

**The Mirror and the Lantern:
Churchill's Heroes and Role Models**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

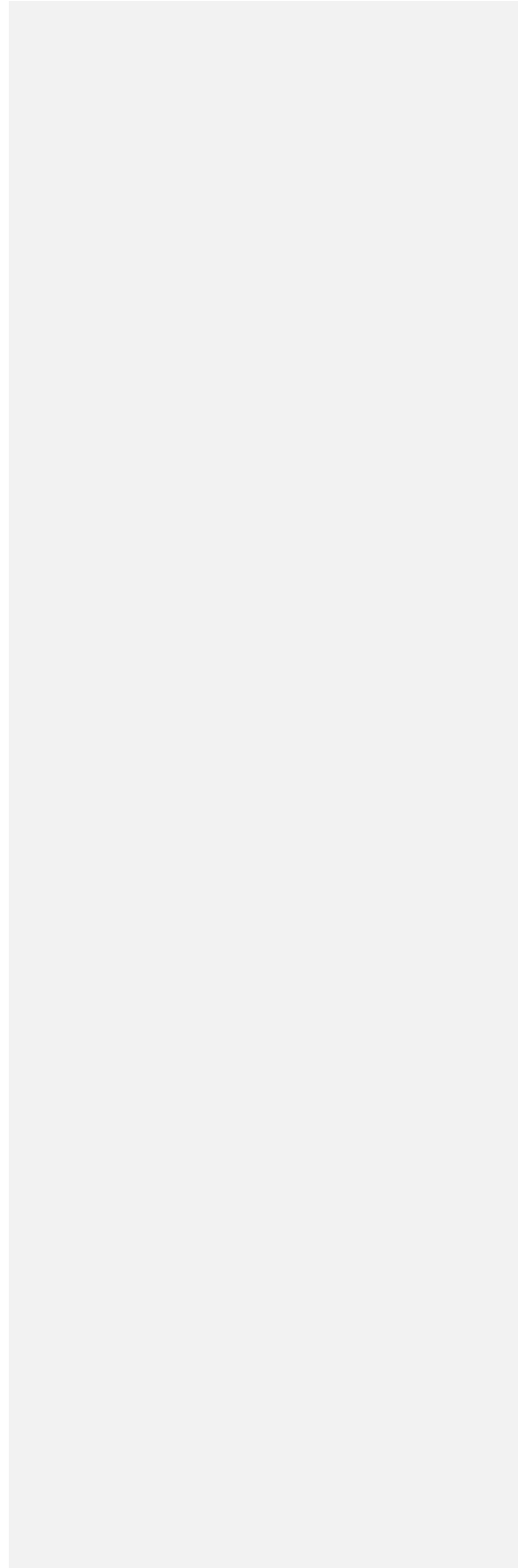
Master of Arts
in
Diplomacy and Military Studies

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By William Mayer

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We certify that we have read this thesis and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality for the degree of Master of Arts in Diplomacy and Military Studies.

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Bryan Gibson, Ph.D.

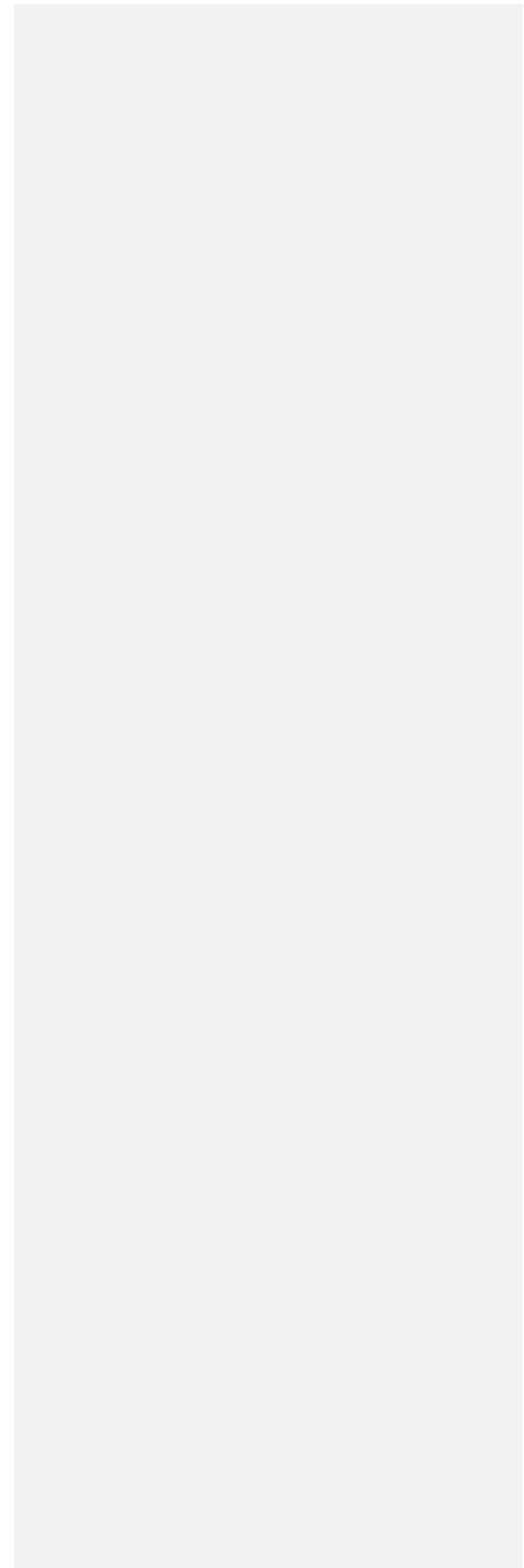
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me back to the Blitz. Thank you to the staff at Chartwell. To accommodate my requests to see Churchill's study while under renovation was particularly significant for me and greatly aided my understanding of his busts of Napoleon and Nelson. A major shout out to Dr. Andrew Roberts, author of *Walking with Destiny*, who invited me to his home in London, drank champagne, and shared with me some of the most important information I needed for my thesis about Churchill and his historical inspirations. To find myself in the presence of a Churchillian master was monumental to my overall experience and I am honored that he made time out of his busy schedule to help me unravel my thesis topic. Truly a magnificent fellow. I would also like to acknowledge the archival staff at the Churchill Archive Centre at Cambridge University. Their speed, efficiency, kindness, and patience made the research process particularly enjoyable and motivating. Director Allen Packwood also deserves recognition for his massive support and kindness during my time in Cambridge. His commitment to helping me find the right the books, documents, and people was like no other. I am indebted to his efforts and perpetual generosity in the process of writing this thesis.

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Preface**Commented [BM1]:** Preface to explain structure of paper.

The Mirror and the Lantern is a thematic study. To thoroughly investigate the construction of Churchill's leadership paradigm, it is important to consider the people and events in his life that impacted his worldview and perception of leadership. This included his upbringing, education, sense of destiny and magnanimity, the principles he learned and adopted from others, the Dardanelles, and personal reflections of history. At first glance, this thesis appears to be structured like a biographical study. However, it does not always stay on the chronological timeline. To give the best understanding of these individual landmarks throughout the first half of his life, the conceptual framework in chapter three illustrates the themes and significant points listed above. These points often overlap with each other, so it is advised not to read it as a chronological biography but a thematic leadership analysis. Moreover, all readers are encouraged to have a basic familiarity of the Churchillian timeline from 1874-1945 to best leverage the structure of this thesis. The next page contains a brief timeline to prevent confusion and help guide the reader through the shaping of Winston Churchill's leadership paradigm. Each section represents a theme or point that contributed to Churchill's overall understanding and development of leadership prior to the Second World War.

Brief Churchillian Timeline

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Year	Event
November 30, 1874	Winston S. Churchill is born
1874-1887	Churchill raised primarily by his nanny Elizabeth Ann Everest
1888-1893	Attends Harrow School; Professes his destiny to a peer at Harrow, 1891
1895	His father Lord Randolph dies; Commissioned, 20 February, as Second Lieutenant, 4th Hussars. Served with Spanish forces in Cuba
1897	Malakand Field Force, 31st Punjab Infantry, Self-Education in India
1898	Orderly officer to Sir W. Lockhart with Tirah Expeditionary Force (clasp). Served, attached 21st Lancers with Nile Expeditionary force, present at Battle of Omdurman
1899-1900	Acted as correspondent Morning Post South Africa; taken prisoner but escaped; served as Lieutenant South African Light Horse; Advocated for magnanimous treatment of the Boers.
1900	Retired from the Army
1900-1904	M.P. Oldham (Conservative)
1904	"Crossed the Floor": Moved from Conservative to Liberal Party, May 31, Principle over Party
1908	Married, 12 September, to Clementine Hozier
Feb 1910-Oct 1911	Home Secretary
Oct 1911-May 1915	First Lord of the Admiralty; Dardanelles Disaster-March-Nov 1915
1915-1916	Served on Western Front with Grenadier Guards; appointed Lieutenant-Colonel, commanding 6th Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers, France
Jul 1917-Jan 1919	Minister of Munitions
Jan 1919-Jan 1920	Paris Peace Conference; Advocated for magnanimous treatment of the Germans
1922	Bought Chartwell Manor, Kent

1924	Returned to the Conservative Party from the Liberal Party; Principle over Party
1930s	Wilderness Years, not in power. Authored 11 books including his Life of Marlborough; Period of Reflection.
Sept 1939-May 1940	First Lord of the Admiralty
May 1940-July 1945	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, WWII
July 1945-Oct 1951	Leader of the Opposition
1946	"Iron Curtain" Speech, Fulton, Missouri, 5 March
1951-1955	prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury
1953	Awarded Nobel Prize for Literature
January 24, 1965	Churchill Dies

*This only encompasses the most important events of his life as it pertains to this thesis. See: "Sir Winston Churchill: A Chronology, Churchill College, Cambridge, <https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/collections/churchill-papers/sir-winston-churchill-chronology/> for a more detailed timeline

Chapter One:
Building the Churchillian Paradigm
-Introduction-



“Let us reconcile ourselves to the mysterious rhythm of our destinies.... Let us treasure our joys but not bewail our sorrows. The glory of light cannot exist without its shadows. Life is a whole, and good and ill must be accepted together. The journey has been enjoyable and well worth making—once.”¹

-Winston Churchill, *Thoughts and Adventures*-

* Image Source: “Member for Woodward.” Cartoon, London: *Punch Magazine*, November 30, 1949, accessed March 9, 2020, <https://punch.photoshelter.com/gallery-image/Winston-Churchill-Cartoons/G0000wRqhEpJ3fss/100001XvtdArc.lw>.

¹ Winston Churchill, *Thoughts and Adventures*, London: Thorton Butterworth, 1932, 8.

Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill was one of the most profound, distinct, and controversial leaders of the 20th century. There was never an easy answer to explain Churchill's thought process and methodology while he was at the helm of the ship. It was almost always complicated and usually contested; however, his power to challenge convention, lead magnanimously, and inspire those crippled by fear placed his leadership paradigm in the spotlight. Historically inspired and a voracious reader of the antiquities, he allowed himself to develop a unique and well-defined worldview that very few would comprehend. His knowledge of the ancients as well as other well-known historical giants gave him a distinct edge over other individuals in his lifetime. Unfortunately, because of so many controversial endeavors, some of which he was blamed or discredited for, Churchill's journey was not easy. Nevertheless, in times of struggle, he would look upon the past for guidance. He recognized the importance of history, the lessons imbedded within and vigorously wrestled with them in his own leadership paradigm.

This leadership paradigm would face its ultimate test in the Battle of Britain as Churchill rose to the formidable challenges ahead. As the Luftwaffe dive bombers screamed over the skies of London in the summer of 1940, he vehemently announced, "We shall draw from the heart of suffering itself the means of inspiration and survival."² Explosive inspiration, effective leadership, and defiant courage were essential for Britain to persevere in her "darkest hour." Churchill's unique ability to inspire and lead courageously has encouraged investigation about who he historically admired. What historic leaders drove him to declare, in the face of imminent defeat, that there would be no surrender and that the British would fight on to the end even if it meant sacrificing the home islands to darkness?

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² Winston Churchill, *Churchill Speaks: 1897-1963, Collected Speeches in Peace and War*, edited by Robert Rhodes James, New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1980, 731.

Churchill was the epitome of a self-made man. He began laying the foundations of leadership as a child. The relationship he shared with his parents was cold and distanced resulting in Churchill relying on himself to learn and expand his practical knowledge. From toy-soldiering to language and memorization skills, Churchill was an ambitious pragmatist. His generalship of 1,500 toy soldiers was as legendary as it was crucial to his inevitable upbringing into the military. While most children would play with the troops like any other toy, Churchill took these men to war. His cousin Clare Frewen recalled:

[Winston's] playroom contained from one end to the other a plank table on trestles, upon which were thousands of lead soldiers arranged for battle. He organized wars. The lead battalions were manoeuvred into action, peas and pebbles committed great casualties, forts were stormed, cavalry charged, bridges were destroyed—real water tanks engulfed the advanced foe. Altogether it was a most impressive show, and played with an interest that was no ordinary child game.³

Whether he was living in the shadow of Marlborough, Nelson, or Napoleon, his interest of strategy, tactics, and the execution of war was an anomaly at such a young age. However, his passion for toy box military leadership motivated him to enlist in the cavalry at Sandhurst.

Churchill was not fond of the books in school unless he chose to read them. His passion for history led him to read Shakespeare and Macaulay, whom he also deeply memorized while mastering the intricate ways of the English language. Aware of most decisions, Churchill was acquiring the tools he needed to ascend the mountain of leadership. As with most ascensions up the mountain, there were bound to be slips, falls, cuts, bruises, and frustration. But Churchill rarely let it get the best of him thanks to his undying perseverance and meaningful relationship with Clementine. In a telling metaphor, he wrote: “Thus the beaver builds his dam, and thus when his fishing is about to begin, comes the flood and sweeps his work and luck and fish away

³ Michael Paterson, *Winston Churchill: His Military Life, 1895-1945*, London: David and Charles, 2005, 43.

together. So he has to begin again.”⁴ Determination defined Churchill’s character and although cliché, his common comparison to a bulldog was fitting because once he had an idea, the idea turned into a mission in which he considered failure only transient with total success on the horizon. Churchill famously said, “Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never-in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.”⁵ Winston ‘Never Surrender’ Churchill embodied this message. The Dardanelles debacle could have easily derailed his progress up the ladder of leadership, but he overcame the scapegoated accusations and dedicated his Wilderness years to self-reflection and the writing of his memoirs.*

What was learned here gave prominent shape to the leader he became in 1940. No matter the consequences, Churchill always chose principle over party symbolizing a commitment to his constructive worldview and manifestation of his own personal destiny. His foresight, a conceivable ally, rarely convinced his colleagues of the long-term consequences of major decisions due to short-term perceptions.

From Omdurman to Gallipoli and ‘Never Surrender’ to ‘Iron Curtain’, Churchill, himself created the man he became in 1940. His past experiences, most certainly, prepared him for this moment as he walked with destiny into the furnace of war. Charles Eade wrote, “He explained to me that he was able to handle all these affairs at the centre, because his whole life had been a training for the high office he had filled during the war.”⁶ Those that he admired only contributed to Churchill’s final form. They did not shape him. Rather, Churchill embodied these

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⁴ Winston Churchill, *My Early Life*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1958, 160.

⁵ Winston Churchill, “Never Give In, Never, Never, Never!” Speech, Harrow School, October 29, 1941, accessed March 9, 2020, <https://www.nationalchurchillmuseum.org/never-give-in-never-never-never.html>.

* Churchill’s Wilderness years comprised of the time he was out of political and military power and focused on the authorship of eleven books during the 1930s.

⁶ Andrew Roberts, *Walking with Destiny*, New York: Viking, 2018, 1.

enlightened principles to help guide him through the Nazified heart of darkness. Churchill planted and nurtured his tree of leadership and as it grew applied the ornaments or lessons drawn from his inspirations. The leadership successes witnessed in 1940 were primarily and most importantly of Churchillian origin. The wisdom garnered from his idols only complemented the paradigm he had already created.



In his study of Moses, Churchill reflected what he thought went in to building a great leader. “Every prophet has to come from civilization, but every prophet has to go into the wilderness. He must have a strong impression of a complex society and all that it has to give, and then he must serve periods of isolation and meditation. This is the process by which psychic dynamite is made.”¹



This paper seeks to investigate how three major historical inspirations contributed to Churchill’s leadership as well as how Winston sought to use their lessons both politically and militarily to defy Hitler and the Nazi regime. To create a list of Churchillian inspirations is easy; to narrow down the most significant not so much. From politics and writing to war and public speaking, many important historical figures aided and inspired the development of Churchill’s worldview and application of leadership. Warren Dockter explained: “He subscribed to a very classical, romantic notion of heroism, believing that one was not born, but had to become, a

hero.”⁷ Therefore, to become a hero, one must look to past paladins for guidance. Churchill’s most important inspirations were familial—his father Lord Randolph and his ancestor the First Duke of Marlborough. Despite their significance, however, their influence is already well-documented. It was clear that they both contributed to Churchill’s political and military worldview because of the time and effort Winston dedicated to composing extensive biographies about them.

As Churchill was constructing his own leadership paradigm, he confided in many significant individuals during his ascension to greatness. Arguably, Churchill was most vulnerable during his involvement in the Great War and thus was more permeable to influence and guidance toward becoming a stronger and more effective leader. According to Richard Meinertzhagen, Churchill’s attitude toward T. E. Lawrence “almost amounted to hero worship”.⁸ However, the relationship Churchill shared with Lawrence was more like a confidant and ally as opposed to a hero. Churchill maintained a similar bond with his mother, Jennie, for example. Many have argued that Lloyd George inspired Churchill deeply as well. While he did, in fact, influence Winston, the relationship was too inconsistent to be considered a source of admiration. Churchill had immense respect for the prime minister, but often ‘buted heads’ over important decisions. French Premier Georges Clemenceau, on the other hand, had an immense impact on Churchill’s leadership paradigm and will be included in this study because of his commitment to lead from the front. Churchill spent one day with Clemenceau during the First World War and saw everything he needed to admire the ‘Tiger’s’ bold and courageous determination to lead his

⁷ Warren Dockett, “Who were Winston Churchill’s Biggest Heroes?” *The Telegraph*, January 29, 2015, accessed March 11, 2020, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/winston-churchill/11376367/Who-were-Winston-Churchills-biggest-heroes.html>.

⁸ *Ibid.*

nation from the frontlines. Witnessing the morale-boosting impact that Clemenceau had on the exhausted *poilu* (French soldier) inspired Churchill to lead from the front as a symbol of defiance against Nazi tyranny during the Second World War. Clemenceau's influence greatly contributed to Churchill's leadership paradigm and deserves further investigation.

Historically, Churchill admired several great individuals. As he aspired to be prime minister, it was only natural that he was inspired by past premiers including William Pitt the Younger and Benjamin Disraeli. One can see the clear similarities in leadership style and political affiliation between the Younger Pitt, Disraeli, and Churchill. Perseverance, obstinance, and ambition all fueled their tenures, however, it is questionable what impact these men had on Churchill during the Second World War. Like his admiration for his father and Marlborough, Churchill sought guidance from the former premiers to build his foundation and stairway to No. 10. They played a critical role in the construction of Churchill's leadership paradigm but are not as significant as others in the wartime examination. This is because Napoleon Bonaparte and Admiral Horatio Nelson arguably contributed more to Churchill's perception of war and ascension to victory.

Napoleon is an interesting case study for this project because of Churchill's infatuation with the emperor. Starting in 1909, Churchill collected a vast amount of hagiographic Napoleonic texts which can still be viewed at the Churchill Archives Centre at Cambridge University. Moreover, Churchill kept a bust of Napoleon's head at the center of his desk at Chartwell signifying his deep admiration where he had hoped to write a biography of the Corsican. While it may seem likely that Napoleon inspired Churchill's military leadership, he provided a more abstract influence on his leadership paradigm. Though Napoleon had garnered a vile reputation as a tyrant and conqueror, Churchill held a romanticized view of the emperor and

his embodiment of the French revolutionary spirit. By no means did Churchill agree with Napoleon's methods or actions but believed that he symbolized the values of the Enlightenment and French Revolution prior to the Terror. As brutal and violent as Napoleon was, Churchill commended the Napoleonic effort to spread the ideals of liberty and freedom in defiance of absolutism and tyranny. Furthermore, he admired Napoleon's dynamism, contagious ambition, and sense of destiny as he sought to emulate the emperor against the Nazi regime.

Horatio Nelson, on the other hand, shaped Churchill's worldview as well as his wartime leadership. Every British boy had heard the stories of the victorious hero of Trafalgar. For them, Nelson was the epitome of glory and represented the importance of duty and courage against the most dangerous opposition. Nelson inspired Churchill's sense of duty and ability to inspire those crippled with fear.⁹ As the admiral was able to rally his men against the Napoleonic fleet, Churchill boosted British spirits against the imperious wave of Nazism. Moreover, Churchill foresaw himself in command of history awaiting his moment of Nelsonian glory. Standing at the helm of his country, Churchill recognized that to do one's duty is not always easily accomplished but persevered against all odds as the beacon of light for the free peoples of the world before America's entry into the war. As prime minister, he was often forced to make difficult wartime decisions that challenged his principles and worldviews. This included the infamous order to annihilate the French fleet at Mers-el-Kébir on July 3, 1940. No matter the difficulty of the decisions, Churchill understood the power of the initiative. Admiral Nelson was so successful because he took the initiative, challenged convention, and actively took risks to defeat his foe at sea. Churchill once told the Dardanelles Commission that "Victory is only

⁹ Churchill kept a smaller bust of Nelson on his desk as well. He also named his favorite cat after the legendary admiral.

wrested by running risks”¹⁰ and in the face of the Nazi menace, he had no choice but to boldly defy his enemy and piece together the last remnants of hope to ultimately succeed. Churchill found Nelson and his leadership capabilities inspiring (as most Britons did) and used what he learned as a weapon against the German war machine.

Churchill was arguably one of the greatest men of the 20th century as he developed his own distinct leadership paradigm throughout his deep study of history and expansive political and military life experiences. In 1891, he envisioned his destiny to become the savior of Britain in her darkest hour. Churchill foresaw, “I see into the future. This country will be subjected somehow, to a tremendous invasion, by what means I do not know, but I tell you I shall be in command of the defences of London and I shall save London and England from disaster.”¹¹ His destiny carried him like a magic carpet into Britain’s darkest hour where he not only confided in his perception of leadership, but also the lessons of those who came before him. Churchill was a lamp that illuminated the manifestation of a distinct leadership model. He casted light on the traits of Clemenceau, Napoleon, and Nelson, selected those that were most critical, and absorbed them to evolve into the leader he became in 1940. He was by no means a mirror or reflection of those that came before him. Rather, Churchill was his own man with his own unequivocal destiny. Consequently, Churchill embodied the ferocity of the ‘Tiger’, the ambition of the emperor, and courage of the admiral to create an all-powerful Churchillian paradigm of leadership that ultimately contributed to the complete defeat of Hitler and the Nazi regime.

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¹⁰ Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill: The Challenge of War, 1914-1916*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971, 120.

¹¹ Roberts, 22.

Chapter Two:

-Historiographic Assessment of the Churchillian Literature-



MR. CHURCHILL AND FRIEND.

WINSTON. "WE HAVE BOTH MADE HISTORY AND WE HAVE BOTH WRITTEN IT. LET US EXCHANGE HEADGEAR."

*"Words are the only things that last forever."*¹²
-Winston Churchill, 1938-

* Image Source: "Mr. Churchill and Friend," Cartoon, London: Punch Magazine, February 14, 1923, accessed March 18, 2020, <https://punch.photoshelter.com/image/I00009sot4x539tc>.

¹² David Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War*, New York: Random House, 2005, x.

Churchill famously once said, “I shall leave it to history, but remember that I shall be one of the historians.”¹³ The Churchill historiography is immensely vast and dense with hundreds of works produced about Britain’s finest. Though the popularity of “great man” history is declining, historians and popular authors have found Churchillian niches to target and expand upon such as Piers Brendan’s examination titled *Churchill’s Bestiary: His Life Through Animals*. One bibliographer counted that there have been approximately 62 biographies written about Churchill between 1905 and 2000 with many more written since the turn of the century.¹⁴ However, to accurately assess the evolution of the Churchillian historiography, it is important to begin with his own works. Dating back to his early military adventures in the Empire, Churchill was an ardent author and avid historian. At age twenty-five, he had already written five books and 215 newspaper articles including *The Malakand Field Force*, *The River War*, and *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria*.¹⁵ These books covered the stories of his early military career in India, Sudan, and South Africa while building his reputation in Great Britain. Churchill was a masterful historian who reflected and learned from the lessons of the past; however, he was often biased and effectively embellished darker parts of his history. Consequently, much can be extracted from Churchill’s careful observations and primary source content but should be consciously questioned and investigated. For example, his works on his father and ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough were strong and convincing contributions to the historiographic investigation of these men, however, were hagiographically skewed to preserve and protect the legacies of his family. As a historian, an awareness of natural and apparent biases that shape or impact the recollection of events is necessary. Of *Lord Randolph Churchill*, Jenkins critiqued, “It had a lot

¹³ Reynolds, xix.

¹⁴ David Freeman, “Books, Arts & Curiosities—The Long and Short of Churchill Biographies,” *Finest Hour* 157 (2012-2013): 44.

¹⁵ Roberts, 76.

of a faults. He treated Lord Randolph more as an icon than as a human being. Nevertheless, the book ranks as perhaps the best of the consanguineous biographies.”¹⁶ The *Times Literary Supplement* added that he wrote “like a historian, and not at all like a man on a party platform.”¹⁷ Churchill’s mastery of the English language made his writing insightful and captivating despite his personal biases and occasional distortions. His ability to deconstruct intricate subjects, assess them, and provide a cinematic illustration was Churchillian in nature. Churchill’s poetic command of the language enabled the reader to relive a battle they never witnessed and left them with thoughts to critically ponder about conflict. In a review of *The River War*, one soldier complemented, “For a young man of twenty-five, this history—abounding in vivid description, graphic narrative, and philosophic reflection—is a wonderful achievement. ...”¹⁸

During his “Wilderness Years,” Churchill was a voracious author publishing eleven books and over 400 articles including *The World Crisis*, *My Early Life*, *Great Contemporaries*, and *Marlborough*.¹⁹ Furthermore, of significant importance to his historiography was his six-volume *Memoirs of the Second World War*. This monumental task was executed during his Second Wilderness (1945-51) in which he and his brilliant research team produced delicious a six-course feast according to David Reynolds.²⁰ Other than applauding or criticizing his authorship, little has been written about Churchill the writer. Historians have chosen to focus more broadly on his life and efforts as a soldier and politician even though writing was critical to his livelihood and construction of his leadership paradigm. In 2005, Reynolds tackled this task in his *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War*. In this

¹⁶ Roy Jenkins, *Churchill: A Biography*, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001, 102-103.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 102-103.

¹⁸ Book Review of *The River War*, November 10, 1899, Churchill Archives Centre, Broadwater Collection 1, Press 1 & 2, BRDW 1.

¹⁹ William Manchester, “Indomitable Churchill,” *American Heritage* (March 1987): 80, MCHL 5/8/9.

²⁰ Reynolds, 502.

brilliant contribution to the historiography of one of Churchill's most vigorous writing projects, Reynolds strove to author a "book about a book", taking his audience through the process Churchill pursued in the construction of this historical masterpiece. Reynolds assessed:

[The six volumes] offered unique personal impressions of the war and its leaders, voluminous documentary evidence that scholars could not then expect to see until the next century, and informed narratives of key battles and diplomacy. Their culminative effect was to highlight Britain's contribution to victory at a time when a tide of American memoirs and movies gave the impression that Uncle Sam had won the war single-handedly.²¹

More importantly, Churchill sought vindication. As a definitive visionary who foresaw much of the devastating consequences of Nazi aggression, Churchill used his memoirs to demonstrate that because his warnings went unheeded, war devoured the whole of Europe and Britain. Consequently, he strategically used his memoirs to not only reflect on the disasters of the past but warn of the future Soviet threat. He dynamically constructed his memoirs to parallel the might of the Nazi war machine and the Soviet menace as to warn the world again of an unforeseen threat. This was the power of Churchill's writings. He never wrote or said something without a purpose or objective in mind. Often was he trying to convey a deeper and more insightful message in between the lines of his illustrative history. Moreover, it is important to note that Churchill distorted parts of his memoirs, albeit not deceptively. Reynolds pointed out that it is unfair to assume Churchill was of the Machiavellian school of thought as he did not purposely write deceitfully. The problem with Churchill's deeper investigations and portrayals of some of the larger military decisions was that he often included his telegram, order, or justification and negated the inclusion of his colleagues' replies. Reynolds observed: "Here lay the seeds of revisionism. Many of Churchill's wartime colleagues were irritated by the one-

²¹ Reynolds, 507.

sidedness of his own account— “my” minutes but not their replies—and by the two-dimensional impression conveyed of Churchill himself.”²² It was not long before his peers began to challenge his assertions, thus igniting one of the true beginnings of the Churchillian historiographic timeline.

The first of these historiographic battles began with the damning release of Field Marshal Alanbrooke’s WWII diaries, *The Turn of the Tide* and *Triumph in the West*. Originally to be kept private, these diaries revealed Alanbrooke’s dark, depressing, and stressful state of being.

Alanbrooke was thought to be one of the most competent Army officers Britain had ever seen but made Churchill’s “black dog” look like a pup.²³ Alanbrooke’s diaries were one of the first major entries that critically attacked Churchill as a war leader. However, while some of his claims may be fair, Alanbrooke maintained a fierce and almost petty opinion of many of his colleagues during wartime. Released in the late fifties, the original diaries contained scathing criticisms and judgements about many of the high-ranking Allied officials including Marshall, Eisenhower, Alexander, Gort, Mountbatten, and Churchill but were censored by historian and editor Arthur Bryant. For example, he labeled Eisenhower as a “hopeless” general with a “very, very limited brain from a strategic point of view.” Of Churchill, Alanbrooke remarked, “Planned strategy was not Winston’s strong card. He preferred to work by intuition and impulse.... [WSC has] no long-term vision.... In all his plans he lives from hand to mouth. He can never grasp a whole plan. His method is entirely opportunist.”²⁴ Much of Alanbrooke’s commentary sounded as if he were angrily venting into his diary clearly not meant for publishing. It was rarely constructive and sought to demean his peers for not sharing similar strategic points of view.

²² Reynolds, 505, 508.

²³ Christopher C. Harmon, “Alanbrooke and Churchill,” *Finest Hour* 112 (2001): 34.

²⁴ Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, *War Diaries, 1939-1945*, eds. Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001, 669, 515.

Bryant tried to heavily edit the divisive commentary which proved to be a disservice to the historiography and deeper understanding of Alanbrooke's thoughts and role in the war. Harmon explained, "He was known for self-control, power, and determination; but writing privately, in late hours of interminable days, Alanbrooke permitted himself anger, fatigue, and despair. The result is deeply personal, and sometimes petulant...".²⁵

Understandably, Bryant believed that it was critical to control the damage excreted from the diaries and publish a less flammable version that did not critically assault those who were still alive. Harmon reflected, "Many were offended that so famous a statesman could be accused of boorishness, peevishness, and strategic lunacy by a general who had served him so long."²⁶ It was not until 2001 that the historiography achieved a victory. Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman republished the original Alanbrooke diaries without censorship and included an introduction and critical assessment of the original works. Christopher Harmon wrote an article around the same time that brought balance to the historiographic picture. In his article he assessed, Alanbrooke's harsh criticisms, but gave valid reasons why he may have felt that way. He also added insight about what Alanbrooke left out as well as where he and Churchill agreed on certain issues. Harmon concluded, "Easily visible on secure plinths above all swirls or pettiness are two heroes. One is a first-class general, probably the best Chief of Imperial General Staff Britain ever knew. The other, looming even larger, is a soldier-turned-statesman, who probably saved the West."²⁷

Alanbrooke was particularly bitter about civilian leadership in the military. Churchill had learned his lesson about power-hungry commanders usurping the power of government during the Great War. This was why he made himself minister of defense as well as prime minister. It

²⁵ Harmon, 34.

²⁶ Ibid., 34.

²⁷ Ibid., 34.

was clear that Alanbrooke did not support this. Though being Churchill's top commander, Alanbrooke showed little interest in the grand political strategy. Like Sun Tzu, he was a military purist, but failed to see the importance of Clausewitz's famous phrase: "War is the continuation of politics by other means."²⁸ While Churchill, on the other hand, saw a reliant bond between the two. He once wrote, "At the summit true politics and strategy are one."²⁹ Though severely censored, Alanbrooke's diaries were one of the earliest contributions to the Churchill historiography of wartime leadership. Hagiography was rampant which is one of the reasons why his diaries were received with such shock during this time period. However, it set the bar for later criticisms about Churchill after his death, most significantly, an entry from Churchill's doctor Lord Moran.

Lord Moran's *Struggle for Survival* was another momentous contribution to the historiographic timeline. Published in 1966, a year after Churchill's death, Moran's memoirs focused on his relationship with Churchill as a physician. According to the Churchill family and Winston's peers, Moran blatantly violated doctor-patient confidentiality with this book as it illuminated Churchill's decrepit state in the later years of his life. Dr. G. M. Trevelyan encouraged Moran to proceed: "This is history. You ought to get it on paper. It is inevitable that everything about this man will be known in time. Let us have the truth." Moran morally struggled to pursue this project but wrote, "I cannot tamper with the facts any more than I could fake an experiment in the laboratory...All things of this nature must be submitted, as this is, with great deference to the judgement of the equal reader."³⁰ He knew that his monograph would create waves of criticism among the Churchill community, but believed it was his duty to make

²⁸ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, vol. III, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1908, 121.

²⁹ Harmon, 34.

³⁰ Lord Moran, *Churchill: The Struggle for Survival, 1945-1960*, New York: Carroll and Graf, 2006, xxx, xxxii.

his historiographic contribution through the evaluation of Churchill's health and mental capacity. It was clear that Moran did not have ill intentions with this book, but it challenged the ethical and secure relationship between doctor and patient.

The book reported all of Churchill's ailments including strokes, eye problems, and pneumonia as well as a consistent assessment of his mood and mental status. It is obvious why those closest to Churchill wanted this left confidential as it might have discredited or threatened Winston's long-term reputation as a brilliant leader. Churchill's opposition may have used *Struggle for Survival* to question or challenge decisions he made further damaging his legacy as an effective prime minister. Further driving a wedge between himself and others, Moran also included his evaluations of Winston's performance, political acumen, and personal relationships. This proved rather contentious as observed by Sir John Wheeler-Bennett. Moran did not confine himself to "technical medical details" and "has also given his assessment of Churchill's qualities as a statesman and leader of his country in war and peace. We cannot accept this assessment as it stands: we believe that in some respects it is incorrect and in others incomplete and on both accounts misleading."³¹ This may be true; however, it added a new dimension into the historiography for historians to debate and evaluate. After the war and up through Churchill's death, many hagiographic assessments were written that placed him in the hall of heroes which he rightfully deserves; however, without the counter balance, historians will never be able to create the most accurate representation of Churchill as a whole.

One such work created to specifically counter Moran's work was a collaborative effort titled, *Action this Day: Working with Churchill*. Published in 1968, six of Churchill's closest colleagues shared their personal experiences with Winston. Sir John Martin illustrated Moran's

³¹ John Mather, "Lord Moran's Book is Based on his Diaries," *International Churchill Society*, accessed March 20, 2020, <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/myths/lord-morans-book-is-based-on-his-diaries/>.

perspective: “We are presented with the image of one who in a way had never grown up, an impulsive gambler, bludgeoning his clumsy way among people who he did not understand and in whom he was not interested...”. And yet, Martin countered using Churchill’s words, “The machinery worked almost automatically, and one lived in a stream of coherent thought capable of being translated with great rapidity into coherent action.”³² Through an examination of *Struggle for Survival* and *Action this Day*, it seems evident that Moran provided an honest evaluation based on his observations and interactions with Churchill. However, because he was not politically knowledgeable, his assessments in this area are inconclusive and unconvincing. On the other hand, *Action this Day* tries to set the record straight to not only protect Churchill’s legacy, but to deeply critique Moran’s efforts. For them, *Struggle for Survival* was disgraceful because it challenged the ethics of medical confidentiality as well as offered inadequate insight on topics Moran was not well-informed in. Nevertheless, this is the dutiful process of historiography. Churchill’s death signaled the beginning of a new chapter in the history books and it was now time for family, colleagues, and historians to equip the pen and investigate and assess Winston’s life under the lens of a microscope to build upon the complete Churchillian picture. Randolph Churchill, thus, carried the torch and published the first volume of the official biography in 1966.

Major Biographies: Churchill, Gilbert, Manchester, Jenkins, and Roberts

After Churchill died, the historiographic train left the station. Much had been written about Winston during his life, but it was now time to reflect, debate, and expand upon the histories of the former prime minister. Hagiography still lingered, but many were eager to begin a deeper examination of Winston Churchill’s life. In a letter to his son, Churchill wrote, “My

³² Lord Normanbrook, John Colville, Sir John Martin, Sir Ian Jacob, Lord Bridges, and Sir Leslie Rowan, *Action this Day: Working with Churchill*, London: Macmillan, 1968, 150.

dear Randolph, I have reflected carefully on what you said. I think that your biography of Derby is a remarkable work, and I should be happy that you should write my official biography when the time comes.”³³ Randolph did not take this lightly, established a research team, and began collecting vast amounts of archival documents. He paralleled his effort to his father’s biography of Lord Randolph in 1906. Winston wrote:

I have thought it my duty, so far as possible, to assemble once and for all the whole body of historical evidence required for the understanding of Lord Randolph Churchill’s career. Scarcely anything of material consequence has been omitted.... Scarcely any statement of importance lacks documentary proof. There is nothing more to tell. Wherever practicable I have endeavored to employ his own words in the narration; and the public is now in a position to pronounce a complete, if not a final, judgement.³⁴

This was Randolph’s inspiration and ultimate objective in writing his father’s biography. Many hagiographies had painted Churchill the hero across their canvases and now it was time for the “official” Churchill story to be illustrated. Gilbert explained: “The biography was not to be a hagiography. It was not to hide Churchill’s faults or foibles. Every aspect of the Great Man’s work was to be presented openly and fully. Randolph, who loved his father, had no interest in producing a bland or one-dimensional portrait.”³⁵ This position established a strong foundation for success in this project. However, unfortunately, Randolph passed away in 1968 and Martin Gilbert took the reins of the project masterfully producing six more volumes for the official biography. The genius of Gilbert and the creation of eight million words across his Churchillian journey was his ability to convey the narrative clearly supported with strong documentary

³³ “The Official Biography of Winston Churchill,” accessed March 21, 2020, <https://winstonchurchill.org/the-life-of-churchill/life/the-official-churchill-biography/>.

³⁴ Randolph S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill: Volume I, Youth, 1874-1900*, Hillsdale: Hillsdale College Press, 2015, xxix.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, xli; The term “official biography” is misleading. Gilbert recalled, “[The Churchill family] never asked me to delete a word or to skirt around a particular issue. So ‘official’ is a misnomer if it’s thought to mean a censored or restricted biographer.” <https://winstonchurchill.org/the-life-of-churchill/life/the-official-churchill-biography/>.

evidence. Gilbert observed, "I'm not a theoretical historian, seeking to guide the reader to a general conclusion. I'm quite content to be a narrative chronicler, a slave of the facts."³⁶

Gilbert's contribution to the Churchill historiography was his direct simplicity. He recounted the facts, told the Churchillian story, and left the audience to make their observations and final judgement. This was critically important for the early stages of this historiography because had Gilbert taken a revisionist approach, the beginnings of the Churchill histories would have been marred and difficult to disentangle. Consequently, the theme of this project rang true: "He shall be his own biographer." Much was available. Randolph and Gilbert just needed to piece the puzzle together to create the strongest contribution to the Churchill historiography without shaping it in a misleading way. Lore Dickstein reviewed, "Gilbert acts as the filter, the medium through which the narrative unfolds. Seamlessly, he stitches together the eyewitness accounts and organizes them by time, place and common experience." She added, "The result is a superb, accessible, vibrant historical text."³⁷ Randolph and Gilbert fulfilled their duty as the filters and laid out the narrative of Winston S. Churchill based on the evidence available. As a "slave of the facts", Gilbert presented a hearty and in-depth examination of one of Britain's finest. His forthright approach encouraged other historians to expand upon the historiography, evaluate, and thoroughly investigate Churchill's life. One such historian was the American William Manchester.

A master biographer of Douglas MacArthur, Manchester met Churchill once in 1953 which planted the seed for a future research project. This inevitably developed into three masterful volumes titled *The Last Lion*. Martin Gilbert's successful beginning inspired

³⁶ Margalit Fox, "Martin Gilbert, Churchill Biographer, With a Populist Bent, Is Dead at 78," *New York Times*, February 5, 2015, accessed March 21, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/06/arts/martin-gilbert-churchill-biographer-with-a-populist-bent-is-dead-at-78.html>.

³⁷ Ibid.

Manchester to pursue Churchill on a deeper level. He was more willing to offer his opinions and insights throughout the text which provided great starting blocks for future debate and discussion. Some believed Manchester's work was indigestible and far too wordy to thoroughly comprehend. John Muggerridge evaluated: "It's jungle prose only too quickly runs riot. Verbosity strangles thought.... The foliage is impenetrable.... "The Last Lion" roars so long-windedly."³⁸ Although this may be true of some of his passages, his overall presentation left lasting insight and contribution to the Churchill historiography. Manchester was clearly pro-Churchill; however, he broke down and evaluated past arguments to reflect, counter, and expand upon the emerging historiography. One reviewer assessed, "Manchester's book is neither original nor revisionist. It is—and this is better—informed, accomplished, perceptive, and readable." He added, "All the Churchill warts are here, none ignored. But for once in our iconoclastic time we have a biography written in a spirit of celebration. And for once that approach seems just right."³⁹ By no means does this suggest that Manchester's contribution was hagiographical, rather it laid the foundation for a balanced and insightful "great man" history. In one of the most intuitive reviews, David J. E. Scrivens wrote, "Manchester is a master of stylish detail, but not of analytical judgement. His research is thorough, entertaining, and personal, the kind that puts us in the skin of his characters. But the conclusions he draws are meek and thin."⁴⁰ Manchester was an immensely illustrative author. He not only painted the metaphor on to the page but carved it into a Michelangelan masterpiece. It was through these artistic evaluations that he drew upon his conclusions perceptively, but often left much up for future debate. For example, in *Visions of*

³⁸ John Muggerridge, "Manchester on Churchill: The Past is Prolix," Book Review, *Wall Street Journal*, June 14, 1983, accessed March 21, 2020, MCHL 5/8/9.

³⁹ Edwin M. Yoder Jr., "Biography Fit for a Leonine Leader," Book Review, *USA Today*, May 6, 1983, accessed March 21, 2020, MCHL 5/8/9.

⁴⁰ David J. E. Scrivens, "A Troubled Churchill," accessed March 21, 2020, MCHL 5/8/9.

Glory, Manchester placed the blame of Gallipoli on Prime Minister Asquith and Lord Kitchener rather than Churchill. He provided a thorough explanation in support of his conclusions but fails to consider Churchill's role in the disaster.⁴¹ Unlike Randolph and Gilbert's factual mission, Manchester sought to shed light on virulent subjects like the Dardanelles and appeasement to both challenge and contribute to the ever-expanding Churchill historiography.

The next landmark publication came at the turn of the century with Roy Jenkins's *Churchill: A Life*. Like Churchill, Jenkins was both an author and parliamentarian. Jenkins wrote masterful biographies of Gladstone and Asquith and had served in the Labour Party while Churchill was in power. Jenkins was not convinced that Churchill could be a greater leader than Gladstone and was hesitant to consider this research project. Andrew Adonis, a Labour representative, advised, "After Gladstone, there is one direction to go which will not be an anti-climax, and that is Churchill."⁴² Though Jenkins admitted that he did not have much to add after Gilbert's massive contribution, few Liberals had written deep examinations of Churchill and his life. Therefore, Lady Soames (Mary Churchill) warmly welcomed his perspective. The last thorough Liberal examination was Lady Violet Bonham Carter's 1965 *Winston Churchill as I Knew Him*. However, this historiographic contribution reflected a more intimate portrait of Churchill and the personal relationship Carter shared with him. Jenkins provided a distinct monograph that explored Churchill's life politically and militarily under a critical liberal lens. Though the framework of most Churchill biographies follows a similar pattern, Robert McCrum remarked, "Jenkins's effortless selection of the choicest timber from acres of historiographical

⁴¹ Asquith failed because of poor communication skills and ambiguous leadership efforts while Kitchener neglected to consult his general staff and refused to promptly send troops to aid Churchill's operation. Manchester, *The Last Lion: Visions of Glory, 1874-1932*, New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1983, 614.

⁴² Roy Jenkins, *Churchill: A Life*, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001, xiv.

forest gives his portrait great freshness and originality.”⁴³ This was important because unlike Gilbert and Manchester, Jenkins incorporated Churchill’s entire life into a single volume biography. Naturally, he was unable to detail as much as his predecessors, but he offered valuable insight about Churchill’s policies often disagreeing with his decision making. It also allowed his audience to digest Churchill more easily without having to read the extensive official eight-volume biography. Moreover, unlike the laudatory authors, Jenkins’s perception of Churchill changed as his project progressed. He had once believed that Gladstone was “a more remarkable specimen of humanity.” However, as Lady Lytton remarked, “The first time you meet Winston, you see all his faults, and the rest of your life you spend discovering his virtues.”⁴⁴ Arguably this was exactly what happened to Jenkins during his project. He concluded:

In the course of writing it I have changed my mind. I now put Churchill, with all his idiosyncrasies, his indulgences, his occasional childishness, but also his genius, his tenacity and his persistent ability, right or wrong, successful or unsuccessful, to be larger than life, as the greatest human being ever to occupy 10 Downing Street.⁴⁵

The biography was well-balanced and offered a refreshing perspective because although Jenkins revered Churchill, he never descended into hero worship as presented in Manchester’s works.⁴⁶ Moreover, Jenkin’s practical knowledge of parliamentary politics greatly enhanced his insight regarding Churchill’s governmental actions and responsibilities. Jenkin’s history was a pragmatic contribution to the historiography as it was readable, concise, well-documented, and shrewd. It offered a middle-ground

⁴³ Robert McCrum, “His Finest Hour,” Book Review, *The Guardian*, October 14, 2001, accessed March 22, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2001/oct/14/biography.politicalbooks>.

⁴⁴ Roberts, 99.

⁴⁵ Jenkins, 912.

⁴⁶ Brooke Allen, “More than the Sum of His Parts: The Enigma of Winston Churchill,” *Hudson Review* 55:2 (2002): 315.

perspective of the Churchill tale and performed a thorough, thought-provoking, and critical investigation of his life and legacy.

Another landmark contribution to the Churchill historiography came in 2018 and arguably the best single-volume biography—Andrew Roberts’s *Walking with Destiny*. Roberts is an accomplished journalist, historian, and award-winning author of *The Storm of War: A New History of the Second World War* and *Napoleon the Great*. Of *Walking with Destiny*, Stephen Pollard reviewed, “He has given us a new, ground-breaking portrait of the man whom many consider to be the greatest ever Englishman.... A living, poetic, stirring yet thought-provoking portrait of a giant, it will be regarded as a classic for generations to come.”⁴⁷ *The New York Times* added, “All told, it must surely be the best single-volume biography of Churchill yet written.”⁴⁸ First of all, like *Churchill: A Life*, this book is not a hagiography. Roberts evaluated Churchill and his actions fairly but remained critical of his biggest mistakes as he ascended to his destiny. He occasionally drifted away from a critical lens to target those around Churchill; however, it did not weaken his argument. The question may arise whether there needed to be yet another Churchill biography. For Roberts, the answer was yes because in the past decade, the last of the closed archival material was released. Roberts was given first-time access to King George VI’s as well as transcripts of War Cabinet meetings, letters, and unpublished memoirs from his contemporaries.⁴⁹ This massive release of documents opened many

⁴⁷ Stephen Pollard, “Book Review: Churchill: Walking with Destiny,” *The Jewish Chronicle*, November 18, 2018, accessed March 23, 2020, <https://www.thejc.com/culture/books/book-review-churchill-walking-with-destiny-1.472568>.

⁴⁸ Richard Aldous, “Is this the Best One-Volume Biography of Churchill yet Written?” *The New York Times*, November 13, 2018, accessed March 23, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/13/books/review/andrew-roberts-churchill-winston-biography.html>.

⁴⁹ Rosemary Michaud, “Review: New Churchill Biography Sweeping, Superbly Written Full-Life Account,” *The Post and Courier*, October 17, 2019, accessed March 23, 2020,

new doors in the Churchill historiography of which Roberts capitalized on making his study duly original and critical for future Churchill scholars. Interestingly, Roberts structured his book exactly how this thesis was envisioned. Roberts was determined to present how Churchill's past life prepared him for leadership in the Second World War. Moreover, he illuminated what lessons he learned that helped strengthen his leadership paradigm on the eve of war. Roberts wrote: "For although he was indeed walking with destiny in May 1940, it was a destiny that he had consciously spent a lifetime shaping."⁵⁰ Therefore, while Roberts focused on the shaping of Churchill's destiny, this thesis set upon discovering how his historical inspirations contributed to his wartime leadership. Firstly, it is important to identify what has been written in the Churchill historiography about his influences and what this thesis can contribute.

Much has been written about Churchill's many historical inspirations; however, they remain scattered. This thesis is meant to help alleviate that problem. Throughout the many biographies like *The Last Lion* and *Walking with Destiny*, references are made about Churchill's admiration for his father, the Duke of Marlborough, Napoleon, etc. These biographies are key to this study because they provide a treasure trove of information about why Churchill admired certain individuals and how they inspired him. For example, in *Walking with Destiny*, Roberts quoted Churchill about his oratory inspiration, Bourke Cockran: "He taught me to use every note of the human voice as if playing an organ.... He was my model."⁵¹ This thesis intended to take examples like this and transform it into a condensed study that focused on specific individuals and their

https://www.postandcourier.com/features/book_reviews/review-new-churchill-biography-sweeping-superbly-written-full-life-account/article_f9c9a950-ef58-11e9-ab4b-a713d33f5de5.html.

⁵⁰ Roberts, 3.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

influence on Churchill, therefore, making it easier to discover who inspired Churchill without shuffling through thousands of pages of histories.

There have also been smaller more specific studies done about military leadership like Roberts's *Leadership in War* and Celia Sandys and Jonathan Littman's *We Shall Not Fail: The Inspiring Leadership of Winston Churchill*. Both works focus on Churchill among other leaders and what lessons can be drawn from their experiences. These proved to be valuable resources because one can compare and contrast the behaviors and actions of various leaders to identify sources of inspiration. For example, this thesis investigates the impact Napoleon and Nelson had on Churchill's leadership paradigm. *Leadership in War* contains chapters on all three of these individuals which proved beneficial for deeper analysis. Furthermore, *We Shall Not Fail* depicted the many lessons that can be learned from Churchillian leadership. Though this work did not mention many of Churchill's influences specifically, one can infer what lessons were Nelsonian or Napoleonic, for example.

Smaller articles have proven critical to this study as well. Director of the Churchill Archive, Allen Packwood wrote a brilliant article comparing Churchill and Napoleon titled, "The Tale of Two Statesmen." This article strove to investigate the parallels between the two leaders. Moreover, as author of *Napoleon the Great*, Roberts gave several insightful speeches about Churchill and his passionate admiration for the emperor.

Evidently, Churchill's own works like *Great Contemporaries* and *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* shed light on who he admired and why. For example, there is an entire chapter in *Great Contemporaries* dedicated to French Premier Georges

Clemenceau, another subject in this study. This chapter along with Churchill's story in *Thoughts and Adventures* about Clemenceau clearly demonstrated a source of inspiration for Churchill's wartime leadership. Consequently, this thesis strives to elaborate on Clemenceau while also creating similar chapters on Napoleon and Nelson that encompass and explain how these legends inspired Churchill as a leader during the Second World War. *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* briefly assessed Napoleon, his campaigns, and Nelson's stand at Trafalgar. From here, historians can infer why Churchill admired them. To reiterate, this thesis intends to provide a compressed and well-documented study of Clemenceau, Napoleon, and Nelson and how they ultimately contributed to Churchill's WWII leadership paradigm. The source material used is scattered throughout many texts and has not been filtered into a narrow examination. This is this thesis's historiographic contribution.

Chapter Three:
The Churchillian Complex
-Conceptual Framework-



A FAMILY VISIT

"It was a great work, and I wish you could now add another chapter to your own career."

*Image Source: "A Family Visit," Cartoon, London: *Punch Magazine*, November 11, 1938, accessed March 23, 2020, https://punch.photoshelter.com/image/I0000T.gL44J_fZc.

Churchill's Upbringing:

*"You will become a mere social wastrel, and you will degenerate into a shabby unhappy and futile existence."*⁵²

-Lord Randolph Churchill to Winston, 1893-

*"I understand you as no other woman will."*⁵³

-Lady Randolph Churchill to Winston, 1900-

Winston Churchill was a distinct individual that shaped his own leadership style based on his upbringing and life experiences. From his days in grade school and throughout his political and military life, he was constantly learning how to develop his own leadership principles. These would characterize not only his vast amount of political and military experiences prior to the Second World War, but firmly cement the foundation he built upon when becoming prime minister in 1940. Though influences like Napoleon, Nelson, and Clemenceau directly shaped his perceptions of leadership, it is foolhardy to assume that he solely based his style off these influences. Rather, it is critical to create a conceptual framework that conveys the uniqueness of Churchill's background and life experiences. The lessons he retained from his early life gave shape to the leader he evolved into and can explain why those three major historical figures inspired him as prime minister. To best understand Churchill's origins, it is important to investigate the relationship he shared with his parents first.

⁵² Paterson, 65.

⁵³ David Lough, "Great Contemporaries: Jennie, Lady Randolph Churchill," *The Churchill Project, Hillsdale College*, April 15, 2019, accessed January 13, 2020, https://winstonchurchill.hillsdale.edu/jennie-lady-randolph-churchill/#_ftn3.

His father, Lord Randolph Churchill, was the younger son of the 7th Duke of Marlborough. As a schoolboy, he, like Winston, was “rebellious of rules and arrogant to the point of imperiousness,” but “could, however, exert extraordinary charm when he wished.”⁵⁴ Unlike Winston initially, he was an excellent student while at Oxford and grew an immense appreciation for British history. It was based on his father’s experience that Winston was inspired to read Edward Gibbon’s *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*—a collection that deeply influenced his writing style later in life. At age twenty-four, Randolph met the American Miss Jennie Jerome aboard the warship HMS *Ariadne* at a ball hosted by the Prince of Wales. In a whirlwind engagement, it was love at first sight and they were married in April 1874. **Seven months later, Winston Churchill was prematurely born at Blenheim Palace after Lady Randolph suffered a fall.**

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Randolph’s relationship with his son was distanced and cold. Winston was sent to boarding school at the age of eight as was typical of the Victorian era, but when he did not perform to Randolph’s expectations, the division between father and son expanded. Winston, unlike his father, struggled in school and was often criticized about it. **In a letter to Jennie, Randolph wrote, “He has little [claim] to cleverness, to knowledge or any capacity for settled work. He has a great talent for show-off exaggeration and make-believe...a total worthlessness as a scholar.”**⁵⁵ On the contrary, Winston was transforming into a strong and capable student. Like his father, “he shone at history [and] English. His compositions showed an original mind, and hints of the great writer and orator he was to become.”⁵⁶ Nonetheless, nothing Winston did appeared to ever please

Commented [BM9]: Who Randolph wrote to.

⁵⁴ Mary S. Lovell, *The Churchills*, London: Abacus, 2012, 21.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 108-9.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 109.

his father and when he decided to join the cavalry instead of the infantry at Harrow, the abyss between the two ever widened. Randolph had already made arrangements with the Duke of Cambridge for Winston to join the crack light infantry regiment, the 60th Rifles. Randolph was infuriated because the cavalry was not as prominent as the infantry and costed significantly more. In a letter to Winston, Randolph scathingly wrote, "If your conduct at Sandhurst is similar to what it has been in the other establishments, my responsibility for you is over."⁵⁷

While Winston was in school, Randolph became the leader of the House of Commons and Chancellor of the Exchequer maintaining hopes for the premiership. Randolph explained: "I shall lead the Opposition for five years, then I shall be Prime Minister for five years, then I shall die."⁵⁸ However, in a dispute over a naval expenditure bill in 1886, he threatened to resign and Prime Minister Salisbury called his bluff immediately derailing his political career. At the same time, he had begun to suffer from venereal disease and rapidly deteriorated. When Randolph was appointed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Queen disapprovingly wrote: "I did not like [his appointment]. He is so mad and odd & also has bad health."⁵⁹ As his illness worsened, he became more irritable, less coherent, and distanced himself further from Winston. In a depressing anecdote, at a family dinner in the 1930s, Churchill told his son, "We have this evening had a longer period of continuous conversation together than the total which I ever had with my father in the whole course of his life."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Paterson, 65.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁹ Lovell, 90.

⁶⁰ Jeff Minick, "Mothers and Sons: Jennie Churchill and Winston Churchill," *The Epoch Times*, December 12, 2019, accessed January 13, 2020, https://www.theepochtimes.com/mothers-and-sons-jennie-churchill-and-winston-churchill_3146624.html.

On January 24, 1895, Lord Randolph Churchill died of pneumonia, though was originally diagnosed with “*locomotor ataxia*, the child of syphilis.”⁶¹ Winston was devastated to hear of his father’s passing despite Randolph’s prior treatment of him. Arguably, the distance between the two greatly influenced Churchill to preserve his father’s legacy and follow in his footsteps. Randolph was on track to become prime minister, but due to both his illness and a miscalculated ultimatum, his career shattered like a broken mirror.⁶² Churchill described his father as “the daring pilot in extremity” and admired his commitment to principle as he did not care to play the “cold, calculated game” of politics.⁶³ Churchill fancied one day rising and joining his father among the ranks of politicians in the House of Commons. Consequently, Randolph’s early demise destroyed any chance of this coming into fruition. Therefore, Winston remarked: “There remained for me only to pursue his aims and vindicate his memory.”⁶⁴ He developed a fierce ambition and pursued his goals passionately trying to accomplish as much as possible because he feared he too would die at an early age. It was as if the ill treatment he received from his parents early on ignited a fire beneath him to push on and never surrender. Churchill memorized some of his father’s speeches, dressed in his iconic Victorian style, and with the most significant appreciation published a two-volume biography on his father titled, *Lord Randolph Churchill* in 1906. In his *River War*, Churchill summarized his transition from child to manhood: “Solitary trees, if they grow at all, grow strong: and a boy deprived of a father’s care often develops [*sic*], if he

Commented [BM10]: Following his footsteps commentary

⁶¹ Lovell, 113.

⁶² Randolph believed he was in a position of power when he issued a resignation ultimatum to Prime Minister Salisbury about the 1887 budget. Salisbury called his bluff and accepted his resignation destroying his career.

⁶³ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 46-7.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

escapes the perils of his youth, an independence and vigour of thought which may restore in after life the heavy loss of early days.”⁶⁵ Despite not ever being close to him, the lessons learned from his father in his early life would characterize his political leadership in his future endeavors and most famously in 1940. Churchill used the disdain from his father and his early death as a motivator to pursue greatness and accomplish what Randolph failed to achieve.

Commented [BM11]: Explained how his father impacted him.

His mother on the other hand, Jennie Jerome, was the daughter of an American financier, a Francophile and raised luxuriously having homes both in New York and France. Like Randolph, she remained distant to Winston in his early life but was torn between the American and British ways of raising children. Adapting to the English tradition, she employed Winston’s beloved nanny Mrs. Elizabeth Everest. Known as “Woom” or “Woomany” to Winston, Everest maintained a strong and loving relationship with the boy, caring for his illnesses and providing both comfort and counsel.⁶⁶ Churchill remembered, “My nurse was my confidante. It was to her I poured out my many troubles.”⁶⁷ For Winston, Jennie was “a goddess-like creature to be adored rather than loved. [Because of this], he never resented her emotional neglect.”⁶⁸ After Randolph had fallen ill and was becoming a “swiftly-fading shadow”, Jennie struggled to take care of both Winston and her husband.⁶⁹ It was here that the distance grew between mother and son.

Commented [BM12]: Woom origins

⁶⁵ Winston Churchill, *The River War*, London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1899, 37.

⁶⁶ Minick, https://www.theepochtimes.com/mothers-and-sons-jennie-churchill-and-winston-churchill_3146624.html.

⁶⁷ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 5.

⁶⁸ Lovell, 67.

⁶⁹ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 49.

Churchill biographer Roberts wrote that “from 1885 to 1892, Churchill wrote to his parents seventy-six times; they to him six times. The huge majority of Churchill’s letters were not asking for anything except, between the lines, for love and attention. Their letters to him on the other hand contained constant remonstrations.”⁷⁰ As an American, Jennie struggled to raise a child on British terms. She wanted to mother Winston closely but was forced to yield to British tradition and leave him in the care of Mrs. Everest. As time progressed, she continued to struggle but used her extensive social life and Randolph as an excuse to ignore Winston. Churchill once asserted that his mother “shone for me like the Evening Star. I loved her dearly—but at a distance.”⁷¹ Because she was forced to conform to British standards, Winston admired her, but remained out of reach until Randolph began to decline.

Commented [BM13]: Added to supplement distance between Winston and Jennie

As Randolph entered the final stages of his illness, Jennie opened herself to Winston in a letter in 1894: “Mind you keep straight in every way. I count on you. Bless you darling I can’t tell you how miserable I am often—so far away from you.”⁷² This polar transition dramatically transformed the relationship between mother and son because without her romantic and political influence, Churchill would have struggled in both his military endeavors abroad and political intentions at home. Considered his “ardent ally,” he confided in her for everything and used her influence to pursue his ambitious endeavors abroad. Without her, he would not have secured his position as a wartime journalist with the *Daily Telegraph* which was funding his expensive cavalry expenditures. It would have been impossible to transfer from India to Sudan, he would not have participated in the Battle of Omdurman nor sent to South Africa where he became famous. Finally, without her political connections at home, he would have found it difficult to

Commented [BM14]: Her emphasis

⁷⁰ Andrew Roberts, *Walking with Destiny*, New York: Viking, 2018, 23.

⁷¹ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 5.

⁷² Lough, https://winstonchurchill.hilldale.edu/jennie-lady-randolph-churchill/#_ftn3.

smoothly enter the British political arena in 1900. In 1901, Churchill sent a check to his mother for £300 admitting, “I could have never earned it if you had not transmitted to me the wit and energy which are necessary.”⁷³ By the time Churchill had turned twenty-five, he had authored 215 newspaper articles, written five books, participated in four wars, and entered Parliament as a member of the House of Commons. Much of this credit should be given to Churchill’s explosive ambition, but his mother’s role as an influencer during his early military career critically contributed to his achievements.* In 1930, Churchill reflected that his mother “furthered my plans and guarded my interests with all her influence and boundless energy.... We worked together on even terms, more like brother and sister than mother and son.”⁷⁴ One must consider the impact his mother had upon him and his decisions as he became more influential. This is left for interpretation, but as a lifeline, his mother seemed to give him the ability or motivation to always find an alternative way to achieve his goals despite many obstacles.

His mother helped him lay the foundations and assemble the data while he improvised with the ornaments and refinements in pursuit of his destiny. Michael Paterson argued that Lady Randolph created the Winston Churchill of 1940. “He inherited a streak of boundless determination [from her] and learned the value of perseverance and refusal to accept defeat.”⁷⁵

Churchill reflected:

I have noticed in my life deep resemblances between many different kinds of things. Writing a book is not unlike building a house or planning a battle or painting a picture. The technique is different, the materials are different, but the principle is the same. The foundations have to be laid, the data assembled, and the premises must bear the weight of their conclusions. Ornaments or refinements

⁷³ Lough.

* Churchill participated in campaigns across the globe (Cuba, India, Sudan, and South Africa). He wanted to always be a part of the military engagement and was determined to do so. In almost every case in his early life, his mother had used her influence to get him appointed on the expeditions. In one example relating to the Sudan campaign, Churchill wrote: “My mother devoted the whole of her influence to furthering my wishes. Many were the pleasant luncheons and dinners attended by the powers of those days...” (Churchill, *My Early Life*, 162-3).

⁷⁴ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 62.

⁷⁵ Paterson, 41.

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may then be added. The whole when finished is only the successful presentation of a theme. In battles however the other fellow interferes all the time and keeps upsetting things, and the best generals are those who arrive at the results of planning without being tied to plans.⁷⁶

This extended excerpt explains his position on pursuing one's goals while maintaining a flexibility to adapt for potential obstacles. Even after Gallipoli, she firmly believed in his destiny to pursue greatness and told him, "I am a great believer in your star. Dear boy I am sure that the *bon Dieu* has great use for you in the future."⁷⁷ Though his relationship with his father was detached and his mother initially estranged, they remained important influences in Churchill's leadership paradigm and laid the foundation that he expanded upon through his life experiences, both military and political. No matter their upbringing, it is important to remember that leaders are molded by their own thoughts, influences, experiences, and a belief that they can ascend magnanimously.

Churchill the Destined Visionary:

"The longer you can look back, the farther you can look forward."⁷⁸

-Winston Churchill, 1944-

Churchill had a **divine connection** with destiny and its involvement in shaping his future.

Though not particularly religious, Churchill saw himself as the buttress of the church, supporting

it from the outside.⁷⁹ **He was incredibly distinct in this area and it is important to conceptually**

understand his bond with predestination, destiny, and foresight to grasp the significance of the

Churchillian worldview. Churchill frequently confided in his **Religion** of "Health-Mindedness"

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⁷⁶ Paterson, 212.

⁷⁷ Lough, https://winstonchurchill.hilldale.edu/jennie-lady-randolph-churchill/#_ftn3.

⁷⁸ Churchill, Winston. Speech. March 1944. Churchill Archive Centre. CHAR 9/166.

⁷⁹ Jenkins, 49.

firmly believing in the importance of duty and honor. He preached: “There was general agreement that if you tried your best to live an honourable life and did your duty and were faithful to friends and not unkind to the weak and poor, it did not matter much what you believed or disbelieved. All would come out right.”⁸⁰ Interestingly, however, he had a unique relationship with predestination and freewill, two principles he believed to be identical. In his *Early Life*, he assessed this complex contradiction using a butterfly metaphor. It “all depends on the slanting glimpse you had of the colour of his wings.” He added, from one perspective it may appear to be brown, while under sunlight it is blue, even then “it is the same butterfly.”⁸¹ Churchill saw these two principles as two perspectives of the same thing. This complex understanding defined not only Churchill’s identity, but also his character. The risks he took both in Parliament and on the battlefield did not personify recklessness, but rather a confidence that until his destiny had been achieved, he would not be finished. This then begs the question about whether he knew what his destiny was. At the age of sixteen in 1891, Churchill shared a frightening forethought with a fellow student at Harrow.

I can see vast changes coming over a now peaceful world, great upheavals, terrible struggles; wars such as one cannot imagine; and I tell you London will be in danger—London will be attacked and I shall be very prominent in the defence of London. I see further ahead than you do. I see into the future. This country will be subjected somehow, to a tremendous invasion, by what means I do not know, but I tell you I shall be in command of the defences of London and I shall save London and England from disaster...dreams of the future are blurred but the main objective is clear. I repeat—London will be in danger and in the high position I shall occupy, it will fall to me to save the capital and save the Empire.⁸²

Commented [BM19]: In My Early Life... Churchill describes them as identical.

⁸⁰ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 114.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁸² Jonathan Sandys and Wallace Henley, *God and Churchill*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2015, 4.

This was forty-nine years before his rise to prime minister. At sixteen, he had already envisioned his ultimate destiny and foresaw the horrors that would engulf the first half of the 20th century. From this perspective, he was vastly different from his peers. Because he believed that this would be his destiny, nothing could stop him. From the Dardanelles to his Wilderness years and from bullets to nearby explosions, he would overcome and prevail in time to save England from the Blitz of 1940.

Churchill had many career-collapsing and life or death experiences that carried him into 1940 mentally prepared to face the “tremendous invasion” he spoke of in 1891. Whether he was lost in a desert in Egypt, crossing No Man’s Land at Flanders, or getting hit by a car in New York City, he somehow always came out alive believing that Providence had intervened on his behalf. Two years before the deadly cavalry charge at Omdurman, Churchill dislocated his right shoulder while disembarking a boat in India. It was this accident that he believed saved his life at Omdurman. All cavalry officers carried swords into battle in 1898 except for Churchill. His shoulder injury forced him to use a ten-shot German Mauser pistol with which he killed four men on the brink of being cut down himself and escaped the desert onslaught unscathed. In a letter to his mother after the battle, Churchill wrote arrogantly, “Bullets—to a philosopher my dear Mamma—are not worth considering. Besides I am so conceited I do not believe the gods would create so potent a being as myself for so prosaic an ending.”⁸³ After cheating death in Cuba and participating in vicious battles of the Malakand, surviving Omdurman emboldened the young officer. Onboard a train home, Churchill mused, “On what do these things depend? Chance-Providence-God-the-Devil—call it what you will.... Whatever it may be—I do not complain.”⁸⁴

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Commented [BM21]: Since this is not a biographical study, I do not think it is necessary to explain Omdurman prior to this. As mentioned in the preface, I hope the reader has a basic understanding of Churchill’s timeline.

Commented [BM22]: Do not think this is passive voice. If I led with “the young officer was emboldened by...” it would become passive.

⁸³ Sandys and Henley, 21-2.

⁸⁴ Candice Millard, *Hero of the Empire*, New York: Random House, 2016, 30.

In November 1915 while serving in the trenches on the Western Front, Churchill had a “transformative experience.” Roberts relays, while in his dugout, he received orders to meet with the Lieutenant-General in command of the battalion and walked three miles across the deathly trench lines just to find out that the meeting was cancelled. Churchill stormed back angrily across the field and returned to his dugout only to find it decimated by a German whizzbang (high-explosive shell). His sergeant reported, “Five minutes after you left, [a shell] came in through the roof and blew [his mess orderly’s] head off.” In a letter to his wife Clementine, he wrote, “It is all chance or destiny and our wayward footsteps are best planted without too much calculation. One must yield oneself simply and naturally to the mood of the game: and trust in God which is another way of saying the same thing.” Recalling the incident in 1927, he admitted that he felt “the strong sensation that a hand had been stretched out to move me in the nick of time from a fatal spot.”⁸⁵ On top of his intrinsic relationship with destiny, Churchill could not only see what the future held for him, but the world. Many historians, most notably John Lukacs, have conducted studies about “Churchill, the Visionary” and his innate ability to foresee future conflict and development of the twentieth century world. For example, in 1901 in his second speech to the House of Commons, he warned,

A European war cannot be anything but a cruel, heart-rending struggle which, if we are ever to enjoy the bitter fruits of victory, must demand, perhaps for several years, the whole manhood of the nation...A European war can only end in the ruin of the vanquished...the wars of peoples will be more terrible than those of kings.⁸⁶

Again, like his prophecy of 1891, he correctly predicted and identified the brutality of the world wars to come but struggled to convince his colleagues to adequately prepare. As a visionary, Churchill’s long-term perception clashed with the short-term perceptions around him.

⁸⁵ Roberts, 234.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

Consequently, when he foresaw the benefit of a risk, like Gallipoli, he was often undermined for a more traditional approach as was being fought on the Western Front. It is important to note, however, that Churchill's foresight was occasionally misguided as he contributed to the initial destabilization of Iraq in the 1920s.

In 1921, Churchill recognized the sectarian divisions between Sunnis and Shias when he decided against Ibn Saud's ascension to the throne in Iraq. He warned that putting Ibn Saud in power would "plunge their whole country into religious pandemonium."⁸⁷ Captain Arnold Wilson warned that the deep differences between the three main communities in Iraq ensured democracy's failure. This was because the Shia majority rejected any form of Sunni political leadership. The problem for Churchill was that "no form of government had been envisaged which did not involve Sunni domination."⁸⁸ Consequently, he chose to put the Sunni "Amir" Faisal in power. Even though he recognized the disparity between the two religious' groups, Churchill sowed the seeds of discontent in Iraq for decades to come. His foresight was only an ally when carefully considered and often it was not due to underlying military, economic, or political circumstances.

As the Second World War approached, he recognized the signs of Adolf Hitler's fanaticism faster than those under the spell of appeasement.* Roberts pointed out that because Churchill had fought Islamic fanaticism during his youthful military adventures, he was able to rapidly discern the dangers of the Nazi ideology. None of his contemporaries including Baldwin

⁸⁷ Warren Dockter, *Churchill and the Islamic World*, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2015, 147.

⁸⁸ Patrick Cockburn, "Britain's Role in Shaping Iraq," *BBC*, February 3, 2003, accessed January 15, 2020, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk/2719939.stm>.

* Great Britain adopted the policy of appeasement during the 1930s to pacify Hitler and his hunger for territorial gain. The most famous example of this was Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's sacrifice of Czechoslovakia in the Munich Agreement (1938) to prevent war with Germany. Hitler later broke the Agreement when he invaded Poland and Britain declared war.

or Chamberlain shared similar experiences.⁸⁹ In the late 1920s, Churchill read *Mein Kampf* and in 1930 (three years before Hitler came to power) dined at the German Embassy in London. He warned his hosts of the potential threat that Hitler posed. His warning was relayed back to Berlin which failed to act on the issue.⁹⁰ Churchill also gave several speeches during the 1930s pleading for British rearmament against an imminent Nazi threat, but it was not until Hitler broke the Munich Agreement in 1938 that Britons feared Hitler's true intentions. . As a result, war erupted and Churchill was pulled into the destiny he foresaw in 1891.

Fulfilling his prophecy, Churchill led his country to victory against the Nazi regime as was destined. However, as a definitive visionary, Churchill foresaw the Soviet Union's threat against liberty and freedom. At a speech given at Harvard in 1943, he warned that "the empires of the future are the empires of the mind."⁹¹ He strongly advocated for the central European strategy during the war to curb Stalin's rapid expansion but was turned down by his American counterparts and accused of only trying to protect the British Empire. Lukacs explained:

It was the same visionary understanding of the postwar Russian danger that lay behind Churchill's futile urgings to design an Anglo-American strategy in the last year of the war with the purpose of arriving as far east in Central Europe as possible, in order to forestall a dangerous extension of Russian military presence there.⁹²

John von Heyking added that Churchill thought "Roosevelt naïve for underestimating Stalin's plans for expansion into Europe."⁹³ Because of the Anglo-American disagreement, Churchill negotiated the infamous Percentages' Agreement with Stalin which arguably saved Greece from Soviet domination.

⁸⁹ Roberts, 53.

⁹⁰ John A. Lukacs, "Churchill the Visionary," Lecture, Westminster College, Fulton, MO, April 13, 1997, 7.

⁹¹ Roberts, 794.

⁹² Lukacs, 11.

⁹³ John von Heyking, *Comprehensive Judgement and Absolute Selflessness*, USA: St. Augustine's Press, 2018, 67.

Finally, he gave his iconic “Sinews of Peace” speech about an ‘Iron Curtain’ descending across Europe to warn America and encourage immediate action against the rising Soviet menace. However, when action was not promptly taken and the USSR acquired the atomic bomb in 1949, Churchill, at 74 years old, became the forerunner of détente, twenty years before Nixon and Kissinger, and again was silenced by his critics and the American superpower for being too senile to continue.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, he tried to plan summit meetings to reduce Cold War tensions as well as establish a United States of Europe to create a foundation for peace and diplomacy over war and violence. Churchill foresaw the importance of establishing a peaceful precedent to ultimately prevent a third world war. In a 1946 speech presented at Zurich University, he announced: “The salvation of the common people of every race and of every land from war or servitude must be established on solid foundations and must be guarded by the readiness of all men and women to die rather than submit to tyranny.”⁹⁵ Though his summits never produced a peaceful settlement, it signified his commitment to shaping history and creating a world that thrived on peace and not the fear of nuclear war. In his final speech to his constituents in 1959 at 84 years old, he declared:

I seek, and have always sought, nothing but peace with the Russians... We on our side trust and believe that, as the mild and ameliorating influence of our prosperity begins at last to uplift the Communist World, so they will be more inclined to live at peace with their neighbours. This is our hope. We must not be rigid in our expression of it; we must make allowances for justifiable Russian fears; we must be flexible and firm.⁹⁶

Churchill’s connection with destiny and gifted foresight was both a blessing and a curse. On one hand, it led him to lead valiantly against the Nazi war machine and possibly saved his life on

⁹⁴ John Lukacs, *Churchill: Visionary. Statesman. Historian*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004, 73.

⁹⁵ Churchill, *Churchill Speaks*, 893.

⁹⁶ Sir Michael Howard, “Churchill—Prophet of Détente,” Lecture, Westminster College, Fulton, MO, March 25, 1990, 10.

several occasions. While on the other hand, as the antithesis of “the boy who cried wolf,” he severely struggled with contemporaries that did not have similar premonitions about future conflict. Most importantly, Churchill’s visionary capabilities remind us that considering the long-term consequences and effects of short-term decision-making is critical in making a thoughtful and wise leader. In a fitting tribute to Churchill the destined visionary on his eightieth birthday, Viscount Norwich wrote this poem:

To W.S.C.
When ears were deaf and tongues were mute,
You told of doom to come.
When others fingered on the flute.,
You thundered on the drum.

When armies marched and cities burned
And all you said came true,
Those who had mocked your warnings turned
Almost too late to you.

Then doubt gave way to firm belief,
And through five cruel years
You gave us glory in our grief,
And laughter through our tears.

When final honours are bestowed
And last accounts are done,
Then shall we know how much was owed
By all the world to one.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Winston Spencer Churchill: *Servant of Crown and Commonwealth, A Tribute by Various Hands Presented to Him on his Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Sir James Merchant, London: Cassell & Company, 1954, ix.

A Magnanimous Virtue:

*"I hate nobody except Hitler—and that is professional."*⁹⁸
-Churchill to Colville during WWII-

To understand Churchill's worldview and approach to leadership, it is important to comprehend his relationship with magnanimity. According to Aristotle, magnanimity acts as an "adornment of virtues." Those who are magnanimous have perfected every virtue and believe they are capable of "great things." Furthermore, one must contain "self-knowledge" and be "nobly-good."⁹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche wrote: "The noble human being honors himself as one who is powerful, also as one who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and be silent, who delights in being severe and hard with himself and respects all severity and hardness."¹⁰⁰ The magnanimous man seeks the best in people, shows empathy to the defeated, respects the opposition, and displays commitment and courage in life's field of battle. His relationship with it played a definitive role in both his war and peace making. Moreover, it was arguably the most defining characteristic of his personality and leadership style because it was surprisingly controversial. Violet Bonham Carter elucidated:

He never sought to trample on a fallen foe, whether political opponent, or a defeated nation.... His enmity could not survive once victory was won. He never hated nations or men as such. He only hated their ideas. He would knock a man down in order to pick him up again in a better frame of mind.¹⁰¹

In the 1920s, his good friend Lord Birkenhead gifted him a copy of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* claiming it was the best book of all time. Interestingly, Churchill read it and concluded

⁹⁸ Sir John R. Colville, "The Personality of Sir Winston Churchill," Lecture, Westminster College, Fulton, MO, March 24, 1985, 5.

⁹⁹ Edward Rankin, "Aristotle's Magnanimity and Nietzsche's Nobility," *Athene Noctua: Undergraduate Philosophy Journal* 3 (2015): 1.

¹⁰⁰ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 2000), sec. 260.

¹⁰¹ von Heyking, 29.

that it was all very interesting but that he had already thought out most of it for himself.¹⁰² And it was true as he likely had discerned much of it during his early military career

As early as the Battle of Omdurman, Churchill had shown signs of magnanimous virtue toward the Dervish dead. “These were brave men as ever walked the earth. The conviction was borne in on me that their claim beyond the grave in respect of a valiant death was as good as that which any of our countrymen could make...there they lie...their only history preserved by their conquerors, their only monument their bones....”¹⁰³ At the same time, his general in command Lord Kitchener had ordered the Mahdi’s tomb desecrated, “the corpse ripped from the shroud, and the head lopped off and dumped in a kerosene can..., to be treated as an interesting trophy.”¹⁰⁴ Lord Kitchener’s vindictiveness infuriated Churchill and he rebelled fiercely against these acts of revenge. The theme was that Churchill did his duty during the battle and killed his share of the Dervish warriors, but upon their defeat, he refused to belittle and degrade them. Rather, if the victors were magnanimous to the defeated, steps could be taken to create a strong and long-lasting peace. In *My Early Life*, Churchill explained how his views developed in South Africa: “I have always urged fighting wars and other contentions with might and main till overwhelming victory, and then offering the hand of friendship to the vanquished. Thus, I have always been against the Pacifists during the quarrel, and against the Jingoists at its close.”¹⁰⁵ This was only the beginning though as Churchill maintained a similar resolve during his time in South Africa.

¹⁰² Henry V. Jaffa, “Aristotle and the Higher Good,” *New York Times*, July 1, 2011, accessed January 22, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/03/books/review/book-review-aristotles-nicomachean-ethics.html>.

¹⁰³ William Manchester, *The Last Lion: Visions of Glory, 1874-1932*, New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1983, 284.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 281.

¹⁰⁵ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 330-31

Churchill became famous during the Boer War because of his daring escape from a prisoner of war camp in Pretoria. Though he had been captured and a prisoner, he still supported a magnanimous stance towards the Boers. In 1900, Churchill advocated for a lenient treatment of his former captors and to avoid vindictive urges. “First of all because [revenge] is morally wicked, and secondly because it is practically foolish. Revenge may be sweet, but it is also most expensive. We must...make it easy for the enemy to accept defeat.”¹⁰⁶ Though practically everyone involved disagreed with his position, he held true to his virtues and refused to give in to the urges of vengeful action. In this sense, Churchill embodied Aristotle’s maxim on the magnanimous man: “Nor is he apt to bear grudges, for it is not characteristic of one who is great-souled to remember things against anyone, not of any sort and especially not wrongs, but rather overlook them.”¹⁰⁷ Churchill learned early on that there was little to gain and much to lose when revenge was taken against a fallen enemy. At twenty-five years old, he arguably knew more about effective peace-making than many of his superiors. Churchill warned: “Beware of driving men to desperation.... Those who demand ‘an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth’ should ask themselves whether such barren spoils are worth five years of bloody partisan warfare and the consequent impoverishment of S. Africa.”¹⁰⁸

Uniquely, Churchill further embodied his magnanimity when he met with and *befriended* the man that had captured and imprisoned him during the war—Louis Botha, the future prime minister of South Africa. Botha and Churchill shared a distinct and similar relationship that likely stemmed from similarities in worldview. Though they came from different molds, war had engulfed their young adult lives and they would both grow up to lead their nations valiantly.

¹⁰⁶Roberts, 75.

¹⁰⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Translated by J. Sachs, Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2002, 1125a2-4.

¹⁰⁸ Celia Sandys and Jonathan Littmann, *We Shall Not Fail: The Inspiring Leadership of Winston Churchill*, New York: Portfolio, 2003, 72.

Churchill wrote of Botha: “An acquaintance formed in strange circumstances and upon an almost unbelievable introduction ripened into a friendship I greatly valued.”¹⁰⁹ Fittingly, in 1903, Botha concluded, “He and I have been out in all weathers.”¹¹⁰ Churchill called upon Botha several times throughout his life for advice in times of crisis. It is easy to imagine how difficult it would have been making South Africa a British Dominion had Britain taken a more punishing approach at the end of the Boer War. Churchill may have not been able to confide in Botha’s advice in future crises.

Though Churchill was only beginning to play politics, he took advantage of his mother’s connections to telegraph his magnanimous thoughts to the British government regarding the conclusion of the war. Churchill illustrated two contrasting images to present his point: “On the one hand are mighty armies advancing irresistibly, slaying and smiting with all the fearful engines of war; on the other, the quiet farm with wife and children safe under the protection of a government as merciful as it is strong.”¹¹¹ Churchill was right to question the value of the “iron fist” mentality. What purpose did it serve other than cause further indiscriminate destruction? How does that contribute to the strengthening of the British Empire and its colonies? These were the questions that some of Churchill’s critics wrestled with in times of war. They could not foresee the long-term consequences of such unnecessary violence. For many, a short-term victory was worth more than the risk of long-term destabilization. Churchill, of course, as a visionary understood the long-term consequences of war and vengeful action because of his historical studies of the ancients and wrote:

Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos! Spare the conquered and war down the proud. The Romans have often forestalled many of my best ideas, and I must concede to them the patent rights in this maxim. Never indeed was it more apt

¹⁰⁹ Millard, 467.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 467-468.

¹¹¹ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 329.

than in South Africa. Wherever we departed from it, we suffered; wherever we followed it, we triumphed.¹¹²

Churchill recognized the value of magnanimity as a part of war resolution and pursued it closely.

Churchill carried this magnanimous torch into the First World War and was arguably one of the most outspoken opponents to the punishing terms of the Versailles Treaty. In 1919, Churchill was asked to create an inscription for a French war memorial. He submitted what would later become the moral of his war memoirs: *“In War: Resolution. In Defeat: Defiance. In Victory: Magnanimity. In Peace: Goodwill.”*¹¹³ It was rejected because Churchill’s contemporaries, excluding T. E. Lawrence, were of vengeful spirit and fueled by hatred of the Germans. Churchill saw the terms of Versailles as “Carthaginian” and correctly assessed that they would sow the German seeds of grievance and anger against the Allied powers.¹¹⁴ From the Allied perspective, Churchill biographer Manchester argued that “Germany had behaved like a mad dog since the Franco-Prussian War and deserved to wear the shortest leash possible.”¹¹⁵ For Churchill, this logic was simply unacceptable because it not only violated his views on magnanimous victory, but also his peaceful goodwill. Based on his former military experience, he understood the dangers of vindictive behavior and did everything in his power (or lack thereof after the Dardanelles) to challenge the status quo. The vast amount of knowledge he had accumulated from prior experiences and self-education, gave him both a flexible mind to understand complicated issues and a deeper understanding of human nature as compared to his colleagues. Churchill’s granddaughter Celia Sandys pointed out, “To urge reconciliation among

¹¹² Churchill, *My Early Life*, 331.

¹¹³ Winston Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959, ix. The original submission of the inscription read: *“In War: Fury”*. It was not until after it was rejected that he changed it to *“In War: Resolution.”*

¹¹⁴ Churchill described the terms of Versailles as “Carthaginian” because he compared Rome’s vindictive treatment of Carthage to the Triple Entente’s actions against Germany.

¹¹⁵ William Manchester and Paul Reid, *The Last Lion: Defender of the Realm, 1940-1965*, New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2012, 22.

bitter foes [i.e. France and Germany] is neither popular nor easy. Like so much of true leadership it requires independent thought and courage.”¹¹⁶ Compassionate leadership and decision making even against the worst of enemies can produce the most successful compromises; however, it takes the strongest of leaders to make the first step towards magnanimous reconciliation.

Churchill foresaw the dangers of keeping a boot on the German throat and knew that it would fuel a German nationalistic movement to counter Allied retribution. He reflected: “History will characterise all these transactions as insane. They helped to breed both the martial curse and “economic blizzard”... All this is a sad story of complicated idiocy in the making of which much toil and virtue was consumed.”¹¹⁷ As the terms of the Versailles Treaty began to deteriorate over the next two decades, the consequences of unnecessary vengeance came into fruition with the rise of Hitler and the Third Reich. The time had now passed for magnanimity in victory to prevail; the Great War was only the first part of a larger conflict. Alas, this was the curse of the visionary. Churchill foresaw the consequences of humiliating and punishing Imperial Germany and knew that it would sow the seeds of resentment and revenge against the Western Allies. By the time his colleagues in Paris and London realized what they had created in 1938, Churchill had been ringing the bells of war since 1932*. He knew that appeasement from a position of strength would be considered magnanimous while at the other end of the blade disaster awaited. Churchill explained: “Appeasement in itself may be good or bad according to the circumstances. Appeasement from weakness and fear is alike futile and fatal. Appeasement from strength is magnanimous and noble and might be the surest and perhaps the only path to world peace.”¹¹⁸ Recognizing the German blitzkrieg of May 1940 as the manifestation of his

¹¹⁶ Sandys and Littmann, 72.

¹¹⁷ Churchill, *Memoirs*, 6.

* See his speech delivered to the House of Commons: “European Dangers”, November 23, 1932.

¹¹⁸ Roberts, 918.

1891 prophecy, the virtues he had tried to append to the French memorial became critical. As the Germans knocked out Britain's allies one by one, Churchill sought peaceful resolution through total Allied victory (*In War: Resolution*). Surrender was not an option. By the time the Blitz began, Churchill's rallying call became, *In Defeat: Defiance* as he obstinately confronted Hitler's bombardment with a tenacity to prevail. Britain had entered her darkest hour and Churchill's vehement call to 'never surrender' embodied his resistance to Hitler and the Nazi regime.¹¹⁹ In the early years of the war, Churchill had become Hitler's arch-nemesis. Hitler targeted him in several of his speeches and labeled him as a "lunatic," "madman," "criminal," among others. Charles Eade explained, "During Hitler's years of triumph nothing angered him more than Churchill's stubborn refusal to recognize that Germany's tremendous victories were anything more than mere temporary successes.... He denounced the prime minister as a "mad drunkard" for treating his peace offers as signs of weakness."¹²⁰ Hitler even said (without a hint of irony), "Churchill is the most bloodthirsty of amateur strategists that history has ever known. He is as bad a politician as a soldier and as bad a soldier as a politician."¹²¹ It was almost humorous how Churchill could so easily get under Hitler's skin. Once German defeat was inevitable, Hitler seldom made any references to Churchill at all. Upon the Allied victory, magnanimity returned to the forefront of Churchill's agenda. His electoral defeat of 1945 did not destroy him as he understood historical precedent. The same had happened to both the Duke of Marlborough and French Premier Georges Clemenceau.¹²² In pursuit of his magnanimous goals

¹¹⁹ Winston Churchill, "We Shall Fight on the Beaches," Speech, Presented to the British House of Commons, London, England, June 4, 1940, accessed February 23, 2020, <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1940-the-finest-hour/we-shall-fight-on-the-beaches/>.

¹²⁰ Extracts from the Speeches of Adolf Hitler, "Churchill the Hated Enemy", in *Churchill by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Charles Eade, London: Reprint Society, 1955, 138-141.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 138-141.

¹²² Roberts, 888-89.

of establishing a cordial relationship between France and Germany, Churchill gave a speech (as a private citizen) in Zurich on September 19, 1946:

We all know that the two world wars through which we have passed arose out of the vain passion of a newly-united Germany to play the dominating part in the world...crimes and massacres have been committed for which there is no parallel since the invasions of the Mongols in the fourteenth century...The guilty must be punished...but when all this is done, as it will be done, as it is being done, *there must be an end to retribution*. There must be what Mr. Gladstone many years ago called 'a blessed act of oblivion'...Can the free peoples of Europe rise to the height of these resolves of the soul and instincts of the spirit of the man? If they can, the wrongs and miseries which have been inflicted will be washed away on all sides by the miseries which have been endured. Is there any need for further floods of agony? ... I am now going to say something that will astonish you. The first step in the re-creation of the European family must be a partnership between France and Germany [emphasis added].¹²³

A little over a year after V-E Day, Churchill had called for something revolutionary. France and Germany had always been historic rivals from Gaul and Napoleon to the devastation of the World Wars. But this was the critical conversation that needed to occur to successfully initiate the transition from a magnanimous victory to a peaceful goodwill. More importantly, Churchill foresaw the threat of the Soviet Union and desperately wanted to unify Western Europe to check communist expansion. Magnanimity was a distinct part of the Churchillian leadership paradigm. As Sandys reminded: "Magnanimity breeds trust and loyalty...and seeking revenge harms the victors as well as the vanquished."¹²⁴

¹²³ Geoffrey Best, *Churchill: A Study in Greatness*, London: Hambledon and London, 2001, 283-84.

¹²⁴ Sandys and Littman, 78.

Churchill the Student:

*"We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us."*¹²⁵

-Churchill, October 28, 1943-

Churchill never excelled as a traditional scholar. He resisted his classical education and failed his Latin and Greek examinations. To most schoolboys at Harrow, these were of paramount importance, but Churchill was not like most students. Churchill was selective in his learning apparatus. The subjects he found important are those that he performed well in and often surpassed his peers. According to Roy Jenkins, Churchill "loved narrative history and had exceptional interest in and aptitude for the use of the English language."¹²⁶ Though his professors found this unusual, they tried to help nourish and expand Churchill's grasp of his mother tongue. Churchill wrote of his mentor:

Mr. Somervell—a most delightful man, to whom my debt is great—was charged with the duty of teaching the stupidest boys the most disregarded thing—namely, to write mere English. He knew how to do it. He taught it as no one else has ever taught it. I learned it thoroughly. Thus, I got into my bones the essential structure of the ordinary British sentence—which is a noble thing.¹²⁷

Along with his strong understanding of the English language, Churchill was blessed with a photographic memory which contributed greatly to the self-education he received while in India. He memorized and recited an array of materials including his father's speeches, entire scenes of Shakespeare and most famously 1,200 lines from Thomas Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* without error. With an audacious Churchillian character, he would not hesitate to correct instructors dare they misquote a section he had readily memorized.¹²⁸ After Harrow, Churchill

¹²⁵ Churchill, Speeches: House of Commons, August 3, 1943-October 28, 1943, Churchill Archive Centre, CHAR 9/160.

¹²⁶ Jenkins, 18.

¹²⁷ Jenkins, 18-19.

¹²⁸ Sir Gerald Woods Wollaston, "Churchill at Harrow", in *Churchill by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Charles Eade, London: Reprint Society, 1955, 3.

Commented [BM23]: I am keeping this section here as we discussed about the thematic study.

reflected that he did not feel himself at any disadvantage failing to learn Latin and Greek.¹²⁹

Then and always, he recognized the power of the English language and transformed it into one of his most valuable allies politically and militarily.

Furthermore, his grasp of the English language and how to use it oratorically exploded upon meeting Congressman Bourke Cockran in 1895. Forgotten to history, Cockran was an Irish American politician who served in the House of Representatives for New York. He was a “finished literary craftsman” and much like Churchill chose principle over political party.¹³⁰

Almost a year after his father died, Churchill decided to take his first military adventure to Cuba where the Spanish had engaged Cuban Revolutionaries. En route to Havana, he stopped in New York City to meet Cockran for the first time. “I must record the strong impression which this remarkable man made upon my untutored mind. I have never seen his like, or in some respects his equal.”¹³¹ Churchill and Cockran shared a relationship that resembled father and son.

Cockran was not only a political mentor for him but also and more importantly his major oratorical model. Churchill was awe-struck by Cockran’s use of classical and historical allusions, his vibrant vocabulary, and dramatic gestures. For decades to come, Churchill would quote excerpts from Cockran’s speeches most notably: “There is enough for all. The earth is a generous mother. She will provide in plentiful abundance food for all her children if they will but cultivate her soil in justice and in peace.”¹³² He used this line in a few different speeches, the most important being “The Sinews of Peace” also known as the ‘Iron Curtain’ speech. Without Cockran’s oratorical wisdom, Churchill may have not evolved into the famous orator he became

¹²⁹ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 17.

¹³⁰ Michael McMennamin and Curt Zoller, *Becoming Winston Churchill: The Untold Story of Young Winston and his American Mentor*, Greenwood: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007, 15.

¹³¹ Winston Churchill, *Thoughts and Adventures*, London: Thorton Butterworth, 1932, 32.

¹³² Churchill, “Sinews of Peace,” *Speeches & Speech Notes*, January 13, 1946-March 8, 1946, Churchill Archive Centre, CHUR 5/4A.

in 1940. Through his English education at Harrow, he learned the ways of writing and structure, but could not effectively transfer this to speech making as he struggled with his speaking impediment. With Cockran's guidance, Churchill explained that "he taught me to use every note of the human voice as if playing an organ." Churchill was inspired to "play on every emotion and hold thousands of people riveted in great political rallies" as Cockran had masterfully executed.¹³³

Cockran taught Churchill the four major principles of speech-making. First, he was to write his speeches in Shakespearian blank verse (often called psalm style) as a guide rhythmically, to control the cadence of voice, and when to effectively pause. Second, the speeches must be kept simple. Simplicity delivered a more concrete and receptive message that big-worded run-ons could not constructively convey. Third, the truth must always be told. If an orator remains honest with their audience, trust is built and maintained between the two parties. Finally, it was critical to always try to incorporate humor no matter how grave the situation. Humor can effectively lighten the mood and make even the most depressing speeches engaging and powerful. Cockran firmly believed if these oratorical tools were adopted, Churchill would be prepared for any speech-making situation. Cockran's style also known as "visionary rhetoric" would give Churchill's speeches the shape that people recognize today.¹³⁴ Cockran took the form of a musical conductor and directed the audience through rhythm, cadence, and composure. He then would crescendo to a climax and profess a profound peroration leaving the audience with the most important theme or takeaway. At first glance, this strategy sounds Churchillian, but it was Cockran that taught Winston how to orate. If it was Harrow that taught Churchill how to

Commented [BM24]: I have not mentioned his speaking impediment until now because it is associated with his oratory education and belongs in this section

¹³³ Roberts, 36.

¹³⁴ Paul Wright, "William Bourke Cockran: The Irishman Who Taught Winston Churchill the Gift of the Gab!" YouTube video, 20:20-24:20, June 2, 2018, accessed January 24, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IqyaGdQDGsA>.

write, it was Cockran who taught him how to speak. These would be key foundations that paved part of the way to fulfilling his 1891 destiny as a leader who would save the Empire.

Upon reaching India in 1897, Churchill took advantage of his little free time to deeply self-educate. Reflecting in his *Early Life*, he wrote, “It was a curious education...because I approached it with an empty, hungry mind, and with fairly strong jaws; and what I got I bit.”¹³⁵ He engaged in an ambitious reading program that consisted of many significant titles including Edward Gibbon’s eight-volume *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and Macaulay’s six-volume *History of England*. These two individuals had a profound impact on Churchill’s writing style in the future. Churchill wrote, “Macaulay crisp and forcible—Gibbon stately and impressive. Both are fascinating and show what a fine language English is—since it can be pleasing in styles so different.”¹³⁶ Churchill’s writing, no matter the type, embodied these four characteristics. Churchill was slowly developing his voice across the span of five years. Many would argue that the man of 1940 was most significant, but without the foundations he learned in structure at Harrow, speaking with Cockran, and absorbing the styles of Gibbon and Macaulay, the man of 1940 would have failed to blossom.

After establishing this base of knowledge, Churchill sought out Plato’s *Republic*, Henry Hallam’s *Constitutional History*, Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, as well as key works by Schopenhauer, Malthus, Laing, Lecky, and the Marquis of Rochefort to name a few. In a letter to his mother, Churchill wanted his reading to give him “a scaffolding of logical and consistent views.”¹³⁷ On top of this, he also had his mother send him as many copies of the *Annual Register* as possible to study the parliamentary debates held during

¹³⁵ Best, 10.

¹³⁶ Jenkins, 25.

¹³⁷ Roberts, 40.

Disraeli's premiership through his childhood. He added, "Of course the *Annual Register* is valuable only for its facts. A good knowledge of these would arm me with a sharp sword. Macaulay, Gibbon, Plato etc. must train the muscles to wield that sword to the greatest effect."¹³⁸ This enlightened sword would carry him into the battle of parliamentary politics and give him a strategic edge over his rivals in both decision making and arguments. With Harrow, Cockran, and India's knowledge added to his armour, Churchill authored an unpublished article titled "The Scaffolding of Rhetoric" in 1898 which encompassed the five principles he believed were critical in the making of a speech. Interestingly, his principles closely resembled Cicero's 'Five Canons of Rhetoric.' However, as his self-education progressed, Churchill struggled with the quote: "*Le couer a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point*" (One must discard the reasons of the heart for those of the head). Churchill wanted to find the balance between heart and mind as he built upon the foundations of his leadership paradigm. Therefore, he adopted "quite early in life a system of believing whatever I wanted to believe, while at the same time leaving reason to pursue unfettered whatever paths she was capable of treading."¹³⁹ This flexibility and freedom gave him a power few know how to master. It is possible to be knowledgeable and wise as well as passionate and emotional. This balance between heart and mind explained his passionate pursuit of destiny as well as his mental mastery of predestination and freewill. This gave tremendous shape to Churchill's character which complemented the development of his leadership paradigm.

Churchill's education was quite untraditional and yet through perseverance and the development of his own agenda, he created his own personal educational regiment that was stronger, more formidable, and significantly more enlightening for his Churchillian modus

¹³⁸ William Manchester, *Visions*, 244.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 245.

operandi. If a person is unhappy with his or her education, sometimes it is best to teach and learn it themselves without the pressure of external influences. But they must find their education somehow. Churchill wrote: “A man’s Life must be nailed to a cross either of Thought or Action.

Commented [BM25]: This is not a quote. My words.

Without work there is no play.”¹⁴⁰ Churchill’s education at the turn of the century laid the foundations he would need upon entering the House of Commons as a member at twenty-five years old.

Principle Over Party:

“Sworn to no master, of no sect am I

As drives the storm, at any door I knock”¹⁴¹

-Alexander Pope’s Translation of Horace’s *Epistles*-

In 1900, Churchill entered the House of Commons as a residing conservative. While his wartime experiences offered important insight into the foundations of leadership, politics added a new perspective for Churchill. This new realm would contribute to the shaping of his own character and personality. Whether he was arguing for magnanimous treatment of the Boers, wittily countering an in-House insult, or forgetting his entire speech mid-sentence, parliamentary politics helped Churchill grow into the leader he became in 1940. He had always foreseen following in his father’s footsteps and anxiously desired to pursue his legacy as a masterful politician mimicking many of Randolph’s mannerisms. In 1902, Churchill was asked about the qualities desired in a politician and he responded, “The ability to foretell what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month, and next year—and...to explain why it didn’t

¹⁴⁰ Churchill, *Early Life*, 113.

¹⁴¹ Manchester, *Visions*, 364.

happen.”¹⁴² This assessment is Churchillian in nature as Winston recognized the importance of foresight and the consideration of all possible scenarios when looking toward the future. He was not going to permit the pettiness of politics to extinguish his intentions as a political leader. Like his father, Churchill had no time to play the game of politics. If he saw a problem, he would set forth plans of action to remedy it. He did not care for the incessant party politics that often engulfed the chamber and stood by his principles throughout his political career.

Some of Churchill’s most important years were 1895-1900. Not only did he serve in three wars as a soldier, he also deeply self-educated and transformed into an excellent writer and orator. Without question, the aforementioned American Congressman Bourke Cockran was one of his most influential oratorical *and* political mentors. Politically, Cockran epitomized the significance of principle before party as he himself switched four times. Churchill understood the importance of principle as his father did before him and committed to it on May 31, 1904. . On this day, Churchill entered the House, bowed to the Speaker and instead of sitting with his Conservatives, *crossed the aisle* and joined the Liberals. This was by far one of the riskiest moves an MP could make as a British politician because his former party immediately despised him and labelled him a traitor. On the other hand, joining the Liberals was like entering into uncharted territory, unsure of what lurked in those political waters. Churchill once wrote: “Politics are almost as exciting as war and quite as dangerous...in war you can only be killed once, but in politics many times.”¹⁴³ Luckily for Churchill, he had made connections across the aisle, most notably with Lloyd George, and was warmly welcomed.

This event demonstrated Churchill’s ambition and willingness to take risks for the principles he stood for. But why did he decide to take this chance? This decision could have

¹⁴² Roberts, 86.

¹⁴³ Manchester, *Visions*, 360-61.

resulted in political suicide and would have resembled his father's unanticipated political demise. If he had neglected to acquire allies like Lloyd George, Churchill would have crippled his position in both parties and, thus, alienated himself. He would have defeated himself before he could act and discredit his position in politics assuming the role of his father fifteen years prior.

By 1903, Joseph Chamberlain and his protectionist followers had hijacked the Tory Party. This was not the Conservative base Churchill had recognized and joined in 1900 as he supported free trade. Therefore, he had reached a significant juncture on his political journey that would dramatically affect his future career and shape his reputation. Churchill observed, "Some men change their party for the sake of their principles, others their principles for the sake of their party."¹⁴⁴ He had chosen the former. Had he chosen to change his principles over the protectionist matter, McMenamin explained, "[Churchill] would have betrayed the foundation he had erected with Cockran's guidance during his years of self-education in India." By choosing principle over party, Churchill protected both his moral compass and worldview. If he had made any other choice, McMenamin continued:

The foundation upon which he had built his career would have begun to crumble because, in his heart of hearts, he would have known he had placed party and power over principle and gravely disappointed the one man [Cockran] besides his father he most looked up to, a man who freely walked away from power on more than one occasion rather than abandon his principles. Churchill chose to emulate his mentor.¹⁴⁵

Some detractors accused him of being an 'opportunist', only to change sides because it brought him the most benefit. Consequently, it is important to differentiate man of principle and opportunist. An opportunist takes advantage of the moment, not for his values or morality, but for the material and publicity gain that such an event holds. While on the other hand, the man of

¹⁴⁴ Manchester, *Visions*, 364.

¹⁴⁵ McMenamin and Zoller, 191. Cockran had also switched political parties in 1896 when he backed McKinley as a presidential candidate as opposed to the Liberal opponent.

principle utilizes the opportunity to make a decision that best defines his character and position on worldly issues. Loyalty to the party may have been the “supreme morality”, for traditional British politicians.¹⁴⁶ But not for Churchill. Loyalty to one’s values and principles reigned superior for him which, to no surprise, made him a distinct figure in the British Parliament. Churchill had foreseen a future with the Liberal Party. In a letter to Cockran he admitted, “I am a Liberal in all but name.”¹⁴⁷ The Tories were crumbling and as a man of action, he was not going to stay and watch it disintegrate. Rather, he knew that he could contribute to the Liberal platform constructively while also expanding his own political experience in office. He recognized that the Liberals were the party of social progress, an idea he firmly supported based on the vast amount of readings he undertook while in India.

Though he had taken a major chance with this decision, Churchill had recognized that two of his historical inspirations had also changed sides—The Duke of Marlborough and Napoleon Bonaparte. History had shown that a man who keeps to his principles succeeds. Therefore, in 1905, Churchill advised, “In politics when you are in doubt what to do, do nothing. In politics when you are in doubt what to say, say what you really think.”¹⁴⁸ In this case, Churchill knew exactly what to do and said what he really thought about the Tories.

I must reconsider my position in politics. I am an English Liberal. I hate the Tory party, their men, their words and their methods.* I feel no sort of sympathy with them...It is therefore my intention that...my separation from the Tory party and the Government shall be complete & irrevocable.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Best, 22.

¹⁴⁷ Manchester, 357.

¹⁴⁸ Roberts, 93, 96.

* This letter was never sent as one could imagine. A magnanimous man of principle could say no such thing without provoking serious reprisals.

¹⁴⁹ Jenkins, 83.

Randolph failed to achieve his goals and was thrown from power because he *threatened* to take action against his party. Churchill, on the other hand, did not bother to threaten, he made his decision and followed through without looking back. His peers may have seen him as a traitor and untrustworthy, but to many it was an act of courage. To challenge convention creates a wise, genuine, and flexible leader. Sandys explained:

Wise leaders do not stick blindly to fixed positions when conditions change. Churchill was a roll-up-your-sleeves-style leader, and it was this sort of everyday pragmatism that made him valuable in solving a crisis or in tackling the unexpected. Churchill was not one to fall for slogans or to become a slave to ideology. [Flexibility was key]. 'The only way a man can remain consistent during changing circumstances is to change with them while preserving the same dominating purpose.' To abandon the old policy, Churchill noted, it is often necessary to adopt the new.¹⁵⁰

Churchill was a master of principle and committed himself to his perception of the world and refused to compromise his ideals for party partisanship.

As a pragmatic man of principle, Churchill was incredibly consistent. He rarely floundered over decisions and was able to make the difficult judgements needed in the most stressful of situations. When in doubt, he would always fall back on his worldview towards what he believed was the most appropriate approach for the best results. Churchill crossed the floor *again* in 1924 rejoining the Conservatives where he remained for the rest of his political life. Viscount Simon, a Liberal colleague questioned: "Has he not carried into [the Conservative] body the reinvigorating spirit of English liberalism and so brought to fulfilment his father's notion that Toryism could be led into democratic channels?"¹⁵¹ Arguably, he did and did so well. The lesson here was simple. Never allow yourself to be baited by the promise of power and

¹⁵⁰ Sandys and Littmann, 33-34.

¹⁵¹ Viscount Simon, "Churchill as a Liberal", in *Churchill by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Charles Eade, London: Reprint Society, 1955, 61.

wealth. If what you are offered challenges your principles or threatens to break your moral compass, the opportunity is *not* worth it. Moreover, if you find yourself in a stagnant position where your own environment is devolving, leave. Reconstitute yourself in a better and more principally rewarding situation. You may be slandered and judged and that is okay. The best leader embodies his principles disallowing any sort of party promise to taint his ideals. Churchill knew this well and religiously maintained his moral compass as an ever-evolving magnanimous leader. In his study of Moses, Churchill reflected what he thought went in to building a great leader:

Every prophet has to come from civilization, but every prophet has to go into the wilderness. He must have a strong impression of a complex society and all that it has to give, and then he must serve periods of isolation and meditation. This is the process by which psychic dynamite is made.¹⁵²

He made this reflection during his own Wilderness years after the Dardanelles disaster. Though he had become the “scapegoat-in-chief” for this debacle, Churchill stood by his principles, resigned from his sinecure political position and enlisted to fight in the trenches.¹⁵³ The lessons drawn from the Dardanelles debacle would prove significant as he ascended to the premiership in 1940.

Commented [BM26]: I added the tone box in the introduction, let me know what you think.

¹⁵² Sandys and Henley, 41.

¹⁵³ Roberts, 228-231.

The Darkness of the Dardanelles:

*“And thus the native hue of resolution is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought, And enterprises of great pith and moment. With this regard their currents turn awry And lose the name of action.”*¹⁵⁴

-Churchill to Fisher, quoting Hamlet, April 8, 1915-

Considered to be Churchill’s greatest folly, the 1915 Dardanelles Operation or “sideshow” as some critics have referred to it resulted in over 300,000 Allied casualties.¹⁵⁵ As a result of this disaster, many felt someone must be held responsible for the disaster and, at the time, all fingers pointed to Winston Churchill.* “Churchill had become the operation’s most visible advocate and its most eloquent spokesperson.”¹⁵⁶ As “his adventure” started to collapse, it was clear that this was not a one-man operation, however, it was expected that somebody had to pay for the loss of life incurred at Gallipoli because it was . The hypocritical relationship between the military and political leadership was bewildering. The Somme, Verdun, and Meuse-Argonne campaigns all sustained higher casualties than Gallipoli, yet the leaders charged with carrying these operations out received little criticism. Henry Wilson asserted that the place where the Allies could kill the most Germans was on the Western Front; therefore, every man and round of ammunition should be sent there and not to the Dardanelles. However, Manchester countered, “The way to end a war is to win it—defeating the enemy by superior strategy, not by counting his dead, especially when, as in this case, his count is lower than yours.”¹⁵⁷

Commented [BM27]: Does the following sentences explain why it was a hypocritical relationship? Or do I need to add to it?

¹⁵⁴ Admiral Lord Fisher to WSC, 5 April 1915; WSC note to Admiral Lord Fisher, 8 April 1915, Churchill Papers, CHAR 13/57/ 2-3.

¹⁵⁵ Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War*, Westport: Greenwood, 2001, 94.

* This was ironic because, at the same time, British military leaders were leading thousands to their deaths on the Western Front. Did they become scapegoats? No, because the strategy and losses on the Western Front was expected unlike the Dardanelles “sideshow.”

¹⁵⁶ Manchester, *Visions*, 527.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Manchester pointed out that British losses were triple that lost in WWII under Churchill’s leadership.

Churchill, on the other hand, was looking for an alternative “to chewing barbed wire in Flanders” and supported this “underbelly-esque” strategy to not only support the Russians, but knock Turkey out of the war and pull German troops from the Western Front.¹⁵⁸ Churchill had found himself in a precarious position in the spring of 1915 because as First Lord of the Admiralty, he held much of the war making power, but not enough to successfully see this operation through. Consequently, Prime Minister Asquith was forced to remove Churchill because of the pressure put on him from the Conservative side of the coalition government. The Tories had still held a bitter grudge against Churchill for “crossing the floor” in 1904 and wanted him to disappear. Partisan politics had finally caught up with and crippled Churchill; however, he realized that his 1891 destiny had yet to emerge and he would overcome the darkness of the Dardanelles.

Though Churchill was unfairly scapegoated in this incident (many others including Kitchener and Fisher held similar responsibilities), he learned two important lessons that would later shape his leadership during the Second World War. First, he learned much about his own limitations and recognized the importance of cutting his losses. At the Dardanelles, he firmly believed in his moral: *In War, Resolution*. Consequently, Churchill fiercely defended the operations because he saw an opportunity to break the stalemate and end the bloodshed sooner rather than later. As he traveled through the Strait in 1925, Admiral Roger Keyes lamented: “My God, it would have been even easier than I thought. We simply *couldn't* have failed...and because we didn't try, another million lives were thrown away and the war went on for another three years.”¹⁵⁹ Whether this is wholly true is debatable, however it signified that Churchill's colleagues in the field supported this notion as well. Nevertheless, the explosive ambition that

Commented [BM28]: Yes this is my analysis. However, it is historically known that the Tories used the Dardanelles disaster against Churchill because of his change of parties

¹⁵⁸ Jenkins, 261.

¹⁵⁹ Alan Moorehead, *Gallipoli*, London: Wordsworth, 1998, 304.

drove Churchill in his early life became a weakness at Gallipoli. Although the stakes were high and the pros had outweighed the cons, the cooperation between military and government was dreadful and the bickering and lack of coordination between the Army and Navy was pitiful. The potential was there, but the puzzle pieces failed to connect. This was what Churchill called “the terrible [what] Ifs” as nothing was proving successful.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, instead of refraining from further unnecessary risk due to the poor circumstances, Churchill went “all in” instead of reflecting on the consequences of such a decision. He wanted to see his operation through no matter the cost because of the value that victory would bring; however, the slaughter of Gallipoli resulted. It was clear that Churchill drew upon this lesson in WWII as he never once overruled his Chiefs of Staff when they unanimously rejected his schemes, nor did he encourage their silence if they disagreed as he had done with Fisher.¹⁶¹ Most importantly, he learned to contain his obstinate ambition and make prudent decisions. For example, withholding RAF fighter squadrons during the German invasion of France was difficult (especially because he was a Francophile), but strategic in the long run. He knew that committing the RAF squadrons to France would weaken and detrimentally impact the home defense force in Great Britain. Roberts added, “He vigilantly guarded against mission-creep, and disengaged without allowing considerations of prestige to suck him into deeper military commitments.”¹⁶² This was important because his caution here enabled a more vigorous defense of the British Isles from Luftwaffe attack.

¹⁶⁰ Manchester, *Visions*, 535.

¹⁶¹ As the Dardanelles and Gallipoli campaign developed, Fisher turned from advocate to critic as Churchill disregarded his advice and continued to pursue the operation even after it appeared ill-fated. Fisher eventually resigned because of the tensions between he and Churchill.

¹⁶² Roberts, 229.

The second lesson he drew from the Dardanelles debacle focused on the power struggle between the military and governmental leadership during WWI. The two major shortcomings of the British coalition government included “habitual indecisiveness...and its lack of information about the military situation.”¹⁶³ Asquith struggled to make simple decisions because Kitchener failed to keep him apprised of the developing military issues. This lack of communication directly hindered the war effort and kept the strategic decision making in the hands of the generals. In his memoirs, Churchill admitted that “he had been wrong in trying to carry out a major and cardinal operation of war from a subordinate position.”¹⁶⁴ Churchill did not like the power and influence military commanders had over the politicians during the war. He found that the politicians should oversee grand strategy while the military executed operational and tactical supremacy. Arguably, because the military had strategic control during the Great War, the Dardanelles strategy became pinched between the Western school of thought* and interbranch rivalries between the Navy and Army. Hindenburg accurately assessed that during the war the British soldiers were “lions led by donkeys.”¹⁶⁵ Consequently, Churchill was determined to return the military to its proper place in wartime upon becoming prime minister in 1940. Churchill’s ambition alone was explosive, but he knew that to be in total control of the strategic military picture, he must dominate as *both* prime minister and minister of defense. By appointing himself as minister of defense, he kept the military reigned in while also orchestrating political matters as PM. This enabled him to have the final say in all strategic and operational military decisions without being outmaneuvered by his generals.

Commented [BM29]: I think the following sentence explains this.

¹⁶³ Best, 73.

¹⁶⁴ Winston Churchill, *Their Finest Hour*, London: Folio Society, 2000, 15.

* The Western school of thought determined that the only possible way to win the war was by breaking through German lines in France. They paid little regard to “subservient” operations often referring to them as sideshows while the main event was held in the trenches.

¹⁶⁵ Manchester, 528.

Churchill should be held partially responsible for the disaster at Gallipoli as he did make some serious mistakes that contributed to the operation's failure but remained an important reflection point during his Wilderness years. prime minister. Churchill accurately asserted to Clementine after his resignation, "I should have made nothing if I had not made mistakes."¹⁶⁶ This was a humble outlook on a calamitous event. Humans are not perfect, and mistakes are made along all parts of life. However, it is those who learn from their mistakes that ultimately prevail in future endeavors as Churchill did. But before he ascended to fulfill his 1891 prophecy, Churchill spent a long time in his Wilderness years writing and reflecting on war as both a biographer and historian. More specifically, the experience he had while writing his biography on the Duke of Marlborough taught him the culminating lessons he needed to challenge the Nazi war machine. From the Battle of Blenheim to the Battle of Britain, Churchill would reach his ascended to his peak in May 1940.

¹⁶⁶ Roberts, 229.

Churchill the Historian - Marlborough's Lessons:

*"It was as if Caesar had been wielding Cicero's stylus."*¹⁶⁷

-David Reynolds on Churchill's literary achievements-

*"One rule of conduct alone survives as a guide to men in their wanderings: fidelity to covenants, the honour of soldiers, and the hatred of causing human woe."*¹⁶⁸

-Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Times*-

Discarded from politics and discredited after the Dardanelles debacle, Churchill fell into his Wilderness years with the intention to reflect, record, and learn. In the 1930s, Churchill undertook several major writing projects including his Great War memoirs, *The World Crisis*, his famous autobiography, *My Early Life*, and a masterful four-volume biography on his ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough, to name a few.¹⁶⁹ Philip Guedalla described Churchill's *Marlborough: His Life and Times* as "the lullaby of a majestic style."¹⁷⁰ Though Churchill's works were often biased and pursued an agenda, he was a passionate writer and conveyor of ideas. Unlike many of his historical inspirations, Churchill found the pen and ink a most valuable ally because he understood the power of the written word as a tool of persuasion. Malcolm Muggeridge wrote: "For the most part, men of action, like Napoleon... have nothing to say when they look back on their colourful lives... [rather they] trace only banalities when they take up their pens. [Churchill was] an outstanding exception to the rule that artistic gifts are incompatible with effectiveness in the world of action."¹⁷¹ Churchill had always wanted to write a biography of his heroic ancestor

¹⁶⁷ David Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War*, New York: Random House, 2005, 491.

¹⁶⁸ John von Heyking, "Churchill's Marlborough as the 'Sum of Things,'" *Finest Hour* 176 (2017): 35.

¹⁶⁹ Churchill published forty-four books during his lifetime including hundreds of articles. In the 1930s alone, he published fifteen books, many of them becoming his most famous titles.

¹⁷⁰ William Manchester, *The Last Lion: Alone, 1932-1940*, New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1988, 306.

¹⁷¹ Malcolm Muggeridge, "Churchill the Biographer and Historian", in *Churchill by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Charles Eade, London: Reprint Society, 1955, 237.

because he felt it was his duty to challenge Thomas Babington Macaulay's claims in his *History of England*. Macaulay was highly critical of Marlborough's betrayal of James II to William of Orange and considered him a self-serving opportunist, a generational Churchillian accusation.¹⁷² In his effort to counter Macaulay's allegations, however, Churchill's own views were less than objective.¹⁷³ In one critique, he exclaimed: "But what a way to write history! Lord Macaulay stands convicted of deliberately falsifying facts and making the most revolting accusations upon evidence which he knew...was worthless."¹⁷⁴ This was a fair assertion, but Churchill presented a significantly more laudatory case to uphold his ancestor's legacy, therefore, highlighting the dangers of familial biases. Before writing, Churchill humorously told his literary assistant Maurice Ashley that his approach "will probably not be to defend or vindicate my subject, but to tell the tale with close adherence to chronology in such a way and in such proportions and with such emphasis as will produce upon the mind of the reader the impression I wish to give."¹⁷⁵ Consequently, apart from countering Macaulay's charges, the four-volume compilation was a masterful contribution to the Marlborough historiography and was well-received internationally especially with Franklin Roosevelt who received a gifted copy from Churchill in 1932.¹⁷⁶

John Churchill, the First Duke of Marlborough, was arguably one of Winston's biggest historical inspirations. Marlborough led a volatile life as both a soldier and statesman similar to

¹⁷² Both John Churchill (Duke of Marlborough) and Winston were accused of being self-serving opportunists, a generational claim.

¹⁷³ Churchill's biases as it related to Louis XIV include: "During the whole of his life Louis XIV was the curse and pest of Europe. No worse enemy of human freedom has ever appeared in the trappings of polite civilization." (Jenkins, 451). One can understand that Louis XIV was Marlborough's enemy and, therefore, an enemy of Churchill but it is almost ironic that he would go on to admire Napoleon. If Louis XIV was, in fact, this terrible, one could imagine what Churchill thought about Adolf Hitler.

¹⁷⁴ Jenkins, 451.

¹⁷⁵ Manchester, *Visions*, 863.

¹⁷⁶ With an inscription about the New Deal, Churchill wrote "With earnest best wishes for the success of the greatest crusade of modern times." (Roberts, 374).

Winston. He helped James II ascend to the throne but played a major role in the conspiracy to depose him for William of Orange in the Glorious Revolution. He married Sarah Jennings who was a good friend of Queen Anne which secured his place as Captain General of the *Grand Alliance* in the War of Spanish Succession.¹⁷⁷ During the war, he lost no battle and earned his place as one of Europe's finest commanders.¹⁷⁸ Historian John H. Lavalley argued: "He possessed the personal courage, imagination, common sense, self-control, and quick wits that marks the best battlefield commanders.... As commander-in-chief of a coalition army, he had the ability to tolerate politicians, allies, and fools gladly."¹⁷⁹ The Duke of Wellington added that he could "conceive nothing greater than Marlborough at the head of an English army."¹⁸⁰ Marlborough was arguably the British Army's Horatio Nelson and greatly contributed to Churchill's leadership paradigm. Leo Strauss considered *Marlborough* to be the best historical work of the twentieth century while another perceptively described it as "the capstone of [Churchill's] own political education."¹⁸¹ This deep historical and political study taught him several lessons about effective wartime leadership that he would use throughout the Second World War.

Churchill's life experiences up to this point had laid a strong foundation for the leader he would evolve into. He argued that "his ten years out of office, when he was writing the life of his great ancestor...laid the basis for his greatness."¹⁸² These experiences tied with the writing of *Marlborough* greatly expanded his perception and understanding of politics, war, and his role in the developing crusade against Nazi Germany. Ashley pointed out that Churchill "could perceive

¹⁷⁷ Notice that the Duke referred to his coalition as *The Grand Alliance*. Churchill obviously borrowed this title for the Allied Powers during WWII.

¹⁷⁸ Lovell, 1-14.

¹⁷⁹ John H. Lavalley, "Marlborough, John Churchill, First Duke of," in *International Encyclopedia of Military History*, ed. by James C. Bradford, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2006, 829.

¹⁸⁰ Philip Henry Stanhope, *Miscellanies*, National Library of the Netherlands: J. Murray, 1863, 81.

¹⁸¹ Roberts, 373.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 373.

how the minds of statesmen and commanders moved in those far-off times.”¹⁸³ More importantly, Churchill’s massive appreciation for history and study thereof strengthened his visionary foresight of the trouble to come. At the end of the Great War, Churchill proclaimed, “I am [and] always have been since Nov. 11, 1918, for a policy of peace [and] appeasement...; however, if you wish for peace, seek it with a sincere heart. Too often men are tempted to do the exact opposite. They are moderate in war & violent in peace.”¹⁸⁴ After WWII he reflected, “Appeasement from weakness and fear is alike futile and fatal. Appeasement from strength is magnanimous and noble and might be the surest and perhaps the only way to world peace.”¹⁸⁵ Regardless of this insight, the Allies pursued a vindictive peace policy long enough to sow the seeds of retribution in Germany. Thinking they could retract the punishments inflicted during the 1920s, France and Britain appeased from a position of weakness contributing to the rapid growth of Nazi Germany. Churchill’s life experiences, deep study of history, and connection with magnanimity gave him an edge over his short-sighted colleagues.

The writing of *Marlborough* deeply impacted Churchill from which he drew important wisdoms. As a swift learner, he applied this newly acquired knowledge and mastered it during his wartime premiership. First, was a lesson on patience. Clementine once told the prime minister of Canada that “the writing of *Marlborough* had produced a real effect upon [Winston’s] character; he had discovered that Marlborough’s patience became the secret of his achievements.”¹⁸⁶ Based on his prior experiences, it is easy to argue that Churchill was an impatient individual. His fiery ambition was both a blessing and a curse. Sometimes his risk-

¹⁸³ Roberts, 371.

¹⁸⁴ John H. Maurer, “Churchill and the Outbreak of the Second World War in Europe,” *Orbis* (2019): 308.

¹⁸⁵ Richard M. Langworth, “Churchill on War: What He Said in the Nuclear Age,” *The Churchill Project*, May 5, 2015, accessed April 13, 2020, <https://winstonchurchill.hillsdale.edu/churchill-on-war-part-2/>.

¹⁸⁶ von Heyking, 139.

taking and bold persona benefitted him as he “crossed the floor”, for example. As mentioned previously, Churchill was fearful of dying young like his father and set upon accomplishing as much as possible by age forty which he did so impressively. It just so happened that he turned forty in 1915 as the Dardanelles drama unfolded. His impatience and rash decision-making during those operations came with heavy consequences and permanently stained his legacy. He may have thought that it was during the Great War that his 1891 prophecy would materialize, but it did not. He firmly believed that destiny had a place for him but realized that he was not in a position to pursue it as the Dardanelles operation dwindled. . It was important to note that during his time out of political and military power, he did not give in to personal defeat. Rather, he triumphed, went to the books, and became all the wiser. By 1940, his patience had paid off and his prophecy began to emerge amidst the heart of Nazi darkness as he reflected about Marlborough’s restraint:

As he brooded on these wasted opportunities... as he no doubt felt how surely and how swiftly he could reshape the scene, and yet how carefully trammeled he was, can we wonder at the anger that possessed his soul? There was no prophetic spirit at his side to whisper, “Patience! The opportunity will yet be yours” His patience is almost proverbial. He had need for it all.¹⁸⁷

As his prophecy came into fruition with England trapped in the storm of war, patience became a firm ally. For example, Churchill had to fend off the anxious dove-tailed appeasers during the War Cabinet Crisis in late May 1940. Those who were fearful of the potential Nazi invasion wanted to sue for peace to avoid the horrors of war; however, Churchill patiently evaluated the situation and without jumping to conclusions valiantly declared:

I have thought carefully in these last few days whether it was part of my duty to consider entering negotiations with That Man. [But this means] we should become a slave state.... I am convinced that every man of you would rise up and tear me down from my place if I were for one moment to contemplate parley or

¹⁸⁷ Winston Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Times, Volume I*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933, 309.

surrender. We must fight on even if it meant that this long island story of ours would end when each one of us lies choking in his blood upon the ground.¹⁸⁸

Churchill was, in fact, the obstinate, yet patient bulldog and refused to give in to Hitler's demands. Moreover, he vigorously pursued American help to challenge the might of the Third Reich. Churchill's relationship with FDR became critical in the fight against Hitler and signaled the second lesson he drew from *Marlborough*: the importance of political friendship.

One of the factors that greatly strengthened Marlborough's military effectiveness was the friendship he established with the Hapsburg General Eugene of Savoy. This relationship made the Grand Alliance unstoppable against Louis XIV's armies. Churchill illustrated:

Then at once began that glorious brotherhood in arms which neither victory nor misfortune could disturb, before which jealousy and misunderstanding were powerless, and of which the history of war furnishes no equal example.¹⁸⁹

However, an equal example emerged in the friendship between Churchill and Roosevelt. These two men met once before at a dinner in London on July 29, 1918. Nothing could better illustrate this picture than Lady Lytton's famous advice to Eddie Marsh. "The first time you meet Winston you see all his faults and the rest of your life you spend discovering his virtues."¹⁹⁰ Fittingly, Roosevelt observed that evening that Churchill had "acted like a stinker" and was "lording it all over us." But by August 1941, the tides had changed. Roosevelt had read "with real pleasure" Churchill's *Marlborough* and was warming up to the man.¹⁹¹ What did FDR think of Marlborough and Eugene's friendship? Churchill was consciously aware of Queen Anne's betrayal of Marlborough and worked earnestly to maintain and strengthen his bond with Roosevelt. As von Heyking explained, Churchill's biography "enabled him to look back so he

¹⁸⁸ John Kelly, *Never Surrender: Winston Churchill and Britain's Decision to Fight Nazi Germany in the Fateful Summer of 1940*, New York: Scribner, 2015, 251-52.

¹⁸⁹ von Heyking, "Churchill's Marlborough," 33.

¹⁹⁰ Roberts, 99.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 261, 374.

could look forward” regarding the nature of politics and statesmanship. He recognized the importance of political friendship as a tool of statecraft and nourished his relationship with Roosevelt. Churchill identified that “the Cockpit friendships were the crucible from which the power and glory of England were soon to rise gleaming among nations.”¹⁹² It was this crucible that brought Churchill and Roosevelt together in unity to form Marlborough’s Grand Alliance against the Nazi menace. More importantly, Churchill spent his time, prior to meeting the president at Placentia Bay, nurturing the bond with FDR through constant epistolary and telephonic contact. The same type of relationship was shared between Marlborough and Eugene between 1701 and their first face-to-face meeting in 1704. The sustained communication between Churchill and Roosevelt contributed to the distinct and tightly bound friendship that rapidly grew after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Churchill declared, “No lover ever studied every whim of his mistress as I did those of President Roosevelt.”¹⁹³ Mastering his mistress, Churchill learned how to effectively create and maintain the wartime coalition between the US, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union just as Marlborough had executed with the ill-cooperative Low Countries in 1704.

Churchill’s role in the Big Three proved surprisingly effective. He held his own and represented British views and concerns admirably, all while upholding diplomatic ties with his two major allies. Churchill’s life experiences and lessons drawn from his ancestor contributed to the strategic genius he became during the war. The Soviet premier, Josef Stalin, wanted the West to open a second front as early as 1942 and while American generals weighed the possibility of such an invasion of France, Churchill knew it would be a turkey shoot for the defending Nazi forces. He carefully waded in between both superpowers and unleashed his Mediterranean

¹⁹² von Heyking, *Comprehensive Judgement*, 140-41.

¹⁹³ Roberts, 674.

underbelly strategy that proved feasibly survivable for Allied forces early on. At Tehran in 1943, Churchill humorously summarized the proceedings: “There I sat with the great Russian bear on one side of me with paws outstretched, and on the other side, the great American buffalo. Between the two sat the poor little English donkey, who was the only one who knew the right way home.”¹⁹⁴ Like Marlborough, Winston the English donkey posed a strategy that would wear down the enemy from the periphery. Though this is not what the Russian bear wanted, it did keep Hitler from unleashing the complete power of the Wehrmacht and Schutzstaffel (SS) against the Red Army. The American and British forces often butted heads over the Mediterranean strategy especially as the war moved into southern Europe. Churchill sustained heavy imperialist flak for his central European ambitions despite his foresight about the impending Soviet threat to that region. Nonetheless, he crucially held the alliance together as he had learned from his study of Marlborough. Roosevelt and Churchill’s bond remained strong until the former’s death as they maintained not only a strategic partnership but warm friendship. As a parallel, Churchill reflected: “No one can comprehend the movements leading up to the battle of Blenheim unless he realizes that Eugene and Marlborough were working like two lobes of the same brain.”¹⁹⁵ This was exactly how Churchill and Roosevelt operated, as a single unit set out to defeat the evil of Hitler’s regime.

Churchill’s writing of *Marlborough* greatly shaped his wartime leadership through the mastery of patience, understanding the meaning of political friendship, and the strategy behind coalition building. Had Churchill not been lost in his Wilderness during the 1930s, he may have never found his way to the premiership in 1940. He may have struggled to make allies and

¹⁹⁴ “Winston Churchill and the Cold War,” *National Churchill Museum*, Accessed January 31, 2020, <https://www.nationalchurchillmuseum.org/winston-churchill-and-the-cold-war.html>.

¹⁹⁵ Churchill, *Marlborough*, v. I, 825.

impatiently burned bridges necessary to defeat the enemy. The time he spent reflecting, writing, and learning was of critical importance to fulfill his 1891 prophecy. Moshe Wander concluded that “Churchill set out in writing *Marlborough* to rescue his ancestor from what he saw as Macaulay’s distortions and outright lies. Along the way he found a soldier and strategist to serve as a model in his own struggle to save Europe.”¹⁹⁶ Churchill was never lost in his Wilderness however; rather he was always in pursuit of the distant mountains, slowly making his way up and collecting the fruits of wisdom en route to 1940.

Conclusion: Churchill’s “Past Life” Lessons

The purpose of this chapter was to identify key lessons and knowledge that Churchill drew from his upbringing and life experiences in politics, on the battlefield, as a historian and biographer. Most importantly, Churchill became the man he was in 1940 because of his education and experiences. Upon becoming prime minister, Churchill declared:

I was conscious of a profound sense of relief. At last I had the authority to give direction over the whole scene, I felt as if I were walking with destiny, and that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial...I thought I knew a good deal about it all, and I was sure I should not fail.¹⁹⁷

Though Churchill had many historical inspirations including Clemenceau, Napoleon, Nelson, Marlborough, Cicero, Caesar, and his father to name a few, Churchill created his own destiny and developed his own style of leadership to ultimately fulfill his prophecy of 1891. He drew on certain principles from all these figures, but only in addition to what he already understood to be his leadership paradigm. In his *Early Life*, Churchill elucidated:

The foundations have to be laid, the data assembled, and the premises must bear the weight of their conclusions. Ornaments or refinements may then be added. The whole when finished is only the successful presentation of a theme.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Moshe Wander, “How the Duke of Marlborough Inspired Winston Churchill to Greatness,” *National Review*, May 19, 2018, accessed January 31, 2020, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/05/winston-churchill-ancestor-duke-of-marlborough-soldiers-strategies/>.

¹⁹⁷ Roberts, 514. [Emphasis added]

¹⁹⁸ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 212.

The foundations, data, and premises were all of Churchill's experiences and the lessons he absorbed. Moreover, the ornaments are the additional principles drawn from his inspirations to create an indomitable leader in Winston Churchill. Once the Christmas tree is standing with all of its lights and ornaments in place can a message or theme be determined and evaluated. This was the Churchill of May 1940.

To recap, Churchill's Christmas tree was finding its way into the stand as he was growing up. The distance between he and his parents during his youth helped develop not only a personal independence and understanding of responsibility, but also led him to further revere his aloof father and "vindicate his memory."¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, after Randolph's early demise, Jennie stepped away from her isolationist treatment of Churchill and embraced him. The distance had done its damage however, as Churchill compared their relationship to that of brother and sister. The connection they shared was most likely similar to Marlborough's "Cockpit of friendships" as they worked hand-in-hand to further Winston's international pursuits and political ambitions at home.

Churchill had a strange but powerful relationship with destiny. His visionary foresight and ability to project his desires into reality was providential. His 1891 prophecy laid the foundation for his ascension to prime minister in 1940. Churchill's worldview was bounded by predestination and freewill. These two principles, apparent contradictions of one another, were understood by him to be different perspectives of the same thing. Though for most this sounded impossible, Churchill firmly believed in it as it guided him not only to the premiership but throughout the war resulting in Nazi defeat. In a Manichean world, Churchill knew that evil and darkness could never prevail over goodness and light. Consequently, he foresaw the Allied

¹⁹⁹ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 62.

victory over fascism and led the charge into what appeared to be perilous and ultimate defeat. Yet from the ashes of the smoldering London rubble, he picked up the torch of valor and shined it into the night skies overtaken by *Luftwaffe* pilots. This light carried the message of “never surrender” across the seas into the New World and called upon the American giant to aid and sustain the brave inhabitants of the crippled island. Churchill’s relationship with these principles and destiny secured the tree into the stand and laid the foundation for his worldview.

In order to properly nurture and fluff the tree, Churchill strove to become a magnanimous man. The WWI memorial plaque that later became the moral of his memoirs was also the moral of his life. *In War: Resolution. In Defeat: Defiance. In Victory: Magnanimity. In Peace: Goodwill.*²⁰⁰ Churchill never drifted far from these principles as they always characterized the decisions he made. He was never a warmonger though is often charged with that accusation. He always strove for peace. However, if war erupted, he did not hesitate to fight nor consider surrender. He defied the Nazis in 1940, but then gave the Germans his hand upon their defeat in 1945. He recognized the importance of the magnanimous victor as it set a long-term precedent for peace and goodwill between historically antagonistic powers like France and Germany. If historians must assess why Churchill made a certain decision, look upon his morals for the answer.

Now that the foundation had been laid and tree nurtured, it was time for Churchill to incorporate the data and begin stringing the lights. Churchill had a magnificent self-education between his time learning the basics of the English language, his time in India, and working with Bourke Cockran. At age twenty-five, Churchill had read more insightful and fundamental books than most of his peers. From Edward Gibbon and Thomas Macaulay to Plato and Adam Smith,

²⁰⁰ Winston Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War*, ix.

his foundational knowledge expanded further. His readings of the *Annual Register* provided him with strong political understandings of the British Parliament while the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* gave him a historical wisdom unmatched by his colleagues. Churchill's relationship with the English language was particularly unique. Though he did not excel in Latin or Greek, he had a special connection with English that led him to master the written word as demonstrated in his unpublished article called "The Scaffolding of Rhetoric." Furthermore, he had published five books by 1900 and was learning the principles of oratory and visionary rhetoric from Cockran that would later define his speech-making persona and shape his renowned speeches of the Second World War.

As Churchill began to arrange the string of lights around the tree, he had to decide whether principle or party was most important to him. As he "crossed the floor" in 1904, Churchill demonstrated that his own principles were more significant than any kind of party loyalty. Though this was risky especially for a rookie politician, he challenged the norm and shaped his own destiny based on his principles as opposed to being dragged down by party politics. Whether Liberal or Conservative, Churchill represented himself and his constituents and did not "play the cold, calculated game of politics" as he had learned from his father.²⁰¹

As Churchill went to plug in the lighted tree, one of the branches caught fire and singed a lower quadrant. This was the Dardanelles. Churchill was unfairly scapegoated but was partially responsible for the disaster at Gallipoli. In this experience, Churchill drew upon three lessons. First, restraint was sometimes better than action. Never rush an operation for the sake of battle. Secondly, for Churchill to oversee and execute large military operations, he would have to wear both the "brass hat" of the military and "frock-coat" of the politician to maintain complete

²⁰¹ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 46-7.

control over the decisions and outcomes of the battle. Thirdly, and most importantly, he learned that mistakes are made, but one is not defeated until they give up or surrender. Therefore, the singed part of the tree had to be cut back a bit to promote new growth and as Churchill entered his Wilderness, he took the opportunity to blossom and finalize his preparations for his finest hour.

During the 1930s, Churchill wrote voraciously and compiled some remarkable books including his *Marlborough: His Life and Times*. While out of office, he used this time to reflect and learn about his past experiences to help prepare for what was to come. Writing *Marlborough* became an important landmark in his journey for leadership. Patience was crucial as Churchill's leadership paradigm developed. Furthermore, as he discovered Marlborough's comradeship with Eugene of Savoy, he realized the significance of political friendship and how it would later present itself between him and Roosevelt. As he nurtured this relationship and expanded upon it, Churchill also drew the from Marlborough how to effectively build a Grand Alliance or coalition against an imposing enemy. It was these lessons, life experiences, worldviews, perspective and perceptions that gave shape to Winston Churchill and his leadership paradigm. Once the tree was up, in the stand, nurtured and fluffed, lights strung, and recovering from misfortune, it was finally time to put the ornaments on. Though Churchill had many historical inspirations, this thesis will illuminate the principles and lessons he drew from French Premier Georges Clemenceau, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Horatio Nelson. Many of the decisions he made during the Second World War embodied characteristics and ideals of one or more of these individuals. It was time to decorate the tree.

Chapter Four:

The Bulldog and the Tiger

-Churchill and Clemenceau-



TARTARIN DANS LES INDES.

Born (together). "TIENS! LE TIGRE!"
[M. CLEMENCEAU has just sailed for India after big game.]

*"None of the beauty of Napoleon but I expect some of his St. Helena majesty, and far back beyond Napoleon, Roman figures come into view. The fierceness, the pride, the poverty after great office, the grandeur stripped of power, the unbreakable front offered to this world and to the next—all these belong to the ancients."*²⁰²

-Churchill about Clemenceau a year before his death-

* Image Source: Leonard Raven Hill, "Tartarin Dans Les Indes," Cartoon, London: *Punch Magazine*, September 29, 1920. <https://punch.photoshelter.com/image/I0000GHFVp9TVkqc>, accessed February 8, 2020.

²⁰² Paul Alkon, "Churchill on Clemenceau: His Best Student? Part II," *Finest Hour* 151 (2011): 38.

In his *Great Contemporaries*, Churchill wrote, “Clemenceau’s story is familiar to most of us. A life of storm, from beginning to the end; fighting, fighting all the way; never a pause, never a truce, never a rest. His blade was forged and tempered in the fires and chills of half a century.”²⁰³ No man understood this more than Churchill. He, himself, had experienced the same storm of military and political chaos throughout the first half of his life. From his experiences with the Malakand Field Force and journalism in South Africa to crossing the floor in Parliament and surviving the crippling blow of the Gallipoli campaign, Churchill, like Clemenceau, had faced a fierce storm of resistance. Churchill was never at rest. Whether he was fighting for his constituents in the English countryside or amassing troops in the trenches near Ploegsteert, Churchill never surrendered to political pressure nor gave in to his own occasional depression. Historians have recently analyzed and compared the relationship shared between Georges Clemenceau and Winston Churchill. Though they did not spend much time together, Churchill grew to admire Clemenceau and was inspired to model his wartime statesmanship after him. prime minister. Despite not sharing a similar worldview on ideas like magnanimity in victory, Churchill admired Clemenceau’s bold and courageous wartime leadership and appreciated his passionate drive to lead from the frontlines.

Georges Clemenceau lived a tumultuous life. In his youth, he studied medicine, was a teacher as well as a journalist. Like Churchill’s father, Clemenceau chose to marry an American woman. He also visited the American South in 1865, witnessed the destruction of the Civil War, and was a resident of New York. Eventually, he became Mayor of Montmartre when he returned to France after the Franco-Prussian War. Clemenceau’s career was “a long impatience” (a Napoleonic phrase) as he was eager to participate in the contentious French politics of the late

²⁰³ Winston Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, London: Butterworth, 1937, 303.

19th century.²⁰⁴ This included incidents like the Grévy and Panama scandals as well as the infamous Dreyfus Affair. Similar to Churchill's Dardanelles scapegoat, Clemenceau was unjustly accused of bribery in the Panama case. The relationship he shared with those responsible led to his removal from political office and he, like Churchill, also entered a Wilderness. Moreover, during this period, Clemenceau's journalistic output exploded. "His inkwell," Brock observed, "was his fountain of youth when politics failed him."²⁰⁵ Churchill added, "He wrote for bread and life: for life and honour! And far and wide what he wrote was read. Thus, he survived. He survived not to recover only, but to assault: not to assault, but to conquer."²⁰⁶ And conquer he did as he became one of Captain Alfred Dreyfus's strongest advocates who had been accused of treason. As anti-Semitism continued to rise globally at the turn of the century, Clemenceau defended Dreyfus who was eventually acquitted, served in the Great War and survived. As portrayed, one of Clemenceau's most respected traits was his sense of justice.* Referring to this affair, Churchill reflected, "Truth and Justice marched forward: and along the path which he had helped to clear for them, Clemenceau came back into his own."²⁰⁷

While in his Wilderness, Clemenceau met another French journalist named Emile Buré and became close friends. In 1906, Clemenceau rejoined the government as Minister of the Interior and appointed Buré to the head of his Cabinet. During one heated debate between

²⁰⁴ H. I. Brock, "Georges Clemenceau, A Tiger Who Fought to the End," *New York Times*, December 5, 1943, accessed February 5, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1943/12/05/83956079.html?pageNumber=78>. "A long impatience" originated in Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* to describe the impatient return of Heraclius to Rome. Historians have used the phrase to describe Napoleon's leadership because he failed to understand the importance of patience in war.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, 309.

* Clemenceau was involved in over fifty duels in the 19th century, one of which was against the notorious anti-Semite Paul Déroulède.

Source: Thirza Vallois, "The Lair of Le Tigre," *France Today*, January 7, 2015, accessed February 5, 2020, https://www.francetoday.com/culture/museums-galleries/the_lair_of_le_tigre_visiting_the_musee_clemenceau_in_paris/.

²⁰⁷ Churchill, 309.

Clemenceau and another government official, Buré reported that it appeared as if Clemenceau had pounced on the man and threw him out the door. Furthermore, he concluded, “*J’ai cru voir un tigre*,” (I believe to have seen a tiger).²⁰⁸ This was the first mention of the iconic nickname that he would later adopt during the Great War. Clemenceau never referred to it himself but embodied it proudly and even travelled to India after WWI to hunt his namesake at eighty years old!

In 1906, he not only became the ‘Tiger’, but also ascended to the premiership for the first time. However, in a short-lived tenure, he resigned in 1909 after a naval dispute with former French foreign minister Théophile Delcassé who had deemed the navy unfit for war. Though Clemenceau maintained respectable political influence, he was not called back to the helm until 1917 at France’s darkest hour. Churchill vividly illustrated his return:

Profound and tortuous intrigues gripped Paris. Britain had bled herself white at Paschendaele, the Russians had collapsed, the Italians at the last gasp, and the Americans were far away. The giant enemy towered up, brazen, and so far as we could see, invulnerable. It was at this moment, after every other conceivable combination had been tried, that the fierce old man was summoned to what was in fact the Dictatorship of France. He returned to power as Marius had returned to Rome; doubted by many, dreaded by all, but doom-sent, inevitable.²⁰⁹

Interestingly, this was how the Conservatives felt about Churchill in the spring of 1940.* Upon becoming prime minister, Clemenceau, like Churchill, also made himself minister of defense so he could oversee the political side of the war as well as command the strategic. Here, he took complete control of the French chamber and truly embodied his moniker, the ‘Tiger.’ Churchill observed, “He looked like a wild animal pacing to and fro behind bars, growling and glaring; and

Commented [BM31]: You said you did not see how these sentences relate to one another. What I am trying to saying is that Clemenceau did not mind being referred to as “the tiger” but he never called himself that.

²⁰⁸ Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Clemenceau*, Paris: Fayard, 2007, 389.

²⁰⁹ Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, 310. Churchill firmly believed that Clemenceau the Tiger made a truer mascot for France than any barnyard fowl (i.e. the Gallic Cock).

* Dismayed by Churchill’s appointment, Henry Channon wrote that May 10, 1940 was “perhaps the darkest day in English history. We were all sad, angry and felt cheated and outwitted.” Lord Halifax fittingly added, “The gangsters will shortly be in complete control,” (Roberts, 513).

all around him was an assembly which would have done anything to avoid having him there, but having put him there, felt they must obey.”²¹⁰ As the situation worsened in 1918, Clemenceau aggressively advocated for a policy of total war or “*la guerre jusqu'au bout*” (war until the end).²¹¹ This greatly inspired Churchill’s moral *In War-Resolution* and characterized his approach to fighting the Nazis twenty years later. With this strategy, “France had resolved to unbar the cage and let her tiger loose upon all foes, beyond the trenches or in her midst.... With snarls and growls, the ferocious, aged, dauntless beast of prey went into action. In this fashion did the death-grapple with Germany begin.”²¹²

Before the ‘Tiger’ could attack the Germans, he had to first subdue the defeatists in his own government. Churchill shared a similar experience during the War Cabinet Crisis in May 1940. Both he and Clemenceau stood firm against the pressure to capitulate and declared to fight on. Former French Foreign Minister Joseph Caillaux disagreed with the prime minister’s wartime strategy and wanted to surrender to the Germans and negotiate peace. Caillaux was immediately arrested for gambling on French defeat.²¹³ One could imagine how Clemenceau would have reacted to Pétain and Weygand’s defeatism in June 1940 especially when the latter asserted that “Britain would soon have her neck wrung like a chicken.”²¹⁴ It is a common misconception to attribute *never surrender* to Winston Churchill and though he presented that powerful peroration on June 4, 1940, he was not the first. Georges Clemenceau preceded him. After the German Spring Offensive of 1918 began, Clemenceau declared to Churchill and the French War Ministry, “I will fight in front of Paris; I will fight in Paris; I will fight behind Paris.

²¹⁰ Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, 311.

²¹¹ David Robin Watson, *Clemenceau: A Political Biography*, Philadelphia: David McKay and Co, 1976.

²¹² Roberts, 258.

²¹³ Edgar Holt, *The Tiger: The Life of Georges Clemenceau, 1841–1929*, New York: Hamilton, 1976, 192.

²¹⁴ Williamson Murray, “Churchill Takes Charge,” *Historynet*, accessed November 21, 2017, <http://www.historynet.com/churchill-takes-charge.htm>.

We are now giving ground, but we shall never surrender.”²¹⁵ Churchill further observed, “Paris might have been reduced to the ruins of Ypres or Arras. It would not have affected Clemenceau’s resolution. He meant to sit on the safety-valve, till he won or till all his world blew up.”²¹⁶

Clemenceau clearly inspired Churchill’s wartime oratory and contributed to his defiant stratagem against Hitler. Furthermore, like the ‘Tiger’, Churchill refused any kind of peace negotiation with the Nazis until they and German militarism had been extirpated.

As a military leader, Clemenceau was not convincing; however, his determination to visit the common French *poilu* (soldier) greatly impacted declining morale on the frontlines and characterized his drive to lead from the front. The ‘Tiger’ loved to prowl the battlefield, inspire his men and taunt the Germans. This contributed to his second moniker, *Père la Victoire* (Father of Victory).

Churchill’s first major encounter with Clemenceau occurred on March 30, 1918, a week after the Spring Offensive began. Lloyd George had sent him to meet with the ‘Tiger’ to acquire an accurate picture of the developing battle. Meeting with Clemenceau for the first time was surprisingly warm and welcoming Churchill wrote of the encounter.

I am delighted, my dear Wilson (*sic*) Churchill, that you have come. We shall show you everything. We shall go together everywhere and see everything for ourselves.... Whatever is known, whatever I learn, you shall know.²¹⁷

This was a fascinating initial interaction as Clemenceau, the ardent Anglophile, and Churchill, the eminent Francophile, melded together powerfully even though he mistook Winston’s name.

After meeting with the other English commanders, Haig and Rawlinson, Clemenceau and Churchill discovered how dire the British situation currently was. The German surprise offensive

²¹⁵ Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, 312; Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis Volume III, 1916-1918*, London: Thornton Butterworth, 1927, 456.

²¹⁶ Roberts, 258.

²¹⁷ Winston Churchill, *Thoughts and Adventures*, London: Thornton Butterworth, 1932, 168.

had devastated British lines and forced them all to slowly retreat. Rawlinson had hoped he could call upon Clemenceau to bring up French reinforcements to which the 'Tiger' replied, "Very well, then it is all right. I have done what you wish.... If your men are tired and we have fresh men near at hand, our men shall come at once and help you." This was a blessing for British troops, but the 'Tiger' had not finished. "And now, I claim my reward. I wish to pass the river and see the battle." Rawlinson obviously declined the request reporting that the situation was "extremely uncertain." Nonetheless, Clemenceau countered, "Good. We will re-establish it. A few shells will do the General good."²¹⁸ This was the bold and fierce leadership that Churchill came to admire and replicate. Churchill, himself had always been an ambitious and driving force so this experience only reinforced his understanding on how to effectively lead. After they returned from the frontlines, Churchill warned Clemenceau, "This sort of excursion is all right for a single day: but you ought not go under fire too often." The 'Tiger' replied, "*C'est mon grand plaisir*" (That's my great pleasure). It is humorous to think that Churchill was considerably more cautious before he became prime minister. Arguably, it was equally Churchill's pleasure to watch the Blitz from the London rooftops, visit firing anti-air crews, participate in the D-Day operations, and cross the Rhine in 1945.

When the war ended and the Paris Peace Conference began, Clemenceau was selected as president since he spoke both French and English. It was here that he and Churchill's worldview clashed. Manchester wrote, "Churchill saw Versailles as 'grimly polished and trellised with live wires.... [Lloyd George] tried, but failed, to dilute Clemenceau's draconian demands upon the Germans."²¹⁹ Before his Anglophilia, Clemenceau was a committed French nationalist and was

²¹⁸ Winston Churchill, "My 17 Fateful Hours with Clemenceau," *Sunday Dispatch*, January 14, 1940, CHAR 8/665, The Sir Winston Churchill Archive Trust, accessed February 10, 2020, <http://www.churchillarchive.com/>.

²¹⁹ Manchester, *Visions*, 661.

intimately concerned with the resurgence of German militarism. Moreover, as prime minister, the 'Tiger' had to, to some degree, represent the feelings of the French people as they were in no mood for *magnanimity in victory*. France had borne the brunt of the Great War while Germany remained practically unscathed. This fact instilled fear in the French populace that Germany could rise up and invade again after regenerating its strength. Therefore, Versailles tried to curtail that as strictly as possible which ended up proving counterproductive. Churchill later described the clauses of the Treaty as "malignant and silly to an extent that made them obviously futile" and "a sad story of complicated idiocy." Maintaining his position as the magnanimous victor, Churchill "urged the humane treatment of Germany, warning of the grave consequences for the future."²²⁰ Though Churchill and Clemenceau shared a similar worldview about the execution of war and leadership throughout, they did not, in any regard, agree upon the road to peace after battle. Consequently, Versailles created an angry and spiteful German people who rallied under the banner of National Socialism when Hitler came to power in 1933. Churchill observed, "The soul of Germany smoulders with dreams of a War of Liberation or Revenge."²²¹ Churchill foresaw the consequences of Versailles but unfortunately had no authority to take remedial action.

The aggressive position Clemenceau held at the conference was still not enough for the French people as they refused to elect him as president in 1920. He, therefore, resigned as prime minister for the last time and did not enter politics again. Churchill reflected, "When the victory was won, France to foreign eyes seemed ungrateful. She flung [Clemenceau] aside and hastened back as quickly as possible to the old hugger-mugger of party politics." As a man of principle,

²²⁰ Roberts, 273.

²²¹ Sandys and Littman, 83-84.

Churchill found the French people's behavior "impolite."²²² He would hold similar feelings after he lost the election in 1945. For example, in a conversation with the king, he refused to accept a chivalrous order and frustratingly questioned, "Why should I accept the Order of the Garter from His Majesty when the people have just given me the order of the boot?"²²³ Clemenceau and Churchill shared similar war stories from beginning to end as Churchill emulated the 'Tiger's' commitment to lead from the front.

When the Luftwaffe began its Blitz on London in fall 1940, Churchill picked up the torch of resistance, having already defied Hitler on multiple occasions, and set out to boost the morale of his fellow countrymen. Still alone in his darkest hour and awaiting the New World's rescue and liberation, Churchill, like the 'Tiger', was determined to stay in the fight whatever the cost may be. Like Clemenceau, Churchill faced a real dilemma. To boost the morale of a people trapped within Dante's nightly inferno would be no easy task. However, Churchill knew that to be a successful wartime leader, one must lead from the front. Just as Clemenceau had done with his French *poilu*, Churchill strove to do the same for the citizens that became homeless overnight. In his dashing striped siren suit, top hat, cane, and Cuban cigar, Churchill set out to see the damage of the Blitz himself and share conversations with his people. On the second day of the Blitz, Churchill and Clementine visited an air raid shelter where forty people had been killed by a direct hit the previous night. Ismay observed:

Some of the larger buildings were mere skeletons, and many of the smaller houses had been reduced to rubble. The sight of tiny paper Union Jacks which had already been planted on two or three of these pathetic heaps brought a lump to one's throat.²²⁴

²²² Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, 313.

²²³ Roberts, 885.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 593.

Upon arrival, Churchill was surprised to see a relatively relieved crowd. They rushed him and said, “Good old Winnie. We thought you’d come and see us. We can take it. Give it ‘em back.” Churchill began to shed tears and one elderly lady exclaimed, “You see, he really cares: he’s crying.”²²⁵ Churchill devoted himself and his time to the people. Keeping their spirits high was his most important priority because without the people, there would be no will to fight on. His long-term goal was to defeat the Nazi menace but in 1940 Churchill’s duty was to morally support and unify the people against the German war machine. Inspired by Clemenceau’s commitment to his troops, he empowered the people, bombed Berlin, and paid visits to the crews of the anti-air positions around London. From November 1917 to the end of the war, the ‘Tiger’ spent ninety of the 360 days touring the trench lines, stirring the troops and earning their admiration as the *Père la Victoire*.²²⁶ Churchill, more so, worked tirelessly during the eight month German Blitz to keep the British Isles in the fight at all costs and did so effectively.

During the Blitz, Churchill made sure to visit every major industrial city and port in England, Scotland, and Wales as well as visit the men, their AA emplacements, and coastal defenses. These visits particularly moved the men as they shared a toast of either whiskey or tea with Winston and carried on against the German onslaught. Churchill’s pledge that he could only offer “blood, toil, tears, and sweat” was never truer during the Blitz. Moreover, though his emotions often overwhelmed him, Churchill maintained a courageous front that embodied the spirit of the ‘Tiger.’ When photographers came to take his picture after the bombing of the House, for example, Manchester described his stature:

There he stands, in profile, the sharp white northern latitude diffused by a fine haze of pulverized stone, a scene of utter wreckage, the ancient seat of

²²⁵ Roberts, 593.

²²⁶ Michaël Bourlet, “Civilian and Military Power (France),” *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, January 27, 2017, accessed February 8, 2020, https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/civilian_and_military_power_france.

government smashed. Yet it is Churchill more than the wreckage that the observer notes, his chin thrust forward in defiance, an invitation to Hitler to take another swing. His gaze in such photos is firm, and always directed at a particular shocked or bewildered bomb victim, or skyward, toward some unseen enemy, perhaps toward a higher power...his eyes are never downcast. There is a contemplative quotient to his stare...it is the hard, unsettling gaze of a man who has been wronged, and who is intent on righting that wrong...a posture of immutability and imperturbability—this was about all Churchill could offer Britons as the Blitz wore on.²²⁷

This was defiance. This was power. This was Churchill the bulldog leading from the front and ready to bite the nose of Hitler the bull just as the Tiger maimed the Kaiser twenty years prior. Both the Spring Offensive of 1918 and the Blitz of 1940-41 were dark moments in Allied history but were overcome thanks to strong, competent, and caring statesmen. The Tiger and the Bulldog worked furiously for the soldiers and the people. Clemenceau and Churchill had firm grasps on the political and military situations and eventually led their countrymen to the light.

Ever expanding his connection with the troops and developing situations in the field, Churchill embraced what was called his 'virtual office.' As he had learned from his own life experiences as well as the time spent with Clemenceau, Churchill found it most effective to seek and resolve problems at the source. Not only was he an audacious risk-taker as presented previously, but he was arguably the most travelled statesman of all during the Second World War. Churchill appreciated the hands-on experiences that were made possible during his extensive travels. There could be heavy AA and enemy fighters airborne and Churchill would have still found a way to get to his destination. This fiery ambition most likely stemmed from his early military career in the Empire as he never had a problem putting himself in harm's way for the good of his men as well as benefitting himself. The seventeen hours he shared with Clemenceau in 1918 only reinforced his understanding of the importance of leading from the

²²⁷ Manchester and Reid, *Defender of the Realm*, 263

front as opposed to “arm chairing” from No. 10. In the example presented below, Churchill spent twenty-six days on an overseas tour to observe the Italian campaign and the invasion of southern France as well as nurture diplomatic relations with several high-level dignitaries including the Pope, FDR, Marshall Tito, General Mark Clark and Alexander to name a few.

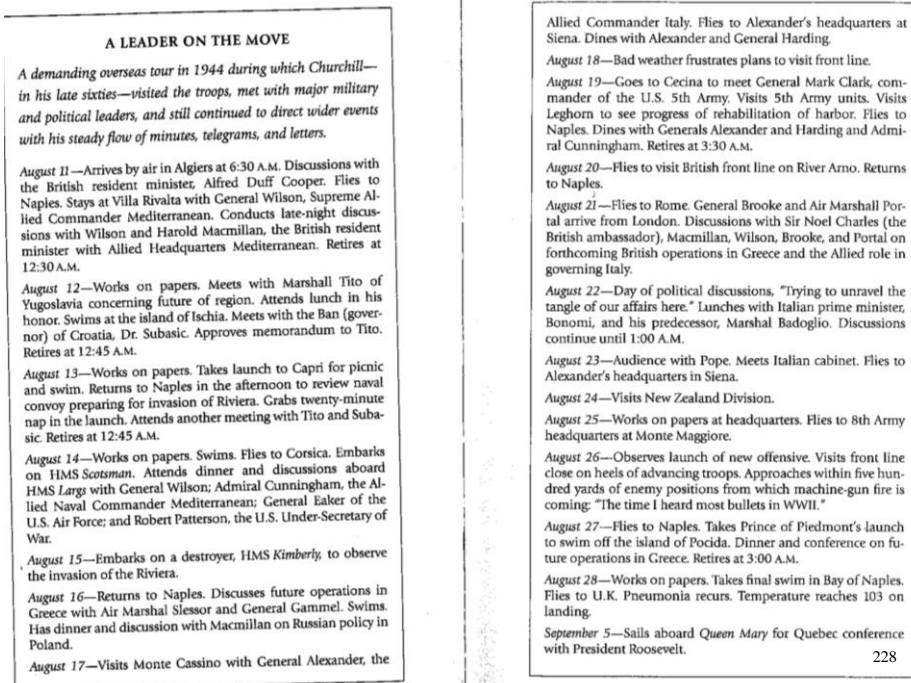


Figure 1: Churchill leads from the front in his “virtual office” on a twenty-six-day trip across Europe.

In this twenty-six day escapade, Churchill flew no less than ten times across southern Europe, dealt with strategic and operational decisions with Allied generals, held diplomatic and political meetings with European leadership, visited the troops, and approached within five hundred yards of incoming enemy fire on the Italian peninsula. One can imagine the impact this had on Allied

²²⁸ Image Source: Sandys and Littmann, 108-109.

morale as well as the impression he left upon those he collaborated with. Moreover, this presented an inspiring image of a go-getting and unyielding Bulldog leading from the front along with those fighting and dying on the battlefield. Churchill stepped out from the shadow of the 'Tiger' and became his own force to be reckoned with.

As the war progressed into Germany, Churchill epitomized the lead from the front doctrine in March 1945 when he joined Montgomery to cross the Rhine. Only days after Eisenhower's armies had traversed the river, Churchill insisted on standing on the most shelled part of the waterway and grinningly declared, "Well, I'm an old man and I've worked hard. Why shouldn't I have a little fun?"²²⁹ The danger was still real as German snipers and gunners were pouring fire on a group of British engineers only 400 yards downstream. Just as Clemenceau's staff feared for the safety of their prime minister, it is easy to imagine the stresses Churchill's guards endured trying to keep the bulldog from blowing himself up. Field Marshal Alanbrooke remembered Churchill's reaction when he was advised to step away from the river. Instead of coming away, he stepped up on to the wrecked bridge and "put both his arms round one of the twisted girders and looked over his shoulder...with pouting mouth and angry eyes!"²³⁰ Andrew Roberts asserted that this burning desire to be in the middle of the fight stemmed from Churchill's admiration of Admiral Nelson and his "glorious death at the moment of victory."²³¹ While this was certainly true, Churchill recognized the importance of seeing the fight through to the end, instilling his men with the inspiration to carry on and finish the job just as Clemenceau had accomplished.

²²⁹ Roberts, 867.

²³⁰ Manchester and Reid, *Defender of the Realm*, 907.

²³¹ Roberts, 867.

The next day Montgomery surprisingly agreed to take the Bulldog across the river. Churchill recorded: “We landed in brilliant sunshine and perfect peace on the German shore.”²³² Once disembarked, Churchill immediately noticed a handful of German POWs who had been herded into a barbed-wire enclosure. Interestingly, some of the disheveled prisoners recognized the Bulldog and “gaped at him in absolute astonishment.”²³³ This was an important observation because it demonstrated that unlike the Tiger and Bulldog, Hitler shielded himself with the blood of ordinary German men and refused to put himself at risk. More significantly, Churchill’s sense of magnanimity reigned true during this encounter because although these men represented the Nazi regime he swore to destroy, he recognized that they, as the defeated, were “very strained” which “had moved and upset him.” Again, this was where the Tiger and Bulldog differed in worldview. Clemenceau would never have sympathized with his captured foe. He would more likely have taunted them instead as he fed off his explosive French nationalistic spirit. Churchill accurately assessed that Clemenceau was, in fact, the modern French revolutionary:

He was an apparition of the French Revolution at its sublime moment, before it was overtaken by the squalid butcheries of the Terrorists. He represented the French people risen against tyrants—tyrants of the mind, tyrants of the soul, tyrants of the body; foreign tyrants, domestic tyrants, swindlers, humbugs, grafters, traitors, invaders, defeatists—all lay within the bound of the Tiger; and against them the Tiger waged inexorable war. Anti-clerical, anti-monarchist, anti-Communist, anti-German—in all this he represented the dominant spirit of France.²³⁴

After the Great War, Churchill personally met with Clemenceau at his home on Rue Benjamin Franklin on multiple occasions before the latter’s death in 1929. Respectfully, the Tiger told Churchill, “I invite no one here, but whenever you come, you will be welcome.” Furthermore, he added in a conversation with his daughter, “Mr. Winston Churchill is very far from being an

²³² Manchester, *Defender*, 907.

²³³ “Moment in Time—Recrossing the Rhine, 26 March 1945,” *Finest Hour* 151 (2011): 43.

²³⁴ Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, 303.

enemy of France.”²³⁵ Even though they spent little time together, the Tiger and Bulldog became cordial allies who shared comparable perspectives on wartime leadership. Moreover, Churchill came to admire Clemenceau for his courage, determination, and strength of will during the Great War and set out to lead the same way during the Second World War. However, Dr. Paul Alkon importantly noted:

Churchill as prime minister would probably have acted and spoken as he did even if he had not known or studied Clemenceau. Many other aspects of his experiences, studies, and psychology pointed him in the same direction. It was their affinities that prompted Churchill to study Clemenceau, and not the study of Clemenceau that prompted those affinities. Nevertheless, Churchill’s instincts as leader, and occasionally the very words of his public pronouncements, were surely fortified by his deep and abiding understanding of Clemenceau’s career.²³⁶

This point must not be taken lightly as it must be reflected upon throughout the upcoming chapters. These great men—Clemenceau, Napoleon, and Nelson—all inspired Churchill’s wartime leadership to some degree but they did not shape it. Churchill shaped his own understanding of leadership based on his worldview and the life experiences he reflected upon. The great men he did come to admire all influenced him and his decision making but Churchill was his own independent and magnanimous mind.

Churchill reflectively wrote, “Those who are charged with the direction of supreme affairs must sit on the mountain-tops of control; they must never descend into the valleys of direct physical and personal action.”²³⁷ He may have learned this during the Dardanelles debacle, but it did not represent his persona as a man of action who leads from the front. Churchill studied the lessons and consequences of Gallipoli and realized the valuable insights one gains from descending the mountaintops into the valleys. The failure of Gallipoli along with what he learned

²³⁵ Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, 314. He added that Lloyd George was an enemy of France.

²³⁶ Alkon, 38.

²³⁷ Roberts, 193.

from Clemenceau, both during the war, and at the Paris Peace Conference greatly matured his perspective of leadership and reinforced his understanding of wartime statesmanship. Upon becoming prime minister, Churchill was ready to fulfill his destiny, lead from the front, and embody the 'Tiger's' spirit as the British bulldog.

Chapter Five:

Winston and the Emperor

-Churchill and Napoleon-



DISARMAMENT AND THE MAN.

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL (late Minister of War by Land and Sea). "OF COURSE MY TRUE GENIUS IS BELLICOSE; BUT IF THEY INSIST ON MY REPRESENTING MY COUNTRY AT THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE I MUST MAKE THE SACRIFICE."

*"Napoleon was a military tyrant, a conqueror, a man of order and discipline, a man of mundane ambitions and overwhelming egotism but his grandeur defied misfortune and rises superior even to Time."*²³⁸

-Correspondence between Churchill and President of the Committee for the Centenary of Napoleon's death, 1920-

* Image Source: "Interwar Churchill Cartoons," Cartoon, London: *Punch Magazine*, October 5, 1921, <https://punch.photoshelter.com/image/10000SIQa5Lyhbe0>, accessed February 14, 2020.

²³⁸ Winston Churchill, Correspondence with the President of the Comite du Centenaire de la mort de Napoleon, October-November 1920, Churchill Papers, CHAR 2/111/44 & 49.

Since the 19th century, Napoleon Bonaparte has garnered an apparent bi-polar reputation. During the age of the Napoleonic Wars and shortly thereafter, he was often referred to as “Colossus” and “The Armed Soldier of Democracy.” However, as time elapsed, as with all great men, his reputation came under historiographic assault as he transformed into the formidable tyrant and “Nightmare of Europe.”²³⁹ Historians have wondered why Churchill could have ever held a man like Napoleon in such high esteem. However, the answer is quite clear. Churchill was born into the Victorian age and raised in a vastly different historical tradition than both the 20th and 21st centuries. As a representative of the British liberal Whig tradition, Churchill supported the French Revolution (before the Terror) and “hailed Napoleon as the modernising force that had swept away old tyrannies and established a new Europe based more on law and liberty.”²⁴⁰ There is no debate that Napoleon was a dictator and a tyrant, however, unlike Hitler and his Nazi worldviews, he fought and conquered to spread the ideals of the French Revolution across the continent. Madame de Rémusat observed that “men worn out by the turmoil of the Revolution...looked for the domination of an able ruler. [The] people believed quite sincerely that Bonaparte, whether as consul or emperor, would exert his authority and save [them] from the perils of anarchy.”²⁴¹ Though his methods were violent and often obscene, Napoleon believed he was destined to uproot and destroy the *ancien* monarchical *régimes* throughout Europe. It was this revolutionary spirit that Churchill came to admire as well as Napoleon’s explosive ambition combined with extraordinary talent. Churchill most likely saw

²³⁹ Geri Walton, “21 Nicknames of Napoleon,” *Geri Walton*, March 23, 2016, accessed February 14, 2020, <https://www.geriwaltton.com/21-nicknames-of-napoleon/>.

²⁴⁰ Allen Packwood, “A Tale of Two Statesmen: Churchill and Napoleon,” *Finest Hour* 157 (2011): 17.

²⁴¹ Claire Elisabeth De Rémusat, *Memoirs of Madame De Rémusat, 1802-1808 Volume I*, Los Angeles: Hard Press Publishing, 2012, 542.

similarities between the tyranny of the absolute monarchy and the oppression of the National Socialist Empire and aspired to emulate the Napoleonic upheaval.

At the height of the French Revolution and its Reign of Terror in 1793, the nineteen-year-old Corsican Napoleon was an ambitious artillery officer who captured Toulon on behalf of the French Revolutionary Government. By age 24, he had become a General and would soon command the French Army of the Interior as well as the Army of Italy. He led his troops to magnificent victories against Austria, occupied Egypt, and invaded the coastal cities of Palestine. In November 1799, he led a *coup d'état*, overthrew the royalist government, and declared himself First Consul. At age thirty-five in 1804, he crowned himself Emperor of France. Therefore, within ten short years he evolved from a smalltime artillery officer to Overlord of the country and eventually Europe as well. Fittingly, Churchill described him as “the greatest man of action born in Europe since Julius Caesar.”²⁴² Like Churchill, Napoleon was an astute student of history and admirer of Ancient Rome. He studied Caesar, wrote a biography of the man, and aspired to emulate his leadership on the battlefield. As a military mastermind, Napoleon led victorious campaigns against the Austrian and Russian Empires, invaded Spain, and considered an invasion of Britain. He and his *Grande Armée* fought off five coalitions of Allied forces over the span of fifteen years before being devoured by the Russian Winter in 1812; a lesson that Hitler obviously did not heed. The Sixth Coalition defeated Napoleon and sent him to exile on Elba between 1813-1814 but that did not stop the ambitious Corsican Emperor. Napoleon escaped from exile, returned to France, and pledged to continue his rule. The Congress of Vienna declared him an outlaw and formed the Seventh Coalition and ultimately defeated him at the Battle of Waterloo on June 18, 1815. This time the coalition banished Napoleon to St. Helena, an

Commented [BM32]: I believe this fits here because Churchill sought to destroy the Nazi regime just as Napoleon tried to overthrow the ancien regime

²⁴² Andrew Roberts, *Leadership in War: Essential Lessons from Those Who Made History*, New York: Viking, 2019, 2.

island 1,000 miles off the coast of Africa. It was here that Napoleon lived the rest of his war-wrung life, wrote the Caesar biography, and learned English. He died six years later in 1821 at the age of 51 forever trapped on that island. In a review of the play “St. Helena,” Churchill darkly assessed the end of his hero’s life:

Six bitter years of narrowness and monotony, mocked by false hopes, accompanied by an infinity of petty vexations, and closing in illness, pain and protracted death, form the shadow without which twenty years of prodigy, power, and glory would be incomplete. Here is the Corsican ogre with his hundred crimes, his hundred battles, and the deaths of several millions of human beings upon his head, caught at last by his one indomitable enemy and flung with a handful of followers...to rot and die on a volcanic islet lost in the wastes of the ocean.²⁴³

Churchill’s analysis of Napoleon in this review illuminated his strong understanding of the man. He aptly recognized the sufferings and horrors that Napoleon had caused, but also relays the importance of the Napoleonic legacy that many often overlook. He explained:

In those six years the legend grew in Europe that Napoleon stood for Freedom, Liberalism, Democracy, for the French Revolution, for the down-fall of tyrants, for the rights and advance of the common people in every land.²⁴⁴

The Revolution’s Reign of Terror tarnished the Enlightened values for which it stood. Therefore, Napoleon’s critics castigate him for internationalizing the guillotined violence late in the Revolution. Churchill, on the other hand, saw both Napoleon and Clemenceau as revolutionaries of freedom who challenged the monarchical and imperial tyrannies of the Old World. Standing beside them, he too believed he could destroy the plague of tyrannical Nazism that had consumed Europe when he came to power. Some may argue that those on the receiving end of Napoleon’s blows thought of him in a different light. The monarchs, indeed, had an unfavorable

²⁴³ Winston Churchill, “Napoleon Lives Again in ‘St. Helena,’” in *The Collected Essays of Sir Winston Churchill*, London: Library of Imperial History, 4 vols, 1975, III, 269-71.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 271.

opinion of the emperor, but the people remembered him as the hero of the French Revolution. Of the Bourbon Restoration, Édouard Driault wrote:

Restoration indeed, but restoration of the privileges of the old regime, of the sovereignty of kings; the peoples brought back within the bounds of servitude. The kings formed a Holy Alliance, a mutual insurance against revolutionary fires, an armed peace of kings leagued against their peoples, and therefore a peace precarious and false. Immediately the oppressed nations shook their chains terrifyingly, and for a hundred years directed against the despotism of the kings a battle of which the Great War must be the last episode.²⁴⁵

According to Driault, Metternich's Congress of Vienna and 99-year peace was a sham and only representative of monarchical restoration and a return to the *ancien régime*. Whether this is true is beyond the scope of this paper but important to consider when evaluating Napoleon as a hero or villain.

Napoleonic Wisdom:

Though Napoleon was a masterful general and inspired by Caesar and Alexander the Great, Churchill's admiration did not stem from the emperor's military leadership. Rather, certain Napoleonic traits influenced Churchill's character and worldview, thus contributing to his personal leadership paradigm. While Clemenceau directly impacted Churchill's wartime leadership, Napoleon abstractly inspired it. Because of his upbringing in the Victorian era, Churchill shared a romanticized view of Napoleon making frequent references to him throughout his political and military career. Churchill clearly held a laudatory view of the Corsican as he would often refer to different Napoleonic maxims and quotations to assert and defend a claim. For example, during the Dardanelles fiasco, tensions between he and Admiral Lord Fisher reached a boiling point. As the operations in the Mediterranean began to collapse, Fisher grew angry, impatient and exclaimed: "D-m the Dardanelles! They'll be our grave! We could have had

²⁴⁵ Édouard Driault, "The Coalition of Europe Against Napoleon," *The American Historical Review* 24:4 (1919): 623-624.

the Greeks & everyone else at the right time but we are 'too late' ALWAYS! This war might be described as 'Procrastinations—vacillations—Antwerps.' (That's copyright!)"²⁴⁶ Fisher enjoyed recalling historical quotations to make a point; therefore, Churchill felt obliged to do the same. In response to Fisher's explosive remarks, Churchill equipped his red pen and quoted his French hero: "We are defeated at sea because our Admirals have learned—where I know not—that war can be made without running risks."²⁴⁷ Napoleon supposedly said these words after Nelson defeated his fleet at Trafalgar. Churchill shared both a pragmatic and intelligible relationship with Napoleon. He only quoted or referenced the Corsican when it was strategically advantageous to accomplish his objectives. Churchill knew that forcing the Dardanelles was a risky peripheral operation but foresaw the value of its success. Napoleon also witnessed the strategic worth of challenging and destroying Nelson's fleet. Had he been successful, the English Channel would have been free to cross for invasion of the British Isles. On the other hand, Churchill foresaw the defeat of the Ottoman Empire as an opportunity to break the stalemate on the Western Front and keep the Russians in the war.²⁴⁸ Consequently, it is clear that Churchill admired Napoleon's audacious decision-making and to better supplement his defense, used the emperor's words to justify certain decisions on the battlefield.

Churchill drew upon his Napoleonic wisdom often for his self-benefit as well. One of his earliest mentions of the emperor's maxims arguably saved his life. On November 15, 1899, Churchill surrendered himself to the South African Boers after an intense engagement around a derailed armored train. One can imagine the sense of defeat Churchill must have felt in this situation having survived the tribal warfare in India and the perilous cavalry charge at

²⁴⁶ CHAR 13/57/ 2-3.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ R. W. Thompson, *Winston Churchill: The Yankee Marlborough*, Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1963, 164.

Omdurman. After everything he had been through up to this point in his life, surrender appeared to be an impossibility until he was staring down the barrel of a Boer rifle. After his heroic stand, he stood alone against Louis Botha and his Boer soldiers at the train wreck. He was left with the choice to surrender or be cut down by Botha himself. In this life or death moment, Churchill reflected back onto his Napoleonic wisdom and recalled the maxim on surrender. Reliving the experience, he wrote, "I thought there was absolutely no chance of escape, if he fired he would surely hit me, so I held up my hands and surrendered myself a prisoner of war. 'When one is alone and unarmed,' said the great Napoleon, in words which flowed into my mind in the poignant minutes that followed, 'a surrender may be pardoned.'"²⁴⁹ He returned to this maxim in WWII as he planned for the withdrawal of troops to Egypt after the British surrender at Tobruk. Leading up to and during the war, Churchill would use several other maxims to justify his reasoning and decisions when fighting the Nazi war machine. Moreover, not only did he rely on the maxims and Napoleonic quotations, but there were specific principles that he drew from his Corsican hero which contributed to his Churchillian worldview.

The French Revolutionary Spirit:

Churchill's Francophilia and his focus on Clemenceau and Napoleon greatly contributed to his understanding of wartime leadership and Enlightenment ideals. As a Francophile, Churchill shared a strong connection with the French revolutionary spirit. He admired both Clemenceau and Napoleon as arbiters of the Revolution, both of whom contained the spirit of liberty and freedom. Churchill denounced the Reign of Terror describing it as the "squalid butcheries of Terrorists."²⁵⁰ More specifically, Churchill supported Edmund Burke's conclusions in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*:

²⁴⁹ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 252.

²⁵⁰ Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, 303.

[The revolutionaries] have demolished and laid everything level at their feet. Not one drop of their blood have they shed in the cause of the country they have ruined.... Their cruelty has not even been the base result of fear. It has been the effect of their sense of perfect safety, in authorizing treasons, robberies, rapes, assassinations, slaughters, and burnings throughout their harassed land. But the cause of all was plain from the beginning.²⁵¹

Churchill added that it was Burke who first showed how “In the name of reason irrational forces had been let loose. These were not easily to be assuaged. France was fated to undergo every form of revolutionary experience.... France was the crucible in which all the modern elements of Revolution were first put to the test.”²⁵² Churchill embodied the characteristics of an Enlightened philosophe and most likely compared the Jacobin violence in France to the rise of Nazi Germany and its own Reign of Terror.²⁵³ Therefore, as the Nazis imposed their will upon continental Europe, Churchill sought to emulate his hero Napoleon’s rise and liberation from darkness. On the 125th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, Churchill presented his *Finest Hour* speech which encapsulated the revolutionary spirit and the stakes at risk as the Nazi shadow shrouded over the British Isles. Churchill declared:

If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be freed and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new dark age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science.²⁵⁴

²⁵¹ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Project Gutenberg, 1790, para. 283, accessed February 20, 2020, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/15679/15679-h/15679-h.htm>. *Burke condemned the entire revolution while Churchill only the Terror. Nonetheless, the important takeaway was that violence did not complement the ideals of the Enlightenment nor the goals of the Revolution.

²⁵² Andrew Roberts, “Winston Churchill and Edmund Burke: An Appreciation of Kindred Souls,” *The Churchill Project*, May 17, 2019, accessed February 20, 2020, <https://winstonchurchill.hilldale.edu/burke-award-roberts/>.

²⁵³ Historically speaking, the Reign of Terror and Nazism are complete opposites, but one can speculate that Churchill saw the discrimination and violence against political officials and others in Germany similar to the unwarranted violence of the Reign of Terror.

²⁵⁴ Winston Churchill, “Their Finest Hour,” Speech to House of Commons, June 18, 1940, accessed February 21, 2020, <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1940-the-finest-hour/their-finest-hour/>.

Whether it was the dark age of Nazism or the return of the *ancien régime*, Churchill, like Clemenceau and Napoleon, was ready to fight for the freedom of peoples and halt the squalid butcheries of the Nazi menace.

The irony of this entire discussion is that Napoleon, himself, was a tyrant and dictator. However, because he represented the spirit of the Revolution and not the dictatorial oppression of other peoples, he maintained an important role in the construction of Churchill's worldview. Upon being rewarded the Grand Prix of the Fondation Napoleon for his masterful biography titled, *Napoleon the Great*, Andrew Roberts defended the emperor's reputation:

Far too many British historians persist in seeing only the dictator in his, and not the positive aspects of the man I like to think of as the Enlightenment on horseback. The builder, the educator, the encourager of science and industry, the self-made man, the thinker, the writer, the giant and the genius. Instead my countrymen only see the soldier, the conqueror, the invader. They blame all the Napoleonic Wars on him—ignoring his pleas for peace and despite the fact that many more wars were declared on France by the seven coalitions than he declared against others.²⁵⁵

This is the Napoleonic misconception that continues to wreak havoc upon the emperor's reputation. Many only look to his violent war making and formidable presence throughout the Napoleonic Wars to impulsively adjudicate his reputation, significance, and contribution. However, this was only a short-sighted assessment of Napoleon when, in fact, it was his long-term successes, and the contributions he made towards the formation of republican government that deserve further scrutiny. Napoleon, himself, once said, "My true glory is not to have won 40 battles. Waterloo will erase the memory of so many victories. But what nothing will destroy, what will live forever is my Civil Code."²⁵⁶ Today, a quarter of the world still uses a form of the Napoleonic Code. Churchill, himself, understood the implications and significance of

²⁵⁵ Andrew Roberts, "Acceptance Speech for the Fondation Napoleon Prix de Jury," British Embassy, Paris, October 2015.

²⁵⁶ Andrew Roberts, *Napoleon the Great*, London: Penguin, 2015, 270.

Napoleon's legacy. He reflected and paid tribute to Napoleon in his *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*:

The impetus of the French Revolution had been spread by the genius of Napoleon to the far quarters of Europe. Ideals of liberty and nationalism, born in Paris, had been imparted to all European peoples. In the nineteenth century ahead they were to clash resoundingly with the ordered world for which the Congress of Vienna had striven. If France was defeated and her Emperor fallen, the principles which had inspired her lived on. They were to play a notable part in every European country, Britain not excepted.²⁵⁷

Consequently, though Churchill held a laudatory view of Napoleon, his visionary abilities and long-term foresight helped explain his admiration for the emperor. Arguably, it is human nature to focus and worry about the short-term consequences of events. Churchill saw the importance of long-term contributions and wanted to leave his own enduring legacy for future generations. He rarely dwelled on the present, studied the past, and looked into the future for lasting impact. . Ever conscious of how history judged even the most brilliant based on solitary failings, Churchill saw Napoleon as a cautionary tale. He was not going to allow Gallipoli to stain his legacy and instead left behind a leadership paradigm to be emulated. . In the foreword of *The Gathering Storm*, he wrote:

It is my earnest hope that pondering upon the past may give guidance in the days to come, enable a new generation to repair some of the errors of former years, and thus govern, in accordance with the needs and glory of man, the awful unfolding scene of the future.²⁵⁸

Maurice Ashley added: "He was conscious of living through a heroic period of history and that in many of his actions and decisions as prime minister he actually asked himself what the judgement of history might be."²⁵⁹ The judgement of history frowned upon Napoleon and

²⁵⁷ Winston Churchill, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, vol. III *The Age of Revolution*, Book IX "Napoleon," London: Cassell, 1958, 326.

²⁵⁸ Churchill, *Memoirs*, preface viii.

²⁵⁹ Maurice Ashley, "Churchill and History," *International Affairs* 42:1 (1966): 93.

smiled upon Churchill. Napoleon's biggest folly was his reliance of powder and cannon. George Washington before him, translated military victory into civil progress, and thus laid a strong foundation for a prosperous United States. Napoleon's interminable conquests devastated Europe and with it, his legacy as the Enlightened soldier on horseback. His code will remain and thus be a reminder of the emperor's revolutionary intentions as well as his avid determination to destroy the *ancien régimes* absolutist monarchies. Churchill, on the other hand, learned from both Washington and Napoleon on how to conduct effective war as well as produce a magnanimous peace. With a Napoleonic ego, Churchill observed, "As it is, those who can win a war well can rarely make a good peace, and those who could make a good peace would never have won the war. It would perhaps be pressing the argument too far to suggest that I could do both."²⁶⁰

Churchill admired that Napoleon was a force for change and progress in Europe despite not agreeing with all his methods or actions. Therefore, he found it disturbing that people like General Montgomery referred to Napoleon as the "Hitler of the nineteenth century."²⁶¹

Hitler and Napoleon came from opposite ends of the spectrum. A French Revolutionary and follower of the Enlightenment cannot be compared to the eugenic "Austrian House Painter" set on the genocide of the "undesirables." Napoleon sought glory through military conquest but did so in the name of liberty and equality of all peoples. Hitler, on the other hand, waged war for the glory of the Nazi Reich, extermination of non-Aryans, and slavery of those who remained. They were distinct opposites. In 1944, Churchill famously asserted, "I always hate to compare Napoleon with Hitler, as it seems an insult to the great emperor and warrior to connect him in any way with a squalid caucus boss and butcher."²⁶² The only valid comparison that can be made

Commented [BM33]: This is me speaking up to the 1944 quote. Pretty good eh? haha

²⁶⁰ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 331.

²⁶¹ Roberts, 931.

²⁶² Packwood, 16.

between these two dictators was that they both conquered Europe, both failed to invade Britain, and both were devoured by the Russian Winter. In this, Hitler was an echo of Napoleon, but they did not remotely share any of the same principles or long-term objectives. In a speech to the Commons in 1941, Churchill said:

Some have compared Hitler's conquests with those of Napoleon. It may be that Spain [Franco] and Russia [Stalin] will shortly furnish new chapters to that theme. It must be remembered, however, that Napoleon's armies carried with them the fierce, liberating and equalitarian winds of the French Revolution, whereas Hitler's Empire has nothing behind it but racial self-assertion, espionage, pillage, corruption, and the Prussian boot.²⁶³

For Churchill, it was clear that Napoleon was no Hitler. Napoleon was an embodiment of the Enlightenment and strove to use political and military abilities to spread the ideals of the French Revolution across Europe. Arguably, his long-term contributions outweighed the short and violent consequences of his actions. Consequently, Churchill saw himself in Napoleon and was determined to root out the Nazi tyranny that infested continental Europe. Moreover, he too wanted to unleash the “liberating and equalitarian winds” upon Europe, gain a magnanimous victory, and maintain goodwill in peace. He was not going to succumb to the myopic criticisms of his adversaries. With a strong grasp on the French Revolutionary spirit, Churchill shared another important trait with Napoleon—a sense of destiny.

The Question of Destiny:

Churchill nourished his sense of destiny and understood its place in his life. At sixteen years of age, he foresaw his liberating role in Britain's darkest hour in 1940. He did not know who, when, or how this “great upheaval” would come and yet he prepared himself to walk with destiny when his country needed him most. However, he was aware that the guardian angel of

Commented [BM34]: Your feedback confuses me here. You said: “So with this quote, you can recast the previous sentences as your analysis of Churchill's beliefs. As written above, it reads like your commentary on Hitler”....So do I move the quote?

²⁶³ Andrew Roberts, “Churchill and Napoleon,” Speech to International Churchill Society, May 29, 2015, accessed February 21, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a36GFWEp45g>, 20:05-20:27.

fate was protecting him to ensure the fulfillment of his destiny. Napoleon shared a similar story and found his destiny in the anarchic and smoldering ruins of the Reign of Terror. Like Britain in 1940, France needed a strong and able leader to restore order amongst the chaos that had erupted from the Jacobin onslaught. As he ascended to power, Napoleon concluded, “Destiny urges me to a goal of which I am ignorant. Until that goal is attained I am invulnerable, unassailable. When Destiny has accomplished her purpose in me, a fly may suffice to destroy me.”²⁶⁴

So, while Churchill pursued his prophecy, Napoleon confided in the legend of “The Little Red Man of Destiny.” This little man was supposedly a ghost that inhabited Tuileries Palace in Paris. The legend said that he would appear when an important event was about to happen to one of the inhabitants. For example, it was recorded that Henri IV supposedly saw him the morning that Francois Ravaillac assassinated him. Similarly, Marie Antoinette noted that she had seen him in the corridor on August 10, 1792 when the mob stormed the Palace and ended the French monarchy.²⁶⁵ Napoleon moved into Tuileries in 1799 upon becoming First Consul and quickly connected with this spirit of destiny whom followed him on his military endeavors. According to the legend, Napoleon first encountered the little red man during his Egyptian Campaign and reportedly was told that he had ten years to enjoy triumph and victory on the European battlefields. This was in 1798. In 1808, Napoleon foolishly invaded Spain, was slowly strangled by guerilla forces, and eventually defeated by the Allies in 1814. The Little Red Man of Destiny did not stop there though; he also warned Napoleon not to invade Russia and on

Commented [BM35]: Found as in... the little red man... I think. Mind still wrapping around that.

²⁶⁴ Napoleon Bonaparte, *Napoleon: In His Own Words*, ed. by Jules Bertaut, Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1916, 9.

²⁶⁵ Kathy Warnes, “Napoleon Bonaparte Ignores His Little Red Man of Destiny,” *Windows to World History*, accessed February 23, 2020, <https://windowstoworldhistory.weebly.com/napoleon-bonaparte-ignores-his-little-red-man-of-destiny.html>.

January 1, 1814, told the emperor that he had three months to make peace with the Allies or succumb Paris to invasion. Eerily, the little man also mentioned that if Napoleon did not abdicate, “his power would be confined to a small, bleak island.”²⁶⁶ On March 31, 1814, the Allies arrived in Paris (three months to the day) and Napoleon abdicated on April 11. However, his failed return and defeat at Waterloo sentenced him to a desolate islet in the middle of the Atlantic known as St. Helena. Many speculate that the Little Red Man of Destiny went into exile as well as his legend and forewarnings were never heard of again.

Glory was Napoleon’s Achilles Heel and the fly that destroyed him. He was a man of great ambition and talent but failed to remain congruent with his destiny as foretold by the Little Red Man. He knew no limits and that costed him. Napoleon was determined to change Europe and destroy the *ancien régime* but his greed for more territory and power consumed him and his destiny’s legacy. In a rare comparison to Hitler, Churchill wrote, “Both these men were temperamentally unable to give up the tiniest scrap of any territory to which the high-water mark of their hectic fortunes had carried them.” As a result, they had stripped themselves of the “power to concentrate in main strength for the final struggle.”²⁶⁷ Because of this, poor leadership resulted, French forces at Waterloo capitulated, and Berlin laid in ruins. Churchill, on the other hand, had a less superstitious and more providential relationship with destiny. Allen Packwood argued that Churchill believed in the ability to shape his own destiny thanks to the power of great men to achieve great things. However, was it possible to shape a destiny? Churchill most likely embraced his 1891 prophecy and pursued it vigilantly until it materialized in 1940 under the protection of an omniscient power. Furthermore, while Packwood asserted that Churchill “did not subscribe to a worldview which relegated the actions of men to outside causes, whether

²⁶⁶ Warnes.

²⁶⁷ Roberts, *Walking with Destiny*, 842.

Commented [BM36]: Yes, Churchill did recognize this rare commonality

divinely pre-ordained or dictated by economics, class or race,”²⁶⁸ His relationship with destiny and achieving great things was not black and white. Though he did not embrace religion actively, he often used religious allegories, referenced God, and reflected upon predestination and its involvement in his leadership paradigm. Many of his wartime speeches contained religious connotations such as his description of Dunkirk as “a miracle of deliverance.” Furthermore, in the peroration of “We Shall Fight”, he declared, “our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in *God's good time*, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.”²⁶⁹ The phrase, ‘in God’s good time,’ is demonstrative to Churchill’s understanding of predestination in his Manichean worldview. Based on his interpretation of this idea, good *should* always triumph over evil *in the end*. Therefore, although the beginning may look grim, according to Churchill’s worldview, it is those of magnanimous virtues and faith in predestination who will be victorious come the cessation of conflict. Napoleon wrote, “Wisdom and policy dictate that we must do as destiny demands and keep peace with the irresistible march of events.”²⁷⁰

Interestingly, the peroration of “We Shall Fight” and the call to America for assistance against the Nazi war machine was likely influenced by a reference made about Waterloo in his *My Early Life*. In the heat of an intense polo match in India, Churchill exclaimed, “Would God that night or Blücher would come.”²⁷¹ Supposedly, this was a misquote attributed to the Duke of Wellington who said, “Give me night or give me Blücher” during a prayer before battle with Napoleon. Historically, Wellington, in a precarious and untenable position at Waterloo, was praying for nightfall or the arrival of Field Marshal Blücher’s Prussian reinforcements to save

²⁶⁸ Packwood, 18.

²⁶⁹ Churchill, “We Shall Fight on the Beaches.”

²⁷⁰ Bonaparte, 5.

²⁷¹ Churchill, *My Early Life*, 210.

him from the Napoleonic armies.²⁷² In the case of 1940, one may wonder if he would have used similar symbology to describe the invasion of Nazi Germany and defeat of Britain while Blücher, the eventual “deliverance” by the United States.

Had he not believed in any pre-ordained intervention, as posed by Packwood, Napoleonic glory may have devoured Churchill. His relationship with providence, one could speculate, secured his humility as a pawn in this great crusade. He acknowledged that even if he died at the hands of the Nazis, it was simply part of the process. In 1915, he wrote an obituary to the poet Rupert Brooke and said: “He expected to die; he was willing to die for the dear England... and he advanced toward the brink in perfect serenity, with absolute conviction of the rightness of his country’s cause.”²⁷³ Arguably, this was exactly how Churchill felt in June 1940.

Like Napoleon, Churchill’s ambition equaled his talent politically and militarily. He embraced his sense of destiny and strategic foresight as part of his worldview as opposed to relying on a Napoleonic paranormal adviser. Most importantly, destiny was a part of Churchill’s leadership paradigm; it played a role in much of his decision making and shaped his outlook on waging war. Unlike Napoleon, Churchill stepped up to fulfill his destiny in a time of darkness, uncertainty, and plausible defeat. Napoleon used the chaos of the Reign of Terror and the end of the Revolution as an escalator to power. Churchill, on the contrary, was forced to bench his personal fears and fatalistic beliefs in an effort to inspire and elevate his countrymen from certain Nazi peril. The summer of 1940 was Churchill’s Thermopylae and he refused to fall into the dark abyss of defeat without “choking in his own blood upon the ground.”²⁷⁴ Anthony Storr assessed:

²⁷² John Bew, “Waterloo: Beyond the Battlefield,” *History Today* 63:9 (2013), accessed February 26, 2020. <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/waterloo-beyond-battlefield>.

²⁷³ Winston Churchill, “Rupert Brooke’s Obituary,” *New York Times*, April 26, 1915, accessed February 23, 2020. <http://exhibits.lib.byu.edu/wwi/poets/rbbituary.html>.

²⁷⁴ Kelly, 251-2.

“Only a man convinced that he had a heroic mission, who believed that, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, he could yet triumph, and who could identify himself with a nation’s destiny could have conveyed his inspiration to others.”²⁷⁵ This is the difference between myopic bias that leads to disaster and strength of leadership that leads to unimagined success. Churchill, himself, demonstrated that his belief in destiny guided him to lead this crusade. Consequently, according to Lori Maguire, Churchill firmly believed that “no matter how dark things may seem, no matter how many defeats the Allies may suffer, God has destined them to win in the end.”²⁷⁶ A. G.

Gardiner concluded:

He thinks of Napoleon; he thinks of his great ancestor. Thus did they bear themselves; thus in this rugged and awful crisis will he bear himself. It is not make-believe, it is not insincerity: it is that in that fervid and picturesque imagination there are always great deeds afoot with himself cast by destiny in the Agamemnon rôle.²⁷⁷

Therefore, Churchill had a far keener sense of his personal destiny and long-term vision than Napoleon ever thought to understand.

On Strategic Flexibility:

Churchill never believed that there was only one way to fight a war. No matter what strategies or tactics were implemented, he was always thinking of alternatives and strove to be ahead of his enemy. As witnessed in the Dardanelles debacle, Churchill’s foresight and desire for strategic flexibility was not popular among his allies. Those that opposed him criticized his egocentrism, claimed he was only out for glory, and believed that his alternative operational plans were simply insignificant “sideshow”. Moreover, those plagued by the Western school of

²⁷⁵ A.J.P. Taylor, Basil Liddell Hart, Robert Rhodes James, and Anthony Storr, *Churchill Revised: A Critical Assessment*, New York: Dial Press, 1969, 251-2.

²⁷⁶ Lori Maguire, “We Shall Fight”: A Rhetorical Analysis of Churchill’s Famous Speech,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 17:2 (2014): 274.

²⁷⁷ Roberts, *Walking with Destiny*, 183.

thought believed that victory against the Germans was only possible in France. Some even inculpated Churchill as being another Napoleon. For example, during the operations, Lord Charles Beresford accused him of being a “Lilliput Napoleon, a man with an unbalanced mind, an egomaniac.”²⁷⁸ The *Morning Post* added, “This severe lesson ought to teach him that he is not...a Napoleon, but a Minister of the Crown with no time to either organize or lead armies in the field.”²⁷⁹ Little did they know that he’d be doing exactly that twenty-five years later. It was clear that Churchill had an inflated ego and often saw himself as the “glow worm” similar to Napoleon. However, unlike the emperor, he did not allow his ego and ambition to blind him from the realities of the conflict. He explained:

We often hear military experts inculcate the doctrine of giving priority to the decisive theatre. There is a lot in this. But in war this principle, like all others, is governed by facts and circumstances; otherwise strategy would be too easy. It would become a drill-book and not an art; it would depend upon rules and not on an instructed and fortunate judgement of the proportions of an ever-changing scene.²⁸⁰

Churchill saw the stalemated Western Front as a futile slaughterhouse and sought to provide alternative options to “[chewing] barbed wire in Flanders.”²⁸¹ Although the Western Front was the “decisive theater”, it was also the decisive meatgrinder. Consequently, it was clear that Churchill admired Napoleon’s effective maneuverability on the battlefield and understood its strategic and operational value in war. He wrote: “Battles are won by slaughter and manoeuvre. The greater the general, the more he contributes in manoeuvre the less he demands in slaughter.”²⁸² Napoleon was a maneuver warfare expert. Even without fast-moving vehicles, he was able to march his troops quickly from battle to battle and orchestrate grand encirclement

²⁷⁸ Roberts, *Walking with Destiny*, 176.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 192.

²⁸⁰ Sandys and Littmann, 250.

²⁸¹ Jenkins, 261.

²⁸² Sandys and Littman, 250.

movements to force surrenders of larger hostile armies. Interestingly, Napoleon inspired the development of the Schlieffen hook in the First World War. Come the beginning of WWII, Churchill witnessed the vast superiority of blitzkrieg tactics. Used in Poland, France, and the Soviet Union, the Nazis mastered the element of operational surprise, rapid deployment, and aggressive armored offensives. Churchill as one of the founding fathers of the “land battleship” or tank understood that war had officially evolved and the key to victory lied in effective maneuverability.

As he had learned in the Great War, Churchill had to be at the helm of the ship as both captain and first officer. He was not going to lead a successful war of maneuver from a “subordinate position” this time. Rather he confided in a Napoleonic maxim that stated, “A Constitution should be short and obscure” and as Clemenceau had done before him, Churchill the prime minister made himself minister of defense as well.²⁸³ This gave him the power to not only handle the high-level wartime political decisions but also intervene in smaller military affairs to successfully lead from the front. He was not about to allow the generals total control of the wartime decision making as had happened in the Great War.

Like Napoleon, Churchill had a compartmentalized mind which allowed him to focus all his time and effort on one objective until achieved. Churchill reflected: “I recall Napoleon’s remark about the value of being able to focus objects in the mind for a long time without being tired—*“fixer les objets longtemps sans être fatigüe.”*”²⁸⁴ Napoleon wrote, “Different subjects and different affairs are arranged in my head as in a cupboard. When I wish to interrupt one train of thought, I shut that drawer and open another.”²⁸⁵ Churchill similarly “saw war policy in terms of

²⁸³ Churchill, *Memoirs*, 239.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 516.

²⁸⁵ Roberts, *Leadership in War*, 17.

large building blocks which together created a structure of victory. Very few people can or do think in this fashion.”²⁸⁶ Churchill’s building blocks were Napoleon’s cupboards and, as a result, both worked tirelessly toward their objectives with extraordinary success. Churchill found it critical to remain strategically flexible because “no plan survives first contact with the enemy.”²⁸⁷ Consequently, he embodied yet another Napoleonic maxim about “forming a picture.” Napoleon advised against “forming a picture” of the situation because war is fluid and ever-changing. The Westerners of World War I condemned millions to death because they had formed a picture about the decisive theater. Hitler’s early conquests were extremely successful because the Allied governments had formed a picture about appeasement. Strategic rigidity almost always leads to defeat on the battlefield.

Napoleon and Churchill both remained flexible to properly address situations as they arose. For example, in 1942, Stalin urged the Western Allies to open a second front in France to alleviate some of the pressures on the Eastern Front. The Americans considered such a proposal but were redirected by Churchill in favor of the “soft underbelly” strategy. Churchill strongly supported this peripheral strategy against Fortress Europe because it slowly consumed Hitler’s external territory holdings while also drawing forces away from the Eastern Front. Moreover, it also allowed the Allies to properly prepare for D-Day and created an unmanageable third front for Hitler in Italy. Had the Allies invaded France in 1942, Churchill knew that it would have ended in complete catastrophe. He was consciously aware of Allied strength and knew that North Africa was a reasonable starting point for US and British forces. During a temperance meeting in

²⁸⁶ Thomas E. Ricks, “Churchill had his Faults, but he was a Far Better Strategist Than His Generals Were,” *Foreign Policy*, August 30, 2017, accessed February 26, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/30/churchill-had-his-faults-but-he-was-a-far-better-strategist-than-his-generals-were-2/>.

²⁸⁷ Helmuth Graf von Moltke, *Militarische Werke*, vol. 2, part 2., 33–40, Found in Daniel J. Hughes (ed.), *Moltke on the Art of War: Selected Writings*, New York: Presidio Press, 1993, 45–47.

1908, Churchill quoted Napoleon: ‘Remember that the great leader Napoleon said, “Always be strongest at the point of attack.” Choose your point of attack, single it out, concentrate all your energies in it, and make your attack absolutely overwhelming and effective.’²⁸⁸ This inevitably led to the successes in Africa and later into southern Europe. His strategic flexibility as both prime minister and Commander in Chief enabled him to proactively work with his allies and wisely adjust strategic and operational decisions as needed to confront, react to, and defeat Hitler’s forces.

Ironically, it was the strategy Churchill used in the Second World War that ultimately defeated Napoleon 130 years prior. US and British forces conquered the U-Boat menace in the Atlantic and Nelson defeated Napoleon’s fleet at Trafalgar. Churchill maintained a strong and competent Allied alliance against Hitler just as the seven coalitions united against the emperor. Churchill wore down German forces in the “soft underbelly” while Spanish guerillas challenged Napoleon on the Iberian Peninsula. Finally, both Napoleon and Hitler froze in Russia and lacked the necessary strength for the final struggle leading to defeats at both Waterloo and Berlin. Packwood brilliantly concluded that “Churchill’s view, learned from history, was that the final mortal stroke had to wait until the enemy was weakened. This surely was the lesson of Napoleon. The irony, of course, is that it is a lesson Napoleon had failed to learn.”²⁸⁹ Consequently, Churchill deeply respected Napoleon as a military leader and man of destiny. He sought to emulate his Corsican hero because he admired the reasons why Napoleon went to war. Glory and the judgement of history was always important to Churchill. However, more significantly was his appreciation for Napoleon’s heroic offensive against the *ancien régime*. Napoleon sought to destroy the Old-World absolutist monarchies while Churchill targeted Hitler and his fanatical

²⁸⁸ Roberts, Speech to International Churchill Society, May 29, 2015.

²⁸⁹ Packwood, 19.

racist regime. Moreover, Churchill saw in Napoleon “a man of action, ability, energy and dynamism...a force of nature.”²⁹⁰ He saw a man willing to break the rules for a valiant cause and sought to not only emulate him during the Second World War, but also after in the reconstruction of the international realm. Napoleon was very much a personal inspiration for Churchill as opposed to a military leadership admiration. Churchill, of course, did not agree with the methods or actions that Napoleon took throughout his continental conquest, but saw the soul of a strong, courageous, passionate, and bold leader that emulated the manifestation of his political and military worldview. Clemenceau had a concrete impact on Churchill’s wartime leadership. Napoleon abstractly built upon his character and further established his worldview. Admiral Horatio Nelson was both a tactile and theoretical inspiration.

²⁹⁰ Packwood, 18.

Chapter Six:

“The Former Naval Person and the Hero of the Nile”:

-Churchill and Admiral Horatio Nelson-



AT THE HELM
THE PRIME MINISTER

*“Nelson’s life should be a lesson to the youth of England.”*²⁹¹

-Churchill in a letter to his mother, December 1897-

*Image Source: “Interwar Churchill Cartoons,” Cartoon, London: *Punch Magazine*, May 22, 1940, accessed March 4, 2020, <https://punch.photoshelter.com/gallery-image/In-The-News-On-This-Day/G000029yX5vInePQ/10000wq9UHi.hHQ>.

²⁹¹ Roberts, *Leadership in War*, 202.

As a child, Churchill, like most English schoolboys, was particularly fascinated with the stories of British glory. Most importantly, the story of Admiral Horatio Nelson and the Battle of Trafalgar reigned triumphant. Churchill recalled one of his lecturers explaining:

He told us how at Trafalgar Nelson's signal—'England expects that every man this day will do his duty'—ran down the line of battle, and how if we and our Colonies all held together, a day would come when such a signal would not merely run along a line of ships, but along a line of nations.²⁹²

Churchill, the young and audacious glory hunter most likely set his sights on making his lecturer's remark a reality. However, glory was not the only gem Churchill desired. Churchill the visionary wanted to become someone who could make meaningful contributions on behalf of the British Empire and evolve into a heroic leader. This was made abundantly clear in his 1891 premonition that forecasted Britain's darkest hour. As seen, Churchill drew upon different inspirations for both abstract and concrete reasons. Clemenceau was primarily a direct influence on Churchill because of the time spent together during the Great War. Napoleon, on the other hand, was purely an abstract reflection of Churchill's connection with destiny and the French revolutionary spirit. Nelson's contribution to Churchill's worldview had both concrete and theoretical foundations that greatly impacted his leadership during the Second World War including the ability to inspire those deprived of hope, the importance of duty, and the doctrine of gaining the offensive initiative. "Churchill's heroes—" Clemenceau, Napoleon, and Nelson—"had not only led, they had inspired. Winston Churchill was prepared now to step forward as England's master and commander, and its drummer. He had readied himself for this moment during every hour of every day for six decades, when he first sent his toy armies charging across

²⁹² Jon Meacham, *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of An Epic Friendship*, New York: Random House, 2004, 17.

the floors of his father's London town house."²⁹³ From toy soldier to British Royal, Churchill stepped onto the bridge ready for war.

Admiral Horatio Nelson, the legendary hero of Trafalgar was an eager and ambitious young man. In 1777, he like Churchill, had a vision of future glory that inspired him to carry on despite contracting malaria. Roberts illustrated: 'As his ship rounded the Cape of Good Hope, Nelson had a strange, still-unexplained vision of "a radiant orb" and "a sudden glow," which he took to be a direct sign from the Almighty.' Nelson observed, "A sudden glow of patriotism was kindled within me...I *will* be a hero, and confiding in Providence, I will brave every danger."²⁹⁴ Following this message to the "T", he valiantly fought in the French Revolutionary Wars losing both an eye and an arm. He performed courageously at the Battle of Cape St. Vincent, broke out of line, boarded the 80-gun *San Nicolas* and 112-gun *Josef* and captured them demonstrating his decisive independent decision making. Immediately after the battle, at age thirty-nine, he was knighted and promoted to rear admiral granting him significantly more naval leadership power against his Napoleonic foes. After the recovery from his amputation, he sailed off to challenge Napoleon's forces at the Battle of the Nile (1798) and won one of the most decisive naval operations in history. Roberts accurately assessed that "Bravery and luck played only a limited part in Nelson's victories; his superb seamanship and acute ability to exploit opportunities were a much more important part of his naval strategy."²⁹⁵ It was clear that losing both an eye and arm was not going to slow the admiral down. In 1804, Napoleon crowned himself emperor and the greatest threat of all loomed over Britain—a cross-channel invasion from France. Nelson was

²⁹³ Manchester and Reid, *Defender*, 50.

²⁹⁴ Roberts, *Leadership*, 30.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

ordered to destroy the combined Spanish and French fleets to prevent such an assault and blockaded Toulon.

On October 19, 1805, the Napoleonic fleet ran the blockade and attempted to pass through the Strait of Gibraltar. Nelson immediately gave chase and set upon annihilating the hostile fleet. Roberts pointed out that ‘annihilation’ was always Nelson’s primary focus. As a British admiral, it was never about capturing an objective or forcing the retreat of an enemy. Churchill, like Nelson always sought to exploit the right opportunity to destroy his enemy on the battlefield. Patrick Thompson observed:

[Winston] rides in the game like heavy cavalry getting into position for the assault. He trots about, keenly watching, biding his time, a master of tactics and strategy. Abruptly he sees his chance, and he gathers his pony and charges in, neither deft nor graceful, but full of tearing physical energy—and skilful [*sic*] with it too. He bears down opposition by the weight of his dash and strikes the ball. Did I say strikes? He slashes the ball.²⁹⁶

Whether it was a game of polo, a cavalry charge at Omdurman, or issuing the order to destroy Rommel’s Afrika Korps, Churchill remained consistent with his wartime **belief to destroy his opposition until total victory**. He embodied this Nelsonian virtue throughout the Second World War, but most notably ending in the destruction of the *Graf Spee*, *Bismarck*, and French Fleet at Oran.

Returning to Trafalgar, Nelson and his “band of brothers” formed two columns in an imaginative and daring attempt to incur heavy losses on the Napoleonic fleet. Before battle, Nelson excused himself to say a prayer below deck. With his prayer book in hand, he whispered, “May the Great God whom I worship grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe...a great and glorious Victory.”²⁹⁷ The same prayer book used here was gifted to Churchill in 1954 by

Commented [BM37]: He sought to destroy his enemy in conflict and then offer a hand up after defeat. Not sure exactly how to tie that in?

²⁹⁶ Sandys and Littmann, 9.

²⁹⁷ Churchill, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, vol. III, 307.

Nelson's great-granddaughter, C. C. Forster Dickinson, "as a token of my great gratitude and admiration for the great services you have done [for] our dear Country. I feel you, the greatest Englishman of this century may appreciate it."²⁹⁸

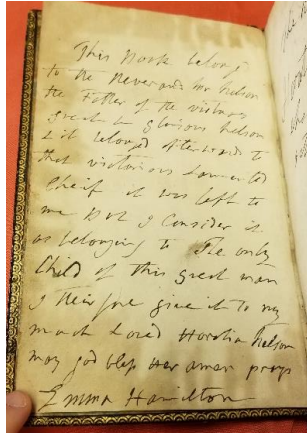


Plate 1: Nelson's Prayer Book can be seen at the Churchill Archives Centre at Cambridge University. The first page is a short letter from Emma Hamilton (his lover) who wrote: "This book belongs to the Reverend Mr. Nelson, the Father of the virtuous great and glorious Nelson... It was left to me because I consider it a belonging to the only child of this great man... give it to my love Horatia Nelson. May god bless her amen, pray..."

-Emma Hamilton

Nelson's Touch broke the British line into thirds, each able to concentrate heavy fire on a different section of the combined fleet and equal the playing field against the larger enemy force. At point blank range, the HMS *Victory* hurled cannonade after cannonade at the French ships: *Neptune*, *Bucentaure*, and *Redoubtable*. Rattling musket fire consumed the top decks of the passing ships. Cannon balls ripped through the hulls sending wooden shrapnel sky high. Rivers of blood stained the decks as bodies collapsed. Mast snipers took aim and executed their victims from above; one of which targeted Admiral Nelson and sent a lead ball through his shoulder breaking his back. The battle raged on for another three hours with the HMS *Victory* alone firing 4,243 cannonballs.²⁹⁹ Before Nelson slipped away, Captain Hardy informed him that fourteen

²⁹⁸ Nelson's Prayer Book, WCHL 11/1, Churchill Archives Centre.

²⁹⁹ Roberts, *Leadership*, 45-46.

enemy ships had “struck” their colors. The final count totaled twenty-two hostile ships sunk or captured without the loss of a single British vessel. In his last breath, Nelson, fulfilling his 1777 prophecy, said, “Thank God I have done my duty.”³⁰⁰ Churchill added, “The victory was complete and final. The British Fleet, under her most superb commander, like him had done its duty.”³⁰¹

The Battle of Trafalgar and the leadership of Admiral Nelson will remain legendary in British and global history. Churchill as well as every other young English boy found inspiration and admiration for the hero of this iconic tale. However, Churchill saw Nelson’s military leadership, opportunity exploitation, and ability to inspire important principles to emulate when ascending to greatness. Churchill formulated his own perceptions about the approach to leadership based on his vast life experiences, but also used aspects of Napoleon and Nelson to expand and solidify the strength of his worldview and strategic perceptions.

In the dark days of spring 1940, the prime minister, above all, had to become a source of inspiration for those debilitated and crippled with fear. Churchill most likely did not draw on Nelson as the epitome of inspirational leadership but recognized that an inspiring leader knows no bounds. He was strong enough to set aside his own personal fears and fatalistic views for the betterment of his people because he realized that if they lost hope defeat would be imminent. Nelson’s commanding officer once wrote of his demeanor: “Animal courage was the sole merit of Lord Nelson, his private character most disgraceful, in every sense of the word.” But he “possessed the magic art of infusing his own spirit into others.”³⁰² Churchill, on the other hand, embodied the courage and obstinacy of a bulldog while also personifying a charismatic and

³⁰⁰ John Sugden, *Nelson: The Sword of Albion*, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2013, 832.

³⁰¹ Churchill, *History of English-Speaking Peoples*, vol. III, 308.

³⁰² Terry Cole, *The Nelson Touch: The Life and Legend of Horatio Nelson*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 7.

thoughtful spirit loved by all as the Nazis casted their shadow over the British Isles. He too, had a “magic art” of infusing hope, resolve, and perseverance in the face of deathly adversity. While Nelson excelled at inspiring his own sailors, Churchill had a powerful relationship with the English language and could directly connect himself with the British people as well as those who had already succumbed to darkness. As the famed journalist Edward Murrow brilliantly observed: “[Churchill] mobilized the English language and sent it into battle to steady his fellow countrymen and hearten those Europeans upon whom the long dark night of tyranny had descended.”³⁰³ Like Churchill, Nelson contained a passionate energy to fight on to total victory as he had done at the Battle of Copenhagen. Both he and Winston could agree that surrender was rarely an option and carried on whatever the cost may be. Like Nelson, Churchill was placed in a precarious position where the fate of Britain laid in his hands. As Napoleon had camped at Boulogne with his eye on England, Hitler prepared to conquer the English Channel and invade the British Isles in Operation Sea Lion. While Nelson was master of the sea, Churchill had to gain control of the air to prevail against the encroaching German threat. However, he first had to inspire those unwilling to risk everything in the name of liberty and freedom.

On May 13, 1940, Churchill solemnly said, “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat.” Though on the surface, this was true, he ignited a fire underneath his withering countrymen and carried the Union Jack into battle. As the Luftwaffe bombardment began, Churchill took to the podium, picked up the torch of defiance and valiantly declared, “We shall never surrender” and “This was their finest hour.” Churchill recorded some of the most memorable phrases during the summer of 1940. And as the Battle of Britain climaxed, he elucidated:

³⁰³ Ralph Keyes, *The Quote Verifier: Who Said What, Where, and When*, New York: St. Martin’s Publishing Group, 2007, 109.

We must regard the next week... as a very important period in our history. It ranks with the days when the Spanish Armada was approaching the Channel... or when Nelson stood between us and Napoleon's Grand Army at Boulogne. We have read all about this in the history books; but what is happening now is on a far greater scale and of far more consequence to the life and future of the world and its civilisation than those brave old days.³⁰⁴

Similarly, when Nelson gave the famous signal, "England expects every man will do his duty," it sparked both a sense of patriotic duty and inspiration among all of Nelson's men. Stanley McChrystal assessed, "Leaders can call to the best in us. The flags above the *Victory* didn't ask or demand obedience in the upcoming fight; they expressed Nelson's unshakable admiration for and faith in the sailors and patriots he knew them to be."³⁰⁵ Both Churchill and Nelson, no matter their personal charisma, had the distinct ability to elicit inspiration, patriotism, hope, and trust in the people that ultimately chose an uncertain victory over perilous defeat. Nelson's sailors could have easily challenged his unprecedented Trafalgar plan, but kept their faith in the man who always saw victory through to the end. Churchill shared a similar relationship with the English people and continued to inspire them through the power of rhetoric and call to action. But while Nelson was set upon destroying all Frenchmen and France, Churchill sought to electrify Britain's closest ally. On the 125th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, Churchill thunderously broadcasted to the French people:

Herr Hitler, with his tanks... has managed to subjugate for the time being most of the finest races in Europe, and his little Italian accomplice is trotting along hopefully and hungrily... They both wish to carve up France and her empire as if it were a fowl—to one a leg, to another a wing, or perhaps part of the breast... I tell you truly what you must believe when I say this evil man, this monstrous abortion of hatred and deceit, is resolved on nothing less than the complete wiping out of the French nation and the disintegration of its whole life and future....

Frenchmen! Rearm your spirits before it is too late. Remember how Napoleon said before one of his battles—these same Prussians who are so boastful today

³⁰⁴ Winston Churchill, *Never Give In! Winston Churchill's Speeches*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2004, 167; 172; 180; 206.

³⁰⁵ Stanley McChrystal, *My Share of the Task*, New York: Penguin, 2014, 392.

were three to one at Jena and six to one at Montmirail. ‘Never will I believe that the soul of France is dead; never will I believe that her place among the greatest nations of the world has been lost forever.’³⁰⁶

US journalist DeWitt Mackenzie noted that this broadcast was “in essence an effort to mend the bonds of a comradeship which had been sealed in blood, and instil [*sic*] in the French the spirit of resistance...against their German masters.”³⁰⁷ Though Nelson and Churchill were of different times and different situations, they both led their countrymen to victory at the helms giving critical rudder orders, determined and timed by solitary instinct and protracted preparation. Morale, inspiration, and admiration are all critical to leadership paradigm and were exemplified by Nelson at Trafalgar and Churchill during the Blitz. Churchill, like all Englishmen, had a spot in his heart for the legend of Horatio Nelson and sought to emulate his excellent and unprecedented military leadership.

While Nelson attacked “Little Boney” with utmost ferocity, Churchill the bulldog hunted Hitler the bull. To obtain, hold, and take the initiative was a critical part of Churchill’s leadership approach. His ability to foresee the long-term consequences of actions gave him an offensive advantage on the battlefield. Sandys explained, “The key was to stop [bullies] before they gained momentum and struck fear in the hearts of their intended victims.”³⁰⁸ The Nazis had already consumed continental Europe and, like a pestilence, began to explosively plague Britain. Churchill had to reverse the German conquest, bite the bull on the nose, and declare that he and the free peoples of the world were not to be swallowed by the abhorrent abyss of war. Once the Luftwaffe was forced from Britain, Churchill was able to embody the Nelsonian offensive more actively and challenge the Kriegsmarine more fiercely. Churchill knew that “victory would not

³⁰⁶ Churchill, *Never Give In!*, 212.

³⁰⁷ Richard Toye, *The Roar of the Lion: The Untold Story of Churchill’s World War II Speeches*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, 81.

³⁰⁸ Sandys and Littman, 89.

be achieved by processes of certainty. Risks had to be run. The leap had to be made.... To wait till everything was ready was probably to wait till all was too late.”³⁰⁹ Churchill’s first target? The *Admiral Graf Spee*.

Captain Langsdorff, commander of the pocket battleship *Graf Spee* stalked the waters of the South Atlantic and preyed upon unsuspecting merchant ships. Between September and December 1939, she sank nine Allied merchant vessels in both the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The British and French Navies deployed four aircraft carriers, one battlecruiser, three battleships, and sixteen cruisers as huntsmen. Churchill as the First Lord of the Admiralty was not going to allow this cub to claim another victim. On December 13, The *Graf Spee* attacked Commodore Henry Harwood and his three cruisers HMS *Ajax*, *Exeter*, and *Achilles* off the coast of Uruguay. Under Nelsonian influence, Harwood signaled to his ships that “England expects that every man will do his duty” and returned fire.³¹⁰ The Battle of the River Plate had begun. After a tense engagement, the *Exeter* sustained heavy damage with a list to port. The *Ajax*’s aft turrets were disabled, and the *Graf Spee* retreated under smoke screen into the river estuary after sustaining approximately seventy hits. Too badly damaged to attempt a return trip to Germany, Langsdorff scuttled his ship and committed suicide in Buenos Aires. Harwood, his crews, and the three ships were instantly heroes. Churchill promoted Harwood to rear admiral and gave him knighthood just as Nelson had received after his daring operations at the Battle of Cape St. Vincent. Churchill offered stirring words to the crews of the *Ajax* and *Exeter* upon their return to English waters in February 1940.

When you came up the river this morning, when you entered the harbour and saw the crowds cheering on the banks, one may almost think that there were other spectators in the great shades of the past, carrying us back to the days of Drake and Raleigh, to the great sea dogs of the olden times. If their spirits brooded on

³⁰⁹ Sandys and Littman, 95.

³¹⁰ Roberts, *Walking with Destiny*, 478.

Commented [BM38]: I see your point about ‘hunted’, but I like haunted....

Commented [BM39]: I do not have evidence of Churchill’s involvement in this knighthood. Roberts only mentions that Churchill awarded it to him. Another source read that he was given it over the radio. What should I do?

this scene you would be able to say to them ‘We, your descendants, still make war and have not forgotten the lessons you taught.’³¹¹

It was clear that Harwood and the crews of the *Ajax*, *Exeter*, and *Achilles* remembered the lessons of Nelson, Drake, and Raleigh. Moreover, Churchill’s guiding light in the darkest hour was to come from the ghosts of the past as he prepared to challenge the might of the Nazi war machine. His life experiences had prepared him for this moment, but the lessons of legends led him to command history. Churchill continued: “The warrior heroes of the past may look down, as Nelson’s monument looks down upon us now, without any feeling that the island race has lost its daring or that the examples they set in bygone centuries have faded as the generations have succeeded one another.”³¹²

Unlike other leaders, Churchill took the lessons of the past extremely seriously. He knew that history echoed and that those who failed to study it repeated it. There is a truth in, “The longer you can look back, the farther you can look forward.”³¹³ Studying history can not only prepare you for the present but provide a critical outlook for the future. Churchill equipped himself with historical knowledge, a weapon often more powerful than any German tank factory could produce. With this knowledge, he ascended to the premiership confidently and was aware that sometimes the hardest decisions must be made for the greater good. The Nelsonian initiative and decisive decision making would become crucial when the Vichy French failed to surrender their fleet at Oran on July 3, 1940.

Arguably one of the most difficult decisions Churchill had to make during the Second World War was giving the order to annihilate the French fleet at Mers-el-Kébir. The majority of the French navy had remarkably survived the Battle of France. It had been responsible for Allied

³¹¹ Roberts, *Walking with Destiny*, 478.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 478.

³¹³ CHAR 9/166, Churchill Archive Centre.

security in the Western Mediterranean and the majority now sat in port off the coast of Algeria. The French navy was formidable as it had strengthened its force to challenge the Kriegsmarine's surface fleet and comprised of two of the world's most powerful warships, the battlecruisers *Dunkerque* and *Strasbourg* as well as the two battleships *Provence* and *Bretagne*. Churchill knew that if this fleet fell into Axis hands, its navy would confront "Great Britain with mortal danger."³¹⁴ Churchill the Francophile had a choice to make: risk deflating all he had done to encourage French defiance, while affronting the spirits of Napoleon and Clemenceau or risk the continuity and survival of the British navy, England's last and most important line of defense. Nelson once wrote: "Duty is the great business of a sea officer; all private considerations must give way to it; however painful it may be."³¹⁵ Churchill stood with Nelson at the helm of the *Victory* pacing to and fro, contemplating the dilemma before him.

At the beginning of the war, Great Britain had one of the largest fleets in the world; however, to challenge the Axis navies and U-boats as well as the all-powerful French force by themselves was futile. Churchill ordered the creation of Force H which comprised of a fleet of battleships, an aircraft carrier as well as numerous cruisers, destroyers, and submarines. Appointing Vice Admiral James Somerville as commander, Churchill telegraphed, "You are charged with one of the most disagreeable and difficult tasks that a British admiral has ever been faced with but we have complete confidence in you and rely on you to carry it out relentlessly."³¹⁶ Somerville's objective was to keep the Germans out of the Mediterranean and the Italians in as well as blockading the Vichy French navy in its home and colonial ports. Churchill took diplomatic measures since it was clear that the Vichy government did not want to

³¹⁴ Manchester and Reid, *Defender*, 107.

³¹⁵ Robert Southey, *The Life of Nelson*, New York: J. & J. Harper, 1830, 51.

³¹⁶ Roberts, 574.

surrender its fleet to the Germans. Moreover, Hitler did not want to seize the fleet for fear of pushing it into the Allies' arms. Consequently, under Churchill's authority, Somerville issued an ultimatum to the French fleet at Mers-el-Kébir: 1) Sail with the Royal Navy against the Axis; 2) Sail to a British port; 3) Sail to a French colonial port in the Caribbean or the United States; or 4) Scuttle the vessels where they float. Somerville ended his ultimatum with a warning: "I have orders from His Majesty's Government to use whatever force may be necessary to prevent your ships from falling into German or Italian hands."³¹⁷ The British and French had shared a common enemy up to this point, but the ultimatum rapidly heated the waters of war. Stalled negotiations produced unproductive results and the line was drawn when the British intercepted a transmission from French Admiral Darlan: "answer force with force." Embodying Admiral Nelson's spirit, Churchill ordered the commencement of Operation Catapult, "the deadly stroke...in the Western Mediterranean."³¹⁸ Churchill warned Somerville that if he did not act quickly, he would be forced to deal with French reinforcements. As the sun was setting on July 3rd, fire and smoke consumed the skies around Mers-el-Kébir. At 17:55, Somerville ordered the bombardment of the French fleet in port and within ten minutes a magazine on the *Bretagne* exploded, killing 977 French sailors and sinking the ship. The *Dunkerque* and the *Provence* ran aground while the *Strasbourg* narrowly escaped. The surprise attack costed 1,297 French sailors their lives and effectively crippled France's naval capacity to operate. Churchill lamented that this operation was a "hateful decision, the most unnatural and painful in which I have ever been concerned."³¹⁹ Though put into a difficult position, Churchill overcame and prevailed because this was war. Churchill knew that leading his country in its darkest hour would involve some of

³¹⁷ Manchester and Reid, *Defender*, 108. Mussolini considered using his Libyan troops to capture and secure the French fleet for Axis forces.

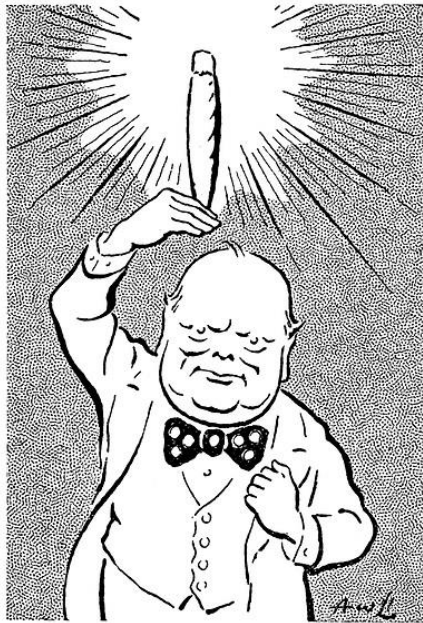
³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 108-09.

³¹⁹ Roberts, 574.

the most disagreeable decisions he would make in his career. His decision to sink the French fleet was significant because it illustrated his commitment to duty and the safety of the British people as well as the importance of the power of the initiative in conflict. Had he hesitated and lost the chance to eliminate this threat, the Axis would have most likely capitalized on the invasion of the British Isles using the French fleet as support. His resolve to take action exemplified everything he had preached in his most iconic 1940 speeches. Nelson was a clear inspiration to him in this capacity. His passionate courage to inspire those paralyzed with fear and carry the troops to victory, whatever the cost, placed him at the helm of history. His decisive action against the French fleet and morale-boosting inspiration that led to the destruction of the *Graf Spee* signified his determination to preserve not only his country but the freedom and liberty of civilization.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

-Churchill's Lantern Lights the Way-



NO DIM-OUT

“The lights burn brighter and shine more broadly than ever before. Let us walk forward together.”³²⁰

-Churchill, February 27, 1945-

* Image Source: “No Dim Out,” Cartoon, London: *Punch Magazine*, March 7, 1945, accessed March 25, 2020, <https://punch.photoshelter.com/gallery-image/Winston-Churchill-Cartoons/G0000wRqhEpJ3fss/10000.tHqJf7RDw>.

³²⁰ Winston Churchill, *Churchill Speaks: 1897-1963, Collected Speeches in Peace and War*, edited by Robert Rhodes James, New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1980, 853.

A day before Winston's 90th birthday, *The Observer* wrote, "He longed for fame, but only of a historic kind: he was not interested in being popular."³²¹ This was true. While Churchill always kept an eye on history, he was primarily concerned with perceptions of his legacy. How would future scholars and historians reflect upon Churchill and his leadership? Would the judgement of history be kind or crippling? General Sir Alan Brooke wrote, "I wonder whether any historian of the future will ever be able to paint Winston in his true colours."³²² His true colors continue to be debated today as the Churchill historiography expands ever further. He was arguably the greatest Englishman of the twentieth century but was not perfect. Roberts observed, "Churchill's mistakes must also be weighed as feathers in the balance against his other supreme contribution, the iron he inserted into the British soul when it was most needed."³²³ His wartime successes reflected the superiority of the leadership model he constructed. The mirror that hung behind Churchill reflected his past life and lessons learned revealing the foundations of monumental leadership. His deep understanding of history and respect for the past secured him an advantage over many of his peers as well as those that opposed him. His daughter Mary observed, "He saw events and people, as on a stage, lit by his own knowledge of history and his burning sense of destiny and the march of events."³²⁴

Churchill's knowledge of history served like the beacon of a lighthouse: it warned and guided those that, blinded by darkness, approached the rocky coastline. Roberts explained, "His historical imagination was powerful, but it was also practical; it was intended to instruct and inform."³²⁵ Despite his strong sense of destiny and foresight, British boats continued to crash and

³²¹ "Churchill," *The Observer*, November 29, 1964, Churchill Archive Centre, Jacob Papers (JACB II) 2/3.

³²² Roberts, *Walking with Destiny*, 965.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 229, 980.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 973.

³²⁵ Roberts, 973.

sink along the jagged silhouettes of war. Unfortunately, his reputation, especially after the Dardanelles, gravely suffered which hindered his ability to convincingly contribute in British politics as Hitler ascended to power. Nonetheless, when reflecting about Churchill the visionary, Henry Kissinger wrote, "His judgements of the trends of history were uniformly perceptive and often profound." Early on, he identified the dangers of Prussian militarism, detected the evils of Nazism, and foresaw the red wave of communism engulf Eastern Europe after the Second World War. Churchill's foresight was distinct because he not only evaluated the situation in the short-term, but he dissected the long-term consequences of actions taken in the Commons and on the battlefield. Moreover, as a historian he was able to place these consequences against the broader continuum of British history and relate them to future outcomes.

One of the biggest parts of Churchill's leadership paradigm, however, was his commitment to principle before party. The courage he embodied to stand for what he thought was right, even if it meant crossing the Commons floor, was an admirable trait. Even if it meant alienation and isolation, Churchill supported free trade, challenged Labor's move toward socialism, and most emphatically confronted Hitler when the majority of Britain embraced false hope ensnared in appeasement. This courage and determination to carry on, whatever the cost, defined his character and set him apart from those who would crumble under comparable pressure. Churchill was the epitome of a pragmatist. He was a bold and ambitious risktaker that, like a bulldog, fiercely attacked his objective until victory. His driving sense of personal destiny made him a force to be reckoned with especially because he was confident that no matter what happened, he would eventually "be in command of the defences of London and I shall save

London and England from disaster.”³²⁶ The prophecy of 1891 foretold not only Britain’s darkest but also Churchill’s finest hour.

The most defining aspect of Churchill’s leadership model was his embodiment of magnanimity. The moral of his Second World War Memoirs inscribed: “In War: Resolution, In Defeat: Defiance, In Victory: Magnanimity, In Peace: Goodwill.” This not only reflected how he felt about war and peace, but also the state of human nature. Justin Lyons illustrated:

Moved by a historically rich and vivid vision of human life, Churchill did not remain content to survey the events of his own experience, and of his own time. Indeed, the world has seen few men whose imaginary eye was more attuned to the shades of the colors of the past, whose view of earlier ages was at once so panoramic and so personal. For the reflective, an intimate walk with history invites contemplation on the human condition as such. Churchill was no exception. His writings on the topic convey the impression of human life as sacrifice and struggle.³²⁷

Churchill cared about the current state of affairs but wanted to contribute a lasting message for future generations. Lyons added:

A moral is meant to provide guidance, a way of proceeding in the world—what is, in the author’s understanding, the best way...it assumes a fundamental stability in the course of human affairs...[This moral sounds] the somber notes of remembrance and warning...one could not think of words any truer to the essence of the man.³²⁸

For most of his life, Churchill was engulfed in war including two of the most devastating in human history. Consequently, though many did not adhere to this advice, Churchill foresaw the foundations of a better world and a humanity who would not feed their populations to meat grinders, subject mothers and children to bombing runs, nor sacrifice an entire generation for the

³²⁶ Roberts, 975.

³²⁷ Justin D. Lyons, “On War: Churchill, Thucydides and the Teachable Moment,” *The Churchill Project*, Hillsdale College, January 21, 2019, accessed March 27, 2020, <https://winstonchurchill.hillsdale.edu/thucydides-churchill-parallels/>.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

gain of six miles of territory (Somme Offensive). For Churchill, to be magnanimous was to offer the hand of friendship to the vanquished so that a new foundation could be laid for a healthier and more stable international community. Because the Allies were not magnanimous toward the Germans after the First World War, Churchill was convinced that the seeds of resentment had been sowed and the roots of war deepened. As a result, part two of the Great War exploded in Europe and ravaged the continent for six years. Unsurprisingly, magnanimity was embraced after the Second World War with the establishment of the United Nations and Churchill as the 'poster child' for a United States of Europe.

The foundation of the Churchillian leadership paradigm encompassed an admiration for history; a personal sense of destiny; a forward-thinking prescience; adherence to principle; and perseverance to fight on amidst failure. Clemenceau, Napoleon, and Nelson's lessons would only further expand this paradigm significantly contributing to his leadership during the Second World War.

Churchill only needed seventeen hours with Clemenceau to witness the power of effective leadership. Clemenceau commanded the loyalty and admiration from his men because unlike many, he led from the front and willingly put himself in harm's way to raise morale and support his troops. Arguably, Churchill did the same prior to meeting Clemenceau when he commanded the 6th Battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers. In a speech at Hillsdale College, Roberts explained, "He entered No Man's Land no fewer than thirty times...he could have stayed back at battalion headquarters...but he didn't, because he didn't believe that he should ever ask anybody in his regiment to do anything he wasn't willing personally to do himself."³²⁹ Witnessing the 'Tiger' on the frontlines further cemented this leadership style into Churchill's

³²⁹ Andrew Roberts, "The Importance of Churchill Today," Speech, *The Churchill Project*, Hillsdale College, April 4, 2019, accessed March 28, 2020, <https://winstonchurchill.hillsdale.edu/the-importance-of-churchill-for-today/>.

paradigm. Churchill's Francophilia contributed to his initial admiration while Clemenceau's decisive and often ambitious decision making inspired him to emulate the Tiger's style. Leo Maxse wrote: "Men fight better under tigers than under monkeys and jackals—or charlatans... 'The Tiger' has the heart of a lion...men of action leave his presence feeling braver than when they came."³³⁰ Churchill once said, "It was a nation and race dwelling all round the globe that had the lion heart. I had the luck to be called upon to give the roar."³³¹ This may have been true as the war progressed but in 1940, it was Churchill who contained the lion's heart, confronted the frightened appeasers, instilled hope in a populace crippled by fear, transferred his determination to the free peoples of the world and "suggested to the lion the right places to use his claws."³³² Clemenceau solidified Churchill's commitment to lead from the front and the importance of continuous morale-boosting inspiration amid a nation's darkest hour. The spirit of the 'Tiger' always watched over the leonine bulldog as he rallied his countrymen to never surrender and defy the tyranny of Hitler's regime. Churchill reflected, "Clemenceau's story is familiar to most of us. A life of storm, from beginning to end; fighting, fighting all the way; never a pause, never a truce, never a rest. His blade was forged and tempered in the fires and chills of a half a century."³³³ It is familiar because it is Churchill's story as well. A story that was arguably all more powerful than the Tiger's.

Though Churchill nourished a romantic view of Napoleon, the abstract influence the emperor had upon his leadership paradigm was substantial. It is fact that Napoleon was both a tyrant and war-mongering dictator; however, his passionate sense of destiny, ambitious drive to

³³⁰ Robert K. Hanks, "Georges Clemenceau and the English," *The Historical Journal* 45:1 (2002): 67.

³³¹ Winston Churchill, *The Quotable Winston Churchill: A Collection of Wit and Wisdom*, Philadelphia: Running Press, 2013, 80.

³³² Roberts, *Walking with Destiny*, 947.

³³³ Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, 303.

destroy the absolutism of the *ancien régime* and becoming the exemplar of the French revolutionary spirit inspired Churchill's manifestation of effective leadership. Churchill's romanticized view of the emperor painted him as a bold and defiant liberator, vigorously pursuing his destiny to spread the enlightened ideals of revolution across the European continent. Churchill never supported how Napoleon's ways and means, but nonetheless, held him to high acclaim because of his vibrant desire to uproot the Hobbesian old world and sow the seeds of Lockean liberalism in the revolutionary soil before him. Churchill sought to emulate Napoleon's dynamism as a 'man of action' as he pursued his destiny to save England from disaster. Napoleon viciously targeted the absolute monarchs while Churchill valiantly defied and attacked the tyranny of the Nazi regime. Churchill, the benevolent dictator of war and magnanimous victor, foresaw his duty to protect and uphold the values elicited from the French Revolution and carry the torch of liberty and freedom into Europe to enlighten the shadows of Nazified darkness. Churchill once described Napoleon as "the greatest man of action ever known to human records."³³⁴ While his war record was impressive and his codified laws timeless, one could argue that Churchill's leadership performance and paradigm was superior to any kind of Napoleonic contribution. It is important to remember, however, that people are not born as heroes. It is who they look up to and historically deconstruct that conceives the hero within them. Without Napoleon's inspiration, Churchill's ambition and perseverance may have dissolved after Gallipoli. Because without the passionate ambition and commitment to light, the darkness of the Manichaeic world may have consumed Churchill and his perseverance to never surrender.

Admiral Nelson will always remain legendary in the hearts and minds of Britons. As with most, Nelson inspired Churchill's leadership paradigm in three distinct ways. The admiral's

Commented [BM40]: These are my words. I assume that Napoleon as a man of enlightenment and revolution would be familiar with these philosophies. His actions toward liberty and freedom can be presumed to be Lockean

³³⁴ Packwood, "A Tale of Two Statesmen," 14.

untamed courage at the helm of his ship spread across the decks and into his men like a wildfire set upon disintegrating the enemy. Moreover, it was this sense of bravery that inspired his men to fight on till complete and total victory against the Napoleonic forces. Churchill inherited such courage and used it to empower a demoralized Britain. His interactions with both soldiers and citizens alike left a Nelsonian mark of hope upon them and elevated their willingness and determination to stand fast against a Nazi invasion. Lady Diana Cooper described: “Winston Churchill, the greatest man ever fathered by England or mothered by America, Winston who in our most dread days armed us with a superhuman courage and endurance that we might respond to his words and actions”.³³⁵ As important as the infusion of courage was the invocation of duty. The famous order given at Trafalgar remained imprinted on Churchill’s mind as he perorated his call to action in the fall of 1940:

Every man and woman will therefore prepare himself to do his duty, whatever it may be, with special pride and care.... What [Hitler] has done is to kindle a fire in British hearts, here and all over the world, which will glow long after all traces of the conflagration he has caused in London have been removed. He has lighted a fire which will burn with a steady and consuming flame until the last vestiges of Nazi tyranny have been burnt out of Europe, and until the Old World—and the New—can join hands to rebuild the temples of man’s freedom and man’s honor, upon foundations which will not soon or easily be overthrown.³³⁶

Under the auspice of Nelsonian inspiration, Churchill also shared the importance of duty with his men through cinematography. En route to Placentia Bay to meet Roosevelt for the Atlantic Charter, he and his crew watched one of his favorite films, *That Hamilton Woman* about Admiral Nelson, his mistress, and Trafalgar. At the conclusion of the film the prime minister turned toward the audience and said, “I thought this would be of particular interest to you, many of whom have recently been under the fire of the enemy’s guns on an occasion of equal historical

³³⁵ Lady Diana Cooper, “The Lion’s Heart,” *The Atlantic*, March 1965. Churchill Archive Centre, Jacob Papers (JACB) 4/3.

³³⁶ Churchill, *Churchill Speaks*, edited by Robert Rhodes James, 730-31.

importance.”³³⁷ The combination of courage and duty made Nelson’s contribution to Churchill’s leadership paradigm crucial. To inspire and uphold the confidence of his countrymen during Britain’s darkest hour was a key part in Churchill’s mission to defy and challenge Hitler upon every decision he made. Building upon his Nelsonian ability to inspire and serve was his sense of initiative. He refused to give Hitler the advantage over the British Isles and aggressively struck important components of the German navy. For example, the defeat of the *Graf Spee* and sinking of the *Bismarck* severely weakened the Kriegsmarine surface fleet. More significant was Churchill’s dramatic and decisive order to destroy the French fleet at Mers-el-Kébir to prevent it from falling from Vichy grasp into Nazi clutches. Churchill embodied the Nelsonian spirit as he led his country to war. Standing at the helm of history, Nelson smiled upon him from his vantage atop the monument in Trafalgar Square.

Winston Churchill was a self-made man. His past political, military, and scholarly life prepared him to meet his destiny with full force and stop the Nazi onslaught of the British Isles.. There he stood with a lantern in one hand and cane in the other, shining light upon those that inspired him. The Tiger peered intently from under the table and released a low snarl. Shining the light upwards, he finds a well-sculpted bust of the emperor sitting on top of his desk with an ambitious fire burning within his eyes. Ever higher, the lantern’s flame consumes the dutiful portrait of the admiral at the helm strong and resolute in the face of tyranny. Pondering deeply, Churchill lights a cigar, releases a puff of smoke, and says “This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”³³⁸

³³⁷ Sir Ian Jacobs, *Diary Entries during the Atlantic Charter Trip and Meeting, August 1941*, Churchill Archive Centre, JACB 1/10.

³³⁸ Winston Churchill, *The Quotable Winston Churchill: A Collection of Wit and Wisdom*, Philadelphia: Running Press, 2013, 76.

Addendum: Action This Day



*"The price of greatness is responsibility."*³³⁹
-Churchill, September 6, 1943-

* Image Source: "Premier and Defence," *Daily Mail*, May 13, 1940, accessed March 30, 2020, Churchill War Rooms.

³³⁹ Churchill, *A Collection of Wit and Wisdom*, 56.

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