

Number One from The Crisis by Thomas Paine

December 23, 1776

These are the times that try men's souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it NOW, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. **Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered;** yet we have this consolation with us, that **the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: 'Tis dearness only that gives everything its value.** Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared that she has a right (not only to TAX) but **"to BIND us in ALL CASES WHATSOEVER*,"** and if being bound in that manner, is not slavery, then is there not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious, for so unlimited a power can belong only to GOD.

...

I have as little superstition in me as any man living, but my secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that God Almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupportedly to perish, who had so earnestly and so repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war, by every decent method which wisdom could invent. Neither have I so much of the infidel in me, as to suppose that HE has relinquished the government of the world, and given us up to the care of devils; and as I do not, **I cannot see on what grounds the king of Britain can look up to Heaven for help against us: A common murderer, a highwayman, or a house-breaker has as good a pretense as he.**

...

I shall conclude this paper with some miscellaneous remarks on the state of our affairs; and shall begin with asking the following question, **Why is it that the enemy have left the New England provinces, and made these middle ones the seat of war?** The answer is easy: New England is not infested with Tories, and we are. I have been tender in raising the cry against these men, and used numberless arguments to show them their danger, but it will not do to sacrifice a world to either their folly or their baseness. The period is now arrived, in which either they or we must change our sentiments, or one or both must fall. **And what is a Tory? Good GOD! What is he?** I should not be afraid to go with an hundred Whigs against a thousand Tories, were they to attempt to get into arms. Every Tory is a coward, for a **servile, slavish, self-interested** fear is the foundation of Toryism; and a man under such influence, though he may be cruel, never can be brave.

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I once felt all that kind of anger, which a man ought to feel, against the mean principles that are held by the Tories: **A noted one, who kept a tavern at Amboy, was standing at his door, with as pretty a child in his hand, about eight or nine years old, as most I ever saw, and after speaking his mind as freely as he thought was prudent, finished with this unfatherly expression, "Well! Give me peace in my day." Not a man lives on the continent but fully believes that a separation must some time or other finally take place, and a generous parent should have said, "If there must be trouble, let it be in my day that my child may have peace;" and this single reflection, well applied, is sufficient to awaken every man to duty.** Not a place upon earth might be so happy as America. Her situation is remote from all the wrangling world, and she has nothing to do but to trade with them. A man may easily distinguish in himself between temper and principle, and I am as confident, as I am that GOD governs the world, that America will never be happy till she gets clear of foreign dominion. Wars, without ceasing, will break out till that period arrives, and the continent must in the end be conqueror; for **though the flame of liberty may sometimes cease to shine, the coal never can expire.**

The heart that feels not now, is dead: The blood of his children will curse his cowardice, who shrinks back at a time when a little might have saved the whole, and made them happy. I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'Tis **the business of little minds to shrink**; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death. **My own line of reasoning is to myself as strait and clear as a ray of light.** Not all the treasures of the world, so far as I believe, could have induced me to support **an offensive war, for I think it murder; but if a thief break into my house, burn and destroy my property, and kill or threaten to kill me, or those that are in it, and to “bind me in all cases whatsoever*,”** to his absolute will, am I to suffer it? **What signifies it to me, whether he who does it, is a king or a common man; my countryman or not my countryman? Whether it is done by an individual villain, or an army of them? If we reason to the root of things we shall find no difference; neither can any just cause be assigned why we should punish in the one case and pardon in the other.** Let them call me rebel, and welcome, I feel no concern from it; but **I should suffer the misery of devils, were I to make a whore of my soul by swearing allegiance to one whose character is that of a sottish, stupid, stubborn, worthless, brutish man.** I conceive likewise a horrid idea in receiving mercy from a being, who at the last day shall be **shrieking to the rocks and mountains to cover him,** and fleeing with terror from the orphan, the widow, and the slain of America.

There are cases which cannot be overdone by language, and this is one. **There are persons too who see not the full extent of the evil which threatens them, they solace themselves with hopes that the enemy, if they succeed, will be merciful.** It is the madness of folly to expect mercy from those who have refused to do justice; and even mercy, where conquest is the object, is only a trick of war: **The cunning of the fox is as murderous as the violence of the wolf;** and we ought to guard equally against both.

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I thank GOD that I fear not. I see no real cause for fear. I know our situation well, and can see the way out of it...**By perseverance and fortitude we have the prospect of a glorious issue; by cowardice and submission, the sad choice of a variety of evils**—a ravaged country—a depopulated city—**habitations without safety, and slavery without hope**—our homes turned into barracks and bawdy- houses for Hessians, and a future race to provide for whose fathers we shall doubt of. **Look on this picture and weep over it!** And if there yet remains one thoughtless wretch who believes it not, let him suffer it unlamented.

** Paine is referencing the British **Declaratory Act** (1766), which declared, quite seriously, that Britain had the right to bind America in all cases whatsoever. In other words, Britain declared that it could pass a law saying **ANYTHING** it wanted. The Declaratory Act was quite famous, and was constantly referred to by Americans as the paradigm of tyranny*

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT

Throughout the speech **in bold** are rhetorical devices. Identify in the margin examples of the following rhetorical devices used in the speech (look up the definitions if you need to do so):

- Metaphor (if extended metaphor note it)
- Simile
- Rhetorical Question
- Parallelism (identify anaphora, epistrophe, asyndeton, polysyndeton)
- Argument by analogy
- Anecdote
- Allusion
- Aphorism
- Acknowledgement of the opposing argument and refutation of that view
- Appeals to logic (logos), emotion (pathos)