

**“WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT”
MONUMENTAL ERROR: WRITING WRONGS ON THE
THOMAS JEFFERSON MEMORIAL**

by

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Abstract

Detailed analysis of the inscriptions found upon the walls of The Thomas Jefferson Memorial (TJM), in Washington D.C. reveals an astonishing rhetorical secret, hidden in plain sight in the form of one of America's most visited, and high-profile, national monuments. Upon the marbled interior of this Washingtonian pantheon, brass lettered quotations from Jefferson's works, epistles, and legislation, purport to communicate an accurate and accessible facsimile version of the third president's intellect, philosophy, and politics. Comparison of the quinquepartite panels to the original documents authored by Jefferson, however, exposes a systematic and purposeful series of textual and semantic alterations, giving rise to a highly manipulated form of US national history, presidential memorialization, and public understanding. This thesis moves in three parts: 1) to establish the existence and extent of these manipulations; 2) to interrogate the means and agents of Jefferson's mediation; and 3) to assess the material and symbolic consequence of the TJM's continued presence in extant form. In so doing, this thesis - informed by rhetorical theory, studies in public memory, and intensive archival research - finds that the inscriptions of the Jefferson Memorial were knowingly edited to function not only as a subjective commemoration of a national political hero, but also as an item of contemporary Progressive propaganda, communicating messages consistently sympathetic to Roosevelt's New Deal and wartime agendas.

Accordingly, the monument becomes an important locus for investigating the specific rhetorical formation and consequence of a single (and highly motivated) public memory space, whilst also providing a replicable case study methodology for a broader derivation of the workings of "technologies of memory" (as defined by Sturken, 1997), as they function at political mnemonic sites in the U.S. and beyond.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work of the author, Martin A. Parlett.

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Introduction: Errors Carved in Stone

Detailed analysis of the inscriptions found upon the walls of The Thomas Jefferson Memorial (TJM), in Washington D.C. reveals an astonishing rhetorical secret, hidden in plain sight in the form of one of America's most visited, and high-profile, national monuments. Upon the marbled interior of this Washingtonian pantheon, brass lettered quotations from Jefferson's works, epistles, and legislation, purport to communicate an accurate and accessible facsimile version of the third president's intellect, philosophy, and politics. Comparison of the quinquepartite panels to the original documents authored by Jefferson, however, exposes a systematic and purposeful series of textual and semantic alterations, giving rise to a highly manipulated form of US national history, presidential memorialization, and public understanding. This thesis moves in three parts: 1) to establish the existence and extent of these manipulations; 2) to interrogate the means and agents of Jefferson's mediation; and 3) to assess the material and symbolic consequence of the TJM's continued presence in extant form. In so doing, this thesis finds that the inscriptions of the Jefferson Memorial were knowingly edited to function not only as a subjective commemoration of a national political hero, but also as an item of contemporary Progressive propaganda, communicating messages consistently sympathetic to Roosevelt's New Deal and wartime agendas.

Accordingly, the monument becomes an important locus for investigating the specific rhetorical formation and consequence of a single (and highly motivated) public memory space, whilst also providing a replicable case study methodology for a broader derivation of the workings of "technologies of memory" (as defined by Sturken, 1997), as they function at political mnemonic sites in the U.S. and beyond.

Informed by rhetorical theory, studies in public memory, and intensive archival research,¹ this investigation forms a rhetorical criticism of the TJM, with particular emphasis on the unearthed

¹ The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission: General Records, 1934-1943. Record Group 79: Records of the National Park Service, 1785-2006. (24 files) ARC: 1170312 (National Archives, MD)

fallacies of the inscriptions as one element of that material and symbolic rhetoric. The archive provides hitherto unreported documentary evidence of the role, motivations and consequence of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission (TJMC) and its most senior and energetic patron, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, acting together as the rhetorical agents of Jefferson's reconceptualization, and codifiers of his public voice and history. An assessment of the TJMC's method of textual selection indicates the extent to which the monument formed a potentially partisan and activist presidential memorialization, to the detriment of public understanding. Evidence suggests that the Memorial, and its constituent inscriptions, was appropriated to form a contemporary rhetorical object that ventriloquized Jefferson to suit the political philosophy of Roosevelt's administration and an interpreted narrative of 1930s-40s America. The TJM is rhetorical attestation of Jefferson's continuous re-situatedness and of the forced malleability of his contested historical persona over time by those claiming (parts of) his legacy at tendentious moments (Adams, 1856; Ellis 1996). Given the celebrity status of Jefferson as a founder of American political thought, it is not surprising that he has been variably borrowed by academics, biographers, and politicians over the centuries as the historical prime mover of particular causes or movements. At the time of the Memorial's creation, Roosevelt and the Progressive movement adopted Jefferson as the standard bearer of civic humanism and government-led social reform. According to Paul Zummo (2008), for example, "[t]he Great Depression, Franklin Roosevelt's ascendancy, and the New Deal reawakened the Progressive impulse, and the spirit of the Progressive movement – itself a manifestation of the Jeffersonian political philosophy" (161). The Memorial Commission, populated almost exclusively by Democratic representatives – and acting as rhetorical sub-agents with political allegiance to Roosevelt – were presented with an opportunity to write Jefferson-the-Progressive into the material and cultural fabric of the United States commemorative narrative.

The discovery of the Memorial's de facto inaccuracy will be, for many, a matter of *prima facie* scholarly and public significance, under the unspoken, but persistent, motto of academic discourse:

*omne ignotum pro magnifico.*² Yet that conversation gets only to the physical *act* of the Memorial's creation and its partiality, not to the more interesting (and rhetorical) question of the motives involved in the particular ways the Memorial was rendered so. This study might loosely align itself with the dramatisic methodology of Kenneth Burke, in understanding the creation of the Memorial (and its inscriptions) as a high-profile communicative action – or text – with complex and powerful motivational provenance and consequence (Burke, 1945). The interpretative philosophy of the dramatisic pentad – Burke's principal construct for the investigation of human motivation – moves us beyond the monadic declaration of misquotation and into the interrogation of *act*, as well as *scene*, *agent*, *agency*, and *purpose* (Burke, xv). The Memorial can be understood as (evidence of) the rhetorical act itself, whilst the remaining elements of the dramatisic pentad can be derived from a thorough analysis of the archival material of the TJMC. Here, exhaustive correspondence among members of the Commission, Agencies, the White House and others, alongside Commission minutes, memoranda, designs, and submissions, reveals multivariate motivational forces and their interaction with the *scene* of mid-twentieth century socio-political attitudes. The memorialisation, therefore, is recognised as a product of a tangled cultural remembering; its (un)reliability forms the keystone for fathoming the interactive “desires, needs, and self-definitions” (Sturken, 2) of an American culture that created, and continues to validate, it. This study employs the lens of Marita Sturken, who (invoking Foucault's technologies of the self) defines memorialising objects, from monuments to yellow ribbons, as “technologies of memory” (9), shifting the emphasis from the nature of the technology itself, to the process and source of that technology's instrumented deployment by agents within a material (and invariably political) context.

Memorials are unavoidably – and axiomatically – rhetorical. Studies in public memory, visual art and rhetorical theory (in response to the “discursive turn”³) have, following Burke, established

² “Everything unknown appears magnificent.”

³ The “discursive turn” (also “rhetorical turn”) is widely understood as a challenge to the objective or scientific interpretation of the rhetorical form. In short, the core proposition of the discursive turn is that rhetoric is always meaning-making, effecting and

memorials, museums and collective memory spaces as rhetorical acts (or texts), upon scenes, by recognised agents with discernible motivations. Ehrenhaus (1988) recognises memorials as legitimate rhetorical *texts* because they are used for persuasion and propaganda, sponsored, endorsed or constructed by governments or their proxies, so that they might be read as inventions of institutional authority, or the expressions of political bodies in (re)conceptualising historical events. (56-7). Gallagher (1995) writes, “[s]uch artifacts are intended by their creators and/or perceived audiences to perpetuate values, admonish us to future conduct, and affirm or challenge existing power relations” (112). Conversely, Carruthers (2000), whilst recognising that “memorials are rhetorical...powerfully so,” notes that they are so “*whether or not* their designers and patrons intended them to have such rhetorical power.” According to her, “it is unlikely that the designers of the Lincoln or Vietnam [and we can assume other major] memorials thought in terms of rhetoric at all; probably they would be offended at the very idea” (40). This thesis, with evidentiary support from the archive, aligns itself with the theories of agential purpose espoused by Ehrenhaus and Gallagher, whilst severely departing from Carruthers’ claims of mediators’ rhetorical naiveté or innocuous political agency.

Part of the power wielded by the rhetors, or creators, of a public memorial is the manipulation not only of what a society remembers, but also of what it forgets, as referenced by Sturken (1997), Dacres, (2004) and Ehrenhaus (1988). This is achieved, according to Biesecker (2002), Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), Young (1993) and Griswold (1992), as memorials function in epideictic or didactic rhetorical modes. By invoking the blame and praise dichotomy recognised by Aristotle in his very definition of epideictic rhetoric, commemorations can “function rhetorically as civic lessons for a generation beset by fractious disagreements about the viability of U.S. culture and identity” (Biesecker,

affecting the realities and culture(s) of its participants. Jack Selzer (1999) and other have challenged the “discursive turn” and its concentration on the ephemeral, to underscore that an object’s material aspect is a dynamic component of rhetoric, meaning and culture.

393). Memorials such as the TJM are explicitly epideictic vehicles for employing national patriotic stories of “ennobling events” (Young, 270) for modern repossession.⁴

This thesis also follows the recent re-consideration of a material rhetoric (by Sturken et al), whereby recognising rhetoric as substantial in itself – and not simply attending to the materiality of the rhetorical context – moves us to consider the Memorial as a legitimate *text* outside of the narrow definitions of written and oral discourse. Much of the intellectual space for a material rhetoric as applied to public memory in physical space was chartered by Carole Blair in the wake of the Fifteenth Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition (1997). Having identified the postmodern, post-structuralist era as the kairotic moment for a material rhetoric, Blair applies five modes of inquiry to her (admittedly curtailed) case studies from a post-1982 memorialising culture.⁵ First, *what is the significance of the text’s materiality?* Second, *what are the apparatuses and degrees of durability displayed in the text?* Third, *what are the text’s modes or possibilities of reproduction or preservation?* Fourth, *what does the text do to (or with, or against) other texts?* Fifth, and most importantly for the heuristic of materiality, Blair asks *how does the text act on person(s)* (30). Such questions, sufficiently adapted, will be deployed in the final chapter to assess the consequence of the misleading Jefferson epigraphs upon the material and cultural context.

In *Places of Public Memory* (2010), Dickinson, Ott, and Blair situate modern memory studies in a post-Halbwachs, post-Foucault context, in which memory is broadly understood as an operation of collectivity, “rather than individuated cognitive work” (6). Following Hattenhauer (1984), Dickinson, Blair and Ott argue that interaction with a site’s materiality “predisposes its visitors to respond in certain ways, enthymematically prefiguring the rhetoric of the place as worthy of attention, investment, and effort (at the very least)” (26). Arguably, the TJM engages in a fallacious rhetorical relationship

⁴ Griswold has similarly identified the Lincoln Memorial as a site of epideictic rhetoric, rendered in the traditional “pattern of a hero,” conveying the Lincoln-as-saviour motif for replication among the American public.

⁵ Throughout her chapter in *Rhetorical Bodies* and other scholarship, Blair has avoided the substantial Washington memorials (Lincoln, Jefferson and Washington) of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

with its audience, enacting a betrayal by subverting the expectation of an accurate and authentic presidential memorialisation.

Finally, this thesis recognises the important observation of James Loewen in underlining the tripartite historic dimension of objects of public memory, such as the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. The first phase is the “manifest narrative” of the original event or person, that is to say the historical genesis to which the object refers (36-40). The second phase is the story of the site’s own creation, the historical circumstance of the object’s mediation which “reflect[s] the attitudes and ideas of the time when Americans put them up, often many years after the event” (22). The final historical moment is that of a visitor’s own contemporary experience, by which the manifest narrative is activated within the confines of a particular context.

In summary, this thesis understands Memorials such as the TJM to be legitimate texts subject to rhetorical motivational forces, used for political propaganda, and constructed for discrete remembrances and amnesias. They employ national stories for modern repossession. They are materially consequential objects which act upon audiences and influence other texts and interpretative discourses over time. Memorials are also acts of collective cognitive work that predispose their audiences to receive accurate and authentic information. These characteristics of memorial objects provided the rhetorical mechanics for the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission to engineer a version of Jefferson’s legacy to agree with the agenda of his Democratic inheritor and primary commemorative sponsor: Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

In Chapter 1, close analysis of the five inscriptions and the archival record reveals that the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission embarked upon a series of purposeful and recontextualizing revisions. In each case, the editing process achieves some level of alignment between the memorial’s subject and its patron. Examples include the generalisation of Jefferson’s political philosophy to serve as an apposite war cry against tyrannical injustice and religious oppression, the use of selective

quotation to suggest Jefferson's support for the scope of governmental overhaul represented by Roosevelt's New Deal, and the extrapolation of a comment Jefferson made on educational provision to an unequivocal endorsement of universal public education. During the consideration of one panel, the Commission simplifies and ameliorates Jefferson's complicated relationship to the abolition of slavery, while also wrestling with the question of whether any reference to Jefferson and civil rights might be problematic for Roosevelt's administration (which, whilst contributing significantly to the advancement of African Americans, also compromised parts of its civil rights agenda to maintain the political support of Southern White Democrats).

Chapter 2 examines the competing motivational forces behind the mediation of Jefferson via the manipulation of the Memorial's epigraphical content. Specifically, archival research exposes the motivations of the Commission and the Sub-Committee on Inscriptions in (re)creating the historical voice of Jefferson for public commemoration. This historicizing project competes with the direct intervention of President Roosevelt to ensure a parallelism between his contemporary agenda and the legacy of Jefferson as a Progressive icon.

Chapter 3 examines the Memorial from a material-rhetoric perspective in order to understand how it achieves the goals of its rhetors, as well as a variety of unintended (or unforeseen) consequences in shaping public memory. The Memorial engages its users in an enthymematic deceit, which presents an inauthentic version of Jefferson as a supposedly elite, accurate and authentic object of public memory, worthy of attention, investment, and effort.

Chapter 1: The Rhetoric – From Parchment to Marble, Jefferson Reclaimed

Thomas Jefferson, who had designed his own modest tombstone during his lifetime, could hardly have imagined the scope of his eventual posthumous memorialisation. Rising 120 feet higher than the obelisk of coarse stone he had envisaged, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial upon the south bank of the Tidal Basin is today an extravagant, Brobdingnagian shrine to the third president of the United States and his interpreted ideals (Appendix A). The design, informed by the Roman Pantheon and Jefferson's own architectural tastes, is unashamedly neo-classical, modelled by leading antiquarian architect John Russell Pope. Facing the Washington Monument and the White House beyond, the main entrance of the Memorial consists of sweeping marble steps leading to a portico with a circular colonnade of Ionic order columns rising 43 feet high to support a pediment containing a sculptured representation of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, crowned by a shallow dome.

The interior of the monument is demarcated by four great stone panels on the northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest walls, as well as a carved panel that encircles the base of the dome's interior. Each quadrant features a prominent brass-lettered epigraph, apparently taken from Jefferson's own writings, communicating a concentrated and accessible version of Jefferson's intellect, philosophy and politics. The content of these panels is illustrated in Appendix B.

This chapter recognises these inscriptions as part of the grammar of the Memorial's rhetorical whole, functioning as examples of the classical concept of "relative inscription" – i.e., epigraphical content bearing relationship to other rhetorical features of memorialisation to communicate a particular narrative or theme. Those responsible for the creation of the TJM relied upon the manipulation of these inscriptions to fashion a reality of Jefferson's thinking which corresponded with – if not historically validated – a number of the policy decisions and rhetorical frameworks of the Roosevelt administration itself. By number alone, analysis reveals that a total of (at least) ten separate textual sources were marshalled by the Commission to compile only five panels, demonstrating the extent of creative license

at work. The nature of this rhetorical manipulation is distinct for each panel, but the overall intent is largely consistent and well-evidenced: that is, to extract from Jefferson's often context-dependent, nuanced and problematic source texts, quotations that are generalised and aphoristic; applicable to World War II dichotomies; and supportive of the New Deal philosophy. The Commission edited the inscriptions to simplify Jefferson's enigmatic qualities as an historical actor, by, for example, Christianizing his voice (where greater theological complexity exists) and – most significantly – transforming the ideological minefield of Jefferson's record on slavery into declarations of unwavering and prophetic abolitionism.

The story of each inscription's formation is detailed in turn below, demonstrating the cumulative mechanistic and ideological manipulation of the source text material to effect an opportunistic interpretation of Jefferson for the benefit of his rhetorical agents and their context. Whilst it is clear that any truncation of Jefferson's language is a fraught experiment of semiotics, the Commission's accommodation of Roosevelt's presidential license leads to a codification of Jefferson's character that, at times, is both opportunistic and counter-historical.

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Panel A (TJMPa)

The quotation on the panel of the base of the interior dome (hereafter TJMPa) is, in fact, the only engraving of the five major quotations found within the Memorial Room, with the other four consisting of individually laid brass letters. Comprising only twenty words, "I HAVE SWORN UPON THE ALTAR OF GOD ETERNAL HOSTILITY AGAINST EVERY FORM OF TYRANNY OVER THE MIND OF MAN," the quotation runs around the entire circumference of the circular chamber, emerging from the right side of Jefferson's statue; its end and beginning points are demarcated only by three engraved saltire crosses – exaggerated terminal punctuation for greater legibility.

As archival analysis reveals, the quotation against tyranny was selected, on the one hand, as an interpretative keystone for the entire Memorial. The sentence functions as the generalising and encompassing parent-thought of American freedom to encircle and unify the quadrants' endorsement of a variety of human freedoms. On the other hand, the Commission significantly and knowingly recontextualized what was originally a private remark on personal electoral and theological rivalries, making it a cosmically proportioned proclamation of liberty. The Commission therefore concentrated Jefferson's original subtlety and specific concern into an aggrandising aphorism that a) distilled Jefferson's historical persona as the prime mover of America freedoms, b) supported the current Western response to the existential threat of Nazism's rise, and c) roused and comforted an American public by re-emphasising the existential semantic of its founding democratic philosophy.

The quotation is taken entirely from a private letter written by Jefferson (in Monticello) to Dr Benjamin Rush, dated September 23, 1800, in which he defends his philosophical rebuttal to the enshrinement of state religion (Boyd 32:168). The missive was written at a crucial point in American political history, on the eve of the antagonistic 1800 presidential election in which Jefferson and his running mate, Aaron Burr, (on a Democratic-Republican ticket) campaigned against the incumbent Federalist, John Adams. The election was bitterly fought, with divisions on foreign policy – particularly attitudes towards the virtue or villainy of the French Revolution – looming large in public debate. Jefferson's ultimately successful campaign was also dogged by accusations surrounding his religious (deistic) beliefs. His numerable critics voiced concern that his abstraction from mainstream Christian orthodoxy made Jefferson unfit to hold the highest office, and a threat to their congregations. This letter, from which the prominent quotation is taken, is, in fact, a response to a warning from Rush – written August 22 – about the strength of anti-Jeffersonian feeling among the Philadelphian clergy (and others) who continued to cast the candidate as a dangerous atheist.⁶ The wall of separation between

⁶ Rush was no doubt reading the same arguments captured in an 1800 article from the *New England Palladium*: “Should the infidel Jefferson be elected to the Presidency, the *seal of death* is that moment set on our holy religion, our churches will be prostrated and some infamous prostitute, . . . will preside in the Sanctuaries now devoted to the worship of the Most High.”

Church and State – a philosophy articulated by Jefferson, and acted upon through his work in Virginia to disestablish religion – had garnered extreme opposition and was becoming a partisan and theological issue.

In the third paragraph of this letter, Jefferson counters the logic of his Pennsylvanian foes by interpreting their opposition to him as a misunderstanding of the “clause of the constitution, which, while it secured the freedom of the press, covered also the freedom of religion” and “had given to the clergy a very favourite hope of obtaining an establishment of a particular form of Christianity thro’ the U.S.” Jefferson’s potential election to the presidency threatened to thwart such an enshrinement, as his enemies believed that “any portion of power confided in me, will be exerted in opposition to their schemes.” It is here, at the crest of a political riposte, that the TJMPa quotation is found:

And they believe rightly; for I have sworn upon the altar of god, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man. But this is all they have to fear from me: & enough too in their opinion & this is the cause of their printing lying pamphlets against me (Boyd, 32:168).

The quotation, as it appears upon the Memorial frieze, is arguably the most faithful textual replication of Jefferson’s words within the epigraphical whole. While it omits the sentence’s beginning, the quotation does not otherwise deviate significantly from the primary source, nor is it combined with any other source material. Grammatically, the comma from the initial clause has been removed, and the lowercase “god” is rendered imperceptible by the total capitalisation of the sentence, as is customary for the majority of memorial inscriptions to maintain aesthetic balance (and also potentially convenient for avoiding theological controversy). Instead the Commission’s formation of TJMPa exemplifies a number of rhetorical fallacies under the broad terminology of recontextualization, a process defined by Per Linell as “the dynamic transfer and transformation of something from one discourse/text in context . . . to another” (126). The Commission abstracts Jefferson and his language (the historical manifest

narrative) – with intent – from an original context and, via the rhetor-agency of an early-twentieth century Commission supported by the president, into a discrete alternative milieu. The inscription of TJMPa is a significant event of fallacious contextomy, or quoting out of context, in order to wrench the words away from their *realpolitik*, epistolary and theological context towards a new kairotic moment of generalising twentieth-century American resistance to oppressive regimes and tyrannical ideologies.

The original letter, with its climactic rebuttal to Jefferson’s political enemies, is a deeply context-dependent document, rich in reference to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century presidential politics, international affairs and constitutional philosophy. The letter forms part of a dialogic correspondence between two of the nation’s founding fathers on the subject of Christianity and political strategy. Recontextualized by the Commission as it is – and dislocated from the realm of private discourse to public and international consumption – the statement is denuded of complexity and emphasis, so that the words are rendered as a stand-alone affidavit of the unerring philosophy of divinely witnessed American freedom. While there is no doubt that this sentiment exists in Jefferson’s original, the quotation erases the constitutional backdrop that provokes it. Rather the quotation drapes Jefferson in a cloak of heroic Christianity as some *Miles Christi* – potentially the antithesis of his original intent. Under the agential influence of the TJMC, the oath sworn upon the altar is no longer the rhetorical retort to the oppressive potential federalist pamphleteers, but the sober religious staging for Jefferson’s rejection of (now ill-defined, and thus potentially reclaimable) general tyranny. The inscription, installed upon the memorial as an isolated maxim, demonstrates the potential for the logical fallacy of contextomy to effect an entirely false attribution of values, to provide the phrase with a philosophical pregnancy not present within the source text. These words have significant bearing upon the interpretative framework of the Memorial, and its constituent inscriptions, arguably serving as a keystone of misremembering.

The Commission archives illuminate the complex of motivational forces working upon the rhetor-agents who moved to adopt the frieze quotation. Dr Fiske Kimball first suggested the use of the

Rush letter quotation at the meeting of the Commission on March 2, 1939, bolstering his selection of the frieze statement with an intriguing appeal to informal presidential authority and approval, suggesting that Roosevelt had in some way already commended the quotation for the outlined application:

I found one which you have seen before that I know the President would like very much. “I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility to every form of tyranny over the mind of man.” I would like to see it run along the frieze (TJMC-7).

On October 19, 1939, the TJMC met to debate the wording for the frieze quotation, eventually moving to adopt the Rush-letter phrase as the memorial’s banner epigraph. It was propelled to debate at this moment by contractual impetus, prior to the establishment of the formal Sub-Committee responsible for later inscription selection.

From the beginning, the quotation was conceived by the Commission as a purposefully undefined axiom, extracted from the particulars of Jefferson’s electoral context to serve as a grandiloquent universal proclamation on liberty, under which each of the other quadrant panels could find a unifying theme. Dr Kimball made the generalizing stratagem clear, understanding the phrase as having the “advantage over all other excerpts, in that while he has elsewhere expressed his hostility to political tyranny, or religious tyranny or other forms of tyranny, in those words he covered all forms of tyranny” (TJMC-7 October 7, 1939). The leaflet prepared to attend the public opening of the Memorial affirmed the quotation’s generalising properties in summarising the “creed of [Jefferson’s] political and social philosophy” (TJMC-2). Senator Thomas, an appointed member of the TJMC, heaped praise upon the inscription in October 1939 for its potential to be an all-encompassing headline: “I do not know what better quotation you could get to show what an American Democracy stands for” (TJMC-7). The Commission transforms the electoral and constitutional threat of Christian Federalist activists, which Jefferson describes as a form of tyranny within the complex of his own political battle, into the

altruistic, statesmanlike remonstrations of individual oppression. The recontextualization causes the twenty-word phrase to serve metonymically for the Jefferson corpus and a Rooseveltian brand of American foreign policy.

TJMPa might be understood less as a signification of the historical object (and his unorthodox religious views), and more a means of deploying that historical object within the circumstantial zeitgeist of cultural memory. In the words of Sturken (writing on other sites of commemoration), the Memorial's "authenticity is derived not from its revelation of any original experience but from its role in providing continuity to a culture" (259). At the moment of the Memorial's creation, the continuity of American culture and democracy faced its greatest existential threat from the rise of European fascism.

Correspondingly, the archives reveal that the intent of the quotation was less to remember who Jefferson was for posterity, and more to ensure that a public did not forget what America meant for interbellum modernity. The quotation was brought to the Commission's attention by Dr Fiske Kimball, with the potency of implied presidential authorization. Almost one year later Roosevelt contacted Chairman Gibboney by memorandum, proposing the very same quotation from the Benjamin Rush letter for the dome inscription, forwarding a supporting letter from Secretary Harold Ickes – a key implementer of the New Deal agenda. "What do you think of this idea?" the president asked, before underscoring, "It seems pretty good to me. FDR" (TJMC-1 December 23, 1940). Gibboney reassured Roosevelt that "this has already been done, as Mr Ickes can see if he visits the Memorial," before inviting further involvement from the sitting president, "to select the most suitable quotations for these panels, and we should be most happy to receive from you any suggestions you might care to make in this connection (TJMC-1 December 27, 1940). Whether Roosevelt was merely measuring the potency of his earlier implicit endorsement of the sentence, or his general sway with the Commission, (or indeed even if the entire matter had been coincidence) his preference for the TJMPa was secured, along with his power as an interceding rhetor with demonstrative agency in a project of Jeffersonian recontextualization.

The motivation behind Roosevelt's intervention was to memorialise a contemporary brand of American liberty, against the current context of Hitlerism's rise, via the abstraction of Jefferson's words. Throughout his World War II rhetorical output, Roosevelt relied upon the re-interpretation of Jefferson as an historical antecedent to his own administration and its challenges. When speaking about the protection of the American maritime borders from German invasion in 1941, for example, Roosevelt called upon the exemplar of Jefferson's order to the Navy to end the attacks on American ships by the Corsairs of the North African nation (391). The alignment of Jeffersonian liberty with Roosevelt's contemporary protection of it was repeated throughout the 1940s, and in 1941 the president went so far as to adopt and redefine the interpretative framework of Jefferson's "Four Freedoms" within his State of the Union Address (Pederson, 406).

In the words of Katherine Scarborough, the frieze quotation was "selected for perpetuation before the eyes of the world at an hour when the right of human beings to think for themselves has been denied to millions, and, where it survives, is challenged more seriously than ever before in history" (December 8, 1940). The sentence is recontextualized (with discernible intent) from Jefferson's political battle against religious intolerance, to an international struggle against Fascism and dictatorships, and from an audience of one in 1800, to a global audience of millions during the uncertainty of international warfare.

In 1939, Senator Thomas – referring to the frieze quotation – exclaimed: "I only hope that they will charge this sentence up to each member of the Commission, and we can all take credit for writing it." Beneath the jocularity of this statement is a self-revelatory truth. The Commission members, as well as Roosevelt, rewrote Jefferson's political statement through the formation of their own rhetorical

object, forgetting, and forcing others to never properly understand, the intent, context and scope of the manifest object.⁷

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Panel B (TJMPb)

The engraving on the quadrant panel of the southwest interior wall (hereafter TJMPb) is similarly derived entirely from a single source, namely the American Declaration of Independence (1776).

Widely recognised as the most influential document in the history of the United States, and ubiquitous in every classroom as the originary rhetoric of the Republic's freedom, the Declaration is the metonym for the American consciousness – an “expression of the American mind” (Jefferson 1825) as its author described it – and understood as the centrepiece of Jeffersonia. It is perhaps evermore striking, then, as central as these words are to the foundation of American democracy and the formation of public memory surrounding Jefferson, that in their quotation there is evidence of significant truncation and deviation, leading to false attribution, contextomy, and the fallacy of incomplete evidence, when compared against the source text. Archival evidence suggests that the manipulations of the Declaration of Independence involved the selective redaction of those clauses least transferrable to contemporary foreign policy challenges. Roosevelt directly intervened to emphasise a (wartime-friendly) statement on the sacrifice of life required to protect American freedoms. This is achieved to the detriment of the document's context and innate artistry.

The changes made to the Declaration for the purposes of inscription are perhaps not the most egregious textual manipulations of the five panels, but they are certainly the most audacious when one considers the eminence of the original. When compared with the signed parchment version housed in

⁷ Despite their ease with their own misquotations of Jefferson, the Commission attempts to tightly control the interpretation of the Jefferson Memorial and to limit the multiplicity of individual readings. When deciding upon the frieze quotation, for example, Senator Thomas forensically examined the collocation of the inscription's letters to assess what alternative readings might be made from various starting points. “Let us see,” he said without irony, “what they [the public] could twist it into” (TJMC-7 – October 7, 1939).

the National Archives, the Memorial text (TJMPb) includes quotations from only two of the five main sections of the *Declaration*. Incorporating the language from the *Preamble* and the *Conclusion*, the quotation omits any reference to the *Introduction*, the *Indictment of George III*, and the *Denunciation of the British People*. It is a quotation of the *Declaration*'s ceremonial and more generic bookends, avoiding the more specific and enumerative contents of the text's middle section, so as to maximize the applicability of its theoretical principles.

Comparative analysis reveals a number of (signalled and hidden) alterations made by the Commission in their attempts to adapt the source text for maximal relevance. At the end of the first phrase in line 2, for example, "self-evident" is followed by a colon (rather than the comma used in the source text) providing a more revelatory pause to the subsequent enumeration of natural rights. In line 5, the subordinating conjunctive "that" preceding the enumeration of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, is eradicated, disrupting the anaphoric flow of the opening sentence. At line 10, the TJMPb version denudes "these colonies" of the modifying "united." In the antepenultimate line, the conclusive declaration ("we mutually pledge our lives") omits the specification that this pledge was made "to each other," arguably molding it for Roosevelt's era of international conflict and military sacrifice. Similarly, line 8 marks the transition between the Preamble and Conclusion of the *Declaration*, yet despite the significance of this textual discontinuity, there is no explicit ellipsis in the southwest panel. The transition between the two sections is problematized further by the terminalisation of the Preamble, which excludes the right of revolution argument at the very heart of the *Declaration*'s rejection of tyrannical rule. These changes, invisible on the Memorial inscription, are a means to an end in drawing out applicable messages, and expunging others. For the current administration, reliant upon internal cohesion of the Democratic Party, the erasure of the revolution principle is a potentially calculated act of self-preservation.

As the quotation moves to incorporate language from the *Declaration*'s concluding paragraph, the textual alterations continue, including the omission indicated by the line 8 ellipses. In the

Commission's recontextualization of the source text for modern repossession, the plural pronoun "we" loses its original reference to congressional representatives:

We, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress,
Assemble...do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies,
solemnly publish and declare.

Consequently, and rhetorically, the specific contextual strings to which the Declaration was anchored – and which were complemented by the current debate and congressional vote – are cut from the Memorial version. The inscription is subject to a process of broad generalisation, through which moral principles (freedom, equality, just government and personal and states' rights) are extracted and decontextualized, in order that they can be successfully resituated in any future American period as embodying the strength of the imperative, yet redacted of George III and his specific tyrannies. In the quotation, the identity of the American enemy is anonymized and the potential for historical resonance expanded, such that the tyranny of an English King is made relatable to the oppositional frameworks not only of World War II, but, for example, the Cold War, Vietnam, and the modern War on Terror. As a new re-interpretative object of public memory, the quotation is made available for generational reclamation, so that portions of Jefferson's political philosophy are (or can be) effectively ventriloquized for the posthumous events which extend beyond the scope of his biography.

From the earliest inception of the Memorial, the Commission considered the Declaration as having a *prima facie* right of inclusion. It had the virtue of being the primary document that Jefferson included in his modest self-memorialisation at Monticello, and it was identified in Foley's *Jeffersonian Cyclopedia* as one of his most substantial legacies. As the Commission archives reveal in startling – and hitherto unreported – detail, the gross manipulation of the source document and the consequent distortion of Jefferson's voice was the sole result of the interruptive force of Roosevelt and the Commission's subsequent attempt to accommodate that high-profile agent's power. If Roosevelt's

influence upon the selection of the quotation for TJMPa had to be inferred, his involvement in the composition of TJMPb is overt and well-evidenced.

In mid-December 1938, Roosevelt was invited to initiate the construction project at the site of the prospective memorial. Prior to the official ground-breaking, the president spoke of (and accordingly framed) Jefferson's meaning to his contemporary American public with direct reference to the *Declaration*:

Jefferson... has been recognized by our citizens not only for the outstanding part which he took in the drafting of the Declaration... not only for his authorship of the Virginia statute for religious freedom, but also for the services he rendered in establishing the practical operation as a democracy and not an autocracy (*Washington Herald*, December 16, 1938).

This statement pre-empts the ultimate inclusion of both the Declaration and the Virginian *Statute* as permanent memory prompts within the textual corpus of the Memorial Room. Posing the democratic ideals of Jefferson against that final antonymic word – “autocracy” – would have undoubtedly resonated with a listening public upon the precipice of autocratic incursions in Europe. Less than a year later and speaking at the cornerstone-laying ceremony, Roosevelt made the elision of Jefferson's political environment and his own era of power explicit: “He lived as we lived in the midst of struggle between rule by the self-chosen individual or the self-appointed few, and rule by the franchise and approval of the many” (TJMC-4 November 15, 1939). Roosevelt's attempts to publicly parallel Jefferson with his own presidency were matched by private machinations that sought to influence the Commission to do the same via the rhetoric of TJMPb.

In May 1941, Gibboney wrote to Roosevelt, making good on a promise that “I would send you a copy of the proposed inscriptions for your suggestions... We should be very glad to have your criticism at your convenience” (TJMC-1). Though Roosevelt received the letter only two weeks before

he was to declare an Unlimited National Emergency, he responded immediately, giving his approbation to the work achieved so far whilst indicating a preference for amending TJMPb:

I do miss the last paragraph of the Declaration of Independence. It seems to me that that is so familiar and so important that it should appear somewhere. It could be condensed somewhat as follows: *“We . . . solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States . . . And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor”* (TJMC-6 May 15, 1941).

Here, Roosevelt goes so far as to model the quotation, with ellipses and editing, to ventriloquize Jefferson in an era of echoic competition between the values of American democracy and those of European autocracy. A number of days later, General Kean responded to the intercession with mixed feelings, agreeing that the addition would “round it out very nicely” whilst being surprised at the “continued interest which the president takes in the Memorial in spite of the tremendous responsibilities which he is facing on matters in which the whole world awaits decisions” (TJMC-1 May 29, 1941). Indeed, the physical act of war and the rhetorical act of the Memorial’s might be interpreted as thematically contemporaneous in Roosevelt’s thinking, each functioning as defensive statements of the American ideal.

Practically, however, Roosevelt’s suggested alteration to the panel’s length, emphasis and continuity, delivered under the seal of the president, sparked fractious debate among the TJMC members and the architectural firm, Eggers and Higgins. In particular, the changes to the content already agreed upon by the Sub-Committee on Inscriptions, threatened to distort the visual balance of the four quadrants. The Commission faced a genuine quandary of priorities, between effectively

memorialising Jefferson in accordance with their collective reasoning, and acquiescing to the power-laden intercession of his 20th century successor.

In August 1941, the architect's design team revised TJMPb "to show the arrangement under these circumstances," but Eggers explicitly disapproved: "I have a feeling that the Memorial might in part fail in its purpose if the inspiring words of Jefferson were not read and absorbed by the majority of visitors... This would mean that substantial additions would have to be made to the other three panels if the president's suggestion is carried out (TJMC-1 September 19, 1941).

Over the next few weeks, Gibboney manoeuvred the Commission out of a potentially embarrassing impasse. Invisible to Commission minutes and the papers of TJMC archives, the panel was significantly revised to accommodate the president's suggestion. General Kean praised the "very clever and satisfactory" compromised arrangement, which "met the President's wishes, got rid of those troublesome words "or abolish it" and gives a satisfactory length for Mr Eggers" (TJMC-1, October 1, 1941). The president subsequently approved of the resolution, adding "I like the way you have worked out the inscription" (TJMC-2, October 3, 1941).

Demonstrably, almost all of the major textual deviations were incurred and documented as a cost of obliging presidential intercession. Senator Thomas viewed the concession as a consequence of short-sighted politicking via the back door of Jefferson's memorialisation, codifying the moral rightness of the incumbent rather than his predecessor:

I... am loth to disagree with the President's wishes, but the last words of the Declaration which we have added on panel one are merely an appeal to support a cause – a great cause, of course, but there is not a bit of political theory in it. Men fighting on Hitler's side today have mutually pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honour, and are giving them! That was America as a war cry, not Jefferson as a political philosopher (TJMC-6 October 22, 1941).

The consequence of Roosevelt's attempted historical parallelism is significant also for what it effects upon the public remembering of Jefferson as a meticulous political author. Roosevelt's panel, adopted by the Commission, is injurious to the modern interpretation of the Declaration as an exemplum of eighteenth-century constitutional prose, wrought with rhetorical precision and Enlightenment style. The Declaration is a paragon of concentration and restraint, with individual propositions, phrases, and words irreducibly essential to the document's force and meaning. It is a treatise brought to the scale of paragraph. On the artistry of the Declaration, Stephen Lucas writes the following:

Each word is chosen and placed to achieve maximum impact. Each clause is indispensable to the progression of thought. Each sentence is carefully constructed internally and in relation to what precedes and follows... One word follows another with complete inevitability of sound and meaning. Not one word can be moved or replaced without disrupting the balance and harmony of the entire preamble (83).

Illustrative of this point is the way in which the Preamble was conceived as an extended deployment of an elaborate rhetorical device – an *ascending pentacolon*– through which the compounding of five sequentially dependent propositions (cola) ascend towards a powerful and inevitable conclusion. Jefferson was *au fait* with the eighteenth-century periodic style of rhetorical construction – including an informal *sorites*, or polysyllogistic construction – whereby “sentences are composed of several members linked together, and hanging upon one another, so that the sense of the whole is not brought out till the close” (Blair 1783, 259). Embedded within the Preamble are five interconnected and progressively dependent propositions that move to justify the emphatic climax of revolution. Throughout these propositions, the structure is dependently chronological – perhaps even biblically so, moving from an act of creation, to the implementation of order, to chaos (rebellion), and to the institution of a new redeeming governmental order. The pentacolon then, writes the fates of American readers in a fabled five-part chronology of American history.

To this considered filigree, the Commission take a metaphorical butcher's cleaver, whereby incorporating the president's wishes forestalls the ascent of the pentacolon, strips away the climactic conclusion, and eradicates any trace of polysyllogistic phrasing which speaks not only to the intended rhythm and progress of Jefferson's authorship, but also to the stylistic age to which he is intrinsically wed. The removal of the anaphorically related "THAT" at line 5 – which would demarcate the third proposition, for example, – effectively neuters the polysyllogistic sense of purposeful expectation in the original, and in place of the fifth proposition ("Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it"), the Commission instead appends the final lines of the Declaration, rendering the ascent towards George III's tyranny as a nondescript affirmation of general freedom. Not only is the jump to the document's conclusion injurious to the rhetorical intricacy of the Preamble, but the alterations made to this new conclusion further detract from another celebrated section of the Declaration as a paradigm of Jefferson's writing. Assessing the lexical incorruptibility of the Declaration's final sentence, Carl Becker suggests the words almost have an innate grammatical sanctity:

How much weaker if he had written "our fortunes, our lives, and our sacred honour"! Or suppose him to have used the word "property" instead of "fortunes"! Or suppose him to have omitted "sacred"! Consider the effect of omitting any of the words, such as the last two "ours" – "our lives, fortunes, and our sacred honour." No the sentence can hardly be improved (27).

The Commission evidently thought otherwise, consistently privileging the accommodation of Roosevelt's tendentious reclamation of the Declaration for his contemporary rhetorical framework of American democracy versus fascist autocracy. By stripping away any specific context-dependent enumerations from the *Declaration*, and showing a disregard for Jefferson's lexical artistry, the Commission ensured that Jefferson's voice was spoliated for the modern audience. Together, Roosevelt and the Commission use the founding document to restate the authoritative position of the American

superpower at a moment of existential crisis, inhabiting the plural pronoun of the quotation affirming protected liberty, and relying upon the modal and infinitive verb sense of the inscription (“ought to be free and independent states”) to bring Jefferson – and his defining document – to an object of perpetuating cultural memory and, potentially, Rooseveltian activism.

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Panel C (TJMPc)

If TJMPb is controversial as a result of the Commission’s decision to deviate from a source text of national celebrity for contemporary rhetorical application, TJMPc is doubly so because of the sheer number of sources – some famous and some less so - harnessed to furnish a panel of only ninety-seven words. The full scope of the panel’s misleading rhetorical composition is illustrated in Appendix C. As a consequence, the inscription upon the northeast interior quadrant wall is potentially the most contentious example of the manipulation of Jefferson’s words for the evocation of his public memory. The patch-work panel recontextualizes five separate sources and knits them into a singular expression of Jeffersonian liberty, with an emphasis upon God-given freedom, anti-slavery, and general education. Though presented as a pure and uninterrupted quotation, without ellipsis, the content is drawn from disparate sources spanning forty-seven years of the author’s life. The panel includes words taken from a political tract, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* (1774); his only full length book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, (1785); his personal narrative, *Jefferson’s Autobiography*, (1821); correspondence with his mentor, *Letter to George Wythe* (August 12, 1780); and an epistle to the first American president, *Letter to George Washington* (January 4, 1786). Through chaining together variously extracted elements of Jefferson’s writing and presenting them as the direct product of the memorialised, the Commission perpetrates the fallacy of contextomy leading to a false attribution of a complete statement which Jefferson never intended to be written

In particular, the archival record relating to the selection process of this quotation reveals the tense negotiation of Jefferson's variable reputation relating to the institution of slavery and the abolitionist movement. While it is clear that a number of the Commissioners were uncomfortable with a simplified caricature of Jefferson's record, others were more concerned about the comparative effect of such a quotation being memorialised in the age of Roosevelt. Like Jefferson's, Roosevelt's performance in the arena of civil rights was mixed, especially at the time of the Memorial's conceptualisation. Though African Americans certainly benefited through the institution of the New Deal economic framework and improved labor laws, they were often deliberately excluded from specific programmes and their advantages. Roosevelt's reliance upon the Southern White Democratic caucus meant that he resisted a comprehensive civil rights agenda and, prior to World War II, failed to institute anti-lynching legislation. To remember Jefferson in the context of slavery was to invite a comparison with the extant racial inequalities under the Roosevelt administration. The decision to reduce and embed the reference to abolition in this panel was arguably informed by the perceived imperfection of both men as proponents of African American progress, proving the rhetorical symbiosis of past and present at work.

TJMPC-1. *A Summary View of the Rights of British America, 1774.*

“Still less let it be proposed that our properties within our own territories shall be taxed or regulated by any power on earth but our own. The God who gave us life gave us liberty⁸ at the same time; the hand of force may destroy, but cannot disjoin them” (Boyd, 1:135).

The first eight lines of TJMPC are taken from the penultimate sentence of Jefferson's *Summary View*, a political tract “intended for the inspection of the present delegates of the people of Virginia now in Convention” (i.e. the inaugural Continental Congress). It is a document expressing both contemporary concerns and Jefferson's political philosophy, forming an embryonic argument for the dislocation of the

⁸ Underlined section indicates the text used in the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Panel

American colonies from the control of Great Britain. Throughout the *Summary View*, Jefferson decries George III's authoritarian grip over his native state's ability to make fundamental fiduciary and political decisions, hampered as it was by the monarch's "inattention to the necessities of his people." Jefferson levels a series of grievances at the British Crown ranging from King George's response to the Boston Tea Party, to the restrictions placed upon the colonies in effectively dismantling the institution of American slavery. "The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in those colonies," Jefferson writes, "where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state."

Extracted from a complex 6,750-word long treatise on the numerous rights of British Virginia, these eight words do not capture the essence of Jefferson's catalogue of political opposition, but are rather deployed in the sense of the beginning of a prayer or supplication to God. It is clear, from examination of the source text, that the quotation creates a new complete and simple sentence out of an elaborate construction, eliminating the initial determiner and impacting the statement's parallel arrangement. Extrication of the preceding sentences, which level attacks on taxation and exclusion from commodity markets, as well as removal of the complementary parallel section of the quoted sentence "the hand of force may destroy, but cannot disjoin them," essentially neutralises the pointed and contextually-anchored criticism of British policy. Jefferson's concluding and embedded political argument is fundamentally transformed into the simple religious framing for TJMPc.

1.3.2. TJMPc-2a. Notes on the State of Virginia, c.1781-5

"For in a warm climate, no man will labour for himself who can make another labour for him. This is so true, that of the proprietors of slaves a very small proportion indeed are ever seen to labor. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble

for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep for ever" (Ford, 4:232).

The preceding 43 words are derived entirely from Jefferson's influential book-length work, *Notes on the State of Virginia*. The text originated in 1780 in response to the Secretary of the French Delegation – Francois Barbe Marbois – who, during his posting in the temporary capital Philadelphia, circulated a questionnaire requesting information on each of the thirteen colonies. Jefferson was responsible for responding to the questionnaire on behalf of Virginia, and it was this transcript which ultimately provided the basis for *Notes* and gave it its overall sense of a directory or chronicle. Jefferson's work is not narrative, but rather a compilation of key state data points regarding rivers, seaports, mountains, population, religion, public revenues, laws, customs, and history. The document remains noteworthy for exposing Jefferson's views on the separation of Church and State (fuelling Federalist calls of "atheist") and controversial for what it reveals about his policy on slavery and miscegenation (complicating Jefferson's already entangled relationship with the cause of abolition).

This portion of the panel is derived exclusively from the second paragraph of Section XVIII of *Notes*, on the topic of "Manners." Extracted as they are, however, these words form less an objective summary of the attitudes of the Virginian people, and more a glimpse into the religious and patriotic psychology of the author. The statement – selected, in part, no doubt, for its lexical continuity with the God-given freedoms of the *Summary View* quotation (demonstrating the deliberate guise of a singular text) – serves as an expression of Jefferson's perceived crisis of national faith, but makes no reference to the main point of Jefferson's original: the injustice of American slavery. Though Jefferson uses the entire section on "Manners" exclusively to address the issue of slavery and its pejorative effect upon Virginian behaviour, the excerpted quotation instead presents a self-contained religious responsorial through careful redaction. The removal of the conjunction "And" at the beginning of the statement cuts all grammatical ties to the previous discussion of slave-owner immorality, and thus erases the primary object of Jefferson's religiously stated despair. This particular example of deliberate recontextualization

is one of the clearest examples of calculated misrepresentation, but it is also peculiar for suppressing the theme of slavery to which the panel subsequently returns. His proximate criticism of black subjugation is circumvented in this quotation only to be revived in concentrated form in the subsequent seven words of the panel, taken from the very same section of *Notes*.

TJMPc-2b. Notes on the State of Virginia, c.1781-5

“The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it...” (Ford, 4:232).

Where the first quotation from *Notes*' section on manners evades reference to Jefferson's argument for abolition, these seven words state it with the force of a paternal and moral categorical imperative. Distorting the order of the original, this quotation reverts to the first paragraph of the section and, without any formal ellipses, pretends to be a statement of climactic subsequence. The words are recontextualized from a complex grammatical composition, stripping back the ornate Jeffersonian vocabulary and undoing the rhetorical balance of the final phrases. The “unremitting despotism” of the masters, for example, is associated syntactically, visually, semantically and rhythmically with “degrading submissions” of the slave community. The erasure of the latter part of that parallel construction removes the equalizing emphasis upon the condition of the subjugated.

The quotation as extracted presents Jefferson's attitude toward slavery as one of unremitting, indignant opposition to an institutional despotism. However, the recontextualization oversimplifies and attempts to ameliorate Jefferson's historical position in the cause of abolition. Whilst Jefferson briefly decries the institution of slavery in the section on “Manners” in *Notes*, he does so less as a moral necessity and more in racist reaction to its observed “unhappy influence” upon Virginian behaviour. “The man must be a prodigy,” Jefferson remarks, “who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances” (Ford, 4:232). Jefferson's stated outrage is couched within an *a posteriori*

argument informed by a moral relativist observation, re-worked by the Commission to feature as a bellowing *a priori* objective morality. The act of contextomy enforces an unequivocal certainty that denies the less forward-thinking elements of Jefferson's ruminations on slavery in the same source text. In Section XIV of *Notes on "Laws,"* for example, Jefferson devotes a significant portion of his survey to the potential consequences of post-Emancipation America. With the detachment of a prejudice-laden anthropologist, Jefferson sees "deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances," which threaten to "divide us into parties, and produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race." Racial integration is made problematic because of the irreconcilability of the "physical and moral" differences represented by colour, which is "the foundation of a greater or less share of beauty in the two races." Whites have "flowing hair, a more elegant symmetry of form" – so fair that even the black man shows "judgment in favour of the whites...as uniformly as is the preference of the Oranootan for the black women over those of his own species." Blacks have, according to Jefferson, "less hair on the face and body" and "secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour." Jefferson proposes that black people have the potential to love, but that "love seems with them to be more an eager desire than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation." He promulgates that blacks feel less pain and discomfort ("those numberless afflictions...are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them"); they are musically gifted but whether they are "equal to the composition of a more extensive run of melody, or of complicated harmony, is yet to be proved"); "their disposition is to sleep;" and "in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior...in imagination they are dull tasteless and anomalous." Jefferson concludes, with the caveat that his ideation is more "a suspicion only," that the black people "whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind" (Ford v.4).

Reconciling this self-revealed character of Jefferson with the author of the very same work that argues passionately for the future emancipation of slaves, remains a point of academic disputation, befuddlement and evasion. Whilst it is clear that one can find a race inferior and still advocate for the fair treatment of its members, the sphinx-like (Ellis 1996) historical persona of Jefferson – on this issue in particular – oscillates between a visionary of freedom (e.g. Peterson 1960, Ferling 2000, Malone 1948) and a man anchored to the racisms and practices of his age (e.g. Wiencek 2012, Finkleman 1994). Through this quotation the Commission attempts to clarify this interpretative confusion by capturing a single snapshot of Jefferson’s oscillation, but in doing so they memorialise a caricatured and ameliorated political position, resolving the difficult and debated subject of Jefferson’s reputation on slavery, and excising the quite significant prejudicial overtones of Jefferson’s work

TJMPc-3. *Jefferson’s Autobiography, 1821*

"Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free. Nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government. Nature, habit, opinion has drawn indelible lines of distinction between them" (Boyd, 1:232).

The Commission’s attempts to navigate Jefferson’s contradictions on the issue of slavery are also evident in the extraction of the above eighteen words from Jefferson’s *Autobiography*, which elaborate and sustain the Memorial’s interpretation of the third president as a prophetic trailblazer in the march towards emancipation. Jefferson’s work is not a traditional autobiography, but rather a concise summary of notable life works – a form of self-memorialisation. This quotation is taken from the middle section of the text, as Jefferson surveys the major legislation of the late 1770s, and specifically a “bill on the subject of slaves,” which he describes as “a mere digest of the existing laws respecting them, without any intimation of a plan for a future of general emancipation.” The law avoids explicit

reference to the manumission of slaves, Jefferson explains, “as the public mind would not bear the proposition...yet the day is not distant when it must bear and adopt it.”

The quoted words, however, do not convey any of Jefferson’s equivocation or contextualisation surrounding the proposed policy of emancipation. The unconditional tone (“nothing is more certainly written”), absolute concepts (“to be free”), as well as the semantic of inevitability (“book of fate”) renders Jefferson’s phrase – in isolation – as a trumpet call for social action, and it is this clarion voice that the Commission extracts and adopts to speak from the walls of their eventual memorial. These quoted lines eradicate the *dissoi logoi* of the statement’s original context. Like *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson’s *Autobiography* is a receptacle for Jefferson’s expressed contradictions on the matter of manumission – principled in argument, but cautious in practicality. The antithetical sentiments in the *Autobiography*, moreover, are so proximate to the quoted statement (as exemplified above) that their extraction is at best misguided and, at worst, purposefully misleading. The quotation deliberately mutes Jefferson’s indulgence in the racist terminology of his age, and distils his legacy on emancipation into one of seeming chapter-closing – and positive – singularity.

TJMPc-4. *Letter to George Wythe, August 13, 1786*

"Preach, my dear sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish & improve the law for educating the common people."

TJMPc-5. *Letter to George Washington, January 4, 1786*

"It is an axiom in my mind that our liberty can never be safe but in the hands of the people themselves, and that too of the people with a certain degree of instruction. This it is the business of the state to effect, and on a general plan."

The final twenty-three words of TJMPc are taken from two letters authored by Jefferson in 1786, whilst he was the US Minister to France: one written to George Wythe (his former law professor at the

College of William and Mary), and the other written to George Washington (before he assumed the presidency), each representing distinct epistolary contexts.⁹ Without formal ellipsis, the produced quotation is a pretended continuous, contemporaneous statement on universal educational provision as the addendum to a panel that refers to a diverse range of political positions.

The imperative phrase extracted from the Wythe letter for the institution of public education is found at the conclusion of the correspondence in which Jefferson identifies the establishment of a new political Republic as an opportunity for implementing improved education, redirecting public monies that had traditionally supported nobles, priests and kings. Jefferson advocates an American (and specifically anti-European) educational brand, explaining to Wythe that “I think by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people.” Grammatically, the quotation excises the sentence’s opening and, without ellipsis, also removes the second verb (“improve”) and with it Jefferson’s belief in the continuous evolution required at the heart of a first class system of education.

The quotation taken from the letter to Washington re-emphasizes the preceding words of the inscription by underlining public education as explicit state business. There is no internal damage done to the syntax or balance of the sentence, though the detail of the contemporary debate around Jefferson’s proposals is suppressed in the recontextualization. If the quotation suggests legislative certainty, Jefferson’s letter acknowledges the multiplicity of educational proposals under consideration, including the use of charity schools as proposed by his addressee. The quotation also strips away Jefferson’s belief in public education as a means to effect social change by passing the baton of democratic leadership to the common populace: “[L]iberty can never be safe,” he writes, “but in the hands of the people themselves, and that too of the people with a certain degree of instruction.” What *is* retained, if not exaggerated, is the sense of Jefferson’s pro-governmental position, that the state has a

⁹ The letter to Wythe (written in August) postdates the letter to Washington (written in January) further demonstrating the Commission’s acceptance of distorted textual chronology.

positive and transformational role and interest in promoting social mobility – particularly among the political elite.

Through the amalgamation of two private letters, the Commission created an aphoristic proclamation on educational reform that Jefferson would not recognise as his own. The Commission expanded Jefferson’s musings into a statement that endorses universal public education – a policy that Jefferson never strictly recommended, but that comported with the pedagogical focus of Roosevelt’s New Deal, and, for example, his federal appropriations for national school relief following the impact of the Great Depression. As Richard Hamowy pointed out in his 2011 review of Jeffersonian reclamation, “Jefferson’s admonition that an educated electorate was essential if liberty were to be preserved is transmuted into a call for universal public education.”

In totality, TJMPc represents a memorial panel designed by committee, culminating in false quotation born of the contestation of Commission egos, historical (re)interpretations, theories of epigraphical memorialisation, and a variety of motivational forces at play over its years-long formation. The breadth of this compromise is demonstrated by the range of topics covered in the tapestried quotation, spasmodically transitioning from the nature of human creation, to theological justice, to slavery, and to universal education, giving the sense of aphoristic compilation. The leaflet produced by the Commission to attend the official opening of the Memorial in 1943, described the formation of TJMPc as a deliberative process whereby quotations were carefully researched and selected to resound with established interpretations of the cornerstones of Jeffersonian philosophy, “to his concepts of freedom of the body and to his beliefs in the necessity of educating the masses of the people” (TJMC-2). This presentation of a clean and undisputed exercise of quotation-as-value-memorialization, however, belies the ideological conflict and compromise at the heart of this tangled rhetorical construction of memory – over the meaning of the Four Freedoms, over the appropriateness (and Rooseveltian relevance) of slavery as a memorialised subject, and over Jefferson’s role in the history of emancipation.

Kean first introduced his argument for a panel exclusively devoted to slavery in a letter to Senator Thomas on October 27, 1939. Kean identified “Freedom of the Slaves” as one of Jefferson’s core philosophical freedoms, and justified its commemoration in the Memorial as a means to revive the issue in the public’s imagination. In his attempts to write the pro-abolitionist Jefferson into the book of national consciousness, Kean called upon British liberal historian Francis Hirst and his *Life of Jefferson*, in which Jefferson is described as “the only powerful statesman of his day in America who was willing to risk political future and social favour in an active effort to remove this dark blot from the institutions of this native land” (TJMC-5 October 27, 1939). Employing a somewhat positive interpretation of Jefferson’s anti-slavery legacy, Kean defended the memorialised, writing that whilst “he was unable to get the law which he and Chancellor George Wythe had prepared for the gradual abolition of slavery to be passed by the Virginia Legislature, he did succeed in getting Acts forbidding the slave trade passed both by the Virginia Legislature in 1778 and by Congress in 1807.”

Kean not only presented an academic case to Thomas at this early juncture, but also appended three separate proofs setting out the alternatives for a panel on slavery. These suggestions, included as Appendix D, positioned Jefferson as a pioneering abolitionist in three different forms to maximise the agreeability of the proposal for the onward approval of the diverse Commission membership. At the subsequent meeting of the Commission on January 9, 1940, two of the most significant members – Chairman Gibboney and Senator Thomas – initially favoured Kean’s recommendation of a panel devoted to the subject of emancipation whilst Kimball sought a less overt reference. Kean was emphatic that the subject of slavery deserved a panel to itself: “It does not seem to have been brought out by American historians and seems to be little known or appreciated by the general public today,” Kean implored, “yet it had a large influence on our national life” (January 30, 1940).

As 1941 dawned, however, a panel on slavery faced renewed challenge from a large constituency of the Commission – including the once-supportive Chairman, Stuart Gibboney. This mood change intersected with, and was perhaps precipitated by, a sharp increase in Roosevelt’s direct

interest in the progress of the Memorial's inscriptions. On 30th December 1940, Roosevelt asked the Librarian of Congress, Archibald MacLeish, to compile a series of quotations for potential inclusion in the Memorial's quadrants. MacLeish provided a series of textual testimonies to Jefferson's achievements, covering a diverse range of topics including the Constitution, education, free speech, liberty, political economy, agriculture and democracy. Roosevelt forwarded his dossier to the Commission with the explicit endorsement of the presidential seal. Crucially, MacLeish's suggestions made no reference to the issue of slavery, implicitly rejecting the nearing consensus of the Inscription Committee's panel on Jefferson's role in American emancipation. The president's interjection drove an ideological schism in the process. Simultaneously, the Chairman made his telling U-turn, rejecting the entire notion of the Four Freedoms as a vehicle for the memorial's rhetoricity. In place of the slavery-themed drafts under consideration, Gibboney suggested an entirely new source and thematic focus based upon a letter from Jefferson to Samuel Kercheval on constitutional adaptability.

A number of arguments emerged from the Commission in resistance to a panel that raised the controversy of Jefferson's position on slavery. Gibboney and Ryan were concerned about complicating the legacies of Jefferson and Lincoln. Tumulty was wary that the panel might be interpreted as an attempt "to rouse resentment" in the post-Emancipation era, asking, "Are we not opening up the old sores?" (TJMC-8 February 21, 1941). Dr Kimball said that whilst he could not hear Kean's suggestion "without feeling a tingling up my spine," the sentiment seemed to be captured in the equality clause of the Declaration: "I would not want to see slavery neglected but I feel it is there as part of civil liberty." Mr Culkin believed the "slavery proposition would be a mistake." The Chairman agreed, stating that "I think some members of the Commission thought it would be somewhat like waving a bloody shirt." The archive is littered with such statements of resistance to a panel addressing slavery on the basis that such a topic was politically inauspicious and electorally inert in the age of Roosevelt. The compromises of this particular panel exemplify the discrete indulgence of two competing forces of contemporary parallelism and historical (re)interpretation.

The compromised draft for TJMPc was brought to the final full Commission meeting on September 30, 1941, at which the inscriptions were debated. Despite the dilution of the slavery issue within a panel that now expressed a more general sentiment on human liberty, even this weaker concentration on the subject was under threat. Senator Andrews objected to many of the quotations selected, including one relating to the commerce between master and slave. “I think it should be left out. It means nothing to anybody. It is not impressive and I would rather not hear about it.” Exposing the anti-historical ethos of some Commission members, Andrews lamented any reference to slavery in TJMPc as contrary to modernity (and the rhetorical agenda of the Commission) because it did not speak to government “as it exists now.” Kean replied:

This makes it all the more obligatory for the Commissioners charged with the duty of bringing to the knowledge of future generations his great words and deeds to point the finger of history at this particular panel...I for one would feel that I had failed in the duty placed upon me by the President if I should be a party to any conspiracy of silence with regard to it (TJMC-1).

The revised panel with reference to slavery (Appendix E) was eventually put to a vote, leading to a dramatic tie. Chairman Gibboney – who had consistently objected to an inscription on the subject – was the unexpected redeemer of Kean’s compromised panel, endorsing it for architectural submission on October 17, 1941.

The fractious deliberations surrounding TJMPc, and the unsatisfactorily constructed nature of the panel itself, supplies evidence for the rhetorical argument of this thesis. Unlike expressions of generalized liberty, democracy-over-autocracy, progressive government or religious tolerance, the specific issue of slavery was not only complicated by Jefferson’s biography, but also contested by the Commission because of its lack of relevance to the America of Roosevelt’s inheritance. Slavery, as an institution, had been abolished and was no longer a cause for political reclamation. Furthermore, a

recontextualized quotation of racial freedom from the eighteenth century risked inviting comparison with Roosevelt's own record as an advocate of African American rights.

While Roosevelt's numerous relief efforts benefitted many black Americans – and Eleanor Roosevelt gained a reputation as an outspoken defender of racial equality – Jim Crow policies of *de jure* segregation persisted throughout the 1940s. Furthermore, a number of the New Deal initiatives, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938), which protected wages and hours, and the National Labor Relations Act, which protected employee rights and unionization, specifically excluded the majority black professions of domestic service and farm labor, as appeasement to Roosevelt's Southern Democratic allies. The archives reveal that the rhetorical agents of Jefferson's Memorial were sensitive to the inclusion of an inscription referencing slavery during Roosevelt's administration, with Commission members describing the panel as a "bloody shirt" that would "arouse resentment" and open "old sores." A statement on slavery provided no opportune tendentious parallel between the Founding Father and the ethic of Roosevelt's programme, and lacked the broader international resonance offered by other panels. As a consequence, TJMPc is a panel of tangled motivations which ultimately suppresses the complexity and sometimes ugliness of Jefferson's (and by rhetorical extension, Roosevelt's) racial politics, and edits Jefferson's own writings to perform as a mouthpiece for federal educational intervention.

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Panel D (TJMPd)

The engraving on the panel of the southeast interior wall (hereafter TJMPd) is derived entirely from Jefferson's letter to Samuel Kercheval on June 12, 1816. The selected quotation advocates intellectual advancement and implores institutional and legal adaptability – a proposition that might be read as the foundational statement of Progressivism itself. This is achieved through the compilation of various proximate phrases and sentences from the letter's penultimate paragraph (without ellipses). The original

tone of self-reflection is excised and much of the first person pronoun is suppressed in order to extend Jefferson's individual musings to the level of a national, and reclaimable, pronouncement or recommendation. According to Richard Hamowy, the result is a very un-Jeffersonian "justification for a new theory of government in keeping with the social-democratic principles that animated the New Deal." The leaflet prepared for the Memorial's dedication corroborated that intent, claiming, "Jefferson's vision in matters of government is demonstrated by the fourth panel. By this statement which appeared in a letter to a friend, we know that he recognised the necessity for change in the laws and institutions of a democracy as opinions altered, new discoveries were made, and circumstances changed" (TJMC-2) The Memorial aligns this philosophy with the sentiment and practice of Roosevelt's paradigmatic shift in legal, societal and economic affairs, under the broad umbrella of the New Deal.

Following the exhaustive debates and compromise over TJMPc, the Kercheval letter (which had not yet been considered seriously for any of the Memorial's quadrants) gained the admiration of Lanham, Culkin and other Commission members who successfully moved to substitute all other source texts for TJMPd with the Chairman's proposal (May 15, 1941). Jefferson was responding to Kercheval's request for his perspective on the nature of equal representation within the United States. Having extensively outlined the inequalities of representation in the Congress, Senate, Executive and Judiciary, Jefferson promoted a number of advisory steps to improve the administration of government, including general suffrage, equal representation in the legislature, ward divisions and – importantly – periodical amendments of the Constitution. The lexicon marshalled by the TJMPd inscription (*change, progress, new discoveries, new truths, enlightened, advance, pace*) is a relatively faithful concentration of the original's call for generational governmental pragmatism, albeit extracted from a private epistolary context that Jefferson insisted upon remaining so. Jefferson could have little imagined that such a source might be recontextualized to form an entire quadrant of his public memorialisation, nor that it might one day be understood as a partially activist justification for the institutional

transformations associated with the post-1935 Second New Deal, which systemized the structural reforms of the era. Once more, Jefferson's historical remembrance through this inscription seems intertwined with a parallel process of ventriloquization in a discrete political context of modernity that relies upon the historical object's temporal translucence.

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Panel E (TJMPE)

The engraving on the panel of the northwest interior wall (hereafter TJMPE) is compiled from an excerpt from "The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom" (drafted 1777, enacted 1786) and a statement taken from a letter to James Madison, dated August 28, 1789. The highly selective quotation includes a pronouncement on the freedom of religious thought with an addendum on universal morality. Freedom of Religion was one of the so-called Four Freedoms of Jefferson's political thought, which came to be embraced and reinvigorated by Roosevelt's own rhetorical repertoire. In his 1941 State of the Union address, Roosevelt modernized Jefferson's Four Freedoms as a framework for his speech on the threat posed to American national security and democracy everywhere by World War II. In Roosevelt's version, Freedom of Religion becomes the Freedom of Worship, with a particularly international emphasis: "The second [of the Four Freedoms] is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way – everywhere in the world."

Passed by the Virginia General Assembly in January 1786, Jefferson's *Statute* disestablished the Church of England as the preferred state religion, paving the way for the constitutionally enshrined right to religious liberty and intellectual freedom of the First Amendment. The recontextualization of the *Statute* involves the selective quotation from the preamble and the conclusion, eradicating any evidence that the source text was – in tone and structure – a legislative document. The panel utilizes only one of the *Statute*'s many premises, delimiting the compound sense and rhetorical dependency of the original. Jefferson's embedded clauses, and more florid language from the preface, are

recontextualized to create a significantly more dogmatic text than the original. The inscription also eradicates the centre of Jefferson's *ascending tricolon*, forestalling its full effect whilst, unlike the earlier quotation, presenting no ellipses to indicate the manipulation by the Commission. The final sentence of TJMPe is appended from a substantial letter from Jefferson to James Madison (August 28, 1789) in which the author gives credence to the notion of objective morality. The statement, however, is derived from a personal epistolary context, resulting in the panel's inelegant transition from the identity-neutral language of the Virginian *Statute* to personal revelation. The compound quotation also suffers from a very un-Jeffersonian thematic leap from a paragraph on religious freedom to a dogmatic affidavit on universal singular and collective morality.

Two primary suggestions for a panel expressing the Freedom of Religion (one of Jefferson's Four Freedoms) were considered throughout the Memorial's construction. Kean's initial proposal (Appendix F) was a quotation taken entirely from the concluding section of the *Statute* (the preamble would be added later), whilst Senator Thomas' proposal (Appendix G) was yet another composite quotation, referencing constitutional change, the populace's responsibility for liberty, freedom of religion and morality. Thomas relied upon the *Statute* for the central component of this inscription, before concluding with a sentence on morality extracted from Jefferson's letter to James Madison. Over the next year, Kean's panel was broadly favoured, and at the meeting of the Commission in February 1941, his proposal included a section from the *Statute*'s preface on the recommendation of Dr Kimball. The Chairman described the source text as "one of the finest bits of language in the world" prior to the panel's unchallenged endorsement. Thomas highlighted that this decision resulted in the loss of his final quotation from the Madison letter on morality, leading to members Smith and Lanham proposing that they be retained and incorporated within Kean's scheme. This motion to amalgamate the wording was seconded and carried, yet Kean questioned the resultant integrity of the overall quotation, stating "that will introduce a thing that is not in the preamble or the law." Kimball responded that "we are satisfied in doing that" because "I do not think the Statute on Religious Freedom is so well memorized by the

public as a whole that they will know whether or not it is extraneous.” This stunning admission revealed by the TJMC archives, provides an important insight into the Commission’s optioneering process, demonstrating not only an irreverent attitude toward the state of the public intellect, but also an explicit awareness of the rhetorical manipulation of memory, exacted without the fear of public consequence or challenge.

The eventual panel met the intent to memorialise one of Jefferson’s central Four Freedoms, and to remember that “[h]e had already, in Virginia, separated the church from the state, guaranteeing freedom of religion” (TJMC-9 April 29, 1938). The quotation not only refers to the legacy of Jefferson’s ideal of free religious thought (a luxury not afforded to Jefferson during the contentious theological debates surrounding his own candidacy) but also reflects his reticence to discuss personal faith within public discourse. The inscription also functions rhetorically, however, to echo the Rooseveltian connection between religious freedom and American democracy:

The lessons of religious toleration - a toleration which recognizes complete liberty of human thought, liberty of conscience - is one which, by precept and example, must be inculcated in the hearts and minds of all Americans if the institutions of our democracy are to be maintained and perpetuated. There can be no true national life in our democracy unless we give unqualified recognition to freedom of religious worship and freedom of education (March 30, 1937).

The TJMPE inscription was undoubtedly selected because of its resonance with an era that feared the twinned rise of fascist ideology and religious intolerance, symbolized by the Nazi-led genocide of Europe’s Jewish population. Jefferson’s *Statute* had disestablished the Church of England in order that all Protestant congregations, Catholics and Jews could enjoy the practice of faith without incrimination. A century and a half later, Jefferson’s principle of the wall of separation between Church and State was

re-inscribed to strengthen a culture that was witnessing the nightmare consequence of abandoning that principle.

Chapter 2: The Rhetors – The TJMC and FDR as Inventors of Public Memory

Deriving the motive forces that compel the creation of a single memorial is, at first glance, as idiosyncratic and qualitative a process as defining the impulses driving the pen of a particular novel, the provocation of a brushstroke, the intent of a chisel. As Adam Gopnik (2014) has recently complained, for example, the interpretation of a memorial's motive(s) is so often complicated by a "broadly unsatisfactory language of commemoration," which – in isolation – can be "confusingly laconic in its architectural grammar." Unlike the private consolation of imagination or the internalised motives of the individual artist, however, the creation of a national memorial is an act of rhetorical communality, leaving behind a partial record of the interaction and competition of motives among the various agents, agencies, scenes and purposes working upon those entrusted with its execution. The Memorial therefore, understood as a legitimate rhetorical product, text or act, has the advantage of some form of motivational testimony, against which the *a posteriori* interrogation of the historical object's mediation (understood through Kenneth Burke's pentad and Sturken's technologies of memory, for example) can be conducted with a rare measure of evidentiary support. Consequently, the scope of this thesis' analysis is indebted to a decision taken in 1945 by the executors of the Commission Chairman Stuart Gibboney's estate "to see that all the papers relating to the conduct of the affairs of the Commission should be put away safely and kept for a reasonable length of time" (TJMC-9 July 5, 1945). Almost seventy years later, this archive reveals the significant multivariate motive forces upon the selection and manipulation of the memorial's inner chamber inscriptions, as well as Jefferson's overall re-situatedness at the hands of the Commission. This chapter focuses upon two essential motivational currents at work, as a brief (and by no means comprehensive) illustration of the evidence available to examine the praxis of Jefferson's individuated commemoration in 1940s America.

First, the Commission archives uncover the competing intentions at work to remember (and forget) aspects of the historical person of Jefferson (section 2.1), to establish in stone and brass his pre-eminence as an American and democratic hero, and to assert his place amongst the capital's main

geographical memory complex, alongside Lincoln and Washington. The archive reveals the entanglement of the Commission members' various mythologies and personal interpretations of Jefferson's historical character, as well as competing theories of public commemoration.

Second, the archives demonstrate the extent to which the commemoration of Jefferson was summoned as a witness of the Progressive agenda of Roosevelt and his New Deal (see section 2.2). As the primary agent of the memorial's creation, Roosevelt exerted and maintained a level of interpretative influence throughout the Commission's existence, in order to force or emphasise the compatibility of the monument's rhetoric with his own.¹⁰ By appropriating the words of Jefferson – and using the (overwhelmingly Democratic) Commission as his agency – Roosevelt ventriloquized the Memorial for maximum personal effect in his 20th century political context, historicizing his own legacy, whilst also distilling Jefferson's for modernity.

The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission: Jefferson (Un) Remembered

The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission comprised multiple and often competing agents of rhetorical formation, shaping the commemorative object and its inscription content, through a complex and years-long negotiation of ego, differing historical interpretations, various reclamations of Jefferson for tendentious applications, and alternate theories of acceptable levels of quotation fidelity. At the time of its appointment, the Commission consisted of the following membership:

Appointed by President

Hon. Thomas Jefferson Coolidge
Hon. Joseph P. Tumulty
Mr Hollins S. Randolph

Appointed by Vice President

Hon. Elbert D. Thomas, Utah.
Hon. Augustine Lonergan, Conn.
Hon. Charles L. McNary, Ore.

Appointed by the Speaker of the House

Hon. John J. Boylan
Hon. Howard W. Smith
Hon. Francis D. Culkin

Appointed by Jefferson Memorial Foundation

Mr Stuart Gibboney
Dr Fiske Kimball
Dr George Ryan

¹⁰ Rhoads (1989) has identified Roosevelt's "deep and direct" involvement with governmental commissions.

Despite the multiplicity of agents and attendant motives, all members were broadly aligned to the Memorial's overall purpose to commemorate Jefferson as a representative of American liberty and constitutional democracy. "The worthy concept represented in this memorial," explained Louis Ludlow in the House of Representatives, is to embody "in visual form a Nation's love for the man who, above all others, created the ideals of popular government in the Western Hemisphere" (TJMC-9 June 3 1936). More specifically, the Commission considered the four internal memorial panels upon which the inscriptions would be laid as potential sites for immortalising the specific concept of the so-called "Four Freedoms" of Jefferson's making and legacy. This concept – written into the very quadrant design of the memorial's interior – was embedded within the initial *Programme of Competition* for the construction of the pantheon-style monument to Jefferson:

His fundamental achievement was in the Apostleship of the "Four Freedoms" of America: Abolition of Feudal Tenure of Land – Freeing the Earth; Abolition of Human Slavery – Freeing the Body; Establishment of Universal Education and Freedom of Speech – Freeing the Mind; Establishment of Religious Liberty – Freeing the Soul. All are summed up in his words: "I have sworn on the altar of God eternal hostility to every form of tyranny over the mind of man" (TJMC-9).

This interpretative framework, which influenced the textual selection process (until its abandonment midway through), is doubly problematic because of its post-Jeffersonian formulation. The concept of the Four Freedoms is an act of secondary historical interpretation, made tertiary by the Commission's later subjective application of it as the interpretative framework for commemorative inscription selection. While recommending the Four Freedoms as a thematic structure, Kimball noted:

Jefferson himself did not formulate the Four Freedoms...although they are all mentioned in the course of his first inaugural and in many other places. The formulation which I

followed was made by Dr Alderman, President of the University of Virginia....He based it on a series of bills offered by Jefferson in the Virginia legislature, proposing reforms which were afterwards incorporated also in the work of the Revisors of the Virginia laws. (TJMC-5 Oct 23, 1939).

Alderman's interpretation of Jefferson's legacy, bound the members of the Sub-Committee on Inscriptions to manipulate Jefferson's words into this contemporary quarto. Kean recorded that "I have written out proposed inscriptions for Four Freedoms which comply with these very narrow limitations" (Oct 27, 1939), and Thomas "worked rather hard trying to make four suitable quotations limiting the panels to something equivalent to what we might call Jefferson's Four Freedoms" (TJMC-1 Dec 4, 1940). So firmly were the Four Freedoms revived as an American conceptual framework that President Roosevelt made it the rhetorical theme and structure of his Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union in 1941.

Senator Thomas, who during his Commission tenure was writing a full-length book on Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson: World Citizen* (1942), approached the task of quotation selection with an unparalleled expansionist attitude. Restricted as he was by the thematic quartet and the legibility of the brass letters, Thomas struggled with the task of condensing the character of Jefferson from his full-length volume into the short paragraphs of his remembrance. Whereas Kean and Gibboney developed panels in thematic isolation, using one panel for one thought or "freedom," Thomas prepared a single prosaic statement that was subsequently divided into four length-appropriate sections. As a result, Thomas' panel drafts, parts of which were adopted, were less about remembering Jefferson through textual fidelity, and more about amassing and re-contextualising dozens of Jeffersonian quotations in an acrobatic display of topical erudition. Thomas explained:

Jefferson did not write an inscriptive language . . . I wondered if we could not take

Jefferson's words and adhere entirely to Jefferson's words and get a small, complete

statement of Jefferson . . . by starting the process of arrangement, leaving out the elements of time, and then just by eliminating all of the unnecessary words. I began to count the various American political concepts that were represented in this simple little statement and I counted something like forty-eight (TJMC-8 February 21, 1941).

Thomas' approach is one of simultaneous rhetorical creation and destruction – dependent on a cavalier approach to the textual integrity of Jefferson's original, the collocation of his statements, and the chronology of ideas – in order to provide a densely concentrated version of almost 50 individual political concepts. Thomas' concentration (and "elimination") of the source texts in fact dilutes an accurate memorialisation of Jefferson's words, sacrificing quality for quantity. That Thomas was the Chair of the Sub-Committee on Inscriptions speaks to the mechanism of the textual misremembering and tonal misrepresentation of Jefferson through his own language. In commemorating Jefferson conceptually (and anti-textually) this way, Thomas also enacts a form of modern reparation, inducing the reader to (invisibly) forget the distinct source, style and context of Jefferson's original, in favour of a streamlined version. Justifying his approach, Thomas cited the grammatical weaknesses of the third president's corpus:

If Jefferson had been writing the panels he would not have had great difficulty...his most choice sayings and most significant sentences sometimes are found in long paragraphs with dangling, incomplete and almost colloquial wording...I have taken sentences and eliminated unnecessary words and I have put sentences out of their original order in respect to time, place and circumstance. No violence is done to Jefferson's thought and no violence is done to Jefferson's expression and I am sure no violence can be done in the interpretation of Jefferson (TJMC-1 Dec 4, 1941).

Thomas' modern reclamation of Jefferson as a philosopher of succinctness and concision, necessitated the rhetorical annihilation of Jefferson's voice for the Memorial's recipient culture(s). The opinion that

no injury had been done to Jefferson as a result of Thomas' method was challenged even by his contemporaries. Judge Smith worried that "it is entirely possible that by taking three or four sentences from four or five different things and putting them all in one place that you may get a document that Jefferson never thought about" (TJMC-8 May 15 1941). Kimball also feared that Thomas' approach "may make Jefferson sound more dogmatic, because when you shorten the sentence by eliminating words it is more acrostic," with the potential consequence that "the sentences are not recognised," or that his historical character is not rhetorically legible. Arguably, Thomas set the precedent for the Commission's well-evidenced lack of textual fidelity throughout the Memorial's inscription selection process.

If Thomas influenced the method or philosophy of quotation, Kean's singular attempt to reclaim Jefferson as a hero of the African American community demonstrated the subjectivity of the third president's remembrance within the scene of 1940s America – as well as the individual motives of Commissioners at work to objectively define Jefferson's mercurial historical character for a discrete purpose. Whilst "Freedom of the Body" had been accepted by the Commission as a facet of the memory-framework of the memorial, the explicit commemoration of Jefferson's work associated with the abolition of slavery was not well agreed upon. Kean was, however, a direct descendent of Jefferson and consistently urgent in the need to parallel him with the great emancipator, Abraham Lincoln:

When Jefferson wrote his sentiments and prophecy with regard to slavery in 1781 his contemporaries, far from sharing them, were not concerning themselves at all about the matter...they expunged from the Declaration the paragraphs referring to the slave trade which Jefferson had written in his draft. Likewise the framers of the Constitution inserted into it a proviso forbidding Congress to interfere with the slave trade for 20 years.

Jefferson was President when this period expired and sent a message to Congress asking for its abolition. In 1808 he signed with joy the law which drive this infamous traffic from the seas. (TJMC-1 September 23, 1941).

The scene upon which Kean wished to exact this rhetorical memory, however, was still the America and Washington of Jim Crow, of segregation, of racial inequality and political exclusion. In essence, the Freedom of the (American) Body was not an enacted concept at the time of the memorial's conceptualisation or unveiling, and to include Jefferson's (disputed) work to improve the future of African Americans was a troubling prospect for other rhetor-agents of the Commission. Mr Culkin thought "the slavery proposition would be a mistake" (May 15, 1941), whilst fellow northerner, Mr Tumulty objected to a large-scale record of anti-slavery work within the inscription content:

I think it will look as if we were attempting to arouse resentment, and why go back to and dig out these ghosts of the past except for a noble reason? My people were on the Northern side, but I just think it is going back to a past that we ought to try to forget, and people are so sensitive when they look at those things. It just arouses that old feeling again. (Feb 21, 1941).

Senator Andrews' speech against the use of the phrase "created equal," from the *Declaration*, also laid bare the Commission's unease with referring to anti-slavery in the racial milieu of Roosevelt's era (TJMC-1 September 6, 1941). The objections to Kean's slavery panel – as discussed in Chapter 1 – resulted in the suppression of emancipation as a secondary theme within a broader series of quotations regarding human liberty. The result is an entanglement of remembrance and amnesia relating to Jefferson's contribution to civil liberties. As Petrina Dacres has written on the subject of representing slavery and emancipation within heterogeneous societies, "[I]n the public-historical sphere visual arts and monuments are important to the *evocation* and *denial* of memory, a nexus of reclamation and invention significant to the making of history and identity" (137). The complicated racial scene of Roosevelt's era, the all-white status of the memorial Commission, the mixed evocations and denials of the various rhetors, the non-existence of true bodily freedom, and the contemporary memory of Jim Crow evils, together led to the obscuration and revelation of existing social fissures that we find in the compromised panel on slavery, and within the pages of the Commission archives. In the following

section, I further assess the extent to which the archives reveal that Roosevelt himself effected the advantageous parallelisation of Jefferson with the contemporary political scene of 1930s America.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt: A 20th Century Jefferson

Roosevelt established his primary agency in the Memorial's creation at an early stage, with the Commission of Fine Arts receiving a memorandum from him in 1934 seeking legislative support to erect a memorial to Jefferson in Washington D.C. (TJMC-4 May 12 1936). Soon after the president's intervention, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission was established by an Act of Congress to direct the erection of a memorial to the third president of the United States. Reflecting the Roosevelt landslide of 1932, the Commission was populated with a majority of Democratic representatives – rhetorical sub-agents of political allegiance. The Commission consisted of 12 members, three of whom were appointed each by the president, the speaker of the House of Representatives, the vice president, and the president of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation. At the time of the Commission's appointment, only two of the Commission members¹¹ – Charles L. McNary and Francis D. Culkin – were identified Republicans. The Sub-Committee on Inscriptions, established on October 19, 1939, consisted entirely of Democratic representatives (Gibboney, Thomas, and Kean). Indeed, there were as many Republicans on the Commission as there were direct descendants of Thomas Jefferson himself.

If almost omnipotent, Roosevelt was also an omnipresent agent in forming the rhetorical object of memory and its inscription content. As early as the first recorded meeting of the Commission in June 1935, then-Chairman John Boylan underscored the Commission's fiduciary dependency upon presidential endorsement, stating, "I had in mind that we would not want to do anything positively without consulting the president because he has to help us out with the appropriation and we would not want to run counter to him." The financial necessity of securing the funds to complete the memorial

¹¹ Additionally, the Director of the National Park Service acted as Executive Agent for the Commission.

arguably laid the precedent for the Commission's close consultation with the White House and their accommodation of the administration's preferences. Yet Roosevelt's influence went far beyond the issue of economic dependency. Throughout the often controversial conceptualization and construction of the Memorial, Roosevelt's interventions punctuated key decision points, provided advice, instruction, media cover, self-promotion, and, at times, pointed aesthetic judgement. As the prime mover of the Jefferson Memorial project, Roosevelt received all plans and sketches of the Memorial's progress at the White House in March 1936 (TJMC-7, February 18, 1936), commissioned the re-competition of the monument's architectural design, privately studied the presented alternatives, endorsed the Pantheon scheme (despite disagreements within the Commission), and requested the appropriation of \$500,000 from the Bureau of the Budget to initiate the Project. Roosevelt interrupted the open competition for Jefferson's statue by reporting to Gibboney, "I do not like any of them!" (TJMC-9 January 24, 1940) and urging the Committee to "reject them all." While appealing to Gibboney to run a new statue competition, Roosevelt was reticent to publicise the evident capacity of his agency upon the rhetorical formation of the Jefferson Memorial: "under no circumstances," he wrote, "should it leak out that I have had anything to do with the choice or non-choice of a statue." Roosevelt did, however, publicly rebut criticisms of the Memorial's design and location, and demonstrated singular disregard for the "embattled clubwomen of Washington D.C." whom threatened to chain themselves to site's Japanese cherry blossom trees in order to thwart the construction work. "If they chained themselves," Roosevelt warned, "they would be removed along with the trees" (TJMC-9, November 19, 1938).¹²

Roosevelt's interventions can be understood as attempts to fuse the memorialised with the memorialiser, and to maximise opportunities to parallel of the era of Jefferson's existence and the scene of his 20th century commemoration. In this sense, the archives provide evidence of the deployment of political commemoration to bolster the legacy of both the manifest object and the sponsoring agent of

¹² The cherry tree controversy, and its rhetorical implications for the TJM, is explored on pages 63-4 below.

its invention. Primarily, Roosevelt and the Committee understood the Memorial as having the broad capacity to translate Jefferson's symbolic properties of liberty, independence, democracy, Progressivism, and American-ness, into a metonymic rejoinder from the current Roosevelt administration towards the growing threat of Nazism and fascism in Europe. Consequently, the Memorial becomes an object of rhetorical and temporal duality, performing both as a long-term memory space for the national consideration of Jefferson and his life's achievement (as interpreted by the Commission), and as a temporary war-time banner within the international rhetorical space of World War II, providing that generation and its president with a rallying touchstone for the foundational principles of freedom which, in that moment, the United States was forced to defend.

Senator Thomas recognised his own participation in a commemoration which was both historical and contemporary in 1936:

When democracy is being questioned in some parts of the world, it seems to me this will be a good influence to bring up at this time with the world on fire as it is, and the one great question in the world today is whether you are going to have government by force or coercion or government by common consent and liberty. This is a monument to those last two ideas (TJMC-7 March 24, 1936).

Making remarks in the House of Representatives, Louis Ludlow concurred with Thomas' interpretation, elevating the Memorial as an object involved in a project of remembering Jefferson promotionally:

At a time when tyrannical dictatorships are rising to the zenith all over the world and popular government is sinking to the nadir everywhere . . . I wish devoutly that the erection of this Jefferson memorial might bring to every human being in the world a mental picture of the difference between dictatorships and rule by the people – between tyrants like Napoleon and patriots like Jefferson (TJMC-9 June 3, 1936).

At key moments throughout the Memorial's creation, the president used his own rhetorical agency to cement the historical parallelism between Jefferson's age and his own. In 1938, in preparation for the ground-breaking ceremony at the memorial construction site, Roosevelt "requested this Commission to arrange for a nation-wide hook up so that his remarks may be broadcast throughout the nation" (TJMC-9 December 7, 1938). Roosevelt spoke as he was seated in his car, surrounded by members of the Commission and beside his wife, Eleanor. In the background, the Secretary of War, Harry Woodring, "paced up and down, hands in pockets, in the cold," energizing the scene with an acute atmospheric parallelism between the current and historical travails to establish American democratic principles. "Jefferson," Roosevelt began, "has been recognized by our citizens not only for the outstanding part which he took in the drafting of the Declaration of Independence itself, not only for his authorship of the Virginia statute for religious freedom, but also for the services he rendered in establishing the practical operation as a democracy and not an autocracy" (TJMC-9 December 16, 1938). At the Memorial's cornerstone-laying ceremony, Roosevelt appropriated the symbolic parallels with Jefferson with even greater zeal, stating: "*He lived as we lived* in the midst of struggle between rule by the self-chosen individual or the self-appointed few, and rule by the franchise and approval of the many. *He believed as we do* that the average opinion of mankind is in the long run superior to the dictates of the self-chosen" (TJMC-9 November 15, 1939).

The surrounding press coverage confirmed the success of Roosevelt's strategy of aligning himself with the talismanic power of Jefferson and the Progressive ideal. Under the heading "Apostle of Democracy," the *Washington Post* underscored the Memorial's binary function to twin executive personalities and presidential eras:

President Roosevelt will be...participating in an act of rededication and consecration of profound significance to our troubled times. Democracy was a frail and feeble plant when Jefferson was alive. And outside the United States, governments almost everywhere were in the hands of despots. Over a large part of the world that is now, unhappily, true again...

Long before Hitler was born he saw the tragic fallacy of the Fuehrer principle. Long before the rise of the Fascists, Nazis and Communists he exposed the tragic consequences of dictatorship... (TJMC-4 November 14, 1939).

The rhetorical coordination of the Memorial with Roosevelt's agenda was so overt that *The Washington Daily News* editorial, "Jefferson on War," remarked, "the President and his literary amanuenses might have done worse than commandeer old Thomas Jefferson himself as ghost-writer for the occasion." So orchestrated was the echoic atmosphere that Roosevelt tapped the cornerstone with "a gavel made from an elm which Jefferson planted at Monticello" (TJMC-4 November 16, 1939).¹³

If Roosevelt's partisan and contemporary arrogation of the Jefferson myth was so visible to contemporary audiences,¹⁴ it has since faded from public memory. At the time of the Memorial's creation however, Roosevelt was willing to risk short term reputational damage in order to secure a political legacy through the associative value of the Memorial. "Most monuments," Petrina Dacres explains, "participate in establishing the legitimacy and authority of the state," but, in the case of political monuments, it is clear that they can also promote the stability of contested partisan agendas under the veil of national accord. As demonstrated throughout Chapter 1, the Memorial's quotations were perhaps the most subversive rhetorical technology available to Roosevelt and his Commission in order to legitimate and stabilize the contested Progressive proposals underpinning the New Deal. Whether it is the transformation of Jefferson's specific statements on natural rights into aphorisms consistent with Roosevelt's wartime oratory; or the conversion of Jefferson's musings on educational

¹³ Roosevelt also orchestrated the eventual unveiling of the Memorial for maximal rhetorical resonance, recommending that the date be postponed for one year so that it has "the advantage of the two hundredth anniversary of Jefferson's birth, thereby giving a sort of springboard on which to focus attention" (TJMC-2 January 26, 1942). Gibboney endorsed the re-schedule, claiming that the Memorial should become a pantheon of celebration, precisely because of the context of war: "We are fighting for democracy, so let us magnify and celebrate the founder of American democracy, not less, but more" (TJMC-2 January 27, 1942).

¹⁴ The *Washington Herald*, for example, reminded readers that, whilst Jefferson had designed his own modest tombstone during his lifetime, any elaboration of it is an act of third party aggrandisement: "One of the oldest examples of political flim-flam we ever saw is being circulated around town, belatedly, as the reason for this marble mass on the Tidal Basin. It runs about like this: 'Well, look here. Lincoln was a Republican. He has a memorial. And it cost plenty, too. What about Jefferson? He founded the Democratic Party and what has he got?' That's the rather crass level on which to set even the monstrosity which is scheduled to go up as a 'Thomas Jefferson Memorial'" (TJMC-4).

freedom into a trumpet-call for universal public education; or the transmutation of Jefferson's endorsement of constitutional evolution into a supporting affidavit of the radical overhaul of the New Deal portfolio, Roosevelt found in Jefferson a nationally-cohesive icon for the celebration of his own partisan legacy, during the very era of its continuing implementation.

Chapter 3: The Consequence – Material Rhetoric, Public Mis-Memory, and the Broken

Enthymeme

Building upon the demonstration of the nature and extent of the manipulations involved in the selection of the memorial's quotations in Chapter 1, and the analysis of the motivational forces working upon the rhetorical agents of the Commission in Chapter 2, this chapter grapples with the rhetorical consequences of the Memorial's continued existence. As such, this chapter calls upon a consideration of Loewen's final temporal stage of public memory: the visitor's individual and collective experience of accessing the historical Jefferson in the present. More specifically, the following analysis examines the Memorial from a material rhetoric perspective, in order to understand how the memory object achieves the goals of its rhetors, as well as a variety of unintended (or unforeseen) consequences, in shaping public memory. Accordingly, the Memorial is subjected to the analytical framework for commemorative rhetorical objects proposed by Carole Blair, with a necessary limitation of focus upon the implications of the inscription controversy, namely: (1) What is the significance of the text's materiality? (2) What are the apparatuses and degrees of durability displayed in the text? (3) What are the text's modes or possibilities of reproduction or preservation? (4) What does the text do to (or with, or against) other 'texts'? and, (5) How does the text act on persons?

Finally this chapter proposes that the Memorial engages its users within an enthymematic prefiguration, in which the major assumed premise (the TJM is an elite, accurate and authentic object, worthy of attention, investment and effort) encourages significant touristic visitation and the internalisation, acceptance and reproduction of the inscriptions as a material structure of public memory. Arguably, the Commission relied upon the subversive quality of the authenticity premise, creating a Memorial which serves the aims of a 1930s political philosophy, to the ongoing detriment of modern visitation and public knowledge.

What is the significance of the text's materiality?

By this question, Blair (1999) means to discuss how the appearance of a rhetorical text within a specific context moves upon or changes that context. That is, “what is different as a result of the text’s existence, as opposed to what might be the case if the text had not appeared at all?” (34) Memorials can mark changes in cultural contexts, they can establish issues, persons and events worthy of remembrance, and they can provide places to form communities missing, or lacking, in the public sphere. Furthermore, the material installation of new monuments within particular landscapes has the potential to distract from, or enhance, the established interdiscursive qualities of a given community of memorial spaces. In Washington D.C. in particular (where more than 160 memorials exist), the act of memorialisation has been open to questions of commemorative saturation (e.g. Savage 4), whereby the introduction of new rhetorical sites has the potential to compete with, and weaken the impression of, existing material objects.

The erection of a significant commemorative memory structure in Washington D.C., devoted entirely to the works of Thomas Jefferson, (re)legitimized the third president as worthy of national prominence, cultural persistence and international visitation. In the words of the Commission, “in a sense, we are erecting a \$3,000,000 billboard to advertise Jefferson and everything connected with him” (TJMC-6 April 14, 1938). As an entirely created physical space, in the form of a classical Pantheon, the Memorial provides a destination of American pilgrimage for the singular remembrance of Jefferson and his significance within the landscape of the nation’s founding and psyche¹⁵. The Memorial now functions as an unavoidable structure of the Washingtonian skyline, “rising, as it appears to do, right out of the water which becomes its reflecting pool, exercis[ing] its glistening white tyranny over the eyes of all who stroll ‘round the Tidal Basin” (Scarborough 1940). Through its physical inscriptions,

¹⁵ “In connection with this monument there should be something in an imperishable form in a separate memorial to preserve those writings that everyone likes to read... I do not refer to the preservation of the originals. I want to see the outstanding works preserved in bronze or marble. The monument that commands the attention of the thoughtful people above all other monuments in the world that I have ever seen is the monument to Confucius, “The Hall of the Classics,” in Peiping, where men come and remain not by the hour but by the day to study and be captivated by the writings. In your whole range of American history Jefferson is the only man that can lend himself to that kind of commanding position.” (TJMC-7 June 5, 1935).

the Memorial purports to vocalize Jefferson within a new public memory space and new physical rhetorical context. Visitors experience Jefferson's words not in a public library or singular source document, but via the unique collocation, arrangement and form of the brass lettered quadrants of the Memorial Commission's selection. The Memorial's materialization, two centuries after the historical object's birth, communicates Jefferson's posthumous national celebrity and a presumed consensus of meritorious contribution.

The Memorial's material existence interacts with the physical and symbolic characteristics of Washington D.C.'s architectural complex in a number of meaningful ways. Firstly, the Memorial is purposefully located upon spatial coordinates which were marked out for exceptional utilisation from the moment that Washington was selected as the seat of government. Pierre Charles L'Enfant was appointed to design the new capital in 1791 by George Washington, and was subsequently instructed by Jefferson to provide a modest blueprint for planning sites for federal and public buildings (see Appendix H). The city would be based on a series of grids, with streets running east to west and north to south. Diagonal avenues created points of intersection for key buildings or plazas, including the "President's House" and Congress, connected by what would later become the National Mall. L'Enfant's conception was extended and modernised by The McMillan Plan (1901) which re-emphasized the National Mall complex as a monumental core of cruciform structure.

The Jefferson Memorial occupies the same axis as the White House and the Washington Monument with the Lincoln Memorial to the north-east, and Capitol Hill to the north-west. The archives reveal that the Memorial's location was recognised by the Commission as a crucial vehicle for the creation of automatic meaning and rhetorical significance, placing Jefferson "on the last of the five cardinal points of the L'Enfant Plan conceived during the time of Washington and Jefferson who visualised and selected the shore of the Potomac as the site of our great Capitol City" (TJMC-2 November 27, 1936). As four of the cardinal points were already occupied, the materialisation of a Memorial to Jefferson *completed* Washington's core memory space. Mr H.P. Caemmerer of the Fine

Arts Commission called the location “the greatest site for a memorial in Washington today,” concluding that “Jefferson is worthy of that site” (TJMC-7 January 25, 1938). The Commission concluded that “The American visiting his Nation’s Capital cannot help but sense the meaning of this arrangement” (TJMC-2).

The siting of the memory structure places Jefferson within a specific constellation of American presidential heroes: the Orion Belt of Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. The creation of the Memorial completed a conceptual triumvirate of celebrated early presidential characters, consistently recognised as the pre-eminent leaders of the United States. Jefferson, Lincoln and Washington are each remembered through gargantuan classical stone formations – a Roman pantheon, a Doric temple and obelisk, respectively – historicizing their eras of power far beyond the actual geo-history of their own civilizations, and raising them (architecturally) to demi-god status within their Republic. The Commission consistently echoed this theological semantic when discussing the Memorial’s proximity to the extant monuments. “[W]e are building something very much bigger than a Memorial to Thomas Jefferson,” Thomas wrote, “we are actually about to add another cornerstone in the formation of a structure which we may call the American National Cult” (TJMC-7, June 5 1935). Hollins Randolph envisaged the Memorial as completing a mystical triptych of three presidential protagonists: “Jefferson and Washington and Lincoln, all of them, should sit as near together as the law allows and the topography allows and the original plan of the city allows. They are together. They are the trinity. Those are the three” (June 5, 1935). The faux classical temple design of the Memorial, suggestive of national infallibility, comports with such an ethic of material beatification, but also architecturally denies the internal fallacies of the brass lettered inscriptions which are given the sense of Jeffersonian scripture.

The Memorial’s material design also replicates and remembers Jefferson’s personal architectural achievements and proclivities for the Greco-Roman form. Despite his reputation for receiving “foreign diplomats in homespun boots” (TJMC-9 April 29, 1938), Jefferson was undeniably a

classicist, describing the Roman Pantheon as “the most perfect example of spherical architecture” in the world (Scarborough 1940). Jefferson used the design during his own architectural forays, including the design of his home at Monticello and the significant rotunda at the head of the University of Virginia, which he built as a hobby in his old age (also inspired by the Villa Rotunda near Vienna). At William and Mary College, Jefferson, along with his associates Chancellor Wythe, Dr William Small and Governor Fauquier, “became absorbed no less with the perfection of classic architectural forms than with the government that gave rise to those forms” (April 29, 1938). Whilst in France, he visited Nimes and “gazed worshipfully for hours” at the Maison Carree “like a lover at his mistress” (TJMC-9 May 6, 1940). For Jefferson, such architecture corresponded with the very fabric of the democracy he sought to establish, “realizing (as he pointed out himself) that our government was founded upon a Greek concept of statesmanship – he found classic architecture to be the most suitable expression of his ideals for the Republic’s buildings” (TJMC-1, April 29, 1938)

The Memorial’s material rhetoric is also informed by the original conflict evoked by its proposed creation. Objections cited the design’s lack of originality, the future usability of the Tidal Basin space, effects upon traffic flow, the lack of a utilitarian function and (most contentiously) the destruction of an established living memorial of cherry trees donated by the Japanese government as a symbol of bilateral cooperation (TJMC April 19, 1937). Some complained that the design was a mere replication of the National Art Gallery, whilst others suggested that the Memorial was a cheap corollary to the Republican iconophilia of the Lincoln Memorial. The Commission was lampooned in the press, set back by initial congressional disapproval, and, at one point, subjected to a highly coordinated professional negative publicity campaign orchestrated by an alumnus of the University of Virginia (TJMC September 24, 1937). In August 1937, the Commission was on the brink of resignation and plans were discussed to reserve the location for a future memorial to Theodore Roosevelt. The single-mindedness of the Commission, and the personal agency of the incumbent president, ensured that Jefferson alone secured the right to this privileged nexus of Washington’s architectural and symbolic

core – the automatic kudos of which contributes somewhat to its protection from serious critical deconstruction and distrust.

What are the Apparatuses and Degrees of Durability Displayed by the Text?

Blair's second question seeks to differentiate material commemorative objects through the analysis of their respective durability and vulnerability. The fabric of rhetorical texts varies from site to site, and it is possible that such compositional qualities can communicate something of the text's endurance and perceived importance.¹⁶

The Memorial is materially, deliberately and durably, American. Alabaster white Danby marble from Vermont was sourced to construct the monument's exterior as well as the twenty-five marble columns (each made from six separate drum sections) with molded bases and carved Ionic style capitals at a height of 41 feet. "Each column, before it was shipped to Washington," Katherine Scarborough writes, "was matched under supervision of the architect at the marble producer's plant in Vermont for color, tone and veining characteristics in order to secure a perfect harmony of material. Over 400 carloads were required, incidentally, to haul the stone to Washington," (December 8, 1940). Tennessee pink marble was laid for the interior flooring space; white Georgia marble was selected for the interior panels of the Memorial Room; grey Missouri marble was selected for the statue pedestal; and bronze was chosen as the material for both the nineteen-foot statue of Jefferson by Rudolph Evans and the quadrant lettering. Due to metallic rationing during World War II, a mock plaster statue, painted to look like bronze was initially installed prior to installation of the bronze version in 1947. Spanning the

¹⁶ Such conclusions are not altogether simple, however, as Blair makes clear that whilst stone or metallic structures are ostensibly more stable and permanent than written or spoken discourse, they are often more vulnerable to attack, erosion, vandalism etc. The sourcing of the memorial's composite materials is equally rhetorical. Specifically, the debates over the suppliers of the memorial's white marble, and the wartime priority acquisition of bronze for the inscription's lettering and the central statue, communicates the importance of geography as well as the perceived importance of Jefferson's memorialisation despite the overt wartime preoccupation of the nation. A text's durability and permanence is particularly important for our discussion in which composite materials 'conspire' with the perpetuation of error. To make alterations to a memorial, or to correct it, is to shade the quality of that permanence, and make vulnerable a text's materiality – however durable.

natural resources, and electoral map, of both the North and South of the nation, all of the construction materials harnessed for the Memorial were deliberately “as native to American soil as Jefferson himself” (Scarborough 1940).

The quotations of the Memorial’s interior walls were cast in bronze, which had to be appropriated during a national war crisis and a scarcity of metallic materials. Eggers warned Chairman Gibboney that “on account of the National Defense program there is a demand for all kinds of metal and it is becoming harder and harder to get these bronze castings” (TJMC-8 February 21, 1941); accordingly, in January 1942 the priority on the bronze for the letters was withdrawn due to the declaration of war” (TJMC-7 January 7, 1942). The White House was eventually lobbied for assistance and a new priority gained, so that the installation of the bronze lettering was completed in April 1942.¹⁷ That the visage of Jefferson himself and his words share material durability is a meaningful and poetic parallelism between the memory of the man and the recollection of his language. The context of the metal’s procurement gives its use here particular cachet and material consequence, suggesting that the memorialization of Jefferson was significant enough to draw upon the rationed resources of an America at war. Bronze, since Horace’s ode, has been recognized as a material of renowned strength, durability and artistic potential, and was pursued here, despite restrictions, to raise Jefferson’s words and memory to a level of material endurance. To memorialise the selected quotations of Jefferson in bronze was to suggest that this use of the restricted metallic compound was as important as (and connected to) the protection of American sovereignty by the deployment of the same material in weaponised form.

As Blair points out, however, durable materials such as stone and metal can be ironically “more vulnerable to destruction by hostile forces” (37). Indeed, Jefferson had himself asked for his modest memorial obelisk at Monticello to be “of the course stone...that no one might be tempted hereafter to destroy it for the value of the materials” (TJMC-9). Today, the Memorial, which is open to the public

¹⁷ The substantial quantity of bronze required for the statue of Jefferson (5 tonnes) was not made available until the end of the war.

24 hours a day, has fallen victim to material vulnerabilities. In 2000, the Memorial was vandalised with oil that was sprayed in crosses by religious groups upon the white marble interior panels, which left permanent staining (Kilian 2000). In 2010-2011, the Tidal Basin seawall was repaired to save it sinking amongst “primordial porridge” (Ruane 2010). In October 2014, a five-foot long portion of the limestone ceiling collapsed within the Memorial Room due to water damage caused by a leaking gutter (WTOPstaff 2014). According to Megan Nortrup (2012), Science Communicator for the National Capital Region of the National Park Service, acid precipitation is causing significant degradation of the marble within the Memorial, specifically “the loss of silicate mineral inclusions in the marble columns as the calcite matrix holding them together is dissolved.” Due to the weakening effects upon the stone, ties were installed to prevent sections falling from the volutes, and restoration work in 2004 removed accumulated “black crusts.” Most significant is the inevitable degradation of the bronze lettering which has succumbed to the green pigmentation of verdigris, caused by the exposure of the brass to half a century of weathering. Today, the patina staining can be seen running down the white marble quadrants beneath the raised letters leaking into the fabric of the building as the words themselves have the capacity to corrupt the public remembrance of Jefferson. The paradox of the memorial’s durability and vulnerability, therefore, offers opportunities to remedy the misrepresentation or slanted re-contextualization of Jefferson via the bronze inscriptions. The detrimental effects of acidic precipitation, vandalism of the panels and the bronze verdigris might offer an opportune moment for the replacement of bronze lettering to correct some of the most egregious fallacies of the extant inscriptions, as a mode of the Memorial’s material *preservation*.

What are the Text’s Modes or Possibilities of Reproduction or Preservation?

“Reproduction,” Blair insists, “is an intervention in the materiality of the text, and it is important to grapple with the degrees and kinds of change wrought by it” (38) Reproduction can increase the public

access and experience of texts, but in the case of material rhetorical objects – such as monuments – reproduction (via guidebooks, photographs, three-dimensional postcards etc.) can provide an inauthentic, incomplete or re-interpreted version of that text.

The Jefferson Memorial is an object of diverse and numerous replications. The Commission, which had already preserved its own brand of reproducing Jefferson's texts through the Memorial, also authorized the publication of a four-page leaflet replicating some of the included quotations, whilst providing a commentary that supported the interpretative bent of the Commission's specific re-contextualization(s) (TJMC-7 January 7, 1942). A more substantial 16-page booklet was also drafted, providing an entire section that reprinted the inscriptions as they appear in the rotunda, prefaced with the paralleling statement that "however true they were at the time of writing, they are more significant at this critical moment in world history" (TJMC-2). The quotations are reproduced, and repackaged to purposefully underline their contemporary reclamation. The modern visitor is similarly exposed to facsimile reproductions of the Memorial and its textual content. "The Words of Thomas Jefferson" (Appendix I) is a one-page replication of the inscriptions available from the Memorial bookstore, and countless leaflets, such as those produced by the National Park Service reiterate select quotations as accurate and direct Jeffersonian statements.

The Memorial's prominence as a symbol of Americana has led to its replicative omnipresence in popular culture. The Memorial features in the opening credits to news programming, such as MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, to immediately establish a national political context. It is deployed during scene transitions and sweeping cutaways to establish geographical context in political dramas such as *House of Cards*, *Scandal*, and *The West Wing*. The frieze quotation performs a narrative function in the satirical films *Bob Roberts*, and *Billy Jack Goes to Washington*, and the inscriptions spur discussions of what democracy means in *Born Yesterday*. So ubiquitous is the Memorial that it featured in an episode of *The Simpsons* (Season 3, Episode 2), in which Jefferson's statue complains that Lisa Simpson has only visited his monument because the Lincoln Memorial is overcrowded. The Memorial has appeared

on postage stamps, such as that designed by Dean Ellis in 1973; pillowcases, mugs, tote bags, mouse pads, and all of the usual souvenir ephemera have featured the monument and its textual content. A cursory search on Google.com provides over 21,500,000 individual results for “Thomas Jefferson Memorial.”

In the process of reproduction, Blair writes, “[s]ometimes what appears to be the rhetorical text is not *the* rhetorical text, but an altogether different one” (39). That point is even more acute when the original rhetorical text is demonstrably inaccurate prior to its reproduction or preservation. Indeed, where memorials include inscriptions of previously spoken or written discourses, the quality of reproduction is multiplied. At the moment of inscription a text has often traversed a series of significant publication reproductions. When dealing with the issue of error perpetuation, the modes and possibilities of a text’s reproduction or preservation are issues of some importance. Fallacious quotations reproduced or preserved have consequence for those who receive them, and signify the intention of the rhetors involved in their materialisation. The reproduction of these texts through repeated visitation, gift shop reproductions and the national appropriation of the Memorial as a symbol of justice, equality and democracy in various media, advances the dangers of a material commemorative rhetoric when its constituent texts are made to be simultaneously durable and misleading.

What Does the Text Do to (or with, or against) Other Texts?

Blair admits that this “is one of the more difficult questions to address because the linkages among texts can be so varied and numerous” (39). In light of this unquantifiability, Blair is sensible to limit these linkages or conversations to those among memorial sites and between memorial sites and their “immediate contexts.” According to Blair, memorial texts can be “enabling, appropriating, contextualizing, supplementing, correcting, challenging, competing and silencing” towards others,

though they can surely engage in other relationships too. Washington D.C., as a physical centre of enlightened Western democracy, American Independence and the seat of government, also poses some of the most tangled and incestuous relationships among sites of memorialisation.

The Jefferson Memorial supplements and appropriates the established vernacular of Washington's Greco-Roman architectural examples, connecting itself to their imposing statues, words upon walls, ascending stairways, domes, pediments and reflective pools. The Memorial relies upon the audience's familiarity with Washington's commemorative syntax and encourages an intertextual reading among the cardinal points. The assumption of this material vocabulary performs a number of functions: it connects utilitarian buildings with the purely commemorative, aligns contemporary government with historical presidencies, and importantly provides the Memorial – and its inscriptions – with a sort of automatic authenticity amongst its architectural neighbours. The Jefferson Memorial's inscriptions, however, have the potential to challenge the authenticity of the Washington constellation, or to blemish the very symbolism of transparent democratic government that it purports. Its perpetuation exacts reputational damage to an already maligned Washington, famous as a topography of mistruth, partisan manipulation, and low standards of accuracy.

The Memorial's creation not only involved the appropriation of the authenticity of surrounding sites, but also necessitated the partial and controversial silencing of a highly motivated memory space. Prior to the monument's construction, the Tidal Basin was already home to almost 3,000 Japanese cherry trees that had been donated to the United States from Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo (encouraged by Jokichi Takamine, a Japanese chemist). These cherry trees became a living symbol of the friendship between the two nations and, accordingly, the United States responded with a donation of blossoming dogwoods to the Japanese nation, placing the memorials within a transactional diplomatic context. This “outstanding monument of international good will around the Tidal Basin” is the focal point of the national Cherry Blossom Festival, which has taken place since 1935. The proposal to construct the Memorial was met with its strongest opposition from those who objected to the potential destruction or

interruption of the tree-lined shore of the Tidal Basin. Newspapers magnified the issue to a level of national controversy, with editorials petitioning the White House to reconsider the plans: “Substantial damage will be done to this community if the simple beauty of the cherry trees is impaired... They are literally assets of great worth to the business of Washington, and material, substantive damage will be inflicted...if those trees are touched” (TJMC-9). According to critics, the president was complicit in a Macbeth-like drama, orchestrating “the scandalous workings of a gang” in a “distinctly skulking” process: “As things stand now...a world-famous spectacle of natural beauty will be shattered...by an invasion of men with picks, steam shoves, trucks and axes, unless the people force one public official to exercise his absolute power to restrain their vandalism” (TJMC-9, April 12, 1938). As the embattled clubwomen of Washington D.C. chained themselves to cherry trees in protest, the Commission and the president dismissed the hype. The Commission reported that only 171 trees were potentially affected (TJMC-9, November 15, 1938) and installed a billboard illustrating that the increased land would provide space for the planting of a large number of new trees (TJMC-9 December 16, 1938). Thomas remarked that “If cutting those cherry trees was a declaration of war on Japan, I should not do it, but there are plenty of them along the western boundaries and at Haines Point where they can be placed with the others” (TJMC-7 June 5, 1935).

The Memorial and its highly motivated inscriptions, therefore, materially disrupted a national symbol of US-Japanese friendship. If Jefferson’s Memorial was shaped by an activist ethic to showcase American freedoms against the rise of international tyrannies, then its impact upon the cherry tree memorial might be read as a highly motivated parallel rhetorical act. Prior to Pearl Harbor, the possibility of war with Japan had existed since the 1920s. The invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and Japan’s subsequent encroachments into China, as well as the Axis Alliance with Nazi Germany and Italy, strained the very signification of the cherry tree memorial. Due to emerging sensitivities, the Cherry Blossom Festival was suspended during World War II; the trees were temporarily labelled as “oriental” rather than explicitly Japanese, and in response to Pearl Harbor a small number of trees were

cut down by protesters. The material interjection of the TJM and its brass lettered quotations, within an already complicated and motivated memory space, provided an immediate World War II conversational context for Jefferson's voice to oppose international aggression, restricted liberties and anti-American values. If the inscriptions were manipulated to form contemporary vocalizations of Roosevelt's foreign policy, the Tidal Basin provided an unparalleled material and metaphorical diplomatic arboreal space for that ventriloquization.

How does the Text Act on Person(s)?

Fifth, and most importantly for the heuristic of materiality, Blair asks how the text acts on person(s). A material approach recognises that a rhetorical text, as a destination, can make particular demands upon the visitor's body, intruding into our material existence. "Memorials do perhaps even more obvious work on the body," Blair writes, as "they direct the vision to particular features, and they direct – sometimes even control – the vector, speed, or possibilities of physical movement" (46).

Surrounded by a mass of cherry blossoms against the shore of the Tidal Basin, the startling white superstructure of the pantheon-style Jefferson Memorial immediately summons visitation as an aesthetic destination. Upon arrival, the visitor traverses a series of steps leading to the interior Memorial Room which, with its central idol and panels of "scripture," has the sense of a spiritual space, or temple. Accordingly, as I observed on each of my several visits, the interior of the Memorial induces the majority of visitors to a state of noticeable – and respectful – hush. The physical reflection of the Memorial within the Tidal Basin gives rise to a contemplative atmosphere, with internal benches and the surrounding steps offering on-site locales for rumination upon its contents.

The visitor experiences each of the Memorial's panel inscriptions in relative isolation, spaced as they are between the four compass-point entrances to the Memorial Room. The inscription-entrance-

inscription-entrance architectural pattern demarcates the quotations as discrete textual wholes, connected by the continuous overhead frieze quotation. The archives reveal supporting evidence that the Commission attempted to prescribe the order for experiencing the recontextualized inscriptions, calling upon psycho-spatial studies. Kimball “assumed that No. 1 (from the Declaration of Independence) would be the first one on the right as you enter...in accordance with the psychological studies that at least 75% of [test subjects] turn to the right, following our habit of walking and driving” (TJMC-1, Oct 31, 1941). Eggers agreed that the “majority of the people do turn right on entering a place to view what may be exhibited on the walls,” proposing the arrangement of TJMPb on the southwest quadrant, TJMPe on the northwest quadrant, TJMPc on the northeast quadrant, and TJMPd on the southeast quadrant. This arrangement ensured that the Declaration of Independence panel retained primacy in the visitor’s reading (TJMC-6 November 6, 1941). The order of the Memorial’s inscriptions invokes the Declaration’s celebrity to initiate a sense of textual familiarity and also encourages the visitor to presume the fidelity of subsequent panels, despite their lesser renown and fallacious content.

A consideration of the Memorial from the perspective of Blair’s rhetorical inquiry, demonstrates the various ways in which the monument’s materiality provides significance, endurance, and replication to the fallacious and inauthentic apparatus of the memorial’s inscriptions, which, in turn, have intended (and unintended) effects on their audiences.

Sites of public memory are also bordered within material and symbolic contexts. A memory place such as the Jefferson Memorial is constructed within the larger memory field of the monumental core of Washington D.C., a city that exists as a real and imagined place and that metonymically expresses ideas far beyond its mere geography. Such memorials are not just any interventions in public memory. Memory places are self-consciously constructed by and for persons with individual and group interpretations of particular events. They are, in their sheer manifestation, partisan, and as a result of this partisanship they are rendered, by virtue of their rarity, as supposedly accurate, authentic and

worthy objects of public consumption. That a memorial exists in the nation's capital defines it as a hyper-rhetorical object of settled public memory, with the most elite forms of partisanship and authenticity. A memorial in Washington D.C. demands a touristic commitment in exchange for the transmission of approved, nationally consequential and trustworthy information. In a sweeping survey of American attitudes towards methods of history learning, for example, Rosenzweig and Thelan found that museums and physical sites of public memory were the most trusted sources of historical information (2013). Such sites score more highly for authenticity than direct conversations with family members, eye witnesses, history professors, teachers, books and visual media:

Americans put more trust in history museums and historic sites than in any other sources for exploring the past...Approaching artifacts and sites on their own terms, visitors could cut through all the intervening stories, step around all the agendas that had been advanced in the meantime, and feel that they were experiencing a moment from the past almost as it had originally been experienced – and with none of the overwhelming distortions that they associated with movies and television, the other purveyors of immediacy...Many respondents felt there was nothing between them and the reality of the past...Museum visitors could form their own questions by imagining that they were re-experiencing for themselves – without mediation – moments from the past (106).

The public's qualitative assessment of Memorials as devoid of agenda, distortion and mediation runs entirely counter to the archival evidence of motivated historical manipulation. Through the lens of material rhetoric, interaction with a site's materiality "predisposes its visitors to respond in certain ways, enthymematically prefiguring the rhetoric of the place as worthy of attention, investment, and effort (at the very least)" (Dickinson, Blair and Ott, 26). This prefiguration is part of the mode of often invisible mediation, appropriated by the authors of particular memory places as a foil for historical immediacy. The complete structure might be presented as follows:

1	Sites of public memory are elite, accurate and authentic objects, worthy of attention, investment and effort.	<i>Major premise – assumed</i>
2	The Thomas Jefferson Memorial is a site of public memory.	<i>Minor premise – assumed</i>
3	The Thomas Jefferson Memorial is an elite, accurate and authentic object worthy of attention, investment and effort.	<i>Conclusion - stated</i>

The Thomas Jefferson Memorial engages its users in a fallacious rhetorical relationship, enacting a betrayal by subverting the expectation of an accurate and authentic memorialisation of the third president of the United States. The major assumed premise of this first order enthymeme has been found to be false in its assumption and, if the panels are left unchanged, the Memorial appropriates the kudos of public memory objects in order to advance an inauthentic (yet trusted) version of American history. “Epistemologically, memory places are frequently understood as offering a unique access to the past,” Dickinson, Blair and Ott find, “but authenticity isn’t something that places just have. A sense of authenticity is a rhetorical effect, an impression lodged with visitors by the rhetorical work the place does” (26-7).

The Jefferson Memorial is a single, high profile public commemorative object, invented in part as propaganda, wrapped in a pantheon, gifted to the world as a signification of fact, and received by its visitors as a heretofore largely un-interrogated and pure revivification of *the* Thomas Jefferson. The Memorial Commission relied upon the material nature of the Memorial itself to acculturate its public with the highly motivated characterisation of the Founding Father as a leading light of Rooseveltian Progressivism. The “rhetorical work” of the Commission was to smuggle statements supportive of World War II intervention, New Deal programmes, federal enlargement, and educational reform, into a memory space orchestrated to frame such words in a material cocoon of historical authenticity and consensus. As part of their material rhetoricity, these quotations can be demonstrated to be culturally significant, permanent, durable, replicable, corruptive to surrounding material memory sites, and disruptive to the relationship between America’s past and her public. With each day of the Memorial’s persistence, the opportunistic reclamation of Jefferson (by a sitting U.S. president no less) is given a greater cachet of commemorative authenticity.

As a case study, this thesis has attempted to lay the groundwork for the identification of commemorative rhetorical fallacy, the utilisation of archival records to ascertain the footsteps of memorialising motive, and the deployment of a material rhetoric framework to qualify a (misleading) Memorial's consequence within a physical culture and zeitgeist. A comparative analysis of the rhetorical formation of other political memorials within the monumental core of Washington D.C. is recommended to examine the extent to which the Thomas Jefferson Memorial is either emblematic or anomalous in so explicitly serving the agenda of partisan proselytization.

Epilogue

Despite the inscriptions' exponential detrimental impact upon Jefferson's public memory, awareness surrounding the concoction of the Memorial's inscription content is negligible. Ronald Hamowy, a professor emeritus in intellectual history, is a rare proponent of the theory of the Memorial's partisan appropriation, claiming that it is "perhaps the most egregious example of invoking Jefferson for purely transient political purposes" (2011). Hamowy has criticized the cumulative effect of the quotations which suggests that "Jefferson advocated positions consistent with the aims of the New Deal – with which he would, in fact, have had little sympathy." Despite the force and clarity of Hamowy's claims, however, they exist only as a tangential point in an obscure book review, on the periphery of academic discourse. Historian Garry Wills has bemoaned the slavery panel, in particular, as "misleadingly truncated" for its eradication of Jefferson's clear vocalisation of the slaveholder interest. The only serious journalistic intervention on the subject was that of Nicholas Kristoff (*New York Times*) who, in 2009, focussed his opposition on TJMPb and the misquotation from the Declaration of Independence: "[T]hat sentence is one of the greatest in American history, and it's a disgrace that it's improperly written on the wall of the Jefferson Memorial." The intent of the preceding pages has been to provide

comprehensive archival and rhetorical substantiation to the whispered accusations of deliberate misquotation which have yet to gain traction in the public sphere.

At the risk of tinging a thesis with advocacy, one might ask whether any action should be performed to mitigate or revise such an elite object of misleading national memorialisation. The exigence for such an intervention is supported by a recent appetite for correcting the so-called errors of extant memorials. In 2011, for example, one of the two engraved quotations of the Martin Luther King Memorial in Washington D.C. (“I was a drum major for justice, peace and righteousness”) drew heavy criticism for its misrepresentation of King as a rhetorician and historical character. This selective quotation from King’s Drum Major Instinct sermon neutered the anaphoric ascension of King’s peroration, and removed the initial conditional phrase which in turn expunged the essential self-effacement of the original. The truncation led to an overall tonal change that Maya Angelou said made King sound like “an arrogant twit” (Weingarten and Ruane 2011). When dedicating the monument in October 2011, President Obama felt it necessary to gloss the engraving: “*what he really said* was that all of us should be a drum major for service, all of us could be a drum major for justice, and there’s nobody who can’t serve” (Siddiqui and Brower 2012). Following considerable objection to the engraved quotation, Ken Salazar, Secretary of State for the Interior agreed that the inscription should be altered, tasking the King Memorial Foundation to find a substitution. “This is important,” Salazar said in early 2012, “because Dr King and his presence on the Mall is a forever presence for the United States of America, and we have to make sure we get it right” (Manteuffel 2012). The episode was speared by television satirist Stephen Colbert, who described the monument as “to the point. Not Dr King’s point, but still. Brevity is the soul of saving money on chiselling fees.” In August 2013, the sculptor erased the disputed inscription from the statue but did not replace it, and instead reworked the side of the memorial with a new, inscription-less finish (in what might be understood as a richly rhetorical act in itself, proffering silence in place of controversy).

Importantly, the Martin Luther King example suggests that a culture exists which is prepared to upend “carved in stone” permanence and to interrogate the material consequences of fallacious mnemonic content in Washington’s monumental district. This responsiveness, however, sits in contradiction to the veritable obliviousness surrounding the errors of the Jefferson Memorial, which are demonstrably more deleterious and far-sweeping than a single truncation and alteration of tone. In attending to the material consequence of an inauthentic historical narrative, however, and cognisant of the enthymematic prefiguration of a Memorial’s role in public understanding, a number of practical options for the partial remediation of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial might be considered, as follows:

- The replacement of the current inscriptions with quotations from identifiable single sources, selected via committee or public/academic consultation.
- The re-presentation of the current quotations, recording the extent of textual manipulation through standard typography.
- The inclusion, within the Memorial Room, of clear source attribution for each panel via additional plaques, engravings or moveable signage.
- The training of National Park Service steward staff in order to provide contextual information, relating to the composition, motivation and consequence of the selected quotations, to the memorial’s visitors.
- The addition of a section in the Jefferson Memorial museum space relating specifically to the work of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission, the process of inscription selection and the reclamation of Jefferson for contemporary rhetorical deployment.
- The provision of enhanced educational materials that underline the nature of the textual content and its role in creating a highly motivated and tendentious Jeffersonian Memorial.

Each of these options for modification, however, is subject to the same complications of agency and motive as those faced by the Memorial’s original rhetorical creators, such that our corrective actions might be read by future generations as merely additive to the commemorative object’s already contested rhetorical formation.

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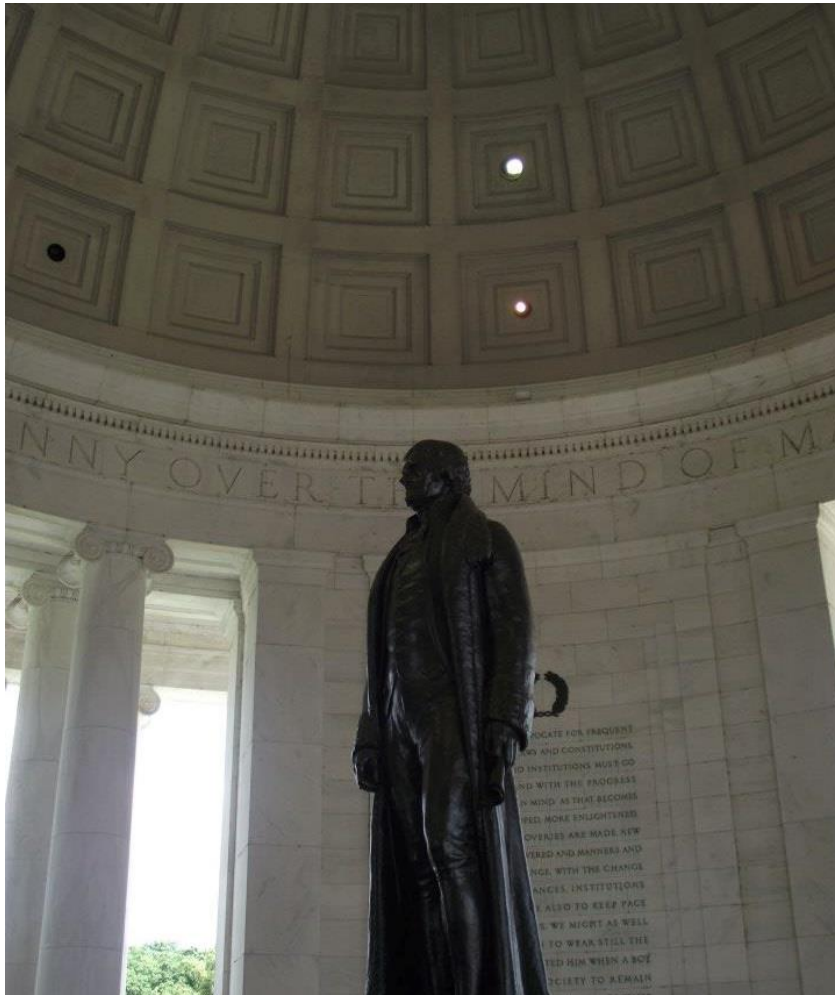
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Appendix A: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial



Jefferson Memorial seen across the Tidal Basin at dusk in Washington, D.C., USA. Courtesy of Joe Ravi (CC-BY-SA 3.0)

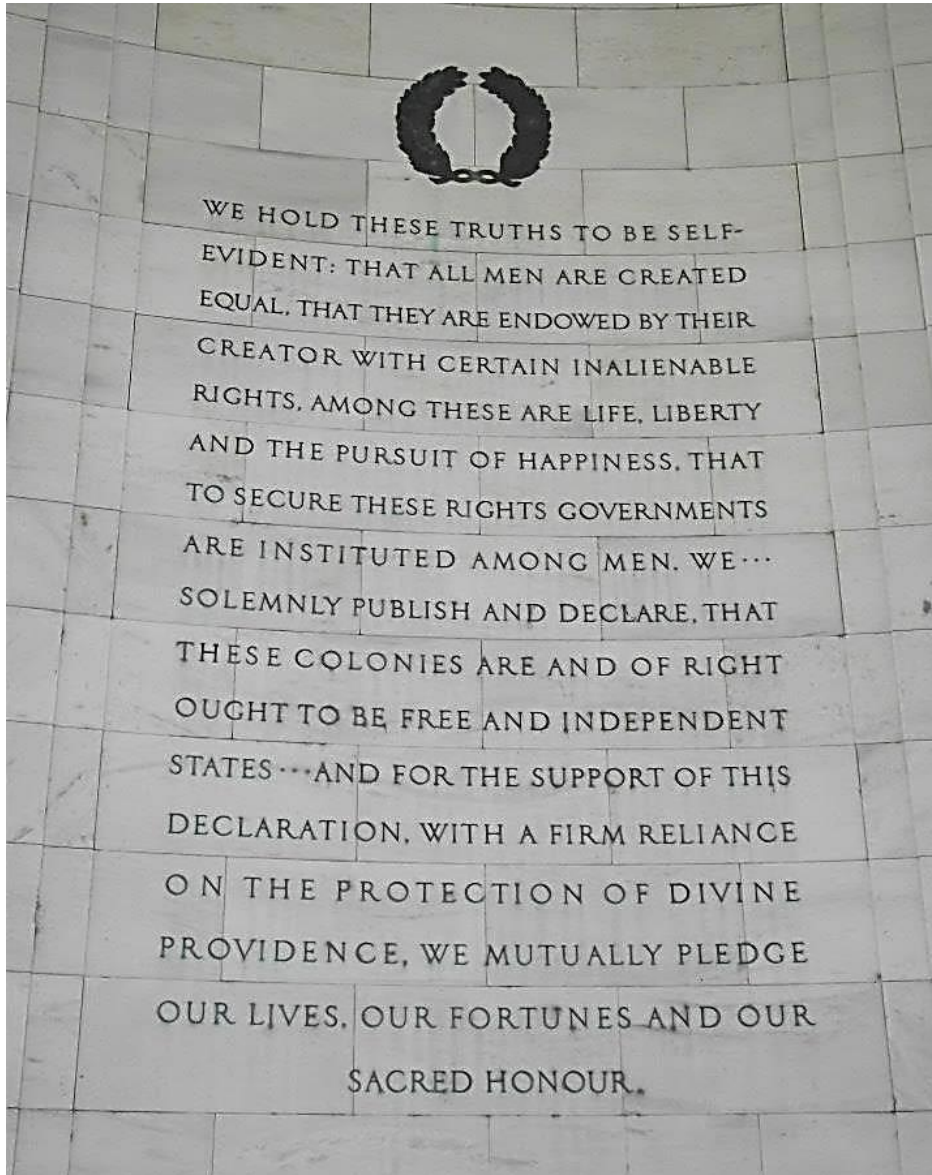
Appendix B: The Inscriptions of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial



TJMPa

I HAVE SWORN UPON THE ALTAR OF GOD
ETERNAL HOSTILITY AGAINST EVERY FORM OF
TRYANNY OVER THE MIND OF MAN.

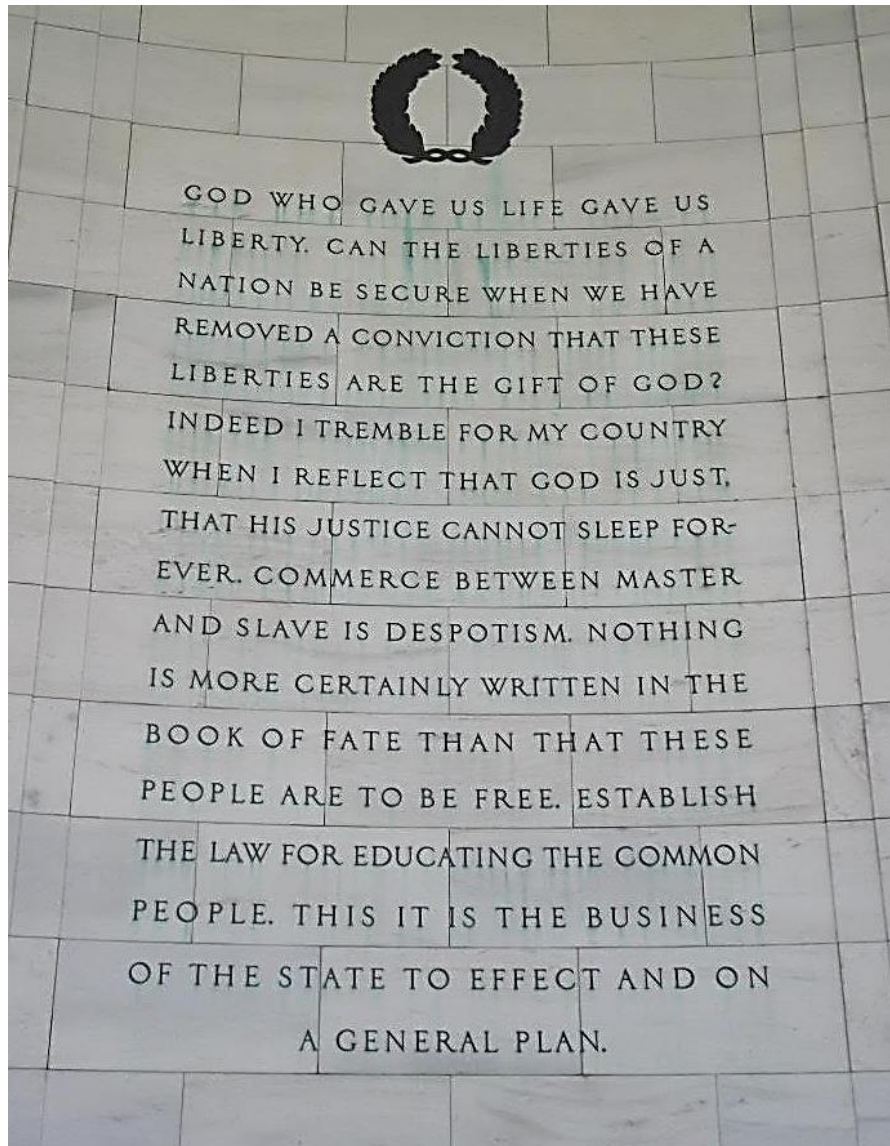
Appendix B (Cont'd): The Inscriptions of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial



TJMPb

WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT: THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN INALIENABLE RIGHTS, AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS, THAT TO SECURE THESE RIGHTS GOVERNMENTS ARE INSTITUTED AMONG MEN. WE ... SOLEMNLY PUBLISH AND DECLARE, THAT THESE COLONIES ARE AND OF RIGHT OUGHT TO BE FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES ... AND FOR THE SUPPORT OF THIS DECLARATION, WITH A FIRM RELIANCE ON THE PROTECTION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE, WE MUTUALLY PLEDGE OUR LIVES, OUR FORTUNES AND OUR SACRED HONOUR.

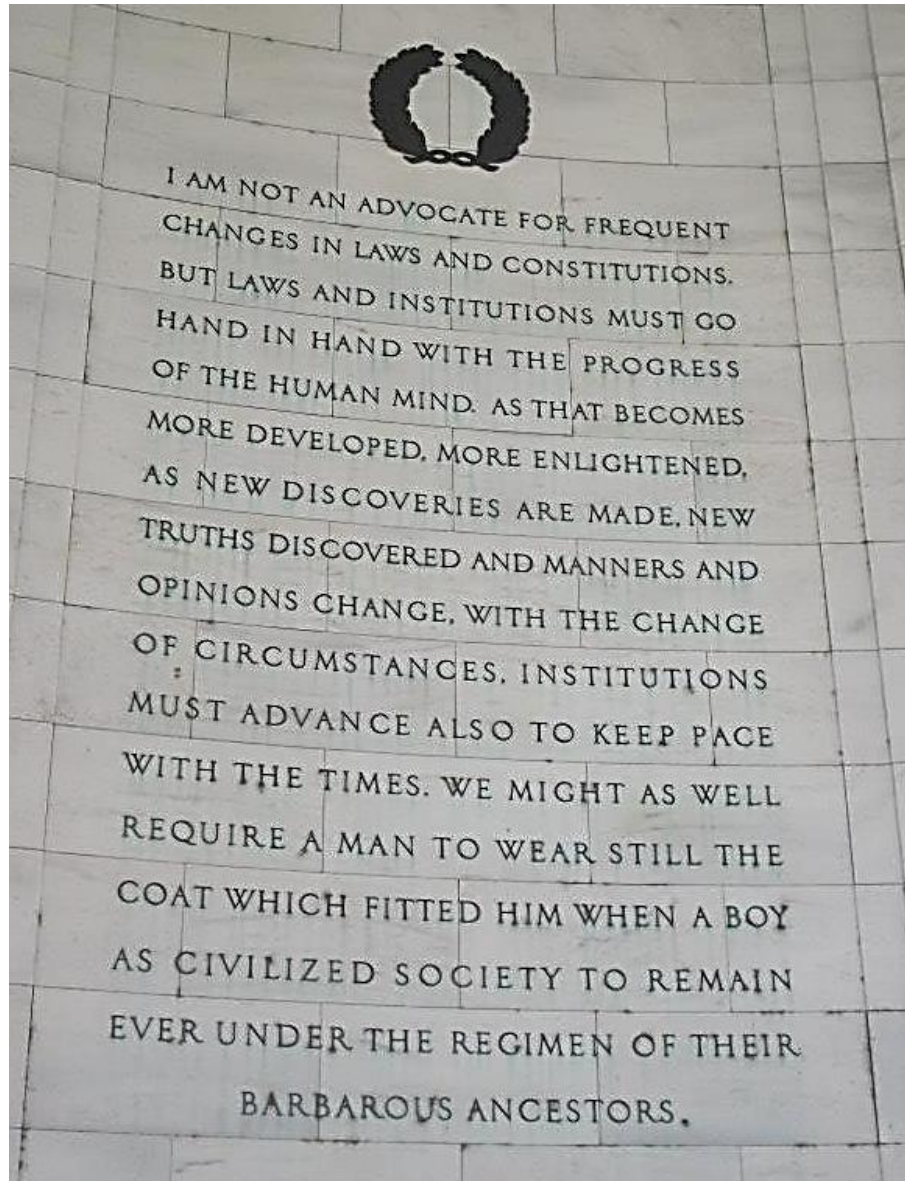
Appendix B (Cont'd): The Inscriptions of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial



TJMPc

GOD WHO GAVE US LIFE GAVE US
LIBERTY. CAN THE LIBERTIES OF A
NATION BE SECURE WHEN WE HAVE
REMOVED A CONVICTION THAT THESE
LIBERTIES ARE THE GIFT OF GOD?
INDEED I TREMBLE FOR MY COUNTRY
WHEN I REFLECT THAT GOD IS JUST,
THAT HIS JUSTICE CANNOT SLEEP FOR-
EVER. COMMERCE BETWEEN MASTER
AND SLAVE IS DESPOTISM. NOTHING
IS MORE CERTAINLY WRITTEN IN THE
BOOK OF FATE THAN THAT THESE
PEOPLE ARE TO BE FREE. ESTABLISH
THE LAW FOR EDUCATING THE COMMON
PEOPLE. THIS IT IS THE BUSINESS
OF THE STATE TO EFFECT AND ON A
GENERAL PLAN.

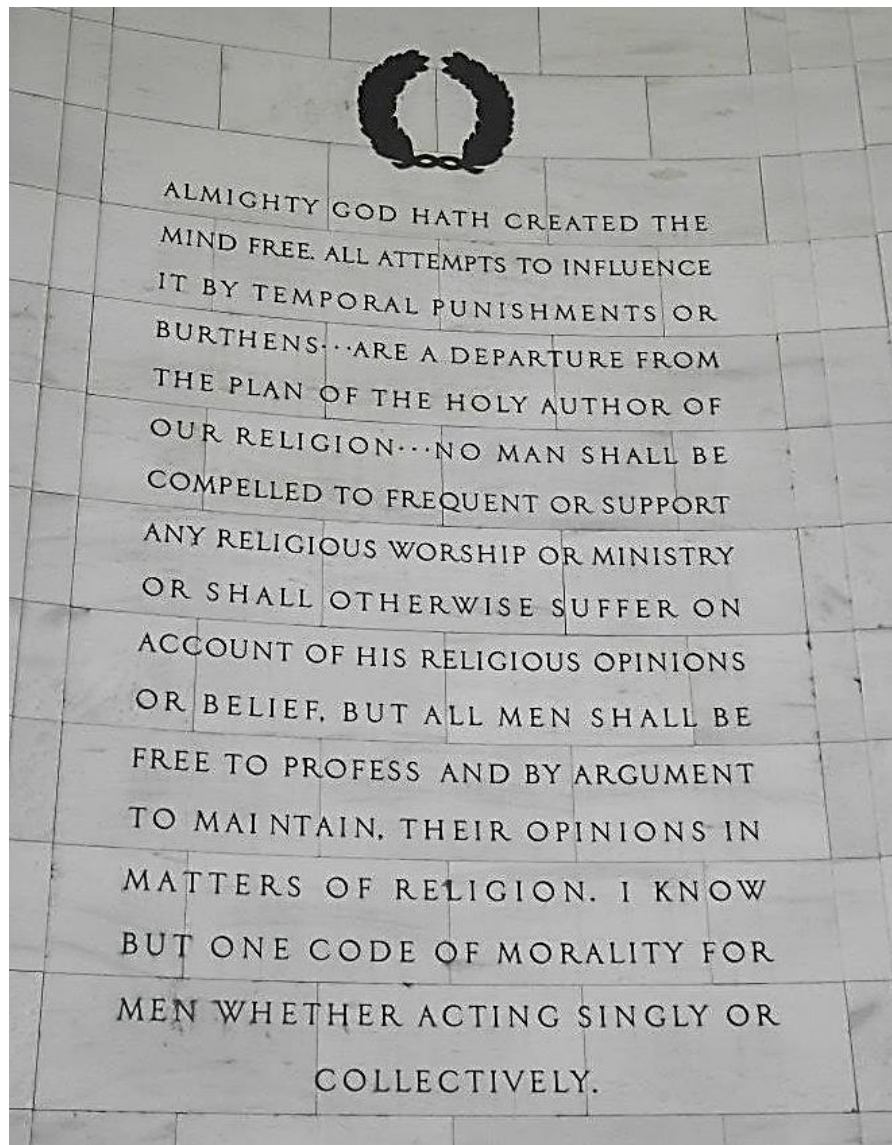
Appendix B (Cont'd): The Inscriptions of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial



TJMPd

I AM NOT AN ADVOCATE FOR FREQUENT CHANGES IN LAWS AND CONSTITUTIONS. BUT LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS MUST GO HAND IN HAND WITH THE PROGRESS OF THE HUMAN MIND. AS THAT BECOMES MORE DEVELOPED, MORE ENLIGHTENED, AS NEW DISCOVERIES ARE MADE, NEW TRUTHS DISCOVERED AND MANNERS AND OPINIONS CHANGE, WITH THE CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES, INSTITUTIONS MUST ADVANCE ALSO TO KEEP PACE WITH THE TIMES. WE MIGHT AS WELL REQUIRE A MAN TO WEAR STILL THE COAT WHICH FITTED HIM WHEN A BOY AS CIVILIZED SOCIETY TO REMAIN EVER UNDER THE REGIMEN OF THEIR BARBAROUS ANCESTORS.

Appendix B (Cont'd): The Inscriptions of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial









TJMPe

ALMIGHTY GOD HATH CREATED THE
MIND FREE. ALL ATTEMPTS TO INFLUENCE
IT BY TEMPORAL PUNISHMENTS OR
BURTHENS ... ARE A DEPARTURE FROM
THE PLAN OF THE HOLY AUTHOR OF
OUR RELIGION ... NO MAN SHALL BE
COMPELLED TO FREQUENT OR SUPPORT
ANY RELIGIOUS WORSHIP OR MINISTRY
OR SHALL OTHERWISE SUFFER ON
ACCOUNT OF HIS RELIGIOUS OPINIONS
OR BELIEF, BUT ALL MEN SHALL BE
FREE TO PROFESS AND BY ARGUMENT
TO MAINTAIN, THEIR OPINIONS IN
MATTERS OF RELIGION. I KNOW
BUT ONE CODE OF MORALITY FOR
MEN WHETHER ACTING SINGLY OR
COLLECTIVELY.

Appendix C: The Composition of Thomas Jefferson Memorial Panel C (TJMPC)

GOD WHO GAVE US LIFE GAVE US
LIBERTY. CAN THE LIBERTIES OF A
NATION BE SECURE WHEN WE HAVE
REMOVED A CONVICTION THAT THESE
LIBERTIES ARE THE GIFT OF GOD?
INDEED I TREMBLE FOR MY COUNTRY
WHEN I REFLECT THAT GOD IS JUST,
THAT HIS JUSTICE CANNOT SLEEP FOR-
EVER. COMMERCE BETWEEN MASTER
AND SLAVE IS DESPOTISM. NOTHING
IS MORE CERTAINLY WRITTEN IN THE
BOOK OF FATE THAN THAT THESE
PEOPLE ARE TO BE FREE. ESTABLISH
THE LAW FOR EDUCATING THE COMMON
PEOPLE. THIS IT IS THE BUSINESS
OF THE STATE TO EFFECT AND ON A
GENERAL PLAN.

	<i>Summary View</i>
	<i>Notes on State of V...</i>
	<i>Notes (earlier section)</i>
	<i>Autobiography</i>
	<i>Wythe Letter</i>
	<i>Washington Letter</i>

Appendix D: Kean's "Freedom of the Slave" Proposals for TJMPc; *The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission: General Records, 1934-1943. Record Group 79: Records of the National Park Service, 1785-2006. (24 files) ARC: 1170312 (National Archives, MD).*

No. 3

FREEDOM OF THE SLAVES

A

Thomas Jefferson effected abolition of the Slave Trade into Virginia in 1778; into the Union in 1807; the prohibition of slavery in the North West Territory in 1788 "He was the only powerful statesman of his day in America to risk his fortunes in an effort to remove this dark blot from the institutions of his native land." (58 words)

Handwritten note: same type of this p. 124

.....

B

FREEDOM OF THE SLAVES

Thomas Jefferson effected abolition of the Slave Trade in Virginia in 1778; in the Union in 1807; the prohibition of Slavery in the North West Territory in 1788. "Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free." (46 words)

Handwritten note: Memo p. 40

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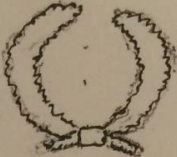
C

FREEDOM OF THE SLAVES

Nothing is more certainly written in the Book of Fate than that the slaves are to be free.....Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice will not sleep forever. (38 words)

Appendix E: Compromised Version of TJMPc; *The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission: General Records, 1934-1943. Record Group 79: Records of the National Park Service, 1785-2006. (24 files) ARC: 1170312 (National Archives, MD).*

12 1/2 x 20 C.M.



<u>God who gave us life gave us liberty.</u>	29
<u>Can the liberties of a Nation be secure</u>	32 6/
<u>when we have removed a conviction that</u>	32 9/3
<u>these liberties are the gift of God?</u>	29 1/2
<u>Indeed I tremble for my country when</u>	30
<u>I reflect that God is just; that his just-</u>	32
<u>ice cannot sleep forever. Commerce be-</u>	31
<u>tween master and slaves is despotism.</u>	31
<u>Nothing is more certainly written in</u>	31
<u>the Book of Fate than that these people</u>	32
<u>are to be free.</u>	11
<u>Those worthy by education without re-</u>	31
<u>gard to wealth or birth should administer</u>	35
<u>the laws - Establish the law for educating</u>	34
<u>the common people. This it is the business</u>	34
<u>of the state to effect and</u>	21
<u>on a general plan.</u>	14
	489

4751
7941
7977 69

Appendix F: Kean's TJMPe Proposal; *The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission: General Records, 1934-1943. Record Group 79: Records of the National Park Service, 1785-2006.* (24 files) ARC: 1170312 (National Archives, MD).

INSCRIPTION
II B

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain their opinions in matters of religion, and the same shall in no wise diminish enlarge or affect their civil capacities.

340 letters -

(From the Act for Religious Freedom
in Virginia)

Appendix G: Thomas' TJMPe Proposal; *The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission: General Records, 1934-1943. Record Group 79: Records of the National Park Service, 1785-2006. (24 files) ARC: 1170312 (National Archives, MD).*

XI

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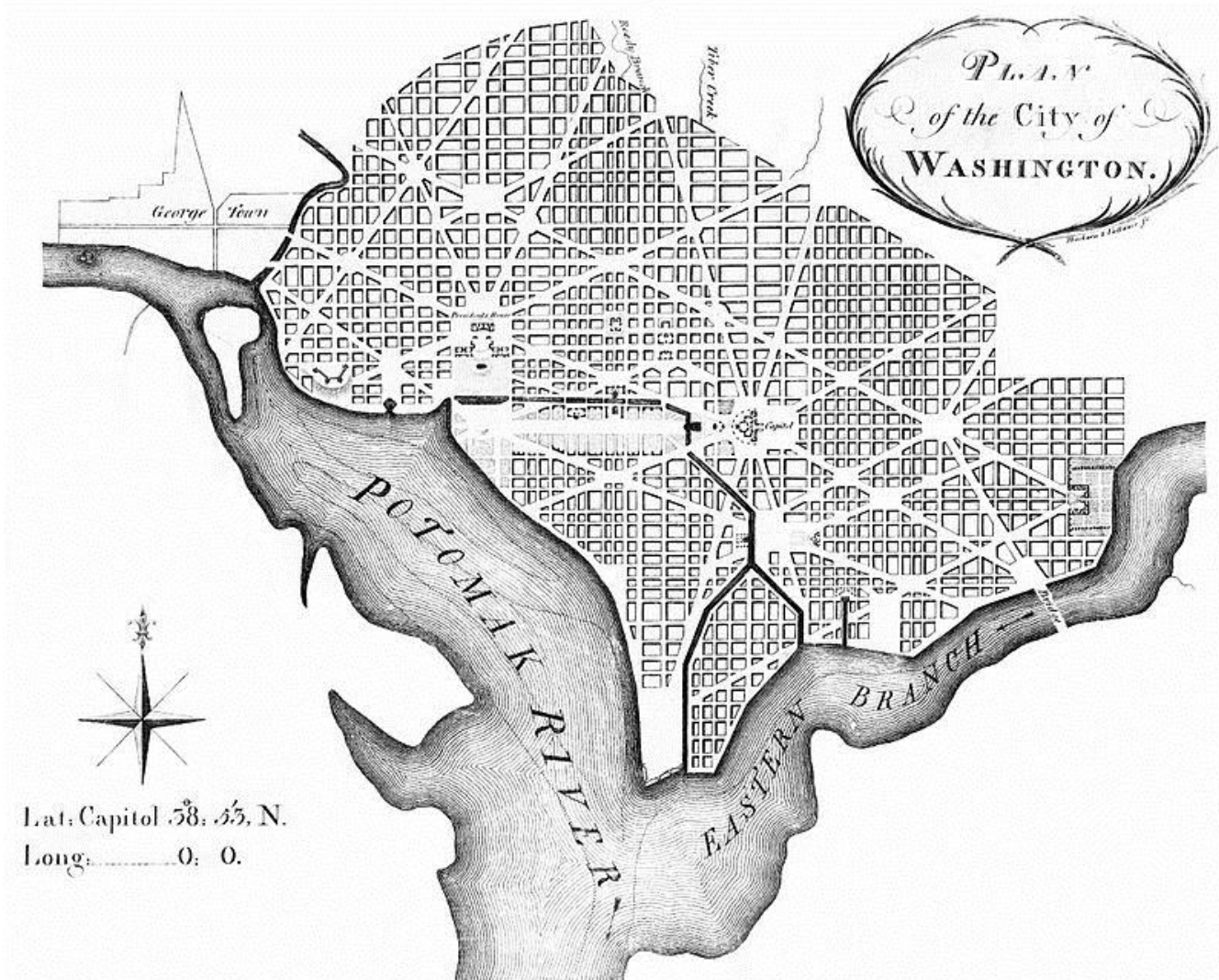
WHEN WE FIND OUR CONSTITUTION
INSUFFICIENT TO SECURE THE HAPPINESS
OF OUR PEOPLE, WE SET IT RIGHT.

THE PEOPLE ARE THE GUARDIANS OF
THEIR LIBERTY.

GOD CREATED THE MIND FREE. NO
MAN SHALL BE COMPELLED TO SUPPORT ANY
RELIGIOUS MINISTRY NOR SUFFER ON
ACCOUNT OF HIS BELIEFS. ALL MEN HAVE
LIBERTY OF RELIGIOUS OPINION. THEIR
MORALITY IS PART OF THEIR NATURE.

I KNOW BUT ONE CODE OF MORALITY
FOR MEN WHETHER ACTING SINGLY OR
COLLECTIVELY.

Appendix H: Pierre L'Enfant's *Plan of the City of Washington*, March 1792



L'Enfant, Pierre Charles, 1754-1825. Plan of the city of Washington / Thackara & Vallance sc. [Philadelphia : s.n., 1792] Scale [ca. 1:39,000]. 1 map ; 21 x 26 cm., on sheet 35 x 43 cm. G3850 1792 .L4. Library of Congress: <http://lcn.loc.gov/88694159>.

Appendix I: "The Words of Thomas Jefferson" Factsheet, Washington D.C.

THE JEFFERSON MEMORIAL
WASHINGTON, D.C.


THE WORDS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON
I HAVE SWORN UPON THE ALTAR OF GOD ETERNAL HOSTILITY AGAINST EVERY FORM OF TYRANNY OVER THE MIND OF MAN

☪

God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever. Commerce between master and slave is despotism. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free. Establish the law for educating the common people. This it is the business of the state to effect and on a general plan.

☪

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men. We... solemnly publish and declare, that these colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent states... and for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honour.



THOMAS JEFFERSON
1743 - 1826

☪

Almighty God hath created the mind free. All attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens... are a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion... no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship or ministry or shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but all men shall be free to profess and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion. I know but one code of morality for men whether acting singly or collectively.

☪

I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions. But laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors.