their own political opinion to the general audience. Political programmes like this have become one of the methods of debating and giving an opportunity for critical evolution of opposing views. In this way, the show aimed to engage members of the public in a political debate - just as the writing of the Romantic authors also aimed to do.

Like the disputes which the thesis has discussed, these political programmes help the audience of the present time to witness the existing combats between the opponents in politics and attract public attention. Debates in such programmes, I suppose, succeed in bringing people and politicians together around a table, and force opponents to control their anger in order to resolve political disagreements. Nonetheless, the use of hostile language such as insults, and direct attacks with the use of impolite voices appears so often between the opponents as a phenomenon of debatable arguments. This reminds us again of similar political disputes that existed two centuries ago which this thesis discussed. Such political quarrels assured that quarrelling is an unsuppressed act which continues to take place between individuals in politics and by which they involve the public. Interestingly, the political works I discuss in this thesis play a similar role in order to reach the public; for example, Burgoyne addressed his public audience and informed them about the political decisions in relation to his return. Paine's *Common Sense* discussed the independence of the Americans and attacked their opponents openly. *Cobbett's Political Register* played a similar role in revealing to the public the actions of the politicians. Besides the epistolary writing in the last chapter, Shelley's poem and sonnet were are shadowed by the use of rhetorical tropes which was aimed to guide political views of the public. In this way, it becomes clear that it was of central importance to these authors to incite quarrels in order to engage a wider public audience with their own political perspective.

It is certainly possible to find parallels between textual quarrelling of the Romantic era and present-day political debate. As such, it could be suggested that the quarrels of this era establish a model for subsequent modes of political engagement that will endure across the centuries - though perhaps assuming different forms and formats (such as the political panel show). Such a parallel may suggest that Romantic manners of public quarrelling were not dissimilar to the contemporary counterparts. Basically, this study helps to illuminate these connections between political arguing in two eras, and to show a possibility for examining romantic quarrelling as a model of contemporary debates.

While this thesis has focused on the work of four very distinctive Romantic authors, each of whom employs highly distinctive modes of quarrelling, it is ultimately my hope that this work will help to broaden the critical investigation of



other political works by these and other Romantic authors, or indeed authors of other genres of the same period. While a discourse around the 'culture of combat' in the Romantic era has begun to emerge through the work of Cronin and others, I believe that there is tremendous scope for this work to be expanded through the kind of increased attentiveness to matters of style and form, and to the interrelationship between personal and political circumstances, which I have emphasised in my own analysis - all of which enhance our understanding of the complex relationships between content and context of writing that surface within the Romantic period, and which also reveal a vibrant portrait of an embattled and highly fraught literary arena in which authors do not simply fight for a readership, but also for their own political beliefs.

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