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The Lost Argument of Isaiah Spittlesworth

By Justin Katz

I feel I should admit, from the very beginning, that it was chance, not any significant research on my own part, that has allowed me the dubious privilege, dubious for it irks me to the core, of revealing this document, which many have hypothesized to exist, but none have been fortunate enough to find in its complete state, as I have. It seems unnervingly fitting that a person such as myself should be afforded this opportunity to offer the final proof that proponents of the downtrodden have been, all this time, correct, descended as I am from dissipated American dynasties through both my maternal and paternal lines. The former, my northerly blood, has flowed in the veins of such renowned Yankees as President Ulysses S. Grant (“U.S.” to the family), of whom my mother had such a collection of pictures that I was led, as a young child, to have a very clear conception, though to this day I know very little about him, of his face, and, were I unshaven and of a military bent, the familial resemblance might be discernible to those who have an ambition to see it. The heritage that my father brought to the matrimonial treaty, so to speak, extends even farther into our nation’s history. Apparently, one of my long departed progenitors was the first man to be granted Virginian land by the king of England. With the many eventful years that have passed between that nobleman’s journey across the Atlantic and my present life in New England, coupled with our nationally affected deploration of

claims founded upon lineage, I feel entirely absolved, both personally and historically, of any blame for the ignorance that I have of the identity and habits of this gentleman. Be this as it might, I am exceedingly thankful that I have not endeavored to educate myself as to my luminary ancestor's status, and its apparent demise, for one of my heritage might have, not many years ago, been corrupted into expecting much from the world, but I, knowing nothing of my latent nobility, expected nothing, and so was quite satisfied to receive, through a long line of bequeathals, only a large cardboard box of ancient books, dusty with age and water-stained by long keeping in converted wine cellars, but even more appropriate, so defiled, to my intended use of them as symbolically decorative props for my equally dusty and water-stained mattress. Buried midway within the most ponderous of these tomes, even the title of which I found illegible, where moisture, being not what one might call a voracious reader, had yet to reach, I found an original pamphlet of Isaiah Spittlesworth's "Argument."

Through exhausting research, I have been able to discover that Mr. Spittlesworth has become, or, perhaps, always was, an elusive figure in our nation's history. His life and death are shrouded in mystery, and proof of his very existence has, until now, been sporadic and questionable. There is some evidence to suggest that he was the product of an extensive education that crossed many national and administrative boundaries, and made one more shadow upon the festal curtains of such early American aristocrats as made up the Continental Congress (though his familiarity with Thomas Jefferson is subject to debate). "The Argument" appears to have been written a few years prior to the American Revolution, but efforts to pinpoint its publication have been futile, especially since the date on the document in my possession has so faded with time that it could, depending upon mood and lighting, be taken as several disparate and unconnected numbers.

Increasingly, over the past fifty years or so, snippets of “The Argument” have been spotted between the lines, as it were, of classic American novels and essays, and flayed from official government documents to which it seemed to adhere, as if intrinsic, by means of some congealing substance that was likely interwoven with the fabric of the paper on which it was printed. In this latter circumstance, the official papers, having been submitted to some glossing procedure, though the paper itself is of a much inferior texture, have refused to yield the more significant passages of the doctrine to which they adhered.

This all related, I cannot stress enough the distaste with which I have grappled as I’ve chewed upon this long lost tidbit. To mollify this reaction in the rest of my brethren humanity, I have modernized the language in order that it might be more democratically digested, and that in a more palatable fashion.

Henceforth, with this bitter pill of history encapsulated so as to be taken in one egregious gulp, it is my hope that our society, having found the one true origin of our nation’s sins, might deny him and be united in a singular indigestion.

Justin Katz, *editor*

The Argument

Gentlemen, I sit this fine day through at a desk to speak of a dark cloud which hovers not only over my head, but over that of every educated man who holds a portion of this new land’s soil under his family’s name. For it is my *name*, that which signifies not just me, but my newborn son and his sons after him as well, which occupies my thoughts. It is every man’s obligation to carry on that portion which his father lent his life to create and sustain. Gentlemen, it is solely upon our shoulders whether that obligation be an honour or a disgrace, and in this

way, must we, each and every one, great or mediocre, answer to our posterity; for it is not merely land and capital which we leave when we ascend: it is the record of our being, our mark, and the state of affairs within which our children must need come of age. Mark my words! Future generations will scrutinize our every transaction and either persecute or revere those of our names by them. Gentlemen! Our focus must not merely be the bettering of our own station, or even that of our sons and grandsons: in everything we do, we must consider its effect upon our families one hundred years hence, and one hundred years after that, so that our names will remain great and our very graves will be shrines! It is for this that I waste away a full Autumn day at writing!

Now, admittedly, it can be said that my acquisition of finance and ascension to a fortuitous position in our blessed economy has been fortunately mysterious almost to the point of miraculosity. I have taken great care to keep my business matters discreet, so that whomsoever I have culled this petty fortune from may have no recourse and his children hold no grudge. It is with this same discretion that we must act as we make motions to sever empirical European ties and engulf the western lands of America. We must orchestrate our affairs in such a way that as our positions improve and the lives of our wives and servants ease (and ease they will for we must avoid the simple answer of tightening their collars just as we will be increasingly constrained by our belts), as their lives ease sufficiently to allow them time for meditation they have no evidence of mistreatment should they come to resent their stations. We must be able to say, without any sign of hesitation, “Things are as they should be,” and be able to ask, with all assurance of the punctilious answer, “Do you doubt that your position would be much the worse were it not for my tender mastery?” In all we do, we of power must act slyly in the application of our force. Surely as reasonable creatures we can find reason to justify a willing, and amicable,

subjugation! If we are not cunning, we must rely on the provisions of God, and so remain vulnerable to accusations of duplicity.

Firstly we must consider the lands which we wish to claim under the name of our “colonies” and later our “country” (and claim them we must, for if history shows us anything it is the equitable relationship between land and power). Even the most conservative and patriotic among us must admit the prior claims that the Native Americans have to these lands, perhaps more so for our greater understanding of civil jurisprudence; and while *we* all understand that *our* rights, those given by God and guineas, are supersedious, we must give consideration to the people of the future, who may not understand the naturality of a fox seizing a rabbit hole. Therefore, we must appear to have given the Native Americans their due chance. It must seem that their society failed of its own dismerit (and who can doubt that it will do so — especially with but the merest of prodding from us). To this end consider two means. Firstly, we must forsake the drive to convert the heathens to Christianity. While father Columbus and others may have thought this a glorious goal, I suggest that it is a useless imposition, tending only to seem contrived and to make the uneducated of European descent feel more closely related to the barbarians than to us. And with all quietude, who among the honest educated has not heard the erroneous murmurs that an aristocratic Christianity is hypocritical? We must, in short, realize that the ignorant will rarely admit that privilege brings with it a holy comprehension of the more secular matters of life. Secondly, we cannot simply snatch from the Native Americans their lands, for if current trends of the “free thinking” do indeed lead them to question our actions, would they not feel justified in likewise ripping *our* lands from *our* hands? I propose that we become great decreers of equanimity and sharing of land. For from this position how can we not encourage the poor of our own race to become rulers of their own little plots? And who would

question the selfishness of the Native Americans should they (and they will) protest against encroachment? Most importantly, how could we of inherent power be blamed for interfering in the interest of peace and justice on the side of the benign settlers, who will then barter away life and land for our protectorate. What's more, our publications and records must be constructed to show the hypocrisy of the Native Americans should they deign to refuse the settler the right to work the land for survival of his own family, a family which, due to the opulent fertility of the mendicant, cannot help but continually require larger pastures.

Similarly must we consider the labor through which we draw our wealth. I believe we are greatly amiss in our subjugation of the African American race. Granted the pecuniary benefit of slavery is enormous, but wealth is relative, and once we have thrown off the manacle-bearing wing of England we must need compete only with each other. Verily, will we see less accumulated wealth in our lifetimes, but truly, who among those of means is not cozy? The benefit will be that to our legacy — the better leverage for our lineage to remain superior. Hence, once we've become our own nation, it would behoove us to show our magnanimity by freeing our slaves and offering, to those who wish, free passage to their mother continent. Those who feel better served in remaining can then be put to work for more than generous wages, which will easily be reclaimed through rents, supply prices, and other such "privileges of freedom." What's more, if free, the African Americans must need compete with their own equals among the white race, and racial inequities will appear to be derived from the impoverished ignorant and not the elitist, though duly commissioned, prejudiced.

Gentlemen, we must base our actions on one all-encompassing truth: that the poor and downtrodden are united by bonds which transcend race and heritage — the bonds of suffering and poverty. So must we put aside our petty bickering and become allies. Through this Alliance

of Aristocrats we can then regulate the division of wealth; for if the wealth of him among us who has the least of it is scattered into the ever open, unquenchable, maw of the desirous, then not only do we lose an ally, but that fallen ally will surely become a dangerous, because well-informed, foe! If wealth be a mountain, cannot the poorest man climb over the backs of the fortunate and so open the avenue to others of his kind while leaving filth upon our overcoats? All nations and generations are divided into categories of wealth and poverty. Servitude is as impregnable as control. We must band together now and build the wall which defines these boundaries and ensure that those who are now on this side remain so. Once we become the institution, we must, in all things, appear to act justly, and all misfortunes must appear naturally caused. Therefore, through both our power and philanthropy, we will be seen as models of our civilization. The lowly will aspire to reach our heights, and will easily be made to trip and stumble over and amongst each other while we retain an appearance nearing sainthood and so ensure that our names will forever be carved in the ever mutable stone at the very peak of society!

Gentlemen! We must seem always to act appropriately. We must resist our vanities. We must appear to offer free rein while keeping the temptation of our status always beyond the noses of those we lead. Moreover, we must be kind. We must be generous. For if we do not appear, in every way, to be beyond censure, then we will lose our greatest advantage: that all harbors must have a guiding light. That all dreams must have an example. And we, gentlemen, must be that great example in all that we appear to do. Ours must be a benign consistency. Though those that understand our arguments will call them foolish, those whose birthrights are foolishness will merely see nature. And the ill-placed foot of the man whose hands are stretched outward in a proposition of support is seldom seen. Once ours is the institution, we must *not* seek to squelch

insurrection, but lead it (and lead it astray). We must never be the enemy, but the best, as we truly are, of what our society has to offer. And above all, gentlemen, there must never be a one among us who is insufficiently informed of our cause so as to portray it as what it is.

So say I on this fine day, and so must be the call that we all take up in whispers, gentlemen. Just so!