

thomas paine common sense analysis

Thomas Paine's Common Sense: A Deep Dive Analysis

Introduction:

Ready to unlock the secrets of one of history's most influential pamphlets? Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, published in 1776, wasn't just a piece of writing; it was a catalyst for the American Revolution. This in-depth analysis will dissect Paine's arguments, explore the historical context that fueled its impact, and examine its enduring legacy. We'll delve into the core tenets of his philosophy, analyze his rhetorical strategies, and consider the lasting effects of his powerful call for independence. Get ready for a comprehensive exploration of *Common Sense* – its context, content, and continuing relevance.

1. The Historical Context: A Fermenting Revolution

Before diving into the text itself, understanding the socio-political landscape of 1776 is crucial. Great Britain, after years of salutary neglect, had tightened its grip on the American colonies following the French and Indian War. Increased taxation without representation, the quartering of British troops, and restrictions on colonial trade fueled growing resentment. While many colonists initially sought reconciliation with the crown, a simmering discontent was reaching a boiling point. Paine's *Common Sense* emerged amidst this turbulent atmosphere, acting as a powerful accelerant to the revolutionary fire. He expertly tapped into the widespread frustration and offered a compelling alternative: complete independence. The pamphlet capitalized on the escalating tension, providing a clear and concise articulation of the colonists' grievances and a persuasive argument for severing ties with Britain.

1. Paine's Central Arguments: A Case for Independence

Common Sense isn't a complex philosophical treatise; its strength lies in its simplicity and passionate appeal. Paine masterfully dismantles the arguments for reconciliation, arguing that continued allegiance to the British monarchy was illogical and detrimental to American interests. His core arguments revolved around several key points:

The absurdity of hereditary monarchy: Paine vehemently attacked the concept of inherited power, arguing that it was inherently unjust and inefficient. He posited that a king, regardless of his personal qualities, was inherently unfit to govern a nation due to the arbitrary nature of his power.

The impracticality of relying on a distant power: Governing a geographically dispersed colony from across the Atlantic was inefficient and unresponsive to the needs of the colonists. Paine effectively highlighted the inherent communication and logistical challenges involved, emphasizing the impracticality of relying on a distant monarchy for effective governance.

The benefits of republicanism: Paine presented a compelling case for a republican form of government, emphasizing self-governance, representation, and the protection of individual liberties. He painted a vivid picture of a free and independent America, prosperous and self-determined.

The moral imperative of independence: Paine appealed to the colonists' sense of morality and self-respect, arguing that remaining under British rule was a betrayal of their own principles and a denial of their inherent rights. He masterfully framed the struggle for independence as a moral crusade.

1. Paine's Rhetorical Strategies: A Masterclass in Persuasion

Paine's success wasn't solely due to the substance of his arguments; his mastery of rhetoric played a crucial role. He employed several persuasive techniques:

Simple, direct language: *Common Sense* is remarkably accessible, avoiding complex vocabulary and convoluted sentence structures. This ensured its wide readership, even among those with limited literacy.

Emotional appeals: Paine effectively tapped into the colonists' emotions, evoking feelings of patriotism, anger, and hope. His powerful language resonated deeply with his audience, stirring them to action.

Use of analogy and metaphor: He employed simple, relatable analogies and metaphors to make complex ideas easily understandable. This made his arguments more persuasive and memorable.

Repetition and emphasis: Key arguments were repeated throughout the pamphlet, reinforcing their importance and making them more likely to stick with the reader.

1. The Impact and Legacy of *Common Sense*:

The impact of *Common Sense* was immediate and profound. Its widespread circulation ignited the flames of revolution, galvanizing public opinion in favor of independence. It is estimated that half a million copies were sold within months of its publication—an astounding number for the time. The pamphlet played a pivotal role in shaping the narrative of the American Revolution, providing a powerful ideological framework for the struggle. Its enduring legacy lies in its articulation of fundamental principles of self-governance, individual liberty, and the right to revolution, principles that continue to resonate today. It served as a blueprint for democratic ideals and continues to inspire movements for freedom and self-determination worldwide.

1. Outline of Thomas Paine's Common Sense:

Title: Common Sense

Introduction: Outlines the need for American independence from British rule.

Main Chapters (Paraphrased):

Chapter 1: Argues against monarchy and hereditary succession.

Chapter 2: Discusses the benefits of a republic and self-governance.

Chapter 3: Addresses the practicality and necessity of independence.

Chapter 4: Examines the relationship between America and Great Britain, detailing past grievances and future prospects.

Chapter 5: Offers a plan for forming a new government.

Conclusion: Reinforces the urgency and moral imperative of American independence.

1. Detailed Explanation of the Outline:

(This section expands on each point of the outline above, providing a more detailed analysis of the content of each section of Common Sense.)

Introduction: Paine begins by establishing the urgency of the situation, highlighting the growing tension between the colonies and Great Britain. He frames the debate as a choice between freedom and oppression, immediately capturing the reader's attention.

Chapter 1 (Against Monarchy): Paine systematically dismantles the legitimacy of monarchy, arguing

that hereditary power is inherently unjust and inefficient. He compares the monarchy to various forms of tyranny throughout history, highlighting the absurdity of a system where a ruler's authority stems from birthright rather than merit.

Chapter 2 (Benefits of a Republic): This chapter lays out the advantages of a republican form of government, focusing on principles of self-governance, representation, and individual liberties. Paine paints a compelling picture of a free and prosperous America, governed by its own citizens.

Chapter 3 (Practicality of Independence): Paine tackles the practical concerns surrounding independence, addressing potential economic and military challenges. He argues that the economic burden of supporting a distant empire far outweighs the costs of achieving independence.

Chapter 4 (America-Great Britain Relationship): This section delves into the historical relationship between America and Great Britain, detailing the past grievances and the deteriorating relationship. Paine argues that reconciliation is futile and that continued allegiance to the crown is ultimately detrimental to the colonies.

Conclusion: Paine summarizes his key arguments, reiterating the urgent need for independence. He concludes with a powerful call to action, urging the colonists to seize the moment and create a new nation founded on liberty and self-governance.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

1. What was the primary purpose of Common Sense? To persuade the American colonists to declare independence from Great Britain.

1. Who was the intended audience of Common Sense? The general population of the American colonies, aiming for broad accessibility.

1. What was the impact of Common Sense on the American Revolution? It significantly influenced public opinion, galvanizing support for independence and contributing to the momentum leading to the Declaration of Independence.

1. What are the key arguments presented in Common Sense? The absurdity of monarchy, the impracticality of British rule, the benefits of republicanism, and the moral imperative of independence.

1. What rhetorical strategies did Paine employ? Simple language, emotional appeals, analogies, repetition, and emphasis.

1. How accessible was Common Sense? Remarkably accessible due to its simple language and direct style, ensuring wide readership.

1. What is the enduring legacy of Common Sense? Its articulation of core principles of self-governance, individual liberty, and the right to revolution continues to influence political thought and action.

1. Is Common Sense still relevant today? Yes, its principles of self-determination, republicanism, and the importance of individual liberties remain relevant in contemporary political discourse.

1. Where can I find a copy of Common Sense? Many online sources offer free access to the text, and physical copies are available through bookstores and libraries.

Related Articles:

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thomas paine common sense analysis: Common Sense Thomas Paine, 1918

thomas paine common sense analysis: An Analysis of Thomas Paine's Common Sense

Ian Jackson, 2017-07-05 Thomas Paine's 1776 Common Sense has secured an unshakeable place as one of history's most explosive and revolutionary books. A slim pamphlet published at the beginning of the American Revolution, it was so widely read that it remains the all-time best selling book in US history. An impassioned argument for American independence and for democratic government, Common Sense can claim to have helped change the face of the world more than almost any other book. But Paine's pamphlet is also a masterclass in critical thinking, demonstrating how the reasoned construction of arguments can be reinforced by literary skill and passion. Paine is perhaps more famous as a stylist than as a constructor of arguments, but Common Sense marries the best elements of good reasoning to its polemic. Moving systematically from the origins of government, through a criticism of monarchy, and on to the possibilities for future democratic government in an independent America, Paine neatly lays out a series of persuasive reasons to fight for independence and a new form of government. Indeed, as the pamphlet's title suggested, to do so was nothing more than 'common sense.'

thomas paine common sense analysis: 46 Pages Scott Liell, 2004-03-03 Includes complete text of Thomas Paine's Common sense--Cover.

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thomas paine common sense analysis: Common Sense Thomas Paine, 2000-11-17 Thomas Paine's Common Sense is one of the most important and often assigned primary documents of the Revolutionary era. This edition of the pamphlet is unique in its inclusion of selections from Paine's other writings from 1775 and 1776 — additional essays that contextualize Common Sense and provide unusual insight on both the writer and the cause for which he wrote. The volume introduction includes coverage of Paine's childhood and early adult years in England, arguing for the significance of personal experience, environment, career, and religion in understanding Paine's influential political writings. The volume also includes a glossary, a chronology, 12 illustrations, a selected bibliography, and questions for consideration.

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thomas paine common sense analysis: Common Sense, and Plain Truth Thomas Paine, 1776

thomas paine common sense analysis: Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution Edward Larkin, 2005-06-27 Although the impact of works such as Common Sense and The Rights of Man has led historians to study Thomas Paine's role in the American Revolution and political scientists to evaluate his contributions to political theory, scholars have tacitly agreed not to treat him as a literary figure. This book not only redresses this omission, but also demonstrates that Paine's literary sensibility is particularly evident in the very texts that confirmed his importance as a theorist. And yet, because of this association with the 'masses', Paine is often dismissed as a mere propagandist. Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution recovers Paine as a transatlantic popular intellectual who would translate the major political theories of the eighteenth century into a language that was accessible and appealing to ordinary citizens on both sides of the Atlantic.

thomas paine common sense analysis: Thomas Paine's Rights of Man Christopher Hitchens, 2008-09 Thomas Paine's Rights of Man has been celebrated, criticized, maligned, suppressed, and co-opted, but Hitchens marvels at its forethought and revels in its contentiousness. In this book, he demonstrates how Paine's book forms the philosophical cornerstone of the U.S.

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thomas paine common sense analysis: The Political Philosophy of Thomas Paine Jack

Fruchtman Jr., 2009-07-30 This concise, insightful study explores the sources and impact of one of the early republic's most influential minds. An Englishman by birth, an American by choice and necessity, Thomas Paine advocated ideas about rights, equality, democracy, and liberty that were far advanced beyond those of his American compatriots. His seminal works, *Common Sense* and the *Rights of Man*, were rallying cries for the American and French Revolutions. More than any other eighteenth-century political writer and activist, Paine defies easy categorization. A man of contrasts and contradictions, Paine was as much a believer in the power of reason as he was in a benevolent deity. He was at once liberal and conservative, a Quaker who was not a pacifist, and an inherently gifted writer who was convinced he was always right. Jack Fruchtman Jr. analyzes Paine's radical thought both in the context of his time and as a blueprint for the future development of republican government. His systematic approach identifies the themes of signal importance to Paine's political thought, demonstrating especially how crucial religion and God were to the development and expression of his political ideals.

thomas paine common sense analysis: Tom Paine's America Seth Cotlar, 2011-03-29 Tom Paine's *America* explores the vibrant, transatlantic traffic in people, ideas, and texts that profoundly shaped American political debate in the 1790s. In 1789, when the Federal Constitution was ratified, democracy was a controversial term that very few Americans used to describe their new political system. That changed when the French Revolution—and the wave of democratic radicalism that it touched off around the Atlantic World—inspired a growing number of Americans to imagine and advocate for a wide range of political and social reforms that they proudly called democratic. One of the figureheads of this new international movement was Tom Paine, the author of *Common Sense*. Although Paine spent the 1790s in Europe, his increasingly radical political writings from that decade were wildly popular in America. A cohort of democratic printers, newspaper editors, and booksellers stoked the fires of American politics by importing a flood of information and ideas from revolutionary Europe. Inspired by what they were learning from their contemporaries around the world, the evolving democratic opposition in America pushed their fellow citizens to consider a wide range of radical ideas regarding racial equality, economic justice, cosmopolitan conceptions of citizenship, and the construction of more literally democratic polities. In Europe such ideas quickly fell victim to a counter-Revolutionary backlash that defined Paineite democracy as dangerous Jacobinism, and the story was much the same in America's late 1790s. The Democratic Party that won the national election of 1800 was, ironically, the beneficiary of this backlash; for they were able to position themselves as the advocates of a more moderate, safe vision of democracy that differentiated itself from the supposedly aristocratic Federalists to their right and the dangerously democratic Paineite Jacobins to their left.

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who had published a similar but more radical proposal in 1776. It also contains a 20th century re-statement of individual and common rights to the Earth and a summary of the relevance of Agrarian Justice today.

thomas paine common sense analysis: Tom Paine John Keane, 2007-12-01 "It is hard to imagine this magnificent biography ever being superseded . . . It is a stylish, splendidly erudite work." —Terry Eagleton, *The Guardian* "More than any other public figure of the eighteenth century, Tom Paine strikes our times like a trumpet blast from a distant world." So begins John Keane's magnificent and award-winning (the Fraunces Tavern Book Award) biography of one of democracy's greatest champions. Among friends and enemies alike, Paine earned a reputation as a notorious pamphleteer, one of the greatest political figures of his day, and the author of three bestselling books, *Common Sense*, *Rights of Man*, and *The Age of Reason*. Setting his compelling narrative against a vivid social backdrop of prerevolutionary America and the French Revolution, John Keane melds together the public and the shadowy private sides of Paine's life in a remarkable piece of scholarship. This is the definitive biography of a man whose life and work profoundly shaped the modern age. "[A] richly detailed . . . disciplined labor of scholarship and love, an exemplar of the rewards of a gargantuan effort at historical research. . . . In short, buy it; it's definitive." —*Library Journal*

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thomas paine common sense analysis: *Revolutions Without Borders* Janet L. Polasky, 2015-01-01 A sweeping exploration of revolutionary ideas that traveled the Atlantic in the late eighteenth century Nation-based histories cannot do justice to the rowdy, radical interchange of ideas around the Atlantic world during the tumultuous years from 1776 to 1804. National borders were powerless to restrict the flow of enticing new visions of human rights and universal freedom. This expansive history explores how the revolutionary ideas that spurred the American and French revolutions reverberated far and wide, connecting European, North American, African, and Caribbean peoples more closely than ever before. Historian Janet Polasky focuses on the eighteenth-century travelers who spread new notions of liberty and equality. It was an age of itinerant revolutionaries, she shows, who ignored borders and found allies with whom to imagine a borderless world. As paths crossed, ideas entangled. The author investigates these ideas and how they were disseminated long before the days of instant communications and social media or even an international postal system. Polasky analyzes the paper records--books, broadsides, journals, newspapers, novels, letters, and more--to follow the far-reaching trails of revolutionary zeal. What emerges clearly from rich historic records is that the dream of liberty among America's founders was part of a much larger picture. It was a dream embraced throughout the far-flung regions of the Atlantic world.

thomas paine common sense analysis: *A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law* John Adams, 2014-10-29 John Adams (October 30 1735 - July 4, 1826) was the second president of the United States (1797-1801), having earlier served as the first vice president of the United States (1789-1797). An American Founding Father, Adams was a statesman, diplomat, and a leading advocate of American independence from Great Britain. Well educated, he was an Enlightenment political theorist who promoted republicanism, as well as a strong central government, and wrote

prolifically about his often seminal ideas—both in published works and in letters to his wife and key adviser Abigail Adams. Adams was a lifelong opponent of slavery, having never bought a slave. In 1770 he provided a principled, controversial, and successful legal defense to the British soldiers accused in the Boston Massacre, because he believed in the right to counsel and the protect[ion] of innocence. Adams came to prominence in the early stages of the American Revolution. A lawyer and public figure in Boston, as a delegate from Massachusetts to the Continental Congress, he played a leading role in persuading Congress to declare independence. He assisted Thomas Jefferson in drafting the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and was its primary advocate in the Congress. Later, as a diplomat in Europe, he helped negotiate the eventual peace treaty with Great Britain, and was responsible for obtaining vital governmental loans from Amsterdam bankers. A political theorist and historian, Adams largely wrote the Massachusetts Constitution in 1780, which together with his earlier *Thoughts on Government*, influenced American political thought. One of his greatest roles was as a judge of character: in 1775, he nominated George Washington to be commander-in-chief, and 25 years later nominated John Marshall to be Chief Justice of the United States. Adams' revolutionary credentials secured him two terms as George Washington's vice president and his own election in 1796 as the second president. During his one term as president, he encountered ferocious attacks by the Jeffersonian Republicans, as well as the dominant faction in his own Federalist Party led by his bitter enemy Alexander Hamilton. Adams signed the controversial Alien and Sedition Acts, and built up the army and navy especially in the face of an undeclared naval war (called the Quasi-War) with France, 1798-1800. The major accomplishment of his presidency was his peaceful resolution of the conflict in the face of Hamilton's opposition. In 1800, Adams was defeated for re-election by Thomas Jefferson and retired to Massachusetts. He later resumed his friendship with Jefferson. He and his wife founded an accomplished family line of politicians, diplomats, and historians now referred to as the Adams political family. Adams was the father of John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the United States. His achievements have received greater recognition in modern times, though his contributions were not initially as celebrated as those of other Founders. Adams was the first U.S. president to reside in the executive mansion that eventually became known as the White House.

thomas paine common sense analysis: The crisis Thomas Paine, 1908 Of this special de luxe Independence edition of the centenary issue of the writings of Thomas Paine there have been printed five hundred numbered copies. This set not numbered. v. 1. Life and appreciations.--v. 2. Common sense; Miscellany.--v. 3. The crisis.--v. 4. The rights of man. v. 1-v. 5. The rights of man. v. 2; Miscellany.--v. 6 the age of reason. v. 1.--v. 7. The age of reason. v. 2; Miscellany.--v. 8-9. Essays, letters, addresses.--v. 10. Essays, letters, poems.

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thomas paine common sense analysis: The Daily Thomas Paine Thomas Paine, 2020-03-08 Thomas Paine was the spark that ignited the American Revolution. More than just a founding father, he was a verbal bomb-thrower, a rationalist, and a rebel. In his influential pamphlets *Common Sense* and *The American Crisis*, Paine codified both colonial outrage and the intellectual justification for independence, arguing consistently and convincingly for Enlightenment values and the power of the people. Today, we are living in times that, as Paine famously said, “try men’s souls.” Whatever your politics, if you’re seeking to understand the political world we live in, where better to look than Paine? *The Daily Thomas Paine* offers a year’s worth of pithy and provocative quotes from this quintessentially American figure. Editor Edward G. Gray argues that we are living in a moment that Thomas Paine might recognize—or perhaps more precisely, a moment desperate for someone whose rhetoric can ignite a large-scale social and political transformation. Paine was a master of political rhetoric, from the sarcastic insult to the diplomatic aperçu, and this book offers a sleek and approachable sampler of some of the sharpest bits from his oeuvre. As Paine himself says in the entry for January 20: “The present state of America is truly alarming to every man who is capable of

reflexion." The Daily Thomas Paine should prove equally incendiary and inspirational for contemporary readers with an eye for politics, even those who prefer the tweet to the pamphlet.

thomas paine common sense analysis: Common Sense Thomas Paine, 2020-02 Common Sense is the timeless classic that inspired the Thirteen Colonies to fight for and declare their independence from Great Britain in the summer of 1776. Written by famed political theorist Thomas Paine, this pamphlet boldly challenged the authority of the British government and the royal monarchy to rule over the American colonists. By using plain language and a reasoned style, Paine chose to forego the philosophical and Latin references made popular by the Enlightenment era writers. As a result, Paine united average citizens and political leaders behind the central idea of independence and transformed the tenor of the colonists' argument against the British. As the best-selling American title of all time, Common Sense has been eloquently described by historian Gordon S. Wood as the most incendiary and popular pamphlet of the entire revolutionary era. Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was an English-American political activist, philosopher, and revolutionary. As one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, he authored the most influential pamphlets at the start of the American Revolution and inspired the colonists to declare independence from Great Britain in 1776. His ideas reflected Enlightenment-era rhetoric of transnational human rights and the separation of church and state. He has been called a corset-maker by trade, a journalist by profession, and a propagandist by inclination.

thomas paine common sense analysis: Archipelagic American Studies Brian Russell Roberts, Michelle Ann Stephens, 2017-05-18 Departing from conventional narratives of the United States and the Americas as fundamentally continental spaces, the contributors to Archipelagic American Studies theorize America as constituted by and accountable to an assemblage of interconnected islands, archipelagoes, shorelines, continents, seas, and oceans. They trace these planet-spanning archipelagic connections in essays on topics ranging from Indigenous sovereignty to the work of Édouard Glissant, from Philippine call centers to US militarization in the Caribbean, and from the great Pacific garbage patch to enduring overlaps between US imperialism and a colonial Mexican archipelago. Shaking loose the straitjacket of continental exceptionalism that hinders and permeates Americanist scholarship, Archipelagic American Studies asserts a more relevant and dynamic approach for thinking about the geographic, cultural, and political claims of the United States within broader notions of America. Contributors Birte Blascheck, J. Michael Dash, Paul Giles, Susan Gillman, Matthew Pratt Guterl, Hsinya Huang, Allan Punzalan Isaac, Joseph Keith, Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, Brandy Nālani McDougall, Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwankwo, Craig Santos Perez, Brian Russell Roberts, John Carlos Rowe, Cherene Sherrard-Johnson, Ramón E. Soto-Crespo, Michelle Ann Stephens, Elaine Stratford, Etsuko Taketani, Alice Te Punga Somerville, Teresia Teaiwa, Lanny Thompson, Nicole A. Waligora-Davis

thomas paine common sense analysis: Quicklet on Thomas Paine's Common Sense (CliffsNotes-like Book Summary) LeAnne Bagnall, 2012-02-29 ABOUT THE BOOK No, you shouldn't only read Common Sense because it's going to appear on your upcoming AP exam (although this writer was no exception to that rule during her time). A critique of America's then-state of oppression—whose words helped launched the open debate for independence and paved the way for the American Revolution—holds as much relevance for today's audience as it did during Paine's era. Paine, the masterful writer, not only captured the sentiments of his generation of restless colonists eager for freedom, but has continued to do so today through his words' timeless ability to incite ongoing generations of protesters and civil rights revolutionists in their expeditions for equality and justice. For this writer, Paine's triumph into fame by way of his daring prose remains a high source of inspiration for my own passion to share through the written word (and a personal reminder to not be afraid of expressing my ideas, as I become my own worst critic). Paine is proof that well-written, passionate prose has the power to stir revolutions! Besides, when can you ever deny needing a little common sense for yourself? MEET THE AUTHOR LeAnne Bagnall is a professional Los Angeles-based writer and editor who specializes in American literature, culture, lifestyle, health, and community. She earned a BA in English from the University of California, Santa

Barbara with a Specialization in American Cultures and Global Contexts. EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK In the second section, Paine brusquely refutes the principles of monarchy and of hereditary succession. Paine references the Bible several times to make his case that the foundation of a monarchy is plainly against the path of the scripture. He calls the government of kings outright idolatry, a form of government which did not result from divinity or from nature—but rather from the “Heathens” who sprang from unruly gangs and ruthlessly conquered their way into power against the will of the people. Quite bold for his day, Paine unabashedly refers to the founder of England’s monarchy, William the Conqueror, as “a French bastard” who pillaged his way to prideful leadership against the will of the people. Furthermore, the hereditary succession of kings does not guarantee that moral virtue is also hereditary, and that future generations will continually be ruled by gracious leaders on the throne. The passing of elderly kings to their infant sons can leave nations in a state of vulnerability in which special interest, enemies, and corruption can thrive... Buy a copy to keep reading!

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and trenchant critique, Dirks shows how the empire projected its own scandalous behavior onto India itself. By returning to the moment when the scandal of empire became acceptable we gain a new understanding of the modern culture of the colonizer and the colonized and the manifold implications for Britain, India, and the world.

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thomas paine common sense analysis: Tom Paine's Iron Bridge Edward G Gray, 2024-06-25 In a letter to his wife, Abigail, John Adams judged the author of *Common Sense* as having a better hand at pulling down than building. Adams's dismissive remark has helped shape the prevailing view of Tom Paine ever since. But, as Edward G. Gray shows in this fresh, illuminating work, Paine was a builder. He had a clear vision of success for his adopted country. It was embodied in an architectural project that he spent a decade planning: an iron bridge to span the Schuylkill River at Philadelphia. When Paine arrived in Philadelphia from England in 1774, the city was thriving as America's largest port. But the seasonal dangers of the rivers dividing the region were

becoming an obstacle to the city's continued growth. Philadelphia needed a practical connection between the rich grain of Pennsylvania's backcountry farms and its port on the Delaware. The iron bridge was Paine's solution. The bridge was part of Paine's answer to the central political challenge of the new nation: how to sustain a republic as large and as geographically fragmented as the United States. The iron construction was Paine's brilliant response to the age-old challenge of bridge technology: how to build a structure strong enough to withstand the constant battering of water, ice, and wind. The convergence of political and technological design in Paine's plan was Enlightenment genius. And Paine drew other giants of the period as patrons: Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and for a time his great ideological opponent, Edmund Burke. Paine's dream ultimately was a casualty of the vicious political crosscurrents of revolution and the American penchant for bridges of cheap, plentiful wood. But his innovative iron design became the model for bridge construction in Britain as it led the world into the industrial revolution.

thomas paine common sense analysis: *Journal of the American Revolution* Todd Andrlik, Don N. Hagist, 2017-05-10 The fourth annual compilation of selected articles from the online Journal of the American Revolution.

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