



Heritage Academy's

INDEPENDENCE

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Our Mission

Thomas Jefferson stated, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.” It is the goal of Independence and Heritage Academy as a whole to keep our nation from a state of ignorance. To accomplish this, Independence will promote learning through the essays of Heritage Academy scholars.

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A Note from the Editors:

You are reading something beautiful. Twenty years ago, Mr. Earl Taylor founded Heritage Academy to teach America's youth the principles upon which their country is founded. Now, Heritage has three campuses, and its message of founding principles has reached thousands of scholars. But we, those fortunates who are learning of the genius of the Founders, and of the exceptional nature of America, believe this message must reach farther. The ideas of self-government and independence should be sung from sea to shining sea. Only then can this, the last true bastion of freedom, be preserved.

So as you ponder these words, don't simply agree and move on, don't simply dismiss them as the ramblings of idiot teenagers. Learn, realize, apply, and live these principles, because you are reading something beautiful. Join Heritage Academy in saving America and building her heroes.

Thank you.

The Pillars of America

Katie Hill

Unity, freedom, and effort: these are the columns of America, the ever-present support system of this great country. In his farewell address to the nation, President George Washington tries to convince the American people of just that. Although the speech was given at the Congress Hall in Philadelphia in 1796, the original draft had been completed four years prior, at the conclusion of Washington's first term. When he was reelected, however, his speech underwent numerous revisions at the suggestion of Alexander Hamilton. The final draft, a powerful 32-page, handwritten document, was later reprinted in Philadelphia's American Daily Advertiser on September 19, 1796. By employing various qualities of the Aristotelian appeal of pathos, George Washington urges the American people to protect their rights and their government at all costs, attempting to impress upon them the dire importance of retaining their complete freedom. With his masterful use of metaphors, Washington emphasizes the importance of keeping their government stable. Early in his address, he states, "The unity of government . . . is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence." By comparing unity to a pillar, Washington clearly implies that it is so vital to true independence that without its support, independence will come crashing down. To add to this point, Washington, regarding the people's certainty of this truth, adds, "This is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively . . . directed." Once again, he has used a metaphor to communicate his message, a metaphor of war and fortresses and weaponry. He specifically states that if the people are not absolutely certain of the crucial nature of governmental unity, the combination of criticism from others and doubts from oneself will almost surely destroy that conviction, leaving behind only uncertainty. Inversely, building up one's belief in the necessity of unity in government is, by all standards, a strategic move, because just as losing faith will leave a man confused and spiritually

crippled, retaining and reinforcing it will make for a stronger patriot, and therefore a stronger nation as a whole. Through the use of these cleverly-placed literary devices, George Washington attempts to convince his listeners of the need for oneness in the government.

In addition to metaphor, Washington applies very specific diction to nudge his audience in the desired direction. For example, he tells them that "The name of American . . . must always exalt the just pride of patriotism." The word "exalt," according to Webster's 1828 dictionary, means "to raise; to elevate; to glorify", and it is often used in reference to things of a divine nature ("Exalt"). This implies that a man should feel the same way about patriotism as he does about divinity—that, in fine, it ought to be glorious. Later, Washington comments that the people are not that dissimilar, but in fact possess only "slight shades of difference." Of course, Washington is not trying to disprove the idea that humans are diverse. Rather he is putting aside Americans' differences, thereby fostering a general feeling of connection among them—a type of unity, per se. Unity is, after all, one of Washington's main topics in his speech, and with the help of some exemplary word choice, he is able to direct his listeners towards it.

Finally, Washington utilizes flattery to prove that defending the government is in the people's own interest because it will help them remain happy. First of all, he makes sure to remind them that "the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guarantee of the plans by which they were affected." He offers praises because he knows that when people feel their work is appreciated, they are inclined to continue lending their assistance. Once again, Washington's words relate to his metaphor of unity as a pillar; in this case, he is reminding them that their combined support has earned them a "guarantee of the plans" for their future. In this way, he builds upon his commendation and implants in their minds the idea that not only are they as individuals desperately

needed, but that as a conjoined force they have even greater opportunities ahead of them. Then, to inspire them even further, Washington declares “that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete, by so careful a preservation” of their Constitution as they have hitherto done. This time, he is providing for them a light at the end of the tunnel, a promise that something good will come of all this. After begging for their labor and their togetherness, he delivers to his audience the light and fluffy part of his remarks, the portion everyone wants to hear: it will make them happy! It is part of human nature to expect or desire a benefit from one’s work, and Washington is promising them just

that—so long as they do the work, and do it in concert—by way of flattery. In his farewell address to the nation, George Washington—through the usage of metaphor, distinctive wording, and praise—pleads with the American people to defend their government. Over two hundred years later, it is still being read by citizens across the United States. His speech has become a well-known piece of literature. In fact, it is a tradition in Congress that every year, to commemorate Washington’s birthday, his famous farewell is read aloud in a special meeting. After all this time, America’s first President is still greatly admired. His words will not be forgotten.

Normal is Extraordinary

Jennifer Moore

“What do you want to do with your life?” I am asked this question at least once by every family member, acquaintance, peer, teacher, and friend. It feels like this question pops up in nearly every conversation I have. I always want to whip up some spectacular answer about how I will be an incredibly successful brain surgeon who expects to make a hundred grand a year and, of *course*, will get the top scholarship to an Ivy League school on recommendation from Mr. President. But, as reality has it, I don’t like the President, and I’m probably going to a community college to maybe find a major that will get me a few grand a year if I’m lucky, so I always have to give the same lamely constructed, yet honest answer: I don’t know. Of course in return I get a half-hearted grunt and an unimpressed glance. Gee, sorry that I’m so boring.

Why is it that this question seems to be so important to our culture? It’s like, if you’re not doing something extraordinarily grand with your life, then you’re only a half-baked member of society. If you’re not going to be a rocket scientist or discover the cure for AIDS then you’re not great. In fact, you’re not even good. You’re just another lame person who will only suck out the nation’s resources with your very existence. Doesn’t this sound like a silly way to

determine the worth of a person in society? Yet this is how it is; these are the hoops we must jump through if we want to be considered more than just “the masses.”

So how is each of us supposed to feel like somebody when according to our culture, most of us don’t amount to anything more than ants on an anthill? My answer for you: find something in nothing. Sometimes people are meant to do the most basic job. You could be spending the rest of your life just sharpening pencils, and the world could completely overlook your existence. But you know what? Without those pencils, it would take longer to educate children, and the kid who was destined to prevent World War III could maybe be too late. See, your simple job might just save the world! Find a way to make yourself feel significant, even if the world labels your life meaningless. Remember that society is made up of a bunch of regular people who aren’t any better than you, so what right does it have to think its opinions are so high and mighty?

Regular people make the world function properly. Without the janitors, who get paid low wages to do detestable jobs, sanitation would be at an all-time low. Without the workers spending all day checking and sorting packages of food in a factory, there would be a lot more problems due to defective

products, creating health and safety issues. Without the people who do nothing but test machinery over and over again, there would be a higher death rate in the construction business. These “boring” workers are all silent heroes who specifically need to be in their positions for the world’s sake, yet nobody bats an eye at them; in fact, some families would disown their children for joining one of these professions. Doctors and lawyers and congressmen aren’t the only people who are successful and needed, yet most of society gives them all the appreciation and respect.

All of us with “boring” lives might never be admired by the world, but we can certainly have the last laugh knowing the world can’t function without us. I say, do your own thing. Find worth in your existence and take the shallow trends of culture with a grain of salt. Normal is more than enough. I don’t know about you, but the next time someone asks me what I want to do with my life, I want to proudly say “I don’t know and that’s okay.”

Liberty of Debt

Kyle Cloud

“The burden of debt is as destructive to freedom as subjugation by conquest” (Skousen 291). In 1814, the United States was on the verge of bitter defeat as England threatened to force its former colonies under British rule once more. Dutifully, patriots bled and died to avert the return of tyranny. Following an exhausting battle at Fort McHenry, the British at last surrendered, and liberty lived on. As Francis Scott Key observed, America remained “the land of the free and the home of the brave.” Today in the United States, we face an equally formidable adversary: our national budget deficit exceeded one trillion dollars in 2012 and remains staggeringly immense. On top of that, our national debt has surpassed our gross domestic product, meaning that all the goods and services in the entire U.S. economy would be insufficient for paying it off. Although the deficit’s recent shrinkage is somewhat reassuring, America cannot be truly free until exorbitant deficit spending, which is unnecessary for national security and unfair to subsequent generations, ceases to plague our exceptional nation.

Amazingly few and meticulously outlined, the U.S. government’s rightful powers do not extend to the unconstitutional actions on which Congress spends more and more borrowed money each year. First and foremost, the federal government must protect the population from foreign invasion and domestic insurrection. Beyond that, it must unify the several

states, maintaining just relations among them and resolving occasional disputes between them. Simply put, “the proper role of government is to protect equal rights, not provide equal things” (Skousen 115). Protection is its chief end. One might assume, therefore, that a majority of federal expenses are related to national defense, but that is not the reality. While defense spending comprised 18 percent of the federal budget in 2013, Social Security, welfare, and other benefit programs made up nearly 70 percent (“Where”). Thus of the 100 pennies in an American tax dollar, a supermajority financed the provision of equal things while the paltry remainder covered the protection of equal rights. How can we balance this budget, which has proven both alarmingly enormous and appallingly disproportionate? Minimizing our dependence on entitlement programs, we can demand that the federal government serve its correct purpose: to “secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity” (Declaration 17).

As our country continues to accumulate debt at a ferocious pace, each citizen’s share rising above \$50,000, the idea of repaying it becomes increasingly daunting. Food stamps and unemployment benefits cost money: to whom will the bill be handed? However diligent, principled, and frugal our loved children and grandchildren might be, they must stomach the poison of insurmountable indebtedness while Paul next door

guzzles the ambrosia of government subsidization. As a young taxpayer, I am among those whose priceless liberty is currently crumbling under the torrent of flagrant financial irresponsibility. Over my generation will lurk the deathly black shadow of debt for a lifetime unless we work to reverse our nation's silent downward trend.

Because the United States of America has a government controlled by the people, American citizens determine the fate of the nation, which outrageous deficit spending now jeopardizes. Fortunately, there is much we can do to bring an end to the madness. Firstly, we can discuss the issue of the mammoth debt with our friends and warn them of the dangers posed by never-ending deficit

spending. In addition, we can elect wise legislators to whom fiscal responsibility in government is a top priority. Furthermore, we can write our representatives in Congress, insisting that they bring the budget into balance. Better yet, we can join thousands of Americans who are calling for an amendment to the Constitution that would force the federal government to maintain a balanced budget so that astronomical debt can never again threaten this outstanding nation. Above all, let us remember that America still has extraordinary potential more than 200 years after its founding. Either we can continue borrowing against that potential, or we can rise up, stand firmly against deficit spending, and claim our withering independence.

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“Building America’s Heroes”

