

CONSTITUTING CONSERVATISM: THE GOLDWATER/PAUL ANALOG

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Barry Goldwater's 1960 campaign text *The Conscience of a Conservative* delivered a message of individual freedom and strictly limited government power in order to unite the fractured American conservative movement around a set of core principles. The coalition Goldwater helped constitute among libertarians, traditionalists, and anticommunists would dominate American politics for several decades. By 2008, however, the cracks in this edifice had become apparent, and the future of the movement was in clear jeopardy. That year, Ron Paul's campaign text *The Revolution: A Manifesto* appeared, offering a broad vision of "freedom" strikingly similar to that of Goldwater, but differing in certain key ways. This book was an effort to reconstitute the conservative movement by expelling the hawkish descendants of the anticommunists and depicting the noninterventionist views of pre-Cold War conservatives like Robert Taft as the "true" conservative position.

This dissertation employs rhetorical criticism in order to examine the precise persuasive functions of each of these texts. In contrast to theorists who have classified the works of Goldwater and Paul as instances of the "jeremiad," this dissertation argues that the "jeremiad" is

understood better as a “form” than as a “genre,” as the former refers to a discursively portrayed situation, and the latter indicates a rhetor’s perception of situation. It considers the two artifacts as “analogs” in an effort to rethink their generic classification. Rather than attempting to classify the works *in toto*, it applies Albert O. Hirschman’s work on “the rhetoric of reaction” in order to find and explain the implication of each author’s use of the “perversity,” “futility,” and “jeopardy” theses. This dissertation argues that a rhetoric that takes identification as its primary aim can also be profoundly persuasive, and that a humanistic approach is capable of articulating its persuasive content. By means of a criticism of two similar libertarian campaign texts from two different eras, it attempts to demonstrate that rhetoric’s instrumental and constitutive functions are both consistent and determinable by the tools of rhetorical theory and criticism.

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PREFACE

The study of rhetoric has always been connected intimately to both the practical and the pedagogical. In this spirit, I have attempted to concern myself with issues of broad importance—liberty, democracy, and equality—but to do so in a manner that eschews terminological mystification and embraces the potential for understanding and engagement by as broad an audience as is feasible given the constraints of the genre. To the extent that I have been successful in my goal of elucidating some of the core persuasive appeals of the modern American conservative movement as exemplified by Senator Barry Goldwater and Representative Ron Paul, I owe much of the credit to the unflagging guidance and support of my advisor, John Lyne. In addition to Professor Lyne, I count Robert G. Evans, Patricia Gable, John Poulakos, and Gordon Mitchell as mentors who also helped shape this project and my academic career in profound ways.

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Most of all, I'd like to acknowledge the support of my amazing family, who have stood by me and assisted in countless ways for my entire life. Mom, Dad, Tristan, Zach, Nikki, Pop Pop, and my extended family—I dedicate this project to all of you. I couldn't have done it without you.

1.0 RHETORIC AND THE RISE OF INDIVIDUALISM

“The nine most terrifying words in the English language,” President Ronald Reagan famously quipped at an August 12, 1986 press conference, “are ‘I’m from the government, and I’m here to help.’” This line seems to encapsulate the thrust of modern anti-government rhetoric, in all its ironic glory: here we find ostensibly the most powerful person in the world looking straight into the eyes of the American people, proudly proclaiming that all of his power is not merely useless, but in fact utterly counterproductive when directed toward improving the material well-being of the American citizenry—and the people applauding with approval. The sentiment would be remarkable if it were not now so commonplace. The dichotomies of “tyranny” vs. “liberty,” “government” vs. “the people,” and “statism” vs. “individualism,” where the pure evil of the former must be met with the eternal vigilance of the latter, are by now so deeply ingrained in the national conversation by a half-century of repetition by the spokespersons of the modern American conservative movement, they might barely register as being worthy of investigation. The sheer simplicity of this worldview is of course the source of much of its utility (and its appeal): it requires virtually no attention to the unique features of any given situation. All one needs to know is that “freedom” is always good, and that any increase in government power necessarily strips “freedom” from “the people,” and therefore must be opposed with every fiber of one’s being.

However, the seeming simplicity of Reagan's expressed worldview is deceptive. The set of basic oppositions that formed the basis of his ideology were moderated by a wealth of myths about national identity and the individual's responsibilities to the community, all of which in turn depend heavily upon our interpretations of the nation's origin and purpose. Such myths, as countless commentators have pointed out, give structure to our politics and serve as a key starting point for persuasion. Reagan, of course, understood this well. He knew that American society is defined by infinitely more than the mere absence of government interference, and he sought to persuade Americans to define themselves and their nation's purpose in particular (and particularly non-individualistic) ways. His favored metaphor was that of the "shining city on the hill," which he borrowed to such great effect from John Winthrop. At the end of his two terms in office, he concluded his farewell address by returning once again to that metaphor:

I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind, it was a tall proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind swept, God blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace - a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity, and if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors, and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here.

That's how I saw it, and see it still. How Stands the City?

And how stands the city on this winter night? More prosperous, more secure and happier than it was eight years ago. But more than that: after 200 years, two centuries, she still stands strong and true on the granite ridge, and her glow has held steady no matter what storm.

And she's still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the Pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home.

The contrast between this passage, with its rich, full imagery of an American community teeming with purpose could not be further from Reagan's "nine most terrifying words," with their flippant dismissal of the possibility of government benevolence. Yet, in Reagan, these conflicting visions found their muse—a vessel for the synthesis of the dueling American myths

of individualism and community (albeit a synthesis in which individualism had the decidedly upper hand).

Reagan's delicate rhetorical balance of the individual and the community helped to usher in a generation of conservative politics, beginning with his own election in 1980, but continuing well beyond his exit from the public stage in 1989. James K. Galbraith (2008) characterizes his achievement as the extension of a feeling of attachment to a particular notion of economic freedom far beyond those directly benefiting from its attendant policies of deregulation and flattening of the tax code: "His movement and even his economic policies did indeed have the makings of a mass base. It was (and always is) the purpose of an ideology—of a set of ideas—to reach out beyond those who were buying and those who were bought, to convince a much larger group with no direct financial stake in policy outcomes. For this purpose, the conservative movement had a secret weapon, and that was the link between markets and 'freedom'" (15). For Galbraith, then, the broader public's emotional investment in the concept of "freedom" short-circuited their real economic interest in a politics capable of sanding the rough edges off the extreme inequality wrought by the machinations of the free market. He approvingly cites Thomas Frank's influential book, *What's the Matter with Kansas?* (2004), which exemplifies the approach of many on the left who criticize working class conservatives for voting against their own interests. This approach, as conservatives often point out, echoes the doctrinaire Marxist position that workers acting against their own self-interest are victims of "false consciousness." My own position (like that of contemporary Marxist critics such as Ernesto Laclau), is that we need neither to posit a "true" consciousness, nor to issue moral condemnation of those who act against their economic self-interest, in order to find the phenomenon of working class voters going to the polls in droves to vote against so-called "redistribution" worthy of investigation.

Galbraith's observation that the voters' emotional attachment to "freedom," rather than their beliefs in any particular policy positions, was determinant of their support for Reagan and other conservative candidates, resonates with much contemporary theory about political rhetoric. Reagan's mastery of this approach made it seem that he understood this almost instinctively, but he was not alone in his recognition that appeals to shared values on the basis of American national identity are potent political weapons. Mary Stuckey (1989) explains, "All candidates for national public office share certain imperatives. These imperatives include the need to identify themselves with symbols of national identity, to be considered patriotic and 'American,' to unite diverse groups, and to prove their ability for the job in question. As a candidate, Reagan shared these imperatives...While Reagan shares many goals with many politicians, his individual attempts to reach those goals are unique" (1-2). He was, however, remarkably effective in his utilization of such appeals.

Prior to Reagan, liberals had enjoyed nearly a half-century of dominance on the basis of a vision of shared prosperity embodied by the New Deal policies of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Even the Republican presidents of this era had used the levers of the federal government to seek out and achieve grand national projects. Nixon, for instance, signed legislation creating OSHA and the EPA, expanded affirmative action, and expressed support for a national guaranteed income. After Reagan, even Democratic presidents found themselves caught in the gravitational pull of the conservative movement. Clinton's signature policy achievements include passage of NAFTA and shrinking the social safety net, and one of his most famous quotes is the positively Reaganesque "The era of Big Government is over."

Reagan was almost certainly the most influential advocate to employ this rhetorical strategy, which effectively eviscerated the old New Deal consensus that government could play a

role in making markets work for the masses by promoting equal opportunity and providing a social safety net for those incapable of providing for themselves. However, he was not its originator. He followed in the footsteps of his forebears in the conservative movement, and chief among these was Arizona Senator and 1964 Republican nominee for President, Barry M. Goldwater. As Sara Diamond (1995) writes, “Reagan’s own prominence during the 1964 campaign won the politically inexperienced movie actor a national corps of admirers” (112). Specifically, the speech that catapulted Reagan from B-movie star status to conservative icon was a nationally televised stump speech for Goldwater on the eve of the 1964 election known as “A Time for Choosing.” It borrowed the themes of freedom and anti-Communism that Goldwater had made the centerpiece of his own campaign, and which Reagan would later invoke so successfully in his own career. Stuckey, for instance, argues that Reagan’s rhetoric was a more polished version of Goldwater’s: “Rather than ranting and raving in Goldwater fashion, and instead of offering to lob a grenade into the men’s room of the Kremlin, he offered audiences a calm and poised presentation. He spoke carefully, and his words conveyed the image of a reasonable man remaining calm in the face of a crisis rather than that of a man unreasonably excited” (13). Reagan’s borrowing and perfection of Goldwater’s rhetorical strategy have led many on the right to conclude that Reagan’s ascension to the White House can be seen as a vindication of Goldwater’s landslide defeat. Columnist George Will (1998) speaks for many conservatives when he writes that Goldwater had in fact won the 1964 election, “it just took 16 years to count the votes” (C07).

This understanding among conservative activists of Goldwater’s 1964 candidacy as ultimately triumphant, despite his landslide defeat at the hands of President Johnson, can be traced at least as far back as Kevin P. Phillips’ classic text *The Emerging Republican Majority*

(1969). In Phillips' postmortem of the 1968 presidential election, he argued that Nixon's victory could be traced to a party realignment made possible by Goldwater's 1964 candidacy, which took a hardline stance in favor of states' rights and against the power of the federal government. For Phillips, the most consequential political movement of the 1960s was not, contrary to popular opinion, that of the left, but rather that of the right. He argued, "The great political upheaval of the Nineteen-Sixties is not that of Senator Eugene McCarthy's relatively small group of upper-middle-class and intellectual supporters, but a populist revolt of the American masses who have been elevated by prosperity to middle-class status and conservatism. *Their* revolt is against the caste, policies and taxation of the mandarins of Establishment liberalism" (470). There is evidence that President Johnson himself agreed. Journalist and former Johnson aide Bill Moyers quoted Johnson as saying privately, the very night he signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law, "I think we just delivered the South to the Republican party for a long time to come" (167). Goldwater's opposition to that bill, framed in the language of constitutionalism rather than that of segregation, would become an important key to persuading southern conservatives to abandon the Democratic Party and vote Republican. With this addition of southerners to the party, conservatives would wrest control of the Republican Party from the Northeast moderates and steer it in a distinctly rightward direction.

In the years since Phillips' proclamation, it has become a matter of consensus among observers of all political stripes that Goldwater's campaign was instrumental in this realignment, known as the "Southern Strategy," which placed conservatives in control of the GOP and simultaneously gave the Republicans a structural advantage over the Democrats in national politics. Goldwater's "victory" was not a result of persuading undecided voters, but of

empowering conservative activists and strengthening their hand with the infusion of southern conservatives into the party. Paul Gottfried (1993) explains,

If postwar conservatism has been a series of movements rather than the orderly unfolding of a single force, the Goldwater campaign is the most crucial turning point in its history. Goldwater's acquisition of the Republican presidential nomination dramatized the political power of the postwar Right. It also mobilized masses of supporters. Before Goldwater's appearance on the national scene, observed William Rusher and James Burnham, there were no more than about a hundred conservative activists, mostly centered on *National Review*. After 1964 there were tens of thousands ready to mobilize behind other conservative candidates for high office (41).

This view of electoral politics, in which building a core of highly motivated, ideologically homogeneous supporters is more important than tacking to the center to appeal to swing voters, has come to define the contemporary strategy of the Republican Party.

The political and economic effects of the rise of extreme anti-government conservatism are too numerous to mention, and only a brief summary is possible here. Political scientists Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein (2012) explain the political consequence as a complete breakdown of civic norms:

However awkward it may be for the traditional press and nonpartisan analysts to acknowledge, one of the two major parties, the Republican Party, has become an insurgent outlier—ideologically extreme; contemptuous of the inherited social and economic policy regime; scornful of compromise; unpersuaded by conventional understanding of facts, evidence, and science; and dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition. When one party moves this far from the center of American politics, it is extremely difficult to enact policies responsive to the country's most pressing challenges (xiv).

As a result of these developments, the government is now unable to pass even the most routine legislation, much less attempt to tackle such issues as immigration, gun policy, and climate change. Meanwhile, the economic consequences are also devastating. After several decades of policies that cut taxes and stripped regulations, inequality has skyrocketed, and the standard of living continues to fall for most of the population while the stock market continues reap fortunes

for the fortunate. Political gridlock renders any reversal of these trends impossible in the near term. Joseph E. Stiglitz (2012) describes the sad irony of the situation: “It might seem strange that as inequality has increased we have been doing less to diminish its impact, but it’s what one might have expected. It’s certainly what one sees around the world: the more egalitarian societies work harder to preserve their social cohesion; in the more unequal societies, government policies and other institutions tend to foster the persistence of inequality” (77). The rise of extreme anti-government rhetoric, cloaked in the language of populism, has given this dynamic a steady push since at least the days of the Reagan administration.

This dissertation seeks to illuminate the rhetorical dynamics of the text that helped make Goldwater’s insurgent candidacy, and the conservative movement it helped inspire, possible—his 1960 best-seller, *The Conscience of a Conservative*. In order to examine how conservative movement rhetoric has developed in the decades since the publication of *Conscience*, it compares and contrasts this text with a more contemporary analog, Texas Representative Ron Paul’s 2008 campaign text, *The Revolution: A Manifesto*. In each case, the conservative movement rallied behind an underdog candidate for the Republican presidential nomination with a simple message of low taxes, deregulation, and a strict constructionist interpretation of the constitutional powers of the federal government in order to push back against the perceived heresy of the outgoing Republican President. In each case, a book written as part of a presidential campaign strategy served as an embodiment of that politician's values: a kind of bible that first outlines the principle of small government, and then demonstrates how that principle can be applied in a variety of policy areas for desirable outcomes. Yet, despite all of these similarities, the texts diverge in many important ways, both stylistic and substantive. That a such a deductive political orientation as libertarianism, which grounds all of its policy commitments in the notion

of maximizing personal freedom and minimizing government power, can accommodate such widely divergent agendas is itself a key topic of inquiry.

In this chapter, I review the relevant primary literature, which consists of the two artifacts, and the relevant secondary literature, which consists of philosophical and economic texts on the questions of political freedom and virtue, historical accounts of the conservative movement, contemporary accounts of the persuasiveness of conservative political argument, and rhetorical theory and criticism on the works of Goldwater and Paul. I then propose a mode of investigation, broadly based on Wayne Brockriede's notion of rhetorical criticism as argument, and specifically drawing on studies of movements, genre, and constitutive rhetoric. Finally, I offer a chapter preview, which includes the thesis questions to be treated by each chapter, and a brief conclusion.

1.1 WHY RHETORICAL CRITICISM?

One of the challenges of this dissertation topic is its interdisciplinary subject matter: political science, economics, history, philosophy, sociology, and linguistics, among others, are implicated. A rhetorician broaching this topic must contend with the competing perspectives offered by these disciplinary approaches. Moreover, countless pundits make their living discussing related issues *ad nauseum* on cable news, talk radio, and the internet. In order to find an audience in this crowded landscape, a rhetorical approach must offer unique advantages while simultaneously drawing upon the insights of these various commentators. To the extent that it is able to offer a compelling explanation for political developments, it can be justified in terms of its contribution to our understanding of contemporary political dynamics. For instance, one of the key issues in

contemporary politics in recent years has been the outsized influence of an extremely vocal, revanchist wing of the Republican Party that has branded itself since the election of President Barack Obama as the “Tea Party.” While this came as a surprise to many, a rhetorical perspective—which takes as axiomatic the notion that rhetors borrow rhetorical strategies from the past while updating them to suit present circumstances—would have militated against the premature relegation of conservatism to the dustbin of history.

A quick glance at the last half-decade of American politics shows that this perspective, informed by classical and modern theories of rhetoric, was in reality lacking. For a brief period after the election of Democrat Barack Obama as President of the United States in 2008, many progressives and even some conservatives were proclaiming the end of the Reagan Era of conservative ascendancy. The fleeting *zeitgeist* held that the evident failures of the George W. Bush presidency and the concurrent financial crisis, made possible by three decades of deregulation, had at least for the foreseeable future consigned conservative theories of governance to the dustbin of history. In this view, the Republican Party had entered into a “death spiral” in which any leader extreme enough to win over the increasingly conservative Republican primary electorate had virtually no chance of winning a general election. A *Time* article by Michael Grunwald in May of 2009 neatly sums up this perspective, citing the Republicans’ “desperate aura of an endangered species” and referring to both Democratic and Republican odes to the death of conservatism.

If it was not yet evident at the time, by the summer of 2009 subsequent events would reveal the hubris entailed by such a position. Ideologies are rarely “disproved” once and for all, nor do they tend to disappear overnight. A new movement calling itself the “Tea Party” was born, and while its ideological underpinnings were at first somewhat unclear, it soon revealed

itself as the latest reincarnation of the decades-old conservative movement, espousing opposition to the “big government” policies of bailouts, stimulus, and healthcare reform. The very movement derided by Democrats and many Republicans alike as clinging to the stale dogmatism of the past asserted itself in the media and at the ballot box with a string of victories, culminating in the return of a Republican majority to the House of Representatives following the 2010 midterm elections, even larger and more conservative than the one prior to the Democratic waves of 2006 and 2008. (Though the 2010 midterms also indicated the dangers of conservative overreach in the Republican primaries, as fringe Senatorial candidates in Alaska, Nevada, and Delaware arguably cost the GOP an opportunity to take the majority in Senate, as well.) The result of this takeover was a near-complete breakdown of the legislative process, as extreme anti-government conservatives repeatedly brought the government to (and past) the brink of shutdown, and even flirted with the possibility of a debt default in order to force the issue of radically downsizing the federal government.

Contemporary attempts to understand the rapidity of conservatism's resurrection often fall into two categories: those that stress the role of money in politics, and those that dwell on the racism, nativism, and anti-Islamism of far-right activists. The former approach stresses the impact of the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision, which allowed corporations to make unlimited, undisclosed independent expenditures in support of candidates, as well as the fervor with which billionaires like the Koch Brothers have jumped into the breach to influence political outcomes at all levels of government. Yet, simply pointing out the sheer volume of money that goes into political persuasion tells us nothing about why people are actually persuaded; without an effective message, this money would largely go to waste. Meanwhile, the latter approach dwells upon fringe sentiment such as “birtherism” (the groundless belief that President Obama is

not an American citizen), which infects mainly the far right and has little crossover appeal among moderates, centrists, independents, or liberals. While each of these approaches has its merits, each fails to articulate how a significant swath of Americans were persuaded in short order to abandon their support of President Obama and elect a new wave of conservatives to state and federal office in 2010.

What rhetorical theory can offer is an analysis of the actual messages that might have been persuasive to swing voters. Unlike the arguments of the xenophobic fringe, libertarian conservatism provides a narrative that many Americans find intuitive and appealing: that the federal government has overstepped its constitutional authority by intervening in a variety of issues better left to individuals or local governments, and the result is both too much power in the hands of the federal government and staggering debt levels that threaten the nation's long-term economic security. Such a position is rooted in the doctrines of both 19th century classical liberalism and 20th century *laissez-faire* economics, and counts among its most influential adherents the prominent 20th century economists F. A. Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, Murray N. Rothbard, and Milton Friedman. By tracing how these arguments develop as they migrate from an academic discourse among philosophers and economists to a political rhetoric designed for easy accessibility by candidates for political office, the rhetorical theorist and critic can shine light on what makes them so persuasive.

Part of what makes libertarianism such a powerful source of rhetorical invention is that there's always a ready-made crisis at hand; any federal deficit or even any perceived growth in the government's reach provides an exigency for change. The juxtaposition of the two artifacts for study in this dissertation makes clear this perpetual exigency, which allowed the conservative movement to gaze upon itself in much the same way in 2008 as it had in 1960: reeling from 8

years of a Republican President whom conservatives saw as insufficiently committed to the conservative principle of small government. While the differences between the Eisenhower and G. W. Bush administrations are of course quite stark, they share the key characteristics of substantial growth in both the size of the federal debt and the scope of the federal bureaucracy.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In addition to the two main artifacts of this study, there are at least four key sets of secondary literature relevant to the questions at hand: the philosophical and economic texts that inform the fiscal conservatism of Goldwater and Paul, historical accounts of the conservative movement, contemporary popular accounts of the current milieu, and discipline-specific accounts of Goldwater's rhetoric. I will treat these in order.

1.2.1 Primary Texts

I've chosen the two artifacts for this study on the basis of several considerations. The first is that they are both rather influential and politically important. Each played a role in its author's presidential ambitions: Goldwater's unsuccessful run for the Republican nomination in 1960 and his successful one in 1964, and Paul's unsuccessful runs in 2008 and 2012. Goldwater's 1960 book became a classic that is credited with energizing an entire generation of conservative activists, culminating in the Reagan Revolution of 1980. Paul's 2008 book, with its far briefer history, cannot yet be attributed with the same impact. Yet Paul's supporters are clearly among the most vocal and enthusiastic members of the current conservative movement coalition,

catapulting him to consecutive victories in the Conservative Political Action Conference presidential straw poll in 2010 and 2011. The small-government arguments he makes in this book and elsewhere serve as the centerpiece of the GOP's strategy against Obama: emphasis on low taxes, deficit reduction, and deregulation. Additionally, the fact that books outlining the candidates' vision and policy proposals for America were released prior to or during their campaigns is hardly unusual, but their influence beyond the campaigns far outsize that of similar texts. Rather than simply serving the interest of individual candidates, these books helped to build and maintain a large and politically active conservative movement that is motivated to act in contexts far beyond the immediate campaigns for which they were written.

The second reason I've chosen these two artifacts is that they are strikingly similar in both form and content. *Revolution* seems to mimic *Conscience*; the back cover even includes a quote from Barry M. Goldwater, Jr., calling it “*The Conscience of a Conservative* for the twenty-first century.” Each book begins with a general statement of “freedom” as the ultimate political end, and excoriates the growth of the federal government as an impediment to this end. Each then proceeds through a series of policy areas, devoting a separate chapter to each policy area and attempting to demonstrate that its author's philosophy of low taxes and minimal government intervention would lead to desirable consequences in that area. Each portrays its contemporary political situation in remarkably similar terms, criticizing Republicans and Democrats alike, including the outgoing Republican president, for expanding the size and scope of the federal government. Yet, their rhetorical strategies vary in some key respects, reflecting the differences in their rhetorical situations: one as an attempt to unify a nascent movement, and the other as an attempt to resuscitate one badly damaged by its real-world failures.

The fact that the two texts are so similar makes their differences that much more interesting. One key difference is that Goldwater is rather suspicious of “the people” as a political force, while Paul is far more likely to appeal to the common wisdom of “the people” as proof of the innate wisdom of his philosophy. This difference points to a general tension within the libertarian philosophy each is espousing: “the people” *as individuals* should be trusted above the government to act in a way that benefits society, while “the people” *as a collective* can be a dangerous force, destructive to the liberties enshrined in our Constitution. Another key difference is the authors' radical divergence in the area of foreign policy: Goldwater's extremely hawkish, confrontational approach to the Soviet Union contrasts sharply with Paul's dovish philosophy of non-intervention. That the same philosophical orientation can accommodate such polar opposite positions is a topic rich for analysis.

One area of ambiguity is the subject of actual authorship of each text. It seems well established that L. Brent Bozell ghost authored *Conscience* (Perlstein 2009), while the role played by possible *Revolution* ghost author Tom Woods remains unclear (Mosk 2008). It's not a particularly important issue for most aspects of the dissertation, though, for three reasons. First, most readers attribute authorship to Goldwater and Paul in any case. Second, each politician revised and approved his respective text before green lighting its publication, and neither has disavowed any of his book's content. Finally, each ghost author attempted to match the style and substance of the respective text to that of the politician to whom it is attributed. Thus, issues of real authorship are likely to arise only if there is perceived tension between the actual politician and his textual persona. Therefore, I refer to Goldwater and Paul as the “authors” of these texts except when dealing explicitly with such issues. There is, however, a related problem of the

tension between Bozell's advocacy in *Conscience* and his writing elsewhere, which I will discuss in the next section.

1.2.2 Philosophical and Economic Texts

The central argument of each text, that freedom unleashes the virtues of the individual over the tyranny of the state, has a philosophical history thousands of years old, and can be dealt with here only in the most skeletal form. Perhaps the earliest “debate” on the connection between freedom and virtue can be found in the differences between Plato and Aristotle on the locus of virtue in society. While Plato would place the most virtuous individuals, the philosophers, in the highest positions of power in his ideal Republic, “Aristotelian political science does not seek to transform imperfect regimes, such as democracies and oligarchies, into regimes devoted to human excellence; rather, it aims to institute measures so as to enable imperfect regimes to honor their principles and to moderate their unwise tendencies” (Berkowitz 1999: 11). This tension between attempts to make the state virtuous and assertions that virtue can only reside outside of the state is one of the central disputes in political philosophy, and the latter position is a central tenet of libertarian philosophy.

Other key figures in the philosophical history of classical liberalism include Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, and John Stuart Mill. Each contributed elements to what is now known as “classical liberalism,” which received perhaps its most fully developed articulation in the philosophy of Mill. Twentieth-century conservative movementarians distinguished classical liberalism, which celebrates individual liberty against the power of the state, from modern liberalism, which uses the power of the state to achieve ends desirable by the collective. Libertarians saw themselves as the true descendants of classical liberalism, and saw

modern liberals as the actual descendants of the tyrannical state-centered conservatisms of the past. Meanwhile, traditionalist conservatives attacked classical liberalism and modern liberalism alike as failing to recognize the duty of the state to maintain social order. To complicate matters further, libertarians are divided along consequentialist and deontological lines. The former argue in terms of the positive consequences of minimal government, and are heavily influenced by economists such as Mises, Hayek, and Friedman, who made the case that capitalism leads to the best outcomes for maximizing and distributing wealth. The latter argue in terms of individual rights, and are more influenced by natural rights theory, which holds that all or most government interventions in human affairs are fundamental violations of individual rights.

Each of these camps found a home at the journal *National Review*, founded by William F. Buckley. Editorial debates hashed out the differences between the camps, but also attempted to synthesize these clashing views into a coherent and politically potent articulation of the conservative movement. One of the most important debates in these pages was between Frank S. Meyer (1962), who made the case for a fusion of the libertarian and traditionalist wings of the movement by arguing that freedom is the condition most likely to bring about human virtue, and *Conscience* ghost author L. Brent Bozell (1962), who argued that the ideals of freedom and virtue often come into conflict and that therefore conservatives must align around the supreme value of virtue. This sets up not only the intellectual grounding for my interpretation of the two artifacts, but raises some questions as well: Is each text an articulation of libertarian or fusionist philosophy? Does it rely upon consequentialist reasoning, deontological reasoning, or both? Why might it rely more heavily on one than the other? Why does Bozell publish an essay under his own name that directly contradicts a book he ghost authored only two years before?

1.2.3 Historical Accounts

Works explaining the broad trajectory of the modern conservative movement, of which Barry Goldwater was an early practitioner and Ron Paul is a contemporary exemplar, help set up the context for my own reading, which is by necessity both deeper and more narrow. The most detailed and most frequently cited historical account of the rise of Barry Goldwater as a major figure in the conservative movement and of the effects this development had on the broader American political scene is Rick Perlstein's *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (2009). Perlstein focuses on the behind-the-scenes machinations that led to the attempts to “draft” Goldwater as a candidate in 1960 and 1964. His chapter “Conscience” is of particular relevance, as it explains the production and distribution of *The Conscience of a Conservative*, as well as its immediate impact and reception. While Perlstein establishes the impact of the text, he does not make any sustained effort at analysis of its suasive appeal.

Other important accounts of the history of the conservative movement include George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America, Since 1945* (1976) and Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (2001). Influential texts on the broader issues of American beliefs and ideology include Max Lerner, *America as a Civilization: Life and Thought in the United States Today* (1957); Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (1996); and Dana D. Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (1998). While each of these sources provides great insight into the ideological terrain of the battles fought by movement conservatives, each lacks the close reading characteristic of rhetorical scholarship, which serves to illuminate the precise persuasive functions of individual texts.

1.2.4 Contemporary Accounts

The topic of conservatives' seeming stranglehold on the national political discourse is a common one in contemporary journalistic non-fiction. Two of the most influential accounts in progressive circles, and those most immediately relevant to this analysis, are those offered by George Lakoff and Thomas Frank. Linguist George Lakoff (2002, 2009) writes about the different neurological patterns followed by those operating under conservative and progressive frames. For Lakoff, conservatism flourishes because its spokespersons understand how to construct simple narratives that activate the part of the brain that makes us think conservatively. While progressives tend to present political issues in terms of policy proposals, and thus miss the opportunity to appeal to the more primeval instincts that activate political behavior, conservatives put a great deal of effort into activating conservative worldviews, and thus are more successful at getting politicians elected and policies passed. His attentiveness to long-term horizons in political discourse is particularly influential to this dissertation's approach

For Frank (2004), conservative success at the ballot box is the result of their devious identification of liberals as the powerful elites, and conservatives as the suffering masses. Average Republican voters, convinced that the liberals in the big cities and universities want to cram their social agendas down their throats, turn out in large numbers to vote on the basis of social issues, when the real conservative agenda is one of economic conservatism. His more recent work (2012) updates the notion by pointing out the irony of the recent conservative resurgence being based upon economic values rather than social ones. This irony is a key factor in the development of this thesis: the very policies of deregulation and low taxes that brought about the current economic mess are now being presented as a new alternative to solve it.

1.2.5 Rhetorical Accounts

There have been several analyses of the rhetoric of Barry Goldwater over the years within the field of rhetorical criticism, most notably those of Ernest Wraga, John C. Hammerback, and Kathryn Olson. The earliest is that of Wraga (1963), who writes of Goldwater's Manichean worldview, his appeal to traditional values, and his belief in rugged individualism. Hammerback (1972) builds on the discussion of rugged individualism by fleshing out the themes underlying Goldwater's rhetoric, namely those of localizing government, protecting private property, and seeking victory rather than peace in the Cold War. Revisiting the topic many years later, he (1999) focuses on how Goldwater “demonstrated how to build and animate an audience which would zealously support solidly conservative candidates and ideology.” For Hammerback, this rhetorical force stems from Goldwater's charismatic persona of rugged individualism. His insight that Goldwater's rhetoric was more concerned with long-term issues of movement building than with short-term issues of winning elections is of crucial importance. Additionally, while I agree with Hammerback's interpretation of the Goldwater persona, I would argue that he underestimates the persuasive force of rugged individualism by finding it only in the author's persona; that in fact, the author's linkage of rugged individualism with a mythic American identity serves to draw the audience closer to taking on that identity as its own.

Olson (1993) presents the most useful analysis of Goldwater's rhetoric for the purposes of this dissertation. Like this study, she situates Goldwater's rhetoric within a genre and compares it to a later discourse with which it bears certain similarities. Her focus, however, is on his speeches on the 1964 campaign trail, and Ronald Reagan is the later rhetor with whom she compares him. Olson's purpose is more theoretical than critical, in that she uses Goldwater's rhetoric primarily as an example to prove her broader point, that rehistoricizing generic

embodiments can help the critic achieve greater insights into “how later rhetors may ‘revitalize’ the latent possibilities of earlier generic embodiments for their own purposes in a way that promotes understanding through the generic analysis rather than independent of it” (300). Olson is thus an important interlocutor for this dissertation, for reasons related to both the topic and the mode of investigation. Her discussion of Goldwater's rhetoric during his presidential campaign serves as a useful counterpoint to the 1960 text I analyze. Meanwhile, her discussion of genre informs my own understanding of my two artifacts as generic “analogs.”

Other than a handful of papers published in conference proceedings, there has been little field-specific work on the rhetoric of Ron Paul. One exception is an article by Jason A. Edwards (2011), which defines Paul’s foreign policy position during the 2008 Republican primary debates as an example of the American Jeremiad. The parts of the dissertation on Paul thus will be more speculative both in tone and in method, relying on what Lawrence Rosenfield (1968b) called “analog criticism,” or the comparison of texts “in such ways that each address serves as a reference standard for the other” (435). At first blush, the paucity of work related to Paul's rhetoric might seem an obstacle for this project. Yet, having a contemporary analog to Goldwater's half-century-old text can help remind us to look at it as a text invented with its future still open, rather than already determined. That is, it can allow us to read *Conscience* both as a product of its time and as an influence on later times, far removed from the circumstances for which it may have been intended. The false choice between studying immediate, intended effects and later, unintended effects can thus be avoided. In the next section, I elaborate further on the precise tools and mode of investigation I propose to pursue.

1.3 MODE OF INVESTIGATION

First and foremost, this study attempts to follow Edwin Black's (1965) dictum, "Criticism has no relationship with its subject other than to account for how that subject works; it demands nothing but full disclosure" (18). In the service of accounting for how its artifacts work, it follows the imperative of Wayne Brockriede (1974), that "useful rhetorical criticism...must function as an argument" (165). Brockriede discusses three kinds of analysis that a rhetorical critic may perform: description, classification, and explanation, only the third of which "functions as a significant argument" (169). This dissertation includes each of Brockriede's three potential lines of analysis, in that it describes the structure and rhetorical appeals of the two primary texts as instances of movement conservatism, thus functioning as a movement study; it classifies them as examples of libertarian jeremiads, thus functioning as a genre study; and it explains why each gains its persuasive force through its appeal to a unique American identity, thus functioning as a study of constitutive rhetoric. The rest of this section will explain these more specific modes of investigation I propose to employ in the service of Brockriede's tripartite division of criticism.

1.3.1 Description (Movement Study)

Brockriede's conception of rhetorical criticism as argument is of particular value in that it enables the critic to make judgments that work as arguments. In the case of a movement study, the rhetoric of social movement literature features theoretical arguments. Approaching that literature from the perspective of argument allows the critic to tap into the dynamism of the disagreements that have characterized the study of social movements. That this dissertation is a "movement study" also makes sense for reasons intrinsic to the primary texts. As "movement conservatism"

is a situated classification, not an imposition by scholars, it is appropriate for the critic to analyze the artifact from the perspective of social movement theory. This sidesteps the pitfalls that characterized early social movement scholarship, according to David Zarefsky (1980), which unfortunately focused on definitional issues at the expense of more fruitful lines of analysis (245).

Rhetorical critics of social movements have long been interested in the study of the conservative movement. An exchange between Barbara Warnick and Martin J. Medhurst is of particular value here. Warnick (1977) writes that “conservative resistance movements exhibit characteristics which, in combination, make them unique:” rather than advocating change, they seek to prevent changes; they emphasize ideology over practical concerns; they exhibit a suspicion of rational argument and of compromise; they appeal to a sense of endangered personal identity and status; and they polarize issues via their refusal to compromise (257-258). Responding to Medhurst's (1982b) criticism that her list paints conservative resistance with too broad a brush (18), Warnick (1982) later argues that Medhurst's counter-example fails to disprove her schema because it is not genuinely a movement study, but concedes that the suspicion of rational argument is not found in many conservative resistance movements (376). While each of the characteristics Warnick identifies could potentially form a subject for investigation, the one with the most explanatory potential for the purposes of this dissertation is the appeal to personal identity.

1.3.2 Classification (Genre Study)

An entire subset of rhetorical scholarship is devoted to sorting out the theoretical quandaries involved in assigning texts to particular genres. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall

Jamieson, Herbert W. Simons and Aram A. Aghazarian, and Carolyn Miller are some of the key interlocutors. Campbell and Jamieson (1978) initiated a discussion of what should be the defining feature of genre: whether the texts included share a common form or content, or whether they're responding to similar situations. They advocate an understanding of genre that requires a "constellation" of these factors to be present before a genre can be said to exist: "Rhetorical acts are born into a symbolic/rhetorical context as well as into an historical/political milieu. Once again, the genre which emerges is a complex of elements—a constellation of substantive, stylistic and situational characteristics" (17). The "constellation" of elements to which they refer can certainly be found in common in the two artifacts, but in justifying their generic compatibility, certain theoretical work can also be done. Namely, the dissertation becomes an opportunity to grapple with the issue of what it means to determine an author's "perceived situation," with which Olson deals in her analysis of Goldwater's rhetoric. The key questions here are: Since the text may include a portrayal of situation designed for rhetorical effect, can the author's perception of situation be determined with reference to the text itself? If not, what resources might be available to the critic that avoid this trap?

Carolyn Miller's (1984) rebuttal to Campbell and Jamieson, that "a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" (151), adds further depth to this discussion. If we are to follow Miller's suggestion that generic considerations should center around purpose rather than substance or form, it still seems fair to classify *Conscience* and *Revolution* within the same genre, as each is used both to bolster the presidential campaign of its author and to build adherence to the conservative movement. But the fact that they do share a great deal of similarities in both form and substance must still be accounted for. The simple answer would be

that *Revolution* just copies both the substance and the form of the iconic *Conscience*, and that these similarities are therefore in no way coincidental. But this perspective would fail to answer two key questions: Why is *Conscience* rather than some other text chosen as the exemplar for *Revolution*? And why are some elements replicated but not others?

Jamieson and Campbell (1982) provide one way to make sense of this tightly wound constellation of common generic characteristics in their later work on “rhetorical hybrids,” which attempts to elaborate the notion that a genre is “a potential fusion of elements that may be energized or actualized in response to a situation” (146). One of their conclusions is that “hybrids are called forth by complex situations and purposes and, as such, are transitory and situation-bound” (150). That is, there is a causal link between the perception of situation and the rhetorical choices made: similar situations lead rhetors to choose similar substantive and formal elements for rhetorical effect. But if recurring constellations are in fact “transitory and situation-bound,” how do the two artifacts retain their persuasive influence beyond the situations for which they were written? If the purpose of the texts were merely to aid in the presidential campaigns of their authors, a transitory character would be no problem. But since each is also an attempt to build and sustain a conservative movement much larger in scope than the presidential ambitions of its author, this characteristic is potentially fatal.

One of the thornier generic considerations in this study is the question of whether the artifacts truly can be said to embody a “libertarian” genre of discourse. While Paul explicitly self-identifies as a libertarian, Goldwater never uses the term in his book. Moreover, some libertarians disavow Paul's libertarianism due to his social conservatism on issues like abortion. Major differences also exist among libertarians on foreign policy issues, as evidenced by Goldwater and Paul themselves. In what sense, then, can we say that either is participating in a

“libertarian” discourse? For this dissertation, I will be relying on the conception of libertarianism provided by David Boaz in the *American Conservatism* (2006) encyclopedia, which describes it as follows:

Libertarianism is a political philosophy that advocates individual liberty and limited, constitutional government. Advocates of libertarian views generally regard themselves as belonging to the tradition of John Locke, Adam Smith, the American founders, and the classical liberals. The term “libertarian” originated in postwar America as the term “liberal” came to mean an advocate of expansive government. A consciously libertarian political movement also developed in the years after World War II (505).

This definition conforms to most contextual understandings of “libertarianism” both as a movement and as a modern appropriation of the principles of classical liberalism. It correctly describes the rhetoric of both Goldwater and Paul as beginning with the principle of individual freedom as opposed to government force, and deducing all of its individual policy prescriptions from this opposition. While each comes to different conclusions, particularly in the area of foreign policy but in some domestic policy areas as well, and while each illustrates the desirability of his chosen policy outcomes in different terms, the central opposition of the individual vs. the state is what defines these texts as “libertarian.” Also, the term “libertarian” should not be confused with the term “Libertarian,” which would indicate a member of the political party. While Paul ran for President as a member of this party in 1988, he spent his entire congressional career as a Republican. As this dissertation is not particularly concerned either with Paul’s 1988 candidacy or with the Libertarian Party in general, but rather with libertarianism as a driving force in the conservative movement that has taken control of the Republican Party, it uses the term “libertarian” exclusively in the small-l sense.

1.3.3 Explanation (Study of Constitutive Rhetoric)

The notion that Americans are defined by a common creed can be traced at least as far back as Alexis de Tocqueville's 1835 treatise, *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville's concern with explaining the differences between American and European societies led him to the notion that "popular sovereignty" was the defining principle of American society: "From the beginning, the principle of the popular sovereignty of the people was the fundamental principle of most of the English colonies in America. It was nevertheless far from dominating the government of society then as it does now" (62). Tocqueville was deeply concerned with this strand of American belief, and feared that it would destroy the social hierarchies that made society function smoothly. Modern conservatives often invoke his criticism of political equality in their efforts to de-emphasize the egalitarian aspects of the American creed. Yet, despite a certain harmony between his anti-egalitarian beliefs and those of modern conservatives, Tocqueville was equally concerned with the dangers of unrestrained liberty. In fact, he explained that although he devoted fewer pages to this concern, this was because everyone was already sufficiently aware of its attendant dangers: "Political liberty, if carried to excess, can endanger the tranquility, property, and lives of private individuals, and no one is so blind or frivolous as to be unaware of this. By contrast, it is only the attentive and clear-sighted who perceive the perils with which equality threatens us, and they usually avoid pointing them out" (583). Part of the challenge, then, was to maintain a proper balance in emphasis between liberty and equality in the American creed.

Contemporary commentators have also grappled with our understanding of national identity and the ways in which it influences our politics. E.J. Dionne, Jr. (2012), for instance, writes, "Underlying our political impasse is a lost sense of national balance that in turn reflects a loss of historical memory. *Americans disagree about who we are because we can't agree about*

who we've been. We are at odds over the meaning of our own history, over the sources of our national strength, and over what it is, philosophically and spiritually, that makes us 'Americans.' The consensus that guided our politics through nearly all of the twentieth century is broken. In the absence of a new consensus, we will continue to fight—and to founder” (4; emphasis in original). If it is the case that a consensus as to what constitutes Americans as Americans once existed, but no longer does, this cries out for critical attention. It forces us to ask a series of important questions. What was the content of the lost shared meaning? How did it dissolve, and who is responsible? What are the new identities around which we base our politics, and where did they come from? What are the consequences of this dissolution of shared identity? What are the prospects of bringing it back, or of forging a new consensus?

The gospel of freedom preached by Goldwater and Paul is grounded in the notion of a unique, capitalist American identity, contrasted sharply with that of a socialistic European identity. To the extent that each author persuades his readers on the basis of their American-ness, he is engaging in a “constitutive rhetoric,” or a discourse that functions precisely by presenting a mythic identity for its audience to emulate. As John Lyne (1985) writes, studies of the way rhetoric “constitutes” communities and practices are a legitimate and valuable contribution to the field, since rhetoric's constitutive function “helps explain why the study of discourse is important independent of whether it can be demonstrated to have 'caused' events” (60). Those engaging in study of constitutive rhetoric often cite as their key sources Kenneth Burke (1950), who proposed substituting “identification” for “persuasion” as the key rhetorical function, and Louis Althusser (1972), who wrote of audiences being constituted or “hailed” as members of pre-existing identities through a process termed “interpellation.”

Another key progenitor within the field of rhetorical studies is Michael Calvin McGee. McGee (1975), borrowing from Ernest G. Bormann (who is in turn borrowing from a host of earlier scholars), describes a phenomenon in which a rhetor describes an image of “the people” in order to draw his/her actual audience closer to a collective fantasy: “The advocate, he suggests, dangles a dramatic vision of the people before his audience. The audience, essentially a group of individuals, reacts with a desire to participate in that dramatic vision, to become 'the people' described by the advocate” (239-240). The subject of myth is thus quite important, as the empirical audience is thus constituted through its desire to become the mythic “people.” This account, insofar as it holds that “the people” do not exist as a collective prior to the discourse, seems to be in direct contradiction with that of Althusser, which holds that the people are “always already” ideologically constituted. The contradiction can be resolved if we view McGee's description of an original instance of constitutive rhetoric as itself mythic, and instances of constitutive rhetoric instead as “reconstitutions” of identity, where an ideologically constituted audience is transformed into a slightly different collective entity via the text's particular portrayal of its chosen mythic identity.

In the case of the artifacts for this dissertation, we can view Goldwater and Paul as reconstituting their audience through appeals to American identity, deploying discourses that in some sense already constitute their audience, but selectively highlighting, eliding, substituting, and transforming elements of that identity for maximum rhetorical effect in these discourses. One way of establishing that each deployment of a mythic identity for rhetorical effect ultimately distorts or transforms the mythic identity itself would be to contrast the identity portrayed with that of earlier iterations. In the case of Ron Paul, contrasting his portrayal of a mythic American identity with that of Barry Goldwater might illuminate the ways in which he selectively

emphasizes and alters elements of that identity and downplays or ignores others. In the case of Barry Goldwater, an earlier example would be required.

Other influential theorists of constitutive rhetoric include Maurice Charland, James Jasinski, and James Boyd White. In his influential study of the role played by constitutive rhetoric in fomenting a sense of unique national identity among the Québécois, Charland (1987) draws a sharp line between identification and persuasion, arguing that “attempts to elucidate ideological or identity-forming discourses as persuasive are trapped in a contradiction: persuasive discourse requires a subject-as-audience who is already constituted with an identity and within an ideology” (134). For Charland, then, constitutive rhetoric is not itself persuasion, but may serve as the groundwork for persuasion. However, I would make the case that logical priority is not equivalent to temporal priority, and that therefore, identification and persuasion can happen simultaneously. In fact, if one is to posit an “always already ideologically constituted” subject, the notion of a subject prior to constitution “with an identity and within an ideology” who therefore cannot be subject to persuasion makes no sense. One need not choose between identification and persuasion as the domain of rhetoric; in fact, being told that one is a particular kind of person can be one of most powerful spurs to action.

James Jasinski's series of essays (1993, 1995, 1998) on what he sometimes calls “(re)constitutive rhetoric” helps to build and expand this theory. Jasinski aims to expand the scope of the study of constitutive rhetoric, arguing that “in addition to self-constitution and the formation of subjectivity or subject positions, discourse functions to organize and structure an individual's or a culture's experience of time and space, the norms of political culture and the experience of communal existence (including the collective identity), and the linguistic resources of the culture (including, in particular, the stock of fundamental political concepts that shape the

culture's understanding of political existence)” (1998: 75). This dissertation answers Jasinski's invitation for expanded use of constitutive rhetoric in two ways. First, it explores the ways in which each text establishes particular “norms of political culture,” illuminating how each portrays the legitimate functions of government as deriving from something inherent in the American character. Second, it investigates how the two artifacts “organize and structure” the “stock of political concepts” that inform the conservative sense of self-identity.

James Boyd White's (1984) study of constitutive rhetoric in literature and politics is instructive in that it stresses the role of language in identity formation. He writes, “It is by what we have been calling languages—shared conceptions of the world, shared, manners and values, shared resources and expectations and procedures for speech and thought—that communities are in fact defined and constituted” (193). His chapter on Edmund Burke is particularly useful for this study, as Burke is often cited as the founder of conservatism. Burke's potential role as an exemplar for modern conservatives was a matter of much debate in the 1950s, and part of Goldwater's exigency is to resolve the tension between conservatives who endorse a Burkean understanding of society and those who reject it.

The preceding line of investigation leads to an interesting conundrum: can either of the artifacts in this study be understood as a “populist” appeal? If a text functions rhetorically through appeals to “the people,” is this enough to qualify the work as an instance of populism? And if it does, what does this say about earlier understandings of populism as a particular ideological orientation fundamentally *opposed* to libertarianism? This understanding is reflected in, for instance, the Nolan Chart, a famous diagram of political ideology devised by libertarian David Nolan in 1969. In its original version, the diagram opposed libertarianism, characterized by both high personal freedom and high economic freedom, to populism, characterized by both

low personal freedom and low economic freedom, though later versions of the chart substitute “statism,” “communitarianism,” or another term for “populism.” Michael J. Lee (2006) is a key source in sorting out the relationship between libertarianism and populism, as he articulates how conservative politicians such as George Wallace appropriated the populist frame in his own presidential campaigns. Lee persuasively demonstrates how populism can be used to express either left-wing or right-wing ideology, but he ignores the tensions that naturally arise in the combination of populism with libertarianism (or socialism, or any other ideology, for that matter.) This study seeks to problematize the juxtaposition of form and content, bringing attention to the notion that form and content cannot be considered in isolation from one another. The sutures that hold together the two may in fact be the most interesting, problematic, and fruitful objects of analysis.

One final source in this area is Ernesto Laclau (2005), who operates from an explicitly rhetorical perspective, likening the process of identity formation to the four master tropes. He provides perhaps the most theoretically useful conception of populism, in his distinction between “institutionalist” and “populist” discourses: “In the case of an institutionalist discourse, we have seen that differentiability claims to be the only legitimate equivalent: all differences are considered equally valid within a wider totality. In the case of populism, this symmetry is broken: there is a part which identifies itself with the whole” (81-82). This distinction allows one to uncover the contradictions inherent within the discourse of libertarianism. That is, libertarian rhetoric poses as an institutionalist rhetoric, as if “freedom” were an unproblematic concept equally available to all. But in its populist appeals to Americanism, it subtly upholds certain expressions of freedom while explicitly or implicitly condemning others as un-American. The shift between the two modes of discourse allows Goldwater and Paul to have it both ways: they can claim the moral

high ground by appearing to advocate freedom equally for all, while encouraging only the particular forms of freedom that suit their political ends. Pointing out such discursive shifts and their rhetorical effects will be one of the key contributions of this analysis.

In addition to the literature on constitutive rhetoric, this dissertation draws upon McGee's (1980a) work on the "ideograph." For McGee, the ambiguity inherent in the concept of "freedom" (as in any ideograph) is what provides the foundation for its polysemic and most persuasive content. McGee demonstrates how such ideographs reveal "patterns of political consciousness which have the capacity both to control 'power' and to influence (if not determine) the shape and texture of each individual's 'reality'" (5). This ideographic polysemy in Goldwater's text, for instance, stems from the situation for which *The Conscience of a Conservative* was written. At the time, the conservative movement was split between traditionalists and libertarians, and one of the key tasks for conservative politicians was to create a discourse that could satisfy each. Michael J. Lee's (2008a) examination of the rhetoric of William F. Buckley and Frank Meyer provides a contemporaneous example; according to Lee, their texts exemplify a "fusionist" discourse designed specifically to placate the two major wings of the movement. Building on this notion of "fusionism," this dissertation demonstrates that while the ideological split between traditionalists and libertarians may have appeared a weakness for the movement at the time, it led to one of its greatest rhetorical strengths. The rhetorical situation thus nudged conservative orators in the direction of "substituting the part for whole," to borrow Laclau's phrase. That is, the attempt to bridge this gap led the movement's key rhetors to adopt a discourse of American identity, rooted in a very particular concept of freedom, which would implicitly endorse a conservative worldview while not explicitly delimiting the concept of freedom.

1.4 CHAPTER PREVIEW

Chapter Two considers the connection between theory and practice in order to determine whether existing theories of rhetorical genre might be of use in understanding these texts. Second, it reviews two generic criticisms of texts by Goldwater and Paul, arguing that while each makes a persuasive case that the texts are jeremiadic, this generic classification is of little use in understanding how the texts function. Third, it examines the rhetorical situations of both texts (and the arc of the movement between Goldwater and Paul) in order to demonstrate that each is responding to the need to re-define and unify the conservative movement around core principles in the face of the perceived failures of the incumbent Republican president. It demonstrates that while Goldwater was responding to an absence of a coherent movement ideology, Paul was responding to the perceived failure of the very consensus Goldwater forged. Fourth, it suggests that Albert O. Hirschman's (1991) study of the "rhetoric of reaction" as a way of classifying and understanding the appeals of each text. By finding each of the three types of argument Hirschman describes and analyzing their dynamics in conjunction with one another, the critic can gain greater insight into how texts function—and how they function differently from one another.

Chapter Three is my analysis of Goldwater's book as an attempt to unite the various factions of the movement behind a singular conservative vision. It uses a debate among 1950s movement conservatives regarding the usefulness of Edmund Burke's political philosophy, as a prism to articulate the movement's shift away from an agonistic approach to politics and toward an antagonistic one. Traditionalist conservative Russell Kirk used Burke's philosophy, which urged a cautious and prudential approach toward change, as an exemplar for the nascent conservative movement, whereas fellow traditionalist Richard Weaver argued that Burke's

philosophy was more representative of a liberal worldview, and thus could not provide a set of principles around which conservatives might rally. Weaver's emphasis upon the "argument from principle" empowered more extreme voices, such as those of Robert Welch and Ayn Rand to take the fore. Soon, the movement's outlook would resemble that of Burke's forceful critic Thomas Paine much more closely than that of Burke. Goldwater's attempt to unify the conflicting strands of the movement entailed his ultimate embrace of the libertarian worldview, couched in the rhetoric of Burkean traditionalism. He utilizes a moralistic vocabulary that attempts to demonstrate that freedom is the necessary precondition for virtue. This vocabulary of self-reliance and dependency, which moralizes embrace of capitalist values, is quite similar to Rand's vision of "makers and takers." However, by describing this moralism in theistic, Burkean terms rather than atheistic, Randian terms, Goldwater is able to present a vision of conservatism acceptable to each of the factions of the movement, which helps enable him to win the Republican presidential nomination as an insurgent candidate, against all odds, four years later.

Chapter Four is my analysis of Paul's book as a turn away from both the elitism and the partisanship expressed by Goldwater. While Goldwater distrusts "the people" and espouses a libertarian philosophy as a means to avoid the leveling tendencies he sees in liberalism, Paul presents libertarianism as an egalitarian doctrine. Unlike Goldwater, he makes little effort to appeal to traditionalist conservatives, but instead attempts to enlist liberal Democrats in his cause by appealing to shared beliefs in areas such as foreign policy and executive power. Such an attempt is made possible by the rise of these issues to the forefront of the American political consciousness in the latter years of the Bush administration. In his turn away from both traditionalism and the hawkish commitments undergirding Goldwater's anticommunism, Paul's text exemplifies a more univocally libertarian worldview than that of Goldwater. While

Goldwater maintains strong traces of a Burkean worldview, Paul abandons these traces in favor of an appropriation of Thomas Paine that treats the exaltation of liberty in order to promote capitalist values as the only legitimate function of government.

Chapter Five examines the relationship between the constitutive and instrumental functions of rhetoric, arguing that an approach that appreciates each, as this study attempts to exemplify, is both possible and desirable. It sums up the study's findings for libertarian rhetoric, explaining the key similarities and differences between the two objects of analysis. It then suggests some limitations to the theoretical approach. Finally, it offers some observations on the implications of the study for our current political milieu.

1.5 CONCLUSION

This dissertation attempts to contribute to the understanding of political persuasion and movement building for both practitioners and theorists of rhetoric. Practically, it illuminates the persistence of libertarian thought in spite of the empirical failures of its policy implementation. It suggests ruptures and contradictions within the seemingly airtight and straightforward philosophy that might be used to refute its specific recommendations. Conversely, it suggests ways in which appeals to a mythic American identity might be used to bolster alternative political approaches. Theoretically, the dissertation contributes to three key areas of rhetorical scholarship: movement studies, genre studies, and studies of constitutive rhetoric. By investigating how the conservative movement is built and maintained through key texts, it builds upon past work on the rhetoric of conservatism. By suggesting an interpretation of "genre" that highlights the function of texts, it offers insights into the construction of genres and theoretical

uses of Rosenfield's notion of "analogs." Finally, by demonstrating how constitutive rhetoric can engage simultaneously in identification and persuasion, it establishes the centrality of constitutive rhetoric as a mode of discourse and analysis, while challenging some of the key assumptions about its mode of operation.

2.0 SITUATIONS AND ANALOGS

2.1 NAVIGATING THEORY AND CRITICISM

One of the key tasks for a rhetorical critic is to negotiate the tension between the general and the specific—that is, between theory and criticism. Possessing and utilizing sound theory should lead one to make pertinent judgments about particular cases. However, there are always going to be new and perhaps unexpected variations from what theory would predict. This leads to an ever-present critical conundrum: if a chosen theoretical outlook leads one to expect certain characteristics of the discourse at hand, how does one account for the uniqueness of the given artifact? Ideally, each observation of a particular rhetorical artifact could lead to a slight modification of theory, and both theory and criticism would benefit from the richness of each critical intervention. In any case, the importance of keeping in mind the repetition of discursive forms, the constant blossoming of new variations on these forms, and possibly even the eruption of entirely new forms, is clear. Edwin Black (1965) usefully suggests some assumptions a critic should make in the process of negotiating this tension. He writes,

First, we must assume that there is a limited number of situations in which a rhetor can find himself. ...Second, we must assume that there is a limited number of ways in which a rhetor can and will respond rhetorically to any given situational type. ...Third, we must assume that the recurrence of a given situational type through history will provide the critic with information on the rhetorical responses available in that situation. ...Fourth, we must assume that, although we can expect congregations of rhetorical discourses to form at distinct points along the scale, these points will be more or less arbitrary (133-134).

Though Black does not employ the term “genre” in this discussion, an implication is that the theoretical construction of genres might help us comprehend individual rhetorical discourses as phenomena responding to recurring situational types.

Following Black, a series of theorists built up a theoretical edifice around the concept of the rhetorical genre. Such theorists were concerned with what should be the determining factor in grouping discourses into a genre—the form they take, or the situations to which they respond. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (1978) argue that a genre can only be said to exist if a “constellation” of defining features are all present. They set out their criteria for studies of genre as follows:

- 1) Classification is justified only by the critical illumination it produces not by the neatness of a classificatory schema;
- 2) Generic criticism is taken as a means toward systematic, close textual analysis;
- 3) A genre is a complex, an amalgam, a constellation of substantive, situational, and stylistic elements;
- 4) Generic analysis reveals both the conventions and affinities that a work shares with others; it uncovers the unique elements in the rhetorical act, the particular means by which a genre is individuated in a given case (18).

Their notion that genre construction must yield “critical illumination” and not merely a neat “classificatory schema” is particularly instructive, as is their call for “systematic, close textual analysis.” However, their call for such a great number of discursive similarities to be present before a genre can be said to exist makes it nearly impossible to posit a genre’s existence; there are always going to be factors that are at least slightly different from one generic iteration to the next. This stems from the genre critic’s emphasis on the *sameness* of discursive forms, which becomes apparent in Campbell and Jamieson’s justification of their “constellation” model of generic definition: “The concept of a genre as a constellation of fused elements refines the notion that, in a genre, the significant rhetorical similarities outweigh the significant rhetorical

differences” (23). This points to a serious limitation of perceiving this sort of study as a genre study: *differences* between artifacts said to belong to the same genre must always be downplayed, lest the existence of the genre itself be called into question.

If we are to follow Brockriede’s counsel that explanation be valued more highly than classification, then, it might be necessary to set aside the call for perfectly consistent classificatory criteria. Carolyn Miller’s influential essay on genre criticism echoes Brockriede’s dictum. She writes, “Because a classification sorts items on the basis of some set of similarities, the principle used for selecting similarities can tell us much about the classification. A classification of discourse will be rhetorically sound if it contributes to an understanding of how discourse works—that is, if it reflects the rhetorical experience of the people who create and interpret the discourse” (152). Miller’s interest in grounding genre in the experience and understanding of rhetors themselves leads her to call for a determination of genre by the purpose of a discourse, rather its form: “A rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish” (151). Amy J. Devitt (2004) shares this concern. She explains that genre cannot be the same thing as form, as a concern with pure form unduly wrenches the object of analysis from the particular contextual cues that give it meaning: “Although the classifications named by genre labels would seem to be based on common formal patterns, form alone cannot define genres. Theoretically, equating genre with form is tenable only within a container model of meaning, for it requires a separation of generic form from a particular text’s context” (9-10). This dissertation aims to follow the advice of Miller and Devitt by seeking an understanding its objects of analysis in terms of their function.

This does not mean that form is irrelevant to the critical task. In practice, forms might be useful in helping us understand how rhetors have tended to respond to situations. As Miller explains, “Inaugurals, eulogies, courtroom speeches, and the like have conventional forms because they arise in situations with similar structures and elements and because rhetors respond in similar ways, having learned from precedent what is appropriate and what effects their actions are likely to have on other people” (152). Given that Goldwater and Paul are responding to similar perceived situations, one might expect to find their books take on similar forms—and one would be, to a large extent, correct in this expectation. The problem arises when one focuses entirely on these similarities, to the exclusion of stylistic and substantive differences that indicate how the texts function in markedly different fashions. The question therefore arises, when grouping texts together into genres, how to explain both the formal similarities and the functional differences. This question reflects Devitt’s (2004) observation that categorization entails calling attention to some things and taking it away from others. She writes, “Groupings of complex items like texts are more like metaphors than equations: how texts are grouped depends on which features the classifier has selected to observe—common prosody, organization, tone, aim, or effect on the reader, for example” (6-7). If formal similarity is what one is trying to prove, then one can always find a way of establishing this similarity via one’s choice of a generic lens. Whether one’s establishment of this formal similarity yields critical understanding is another issue entirely.

In order to allow for a consideration of form without reducing criticism to the task of asserting formal similarity, I have chosen Lawrence W. Rosenfield’s (1968b) method of “analog criticism,” which can be seen as a first step toward the inductive construction of a genre. By choosing two texts that bear certain situational similarities, the critic can move back and forth

between situational similarities and differences, with the aim of reaching a better understanding of each text within its own context. Analog criticism, according to Rosenfield, allows one “to specify the fundamental anatomical features which relate the two speeches (engage in a *factorial* analysis of the category of apologetic discourse exemplified by the messages)” (435; emphasis in original). Formal similarity *might* be one of the critical observations this method entails, but it is not the goal it seeks. Herbert W. Simons and Aram A. Aghazarian (1986) explain how Rosenfield’s approach avoids the pitfalls of genre construction: “‘Speechmaking’ on one rung of the abstraction ladder and an apologia presented on television under conditions of admitted guilt on a more distant rung could each be said to represent a ‘genre’ despite their obvious differences in levels and the fact that the apologia may be said to participate in the class ‘speechmaking.’ In our view it is not specificity that invites the generic name, but the presence of a characteristic set of formal elements given systematic play in response to a recurring situation” (9). By drawing our attention away from taxonomical neatness, and toward a better understanding of the artifacts themselves, then, analog criticism holds the promise of allowing one to negotiate the interplay of theory and criticism in a particularly fruitful way.

The next section summarizes the extant approaches to understanding the rhetoric of Goldwater and Paul, and argues that these approaches overemphasize generic form at the expense of a fuller understanding of their objects of analysis.

2.2 OLSON ON GOLDWATER’S JEREMIADIC RHETORIC

While this dissertation focuses on Goldwater’s 1960 campaign book, Kathryn Olson (1993) analyzes his 1964 general election campaign rhetoric. She describes two main situational

demands confronting Goldwater's speeches in his campaign against President Johnson. The first was the demand to win the election: "The main challenge that Goldwater's audience detected was Goldwater's need to persuade them to vote for him over a heavily favored incumbent" (307). The second was closer to his purpose here. Citing Goldwater's purpose in *The Conscience of a Conservative*, Olson continues, "While Goldwater shared his audience's perception that the situation demanded a rhetorical response with the potential to get him elected, he also perceived that it required him to give voice to 'true' conservatism, for he believed that 'conservatism holds the key to national salvation'" (307). In the pursuit of the second of these two goals, Olson argues that Goldwater employed the rhetorical form of the jeremiad, in which a rhetor "adopts the moral tone of prophet and calls for a return to the covenant governing the group. Goldwater used this moral tone to urge 'return' to a way of life aligned with a strict interpretation of the nation's covenant, the Constitution" (307-308). Olson finds in these conflicting interpretations of the 1964 situation the source of his landslide defeat by Johnson: Goldwater's embrace of the latter demand led him to employ the rhetorical form of the jeremiad, which alienated his audience and allowed Johnson to portray him as a dangerous extremist. As a result, he failed spectacularly to achieve the first of the two demands, which was to garner a sufficient number of votes to win the election.

Goldwater's discourse in *Conscience*, like that of his later campaign speeches, is certainly jeremiadic; throughout the text, he gives his audience the sense that a great catastrophe is impending due to our foolish and accelerating abandonment of our national covenant. For Goldwater, the Constitution was designed to maximize human freedom, and to the extent that we forsake it, we invite the forces of tyranny that will eventually swallow our society whole. He argues, "The delicate balance that ideally exists between freedom and order has long since tipped

against freedom practically everywhere on earth. In some countries, freedom is altogether down and order holds absolute sway. In our country the trend is less far advanced, but it is well along and gathering momentum every day. Thus, for the American Conservative, there is no difficulty in identifying the day's overriding political challenge: it is *to preserve and extend freedom*" (6; emphasis in original). Olson's classification of Goldwater's stump speeches as jeremiadic would seem to apply here, as well. However, while this rhetorical form was ill suited to the situational demands of the general election, it served him quite well in this text. Olson's criticism is thus illuminating in that it reminds us that a successful discourse in one situation can have disastrous consequences when imported to a new one.

However, Olson's underlying assumption—that Goldwater's use of the jeremiad reflects his *misperception* of the situation—leads us to an odd conclusion, which is that some situations are inherently "jeremiadic" while others are not. I would suggest that the jeremiad's "situation" is not a reflection of the rhetor's perception, but rather an indication of his/her *portrayal* of the situation. Vatz (1973) reminds us of the rhetor's role in giving meaning to a situation. He argues, "meaning is not discovered in situations, by *created* by rhetors" (157; emphasis in original). Thus, while any given rhetorical situation has certain recalcitrant attributes, the selection of which attributes to highlight, as well as the meaning attached to those attributes, is an artistic decision of the rhetor.

Though some of these attributes are relatively straightforward, such as the fact that Goldwater's situation in 1964 was that of a candidate for President of the United States, others are far murkier and subject to a great deal of interpretation. The situation posited by the jeremiad—that of a people facing an apocalyptic confrontation brought about by its abandonment of a sacred covenant—seems a rather clear example of the latter. Once we accept

that this interpretation of the situation is a matter of portrayal rather than one of perception, it soon follows that the jeremiad is understood better as a form than as a genre. It offers a powerful, structured interpretation of the facts of the situation, but tells us little about the actual situational elements that brought about the rhetor's choice of this form. As such, the classification of his discourse as a jeremiad would seem to give us little guidance in determining what situations call for jeremiadic responses and which do not.

2.3 EDWARDS ON PAUL'S JEREMIADIC RHETORIC

Just as Olson described the campaign rhetoric of Goldwater as a jeremiad, Jason A. Edwards (2011) makes the case that Paul's foreign policy pronouncements during the 2008 Republican presidential primaries were jeremiadic in their supposition of a secularized covenant between a people and its nation. Edwards describes the jeremiad in terms of a sequence of argumentative moves by the rhetor. He writes, "First, the rhetor reminds his or her audience of its covenant. Second, the prophet describes the deviation from its promise and the consequences created from this deviation. Finally, he or she argues that if people would repent, reform, and return to the hallmarks of the convention, then they can still fulfill their overall mission" (260). According to Edwards, Paul describes the policy of noninterventionism as the broken covenant, given to us by the Founding Fathers, and generally upheld by conservative leaders until Bush's invasion of Iraq. American exceptionalism is what's at stake: "For the United States to maintain its status as a nation to admire and emulate, it must bring back the promise of the Founding Fathers and the Constitution, or its exceptionalist soul may be lost forever" (261). Though it is unclear whether

Edwards is referring to Paul's perception of America's situation or his portrayal of it, it seems that his focus is primarily upon the latter.

The dynamic Edwards describes in these speeches can also be found in *The Revolution*, as Paul devotes his second chapter (which follows a very brief and general first chapter) to decrying American foreign intervention. In fact, Paul's use of the jeremiad is not even confined to foreign policy. For Paul, the Constitution represents a covenant, bestowed to us by the Founding Fathers, whom he represents as embodying a preternatural wisdom. The founders attempted to protect posterity from the immoral growth of the federal government, but they foresaw the inevitability of temptation to expand government's scope into areas reserved for the people. As Paul writes, "That's why it is precisely during times of relative crisis that we should adhere most closely to the Constitution, not abandon it. The Founders were especially concerned about the consolidation of power during times of war and national emergencies. War does not justify the suspension of torture laws any more than it justifies the suspension of murder laws, the suspension of due process, or the suspension of the Second Amendment" (120). In this book, virtually all aspects of government growth point to this lost covenant. At present, our deviation from the warnings of the Founding Fathers in all areas of government policy threatens the continued existence of the republic.

Happily, according to Paul, the wisdom and common sense of the American people can save us before it is too late. He writes, "I do not believe that most Americans want to continue down this path: undeclared wars without end, more and more police-state measures, and a Constitution that may as well not exist. But this is not a fated existence. We do not have to live in this kind of America. It is not too late to rally and recall our people to the Constitution, the rule of law, and our traditional American republic" (67). His diagnosis of catastrophic consequences,

brought about by giving up our precious national covenant, and preventable only by the people's return to lost principles, represents a textbook example of jeremiadic discourse. Edwards' classification of Paul's rhetoric seems to apply here as well, but his essay doesn't expand upon the implications of this finding in terms of how the jeremiad does and does not persuade its audience.

2.4 JEREMIAD AS FORM

If we are to follow the advice of Brockriede, Black, Miller, Devitt, and others who ask us to seek out the ways in which a text functions, rather than simply its form, we must now ask whether the classification of these texts as jeremiads is critically useful. Sacvan Bercovitch (1978) offers one possible implication of a text's classification as jeremiad, which lies in its historical roots. As he explains, the traditional American version of the jeremiad as it originated in colonial New England sought explicitly to tie Americans' political identity to their spiritual calling. Bercovitch's effort to understand "the myth of America" leads him to "approach the myth by way of the jeremiad, or the *political sermon*, as the New England Puritans sometimes called this genre, meaning thereby to convey the dual nature of their calling, as practical and as spiritual guides, and to suggest that, in their church-state, theology was wedded to politics and politics to the progress of the kingdom of God" (xiv; emphasis in original). Unlike its Old World counterpart, which took its inspiration from the fire and brimstone of the Old Testament, the American jeremiad borrowed the optimism of the New Testament. Rather than dwelling on damnation, that is, it celebrated salvation. Bercovitch writes, "The essence of the sermon form that the first native-born American Puritans inherited from their fathers, and then 'developed,

amplified, and standardized,' is its unshakable optimism. In explicit opposition to the traditional mode, it inverts the doctrine of vengeance into a promise of ultimate success, affirming to the world, and despite the world, the inviolability of the colonial cause" (7). For Bercovitch, the ubiquity of this rhetorical form in later American discourse demonstrates the centrality of American exceptionalism to our national self-understanding. Ronald Reagan's famous appropriation of John Winthrop's metaphor of America as a "city upon the hill," consecrated by God as a New Canaan to serve as a beacon of Christianity for the rest of the world, is merely one manifestation of how Puritan themes continue to serve as potent rhetorical justifications of American exceptionalism even centuries later, particularly by conservatives, but also by rhetors of all political stripes.

While the omnipresence of these Puritan themes might be of critical interest, one of the problems with the classification of an artifact as a jeremiad is that this supposition does not necessarily tell us anything about how a text works to persuade its audience. Its valence is etymological, rather than functional. That is, it thus turns our critical attention away from how the text functions in the present, and toward its historical roots. It would be wrong-headed to deny that this is of *any* critical interest, but it would also be incorrect to say that it gives a clear and persuasive explanation as to how this discourse *functions*. In fact, it might lead us to accept the dubious conclusion that the jeremiad is persuasive because contemporary American beliefs are strongly steeped in Puritan ideology—a conclusion that is not borne out by the research on American ideology.

While certain remnants of the Puritan belief system can be found in the contemporary United States, few would claim that it is even close to the dominant American ideology. In their study of American belief systems, Robert N. Bellah et al (1985) explain how the biblical and

republican strains of belief have been drowned out by an all-encompassing individualism, in both its utilitarian manifestation, held mainly by conservatives, and in its expressive form, held mainly by liberals. They argue,

Freedom is perhaps the most resonant deeply held American value. In some ways, it defines the good in both personal and political life. Yet freedom turns out to mean being left alone by others, not having other people's values, ideas, or styles of life forced upon one, being free of arbitrary authority in work, family, and political life. What it is that one might do with that freedom is much more difficult for Americans to define. And if the entire social world is made up of individuals, each endowed with the right to be free of others' demands, it becomes hard to forge bonds of attachment to, or cooperation with, other people, since such bonds would imply obligations that necessarily impinge on one's freedom (23).

If American beliefs are in fact rooted in individualism at the expense of these earlier systems, the classification of artifacts as jeremiads can only obscure the fact of the biblical tradition's demise.

Perhaps, one might argue, these traditions are intertwined, and a rhetor's explicit emphasis upon freedom might in fact rely upon appeals that implicitly reflect biblical or republican ideals. For instance, Bernard Bailyn (1967) explains how the discourse of New England puritanism became absorbed into mainstream American political rhetoric, as revolutionary writers found inspiration from a variety of (seemingly incompatible) sources. For Bailyn, the Puritan discourse "contained the broadest idea of all, since it offered a context for everyday events nothing less than cosmic in its dimensions. It carried on into the eighteenth century and into the minds of the Revolutionaries the idea, originally worked out in the sermons and tracts of the settlement period, that the colonization of British America had been an event designed by the hand of God to satisfy his ultimate aims" (32). While this discourse assured colonists of the ultimate godliness of their struggle, it was not in and of itself sufficient to create a coherent ideological basis to justify the conflict. The revolutionaries would turn to a variety of other discourses, including Roman thinkers who described the fall of their republic,

Enlightenment rationalists, English common law writers, and English republican radicalism of the Commonwealth period. Though Bailyn claims that the English republicans were the most influential on American thought, he also argues, “What gripped their minds, what they knew in detail, and what formed their view of the whole of the ancient world was the political history of Rome from the conquests in the east and the civil wars in the early first century B.C. to the establishment of the empire on the ruins of the republic at the end of the second century A.D” (24). The revolutionaries felt a deep connection with the classical authors who described such transitions, finding important parallels to their own experience with the British Empire.

If the ideological cross-pollination Bailyn describes is present in a discourse, this only begs the question of reductionism. Why stress the biblical roots of a discursive form and not, for instance, its republican roots? For instance, one can find an obsession with virtuous republican government falling victim to the evil temptations of empire throughout *The Revolution*. Paul’s condemnation of foreign adventurism and the attendant loss of civil liberties at home animates the text. For him, the great struggle of our time is to adhere to small government principles in the face of great temptation to hand more unconstitutional authority to the federal government in the name of expediency. Paul seems as obsessed with the historical analogue between the Roman Empire and the American Empire as the Founding Fathers were with the historical analogue between the Roman Empire and the British Empire. Though he makes no explicit reference to Rome itself, the dialectical opposition of republic and empire is as central to his text as that of freedom and tyranny; in each case, the former represents a precious gift bestowed as covenant by wise ancestors, while the latter represents the inevitable catastrophic outcome of continuing on our present path.

The influence of this strain of thought upon Paul creates a quandary if we are to classify this text unproblematically as an instance of the American jeremiad. If we can demonstrate multiple rhetorical influences upon the Founders, as well as upon Paul, why then designate the jeremiad as the genre of this discourse, as opposed to something else? This is not to say that the jeremiad is *not* at work here, but rather to say that other influences are jostling for attention and thus compel us to rethink the simple reduction of the text to a single influence. Moreover, if as Brockriede counsels, our concern is with *explanation* and not merely *classification*, what good does the classification of this text as “jeremiad” actually do us? If this classification were to have true explanatory power, it should be able to tell us something about how the text functions, i.e. what makes it persuasive.

Indeed, other factors related to the situations and purposes of these texts tell us a great deal about they function—including why the authors may have chosen the jeremiad as the form for their respective texts. The first is that both are conservatives who believe substantively that the past should serve as a guide to us in the present. Conservatism does not, however, merely seek continuity with the past. It might, in fact, seek revolutionary rupture with the present in order to return to the ideals of the past. In this respect, it differs from mere traditionalism, or a kind of nostalgic reverence of past society. Corey Robin (2011) explains the difference between simple traditionalism and dogmatic conservatism. He writes, “Where the traditionalist can take the objects of desire for granted—he can enjoy them as if they are at hand because they are at hand—the conservative cannot. He seeks to enjoy them precisely as they are being—or have been—taken away.... But as soon as those objects enter the medium of political speech, they cease to be items of lived experience and become incidents of an ideology. They get wrapped in a narrative of loss—in which the revolutionary or reformist plays a necessary part—and

presented in a program of recovery” (23). If this “narrative of loss” with its attendant “program of recovery” is part and parcel of the conservative worldview, it may be that the classification of these discourses as “jeremiadic” (with the implication that they are simply borrowing a rhetorical form from the early Puritans) obscures precisely what is at stake: that for the conservative, every situation is always jeremiadic. The use of this classification therefore tells us everything and nothing all at once; there is no way to distinguish among conservative texts and how they function if they simply can all be lumped into this one genre.

A second situational characteristic that should be considered is that both authors present their arguments as challengers in a presidential election. As many scholars (Stuckey 1989; Campbell and Jamieson 1990; Hart 2000; Beasley 2004; Hart et al 2005) have noted, presidential rhetoric commonly focuses upon the articulation of visions of national community. Vanessa B. Beasley, for instance, describes how “inaugural addresses are important ritualistic moments in which U.S. presidents reassure the American people that they are a people after all” (10). While inaugurations present the opportunity for presidents to offer unifying messages, campaigns showcase the respective candidates’ conflicting versions of the national purpose. Candidates running as challengers must provide visions of community differing from that of the incumbent (or if there is no incumbent, as was the case in both 1960 and 2008, the candidate perceived as the heir apparent—in these cases, Richard Nixon and John McCain.) Given that American ideology precludes the possibility of presenting a vision of national identity outside the tight confines of what can be established as sufficiently “American,” the only resource for alternative visions is the past. Thus, simply by virtue of being challengers for presidency, these candidates have few options but to glorify past articulations of national identity and argue that the nation has lost its way under the current regime. Just as a candidate’s conservatism might necessarily lead

him or her into employing jeremiadic rhetoric, then, so might his or her role as a challenger in a presidential campaign. This is doubly true for those who see their candidacies as being in the service of a broader movement. Given that both of these conditions are met in each of these texts, each rhetor's choice of a jeremiadic form should not surprise us. But again, the recognition of this jeremiadic form should be a starting point, not a conclusion, for a critical analysis that seeks explanation of how the texts function.

The next two sections delve deeper into the particularities of each author's respective situation in order to lay the groundwork for a classificatory schema that aims to describe the function of each.

2.5 GOLDWATER'S RHETORICAL SITUATION

In 1959, a small group of conservative activists led by Clarence Manion decided to throw a Hail Mary in an effort to take the following year's Republican presidential nomination away from the presumed candidate, Vice President Richard M. Nixon. At the time, ideological conservatives made up but a small portion of the Republican Party, which was a cross-ideological coalition, dominated by moderates but including conservatives and liberals, from the Northeast, Midwest, and West. The Southern conservatives who now dominate the Republican Party were not yet part of this coalition; their steadfast resistance to the Party of Lincoln largely kept them in the Democratic fold, and even when they perceived the Democratic Party moving to the left on civil rights, their response was to form a third party, as Strom Thurmond had done with the short-lived States' Rights Party (or "Dixiecrats") in 1948. Conservative activists sought an ideological realignment of the parties, one that would unite all conservatives under the Republican banner.

As Geoffrey Kabaservice (2012) explains, such activists “were the only Republican tribe that had a sense of themselves as an ideologically coherent group joined in a movement, and their sense of heroic embattlement was enhanced by their opponents’ tendency to view them as not merely wrong but insane. The conservatives were also the sole faction calling for an ideological realignment of the American political system. They argued that converting the GOP into a party of pure conservatism would bring in some previously unrepresented groups such as white Southerners and working-class white ethnics, including many Catholics” (25). By becoming the driving force within the Republican Party, these activists hoped to bring an end to what they called the “me-too-ism” of their party, which they saw as being too eager to embrace the New Deal policies of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the liberal base of the Democratic Party.

The conservative shift in strategy can be seen most clearly when contrasting the positions of post-Goldwater conservative leaders with those immediately preceding him. The leader of the conservative wing of the Republican Party from the 1930s until his death in 1953, for instance, was much more amenable to New Deal policies than later movement conservatives. Known as “Mr. Conservative,” Ohio Senator Robert Taft often used stridently anti-liberal rhetoric, but in practice his political philosophy was more moderate: his focus was on developing more conservative alternatives to the New Deal welfare state rather than dismantling it entirely. As Kabaservice explains, “Taft was not the uncompromising scourge of liberalism that many imagined. Taft was no laissez-faire conservative and opposed bigness in business as well as in government and labor. He recognized that parts of the New Deal were legitimate responses to real needs, and he tried to offer social welfare alternatives more in keeping with Republican ideals of small government, sound finance, and local responsibility” (6).

Mary C. Brennan (1995) describes Taft's flexibility on social spending, especially education and housing. Taft also presented a foreign policy vision based on very little foreign interventionism. Goldwater's approach, in contrast, was based on an absolutist approach to slashing government spending and winning the Cold War. She writes, "To Goldwater, on the other hand, the most important underlying issue was the growth of the government. Convinced that the escalating federal bureaucracy threatened basic freedoms, Goldwater would not support federal aid to education or housing programs. In addition, his devotion to states' rights reinforced his determination to eliminate federal interference whenever possible" (32). As a result, he became a darling of the budding conservative movement, which saw him as a stark contrast to the New Deal liberalism that had reigned in Washington for nearly thirty years, under both Democratic and Republican administrations. By the late 1950s, these movement conservatives had embraced more revolutionary efforts to dismantle the New Deal rather than offer a more small-government alternative to it. Kabaservice writes, "Conservatives considered the New Deal to be wholly alien to the American tradition and aimed to eradicate it. They objected as well to the progressive movement's earlier attempts to meliorate the rawest outcomes of industrial society. They believed (or affected to believe) that liberalism led inexorably to socialism and Communism, and that the smallest government effort to provide for the general welfare constituted the first step on 'The Road to Serfdom,' in the titular argument of Friedrich Hayek's 1944 bestseller" (25). Such conservatives believed that the path forward would require putting forth an absolutist conservative as a Republican presidential candidate, in order to deny the nomination to a moderate in the cast of Eisenhower or Nixon. Their plan was to draft Goldwater to run for the position, and hope to orchestrate something of a *coup d'état* at the party's

convention by winning enough delegate seats to nominate Goldwater, or failing that, demonstrate enough power to force Nixon to choose Goldwater as his running mate.

Goldwater represented the perfect candidate to these activists precisely because he did not have ambitions for higher office. He saw the Senate as a perch from which he could express staunchly conservative views without fear of electoral retribution. Robert Alan Goldberg (1995) writes, “For Goldwater, the Senate became a means to a larger end. Not yet yearning for higher office, Goldwater found his calling peddling conservative ideas; he was a preacher who could rouse men and women to action and service to their principles and country. The Senate conferred stature and gave him a national pulpit from which to carry on the crusade” (100). His self-definition as a movement conservative made him particularly appealing to these activists, who were looking to prove that a candidate with unabashedly conservative views might be competitive in a national election precisely because of the stark contrast drawn with moderates and liberals.

They were not, however, under any illusion that Goldwater could win a general election in the short term. David Farber (2010) explains that, sensing the immensity of overturning a century’s worth of Southern animosity toward the GOP, their plan was as follows:

Because Manion believed that white southerners would not vote for a Republican, he wanted the conservative cause to promote two candidates: a third-party candidate in the South, akin to the 1948 States Rights Party candidacy of South Carolina’s then governor, Strom Thurmond, and a regular Republican candidate, Goldwater, who could capture votes in the Midwest and, it was hoped, assorted other northern states. If all went as planned, the two conservative candidates would overwhelm the one nonconservative Democratic candidate. This three-way race would prevent any one candidate from achieving a majority in the Electoral College tally, which would move the presidential election into the House of Representatives where, in a grand compromise, Goldwater would win. It was a complicated scenario but not impossibly so (88).

Central to the 1960 plans was a text that would serve as a rallying cry for conservative activists. Rick Perlstein (2001) writes, “[B]y July, Manion had a hook. ‘We hope to publish a 100 page booklet on Americanism by Senator Goldwater,’ he now wrote in his entreaties, ‘which can be purchased by corporations and distributed by the hundreds of thousands’” (51). *National Review* contributor L. Brent Bozell was tapped to ghost author the book, which finally appeared in spring of 1960. The extent of Goldwater’s involvement in the writing of this book remains contested. For instance, Perlstein and Farber treat Bozell as virtually the sole author of the book. Farber writes, “Bozell knocked out *The Conscience of a Conservative* in a few weeks time. The prose, and the thinking behind the prose, sounded a good deal more like the erudite, Yale-educated, Catholic intellectual Bozell than it did ‘antsy-pants’ Barry Goldwater. Senator Goldwater did not care. He glanced at the manuscript, had his regular speechwriter check the manuscript pages more carefully, and told Manion to go ahead with it” (89). Edwin J. Feulner (2004) takes an opposing stance, portraying Goldwater as intimately involved in the book’s writing: Bozell “was in frequent telephone contact with Goldwater and every week or so would visit his Capitol Hill office with the draft of a chapter. Goldwater would scribble his comments in the margins or dictate corrections to his secretary that would be passed along to Bozell” (6-7).

Even Goldwater himself gave slightly varying accounts of the book’s creation at different times. In his 1979 memoirs, he writes that he “put it together with the help of L. Brent Bozell and others” (100), while in his 1988 memoirs, he gives Bozell more credit: “The book was adapted by Brent Bozell...based on speeches I’d given and his own research” (120). Perhaps the best evidence of Goldwater’s level of involvement can be found in his August 12, 1959 letter to Bozell, in which he outlines the eventual structure of the text. Goldwater writes, “Throughout this portion of the discussion we would treat generously the thought that the one hope and desire

of all the people of this country is freedom. We could point up in the summation of this portion of the book the thought that all people today want this, and wanting it they should, therefore, think primarily of the powers that might threaten that freedom before they think of the material things they can gain from it” (2008: 108). Based on this evidence, it seems fair to credit Goldwater with substantial input on both the content and the structure of the text, even if Bozell was largely responsible for the exact articulation of the views expressed here.

Despite its massive success, the book was never intended to appeal to the broader electorate; it was essentially a movement text designed for and by conservative activists who had grown tired of the moderate leadership of the Republican Party and wanted to steer it in a distinctly rightward direction. It aimed to portray the Party’s current leadership as having largely betrayed conservative values in favor of the New Deal policies originally instituted by Franklin Roosevelt. Throughout the book, Goldwater takes rhetorical shots at the Eisenhower Administration for not simply continuing, but accelerating the growth of government that began under Democratic Presidents Roosevelt and Truman. For instance, he writes, “During the last five years of the Truman Administration the average annual federal expenditure for domestic purposes was \$17.7 billion; during the last five years of the Eisenhower Administration it was \$33.6 billion, an increase of 89%” (59). However, it was not enough to define Eisenhower and Nixon as enemies of the conservative cause; Goldwater had the additional and more fundamental challenge of uniting a diverse and cacophonous cadre of conservative intellectuals under a single umbrella. As Feulner writes, “It was a fusion of the three major strains of conservatism in 1960—traditional conservatism, classical liberalism or libertarianism, and anti-communism. It was a book by a conservative for conservatives at a time when conservatives were beginning to realize the potential of their political power” (7).

A primary aim of the book, then, was to articulate a vision of conservatism acceptable to the various, conflicting wings of the movement. While the conservative movement had been germinating for some time at publications such as *Human Events* and *National Review*, its adherents were not ideologically unified. Some were strongly influenced by classical liberalism, which championed individual freedom against the state. Others were traditionalists concerned about cultural decline, who were more likely to support a strong state capable of encouraging a virtuous citizenry. Still others were motivated primarily by their opposition to communism, and viewed the government's policy of containment as insufficient to the cause of defeating a powerful, declared enemy of capitalism. To unite these three elements, while maintaining enough distance from their most strident advocates to allow for a plausible general election candidacy, was no easy task.

Thus Goldwater's exigency was one of a young, insurgent movement marked by fracture and discord. The conservative movement of the 1950s from which the Goldwater juggernaut emerged did not espouse anything resembling a coherent ideology. In fact, the three distinct, often conflicting wings of the movement formed a loose, highly fractured coalition. Nash writes, "That the need for self-definition was urgent seemed increasingly obvious to perceptive conservatives in the mid-1950s.... A fervent but embattled minority—not even one movement, really, but three—was striving to gain intellectual coherence. What emerged in 1955 around *National Review* was not a single 'voice of conservatism' but a coalition of often competing intellectuals" (154). The friction was greatest between the traditionalist and libertarian camps, as each had a distinct intellectual heritage: while the libertarians borrowed from the revolutionary spirit of classical liberalism, the forebears of the traditionalists were the primary opponents of

Enlightenment liberalism. A philosophy stressing individual freedom and innovation and one counseling adherence to the wisdom of the ages were bound to have friction with one another.

Though their intellectual histories were sharply opposed, anticommunism provided a bridge between these two camps, as the atheistic and anti-capitalist ideology was anathema to each. Kabaservice writes, “Anti-Communism provided a unifying cause for traditionalist conservatives and libertarians, who otherwise would have argued more over their many points of disagreement” (26). Even here, though, the outlandish claims of prominent anticommunists such as John Birch society founder Robert Welch, who had claimed in print that President Eisenhower was a Communist, would prove to be a problem for Goldwater. On the one hand, he would need the support of rank-and-file Birchers. On the other, he would need to distance himself from the toxic views of Welch. Goldwater’s rhetorical strategy reflects this difficult position, of which he was clearly aware. As he states in his 1979 memoirs, “No man should be judged by a single act. Robert Welch has done much to alert people to the dangers of communism. Most of the John Birchers are patriotic, concerned, law-abiding, hardworking, and productive. There are a few whom I call Robert Welchers, and these are the fanatics who regard everyone who doesn’t totally agree with them as communist sympathizers” (119). In order to navigate this tension, Goldwater would need to assert his anticommunist credentials without implying an acceptance of the more controversial views of Welch.

Moreover, as Nash notes, the conservative movement at the time was struggling to articulate an American heritage. Many of its most vocal advocates were European immigrants who saw in conservatism a powerful rebuke to the totalitarianism that had ravaged Europe for much of the twentieth century. The movement desperately needed to establish itself as homegrown, especially in light of the predominant view that liberalism was the one and only

truly American creed. Nash explains, “It is not entirely surprising, therefore, that many left-of-center observers soon insisted, and insisted repeatedly, that the postwar Right was ‘un-American,’ peculiarly foreign to the American experience” (187). Russell Kirk’s classic text *The Conservative Mind* (1953) was one highly influential effort to establish an American conservative heritage, but it too relied mainly upon establishing philosophical connections between American conservatives and their European counterparts, rather than defining American institutions as fundamentally conservative. For Goldwater to succeed electorally while embracing “conservatism,” he would have to make a strong case that this worldview was fundamentally ingrained in American institutions.

In addition to the problems of forging ideological coherence and articulating an American conservative heritage, Goldwater faced a third challenge: proving that a conservative political coalition could win in American electoral politics. This would entail the herculean task of convincing conservative Southern Democrats who had despised the Republican Party since the century-old days of the Civil War to switch their partisan allegiance. Such a move would require no small amount of rhetorical dexterity in navigating between appeals to the interests of Southern conservatives while simultaneously not offending the sensibilities of more liberal Republicans elsewhere.

2.6 PAUL’S RHETORICAL SITUATION

Surfacing forty-eight years after *The Conscience of a Conservative*, Ron Paul’s campaign text, *The Revolution: A Manifesto* was an effort to rebuild the conservative movement that had taken shape in Goldwater’s time, grown to maturity during the administration of Ronald Reagan, and

crumbled under the stress of its perceived obsolescence after the administration of George W. Bush. In order to set up the defining characteristics of Paul's exigency, it is first necessary to give a brief account of the conservative movement's rise and fall during the intervening half-century. This story begins with the immediate aftermath of Goldwater's brief 1960 primary campaign.

Judged as a rhetorical intervention addressing a discrete situation with clear, immediate instrumental goals, Goldwater's book was a failure. The 1960 nomination would of course go to Nixon, and Goldwater wasn't even his closest challenger (an honor that would instead go to Nelson Rockefeller.) Goldwater's failure was seen at the time as confirmation of the conventional wisdom that the conservatives' efforts were laughably quixotic. Kabaservice writes, "A scenario in which the conservative faction would take over the entire party and force all Republicans to dance to their tune would have strained credibility in 1960. Nixon, nervously weighing the balance of forces in the GOP, felt no need to strike a deal with the conservatives in pursuit of his nomination at the convention. The faction that he worried most about was the progressives, and particularly Nelson Rockefeller" (26). But Nixon's defeat in the general election would only boost Goldwater's argument that Republican candidates should offer a clear contrast with their Democratic opponents.

Moreover, Nixon's inroads in the South vindicated the movement's efforts at a geographical realignment. While conservatives blamed Nixon's defeat on his moderate politics, they took credit for his gains in the South, where Goldwater had campaigned heavily on his behalf. Goldberg explains, "In spite of their party's defeat, Goldwater Republicans found solace in the returns from the South. Operation Dixie, combined with white southerners' dissatisfaction with liberal Democrats over racial issues, had enabled the Republicans to maintain and even

expand their inroads below the Mason-Dixon line. ... Just a glance at the 1960 electoral map was enough to convince conservative strategists that a western-midwestern-southern coalition was being born and that the White House was in reach” (147). In this way, conservative activists were able simultaneously to blame moderation for the Republican loss and to credit conservatism for the substance of Nixon’s Southern success.

In the intervening four years, Goldwater’s backers built an organization that would catapult him from extreme underdog to GOP standard-bearer in only one election cycle. Such a movement was unprecedented. Even Robert Taft, Goldwater’s predecessor as conservative Republican presidential hopeful, who had nearly won the 1952 nomination, had never achieved this level of success. Farber writes,

Between 1960 and 1964, following Nixon’s defeat by John Kennedy, conservatives organized in an unprecedented way to make the Republican Party their party and to gain the presidential nomination for their man, Barry Goldwater. Senator Taft and his supporters had never been able to generate a national, grassroots base of support, let alone an activist movement to support his bid for the Republican nomination. They had not even tried. Goldwater’s supporters meant to challenge conventional political wisdom, which placed the power to nominate in the hands of a few party kingmakers operating in “smoke-filled backrooms” (93).

Moreover, it was Goldwater’s strident tone that was particularly instrumental in gaining the strong support of one of the most powerful movement organizations. John A. Andrew III (1997) explains, “Young Americans for Freedom was attracted to Barry Goldwater in 1964 because his politics were conservative and unflinching. He offered, as his campaign theme later reminded voters, ‘a choice, not an echo.’ The choices he offered were significant because they gave voice to views outside the political consensus” (191). Such rhetoric provided a stark alternative not merely to that of President Johnson, but also to that of his primary opponents. Nicol C. Rae

(1989) describes how Goldwater was alone among the Republican candidates in presenting a sharp ideological distinction with the Democrats:

The liberal Republican standard-bearers of 1964—Rockefeller, Romney, Lodge, and Scranton—all eschewed ideological appeals and oriented their campaigns around personality and their reputations as pragmatic, problem-solving reformers who approached problems with an open mind and in an ad hoc manner. Their failure to articulate any coherent set of beliefs for which the GOP was supposed to stand cost the liberals dearly. Goldwater and the conservatives were allowed to win the intellectual argument by default because their principles were not effectively challenged by their moderate opponents who attacked the Arizona senator for his extremism and unelectability, but never attempted to formulate an intellectual alternative to the “true Republicanism” that Goldwater claimed to preach (61).

Though Rae goes on to say that Rockefeller’s personal foibles may have been more to blame for his defeat than his lack of rhetorical stridency, the arguments Goldwater presented would go on to influence and inspire the next generation of conservative candidates. Moreover, regardless of the success of his 1964 rhetoric, one can still credit his 1960 rhetoric with helping to bring about his later nomination. One’s take on the success of *Conscience* can thus be determined by how one defines its purpose. Understood as a short-term effort to win the 1960 nomination, it was a clear failure. Understood as a long-term effort to unify and energize a political movement in its infancy, it was a spectacular success.

Goldwater himself recognized the building of this movement as an important outgrowth of his 1960 campaign. He explains in his 1988 memoirs that such a movement was necessary in order for conservatives to become the dominant force in the party: “Conservatism was an intellectual movement with few organizational roots. After Richard Nixon lost the 1960 presidential race to John F. Kennedy, it seemed to many of us that we were ready to become not just an intellectual but a political movement. We were still several years away from creating a structure that could organize a movement and take over the party. This new movement would be

composed not of members of the board and Eastern old boy networks, but average Americans with strong beliefs in conservative principles, people with a cause, a creed: crusaders” (121). The 1960 campaign thus marked the beginning of the transformation of the conservative movement from a primarily intellectual one to a primarily political one. Goldwater’s showing, first as candidate and later as Nixon surrogate, laid the groundwork for this effort.

Even if we are to look beyond the immediate consequences of the publication of *Conscience*, one might still deem the book a failure within the longer horizon of the 1964 presidential campaign. After all, Goldwater’s candidacy resulted in one of the most famous landslide defeats of the twentieth century. He would lose the popular vote by nearly 23 percentage points, capturing only 6 states and 52 out of 538 electoral votes. But the location of the states that he did win—Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and South Carolina, in addition to his home state of Arizona—would prove to be more important than their size or number. The seismic shift represented by the conversion of the Deep South to the Party of Lincoln would lead to a realignment of the major parties along ideological lines, with southern conservatives switching to the Republican Party and northern liberals (somewhat later) switching to the Democratic Party.

The immediate consequence of Goldwater’s general election defeat was to weaken the conservative wing of the party. Paul Gottfried (1993) explains that Goldwater’s rhetorical style did not immediately catch hold. In fact, for the next several election cycles, candidates would intentionally avoid Goldwater’s harsh denunciations of the “welfare state.” He writes, “After 1964 no ‘conservative’ politician would speak as explicitly as Goldwater had about rescinding the New Deal. Republicans would denounce further deficit spending, extol individual self-reliance, and call for trimming budgets. ‘Conservative’ politicians would repeatedly seek votes

by deploring the growth of bureaucracy. Yet, the obvious lesson of 1964 would not be forgotten. The majority of the American electorate voted for the welfare state and against its unabashed critic” (39-40). It would not be until Reagan’s near-defeat of President Ford for the 1976 nomination that another Republican candidate would follow in Goldwater’s footsteps by running on an anti-government platform.

However, in the near term, one effect of Goldwater’s candidacy was to move the balance of power within the GOP away from the moderate eastern establishment. Rae explains, “The events of 1964 further demonstrated the emergence of a new genus of Republican conservatism based on the rapidly expanding southern and western regions of the United States. The Taftite regulars of the Midwest, who traditionally acted as guardians of Republican orthodoxy, formed an alliance with the more populist conservatives of the Sunbelt, leaving the liberals of the Eastern Seaboard an isolated minority, with limited influence over the future course of the Republican party” (46). This realignment, which elevated conservatives to positions of power within the party, would reshape American politics for decades. Its roots can be traced, in part, to Goldwater’s appeals to states’ rights and limited government in *Conscience of a Conservative*, which helped make possible the migration of southern conservatives from the Democratic Party to the GOP.

The so-called Southern Strategy entered a new phase in the 1968 campaign, which featured three, rather than two, major candidates. In addition to Democratic Vice President Hubert Humphrey and former Republican Vice President Richard Nixon, former Democratic Alabama Governor George Wallace ran as candidate for the American Independent Party. Wallace’s candidacy represented one of the strongest showings for a third-party candidate in American history. Four of the five states he won—Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and

Georgia—were those that Goldwater had carried four years earlier. According to Kevin P. Phillips (1969), Wallace’s strong showing indicated the staying power of Goldwater’s appeal in the South. He explains, “Wallace split the conservative electorate, siphoned off a flow of ballots that otherwise would have gone heavily for Nixon, and garnered many of his backers—Northern or Southern, blue-collar or white-collar—from the ranks of 1964 GOP presidential nominee Barry Goldwater” (34). Moreover, the fact that Nixon was easily able to defeat Humphrey despite losing these states to Wallace proved the strength of the Republican position. Phillips continues,

Four of the five Wallace states had gone Republican in 1964, and although the Alabaman greatly enlarged the scope of Southern revolt by attracting most of the (poor white or Outer South Black Belt) Southerners who had hitherto resisted Republican or States Rights candidacies, much of his tide had already been flowing for Goldwater. Nor does the Nixon Administration have to bid much ideologically for this electorate. Despite his success in enlarging the scope of white Southern revolt, George Wallace failed to reach far enough or strongly enough beyond the Deep South to give his American Independent Party the national base required for a viable future (462).

History would prove Phillips’ reading of the situation correct. Wallace’s inroads in the South would do more to elevate the Republican position there than to build a third-party presence. In subsequent election cycles, the formerly Democratic South would become a reliably Republican voting bloc. This bloc would create a major structural advantage for the Republicans in the Electoral College, allowing them to take on a far more ideological conservatism than otherwise would be possible. Meanwhile, the only Democrats who would win the presidency until 2008 would be the southern governors Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, both of whom benefited from unusual situational factors (Watergate for Carter, a recession and the third-party candidacy of Ross Perot for Clinton) in their campaigns.

Though Nixon utilized the Southern Strategy, and benefited from it electorally (especially in 1972, when he won 49 states), he would not govern as a particularly conservative president. He was eminently willing to use the government to achieve a number of desired policy outcomes, many of which might be considered to the left even of Democratic politicians today. It would not be until the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 that a true movement conservative would win the presidency. Mary E. Stuckey (1989) explains how Reagan leveraged his position in the conservative movement, including his close association with Goldwater, to help win the White House. She writes, “Reagan was in an ideal position to head the conservative wing of the Republican Party. As the ‘only major figure in the Goldwater movement to survive with any popular appeal at all,’ he was identified closely enough with Barry Goldwater to excite conservative interest, yet urbane and poised enough to avoid most of Goldwater’s image problems. Above all, Reagan presented the image of a winner” (33). In his refinement of Goldwater’s rhetorical strategy, he represents the pinnacle of the conservative movement’s power and popularity.

Like Goldwater, Reagan relied upon the fusion of libertarian, traditionalist, and anticommunist elements of the conservative movement to maintain a viable coalition. And like Goldwater, this fusion occurred under the sign of libertarianism: he asserted freedom as the dominant value that tied these three strands together. Robert N. Bellah et al (1985) explain, “Reagan has eloquently defined his mission as one of building ‘a new consensus with all those across the land who share a community of values embedded in these words: family, work, neighborhood, peace and freedom.’ In Reagan’s rhetoric, however, such words, charged with moral resonance, are evocations of private, rather than public, virtues. Work is an economic activity pursued by self-reliant individuals in the interests of themselves and their families”

(263). His evocation of distinctly private virtues betrayed his central concern with individualism, rather than communitarian values. As Chapter Three will demonstrate, this move away from a conception of virtue as public can be found in *Conscience of a Conservative*.

Earlier, I critiqued Olson's (1993) classification of Goldwater's campaign rhetoric as an instance of a jeremiad. Olson's work presents an additional challenge for contemporary critics of Goldwater's text, by reminding us to be on guard against accepting the conservative movement's hagiography of Goldwater at face value. Her own verdict of Goldwater's success in promoting conservatism is mixed but indeterminate: while she credits Goldwater for paving the path of the movement's later success under the leadership of Ronald Reagan, she suggests that this position may be based as much in the mythology of the movement as in reality: "Lest we commit the *post hoc* fallacy of assuming that Reagan in particular succeeded because of Goldwater's earlier conservative rhetoric, it is important also to consider the possibility that Reagan's success redeemed or rehabilitated Goldwater's political rhetoric for the 1980s by putting it in a new light. Viewing Goldwater retrospectively through the lens of Reagan's success, many vindicate him as the prophet who clearly perceived the deeper meaning and currents of events that most of his immediate audience could not see" (312). Olson's reminder not to take revisionist accounts of Goldwater's success too literally is instructive here. Yet, even if we grant that Reagan's rhetoric was successful for reasons other than imitation of Goldwater (and it certainly was to some extent) this is no indictment of Goldwater's success. The success of a rhetorical text can be, and usually is, measured in terms other than the extent to which it is imitated by later rhetors. In this case, if Goldwater's rhetoric was instrumental in establishing a powerful political movement that would lay the foundation for Reagan's later success, we can evaluate it positively even though Reagan's rhetoric differed in some ways. (This dynamic can be seen even more clearly by

contrasting Goldwater with Nixon.) Additionally, to the extent that Reagan and other later conservatives draw inspiration from Goldwater's campaign, his campaign can be considered a success even if the post-Goldwater narrative is steeped in hagiography. That is, the existence of the narrative itself can be considered evidence enough of Goldwater's success. Just as Goldwater's invocation of the Founding Fathers was rhetorically powerful despite relying upon myths about their actual beliefs, Reagan's invocation of Goldwater need not be objective to do rhetorical heavy lifting.

After Reagan, the conservative movement entered a new phase marked by the end of the Cold War and the consequent end of anticommunism as a rallying principle for the conservative cause. In the 1990s, there seemed to be no particular foreign policy leaning that characterized either party. The exigency that would give rise to new foreign policy commitments would arrive a decade later, on the morning of September 11, 2001. A group of hawkish foreign policy advisors (sometimes referred to collectively as "neoconservatives") within the Bush administration, academia, and media, advocated and achieved a major shift in American foreign policy: the U.S. military would now engage in an aggressive and preemptive confrontation with transnational terrorists. The most obvious result of their rise was the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, but they would influence Bush administration policy in a myriad of other ways, including the institution of torture, extraordinary rendition, and broad surveillance regimes. They were the ideological descendants of the anticommunists, committed to using the full strength of U.S. power to defeat what they saw as a global threat to the American way of life. They did not, however, represent a grassroots movement in the same sense that libertarianism did; their rise was more an unintended consequence of the conservative movement, made possible by the black swan event of September 11th, than an expression of conservative

sentiment. Though they did succeed in generating a large amount of popular support for the Iraq War, the popularity of worldview was fleeting. By the time of the 2008 presidential election, many movement conservatives had become outspoken critics of the policies they supported.

This brief history finally brings us to the particular exigency Paul faced. By the time *The Revolution* appeared on April 30, 2008, Senator John McCain, closely associated with his support for the Iraq War and other hawkish foreign policy commitments, had long since clinched the Republican nomination for president, and all of his competitors but one had already withdrawn from the race. Representative Ron Paul, despite failing to finish first in a single primary or caucus, and with no route to the nomination, would soldier on for another six weeks before “suspending” his campaign but refusing to endorse McCain. He would eventually endorse Constitution Party candidate Chuck Baldwin that September. The timing of the book’s release at the end of the campaign rather than the beginning, like the quixotic persistence of Paul’s campaign itself, indicates his lack of interest in partisanship. Unlike Goldwater, who had dutifully endorsed Nixon and served as a foot soldier in his 1960 campaign when it became clear that he would not win the nomination, Paul chose to thwart the GOP establishment’s attempts to hold onto the White House. In an era in which the parties were broadly assumed to have organized themselves along ideological lines, Paul’s refusal to support either major party candidate indicates a deeper and more fundamental ideological commitment. His lack of partisanship should not be confused with the “bipartisan” overtures of both McCain and Obama, but instead entails a profound anti-partisanship preoccupied with ideology and thus opposed to both partisanship and bipartisanship with equal ferocity.

That this book was written in the service of a campaign with virtually no shot at the nomination demonstrates Paul's interest in agenda setting, rather than in winning office. This is a purpose that Paul freely admits. As he writes in the preface,

If we want to live in a free society, we need to break free from these artificial limitations on free debate and start asking serious questions once again. I am happy that my campaign for the presidency has finally raised some of them. But this is a long-term project that will persist far into the future. These ideas cannot be allowed to die, buried beneath the mind-numbing chorus of empty slogans and inanities that constitute official public discourse in America. That is why I wrote this book. (xi)

Such an agenda is based upon grand ideas and core principles rather than cobbled-together policy positions: "In this book I have tried to make as few references to specific pieces of legislation as possible, because my preference is to focus on ideas rather than minutiae, and I have never had much interest in assembling a policy manual" (123). While at times he does delve slightly below the surface of particular issues, this is only in the service of illustrating a few concrete ways in which he believes the market creates better outcomes than government intervention, rather than attempting to prove on a case-by-case basis that this principle is necessarily true in every policy area (a task that would, of course, require many books to attempt to prove).

His goal is to refashion the conservative movement around the pre-Cold War principles of Robert Taft. Citing at length a biography of Taft by James McClellan and Russell Kirk, Paul argues that Taft's rejection of imperial policies represents the true path of conservatism. He frames this discussion around the views of three prominent traditionalists of the pre-Goldwater era: Kirk, Richard Weaver, and Robert Nisbet (all of whom factor into Chapter Three of this study.) For Paul, the most important contribution of these thinkers was not their insistence upon virtue as the precondition for a free society, but their belief in the "the immorality of total war" (33). Paul's appeals to these past conservatives serve three purposes. The first is to assert his

traditionalist credentials, despite presenting a predominantly libertarian worldview. The second is to reconstitute the conservative movement around lost principles—principles that were lost to a large degree due to the aggressive foreign policy prescriptions of conservatives like Goldwater, though Paul never mentions him by name. The third is to take advantage of the anti-war alliance among conservatives and liberals who had either opposed the Iraq War from the start or grown weary of its consequences. By reference to the anti-imperial leanings of pre-Cold War conservatives like Taft, and the interventionist policies of liberals like Wilson and Johnson, Paul aims to excommunicate the neoconservatives from the conservative coalition, elevate the dovish conservatives to power, and invite anti-war liberals to the cause.

2.7 PERVERSITY, FUTILITY, JEOPARDY

Now that I've explained the exigencies of Goldwater and Paul as I see them, this section will return to the issue of how to categorize these texts in ways that allow the critic to recognize both the similarities *and* the differences in their situational demands. Albert O. Hirschman's (1991) work on the "rhetoric of reaction" is one particularly useful tool for doing so. Though Hirschman's work has not been cited often by scholars of rhetoric, James Arnt Aune (2001) is one theorist who has utilized it in illuminating ways in his study on the free-market prescriptions of libertarian rhetoric. Though Aune is more closely concerned with the policy objectives of libertarians, rather than their construction of a movement, he demonstrates how Hirschman's three theses—those of perversity, futility, and jeopardy—can be used to show how different libertarian texts can be said to function in different ways.

The first of Hirschman's three theses, that of "perversity," claims that all attempts to promote social change will cause more harm than good regarding the very values the change agent is seeking to promote. Central to the perversity thesis is the concept of "unintended consequences," which was deployed originally by Adam Smith and other proponents of free markets to illustrate how capitalists, in competition with one another, could create positive social outcomes despite being primarily concerned with their own self-interest. Over time, the concept evolved into an argument *against* state intervention in the economy. Whereas the unintended consequences of free market actors were portrayed as invariably good (by causing goods to be produced more efficiently and more responsive to demand via the discipline imposed by market competition), those of any state actor were portrayed as *perverse* (by worsening the very problems they were attempting to address.) One of the reasons advocates find this argument appealing is that there are always potential unintended consequences for any given action one might take. As Hirschman writes, "the undoubted possibility of a perverse outcome makes for an excellent debating point which is bound to be brought up in any polemic" (28). The only challenge, then, is to discover potentially bad consequences, and to portray these as the necessary result of the action.

While the perversity thesis claims that progressive state actions will have the opposite effect as the one intended, the futility thesis claims that those actions will have no effect at all. Arguments from futility are based on the notion that "reformers were ignoring some 'law' or 'scientific fact' that would make basic social arrangements impervious to the proposed political change" (51). By asserting the impossibility of any change whatsoever, the futility thesis denies the possibility of human agency. Hirschman explains, "The claims of the futility thesis seem more moderate than those of the perverse effect, but they are in reality *more insulting* to the

‘change agents.’ As long as the social world moves at all in response to human action for change, even if in the wrong direction, hope remains that it can somehow be steered correctly. But the demonstration or discovery that such action is incapable of ‘making a dent’ at all leaves the promoters of change humiliated, demoralized, in doubt about the meaning and true motive of their endeavors” (45). It is therefore used most often by rhetors who wish to impugn the motives of their adversaries. While the perversity thesis depicts adversaries as foolish and naïve, the futility thesis portrays them as cunning and evil. As a result, the perversity and futility theses are logically incompatible. Hirschman explains, “In [the futility thesis]’ scenario, human actions or intentions are frustrated, not because they unleash a series of side effects, but because they pretend to change the unchangeable, because they ignore the basic structures of society. The two theses are therefore based on almost opposite views of the social universe and of purposive human and social action” (72). That doesn’t mean, of course, that there won’t be attempts to combine them; those relying mainly on the futility thesis might, for instance, occasionally go one step further in their claims and mention possible negative results of reform. It does, however, mean for Hirschman that one is undercutting one’s own argument by doing so.

Hirschman’s third type of reactionary argument, the jeopardy thesis, claims that efforts to promote social change will endanger other important social values. According to Hirschman, it “asserts that the proposed change, though perhaps desirable in itself, involves unacceptable costs or consequences of one sort or another” (81). The endangered values are generally portrayed as particularly hard-won, precious, and fragile, while the new advance is portrayed as unnecessary, dangerous, or misguided. Such arguments are common among those (like Goldwater and Paul) who oppose the growth of the “welfare state.” Hirschman explains, “The Welfare State, it will be contended by some, is likely to endanger earlier advances with regard to individual rights

(Marshall's first dimension of citizenship). There will also be attempts to show how the Welfare State is a threat to democratic governance (Marshall's second dimension). Most often, the two arguments will be combined" (85). The jeopardy argument is particularly powerful in that it allows one who is reacting against reform to take the stance of the *true* revolutionary; it repositions the rhetor as a defender of rights, rather than as their opponent.

While the futility thesis is logically incompatible with the perversity thesis, the jeopardy thesis can be used in conjunction with each of the other arguments. According to Hirschman, "The two other pairs of arguments, jeopardy-perversity and jeopardy-futility, are tolerably compatible and could easily and perhaps effectively be marshaled together in combating some 'progressive' move. It is then a matter of some surprise that such combinations do not occur with any frequency or regularity, at least as far as my survey indicates" (143). It is these combinations and re-combinations of the three theses that make Hirschman's theoretical edifice so useful for the rhetorical critic. Unlike the application of a generic label such as "jeremiad," which papers over the differences between discourses in order to stuff them into the same category, the discovery of the shifting emphases of the three theses among various texts allows one to recognize both similarities and differences between and among texts. One text, for instance, might rely heavily upon the futility thesis, but also make the occasional appeal to jeopardy, while another might rely on a more balanced usage of both the perversity and the jeopardy theses. The critic can thus demonstrate similarity between the texts by virtue of their common usage of the jeopardy thesis, while also theorizing about how their usage of the other theses, to varying degrees, distinguish their rhetorical appeals.

The next two chapters attempt to demonstrate the usefulness of Hirschman's theory by presenting, respectively, rhetorical criticisms of the two texts that are the focus of this study.

3.0 BARRY GOLDWATER'S CONSTITUTION OF A CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

This chapter builds upon the previous chapter's analysis of Goldwater's rhetorical situation by applying Hirschman's theoretical edifice of the "rhetoric of reaction" in order to demonstrate how *Conscience of a Conservative* successfully responds to the exigency Goldwater faced.

3.1 APPEALS TO ANTICOMMUNISTS

As Chapter Two explains, the conservative movement in Goldwater's time was made up of the factions of libertarians, traditionalists, and anticommunists. Anticommunism, while a constituency in its own right, also suggests a point of common belief between each of the other factions—both libertarians and traditionalists feared the threat of communism both at home and abroad. Goldwater capitalizes on this common enemy by suggesting that liberalism, in its acceptance of the power of government to achieve certain ends, is philosophically akin to communism. In order to appeal to the strong strain of anticommunism in the conservative movement, Goldwater links not only the ideologies of liberalism and socialism, but also the struggles against statism both at home and abroad. He argues, "Our defenses against the accumulation of unlimited power in Washington are in poorer shape, I fear, than our defenses against the aggressive designs of Moscow. Like so many nations before us, we may succumb

through internal weakness rather than fall before a foreign foe” (14). Here, he’s expressing the resistance to statism at home as an extension of the fight against totalitarian regimes abroad. If one accepts that the Soviet Union is a menace to the United States, then, one must be prepared to accept the corollary that homegrown statism is equally repugnant.

For Goldwater, collectivists (whether of liberal or communist stripe) seek the same goal: the subordination of the individual to the state. While their means differ sharply, neither should be trusted by conservatives, because the supremacy of the individual is paramount to the conservative worldview. Goldwater writes, “The currently favored instrument of collectivization is the Welfare State. The collectivists have not abandoned their ultimate goal—to subordinate the individual to the State—but their strategy has changed. They have learned that Socialism can be achieved through Welfarism quite as well as through Nationalization” (64). This is a particularly unkind portrayal of liberals, because it assumes that their stated goals differ sharply from their true goals. The strident tone as well as the supposition of hidden motives plays well to the conspiratorial leanings of the conservative movement of his time. Moreover, it heightens the attack on liberalism by depicting it as an even sneakier, more effective means of smuggling collectivism into American policy. He continues, “I do not welcome this shift of strategy. Socialism-through-Welfarism poses a far greater danger to freedom than Socialism-through-Nationalization precisely because it *is* more difficult to combat. The evils of Nationalization are self-evident and immediate. Those of Welfarism are veiled and tend to be postponed” (65; emphasis in original). For Goldwater, then, it is precisely because liberalism is more subtle and effective than communism at transforming society that it must be battled with even greater force.

An important aspect of Goldwater’s denunciation of the liberalism of both political parties of his day is his argument that liberals seek power for its own sake—that even ostensibly

well-meaning efforts to promote the general welfare inevitably justify expansive growth of government power that swamp any chance of these reforms actually benefiting the public. Citing Lord Acton's dictum that "absolute power corrupts absolutely," Goldwater goes on to argue:

[N]ote that the very instrument by which these desirable ends are achieved *can* be the instrument for achieving undesirable ends—that government can, instead of extending freedom, restrict freedom. And note, secondly, that the "can" quickly becomes "will" the moment the holders of government power are left to their own devices. This is because of the corrupting influence of power, the natural tendency of men who possess *some* power to take unto themselves *more* power. The tendency leads eventually to the acquisition of *all* power—whether in the hands of one or many makes little difference to the freedom of those left on the outside (9).

Passages such as this one emphasize what Goldwater portrays as the central hubris of liberalism: the belief that government can do good, and that it is possible to trust politicians to use power wisely. This is an example of Hirschman's "futility thesis," which claims that all attempts at reform are doomed—in this case, by the tendency of government power to grow far beyond its intended scope, and to deploy this power in its own service, rather than in the interests of the people. Goldwater's reasoning closely follows Roberto Michels' "Iron Law of Oligarchy," one of Hirschman's examples of the futility thesis, which asserts, "political parties, trade unions, and other mass organizations are invariably ruled by largely self-serving and self-perpetuating oligarchies, which defy attempts at democratic control or participation" (Hirschman 57). His invocation of futility undergirds his criticism of liberalism as incapable of bringing about any of its promises of equality and prosperity. One of the advantages of this portrayal of liberalism is that it allows Goldwater to borrow the extreme anticommunist sentiment of Robert Welch, without making the more conspiratorial claim of any actual Communist Party membership of American liberals. This allows him to appeal to the radical views of John Birch Society members, without alienating his more moderate readers.

The primary argumentative maneuver of the book, however, exemplifies Hirschman's "jeopardy thesis," which involves the assertion that attempts to secure new social advances threaten already-existing rights that are particularly important but fragile. Hirschman isolates "two distinct types of possible jeopardy arguments: 1. Democracy imperils Liberty. 2. The Welfare State imperils Liberty or Democracy or both" (85). Goldwater's argument is a hybrid of the two: he argues that the Welfare State and Democracy are both threats to Liberty. He makes clear throughout the book that "freedom" is his highest value. In fact, for Goldwater, freedom is the defining value of conservatism. He writes, "As he surveys the various attitudes and institutions and laws that currently prevail in America, many questions will occur to him, but the Conservative's first concern will always be: *Are we maximizing freedom?*" (6; emphasis in original). Everywhere he looks, he sees threats to freedom. These threats derive largely from the efforts of liberals to extend additional, unwarranted rights to the citizenry, which is the point of connection between the futility and jeopardy theses. For Goldwater, the Constitution was designed to protect us from these threats, but the nation's turn away from it places in jeopardy the freedom the founders bestowed upon us.

Woven throughout the text are Goldwater's efforts to represent conservatism as the true and natural ideology of America. Central to this goal is his portrayal of the Constitution as the embodiment of conservative values. Lee Fang (2013) highlights how such appeals to the nation's origin have powerful emotional resonance, due to their association of the reader with historical forces seen as unconditionally good: "By redefining the founding story of America, libertarians sidestepped both political parties and aimed directly for the American psyche" (5). Goldwater harnesses this appeal by arguing that liberalism's abandonment of the small government principles articulated by the Constitution places Americans' liberty in jeopardy. For Goldwater,

the framers of the Constitution understood the value of freedom and sought to enshrine it for future generations by sharply limiting government power. He writes, “The framers of the Constitution had learned the lesson. They were not only students of history, but victims of it: they knew from vivid, personal experience that freedom depends on effective restraints against the accumulation of power in a single authority. And that is what the Constitution is: *a system of restraints against the natural tendency of government to expand in the direction of absolutism*” (10; emphasis in original). The framers’ imposition of these restraints is thus an expression of both their experience and their extraordinary understanding of human nature as it relates to the machinations of power.

For Goldwater, it is irrelevant whether the power deployed by the government is an expression of the wishes of the masses. The Constitution, in his view, was designed to limit the government’s power even in areas where the people demand and sanction government action. He argues, “Was is a *Democracy* the framers created? Hardly. The system of restraints, on the face of it, was directed not only against individual tyrants, but also against a tyranny of the masses. The framers were well aware of the danger posed by self-seeking demagogues—that they might persuade a majority of the people to confer on government vast powers in return for deceptive promises of economic gain” (10). His portrayal of the framers’ understanding of democracy is rather remarkable for politician running for office; it’s hard to imagine many politicians explicitly taking such a position in a present-day campaign. Yet, the view that the Constitution created a republic and not a democracy was orthodoxy for the conservative movement of his time. The fact that he’s writing for a relatively narrow audience of conservative activists allows him to make arguments that a general election candidate would likely avoid.

Goldwater's reading of the framers' intention in restricting the power of government is grounded in mythic view of the Constitution as an expression of classical liberal ideology. In the late 1950s, the primary understanding of the ideology of the Founders was informed by the contention of Louis Hartz (1955) that American ideology was rooted in Lockean liberalism. Hartz' thesis was that socialism's inability to gain a significant foothold in American politics, in contrast to its strong influence in Europe, derived from Locke's complete hold on American ideology. In the words of Hartz, "A society which begins with Locke, and thus transforms him, stays with Locke, by virtue of an absolute and irrational attachment it develops for him, and becomes as indifferent to the challenge of socialism in the later era as it was unfamiliar with the heritage of feudalism in the earlier one" (6). The Hartz position reflected a zeitgeist that also produced Daniel Bell's (1960) proclamation of *The End of Ideology* (due to the ultimate triumph of liberalism), as well as President Eisenhower's rhetorical embrace of "liberalism." As the nascent split between the classical and modern conceptions of liberalism, with their respective emphases upon "negative" and "positive" liberties, had not yet grown into an ideological chasm, a general consensus could still be discerned.

In light of this consensus, Goldwater's appeals to Lockean conceptions of government, whereby strict limits and competing levels and branches of government were necessary to prevent too much power from accumulating in the hands of would-be oppressors, fit the contemporary understanding of the Founders' views. By the end of the 1960s, though, historian Gordon S. Wood would shatter this view with his groundbreaking investigations into the Founders' ideology. He explains that frustrating and eliminating government power was not at all the goal of the Founders. In fact, the entire system depended upon ensuring that *virtuous men* would hold public office and act in the public's interest. Wood (1992) explains:

Public or political liberty—or what we now call positive liberty—meant participation in government. And this political liberty in turn provided the means by which the personal liberty and private rights of the individual—what we today call negative liberty—were protected. In this classical republican tradition our modern distinction between positive and negative liberties was not yet clearly perceived, and the two forms of liberty were still often seen as one. Liberty was realized when the citizens were virtuous—that is, willing to sacrifice their private interests for the sake of the community, including serving in public office without pecuniary rewards. This virtue could be found only in a republic of equal, active, and independent citizens. To be completely virtuous citizens, men—never women, because it was assumed they were never independent—had to be free from dependence and from the petty interests of the marketplace. Any loss of independence and virtue was corruption (104).

This understanding of public virtue as the primary bulwark against tyranny is the defining feature of “republicanism,” which shares liberalism’s concern with maintaining individual freedom from encroaching power of the state, but offers an entirely different mechanism for protecting it.

Wood (2011) argues persuasively that the Constitution itself, not just the worldview of the Founders in a more general sense, is undergirded by republicanism. In fact the conception of government it puts forth depends upon the virtue of those who would hold power. He writes, “The Federalists’ plans for the Constitution, in other words, rested on their belief that there were some disinterested gentlemen left in America to act as neutral umpires. In this sense the Constitution became a grand—and perhaps in retrospect a final desperate—effort to realize the great hope of the Revolution: the possibility of virtuous politics” (150). Unlike the liberal vision of government as inherently evil, this vision calls forth virtuous citizens to exercise public virtue in order to exercise wisely the levers of power. In fact, for the founders, the continued existence of liberty depended upon the people understanding themselves as coterminous with one another, and not as atomistic individuals. As such, classical liberalism’s wholesale rejection of government power simply does not represent the intentions of the founders.

Unlike liberalism, then, republicanism called for a vibrant, democratic public sphere. It recognized and endorsed the potential for collective action to solve societal problems. Cass R. Sunstein (1988) explains, “Classical republicans emphasized the role of the polis as the locus for achieving freedom through active citizenship. On this view, political participants were to subordinate their private interests to the public good through political participation in an ongoing process of collective self-determination. Civic virtue was thus a central organizing principle of classical politics” (1547-1548). Goldwater’s invocation of a univocal liberalism among the Founders, then, is mythic because it erases the founders’ concern with inculcating a virtuous citizenry, capable of wielding government power for the benefit of the people.

Goldwater is not alone among conservative spokespersons in attributing to the Founders a total rejection of the possibility of government action in concert with freedom. In fact, there’s a strong, common impulse among conservatives to turn to the founders to prove anti-government values. Historian and conservative movement apostate Garry Wills (1999) argues that this tendency to misattribute anti-government views to the founders is endemic to modern conservatism. He writes, “In this whole area we live with a mythical history and jurisprudence. There is a positive determination to see even in the organs of government itself only anti-governmental values. Our whole history is read and invoked in this light. Hardly a modern controversy arises without instant recourse to the founding fathers, and to a heavily distorted version of what they were up to when they drafted and ratified the Constitution” (15-16). Ironically, this habit of finding only limitations of government power in the Constitution, a document specifically designed to correct the inefficiencies that were the fatal flaw of the Articles of Confederation, leads conservatives to echo the opinions of the antifederalists. Their arguments about the meaning of the Constitution are therefore drawn from the beliefs of its

opponents: “Most of these items *were*, in fact, thoroughly aired, but by the enemies of the Constitution (known as Antifederalists) bringing up things *not* contained in the document: there were no real checks, no balances, no separation of powers, no equality of the branches, no protection of rights (whether those of states or those of individuals)” (57).

Despite the antifederalists’ concerns with federal power, the goal of the constitutional convention was to *increase* efficiency, not *decrease* it. Wills continues, “We have been taught that the separation of powers was meant to provide checks, with consequent inefficiency in operation. But the primary need, for those observing the Confederation’s feebleness, was for a separation in order to *achieve* efficiency” (73). Moreover, the antifederalists’ concern with limiting government power was not rooted in a desire to maximize each individual’s freedom; it was designed to protect powerful private interests from competition from the government. Wills (1978) explains, “The Antifederalists, as people have realized since Cecilia Kenyon made her study of them, were not the champions of democracy against privilege. There were often men of established power within their states, who did not want to yield that power to a federal apparatus. They talked of defending the individual by interposing the state’s power against any rival” (354). Thus, Goldwater’s implication that the founders were concerned with limiting state power in order to maximize individual freedom is doubly misleading: it attributes the wrong motives to the wrong group of people.

3.2 APPEALS TO SOUTHERN DEMOCRATS

Goldwater’s misattribution of the ideology of the antifederalists to the framers of the Constitution helps him achieve one of his key goals, which is to invite southern conservative

Democrats to the movement. This text represents an early effort, which would begin to come to fruition in the 1964 campaign, at building a new conservative majority within the GOP by convincing such southerners to switch parties, in order to form a powerful conservative majority within the Republican Party. Farber explains, “Goldwater, as he had intended, helped teach millions, including anticommunist militants, committed anti-secularists, pro-states’ rightists, and dedicated segregationists, that they were, overarchingly, political conservatives—Republican Party conservatives...Not least, Goldwater brought millions of southern whites to the conservative cause and unified and nationalized a grassroots right-wing movement.” (79) While Goldwater’s later vote against the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on the basis of states’ rights would come to represent this strategy, his reading of antifederalist concerns into the Constitution in this text lays this groundwork.

The notion that the founders sought to limit the power of the federal government, not to prevent the accumulation of government power at all, but to preserve this power for state governments, helped to bring southern conservative Democrats into the fold while not offending the beliefs of northern liberal Republicans. Goldwater was not the originator of this argument; it had been used as a warrant for nullification by John C. Calhoun, by secessionists leading up to the Civil War, and by Strom Thurmond’s States’ Rights Democratic Party, known better as the Dixiecrats, in the 1948 election. Goldwater must walk through a minefield in his use of this appeal, given its strong and sordid associations with slavery and subsequent civil rights abuses, but also simply because he’s importing a concept long championed by the Democrats into Republican politics. This was not simply a matter of appealing to the sentiments of Southern conservatives: Jim Crow laws were still alive and well, and Goldwater must find some way to demonstrate that each of his potential constituencies would find him an acceptable candidate.

Despite his devotion of an entire chapter to explaining this principle, the fact that the following chapter is entitled “And Civil Rights” is quite telling. These doctrines are deeply intertwined in American history, and one cannot be invoked without a discussion of the other. The balance he creates with these two chapters indicates his desire to placate two very different constituencies. He begins this second chapter by reminding his readers that the term “civil rights” is often used incorrectly—that it can refer only to rights already established by law. He explains, “Civil rights is frequently used synonymously with ‘human rights’—or with ‘natural rights.’ As often as not, it is simply a name for describing an activity that someone deems politically or socially desirable. A sociologist writes a paper proposing to abolish some inequity, or a politician make a speech about it—and, behold, a new ‘civil right’ is born! The Supreme Court has displayed the same creative powers” (26). The tone and substance of this quote reveal his fundamentally conservative approach to civil rights—that they only exist when recognized by law, and we should be very cautious about expanding the law to recognize new ones. He cites as his example the landmark Supreme Court decision *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which desegregated the nation’s public schools and ignited a massive, often violent backlash: “It may be just or wise or expedient for negro children to attend the same schools as white children, but they do not have a civil right to do so which is protected by the federal constitution, or which is enforceable by the federal government” (28). It would be easy to read Goldwater as implying here that he does not support the goal of integrating the nation’s schools—that his objection to the Court’s procedure entails a corollary objection to the social outcomes it brought about.

However, Goldwater later makes clear that this is not the case (though he waits a few pages to do so). Repeating the structure of his earlier claim that “it may be just or wise,” he explains, “It so happens that I am in agreement with the *objectives* of the Supreme Court as

stated in the *Brown* decision. I believe that it *is* both wise and just for negro children to attend the same schools as whites, and that to deny them this opportunity carries with it strong implications of inferiority. I am not prepared, however, to impose that judgment of mine on the people of Mississippi or South Carolina...” (31; emphasis in original). This sharp distinction between his personal beliefs and what he would be prepared to use the power of the state to accomplish is crucial to bridging the gap between northern and southern racial attitudes. He is thus able to appeal to northern sensibilities on the issue of race, while assuaging southern conservatives that he would never interfere with their “right” to maintain a segregated, legally unequal society.

3.3 APPEALS TO LIBERTARIANS

Goldwater’s understanding of the Constitution as an expression of classical liberalism made his position particularly attractive to the libertarians of his day, though his emphasis upon states’ rights complicates the matter by positing that certain displays of government power are better than others. In order to massage this tension, he grounds his defense of states’ rights doctrine in the notion that local government action is preferable to that of the federal government, as it leaves individual citizens in greater control of their own destiny. He is careful to attribute this wisdom not merely to himself, but to the framers of Constitution. He writes, “There is a *reason* for [the Constitution’s] reservation of States’ Rights. Not only does it prevent the accumulation of power in a central government that is remote from the people and relatively immune from popular restraints; it also recognizes the principle that essentially local problems are best dealt with by the people most directly concerned” (22). By framing states’ rights as a fundamental principle to be applied without exception, he is also able to distance himself from the attacks of

more liberal Republicans who might be inclined to see the doctrine as a thinly veiled code word for racial inequality. His appeals to the doctrine in areas unrelated to civil rights help immunize him from the charge that he is selectively applying the doctrine in order to justify segregation. For instance, in his discussion of welfare policy, he makes an argument almost identical to the one above: “Finally, if we deem public intervention necessary, let the job be done by local and state authorities that are incapable of accumulating the vast political power that is so inimical to our liberties” (69). By basing his appeals to states’ rights in the Constitution and applying them to areas other than civil rights, he is able to depict his appeal as a matter of principle rather than one of strategy. Though such arguments do not prove that constitutionalism and libertarianism are entirely coterminous, they at least indicate Goldwater’s general affinity with the libertarian worldview.

At times, Goldwater seems to identify himself entirely with the libertarian position, such as in his claim that the free market is the most efficient means of matching supply with demand. In his chapter on agricultural policies, for instance, he writes, “The reason government intervention has created more problems than it has solved is quite simple. *Farm production, like any other production is best controlled by the natural operation of the free market*” (36; emphasis in original). He goes on to say that the proper solution for market distortions brought about by government policies is to end these policies and allow the discipline of the market to work its magic: “The only way to persuade farmers to enter other fields of endeavor is to stop paying inefficient farmers for produce that cannot be sold at free market prices” (37). Such passages allow him to establish his bona fides with this wing of the conservative movement. However, as Chapter Two notes, they are not the focus of this book. He is much more concerned

with building a coalition between libertarians, traditionalists, and anti-Communists that could serve as the foundation for a conservative takeover of the Republican Party.

3.4 APPEALS TO TRADITIONALISTS

Goldwater's appeals to individual freedom reflected the ideology of the libertarian wing of the conservative movement of his time. However, there was another important wing of the movement that distrusted this emphasis. These conservatives, the heirs to the republican ideology of the founders, saw virtue as the most important societal value, and feared that individualism would erode the shared values of society. Robert A. Nisbet's classic book, *The Quest for Community* (1953), exemplifies the traditionalists' concerns well in its critique of the single-minded pursuit of liberty. He wrote, "A free society would be one in which individuals were morally and socially as well as politically free, free from groups and classes. It would be composed, in short, of socially and morally *separated* individuals. Order in society would be the product of a natural equilibrium of economic and political forces. Freedom would arise from the individual's release from all the inherited personal interdependences of traditional community, and from his existence in an impersonal, natural, economic order" (227). In Nisbet's view, this separation among citizens was self-defeating; a sustainable notion of freedom required us to act virtuously and work together for common causes. For Nisbet, freedom actually depends upon community. He continued, "Economic freedom cannot rest upon moral atomism or upon large-scale impersonalities. It never has. Economic freedom has prospered, and continues to prosper, only in areas and spheres where it has been joined to a flourishing associational life. Economic freedom cannot be separated from the non-individualistic contexts of association and community

of moral purpose. Capitalism has become weakest, as a system of allegiances and incentives, where these social resources have become weak and where no new forms of association and symbolism have arisen to replace the old” (239-240). While Goldwater’s seemingly single-minded emphasis upon freedom would serve him well among the libertarian wing of the movement, he would need to offer a synthesis of both values—freedom and virtue—in order to unite movement conservatives behind his vision. As freedom was his highest value, rather than virtue, Nisbet’s argument that virtue secures the blessings of freedom would not work. He would need to argue the reverse: that freedom is the essential precondition for virtue.

Even within the traditionalist faction of the movement, there was vociferous disagreement about the path conservatism should follow. One key ongoing debate raged on over the role of late-eighteenth century British M.P. Edmund Burke’s legacy for the movement. While some, such as Russell Kirk, highlighted Burke’s prescience in his support for the American Revolution and opposition to the French Revolution, others such as Richard Weaver claimed that Burke’s reluctance to embrace a set of ideological principles rendered his rhetoric ineffective (and even unconservative). Conservative interest in Burke, and more importantly in the suitability of his philosophy as a muse for 20th century conservatism, exploded in the 1950s. As Nash writes, “Stimulated partly by the release of a collection of Burke’s correspondence in 1949, studies and sympathetic invocations of Burke proliferated in the 1950s. Russell Kirk’s own *The Conservative Mind* was the most notable of the genre. By 1959, interest in Burke was so great that the quarterly *Burke Newsletter* was established under the auspices of *Modern Age*” (163-4). The debate over Burke’s role as conservative exemplar was not merely an intellectual one; it was a prism through which activists made claims about the very nature of conservatism itself. Many observers have noted the centrality of this debate in the quest for conservative self-definition. For

instance, Sam Tanenhaus (2009) writes, “The story of postwar American conservatism is best understood as a continual replay of a single long-standing debate. On one side are realists who have upheld the Burkean ideal of replenishing civil society by adjusting to changing conditions. On the other are revanchists committed to a counterrevolution, whether the restoration of America’s pre-New Deal ancient régime, the return to Cold War-style Manichaeism, or the revival of premodern ‘family values’” (20). One’s position on Burke’s philosophy thus serves as a litmus test for the kind of politics one endorses.

Kirk’s brand of traditionalism eschewed abstract philosophical principles in favor of the values grounded in the wisdom of generations. His version of traditionalism stressed adherence to these values as a bulwark against the hubris of utopian visions of sweeping societal change. As such, he presents Edmund Burke as the prophet of the morass of 20th century revolutionary totalitarianism: “A world that damns tradition, exalts equality, and welcomes change; a world that has clutched at Rousseau, swallowed him whole, and demanded prophets yet more radical; a world smudge by industrialism, standardized by the masses, consolidated by government; a world crippled by war, trembling between the colossi of East and West, and peering over a smashed barricade into the gulf of dissolution: this, our era, is the society Burke foretold, with all the burning energy of his rhetoric, in 1790” (4). Our failure to heed Burke’s warnings, to be wary of revolutionaries who would overthrow the hard-won gains of the past in favor of ideologies not sufficiently grounded in the respect of tradition, has left us defenseless against radicalism of all stripes. He continues, “By and large, radical thinkers have won the day. For a century and a half, conservatives have yielded ground in a manner which, except for occasionally successful rear-guard actions, must be described as a rout” (4-5). Kirk’s narrative, then, is a deeply tragic one; he

is explicitly calling upon his American readers to adopt Burke's philosophy as a defense against the revolutionary spirit that had already cloaked much of Eurasia in totalitarianism.

Though Burke's conservatism (in Kirk's reading) stressed continuity over the revolutionary spirit, it was not opposed in principle to reform. In fact, faced with great challenges, it allowed for careful changes to the societal structure in order to prevent the eruption of all-out conflict. Kirk explains, "Conservatism never is more admirable than when it accepts changes that it disapproves, with good grace, for the sake of a general conciliation; and the impetuous Burke, of all men, did most to establish that principle" (47). What Burke's conservatism opposed was immoderate reform that upset the delicate balances, worked out over many generations, which made existing liberties possible. As such, it portrayed the revolutionaries of France and the philosophers who inspired them as the *enemies* of freedom, due to their all-or-nothing insistence on natural rights. Burke, in Kirk's reading, saw the *philosophes* (and importantly, Thomas Paine) as dangerous radicals, not because they promised too much freedom, but because they threatened the freedom that Britons already enjoyed. Kirk argues, "Equality in the sight of God, equality before the law, security in what is one's own, participation in the common activities and consolations of society—these are the true natural rights. The presumptuous demands of Rousseau, Condorcet, Helvetius, and Paine for absolute liberties which no state in history ever could accord are the very reverse of natural justice; they are unnatural because impious, 'the result of a selfish temper, and confined views.' In the political sphere, these claims are absurd, for the exercise of any right must be circumscribed and modified to suit particular circumstances" (63-64). The only rights that should be celebrated, then, are those concrete rights that had been established over long periods of time.

For Kirk, then, the essence of conservatism is a spirit of caution toward forces of social and political change that too quickly seek to alter the delicate balances that have been forged over the course of centuries, making civilization itself possible. “Convinced that Burke’s is the true school of conservative principle” (5), Kirk articulates a long history of intellectual conservatism. According to him, Burke is not merely an early or important muse for conservatism, but in fact its very progenitor. He explains, “Conscious conservatism, in the modern sense, did not manifest itself until 1790, with the publication of *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. In that year the prophetic powers of Burke fixed in the public consciousness, for the first time, the opposing poles of conservation and innovation” (6). Like the libertarians, Kirk’s take on traditionalism valued liberty, but unlike the libertarians, he understood the term in the very particular sense of grounded liberties that had already been granted to citizens through a long, slow process of societal recognition. Thus, it was not pure “liberty,” but the “liberties of Englishmen” that Kirk, by way of Burke, endorsed:

Liberty, Burke knew, had risen through an elaborate and delicate process, and its perpetuation depended upon retaining those habits of thought and action which guided the savage in his slow and weary ascent to the state of civil social man. All his life, Burke’s chief concern had been for justice and liberty, which must stand or fall together—liberty under law, a definite liberty, the limits of which were determined by prescription. He had defended the liberties of Englishmen against their king, and the liberties of Americans against king and parliament, and the liberties of Hindus against Europeans. He had defended those liberties not because they were innovations, discovered in the Age of Reason, but because they were ancient prerogatives, guaranteed by immemorial usage. Burke was liberal because he was conservative. And this cast of mind Tom Paine was wholly unable to appreciate (20-21).

The mention of Paine is instructive, because it highlights the importance of the traditionalists’ understanding of the American Revolution as a reclamation of the Americans’ rights as Englishmen. While Burke supported the American Revolution in these terms, Paine saw it as the

beginning of worldwide struggle for the absolute “Rights of Man,” as he titled his famous philosophical treatise.

Kirk shared Burke’s belief that the American Revolution was a restoration of the colonists’ rights as Englishmen. He writes, “By and large, the American Revolution was not an innovating upheaval, but a conservative restoration of colonial prerogatives” (72). As a result, he aligns himself with the Federalists, who took a Hobbesian view of the state, rather than the Republicans. For Kirk, the Federalists were conservatives who understood from history that the hard-won victory of the Revolution could only be protected by employing a powerful state in its defense, while the Republicans smacked of the Painite defenders of absolute liberty who did not understand or appreciate the constraints of history. Kirk argues, “Thus men essentially conservative found themselves triumphant rebels, and were compelled to reconcile their traditional ideas with the necessities of an independence hardly anticipated. It was a profound problem: the Republicans, Jefferson being chief among them, endeavored to solve it by the application of *a priori* concepts, and came to sympathize with French egalitarian theories. Their opponents, the Federalists, appealed to the lessons of history, the legacy of British liberties, and the guarantees of prescriptive constitutions” (72). To contemporary readers, this invocation of the Federalists as paragons of conservatism seems downright bizarre, as the conservative movement since Kirk has venerated the Federalists’ “small government” opponents as the progenitors of modern conservatism. But for Kirk, only a people capable of exercising their freedom virtuously could enshrine the liberty so cherished by conservatives; his approach is indebted to the republicanism Wood finds in the Constitution, not the classical liberalism that most contemporary conservatives find in it. As such, he posited none other than John Adams as the prototypical American conservative: “Adams preferred the concept of virtue to the concept of

freedom. But he did not think the first excluded the second; on the contrary, enduring liberty is the child of virtue. Liberty is not to be got by simple proclamation; it is the creation of civilization and of heroic exertions by a few brave souls” (99). Again, Kirk’s choice of Adams, perhaps most famous for the decidedly anti-libertarian Alien and Sedition Acts, as an exemplar of conservatism is rather surprising—but that is only because of the profound changes in conservative self-definition in the years since Kirk wrote his treatise.

In 1953, the same year that *The Conservative Mind* appeared, another traditionalist conservative, Richard Weaver, published *The Ethics of Rhetoric*. In this book, Weaver rejected the notion that Edmund Burke’s political philosophy could serve as a model for modern conservatism. For Weaver, Burke’s argumentative strategy is profoundly un-conservative. He argues that Burke’s reliance upon the argument from circumstance does not merely render his political philosophy useless to modern conservatism, but also disqualifies him from even being considered as a conservative. Weaver observes that one’s rhetoric reveals one’s characteristic way of thinking: “All men argue alike when they argue validly because the modes of inference are formulas, from which deviation is error. Therefore we characterize inference only as valid or invalid. But the reasoner reveals his philosophical position by the source of argument which appears most often in his major premise because the major premise tells us how he is thinking about the world” (55). He goes on to say that the use of arguments from circumstance reveals a liberal frame of mind. He writes, “The argument from circumstance is the argument philosophically appropriate to the liberal. Indeed, one can go much further and say that it is the argument fatal to conservatism” (58). Burke’s political philosophy thus cannot, for Weaver, serve as a model for modern day conservatives.

For Weaver, Burke's emphasis upon the liberties of Englishmen, rather than upon an absolute principle of liberty, begs the question of what the conservative actually stands for. If conservatives are simply advocating caution and prudence, it's impossible to give a coherent reason why any given change should be endorsed or opposed. He explains, "Since he scorned that freedom which did not have the stamp of generations of approval upon it, he attempted to show that freedom was a matter of precedent. Yet this is an evasion rather than an answer to the real question which is lying in wait for Burke's political philosophy. It is essential to see that government either moves with something in view or it does not, and to say that people may be governed merely by following precedent begs the question" (74). This leaves conservatism in the position of being not only unable to justify its positions, but also powerless to choose which reforms should be accepted and which should be rejected. For it to do us any good as we go about making actual decisions in the world, it must be able to give us some guidance as to the desirability of any given change. For Weaver, this means Burke's conservatism is useless: "This political organism is a 'mysterious incorporation,' never wholly young or middle-aged or old, but partly each at every period, and capable, like the animal organism, of regenerating itself through renewal of tissue. It is therefore modified only through the slow forces that produce evolution. But to the question of what brings on the changes in society, Burke was never able to give an answer" (75). Conservatism, then, could only be grounded in "arguments from definition," which reason from *a priori* principles to determine the desirability of an action in the present—the exact dynamic Burke (and Kirk) so strenuously opposed.

In Weaver's eyes, conservatism's exigency was one of a triumphant left that had used the argument from definition to great advantage, while a meek and powerless right had ceded power due to its hopeless clinging to the argument from circumstance. He portrays this situation as dire:

To look at the whole matter in an historical frame of reference, there has been so violent a swing toward the left that the Democrats today occupy the position once occupied by the Socialists; and the Republicans, having to take their bearings from this, now occupy the center position, which is historically reserved for liberals. Their series of defeats comes from a failure to see that there is an intellectually defensible position on the right. They persist with the argument from circumstance, which never wins any major issues, and sometimes, as we have noted, they are left without the circumstance (82).

His counsel to the conservative movement, then, is to employ the argument from definition, exemplified by the rhetoric of Lincoln, in order to take the initiative away from the ascendant left. His advice was not left unheeded. Perhaps the most influential of a new generation of conservative leaders who would rely primarily upon the argument from definition was an Arizona Senator who took office the same year as appeared the books of both Kirk and Weaver.

In heeding Weaver's advice, Goldwater ironically ended up echoing in some ways Thomas Paine, perhaps Burke's most important contemporary interlocutor. According to Harvey J. Kaye (2005), Paine's treatise *Rights of Man* was written in direct response to Burke, and became a popular sensation: "Published in November 1790, Burke's *Reflections* became a tremendous literary success and would come to be seen as the first great treatise of modern political conservatism.... But the most powerful of the replies—titled simply *Rights of Man*—came from Paine" (71-72). It offered an argument diametrically opposed to that Burke. Whereas Burke claimed that rights were grounded in the particular circumstances of history, Paine asserted that they were absolute and inviolable:

Rejecting Burke's thesis that generations were obliged to defer to their ancestors, he upheld the 'rights of the *living*' and insisted that generations cannot 'bind' future generations: 'Every age and generation must be free to act for itself, *in all cases*, as the ages and generations which preceded it.' And countering Burke's propositions about the 'ancient' origins of rights, he retorted that Burke did 'not go far enough into antiquity,' for the 'natural rights of man' went all the way back to 'creation' and remained in every generation 'equal' and 'universal' among men. Divinely ordained, natural rights might be suppressed, but they could not be forfeited or alienated (Kaye 72).

Paine's appeal to "natural rights" in *Rights of Man* echoes his earlier work in *Common Sense*, which exhorted American colonists to declare independence from Britain. *Common Sense* aimed to disabuse the colonists of their continued feeling of being British, despite the abuses of the crown, which made it difficult for them to contemplate independence. Kaye writes, "Even as Americans defied the British government's authority, they voiced fealty to the Crown, appreciation for Britain's constitution, attachment to the empire, and pride in being British. They protested—and felt empowered if not compelled to protest—because they were Britons, possessed, they believed, of the rights of freeborn Britons" (16). Only by seeing themselves as a new people could they be persuaded to take revolutionary action to free themselves from British rule.

Paine's singular achievement was thus his use of constitutive rhetoric—his definition of the colonists as a new people. Unlike Burke, who stressed the colonists' rights as British subjects, Paine's argument began with the premise that the colonists were, first and foremost, Americans, and that they enjoyed political rights precisely by virtue of their Americanness. Kaye writes that Paine "grasped the originality of American life. And inspired by it, he would make Americans aware of themselves *as* Americans, a people possessed of exceptional purpose and promise and capable of creating a free, equal, and democratic nation-state that would become 'an example to the world'" (41). By defining Americans as a new people, Paine encourages them to break the bonds of past generations—in other words, in a phrase made famous by Paine and often repeated by Reagan, "to begin the world anew."

One of the ways in which Goldwater attempted to resolve the difference in worldviews between the traditionalists and the libertarians in the conservative movement was to resolve the tension between the approaches of Burke and Paine. At first blush, this tension seems

irresolvable, as their conceptions of freedom were diametrically opposed. However, what allowed Goldwater to fuse them together was a creative use of constitutive rhetoric. This rhetoric is made possible by the difference in meaning between the British and American senses of the term “constitution.” While in the United States, the term “constitution” refers to a discrete document, in Britain, it refers to the entirety of the nation’s laws and customs. Daniel J. Boorstein (1965) explains this difference as follows: “In Great Britain, the ‘constitution’ was the whole sum of characters, statutes, declarations, traditions, informal understandings, habits, and attitudes by which the government was actually administered. Technically speaking, then, there was no such thing as a British statute being invalid because it was ‘unconstitutional’: any British statute could change the constitution. There was no ‘constitution’ by which a court could test legislation” (406). This is the sense in which Burke employed a constitutive rhetoric: his “constitution” referred to the constantly but slowly evolving British character. James Boyd White (1984) explains how Burke used the term to emphasize the fragility of British liberties, in order to caution against hasty changes. He writes, “In all its complexity and interconnectedness it is our substantive and actual constitution. This is the constitution we threaten or promise to change when we adopt a new structure of government; we ought therefore to proceed with great caution and humility, recognizing that we can understand only a little of what we are and of what we seek to change” (227). The American Constitution, by contrast, makes no such claims upon the people. It simply sets up guidelines for the operation of government, and then steps out of the way. It is a purely legal document, rather than a full expression of a culture. White continues, “The only respect in which the [American] Constitution makes the claim that its people are ‘one’ is in the establishment of the Constitution itself; once that is done, they are free to engage in the ordinary competitions of trade and politics, to pursue their conflicting interests, to form clubs and

factions, and to seek and exercise power, so long as they do all this on the conditions, and, where relevant, in the ways, that the Constitution establishes” (241). The document thus does not claim to “constitute” the people in anything like the sense the British constitution does.

Goldwater, however, seizes upon the multiple meanings of the term “constitution” to synthesize the profoundly opposed views of Burke and Paine. He fully accepts Burke’s point that a constitution reflects the wisdom of generations, while completely ignoring Burke’s allowance for cautious changes to that constitution. The first half of this equation assumes the British understanding of “constitution,” while the second half relies upon the American sense of the term. The founders thus represent, for Goldwater, the endpoint of the development of the American Constitution, rather than a midpoint. It is as if the slow and steady process of the people constituting themselves somehow came to a grinding halt due to the adoption of a document called a “constitution.” This allows Goldwater to articulate his Painite understanding of liberty in Burkean terms—as the wisdom of a past generation that should be given complete deference in the present.

Goldwater’s embrace of a Painite conception of freedom, framed in Burkean terms, allowed him to assuage the traditionalists in the movement by indicating that he was concerned not merely with a narrow, economic view of society, but also with deeper, spiritual commitments. The first chapter of *Conscience* is devoted largely to paying tribute to traditionalism by deflecting the notion that his position is simply an economic theory. This purpose is made clear in the opening paragraph. After quoting comments from Nixon and Eisenhower that they are conservative in reference only to the economy, Goldwater writes, “These formulations are tantamount to an admission that Conservatism is a narrow, mechanistic *economic* theory that may work very well as a bookkeeper’s guide, but cannot be relied upon as a

comprehensive political philosophy” (1; emphasis in original). Dispelling this view of conservatism immediately accomplishes two goals for Goldwater: it demonstrates that conservatism is sufficiently robust to accommodate both economic and non-economic concerns, and it encourages his readers not to be defensive about their conservatism. Both of these ideas become key themes in the text.

Goldwater then immediately turns this criticism around on his political enemies, claiming that socialism is the ideology that subordinates all other concerns to economic ones. He argues, “Such statements, from friend and foe alike, do great injustice to the Conservative point of view. Conservatism is *not* an economic theory, though it has economic implications. The shoe is precisely on the other foot: it is Socialism that subordinates all other considerations to man’s material well-being. It is Conservatism that puts material things in their proper place—that has a structured view of the human being and of human society, in which economics plays only a subsidiary role” (2). In one fell swoop, he has now laid the groundwork for an expansive, multi-dimensional conception of conservatism, while articulating a common enemy of socialism for conservatives of all stripes. He then shifts between describing his enemies as socialists and describing them as liberals: “The root difference between the Conservatives and the Liberals of today is that Conservatives take account of the *whole* man, while the Liberals tend to look only at the material side of man’s nature. The Conservative believes that man is, in part, an economic, an animal creature; but that he is also a spiritual creature with spiritual needs and spiritual desires. What is more, these needs and desires reflect the *superior* side of man’s nature, and thus take precedence over his economic wants” (2). This easy shift subtly equates the then-popular designation of “liberal” with that of “socialist,” contaminating the popularity of the former with

the suspicion of the latter. It also claims for conservatism alone the moral high ground by asserting its concern for the more important, transcendental matters.

On what basis, then, does conservatism determine the answers to such spiritual concerns? Goldwater's appeal is not to religious authority, as one might expect, but to history. He explains, "Surely the first obligation of a political thinker is to understand the nature of man. The Conservative does not claim special powers of perception on this point, but he does claim a familiarity with the accumulated wisdom and experience of history, and he is not too proud to learn from the great minds of the past" (3). Here, he is closely echoing Edmund Burke and the American conservatives Burke inspired. The position is one of humility: an belief that social institutions that have survived through the ages are generally to be trusted more than the prideful innovations of our own time, and that any changes to these institutions should be approached cautiously. Goldwater confirms Burke's influence in his 1979 memoirs, in which he writes, "My understanding of the nature of man and what society and government ought to be lean heavily on the great conservative thinkers, commencing with Edmund Burke" (98). The substance of Burke's influence is the appeal to a contract between generations. He explains, "I believe with Burke that each present generation has a contract with the generations which preceded it and the generations which will come after it, and by that contract we are required to preserve what we perceive to be good for society and to attempt to improve what we perceive to be evil. I understand that liberty and property are indivisible. Each one of us is entitled to the products of our own labor" (99). His Burkean ruminations here allow him to appeal to the sentiments of many conservatives, while laying the groundwork for his argument that our prideful rush to employ government power to achieve social ends ignores the lessons of history and leads to our ruin.

This cautious approach is contrasted sharply with that of liberalism, which he depicts as foolish, rushed, and hubristic. In doing so, he groups both dictatorial and liberal attempts to reshape society into the common category of collectivism. “The conscience of the Conservative is pricked by *anyone* who would debase the dignity of the individual human being,” he argues. “Today, therefore, he is at odds with dictators who rule by terror, and equally with those gentler collectivists who ask our permission to play God with the human race” (5; emphasis in original). This allows him to align conservatism with individualism in such a way as to invite traditionalists as well as libertarians to embrace his position. While traditionalists may be less inclined than libertarians to take an individualistic approach to politics, they are likely to see in individualism a bulwark against those who wish “to play God” with society. By wrapping a Paineite commitment to absolute liberty in the language of Burke, Goldwater thus fuses the worldviews of libertarians and traditionalists into a coherent whole.

Ironically though, one of Goldwater’s most famous and polarizing moments would come about as a result of a direct reference to Paine’s views, stripped of the Burkean sentiment in which he encases it here. In his acceptance speech for the 1964 presidential nomination, Goldwater declared, in what is perhaps the best-remembered quotation of his entire political career, “I would remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice! And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!” This line is a paraphrase of Paine, who wrote, “moderation in temper is always a virtue; but moderation in principle, is a species of vice” (qtd. in Kaye, 223). Kaye explains that Goldwater’s speechwriter, Harry V. Jaffa “acknowledged that he derived Goldwater’s famous lines from Paine” (301n3). After a bitter fight for the nomination, these words alienated the more moderate delegates at the convention, who were shocked that Goldwater did not adopt a more conciliatory tone. That the tone of

Paine's borrowed words was so polarizing only accentuates the importance of Goldwater's wrapping his thought in Burkean language in this text.

In *Conscience*, Goldwater's appeal to Paine's conception of liberty adds a patina of revolutionary spirit to his views. This is a classic effect of the jeopardy thesis: it allows a rhetor to assume the pedestal of the revolutionary while advocating a reactionary agenda. That Paine would not have endorsed Goldwater's appropriation of his views seems abundantly clear—but there is just enough ambiguity there to make the appropriation possible. For instance, in his appeals to “the people,” Paine drew a sharp distinction between society and government. This would seem consonant with modern conservatives' attempts to demonize the latter. But this is a simplification of Paine's actual views. Kaye explains, “In words that would forever delight libertarians and anarchists, he distinguished between society and government and maintained that ‘society in every state is a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil.’ Yet Paine was neither a libertarian nor an anarchist or for that matter a Lockean liberal. He was a revolutionary democrat, and contrary to the commonly accepted view, his tale was rendered not so much as a diatribe against government, at least not all forms of government, as a narrative of democratic beginnings and commitments” (43-44). His rejection of government power was thus a matter of tactics, not principles. While he opposed most of the existing functions of government in his own day, he in no way ruled out the possibility of the people utilizing government power to improve their condition.

Paine rejected not the abstract principle of government intervention in the economy, but the particular reality of government's interventions on behalf of the aristocracy of his own time. Given this reality, reducing government's reach into the economy was in fact a progressive position. Kaye explains, “Paine comprehended ‘political liberty and economic liberty’ as

mutually interdependent and imagined that economic freedom served to assure equality of opportunity *and* results. Witnessing monarchical regimes taxing the productive classes, transferring wealth to parasitic royals and aristocrats, and punishing working people and the poor, he personally had come to view nondemocratic governments, not markets, as the fundamental cause of social inequality and oppression. Consequently, he proposed the liberation of the market and expansion of commercial activity” (76). Moreover, Paine specifically rejected the logic of the jeopardy thesis. He advocated expansion of democracy and equality, and argued that these would enhance, not threaten, liberty. Kaye continues, “As much as he appreciated the manifold potential of free markets, however, he did not hold that equality and democracy must necessarily defer to the imperatives of commerce and trade. And as his revolutionary proposal for welfare-state policies attests, he increasingly realized that the democratic governments for which he fought would have to *politically* address inequality and poverty” (76). This hints at the reverse of the jeopardy thesis. Instead of arguing that newly asserted rights jeopardize already existing rights in a zero-sum fashion, he argued that these different rights are in fact mutually beneficial—that, for instance, democracy can help protect and extend liberty. In this sense, his views reflected the republican spirit, which stressed public virtue as a defense against threats to liberty.

Paine’s rejection of using a concern with liberty to defeat advances in democracy and equality can be seen even more clearly by looking at the policy positions he actually advocated. Paine’s views actually anticipated twentieth century liberalism’s emphasis on positive liberties. His policy positions sound more like those of a New Dealer than those of a libertarian. As Kaye explains, “Along with suggesting a progressive estate tax to limit accumulation of property, he recommended raising the incomes of the poor by remitting their taxes and augmenting the sums,

distributing special relief for families with children, creating a system of social security for the elderly, instituting public funding of education through a voucher system, providing financial support for newly married couples and new mothers, and establishing employment centers for the jobless” (75). Goldwater’s application of Paine’s conception of liberty to defeat the very policies Paine supported once again suggests that rhetorical appeals to values can be more politically potent than appeals to policy—that is, that epideictic rhetoric can play a more fundamental role in the political arena than deliberative rhetoric.

Moreover, there is good reason to believe that the founders, and not just Paine, would have disagreed with Goldwater’s notion that the Constitution froze in place only the rights enumerated therein and excluded the possibility of new ones. For instance, Wills (1978) writes that Jefferson “would never encourage people to yearn back toward some ideal of perfection delivered to their forebears. He opposed ‘entailing’ opinions on a later generation; he wanted constitutions revised often, since accumulated knowledge must make later generations wiser than that which drew up *any* old document” (xxiii; emphasis in original). Though Jefferson was not himself involved in the framing of the Constitution, his key role in the founding of the nation itself should give us reason to doubt that the founders shared Goldwater’s interpretation of their infallible wisdom.

While the founders’ views on government policy would not match those of Goldwater, their revolutionary spirit is a powerful rhetorical resource that he employs to great effect. Wood (1992) explains how the founders’ radicalism was directed against the government. He writes, “[The American Revolution] was as radical and social as any revolution in history, but it was radical and social in a very special eighteenth-century sense.... Most people in that very different distant world could not as yet conceive of society apart from government. The social distinctions

and economic deprivations that we today think of as the consequences of class divisions, business exploitation, or various isms—capitalism, racism, etc.—were in the eighteenth century usually thought to be caused by the abuses of government” (5). When modern-day conservatives make appeals to the founders as opponents of government, they mistake the founders’ opposition to the particular policies of the government of their time as a rebuke of the very possibility of collective action to benefit society. They are thus able to transform the founders’ revolutionary spirit into a profoundly reactionary one.

In his rhetorical synthesis of the views of Burke and Paine, Goldwater thus cloaks his conservative agenda in a revolutionary *ethos* borrowed from Paine and the founders. Not only does he domesticate Paine’s revolutionary support for absolute liberty to a stunning degree, but he also invokes Burke in a spirit far more conservative than the one in which Burke wrote. In Goldwater’s hands, both the conservative Burke and the radical Paine become reactionaries, cautioning against the supposition of any new rights at all, lest they jeopardize the one and only true right of liberty. Goldwater’s embrace of a stripped down and domesticated version of Paine’s philosophy of freedom took hold in the conservative movement, and influenced the next generations of its spokespersons.

I’ve demonstrated so far how Goldwater attempted to forge a synthesis between the traditionalist and libertarian approaches to conservatism by tying together the seemingly contradictory approaches of Burke and Paine. This leaves unanswered the question of the content of this synthesis. That is, if Paine’s absolutist conception of liberty is in fact our ancestral guarantor of virtue, what type of virtue does it actually guarantee? In what follows, I will explain Goldwater’s vision of how liberty best creates the conditions for a virtuous citizenry.

Goldwater's implication throughout his book is that citizens, when considered as individuals, are generally good as long as they are given the freedom to make the right decisions for themselves. The title of the book is in fact an expression of this very principle: *conscience* reflects the individual's free choice to behave virtuously, and a specifically "conservative" conscience is Goldwater's endorsement of his audience's virtuous behavior. But what is the content of this conscience? Goldwater explains his vision in terms of what I will call his "moralistic individualism," which supposes that freedom from constraints will cause citizens act virtuously specifically because of their *independence*.

Goldwater's understanding of virtue is premised on the position that the economic and moral spheres are intimately related. As such, economic considerations always have a moral dimension. This he makes clear at the outset of the book. He explains, "The Conservative has learned that the economic and spiritual aspects of man's nature are inextricably intertwined. He cannot be economically free, or even economically efficient, if he is enslaved politically; conversely, man's political freedom is illusory if he is dependent for his economic needs on the State" (4). While this passage stresses the interrelation of freedom and virtue, it also puts freedom front and center by discussing the only the conditions of freedom in the second part. It also introduces the key term of "dependency" that will inform his conception of virtue throughout the book.

Goldwater's conception of virtue understood as economic independence is strongly informed by his belief in individual responsibility. As he explains in his 1988 memoirs, "Every man, for his individual good and for the good of society, is responsible for his *own* development. The choices that govern his life are choices that *he* must make; they cannot be made by any other human being, or by a collectivity of human beings" (4). Later in the same text, he explains that

self-reliance, the converse of dependency, is a chief concern of *Conscience*. This he contrasts with paternalism, or the belief that the state can take on the responsibility properly assigned to individuals. He writes, “In the book I said that the liberal agenda for the country was not working. I criticized increasing state paternalism at the expense of individual self-reliance. With new decentralized government, individual liberty and economic initiative could flourish. Collectivism and the welfare state were our greatest enemies at home, while communism had become our foremost enemy around the world. Either could destroy us” (120). This is another example of the jeopardy thesis, in that it posits liberty as an existing right threatened by attempts to extend economic welfare. This time, the thesis is being used to demonstrate (among other things) the threat that the state represents to the possibility of virtue.

The futility thesis, which claims that the nature of government power dooms reformers to accomplish nothing at all, also comes into play as Goldwater reads evil intentions into those who wish to promote citizens’ economic needs. For Goldwater, the deprivation of virtue, in the form of forced dependency, is not an unintended consequence, but a desired goal of liberals. In *Conscience*, he explains, “Collectivists...understand that the individual can be put at the mercy of the State—not only by making the State his employer—but by divesting him of the means to provide for his personal needs and by giving the State the responsibility of caring for those needs from cradle to grave” (64). This craven search for power, as he sees it, has had the result of denying individuals the means to care for themselves. Again referring to the victims of state power as “dependents,” he writes, “The State that is able to deal with its citizens as wards and dependents has gathered unto itself unlimited political and economic power and is thus able to rule as absolutely as any oriental despot” (67). Again, this is portrayed as the intended goal of policies ostensibly designed to promote economic welfare.

The terms in which Goldwater describes the threat posed by “Welfarism” are designed to appeal not only to libertarians, but also to traditionalists. That is because just as he argues that conservatism is not merely an economic policy, he describes the effect of “Welfarism” in moral, and not merely economic, terms. Hence, the frequent references to “dependency,” which for Goldwater is the bridge between freedom and virtue—if individuals are denied freedom, they are thus deprived of their self-reliance, and thereby of their virtue. As a result, policies to promote economic well-being might have some appeal in the short-term, but this appeal is illusory. In the end, he writes, their effect is to leave us in chains: “The effect of Welfarism on freedom will be felt later on—after its beneficiaries have become its victims, after dependence on government has turned into bondage and it is too late to unlock the jail” (65-66). The hyperbolic language of imprisonment gives greater moral weight to the notion of freedom, imbuing it with powerful moralistic overtones. This notion of creeping “dependency” serves as a key link between the libertarian and traditionalist positions, because it establishes economic freedom as a precondition for living a virtuous life.

Goldwater’s invocation of an extreme state of dependency is concrete rather than abstract. For instance, he compares life in the “Welfare State” to the very real, tangible condition of unfreedom found in slavery: “Consider the consequences to the recipient of welfarism. For one thing, he mortgages himself to the federal government. In return for benefits—which, in the majority of cases, he pays for—he concedes to the government the ultimate in political power—the power to grant or withhold from him the necessities of life as the government sees fit. Even more important, however, is the effect on him—the elimination of any feeling of responsibility for his own welfare and that of his family and neighbors. A man may not immediately, or ever, comprehend the harm thus done to his character” (68). The claim is non-falsifiable; one need not

even realize that a dependency has fallen upon oneself. While the nature of this claim may seem to undermine its efficacy, it actually heightens it. Murray Edelman (1988) explains how non-falsifiable claims are often more persuasive than falsifiable ones (specifically referencing the claim that welfare harms character). Edelman writes, “The case is different for warnings about the hostile intentions of domestic or foreign regimes, charges that welfare checks destroy character, or allegations that fetuses feels pain as they are aborted. Such claims cannot find confirmation in anyone’s experience; but they win support for policies nonetheless. They are typically more effective in attracting political support than the problems that can be examined, for those who find such claims ideologically appealing need not worry about counterevidence” (30). This reverses the rational standard for argumentation; the most questionable claims thus become the most persuasive ones. As a result, it is important to understand Goldwater’s argument not in terms of what it proves or doesn’t prove logically, but in terms of how it satisfies its audience’s expectations and inculcates a way of thinking about politics.

Goldwater further elaborates on this “bondage” of “dependency” by contrasting it with his own moral standard of rugged individualism. He writes, “Consider the consequences to the recipient of welfarism. For one thing, he mortgages himself to the federal government. In return for benefits—which, in the majority of cases, he pays for—he concedes to the government the ultimate in political power—the power to grant or withhold from him the necessities of life as the government sees fit. Even more important, however, is the effect on him—the elimination of any feeling of responsibility for his own welfare and that of his family and neighbors. A man may not immediately, or ever, comprehend the harm thus done to his character” (68). The (dubious) assumption is that recipients of government assistance would otherwise be able to care for themselves and their communities, and that the assistance itself serves as a disincentive to carry

out these duties. By describing government assistance in very general terms, as if it is based in neither extreme hardship nor the redemption of an accrued benefit (as is the case with Social Security), he is able to portray the beneficiaries of such aid as being morally stunted by it.

The Welfare State does moral damage, in Goldwater's view, not only to the recipients of government assistance, but also to those who advocate and support it. He portrays the appropriation of tax money for this purpose as a kind of moral shortcut, an attempt to garner moral credit for generosity by confiscating others' wealth. He argues, "Consider, first, the effect of Welfarism on the donors of government welfare—not only those who pay for it but also the voters and their elected representatives who decide that the benefits shall be conferred. Does some credit redound on them for trying to care for the needs of their fellow citizens? Are they to be commended and rewarded, at some moment in eternity, for the 'charity?' I think not" (67). Again, he is utilizing the futility thesis to play to the conspiratorial leanings of his readership by positing an underlying selfish motive behind liberals' apparent generosity. In his view, the Welfare State thus destroys the moral worth of those who support government assistance just as surely as it does to those who are its beneficiaries. Goldwater does attempt to temper this seemingly callous position by proclaiming his support for voluntary charitable contributions. He explains, "Let us, by all means, encourage, those who are fortunate and able to care for the needs of those who are unfortunate and disabled. But let us do this in a way that is conducive to the spiritual as well as the material well-being of our citizens—and in a way that will preserve their freedom" (69). This position allows him to attack the moral worth of government assistance programs while supporting the work of charitable organizations, many of which are religiously affiliated and likely to be supported by his conservative readers.

Goldwater's invocation of the notion of "dependency" as the key link between liberty and virtue harkens back to colonial ideals. Unlike his read of the Constitution as being grounded in liberalism, however, here he is attempting to assert *republican* ideals. However, as I have described in a previous section, republicanism was concerned mainly with public virtue rather than private virtue. By placing his emphasis upon the private virtue of self-reliance, Goldwater is appealing to a lesser concern of the republicans. Moreover, early Americans embraced interdependence as a way of life. Wood (1992) describes how in colonial society, relationships of dependency could be found everywhere. In addition to the obviously dependent status of slaves, indentured servants, women, and children, more subtle relationships of dependency could be found throughout colonial society: "But all dependency in this still very traditional and hierarchical society was not so limited and so obvious. These conspicuous examples of legal and contractual dependence did not begin, in fact, to comprehend the thousand and one other, less palpable ways in which paternalism and dependence made themselves felt. This monarchical society had many other, more elusive devices for extracting obedience and deference" (56). Such patterns of "obedience and deference" made social relationships stable and predictable. But they also meant that no colonists could consider themselves truly independent. Crucially, they were aware of the truth that independence was always a chimerical ideal. Wood continues, "Despite the traditional English celebration of independence and liberty, no one in this hierarchical society could be truly independent, truly free. No relationship could be exclusive or absolute; each was relative, reciprocal, and complementary" (57). Thus, colonial life was marked by interdependence, rather than independence.

After the Revolution, the republican ethic evolved to stress the importance of independence. However, the founders who embraced this ideal were not particularly concerned

with self-reliance as private virtue for its own sake. Rather, they believed it was important in terms of one's ability to hold office and act disinterestedly for the sake of society. Wood writes, "Ultimately the most enlightened of the enlightened age believed that the secret of good government and the protection of popular liberty lay in ensuring that good men—men of character and disinterestedness—wielded power.... But no one paid more attention to this need for virtue than did members of that generation of North American colonial leaders who came of age in the middle decades of the eighteenth century" (109). Private virtue was thus a means to an end for the founders. Goldwater's valorization of independence for its own sake reflects a partial reading of republicanism that obscures their primary concern.

In his travels in the antebellum United States, Alexis de Tocqueville (1830) observed a dynamic of interdependence similar to the one Wood describes as existing in the pre-revolutionary era. Americans, Tocqueville wrote, understood virtue in utilitarian terms: "In the United States people rarely say that virtue is beautiful. They maintain that it is useful and give proof of this daily. American moralists do not hold that a man should sacrifice himself for his fellow man because it is a great thing to do; they boldly assert, rather, that such sacrifices are as necessary to the man who makes them as to the man who profits from them" (610-611). The interdependence Tocqueville found in the United States stands in stark contrast to Goldwater's demand for virtuous self-sufficiency. Tocqueville, as Chapter One indicates, saw in this interdependence an important safeguard against an all-consuming egoism.

In stressing the importance of private virtue over public virtue, then, Goldwater's rhetoric feigns concern with republican values, while de-emphasizing the very characteristics that republicans saw as most important. In so doing, he frames the values of individualism within the terms of a belief system profoundly opposed to individualism. Robert N. Bellah et al (1985)

explain how the radical individualism Goldwater advocates has in fact crowded out the very republican values he invokes. They write, “We have found that an emphasis on hard work and self-support can go hand in hand with an isolating preoccupation with the self, as Tocqueville feared would be the case. Indeed, work continues to be critically important in the self-identity of Americans, closely linked to the demand for self-reliance” (56). Goldwater’s belief system is in fact much more in line with what Bellah et al call “utilitarian individualism.” As they explain, “By the end of the eighteenth century, there would be those who would argue that in a society where each vigorously pursued his own interest, the social good would automatically emerge. That would be utilitarian individualism in pure form” (33). The ethic of utilitarian individualism, which stresses self-interest rather than virtue, undermines the very foundation of collective action. By wrapping this form of individualism within the language of republicanism, Goldwater is in sense invoking something different entirely: a moralistic individualism, grounded in personal freedom, which asserts the primacy of private virtue.

3.5 APPEALS TO FOLLOWERS OF AYN RAND

Goldwater’s linkage of libertarianism and traditionalism by infusing the discourse of capitalism with moralistic terms was not entirely new. It echoed the efforts of Ayn Rand to articulate a morality of individual achievement in the marketplace. Like Goldwater, Rand posited the hard-working, self-sufficient entrepreneur as the paragon of virtue. As Bellah et al explain, the entrepreneur is the embodiment of the individualist ethic: “The self-sufficient entrepreneur, competitive, tough, and freed by wealth from external constraints, was one new American character. Certainly much of the moral appeal of the self-made man is his apparent freedom, not

only from traditional restraints, but from the tight organization, the drudgery and banality, of so much of modern industrial life. The irony, of course, is that the entrepreneur's major historical role has been to create the modern industrial context" (44). This common hero of Goldwater and Rand points to a convergence in the worldviews, despite Rand's derivation of her morality from atheistic premises—a point Goldwater certainly could not endorse, given the constituencies to which he was appealing.

While Rand's morality was explicitly based upon an atheistic, anti-religious worldview, Goldwater's was rooted in theistic, Burkean language. One of the most powerful and polarizing voices of her era, Rand's 1957 novel *Atlas Shrugged* gave voice to the individualist sentiments of the libertarian wing of the movement. Nash (1976) writes, "Rand's forceful and Nietzschean novel quickly became enormously popular; within a few years it had sold well over a million copies. For many conservatives, especially the young, it was a powerful treatise. Certainly some of its themes—the wickedness and irrationality of the welfare state, collectivism, and all sorts of government intervention; the virtues of capitalism; the celebration of individual self-assertion—were (in somewhat less extravagant form) themes of the libertarian Right. But not all conservatives were pleased by *Atlas Shrugged*..." (Nash 156-7). Rand's popularity presented a challenge for the conservative movement: while her books effectively turned a generation of readers toward an anti-government philosophy strongly resonant with libertarianism, her dogmatic contempt toward religion and traditional values made a rapprochement with traditionalist conservatism impossible.

After much debate in the pages of *National Review*, her critics, including Kirk, Whittaker Chambers, Frank Meyer, and Garry Wills, won the day. Buckley himself would go on to denounce her philosophy, effectively banishing it from the ranks of the conservative movement.

As Nash explains, the divide between Rand and Buckley's *National Review* circle would eventually become total: "As William F. Buckley, Jr. reflected in the early 1960s, Rand's 'desiccated philosophy' was inconsistent with 'the conservative's emphasis on transcendence,' while her harsh ideological fervor was profoundly distasteful. Rand herself was similarly aware of the unbridgeable gap. *National Review*, she declared in 1964, was 'the worst and most dangerous magazine in America'; its mixture of religion and capitalism represented a sully of the rationally defensible (freedom and capitalism) with mystical, unconvincing obscurantism" (158). The level of vitriol coming from personalities as forceful as those of Buckley and Rand would seem to make any alliance between the camps impossible.

However, despite the chasm between Buckley and Rand, her books would continue to inspire young people to join the movement. Barry Goldwater would go on to figure out a way to leverage Rand's support while avoiding any backlash caused by embracing her philosophy publically. Burns (2009) recounts an exchange that occurred between Rand and Goldwater not long after her famous 1960 televised interview with Mike Wallace. She writes, "Goldwater told Rand, 'I have enjoyed very few books in my life as much as I have yours, *Atlas Shrugged*.' He enclosed an autographed copy of his new book, the best-selling *Conscience of a Conservative*. Shortly thereafter the two met briefly in New York. Rand followed up this encounter with a lengthy letter urging Goldwater to support capitalism through reason alone. Although she considered him the most promising politician in the country, Rand was distressed by Goldwater's frequent allusions to religion. ...Goldwater's response, which reiterated his Christian religious beliefs, was brief yet polite. Rand had a powerful admirer, but not a convert" (190-191). His ability to maintain a privately cordial relationship with Rand would later pay dividends in his 1964 run for the White House. During that campaign, Burns writes, "She told her readers it was

not necessary to endorse a candidate's total philosophy, only his political philosophy. On this basis Goldwater was still the best candidate, 'because freedom is his major premise.' ...Once Goldwater won the nomination she actively sought a role in his presidential campaign through their shared contacts, offering her help in any capacity" (204). Goldwater's skillful handling of the double-edged sword of Rand's endorsement demonstrates his knack for holding together factions of the conservative movement that others could not. More importantly, his re-interpretation of Rand's philosophy in traditionalist, theistic terms allowed him to harness the powerful moral appeal her books had to some conservatives, while not alienating the conservatives who were deeply opposed to her strident atheism.

3.6 POSTSCRIPT: THE DEBATE OVER FUSIONISM

Goldwater's attempt to describe and promote conservatism in a manner both ideologically coherent and broad enough to accommodate the various factions of the movement anticipated the efforts of Frank S. Meyer in his now-classic text, *In Defense of Freedom* (1962a). In this book and in subsequent *National Review* essays, Meyer, who called *The Conscience of a Conservative* "an epitome of that unity" between libertarianism and traditionalism, put forth a case that the two positions are but separate expressions of a unitary conservatism. He explains in the essay "The Twisted Tree of Liberty" (1962b) that conservatism "maintains that the duty of man is to seek virtue; but it insists that men cannot in actuality do so unless they are free from the constraint of the physical coercion of an unlimited state. For the simulacrum of virtuous acts brought about by the coercion of superior power is not virtue, the meaning of which resides in the free choice of good over evil" (17). As such, in Meyer's view, freedom is a precondition for virtue. However,

he is also careful not to prioritize libertarianism over traditionalism in this formulation, as the above passage may seem to imply. He explains, “In the political sphere the conservative consensus presently emerging in the United States regards freedom as an end; but, although it is an end at the political level, it is a means—as is the whole political structure—to the higher ends of the human person. Without reference to those ends, it is meaningless” (17-18). For Meyer, then, libertarians and traditionalists are natural and equal allies against the state.

Ironically, the greatest critic of Meyer’s approach, and by extension, that of Goldwater as well, was none other than *Conscience* ghost author L. Brent Bozell. It was Bozell who named this approach “fusionism” (a term Meyer himself never embraced.) For Bozell, such an approach could not serve as philosophical glue for conservatism, because the libertarian’s fundamentalist approach to freedom is inherently incapable of grasping or responding to the exigency of cultural decline. As he explained (1962) his position, “I doubt whether a movement dominated by libertarianism can be responsive to the root causes of Western disintegration. And we should not make any mistake about this. A movement that can accommodate libertarianism’s axiom *is* dominated by it: if freedom is the “*first* principle” in politics, virtue is, at best, the second one; and the programmatic aspects of the movement that affirms that hierarchy will be determined accordingly” (21). Bozell’s rapid conversion from one of fusionism’s great muses in 1960 to one of its biggest critics in 1962 is somewhat puzzling.

Kabaservice offers one explanation for Bozell’s change of heart. He explains that Bozell’s experience of Franco’s Spain led him away from his earlier libertarianism and toward a stridently traditionalist position: “As Goldwater’s ghostwriter, Bozell had affected a generally libertarian stance. Shortly after finishing *Conscience of a Conservative* in 1960, however, he had moved his family to Spain, where he was impressed by the Catholic domination of society

enforced by the dictator Francisco Franco. ... Bozell returned to the United States inspired to use government power to inhibit citizens' freedom and enforce their virtue. This was in keeping with the American tradition, he believed, since the Founding Fathers' writings contained 'not a hint of the ideology of freedom...not a word suggesting that freedom is the goal of the commonwealth'" (82). Such a conversion stands in stark contrast to Goldwater's continual evolution toward a more purely libertarian approach: he famously supported abortion rights and gay rights and feuded with leaders of the Christian right in his later years (Murphy 1998).

Moreover, Bozell did not go so far as to claim that libertarianism and traditionalism could not make common cause; his point was simply that there could be no philosophical union between the two. At best, the two might operate as strategic partners. In fact, in practice, libertarianism and traditionalism usually do still work in tandem: "A thousand times more often than not—given the kind of claims government makes these days—the prudent decision will be against the grant of power and in favor of leaving the individual and private groups on their own. But not always." (34). Thus, Bozell's rapid disavowal of the very approach he so successfully pioneered may be less dramatic than it first appears. Even so, given the rapidly divergent paths of Goldwater and Bozell, it is something of a wonder that the fusionism they together expressed in this book could even be possible. This is not to say that other rhetors would not have responded to the movement's exigency in somewhat similar ways in the absence of this book. It is, however, to point out that an alternative fusion would have been different in ways that are inherently unknowable—that a conservative movement constituted in different terms would be a different movement.

4.0 RON PAUL'S RECONSTITUTION OF A CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

While Goldwater relies primarily upon the jeopardy thesis, with a key assist from the futility thesis, Paul's text utilizes a more complex interaction of the perversity, futility, and jeopardy theses. This chapter makes the case that Paul uses the exigency of widespread disillusionment with Bush administration policies to reach out to liberals and encourage them to think conservatively. In so doing, he argues that the neoconservatives responsible for the Iraq War and civil liberties abuses are not really conservatives. Instead, he tries to reconstitute the conservative identity around the pre-Cold War, pre-Goldwater views of Robert Taft. Additionally, unlike Goldwater, he frames his book in populist, rather than elitist terms.

4.1 AN INVITATION TO CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT

Unlike Goldwater, Paul's purpose is not confined to defining, defending, or promoting "conservatism" per se. He rarely defines his views as "conservative" or "libertarian," instead portraying them as quintessentially American. His sole reference to a "conservative movement" writ large is to condemn its present state while not even clearly identifying himself with its past greatness: "A substantial portion of the conservative movement has become a parody of its former self. Once home to distinguished intellectuals and men of letters, it now tolerates and even encourages anti-intellectualism and jingoism that would have embarrassed earlier

generations of conservative thinkers” (2). The framing of his political ideology as “American” rather than “conservative” reflects his effort to broaden this movement and infuse it with new energy, reaching out to liberals who were disgusted by the Bush administration’s misadventures in foreign policy, civil liberties, deficit spending, and social policy—all of which Paul portrays as fundamentally un-American.

The most glaring difference in policy prescriptions between *Conscience* and *Revolution* is that while Goldwater advocates an extraordinarily confrontational stance toward the Soviet Union (going so far as to call for the development of tactical nuclear weapons in order to make the use of nuclear weapons thinkable in a potential future conflict), Paul advocates a radical military withdrawal and contraction in response to the perceived primary enemy of his own time, transnational Islamist terrorism. As such, Paul paints the Bush administration’s foreign policy adventurism as being rooted in a liberal, rather than a conservative, understanding of foreign relations. For Paul, the justification for the Iraq War echoes that used by “liberal” presidents such as Woodrow Wilson in his rationale for U.S. involvement in World War I and Lyndon Johnson in his rationale for U.S. involvement in Vietnam, rather than the more restrained foreign policies of conservative administrations. That both Goldwater and Paul take such extreme stances is not surprising; libertarianism, as we’ve seen, is a form of orthodoxy that calls for total commitment and leaves little room for pragmatic considerations. What calls out for explanation here is that libertarianism can accommodate such diametrically *opposed* positions. Part of this, of course, can be explained by the adversary’s capacity to harm Americans: the Soviet nuclear arsenal truly represented an existential threat to the United States, whereas it seems nearly impossible for non-state actors to acquire a capacity remotely as terrifying. The difference seems to be truly qualitative rather than merely quantitative. However, despite the clear differences between the

threats the U.S. faced in each instance, the differing rhetorical strategies require some critical exposition.

The positioning of foreign policy within the structure of each book is particularly telling. While Goldwater makes his extended case for “victory” in the Cold War at the end of his book, Paul calls for military (and foreign aid) withdrawal from most of the world at the beginning of his. One can infer that Goldwater was likely aware that his call for more usable tactical nuclear weapons might terrify certain readers, so he wanted to first lay a strong foundation for this discussion with his apocalyptic account of the threats faced by the free world. It would also indicate that Goldwater designed this section specifically for conservatives—those who have read appreciatively to the end of his book, rather than dabblers and skimmers. Paul, however, can be confident that his position places him firmly within the mainstream of American popular opinion at the time; while his opposition to the Iraq War might have been a minority position in the previous election cycle, by 2008, it was clearly the majority opinion. It thus serves as a strategic rhetorical gateway into Paul’s ideology: conservatives disillusioned by the Bush Administration as well as liberal Democrats might see Paul as not merely an ally, but also a prophet: most of the other presidential candidates in both parties had supported the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) in Iraq. Those who had since turned against it, like Senator John Kerry in 2004 and Senator Hillary Clinton in 2008, were seen as compromised candidates, and Obama’s underdog victory over Clinton for the Democratic nomination was largely attributed to his early opposition to the invasion. Paul’s placement of this discussion in his first chapter indicates that he believes, with good reason, that his unwavering opposition to the Iraq War gives a strong boost to his *ethos* and puts his readers in a position where they are likely to evaluate his more controversial stances in a favorable state of mind.

In this way, Paul is taking advantage of the radically different foreign policy environment as perceived by the American voter in 2008, as opposed to 1960. In the context of the Iraq War, as well as the other excesses of the security state under the Bush Administration, such as domestic surveillance, extraordinary rendition, and torture, on which American public opinion had long since soured, Paul's consistently dovish position was an asset, not a liability. Thus, the following passage can be read not only as a rejoinder to hawkish conservatives, but also as an invitation to dovish liberals: "Blowback should not be a difficult or surprising concept for conservatives and libertarians, since they often emphasize the unintended consequences that even the most well-intentioned *domestic* program can have. We can only imagine how much greater and unpredictable the consequences of intervention abroad might be" (19). According to Paul's logic, just as liberals' opposition to foreign policy adventurism was grounded in an understanding of unintended consequences, then, so should their approach to economic policy be. Paul is thus using his agreement with liberals on issues of war and civil liberties as a gateway to get them to accept the perversity thesis. And as we know from Hirschman, acceptance of the perversity thesis is a hallmark of conservative thought.

Paul's strategic leveraging of points of agreement with liberals to convert them to conservatism echoes the efforts of one of his mentors, economist and libertarian activist Murray Rothbard. Paul Gottfried (1993) recounts how Rothbard co-created *Left and Right: A Journal of Libertarian Thought*, which attempted to persuade libertarians to align themselves with the New Left, rather than with conservatives (43). Unlike most movement conservatives of the 1960s, Rothbard did not adhere to the doctrinaire anti-communism of the fusionist consensus. He distrusted his peers' obsession with communism due to its tendency to justify authoritarian

measures to counter the Soviet threat. Patrick Allit (2009) describes Rothbard's condemnation of the movement's uncritical acceptance of anti-libertarian policies in the name of anticommunism:

His views had remained the same, he wrote, since the late 1940s, when he first became a libertarian, yet having once been denounced as a man of the 'Neanderthal' right, he was now being condemned as part of the far left. The reason for this great shift was the fact that the American right had itself changed beyond recognition. In the 1940s it had opposed the Cold War, NATO, and intervention in Korea because it recognized militarism and conscription as 'instruments of mass slavery and mass murder.' But now it endorsed such commitments because of its obsessive anticommunism. Why had the right become internationalist and statist? First, because McCarthyism had mobilized the conservative masses in the name of anticommunism; second, because Buckley had been too willing to listen to the ex-communists who dominated his journal *National Review*; and third, because traditionalists like L. Brent Bozell and Russell Kirk...did not regard personal liberty as the value most to be protected and promoted (198-9).

That libertarianism can be used as a warrant for diametrically opposed foreign policy orientations at different times by Goldwater and Paul should not be surprising, then: even in the common context of the Cold War, libertarians could and did use the warrant of "freedom" to justify both an extremely confrontational stance against the Soviet Union and an extraordinarily isolationist position. The difference for Paul is that he happens to be writing during a time that a dovish position is an asset.

Paul's use of the perversity thesis is ample, and draws upon the Austrian economists who influence his understanding of liberty. He portrays the doctrine of unintended consequences as a rejoinder to any attempt at using government planning to solve economic problems. For Paul, it's simply an economic law that the unintended consequences of such planning are always negative. Attributing this view to Mises, he writes, "Ludwig von Mises noted that government interventions always produce consequences at odds with their intended effect—for instance, price controls on milk, designed to make milk more accessible, reduce the quantity of milk supplied and thus wind up making milk *less* accessible" (166). Within this perspective, the laws

of supply and demand are perfectly rational and efficient in government's absence, so any government intervention in the marketplace *necessarily* distorts this efficiency and creates more negative outcomes. It is not necessary to examine specific instances to determine if government policy is working, then; the mere fact of government intervention proves that the situation is not optimal.

Yet, Paul does give some examples of how specific government interventions have yielded perverse outcomes. This he does not in the spirit of arguing inductively, but in the spirit of offering illustrative examples of a principle. For instance, he argues at the start of his chapter on "Economic Freedom" that insofar as the government becomes a tool for wealth distribution, the rich will quickly learn to game this governmental function for their own advantage: "...people of all classes are happy to use the machinery of state, if they can get away with it, to benefit themselves instead of earning their way in the world honestly. The rich are more than happy to secure for themselves a share of the loot..." (70). In addition to the problem of regulatory capture by the rich and well-connected, other perverse effects include the withering away of private solutions to social problems. Over time, citizens come to expect the government to address all social ills, and so they fail to take actions that they would otherwise take to address them: "we have bought into the soul-killing logic of the welfare state: somebody else is doing it for me. I don't need to give of myself, since a few scribbles on a tax form fulfill my responsibility toward my fellow man" (85). Importantly, this logic is all encompassing; virtually any government program could be said to crowd out and de-incentivize potential private sector actions.

For Paul, government's tendency to worsen the social problems it attempts to address is merely a symptom of a deeper problem. One manifestation of this confusion is bureaucratic

hubris, which explains the difference between unintended consequences of state actors and those of the private sector. The very nature of these institutions and their incentive structures dictates these diverging outcomes. He writes, “The bureaucracy itself, with a vested interest in maintaining itself and increasing its funding, employs all the resources it can to ensuring that it gets a bigger budget next year, regardless of its performance. In fact, the worse it does, the more funding it is likely to get—exactly the opposite of what happens in the private sector, in which those who successfully meet the needs of their fellow men are rewarded with profits, and those who poorly anticipate consumer demand are punished with losses” (74). Here, Paul is echoing Adam Smith’s metaphor of the Invisible Hand, which ensures that positive social outcomes are best achieved through market competition, rather than central planning. For Paul, this is a matter of justice and not merely expediency. Businesses, acting virtuously in pursuit of self-interest, are justly rewarded for efficiently meeting the demands of their customers. Governments, also acting in self-interest, but incapable of doing so virtuously due to their lack of subjection to market discipline, can only be rewarded unjustly.

Paul’s habit of finding only negative unintended consequences from government action, rather than a mix of both good and bad ones, is a hallmark of the perversity thesis. By attributing such regularity to these outcomes, Paul, like Goldwater, is painting human nature as unduly hubristic. Hirschman explains, “The perverse effect is a special and extreme case of the unintended consequence. Here the failure of foresight of ordinary human actors is well-nigh total as their actions are shown to produce precisely the opposite of what was intended; the social scientists analyzing the perverse effect, on the other hand, experience a great feeling of superiority—and revel in it” (36). Yet, due to Paul’s appeals to perversity rather than futility, the hubris attributed to those who would use the government to achieve beneficial ends carries a

different valence. At first blush, futility arguments appear to be less harsh denunciations of proposed changes than arguments from perversity, because they assert no real harm from the effort. Yet in Hirschman's view, these are ironically even more devastating than arguments from perversity, because they deny the very possibility of change at all. For Hirschman, at least "a world in which the perverse effect is rampant remains accessible to human or societal intervention" (75). When futility reigns, the would-be reformer seems to be thwarted entirely.

That the futility thesis offers a more damning indictment of reform than the perversity thesis stems from the two arguments' respective attributions of the reformers' motives. We can see this dynamic clearly when contrasting the rhetoric of Goldwater with that of Paul. Whereas Goldwater portrays liberalism as evil, Paul sees it as foolish and misguided; that is, Goldwater's reliance on the futility thesis operates within what Kenneth Burke (1937) called the "tragic frame," while Paul's reliance on the perversity thesis utilizes Burke's "comic frame." Hirschman makes a similar observation about this difference in frames. He writes, "To convey this idea, [purveyors of the perversity thesis] use the terms 'well-meaning' and 'well-intentioned' widely and condescendingly. Those who started the chain of events that led to the perverse result are portrayed as lacking, ridiculously and perhaps culpably, in elementary understanding of the complex interactions of social and economic forces" (76). This sums up Paul's tone well. It also sets up a rather stark contrast with Goldwater's tone, steeped in the paranoia of anticommunism. Hirschman explains the difference as follows:

With the futility thesis there is a considerable change. Once again, it is typically shown that policies pretending to empower the powerless (through democratic elections) or to make the poor better off (through Welfare State arrangements) do nothing of the kind and rather maintain and consolidate existing distributions of power and wealth. But to the extent that those responsible for the policies are right among the beneficiaries, the suspicion arises that they are by no means all that innocent or well-intentioned. Their good faith is being questioned, and it is suggested that the social justice and similar goals that serve as justifications for

the policies pursued are nothing but smoke screens hiding the most selfish motives (76-77).

Paul's shift from the tragic frame to the comic one has several important implications. First, it opens up the possibility of dialogue with liberals by setting them up as interlocutors to be engaged rather than as adversaries to be defeated. By attributing to liberals a modicum of decency, Paul is extending an invitation to at least consider what the world looks like through a conservative lens. Second, it serves to heighten the exhortation to his devoted followers. By implying the existence of human agency, Paul is encouraging these readers to participate in the "revolution" he advocates.

However, even in these examples, Paul hints that the perversity thesis is merely a secondary argument, and that the real thrust of his opposition to the welfare state lies elsewhere. The quotations from *Revolution* at the beginning of this section condemn those who rely on the government for their own benefit. It's not simply a matter of government programs exacerbating the problems they attempt to solve, then. Rather, as Paul argues, they destroy the freedom at the heart of the American character. This commitment to the principle of freedom over the utility of government actions is made clear throughout the text, but most succinctly in the following passage: "I would choose freedom even if it meant less prosperity, but thankfully we do not face such a choice" (100). The perversity thesis, which attacks the utility of government action, thus makes Paul's libertarianism easier to swallow, but it by no means reveals Paul's commitment to anti-government views as being based on utilitarian considerations.

While the perversity thesis plays an important role, then, Paul's complementary argumentative strategy is the jeopardy thesis. The real and potential loss of a fragile and hard-won social value, liberty, is his primary stated reason for opposing federal efforts to achieve other goals, rather than the tendency of those efforts to backfire. Though Paul is making a more

comprehensive argument against existing government programs, and not merely against newly proposed ones, his primary argumentative strategy fits the definition of the jeopardy thesis. He celebrates “liberty” as the ultimate social value, and portrays government attempts to promote other social values (such as economic equality) as inherently dangerous. Such conflict between liberty and other social values is necessary, due to Paul’s understanding of liberty in negative terms, as the absence of government action. He writes, “We should respect each other as rational beings by trying to achieve our goals through reason and persuasion rather than threats and coercion. That, and not a desire for ‘economic efficiency,’ is the primary moral reason for opposing government intrusions into our lives: government is force, not reason” (5). This stark dichotomy between government as coercion and the market as free association is central to Paul’s argument. The possibility of coercion by business is never entertained, and thus the perhaps overly neat dichotomy is sustained.

Hirschman notes that the simplicity of this form of argument and its reliance upon ancient myths of tragic figures who give up something of value in order to gain something without value makes it especially powerful: “The argument that a new advance will imperil an older one is somehow immediately plausible, as is the idea that an ancient liberty is bound to be more valuable or fundamental than a new (‘newfangled’) one. Jointly these two arguments make a powerful case against any change in the status quo” (123). For Paul, such mythology is centered on the Founding Fathers, portrayed as immensely wise giants with preternatural powers of foresight, whose gifts we mock at our own peril. The Constitution is the embodiment of their wisdom, perfectly designed to prevent any branch of government from becoming too powerful and taking away our hard-won liberties. In fact, it was designed to prevent us from expanding the scope of government in precisely the way Americans have, and that the Founders knew we

would try to: “There would always be a powerful temptation to allow the federal government to do something many people wanted, but that the Constitution did not authorize” (45-46). By endowing the Founders with such superhuman powers of foresight, Paul heightens his depiction of current events as foolish, and places his call for us to return to more traditional, limited government within a simple but powerful mythic framework. The “jeopardy thesis” requires this strict delineation between the wisdom of the past and the foolishness of the present, made possible by the uniquely American understanding of a “constitution” as a singular document rather than the accumulated wisdom of the ages.

Paul’s assertion of the absolute value of liberty, like Goldwater’s, relies primarily upon Weaver’s “argument from definition” rather than the “argument from circumstance.” As a deontological rather than consequentialist libertarian, Paul explicitly rules out the possibility of letting circumstances determine our course of action: “Should we give up the First Amendment because times have changed? How about the rest of the Bill of Rights? It’s hypocritical and childish to dismiss certain founding principles simply because a convenient rationale is needed to justify foolish policies today. The principles enshrined in the Constitution do not change” (10). His powerful statement against arguments from circumstance reflects a core tenet of the conservative movement, strongly influenced by Weaver and later articulated by Goldwater, that one should always argue from definition rather than from circumstance. For Weaver, arguing from definition allows one to state powerfully the principles behind one’s action, whereas arguing from circumstance places one in the unenviable position of merely reacting to (and thus upholding) the ultimate principles of one’s opposition. Writing at the height of New Deal consensus liberalism, he decries Republicans’ reliance on the argument from circumstance in his own time, “which never wins any major issues, and sometimes, as we have noted, they are left

without the circumstance” (82). As Chapter Three argues, much of the distinctiveness and influence of Goldwater’s style is based upon an adherence to Weaver’s maxim, which contrasts sharply with other conservative voices of the time. Paul’s argumentative style is a continuation of that tradition, which emphasizes the need for conservatives to offer a profoundly different vision of government than that of liberals, rather than negotiating different policy outcomes based on a shared vision. Pragmatism and compromise are among his chief enemies.

Like Goldwater, Paul is as likely to criticize fellow conservatives and Republicans as he is to criticize liberals and Democrats. In his view, members of both parties and both ideological persuasions have become too meek to stand up to real abuses of power and unnecessary growth of government that threaten our freedom and prosperity. Liberals, with whom he shares certain views on civil liberties and foreign policy, are trapped in the compromising position of whiggism that Weaver decried: “Needless to say, I am also unimpressed by the liberal Left. Although they posture as critical thinkers, their confidence in government is inexcusably naïve, based as it is on civics-textbook platitudes that bear absolutely zero resemblance to reality. Not even their position on unnecessary wars is consistent...” (3). One of the areas in which liberals’ lack of realism betrays them, in Paul’s view, is in their approach to the so-called “welfare state.” Paul’s retort to those who wish to use the state to alleviate poverty is that they are simply unwilling to face the cold, hard reality that government can’t afford to do so. He argues, “Issues like these are predictably portrayed as contests between generous souls who want to provide for their fellow men on the one hand, and misers and misanthropes who care nothing for the suffering of their fellow citizens on the other. I should not have to point out that this is an absurd caricature. The fact is, *we do not have the resources to sustain these programs in the long run*” (83; emphasis in original). Oddly, this criticism of liberals for being unrealistic cedes the very ground of idealism

Weaver was so intent on reclaiming for conservatism. However, for Paul, his libertarian position reflects an even deeper, more fundamental, and more sustainable idealism.

Whereas liberals are too detached from reality in Paul's view, conservatives are too attached to expediency to stand up for their principles. Like Goldwater, Paul sees his fellow conservatives' lack of spine as their primary weakness: "Today, few Republicans in public life have been courageous or principled enough to speak out against a clear abuse of power" (44).

He's also unafraid to call them out by name at times. He writes, "Toward the end of 2007, Senator Jeff Sessions declared, 'Some people in this chamber love the Constitution more than they love the safety of this nation. We should all send President Bush a letter thanking him for protecting us.' What kind of sheep must politicians take Americans for if they expect us to fall for creepy propaganda like this?" (125). Such stridency of tone in attacking his fellow Republicans (including President Bush himself at times) illustrates his commitment to principle over party. It also demonstrates the persistence of Weaver's criticism of conservative whiggishness, despite the ascendancy of conservatism and its forceful enunciation in the intervening half-century.

4.2 POPULISM

Thus far, I've discussed Paul's usage of perversity and jeopardy claims, but the third type of argument, the futility thesis, seeps into Paul's rhetoric as he embraces the populist frame. This greatly complicates the analysis, as it introduces a feature—the combination of perversity and futility arguments—that Hirschman presents as a logical incompatibility. This section will

explain Paul's use of the populist frame, and attempt to offer an explanation for the implications of this complicating factor.

To begin, populism has often been understood as a commitment to a particular set of policy proposals. Michael P. Federici (1991) exemplifies the view of those who say that populism must be understood as more than a rhetoric. He writes, "It is common to characterize a politician as populist when he uses rhetoric that appeals to the common man or when he declares that he too is an ordinary individual. But if populism refers to something worth defining, it must be reserved for individuals and political movements that embrace more than the rhetoric of populism. The term *populism* is trivialized in the news media when it is used so loosely. Such use of the word tends to conceal important features and often radical tendencies" (26; emphasis in original). In this view, populism is not a rhetoric at all, but a program for political action. For Federici, instances of right-wing populism must include a call for popular sovereignty. He continues,

What ultimately drives the right-wing populist to political action is the belief that he is being treated unjustly. This belief stems, in part, from the populists' skeptical attitude toward elites, especially intellectuals and high government officials. It is their contention that the simple hard-working people understand what needs to be done but that the elites stand in the way of progress. Elites are a large part of the cause of most political and social problems. Consequently, populists are skeptical of anything that prohibits the people from directly determining government policy. Insofar as they oppose constitutional measures to restrain the momentary popular will, populists are anticonstitutionalists. Yet it is conceivable that, in certain circumstances, populist opposition to constitutional checks on the majority will be compatible with constitutionalism (39).

The conundrum Federici faces is that conservative populism, understood as a call for popular sovereignty, conflicts with the deference to the Constitution that characterizes much conservative movement discourse. Therefore, he simply says that "certain circumstances" might "conceivably" allow for a fusion of populism with constitutionalism. I would argue that the

frequency with which this fusion occurs serves as a counterpoint to Federici's contention; that in fact, conservative populism embraces constitutionalism as one of its core features. Federici's assumption that conservative populism requires a program of popular sovereignty is precisely the problem; his understanding of populism as a particular political program is what leads him astray.

More recent theorists have made a powerful case that populism, often mistaken as a political program, is in fact an extraordinarily flexible rhetorical frame capable of accommodating diverse political positions (Kazin 1998; Berlet and Lyons 2000; Frank 2004; Lee 2006). Lee, for instance, demonstrates how populism provides a consistent rhetorical frame for rhetors as divergent as the leftist Huey Long and the segregationist George Wallace, as well as that of the Declaration of Independence. Though the respective rhetorics of Long and Wallace seem to have little common, each uses the frame of populism to encourage "the people" to rise up against a powerful "elite," destroy a "system" designed to keep them powerless, and claim their rightful destiny. While Lee assumes a natural affinity between populism and progressive movements, ruptured only later by the co-optation of populist themes by reactionaries, both Kazin and Berlet/Lyons show how conservative forces have utilized populist frames since the earliest days of the Republic.

Though he does not make such a connection, Lee's description of the structure of such appeals closely mirrors the structure of the American jeremiad. He writes, "The populist vision, or its 'restorationism' in Richard Hofstadter's view, locates political victory in the resurrection of a simpler idealized history. Specifically, populism begins with the constitution of a virtuous 'people,' then envisions a robust 'enemy,' decries the current 'system,' and finally finds the promise of reform in 'apocalyptic confrontation'" (358). All of the elements are here: a people

who have lost touch with a past promise, facing a powerful enemy who must be defeated in an apocalyptic showdown in order to return the people to their past glory. Schematically, the primary difference between Lee's articulation of populism and Edwards' description of the jeremiad is that the lost covenant is now expressed in terms of both an "enemy" and a corrupt "system." Yet it is easy to see how positing a "lost covenant" can entail both of these barriers to rebirth.

The Revolution follows the people-enemy-system-confrontation structure Lee outlines for populist appeals. In fact, each of these elements can be found in kernel form just in the closing lines of the book, which serve as an exhortation to readers to take up the revolution started by the Founding Fathers and continued by Paul's supporters. He urges his readers as follows:

The last line of defense in support of freedom and the Constitution consists of the people themselves. If the people want to be free, if they want to lift themselves out from underneath a state apparatus that threatens their liberties, squanders their resources on needless wars, destroys the value of their dollar, and spews forth endless propaganda about how indispensable it is and how lost we would all be without it, there is no force that can stop them. If freedom is what we want, it is ours for the taking. Let the revolution begin (181).

Each of these elements Lee articulates can be found throughout the text, demonstrating the explanatory potential of understanding Paul's appeals through the lens of populism.

4.2.1 The People

In *The Revolution*, Paul goes to great lengths to describe his supporters in terms of their diversity, in the most inclusive manner possible. He writes, "I have never seen such a diverse coalition rallying to a single banner. Republicans, Democrats, Independents, Greens, constitutionalists, whites, blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, antiwar activists, home-schoolers, religious conservatives, freethinkers—all were not only involved, but enthusiastically so. And

despite their philosophical differences in some areas, these folks typically found, to their surprise, that they rather liked each other” (4). Elsewhere, Paul explicitly defines “the people” in the broadest possible terms: as every individual in society, aligned only against government power. His statement appears as a stinging rejoinder to those of any political persuasion who would appeal to race, class, gender, or any other category of division: “The only us-versus-them thinking in which we might indulge is the people—*all* the people—versus the government, which loots and lies to us all, threatens our liberties, and shreds our Constitution. That’s not a black or white issue. That’s an American issue, and it’s one on which Americans of all races can unite in a spirit of goodwill” (66). On the surface, these are remarkably inclusive statements, functioning as a rebuke of appeals to identity. However, as Kenneth Burke (1950) notes, every statement of identification necessarily entails division. This problem is the source of what Chantal Mouffe (2009) calls the “paradox of liberal democracy”: the necessity of asserting human equality while simultaneously drawing a boundary line between who counts as a member of the *demos* and who does not (40). For Paul, the problem is that “the government” is no abstract entity; it consists of millions of people. Are federal workers part of “the people” or part of “the government” in this delineation?

Aside from the problem of having to make arbitrary distinctions between “people” and “government,” Paul violates his own dictum of making no other distinctions when he postulates certain handmaidens of government, namely the media. Throughout the text, he takes jabs at the media for upholding conventional wisdom rather expressing common sense. To cite just one representative passage, he writes, “Now whenever a Great Bipartisan Consensus is announced, and a compliant media assures everyone that the wondrous actions of our wise leaders are being taken for our own good, you can know with absolute certainty that disaster is about to strike”

(160). This further complicates the neat dichotomy he attempts to draw between “people” and “government”; if the media is not part of government but represents its interests and does its bidding, on which side of the divide does it thus fall?

The cracks opened up in Paul’s people vs. government dichotomy point to the impossibility of building a coalition around *all* of the people. The discursive boundaries of “the people” are necessarily arbitrary. As Michael C. McGee (1975) notes, there is always a gap between the rhetorical construction of “the people” and objective reality; its invocation is mythic rather than purely descriptive. Some characteristic of the people must be emphasized at the expense of others, which necessarily postulates certain people as being more representative of “the people” than others. This defining characteristic does not simply describe an underlying unity, but in fact *constitutes* the very term “people” as deployed by the author. As Ernesto Laclau (2005) puts it, “In order to have the ‘people’ of populism, we need something more: we need a *plebs* who claims to be the only legitimate *populus*—that is, a partiality which wants to function as the totality of community” (81). As such, appeals to “the people” are necessarily rhetorical: they rely on the trope of synecdoche to identify some part of the people as representative of the whole.

Michael Kazin (1998) offers an explanation of populism’s characteristic synecdoche. For Kazin, what defines “the people” across both rightist and leftist populist discourses is their role as *producers*. He describes the producerist ethic as follows: “A producer ethic [was] the central element in populist conceptions of ‘the people’ well into the twentieth century. By the 1830s, it had already become gospel for political candidates and mass orators. Producerism was indeed an ethic, a moral conviction: it held that only those who created wealth in tangible, material ways (on and under the land, in workshops, on the sea) could be trusted to guard the nation’s piety and

liberties” (13). This ethic is closely associated with working class values; indeed, the very name “working class” invokes it as a defining characteristic. As the basis of a political rhetoric, producerism provides a powerful means of flattering one’s audience, while turning its ire against anyone portrayed as lazy and unproductive. While the producer is populism’s hero, the parasite is thus populism’s enemy.

4.2.2 The Enemy

Populism’s “enemy” of the parasitic freeloader is a remarkably fluid target, capable of accommodating radical discourses on both the right and the left. While the populist ethic invariably portrays the working class as its paragon of virtue, it leaves open the possibility of portraying either the very rich or the very poor as the parasitic enemy. While leftist populists decry a parasitic upper class that siphons away the fruits of workers’ labor in the form of profits, rightist populists take aim at a parasitic lower class that live off taxpayers’ largesse in the form of “entitlements.” Lee describes a shift from left to right over time in the deployment of the populist frame. Whereas populism was once the language of progressives like William Jennings Bryan and Huey Long, conservatives have also utilized appeals to “the people” to promote their own agenda. Lee locates George Wallace as a key figure in transformation of this discourse from left to right. He explains, “The once radical language of ‘debt-ridden farmers,’ ‘craft and industrial unionist,’ and socialists was frustrated by conservative politicians including anti-communists, the Christian Right, Nixon, Reagan, and George Wallace. George Wallace spearheaded this transformation” (368). Such a transition played a key role the “Southern Strategy,” whereby Republican presidential candidates appealed to the racial resentments of southern whites in order to break the century-long Democratic electoral stranglehold over the South. Jefferson Cowie

(2010) writes, “As an independent candidate in 1968, and again as Democratic primary challenger in 1972, Wallace drew together the segregationist South with anti-liberal northerners fearful of blacks moving into their neighborhoods, questioning the protests, and feeling, above all, simply forgotten” (80). This appeal to a feeling of resentment and being forgotten among working class whites formed the basis of Nixon’s successful appeals to a “silent majority.”

Jeremy Engels (2010) describes the rhetoric of resentment as an appeal to emotion that circumvents deliberation. The audience of such rhetoric, once convinced of their victimhood through powerful emotional appeals, can be convinced to target their rage at both real and imaginary enemies. Such feelings, once stoked, cause those who perceive themselves as victims to engage in scapegoating. “Rather than promoting deliberation,” Engels writes, “such rhetorics can coerce publics and manufacture consent by manipulating the vitriolic emotions that often accompany the feeling that one is a victim. When rhetorics cultivate hostility toward the perceived cause of suffering, they become deeply problematic—especially when one is not really a victim, or when one has identified the cause of suffering incorrectly” (304). As populism allows for the expression of resentment in both upward and downward directions, it can be used by those who wish to redirect the economic anxieties of voters onto cultural out-groups. Such is the rhetorical “achievement” of Wallace. Following his lead, Nixon recognized that working class white economic anxiety can be channeled away from economic elites and toward minorities, once they are perceived as the illegitimate beneficiaries of federal largesse. Engels explains, “Nixon was a master at dividing in order to bring together. He was also a master at stoking resentments in order to win votes and secure support, turning division into victimage and justifying the rage of one side at the other” (314).

The Southern Strategy was eventually employed by, among others, Ronald Reagan, whose notorious use of the “welfare queen” bogeyman in the 1976 campaign is a classic example of reliance on racially coded, while not explicitly racist, language. Lee Atwater, who later became an aide to Reagan and managed George H. W. Bush’s 1988 presidential campaign, demonstrated his mastery of the technique with the infamous “Willie Horton” ads in that year’s election. In an originally anonymous interview, Atwater described the tactic with surprising honesty: “You start out in 1954 by saying, ‘Nigger, nigger, nigger.’ By 1968 you can’t say ‘nigger’—that hurts you. Backfires. So you say stuff like forced bussing, states’ rights, and all that stuff, and you’re getting so abstract. Now, you’re talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you’re talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is, blacks get hurt worse than whites” (qtd. in Perlstein 2012). This growing abstraction of racially charged rhetoric allows candidates to appeal to voters’ perhaps unconscious racist sentiments, while allowing the rhetor to appear above the fray and avoid offending other voters’ sensibilities.

Ron Paul’s racially charged comments in his newsletters decades ago also attempted to tap into this powerfully populist message. In *The Revolution*, such racial language is completely absent. There are no racially coded references to “welfare queens,” and Paul meticulously employs universalist language throughout the text. Libertarian columnist Matt Welch (2008) congratulates Paul for disavowing his previous racially-charged rhetoric, claiming that “It turns out that spreading a ‘freedom message’ directly is more effective than trying to camouflage it in collective resentment.” Welch describes how in 1991, “Paul was making good money with monthly newsletters that savaged [Martin Luther] King as a ‘lying socialist satyr’ who ‘seduced underage girls and boys’ and mocked the very idea of dedicating a holiday to the civil rights leader.” He goes on to recount other racially charged comments from Paul’s infamous

newsletters, celebrating “how far American politics, and libertarian politics in particular, have progressed in two short decades.” However, Atwater’s comment demonstrates how racial resentment can be (and is) stoked even without explicit reference to race.

Such implicit appeals are an example of the enthymeme, which functions by means of invoking premises shared by one’s audience without actually stating them. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle described the enthymeme as “in general, the most effective of the modes of persuasion” (1355a6). There are multiple advantages to this technique. First, it allows the author to harness powerful beliefs already held by the audience, causing them to in effect persuade themselves rather than allowing for the possibility of disagreement. Second, it boosts the author’s *ethos* by indicating that s/he shares values with the audience that need not be stated explicitly. Third, it creates polysemy in the text; audiences who share the unstated premise will connect with it, while audiences who do not share it may not detect it and thus won’t take offense.

Edwin Black (1965) offers an explanation as to why this use of the enthymeme can only occur in late stages of movements. He writes, “Enthymemes do not begin to figure importantly in the controversy until after some set of premises has been established as convictions of the auditors, and established with relatively deep and abiding intensity. Once these premises have been established, there can follow the heresies, doctrinal disputes, purifications of faith, and mimetic-oratory that characterize an established universe of discourse” (176). In other words, the key premises of the movement must already be accepted by its adherents for this technique to work. We can infer that if Goldwater had attempted to use a similar enthymeme, his audience would have lacked the context to be persuaded by it. Only after decades of stoking resentment of “parasites” could Paul employ this argument effectively.

Modern research confirms the power of this very enthymeme in yet another way. According to Drew Westen (2008), racially coded appeals are extraordinarily effective in persuading those who consciously oppose racism but unconsciously harbor racial prejudices. He explains, “Coded racial appeals present one message consciously and another unconsciously. They provide ‘plausible deniability’ while simultaneously activating unconscious networks that usually work in tandem with the conscious message to ratchet up its emotional power. If you simultaneously activate an unconscious network about scary black men while focusing people’s attention on a furlough program for dangerous criminals, you’ll get a very different effect than if you run the furlough appeal without the unconscious prime” (226). Thus, the unconscious mind gets a powerful emotional prime, while the conscious mind, on guard against being perceived as racist, does not have to feel guilty.

Yet even in Wallace’s case, such resentment often was not expressed in explicitly racial terms, but as animosity toward the government itself. This involved two key transformations. The first was the transformation of his stand against racial minorities into a stand against the federal government, by means of an appeal to “states’ rights.” According to Kazin, “Remarkably, Wallace had converted his failure to stop two black students from attending a public university into a forceful symbol of protest against the centralized government about which most Americans always felt uneasy” (232). Note that while Goldwater made similar arguments regarding states’ rights, his own position was not a populist one due to his assumption of an explicit elitism (at least in *Conscience*, though Chapter Five returns to this subject.) The second transformation involved the reinterpretation of populism’s “enemy” as “big government” itself. In his populist formulation, “big government,” rather than the “big business” of Long, served as the bogeyman elite against which the virtuous “people” were rhetorically opposed. As Lee

explains, “With ‘big government’ supplanting ‘big business’ as the enemy in the narrative, Wallace’s brand of populism effectively captured the anti-government spirit of the American revolutionary narrative and the Southern civil religious narrative; accordingly, it changed the political direction of populist agitation” (371). While appeals to racial resentment may have become more sophisticated over time in the way Westen describes (and Atwater admits), their enthymematic character was thus present in some form at least as far back as Wallace.

This enthymeme is central to Paul’s populist appeal, even in the universalist language he uses in this text. The government itself serves as a stand-in for the racial out-groups characterized as “unproductive” and thus outside the producerist formulation of “the people” articulated in cruder formulations of right-wing populism. Like the image of the “welfare queen,” the government is portrayed as a parasite, stealing our hard-earned wealth in the form of taxes in order to enact policies outside of its legitimate domain of policy. The tropes of people-as-producers and government-as-parasite are present throughout the text, but nowhere more clearly stated than when Paul is explaining his view of taxation. Drawing a metaphor between military conscription and the income tax, he argues, “In another chapter I explain my opposition to the military draft, an institution based on the idea that the government owns its citizens and may direct their destinies against their will. The income tax implies the same thing: government owns you, and graciously allows you to keep whatever percentage of the fruits of your labor it chooses. Such an idea is incompatible with the principles of a free society” (78). While the people are virtuous due to their productivity, the government is sinful due to its parasitical theft of what they produce.

Unlike many on the right, Paul spends little time dwelling on “entitlement programs,” and even when he does discuss them, he’s careful to distance himself from past articulations of

racial resentment. But such explicit distancing only increases the power of the implicit appeal. In the rare instance Paul does bring up “entitlements,” he makes two basic arguments about them. The first is that these programs are unsustainable at current spending levels, which reinforces the image of the government as inept and unworthy of trusting with our tax dollars. The second appears surprisingly humane; he writes, “In the short run, in order to provide for those we have taught to be dependent, such programs could survive. My own suggestion is to fund this transition period by scaling back our unsustainable overseas commitments” (83). By valuing such programs more highly than military expenditures, he’s able to establish himself as thoughtful and humane, reaching out to a progressive audience unlikely to be persuaded by more strident articulations of the case against entitlements. However, the phrase “those we have taught to be dependent” is particularly rich with meaning, as it manages simultaneously to uphold and reverse the image of the recipient of government aid as parasite. While the “welfare queen” image accusingly portrays such recipients as intentionally deceitful and gluttonous, this one condescendingly presents them as the unwitting victims of government’s arrogance. They remain parasites, but the blame is now shifted to what Paul claims is the true parasite: government itself.

For Paul, government is a particularly powerful enemy because its growth is self-perpetuating. He writes, “If the history of American government teaches us anything, it is that the time to fight oppressive and absurd programs is *before they are established*, since once they are in place they are essentially impossible to dismantle. They need to be blocked before they have a chance to start. Otherwise, local programs with federal funding will grow larger and larger and be found in many more localities, until we finally have a mandatory federal screening program. This is how it always works” (135; emphasis in original). Here, Paul is stating the “inevitability thesis,” a version of a “slippery slope” argument that states that the growth of

government power carries a certain momentum rendering still further growth inevitable. This position has been attributed to famed Austrian economist F.A. Hayek, a vociferous critic of government economic intervention, but Hayek himself refuted this interpretation of his work as overly deterministic (Caldwell 2007, 29). Paul's argument, more fatalistic even than Hayek's, heightens the depiction of government as enemy that must be stopped before it grows too powerful to rein in. Though he displaces most of the racial coding used in his own and others' earlier denunciations of the "Welfare State," enough residual force remains here for it to function as a powerful enthymeme.

4.2.3 The System

Paul's image of the government as a coercive parasite, voraciously devouring the wealth of the virtuous and productive people, captures but part of the target of his scorn. For Paul, what maintains this flagrantly unconstitutional arrangement between the people and the government is a vast system of social control, making it impossible for us to think outside narrow contours of the politically possible. His portrayal of this system is somewhat Platonic, in that he stresses the strict limitations of human understanding inside the "cave" of this system. Unlike Plato, however, he has no use for the Noble Lie—he calls upon all citizens, rather than a select few, to escape the cave and embrace the truth of freedom.

In appealing to the pervasiveness of this system of thought control, Paul is tapping into a worldview long shared by movement conservatives. Richard Hofstadter (1965) describes the "paranoid style" of the purveyors of this worldview. The true believer in what Hofstadter calls the "pseudo-conservative revolt," due to its insistence upon revolution rather than maintaining the status quo, "believes himself to be living in a world in which he is spied upon, plotted against,

betrayed, and very likely destined for total ruin. He feels that his liberties have been arbitrarily and outrageously invaded” (45). The paranoid pseudo-conservative sees a vast network of coercion, made up of “liberal” institutions such as the media and academia, conspiring to prevent the people from exercising their freedom.

Paul appeals to this worldview throughout the text. He does so rather carefully, never naming those involved in a conspiracy to mislead against the American people, but instead invoking a conspiratorial worldview in order to create the sense that we are being misled. This distinction is important, because the former would invalidate Paul’s appeal to moderate readers by marking him as an extremist. The latter allows him to reach out to reach out to multiple audiences at once, confirming the paranoid beliefs of some, while maintaining his credibility with the rest of his readers. His primary tactic for negotiating this tension is his frequent use of the passive voice, which allows him to assert a conspiracy without having to name any actual conspirators. For instance, he argues, “Once again, Americans are deprived of a full and fruitful debate on a subject of the utmost importance. The entire range of debate is limited to minor tinkering: should the Fed make this trivial adjustment or that one? Read the major newspapers and watch the cable news channels: you will not see any fundamental questions raised. The debate will be resolutely confined to superficialities” (137). Paul is thus able to claim the “denial” of our right to discuss fundamental issues without having to tell us who is doing the denying. Such a rhetorical move is especially powerful when it comes to conspiratorial claims about an institution as broad as the media, as it would strain credulity to argue that everyone employed in an industry so broad could somehow be implicated in a conspiracy.

For Paul, the “system” subjugates us by distracting us with “superficialities” rather than allowing us to address “fundamentals.” The dichotomy between these terms forms the basis of

his indictment of the system. By keeping us distracted with pseudo-issues, the system defends itself from any true challenges. He explains, “But instead of thinking about what this means for how we conduct our foreign and domestic affairs, our chattering classes seem incapable of speaking in anything but the emptiest platitudes, when they can be bothered to address serious issues at all. Fundamental questions like this, and countless others besides, are off the table in our mainstream media, which focuses our attention on trivialities and phony debates as we march toward oblivion” (x). In this way, we are thwarted from grasping any reality more profound than that of the pseudo-issues covered by the cowardly and compliant media.

Paul’s willingness to take on other leaders of the conservative movement serves his purpose well in this area. For him, even many of those who speak loudly of reducing the size of government are in fact defending the system by getting us to focus on trivial issues. For instance, he describes the “Contract with America,” a list of campaign promises made by a group of conservative Republicans who won a congressional majority in 1994, as a “toothless, soporific agenda that was boldly touted as a major overhaul of the federal government. Nothing could have been further from the truth” (3). In contrast to those who describe the 1994 Republican takeover as a “revolution,” then, Paul portrays it as another instance of rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. He describes the goal of many conservatives to eliminate legislative earmarks in much the same terms: a fiddling with superficialities that prevents us from the far more fundamental task of revolutionizing the role of the federal government.

Somehow, though, the people’s common sense is stronger than the mass manipulation of the system. Again, Paul must walk a fine rhetorical line here. If the people can grasp “fundamental” issues despite the best efforts of the system, then the system is a meaningless foe. But if the system’s coercion is total, then the people’s struggle is doomed to failure. Paul must

attribute just enough power to each side of the battle to make it a fair fight. The following passage demonstrates how he accomplishes this:

Most people don't know what's causing it, but they correctly sense that something in our economic system is rotten. Neither political party will speak to them frankly and honestly. Instead, the people are told by the talking heads on television that their rulers know just what is wrong and will promptly put things right. A little monetary manipulation by the Federal Reserve is all the economy needs, and there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the system. These contrived, self-serving answers satisfy very few, but they are all the answers the American people are ever given (137).

Once again, his use of the passive voice allows him to describe a conspiracy without any actual conspirators. More importantly, by postulating two different levels of understanding, he's able to negotiate the tension between asserting the power of the system and proclaiming the ability of the people to overcome it. At one level, the people are unable fully to understand the causes of their subjugation. At some deeper level, they "sense" that something is wrong. Thus, they are simultaneously aware and unaware of the need for the revolution they are compelled to bring about. This allows Paul to represent his work as merely helping the people to understand what they already in some sense know and believe. Such positioning lowers his readers' defenses, increasing the likelihood of their reading his text sympathetically rather than oppositionally.

4.2.4 The Confrontation

The apocalyptic confrontation urged by populist rhetors is the clearest point of convergence between the jeremiad and populism. Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons (2000) make reference to this convergence point when they describe the populist vision of "palingenesis." In describing the Ku Klux Klan as an example of repressive right-wing populism, they write (quoting Roger Griffin), "Palingenesis has been central to the ideology of fascism, whose 'mobilizing vision is

that of the national community rising phoenix-like after a period of encroaching decadence all but destroyed it.’ (This also replicates a prophetic theme from apocalyptic Christian narratives of the final battle between good and evil)” (61). Palingenesis is not confined to “repressive right-wing” movements, however. It can also be found in populist discourses that attempt to appeal to a broad audience, such as *The Revolution*. By calling upon his readers to overthrow the developments of the twentieth century and return to the founders’ vision of freedom and limited government, he’s making a radical, and not merely conservative, argument. Its radicalism takes on the form of palingenesis.

Consistent with Paul’s attempts elsewhere to use the explicit language of moderation while implicitly appealing to a more radical readership, the “revolutionary” confrontation he urges is described in peaceful terms rooted in American history. Despite his efforts to portray the stakes as incredibly high, the confrontation itself appears to be rather non-threatening. At times, the term “revolution” refers to a present-day continuation of the American Revolution itself. He writes, “This revolution, though, is not altogether new. It is a peaceful continuation of the American Revolution and the principles of our Founding Fathers: liberty, self-government, the Constitution, and a noninterventionist foreign policy. That is what they taught us, and that is what we now defend” (6). At other times, the term seems to refer to a more specific movement among his supporters: “The revolution my supporters refer to will persist long after my retirement from politics” (7). In each case, however, he is carefully borrowing the spirit of the revolutionary without endorsing any actually revolutionary actions.

The apocalypse Paul forewarns is not a biblical one, nor even a necessarily violent one. It will happen in the realm of economics, due to the profligacy of federal spending. He explains, “All of this is going to come to an end sooner or later, because financial reality is going to make

itself felt in very uncomfortable ways” (x). He claims that the laws of economics dictate this outcome, which heightens his rhetorical effect by portraying the narrative as scientific rather than ideological. Ultimately, the apocalyptic scenario if we fail to change our ways arises from the specter of hyperinflation. He argues, “When I say ‘bankruptcy,’ I do not mean that the federal government will stop writing checks and spending money. The federal government is not likely to go out of business anytime soon. I mean that the checks and the money won’t buy anything, because the dollar will have been destroyed” (36). The matter-of-fact tone here masks an underlying narrative that is familiar to readers of other works obsessed with the possibility of hyperinflation. In this narrative, a primary cause of Hitler’s rise to power was the hyperinflation of the deutsche mark, which impoverished the German people and paved the way for their acceptance of the genocidal totalitarianism of Nazism. Paul himself makes reference to this narrative in his chapter on foreign policy, not long before the passage quoted above: “Thanks to [America’s] intervention [in World War I], not only did the Allies win, but they were also now in a position to impose the punitive Versailles Treaty on a defeated Germany. It is not at all a stretch to say, as many historians have indeed said, that Wilson’s decision to intervene gave inadvertent impetus to Hitler’s politics of extreme nationalism” (25). The specter of hyperinflation, then, acts as an enthymeme by invoking totalitarianism looming on the horizon as a result of inflationary deficit spending. Those familiar with this narrative will make the connection (and are primed to do so by the reference to Hitler’s rise only eleven pages earlier), heightening the rhetorical effect. Meanwhile, those who are not steeped in the narrative will interpret hyperinflation as a merely undesirable economic consequence. The enthymeme allows Paul to have it both ways: utilizing the rhetorical power of the invocation of Hitler, while not

being forced to articulate or defend the shaky logic that leads directly from deficit spending to National Socialism.

The populist structure of people-enemy-system-confrontation thus enables Paul to achieve powerful rhetorical effects. However, his invocation of a powerful enemy that must be defeated is somewhat more consonant with the futility thesis than with the perversity thesis he more frequently utilizes. As I've explained earlier in the chapter, this indicates a certain contradiction. How, then, is it possible for Paul to utilize both without each undercutting the other? First, logical incompatibility does not imply a lack of persuasive effect; logical consistency is only one of many tests an audience might apply to a discourse in determining whether to accept it, and it is rarely the most determinative factor. Second, the two arguments (and the different degrees of human agency they imply) apply to two different targets. The foolishness Paul sees in liberals' efforts at reform is compatible with the attribution of evil intentions in those who actually exercise government power, if we recognize that these are two different groups of people. Indeed, given Paul's strict dichotomy between "the government" and "the people," there is not necessarily any overlap at all. He can depict liberal citizens as foolish, and the government that carries out their wishes as evil, without logical contradiction. Therefore, there need not be any logical contradiction between the two theses as long as they each posit different adversaries. In fact, this combination of arguments might be the most persuasive of all: it allows Paul to reach out to liberal readers as potential converts, while also heightening the effect of his populist appeal by portraying an evil adversary. It also asserts just enough human agency to allow for the possibility of the people's victory in their confrontation with government power.

4.3 THE EMBRACE OF SOCIAL ATOMISM

While the previous section argued that *The Revolution* uses polysemy, or the openness of the text to multiple interpretations, to appeal to multiple audiences with conflicting worldviews, this section suggests certain outcomes to this approach. Namely, by offering “the people” a vision of liberty defined almost entirely in negative terms, Paul largely fails to elucidate a persuasive alternative to the system he decries.

Freedom is defined almost entirely negatively for Paul, as the mere absence of government intervention. The closest he comes to a positive definition is to assert its indivisibility: “Freedom means that we understand liberty as an indivisible whole. Economic freedom and personal liberty are not divisible” (109). Perhaps the problem stems from the impossibility of justifying first principles in terms of their desirability. Still, rhetorically this presents a problem for Paul. It is often unclear what his vision of the free society looks like at all, given both his negative definition and his wide range of appeals to both conservative and liberal policy goals.

McGee’s (1980a) conception of the “ideograph” is helpful here, because it allows us to interpret Paul’s vision of “freedom” not in terms of an explicit definition, but in terms of the vision of society Paul describes and invokes. For McGee, ideographs such as “freedom” are “easily mistaken for the technical terminology of political philosophy” (5). We take their meanings as stable, when in fact they embody a variety of different, even contradictory values that can be only determined by context of their actual usage in concrete situations. As McGee explains, “The significance of ideographs is in their concrete history as usages, not in their alleged idea-content” (9-10). In the case of this text, we can elucidate Paul’s understanding of liberty by looking at the examples he uses of its function in society, which are few and far

between. Often, his examples of activities that should be legal are ones he morally opposes; even when fighting tooth and nail for freedom, it's usually a matter of principle, not of support of its actual exercise. The war on drugs should end—but we shouldn't use drugs. States should be free to set their own laws regarding abortion—but no one should choose abortion. Like Goldwater, Paul strongly supports the exercise of government power at the state and local levels. He writes, “This is the constitutional approach to deciding all issues that are not spelled out explicitly in our founding document: let neighbors and localities govern themselves” (62). Yet even here, he has virtually nothing to say about what states and municipalities should do with this power, or how its exercise differs from the coercive character of federal power. His is a vision of freedom from which we should usually refrain.

One positive exercise of liberty he does suggest is that of persuasion: “We should respect each other as rational beings by trying to achieve our goals through reason and persuasion rather than threats and coercion. That, and not a desire for ‘economic efficiency,’ is the primary moral reason for opposing government intrusions into our lives: government is force, not reason” (5). While this quote functions primarily as a statement of principle over expediency, stating his oft-repeated dichotomy between coercive government action and free association, it at least hints at a positive conception of freedom: a civil society with vigorous debate, where a free exchange of ideas allows us to influence one another in a productive and mutually helpful manner. Even here, though, the vision is not particularly vivid.

The one exception, the one positive vision for society Paul elaborates in detail is the competition of the marketplace. For Paul, accumulation of capital and increased productivity promise virtually unlimited progress, and serve as his positive image of freedom. For instance, Paul stresses the achievements of the market in improving living standards throughout the world.

“Never before in the history of the world have so many people seen such an improvement in their living standards,” he writes. “And these wonderful results have come about quite in spite of official development aid programs devised in the West. They are, instead, the natural result of the market economy” (101). This argument co-opts the desire of progressives to alleviate poverty by claiming that the market can actually do so better than collective action. The mixed economic system of the status quo is what allows this argumentative move; success stories become proof that capitalism is working, while any negative effects can be chalked up to government aid.

Co-optation of capitalism’s critics is one of Paul’s most common argumentative moves. The devastating boom-and-bust cycles of the economy, writes Paul, are the result of government intervention, not the workings of the free market. He argues, “Financial bubbles simply happen, the political establishment tells us; these bubbles are an unfortunate but inevitable side effect of a market economy. That is nonsense. But it is convenient nonsense for some people, and that’s why it gets repeated so often” (156). His condemnation of corporatism mimics that of *laissez-faire*’s progressive critics, but turns their rage against unfair business practices into an argument for even freer markets. Rather than serving as a counterbalancing force against the monopolistic accumulation of capital, government intervention actually helps it along:

The real history of regulation is not so straightforward. Businesses have often called for regulation themselves, hopeful that their smaller competitors will have a more difficult time meeting regulatory demands. Special interests have helped to impose utterly senseless regulations that impose crushing burdens on private enterprise—far out of proportion to any benefit they are alleged to bring—but since those interests bear none of these burdens themselves, it cost them nothing to advocate them (91).

This is one of Paul’s greatest rhetorical strengths: his ability to turn arguments designed to critique the efficacy of free markets into arguments proving their desirability. Rather than opposing the values of capitalism’s critics, he uses the force of their own arguments to prove

how capitalism best achieves the outcomes in line with their values. Yet even in these examples, he's criticizing the lack of a free market in the status quo rather than celebrating what its virtues might look like. Even here, his vision of freedom is illustrated only by the negation of the status quo, and not by a vividly positive alternative.

Paul rarely delves into specific business practices to make these points, but one industry he does examine is that of health care. When it comes to medical services, Paul recognizes the inadequacy of the American health care system. Rather than justifying such a system to a likely skeptical audience, he instead portrays its shortcomings as the result of government intervention: "On the other hand, just about everyone is unhappy with the health care system we have now, a system some people wrongly blame on the free market. To the contrary, our system is shot through with government intervention, regulation, mandates, and other distortions that have put us in this unenviable situation" (86). Paul, a longtime practicing physician, speaks with rare concreteness when discussing this issue. His ground-level experience dealing with medical payments gives his perspective a concreteness lacking in his more abstract analysis of, for instance, foreign aid. An alternative he suggests is based upon his familiarity with a medical colleague who chose to forego the standard system of billing insurance providers, instead "practic[ing] medicine as most doctors did 40 years ago, when patients paid cash for ordinary services and had inexpensive catastrophic insurance for serious injuries or illnesses" (90). Notice the slippage between past and present here, though. The insurance he describes as "inexpensive" was so in the past, not the present. The implication is that insurance geared only toward catastrophic illness would create a significant cost savings for patients, ignoring the likelihood that the astronomical cost of treatment for more serious conditions is the primary driver of cost increases. It's not clear at all that simply cutting out an intermediary payer for the less costly

office visits would result in significant cost savings—unless the savings simply come from not having health insurance at all. As Paul points out, this doctor’s “patients are largely low-income working people who cannot afford health insurance but don’t necessarily qualify for state assistance” (90). Such a payment scheme is therefore probably a lot cheaper than buying health insurance, but only because it excludes coverage for emergency care, specialist visits, or treatment for catastrophic illness.

Despite Paul’s references to his personal experiences in the medical field, his position here relies heavily on the perversity argument and its corollary, which Paul attributes to economist Ludwig von Mises, that the unintended consequences of government action create further calls for intervention, leading to a “destructive spiral of more and more government control” (88). The perversity thesis thus serves as a positive argument in favor of the free market, rather than simply an argument against government intervention. This points to a potential answer to the riddle left unanswered early in this chapter: why develop the perversity thesis to such a great extent when the position depends ultimately upon the jeopardy thesis? For Paul, the perversity thesis is not merely an argument against government action; it’s the very basis of his endorsement of capitalism. This, in turn, serves as his main illustration of why liberty is the primary (and perhaps only) value he truly endorses. Without this positive vision, there would be nothing worth defending against government intrusion—his vision of liberty would be virtually empty. Even with this celebration of the wonders of free enterprise, however, Paul’s negative definition of liberty leaves us with a rather threadbare vision of a free society. This vision has the virtue of being a blank slate upon which readers of various ideological persuasions might project their ideal society. But its emptiness also undercuts the jeopardy thesis by leaving us with little of importance that needs to be protected from the “tyranny” of government growth.

Paul's use of the populist frame does, however, suggest a possible slight turn away from the extreme individualism articulated by Goldwater. This can be seen in their varying appeals to the philosophy of Ayn Rand. Rand's influence upon Paul is perhaps even greater than her influence upon Goldwater. Paul frequently invokes her philosophy. In this book, for instance, he provides a suggested reading list, entitled "A Reading List for a Free and Prosperous America." There are only several annotations to this list, but one of them appears under the listing for Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*. Paul writes, "I consider all of Rand's novels worth reading, in spite of my strong disagreements with her on important matters" (190). The unstated "important matters," we can presume, have to do with her staunch atheism. Nonetheless, the fact that Paul is able to mention her by name indicates that the libertarian wing of the movement, with whom her philosophy is most consonant, has grown in power vis-à-vis the traditionalist wing since Goldwater's time.

Paul's producerist appeals, moreover, highlight a slightly different aspect of Rand's beliefs than do Goldwater's advocacy of moralistic individualism. Rand's philosophy features both of these appeals: it condemns both the lack of productivity and the lack of self-reliance of those she describes as "moochers." By focusing on the first of these, rather than the second, Paul offers at least some possibility of social interdependence. By asserting the moral worth of citizens in terms of their productivity, rather than their independence, Paul emphasizes economic exchange rather than social atomism. Though the focus is still upon private virtue rather than public virtue, there is at least some recognition of the inevitability of interdependence. Whether this recognition leaves open the possibility of interdependent social relationships outside of the medium of economic exchange is another question entirely.

There is, however, another sense in which Paul's appropriation of Rand is even more reactionary than that of Goldwater. Goldwater's understanding of self-reliance is based on the notion, traceable to Adam Smith, John Locke, and Karl Marx alike, that individuals rightfully own the fruits of their own labor. This notion, known as the "labor theory of value," marks one of the key points of departure between classical liberalism and modern libertarianism. Modern libertarians, such as Paul, deny the labor theory of value in favor of the notion of "marginal utility," which states that consumer demand, rather than producer labor, determines the value of goods. The virtue of production, in this view, is not labor itself, but the effective ability to shift resources in order to respond to consumer demand. In other words, productivity, for libertarians, is a characteristic of capital, rather than labor. Paul's producerist appeals thus require a great deal of rhetorical ambiguity: he must flatter his readers by implying that their hard work makes them virtuous producers, while maintaining the position that economic value comes from capital, not labor. This ambiguity helps account for the rise of conservative populism, a rhetoric that invokes "the people" to protect the interests of the rich and powerful.

For all of Paul's celebration of individual liberty against the tyranny of government, he elucidates few possibilities for human action outside of participation in capitalist enterprise. In this text, we can see the radical individualism expressed by Goldwater taken to its logical extreme. His expressed understanding of the individual brings to fruition the nightmare vision of those conservatives from Tocqueville to Nisbet who warned against the dangers of social atomism. The individual liberty Paul holds dear offers the living, breathing individual little sustenance, other than one single, ultimately chimerical promise—the right to be left alone.

5.0 LIBERTARIAN CAMPAIGN TEXTS, PAST AND PRESENT

This dissertation attempts to offer insights into both rhetorical theory and rhetorical criticism. At the level of theory, it tries to demonstrate that an alternative approach to the study of genre is possible—one that accounts more fully for the particular functions of discourses by highlighting both the similarities and the differences between texts, rather than erasing their differences for the purpose of taxonomical classification. As such, it posits Hirschman’s theory of perversity, futility, and jeopardy theses as one possible means for understanding how seemingly similar statements of conservative movement doctrine also diverge in key ways. It also tries to demonstrate that “constitutive” and “instrumental” approaches to the study of rhetoric are complementary, rather than mutually exclusive. Texts that constitute “the people” in particular ways are usually created in the service of instrumental ends, and the study of rhetoric can help illuminate the ways in which such appeals work.

At the level of criticism, this dissertation argues that the libertarian presidential campaign books of Barry Goldwater and Ron Paul share in common a view of government action as essentially threatening to the core value of liberty. Each thus relies heavily on the jeopardy thesis, which allows each to assume the mantle of the revolutionary, rather than that of the reactionary or counterrevolutionary. Meanwhile, the two rhetors diverge in their usage of the other two theses. Goldwater’s reliance upon the futility thesis represents his liberal adversaries as enemies to be destroyed—a representation that serves his interest in building a coalition within

the Republican Party of those who already self-identify as conservative. Paul's extensive use of the perversity thesis paints his liberal adversaries as interlocutors to be persuaded—a depiction that serves his interest in building a trans-partisan coalition that would include liberal critics of the Bush administration's excesses in the areas of civil liberties and foreign policy, while inviting them to consider the conservative understandings of other policy areas, as well. However, a complication arises in this secondary usage of the futility thesis, suggesting that the perversity and futility theses, contrary to Hirschman's theory, might be combined effectively in certain cases.

The rest of this chapter explores some of these implications for both theory and criticism. It suggests ways in which this approach might be useful in other critical contexts, while also pointing out some of its key limitations.

5.1 CONSTITUTIVE AND INSTRUMENTAL RHETORICS

One of the aims of this dissertation is to firm up a particular brick of rhetoric's foundation by defending it against the charge expressed by political scientist George Edwards (2003), but emblematic of a particular though significant strain of social scientific literature, that “the best work on presidential rhetoric...contained many assertions about the effect of rhetoric but virtually never offered proof, much less systemic evidence, on behalf of these causal inferences” (x). The implication—that only empirical methods can yield significant insights into rhetoric—is pervasive, and it has forced the study of rhetoric into a defensive posture regarding the utility of its methodological orientation. David Zarefsky's (2004) response to Edwards is instructive here. He cautions critics to be more alert to the dangers of using causal language inappropriately, in

order to avoid the charge that they are making claims unsupported by empirical evidence. He explains, “the remedy is not for rhetorical critics to morph into empirical social scientists, but rather for them to be more precise about what they are claiming and to eschew misleading causal language when it does not fit” (610). Even here, though, the response is framed in the negative; it speaks more to what critics should avoid than to what they should do.

Perhaps in reaction to Edwards’ existential assault on the study of presidential rhetoric (and by extension, the humanistic study of rhetoric in general), interest in the study of “constitutive rhetoric” has increased in recent years. Maurice Charland, a pioneer in this approach to rhetoric, considered rhetoric’s “instrumental” and “constitutive” functions as mutually exclusive. As a result, “constitutive rhetoric” has become a shelter for those seeking refuge from the critics of instrumentalism—a way of theorizing about rhetoric without making any causal claims. This move can lead critics to engage in a form of retreat from articulating anything significant about rhetoric, and while it achieves the goal of dodging Edwards’ critique, it ends up placing the study of rhetoric in a tenuous position.

Fortunately, I believe, such self-effacement is unnecessary. The problem with Edwards’ position is that he has an extraordinarily limited notion of instrumentality. Most of his empirical evidence has to do with immediate public reactions to presidential speeches advocating discrete legislative items. While it may be the case that such speeches had little short-term effect on the congressional docket, this is not the only sense in which rhetoric can be said to have effects, as both George Lakoff’s (2002, 2009) studies on conceptual frames and the literature on the rhetoric of social movements would attest. Rhetoric is not always about “moving the needle” on policy proposals; it can also, as this study argues, work over the course of decades to affect

profound changes in the way we define ourselves, and thus in the political choices we make and the manner in which we pursue these ends.

Rhetoricians need accept neither Edwards' position that causality can only be proven via reference to public polling data, nor Charland's position that rhetoric can be either instrumental or constitutive, but not both. Moreover, the recognition of a connection between rhetoric's constitutive and instrumental functions need not collapse the distinction entirely. James Jasinski (1998) describes how a critic might usefully explore the connections between rhetoric's constitutive and instrumental dimensions while also upholding a conceptual dichotomy between the two. He writes,

It seems clear that constitutive influence...is frequently epiphenomenal. In these cases the challenge to the rhetorical historian is to trace the slow transformation of subjectivity, temporal and/or spatial experience, sense of community and political culture, and/or language as they are articulated and rearticulated in discursive action. But it seems equally clear that rhetorical action embodies a purposive element that should be taken into account in analysis. The challenge posed by Giddens's position is how to reintroduce intentionality into constitutive inquiry in a way that does not completely collapse the distinction between instrumental and constitutive inquiry (78).

Keeping in mind a conceptual distinction, while being alert to the senses in which given discourses exhibit both instrumental and constitutive dimensions, would seem to be the best way to navigate this issue.

In contrast to the defensive posture assumed by the retreat from instrumental claims, this dissertation attempts to shift the study of constitutive rhetoric away from its current defensive posture by demonstrating that a rhetoric that takes identification as its primary aim can also be profoundly persuasive, and that a humanistic approach is capable of articulating its persuasive content. Oppositional presidential campaign rhetoric is a particularly powerful form of such rhetoric that is both instrumental and constitutive, because by its very nature it attempts to

articulate a vision of national identity that persuades its audience to act in a specific way. By means of a criticism of two similar libertarian campaign texts from two different eras, this dissertation attempts to demonstrate that rhetoric's instrumental and constitutive functions are both consistent and determinable by the tools of rhetorical theory and criticism.

One of the arenas in which the interplay between rhetoric's constitutive and instrumental functions can be most clearly seen is that of contemporary politics. Amy Gutmann (2003) suggests ways in political discourse demonstrates how constitutive rhetoric must be understood instrumentally. She writes, "There now can be little reasonable doubt that mutual identification around a partisan group identity plays a central role in the official institutions of democratic politics. As the literature on party identification amply demonstrates, the relative successes and failures of political parties cannot be adequately understood without attending to the ways in which parties succeed or fail in calling upon and cultivating mutual identification among members" (5). The cultivation of group identity, then, forms one step in the process of persuasion. Recognizing the connections between identification and persuasion allows the critic to illuminate this process. The benefits of doing so would seem to outweigh those of maintaining a too-neat distinction between constitutive and instrumental approaches simply for the sake of theoretical clarity.

The usefulness of Gutmann's approach can be seen clearly both in the work of Todd Gitlin (1995) and in Guttman's response to it. Gitlin argues, in a manner similar to the reasoning of this dissertation, that conservative leaders such as Reagan have enjoyed success due to their appeals to identity. By contrast, liberals have failed to utilize constitutive rhetoric effectively. He explains, "By contrast to the revitalization Reagan seemed to offer, the Democrats offered no commonality, no alternative crucible, no compelling rhetoric, no political culture—only a heap

of demands piled on demands. Reagan told Americans, especially whites, who they were, and equally important, who they were against; Democrats told Americans, especially women and minorities, about their interests” (79). Gitlin’s theory, in one sense, bolsters the thesis of this dissertation in its assertion of the primacy of appeals to identity. However, he goes on to say that the embrace of “identity politics” has rendered liberal rhetoric ineffectual. This is because they’ve abandoned what he calls “the politics of equality” in favor of “the politics of identity.” In Gitlin’s view, the left has focused on particularistic definitions of identity, while conservatives like Reagan have grounded their appeals in universalism. As a result, the more powerful rhetorics of the “old left,” centered around universalist conceptions of labor rights and civil rights, have withered, while the “new left” has embraced a less efficacious invocation of racial, ethnic, and religious identities.

However, Gutmann points out that Gitlin’s critique is not an indictment of “identity politics” per se. Though the decline of unions may be attributable to the left’s shift in emphasis toward specific personal identities, this results not from an emphasis upon identity, but from an emphasis on the *wrong* identities. She explains, “At one time, unions did better, but their decline, and their relative lack of success in the United States compared to in many European countries, is attributable in no small part to the weakness rather than the strength of identity politics: the considerably weaker identification of American workers with a working class group identity than their European counterparts” (22). The key, then, is not to stop using constitutive rhetoric, but to learn to use it better. By defining its constituencies in broad terms, rather than narrow ones, the left might be able to counter the right’s conception of Americans as radical individualists with its own constitution of “the people” as interdependent citizens.

5.2 THE RHETORIC OF LIBERTARIANISM

In order to grasp the possibility of an effective progressive articulation of constitutive rhetoric, it helps to understand its conservative manifestations first. This dissertation is one entry in the effort to do so. It finds in the texts of Goldwater and Paul both remarkable continuity and profound differences. This is an expected finding for a study that spans the course of nearly half a century in the history of modern American conservative movement. Insofar as libertarianism is an ideology rooted in a simple dialectical opposition between a virtuous, productive people and a vicious, kleptocratic government, we would expect to see great continuity in its articulations over the years. To the extent that it is also a discursive formation, forged within and responsive to the particular situational elements of its time, we would expect to see great variation amongst its respective expressions, in accordance with the turbulent changes of post-war U.S. This section summarizes and expands upon the implications of those similarities and differences.

5.2.1 Key Rhetorical Similarities

The jeremiad. Both discourses can be seen as embodiments of the jeremiadic form, but this should be seen as a starting point, not an endpoint, for analysis. The revolutionary spirit that pervades the modern conservative movement makes the jeremiad a powerful and omnipresent form in conservative discourse. Its narrative of the impending loss of a profound covenant is deeply consonant with the conservative worldview. Meanwhile, its assertion of the rhetor's revolutionary *ethos* motivates its audience to act to reclaim its rightful ownership of precious, hard-won rights. The jeremiad invokes not the caution and prudence of an Edmund Burke, but the radicalism of a Thomas Paine. While the recognition of this recurring form may help yield

critical insights, an overemphasis upon it as the “genre” of conservative discourse presents several pitfalls. First, it mistakes the rhetor’s definition of the situation for the situation itself, thus masking an artistic choice as an indication of an objective exigency. Second, it stresses origin at the expense of function, making it difficult for the critic to make observations about how the text actually works. Third, in its emphasis upon etymology, it risks highlighting the wrong factors by implying that its underlying worldview is rooted most strongly in Puritan biblical values, and ignoring the competing belief systems, such as republicanism and individualism, from which a discourse draws. Finally, it offers little possibility for the critical elucidation of intra-generic difference.

Negative liberty. Both Goldwater and Paul build their texts around simplistic understandings of power. They both rely on the dialectical oppositions of government/people and tyranny/liberty, as if power in the hands of the government is necessarily bad, and in the hands of the people is necessarily good. This allows them implicitly to affirm uses of power by the people that may in fact infringe upon certain liberties. In this respect, they are relying on a particularly cramped conception of “negative freedom,” one far more limited than the conception of Isaiah Berlin (1969), the philosopher with whom the term “negative freedom” is most closely associated. Even Berlin, who champions “negative liberty” as a necessary correction to conceptions of liberty that unduly valorize government power, recognizes however that there are many values against which liberty must be weighed and balanced. He writes, “The extent of a man’s, or a people’s, liberty to choose to live as they desire must be weighed against the claims of many other values, of which equality, or justice, or happiness, or security, or public order are perhaps the most obvious examples. For this reason, it cannot be unlimited” (170). Berlin explains that his emphasis upon negative liberty has been misunderstood as an absolute rejection

of competing values. In fact, he says, he intended this emphasis as a tactical corrective to the rise of statism in the twentieth century: “Whereas liberal ultra-individualism could scarcely be said to be a rising force at present, the rhetoric of ‘positive’ liberty, at least in its distorted form, is in far greater evidence, and continues to play its historic role (in both capitalist and anti-capitalist societies) as a cloak for despotism in the name of a wider freedom” (xlvi-xlvii).

Jeopardy. By valorizing liberty in its negative form as the only value worth protecting, both authors rely heavily upon what Hirschman calls the “jeopardy thesis,” which presents contemporary efforts at reform as threatening to more fundamental, fragile, and hard-won rights bestowed to us by our ancestors. Thus, these texts demonstrate a key purpose of the jeopardy thesis: to portray the rhetor as a revolutionary, rather than as a reactionary. By setting up the author as a defender, not an opponent, of core rights, the jeopardy thesis borrows the revolutionary *ethos* in defense of the existing hierarchy. Robin (2011) explains how conservatives who thus position themselves rearticulate the claims of the powerless, but in defense of the powerful. He writes, “The conservative, to be sure, speaks for a special type of victim: one who has lost something of value, as opposed to the wretched of the earth, whose chief complaint is that they never had anything to lose. His constituency is the contingently dispossessed—William Graham Sumner’s ‘forgotten man’—rather than the preternaturally oppressed” (58). As such, the conservative leverages the revolutionary spirit, but turns its valence around in the service of reaction.

Virtue. Both Goldwater and Paul are libertarians at their core, taking great pains to convince traditionalists that their respective positions are resonant with cultural conservatism. As a result, both moralize “independence” or “self-reliance” as opposed to “dependence.” This allows them to couch their positions in terms suitable to traditionalists without fully buying into

religious dogma (with which neither is entirely comfortable.) Each therefore presents a vision of society in which liberty is the fundamental value, but in which this liberty is particularly amenable to promoting virtue.

Trans-partisan Appeals. Both rhetors are attempting to appeal to certain Democrats to join the conservative movement. Goldwater invokes states' rights in an effort to encourage southern conservative Democrats to abandon their ancestral party and join forces with the new conservative movement rising up within the GOP. Paul is after an entirely different demographic within the Democratic Party: those repulsed by the policies of the Bush Administration in the areas of foreign relations and civil liberties. While these attempts to constitute and reconstitute the conservative movement by inviting Democrats into the movement seem to have little in common, they both represent examples of constitutive rhetoric. While Goldwater is trying to constitute the conservative movement around a coalition of libertarians, traditionalists, and anticommunists, Paul is trying to reconstitute it by excommunicating the hawkish descendants of the anticommunists and replace them with the dovish descendants of the pre-Cold War Taftite conservatives.

5.2.2 Key Rhetorical Differences

Futility and Perversity. Though both authors rely heavily upon the jeopardy thesis, Goldwater also employs the "futility thesis," which denies the possibility of achieving anything at all through government action. Paul builds much of his argument around the "perversity thesis," which asserts that government actions achieve the opposite of their desired effect. The futility thesis does bleed through his argument, though, as posits the evil intentions of government bureaucrats. While the appeal to futility operates within Burke's tragic frame, stressing good and

evil, the appeal to perversity utilizes the comic frame, stressing wisdom and foolishness. Each is a product of its own time. On the one hand, Goldwater's denunciation of liberalism is steeped in anticommunism, with its paranoid belief that liberals harbor totalitarian motives. On the other hand, Paul's critique of liberalism is based on the economic theory of unintended consequences, which takes reformers at their word that they intend positive outcomes, but asserts that their naivety dooms their projects to failure. While the first sets up an apocalyptic conflict between the forces of good and evil, the second presents an opportunity for constructive engagement. The dichotomy Paul draws between "the government" and "the people" makes his combination of the futility and perversity theses possible; those who advocate reform are depicted through the lens of perversity, while those who enact it are portrayed through the lens of futility.

Populism. While Goldwater rejects the use of populist appeals, Paul embraces them. This difference stems from the differing purposes of the texts. In 1960, Goldwater was attempting to appeal to conservative activists, rather than the general public. It made sense for him to take an elitist stance, appealing to these activists' mistrust of the populism of Democrats. The utility of this appeal quickly wore off, though, as Goldwater failed to gain much traction in the 1964 general election on the basis of such rhetoric. George Wallace would later demonstrate an anti-government rhetoric rooted in populism. This is the rhetorical style employed by Paul (and most of the conservatives who followed Wallace.) It taps into a distrust of "elites" that has permeated American political rhetoric since the founding of the nation, and fits easily into Paul's worldview, which is fundamentally distrustful of the two-party system. Paul's brand of populism is rooted in a producerist ethic, which asserts the virtue of economic production against the vice of slothful parasites. The power of the producer ethic is such that it infuses not only the dominant ideology, but also the language of protest and opposition in this country. While populism is often

considered a source for potent critique of the free market, *The Revolution* demonstrates how it is perfectly consistent with capitalist ideology. Central to populism's dynamic is its celebration of "the people" first and foremost as producers. While it's certainly possible to advocate non-capitalist economic arrangements from this position, such usage has been generally foreign to its manifestation in American discourse. As Kazin (1995) writes, "The producer ethic was decidedly *not* an Americanized version of the class consciousness Marx and other European thinkers saw as the inevitable result of the Industrial Revolution" (13). Rather, Kazin explains, the producer ethic has been used most commonly to uphold the institutions of capitalism: "And neither, in the antebellum period nor after, did populist speakers dwell upon the acquisitive temperament and profit-mindedness so central to the engine of American capitalism. Like Tom Watson in 1892, they championed 'individual enterprise' or equal opportunity in the marketplace but decried the division between haves and have-nots as a perversion of the democratic spirit" (17). Kazin's observation serves as a counterpoint to alternative explanations of populism as embodying a particular set of policy positions.

Partisanship. Each rhetor positions himself differently vis-à-vis the political party structure. Goldwater is attempting to realign the parties around ideological differences by bringing southern conservatives Democrats into the fold in order to establish conservative control over the Republican Party, so his purpose is largely partisan. Therefore, he attempts to prove that the Republican Party is the natural home for conservative voters. Paul, who ran for President in 1988 as the Libertarian Party candidate, is less attached to the two-party system. Rather than being the choice of a broader intellectual movement, as was Goldwater, Paul was the leader and focal point of his own version of the conservative movement. As such, his

commitment was more purely ideological, and though it reached out to certain liberals, it did so in the service of building a nonpartisan movement profoundly distrustful of the two parties.

Constitution vs. Reconstitution. Movements in their infancy need to build bridges among their adherents, while movements in their later stages often need to burn bridges in order to eliminate elements that are damaging their success. Goldwater's fusionism, which attempted to articulate a coherent vision of conservatism acceptable to libertarians, traditionalists, and anti-Communists, was appropriate for a fledgling movement in its early stages. Paul's forceful denunciation of neoconservatism and almost incidental embrace of social conservatism was designed to purify a late-stage, well established movement whose brand had been badly damaged by the failures and excesses of the Bush Administration.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THIS APPROACH

First, this approach, which aims to explain how texts work, relies on the work of others who have already established the influence of these texts, particularly Goldwater's. This has the virtue of allowing the critic to dodge the need to make any claims about effectiveness, and instead focus on the function of the text. Unfortunately, taken as a model for rhetorical criticism, it drastically limits the scope of potential artifacts for study. There are very few artifacts available that, like *Conscience of a Conservative*, have both a large secondary literature base establishing their importance and a paucity of rhetorical criticism. As a model for rhetorical criticism writ large, then, this study's approach is unsustainable. While this dynamic does not negate the usefulness of the criticism itself, it does point to the need for broader considerations of what might be considered potential artifacts for rhetorical study.

Second, this study proves the difficulty in extrapolating genres from rhetorical analogs. The constellation of similarities one finds in these texts—libertarian appeals, offered by a Republican politician in the form of a presidential campaign text, designed to (re)constitute a conservative movement—does not, as far as I can tell, exist in any other text. In order to posit the existence of a “genre” with more than two embodiments, it would be necessary to remove at least one of these elements. For instance, one might drop the requirement that the rhetor represent the Republican Party, which would open the door to the inclusion of a variety of texts by lesser-known third-party candidates. Or, one might drop the requirement that the text ground its positions in libertarianism, which would open the door to texts by Patrick J. Buchanan, for instance. In each case, though, the genre would be different than the one suggested by the tiny subgenre of the Goldwater/Paul analog. It would involve all sorts of rhetorical considerations that are not involved in this study. How such genres might be constructed is a question for other critics, if and when they might find the critical insights of this study useful.

Third, by limiting its scope to only two texts, this study emphasizes depth over breadth. It offers two snapshots of conservative rhetoric at key moments in the development of the movement, but little analysis of what happens in between. By sacrificing breadth, it excludes the possibility of pinpointing moments of rhetorical shifts between the era Goldwater and that of Paul. The very condensed history of the movement from Goldwater to Paul at the beginning of Chapter Four is no substitute for more complete accounts of what occurred during this long interval. For instance, it is impossible to say on the basis of this study exactly when the conservative movement began to embrace a populist message. Though Paul exemplifies the more populist rhetorical strategy of contemporary conservatism, he certainly was not its originator. In fact, while this study portrays Goldwater as an exemplar of an explicitly elitist rhetoric, it may be

that not long after the surfacing of *Conscience*, Goldwater himself helped to spearhead the movement's turn toward populism.

In a 1961 speech on the Senate floor entitled "A Statement of Proposed Republican Principles, Programs and Objectives," Goldwater employed a form of populism in his appeal to the "silent" and "forgotten Americans" who were not represented by lobbying groups. Anticipating a rhetoric later made famous by Nixon, Goldwater proclaimed, "There are literally scores of millions of Americans who are either outside the organized pressure groups or find themselves represented by organizations with whose policies they disagree in whole or in part. These millions are the silent Americans who, thus isolated, cannot find voice against the mammoth organizations which mercilessly pressure their own membership, the Congress, and society as a whole for objectives which these silent ones do not want. They thereby have become 'The Forgotten Americans' despite the fact that they constitute the majority of our people" (577). Here, we can see the outlines of the populism that would come to characterize conservative movement discourse in later decades. Robert Alan Goldberg (1995) correctly describes this message as explicitly populist. He writes, "Goldwater's manifesto raised a new breed of conservative. His conservative was populist, unshackled from elite pretense and unafraid to rally the people" (151). Moreover, this message directly influenced the later conservatives who would go on to use populist appeals to such great effect. Goldberg continues, "Republicans like Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush would heed the 'Forgotten American' message, which came to frame Republican discourse for a generation. In 1961, as America entered the New Frontier, the message was still devoid of divisiveness and the politics of resentment. It would not remain so for long" (151). Though *Conscience* does not contain any of these explicitly populist appeals, the fact that Goldwater articulated them so soon after the publication of the book

suggests the nagging possibility that they might in some way be an extension, rather than a revision, of the book's rhetorical strategy.

On the surface, the "Forgotten American" rhetoric could not be more different from the explicitly elitist and anti-democratic sentiments expressed in *Conscience*; in place of his earlier rejection of majoritarian principles, Goldwater substitutes a call for the "true" majority to rise up against the illegitimate rule of a "false" one. As always, the rhetor's respective situations give us clear clues as to the reason for the differences between the texts: in *Conscience*, Goldwater is appealing specifically to those with pre-existing attachments to a conservative worldview, whereas here, he is laying out a strategy for the movement to expand its base. Read together, the two rhetorics point toward a fundamental ambivalence within conservative movement rhetoric: a principled opposition to the concept of democracy, combined with a tactical willingness to use the levers of democracy to attain conservative objectives.

The recognition of Goldwater's populism in this speech raises an even thornier question: could it be that despite the explicit elitism expressed in *Conscience*, there is a deeper populist frame undergirding the text? After all, as Chapter Four notes, appeals to states' rights and to government as a powerful, evil force are both hallmarks of the populist frame. Since these appeals are both central to *Conscience*, there is reason to believe that populism might be at play underneath the surface of the text. In fact, if one supposes that Goldwater's core audience of conservative activists is being hailed, in a rather extreme example of synecdoche, as "the people," then the frame can be said to be operative here. All one needs to do is to recognize that rhetors' invocations of "the people" are always partial in order to begin to uncover the nascent populism in this text.

Further research into the persuasive appeal of libertarian rhetoric and its role in the construction of the modern conservative movement would help turn the snapshots provided by analog criticism into a moving picture of these rhetorical dynamics. For instance, while the approach of this study is diachronic (analysis of similar campaign texts at different times) it suggests the possibility of synchronic studies (analysis of dissimilar texts that appear at roughly the same time). One such synchronic study might compare *Conscience* to John F. Kennedy's 1957 book *Profiles in Courage*, which unlike the texts discussed in this dissertation, argues inductively from series of examples. It begins with a quote from Edmund Burke, and celebrates a series of bipartisan maneuvers by U.S. Senators that Kennedy praises for being in the nation's interest—precisely the type of political rhetoric Richard Weaver rejected as directionless and ineffective, and which Goldwater strives to avoid. Another synchronic study might compare *The Revolution* to Barack Obama's iconic bestseller *The Audacity of Hope* (2006). Here, Obama doesn't just utilize the approach Weaver attacks; he explicitly endorses it as an ideal. He explains,

Ultimately, though, I believe any attempt by Democrats to pursue a more sharply partisan and ideological strategy misapprehends the moment we're in. I am convinced that whenever we exaggerate or demonize, oversimplify or overstate our case, we lose. Whenever we dumb down the political debate, we lose. For it's precisely the pursuit of ideological purity, the rigid orthodoxy and the sheer predictability of our current political debate, that keeps us from finding new ways to meet the challenges we face as a country. It's what keeps us locked in "either/or" thinking; the notion that we can have only big government or no government; the assumption that we must either tolerate forty-six million without health insurance or embrace "socialized medicine" (39-40).

Audacity is rather Burkean in its approach: it demonstrates, over and over, how conservative insights might make attempts at social progress through government action more fluid and less disruptive. The contrast between this text and Paul's could help illuminate the consequences of

the conservative movement's embrace of Paineite appeals, and the subsequent move by liberals to fill the vacuum left by conservatives in their abandonment of Burke.

5.4 POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

Obama's embrace of a Burkean rhetoric raises the question: what does it mean that a liberal Democrat's use of what was once considered a conservative rhetoric helped propel him to the White House? Does this refute Weaver's dictum that a Burkean rhetoric is incapable of success? Looking at the history of Obama's legislative achievements, Weaver is at least partially vindicated. The first major piece of legislation of Obama's presidency was the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (better known as the "stimulus"), and Obama could have taken advantage of several situational factors that likely would have made possible passage of a much larger bill with more progressive priorities. First, the economy was in a state of free fall, shedding three-quarters of a million jobs every month. Second, a broad consensus had developed that neoliberal economic policies had failed, and that at least a temporary return to Keynesian countercyclical spending (a "new New Deal") would be necessary. Third, Obama enjoyed substantial Democratic majorities in both the House and the Senate, and there was a perception that many of the new congresspersons owed their victories to Obama's 2008 coattails. Obama thus had an opportunity, not seen since the days of LBJ, to pass sweeping progressive legislation. Instead, he chose to pursue a bipartisan approach, loading up the stimulus with less stimulative tax cuts rather than direct spending. His bipartisan overtures won the Democrats only 2 out of 40 Republican votes in the Senate and zero out of 177 Republicans in the House.

Despite the catastrophic failure of using legislative concessions to win goodwill from the opposing party, he would go on to employ a similar strategy in the healthcare reform debate. The Affordable Care Act did, of course, pass in 2010, but the bitter fight over its passage lasted for most of 2009 and never seemed to hold out much potential for compromise between the parties. This political fallout occurred not because, but in spite of, Obama's legislative strategy. In an effort to sell the bill as a moderate, bipartisan proposal, Obama often touted the fact that the basic premise of the law—an individual mandate combined with tax credits to subsidize market-based health insurance for those unable to afford it on their own—originated at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank. It had once enjoyed the support of Newt Gingrich and other conservative congressional leaders, and it formed the basis of Massachusetts' health reform under Republican Governor Mitt Romney. Nonetheless, it would pass Congress with zero Republican votes in either chamber, and would become a lightning rod for conservative criticism of the president, with constant attempts by Republican leaders in the ensuing years to revoke, defund, or overturn it using any tactic imaginable (including the government shutdown of fall 2013). Conservative backlash against the bill was also central to the rise of the Tea Party and extreme shift in power in the House of Representatives following the 2010 midterm elections.

The fact that Obama's conciliatory approach coincided with both his electoral success and his legislative failure tells us a great deal about the current applicability of Weaver's position. Weaver's ideas have enjoyed a rather apparent and smashing victory in convincing conservatives to adopt the rhetorical mode of the argument from definition. Yet, the assumption of a loyal adversary with whom one compromises to create policies better than either side might create on their own still seems to resonate with the public. Americans, it seems, have embraced the idea of whiggism—which stipulates politics as a realm of careful compromise and synthesis

of opposing views—but have rejected it in practice. In fact, the rampant belief that “Washington” is to blame for Congress’ inability to pass even the most vital legislation, rather than any particular participant, only serves to confirm this. The underlying assumption is that both sides are simply inept and incompetent, and suffer equally from a gridlocked Congress, when in fact one side reaps the political benefits from the scenario. However, despite Obama’s success in employing it as a rhetorical strategy, whiggism seems obsolete as an actual governing strategy; it assumes a moderate Republican approach from an earlier era before Weaver and Goldwater, rather than the intransigent approach of contemporary conservatism.

It should not be surprising that rhetorical strategies do not translate easily into governing techniques. The same was true for Reagan’s stridently libertarian rhetoric, which simply could not translate into an actual governing strategy—a President could talk all he wanted about the uselessness of government power, but ultimately, he would need to learn to use this power (at least occasionally) for the good of the people. For instance, he might have to raise taxes to ensure the survival of a massive and popular government-run pension program that ran counter to libertarian beliefs. Just as Reagan’s absolutism would prove impracticable in reality, so would Obama’s whiggism. In Congress, however, the dynamic is different. As each member is answerable primarily to a particular district rather than the country as a whole, he or she might be incentivized to vote in ways that conflict strongly with the will of the broader electorate. Additionally, as each individual legislator rarely can be held responsible for the success or failure of a bill, he or she might be far freer to vote along ideological lines, rather than practical ones. The current dynamic of conservative voting patterns in Congress seems to confirm this.

While the conservative movement’s embrace of radical individualism seems to render moot the possibility of collective action, there are signs that the rhetoric of libertarian populism

might be entering a new phase. The steady rightward pull of the conservative movement has proven to engulf even formerly “moderate” Republican politicians—at least in their campaign rhetoric. In order to survive the gauntlet of presidential primaries, candidates today must tack far to the right to appeal to the ever more conservative leanings of the Republican base. In doing so, they diminish their own chances for success in a general election. Ironically, this serves as an example of unintended consequences operating against the success of Republican politicians; it demonstrates that past argumentative warrants can outlive the claims they were designed to support, and effectively destroy the possibility of persuasion in the present. This dynamic could be seen in the presidential elections of both 2008 and 2012, which featured Republican candidates who formerly enjoyed reputations as pragmatic moderates, but by election day had transformed into staunch (or perhaps “severe”) conservatives. For instance, Mitt Romney’s embrace of radical individualism, as evidenced by his choice of Ayn Rand acolyte Paul Ryan as running mate, his rejection of health care reform modeled on his own policy as Massachusetts governor, and his infamous 47% comments, undoubtedly hurt his electoral chances. This might seem to preclude the possibility of libertarian populism serving as an effective rhetorical strategy for a general election presidential candidate. However, as Chapter One notes, premature declarations of the death of ideologies have a tendency to be disproven in due haste.

One area in which the libertarian rhetorical strategy is very likely to live on is in campaigns for congressional races. Several factors have converged to make this possible. First, as Nicholas Negroponte (1995) describes, the contemporary fracturing of the media environment as a result of cable and the internet means that citizens of different political persuasions consume different media. We now live in nearly hermetically sealed media environments in which divergent views are never really given a fair hearing; they’re presented only as strawpersons to

be knocked down. The result is that we are each trapped in a kind of echo chamber in which all new information simply confirms the information we already have. This has a polarizing effect on political views, which has led to a sharp decrease in the number of undecided voters.

Second, Bill Bishop (2008) describes a closely related dynamic: not only have citizens become more polarized by ideology, but they are also becoming more geographically separate, as rural areas become more radically individualist, and those with communitarian views cluster together in urban areas. As a result, congressional districts are more homogeneously conservative or liberal than they were in the past.

Third, gerrymandering (conducted by the more ideologically extreme state governments) has exacerbated the first two dynamics even further. Aided by sophisticated knowledge of voter preferences and computer models that maximize the number of “safe” districts for the party in power, candidates no longer need to worry about general elections. Their only concern is a primary challenge from the more “extreme” or ideologically pure wing of their own party.

“Swing states” in 2012 demonstrate this in a remarkable way. Wang (2013) argues that extreme gerrymandering practices have radically distorted the relationship between voter preferences and electoral outcomes. He explains, “In North Carolina, where the two-party House vote was 51 percent Democratic, 49 percent Republican, the average simulated delegation was seven Democrats and six Republicans. The actual outcome? Four Democrats, nine Republicans — a split that occurred in less than 1 percent of simulations. If districts were drawn fairly, this lopsided discrepancy would hardly ever occur.” This happened in ten states—seven redrawn by Republican-controlled legislatures, and only one by a Democratic-controlled legislature.

While this may seem to contradict the importance of rhetorical appeals, it in fact supercharges them. It encourages candidates to switch away from attempts to persuade

undecided voters, and toward attempts to motivate their supporters to get to the polls. As such, identification becomes an even more important goal. As candidates seek to hone their rhetorical choices to the preferences of more ideologically extreme voters, they perpetuate the acceleration of political polarization. It is difficult at this time to find solace in any countervailing forces that might arrest this dynamic.

The rise of a new breed of libertarian politicians, exemplified by the now-retired Representative Paul and his son, Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky, does however present some interesting possibilities for American politics. As these politicians are buoyed by the strong support of a mass base, they are somewhat immune from the normal pressures of fundraising and political influence peddling. The downside is that this insulation allows them to contemplate support for policies, such as allowing the government to default on its debt, which would do the nation great harm. The upside is that they might form alliances with liberals on issues where they share common causes, such as those related to civil liberties, domestic surveillance, drug policy, and military intervention. Such alliances hold the potential to circumvent the stale, long-held status quo on many of these issues and expand the realm of political possibility in unexpected ways.

However, the history of libertarianism as a warrant for radical individualism, often in the service of preventing, rather than promoting, the extension of rights, gives reason for pessimism in this area. To the extent that cooperation with liberals proves that compromise within democratic channels is possible, such moves would only undermine the libertarian argument that democracy is antithetical to liberty. That the libertarian's brand of individualism often serves the interest of existing hierarchies, rather than the liberation of oppressed minorities, can be seen in Goldwater's support for states' rights in the name of limited federal powers. It can also be seen

in Rand Paul's use of the very same reasoning as late as 2010 in his refusal to offer his full support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Karl and Dwyer 2010). In any case, it seems likely that libertarian rhetoric will continue to shape our politics for years to come.

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