

REPRINTING RUSSIA: ANTI-IMPERIAL DISCOURSE IN ELIAS BOUDINOT'S

CHEROKEE PHOENIX

A Paper
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
North Dakota State University
of Agriculture and Applied Science

By

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Major Department:
English

June 2017

Fargo, North Dakota

North Dakota State University
Graduate School

Title

REPRINTING RUSSIA: ANTI-IMPERIAL DISCOURSE IN ELIAS
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MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT

While much work has explored American Indian print resistance to the encroaching United States, little scholarship has explored reprinting as a method of resistance. Building on Meredith McGill's argument that reprinting is "legible as an independently signifying act" (5), this analysis shows how Elias Boudinot, editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* newspaper from 1828 to 1832, selectively reprinted articles about the Russian Empire to foster an anti-imperial spirit among his readers. This analysis shows that Boudinot subversively played on the idea of Russia as the United States' distant twin by predominantly republishing articles that portray Russia as cruel, weak, and an enemy to democratic ideals of liberty and freedom. Such a portrayal instills a resistant attitude in his readership against Russian-style imperialism and the countries which subscribe to it. This analysis calls for refocusing of attention away from great powers and onto smaller nations affected by great power politics.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: READING BOUDINOT’S <i>CHEROKEE PHOENIX</i>	5
CHAPTER THREE: EDITING THE FIRST AMERICAN INDIAN NEWSPAPER.....	10
CHAPTER FOUR: DISTANT TWINS: THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE EARLY-NINETEENTH CENTURY.....	17
CHAPTER FIVE: REPRINTING THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN THE <i>PHOENIX</i>	21
General Russian Life, Politics, and Leaders.....	22
The Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829.....	25
Polish Uprising of 1830-1831.....	31
Resistance Lost.....	35
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION.....	37
WORKS CITED.....	38

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This analysis of Elias Boudinot's work as editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* newspaper seeks to understand how Cherokee readers and white U.S. readers might have come to understand the relationship between the United States and the Russian Empire. As opposed to focusing on books that only the wealthy would have had access to in the early nineteenth century, this focus on the Cherokee Nation's easily-available newspaper shows how ordinary people have experienced imperialism and internalized its surrounding discourses. Through his selective reprinting practices, Boudinot launched a Cherokee critique of land empire in both the United States and Russia. This analysis shows that the sum of Boudinot's reprinted articles about the Russian Empire provides us with a thorough critique of the type of imperialism that the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as seeking to extend a country's power through military or cultural dominance ("Imperialism"). I suggest that, through reprinting, Boudinot offered a critique of empire that was subtle but nonetheless powerful.

In 1828, the Cherokee Nation included a capital, court, legislature, and many other hallmarks of a European-style government as part of their project to legitimize itself as an independent nation. At the beginning of that year, they would add a newspaper to these other markers of nationhood while facing demands from the U.S. Government to remove to lands west of the Mississippi River and to end their tribal government and give control of its lands to the state of Georgia. In this time of intimidation, debate, and division, the *Cherokee Phoenix* newspaper rose as a pillar of the Cherokee Nation, publishing some original articles and editorials about Cherokee events, but also filling its pages with reprinted material borrowed from books and other newspapers. Throughout Boudinot's time as editor (from the *Phoenix's* first issue in February 1828 until he resigned in the fall of 1832), the *Phoenix* regularly published

articles about European affairs in the “General Interest” section of the paper, and it is striking just how often the paper published about Russian affairs in particular. From profiles of historical figures like Ivan the Terrible to general descriptions about life in the Russian Empire and updates about the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-29, a search of the *Phoenix* archives reveals at least 131 separate instances of Boudinot publishing articles about Russia. This marks it highest among distant European or Asian countries, with only France coming close (116 articles), and well ahead of countries like Belgium (15 articles), Prussia (37 articles), China (20 articles), and Italy (31 articles)¹. France’s prominence within the pages of the *Phoenix* perhaps isn’t surprising, as France had only recently sold the Louisiana territory to the United States and was still involved in colonial projects elsewhere in the Americas at the time Boudinot was editing the *Phoenix*. It is less readily apparent why the *Phoenix* was so fixated on the Russian Empire, a mysterious country on the opposite side of the world with little direct involvement in American life or politics, let alone Cherokee life.

Existing scholarship is almost completely devoid of analyses of Boudinot’s reprinting practices in general, let alone explorations of his reasons for so often reprinting articles about the Russian Empire. Most scholars examining the *Phoenix* have dismissed the reprinted content as filler, and instead focused on more overtly political material (Gaul, “Editing” 284). Only Theresa Strouth Gaul has attributed enough agency to Boudinot’s reprinting to produce a sustained analysis on the topic. In her article “Editing as Indian Performance,” Gaul analyzes poetry reprinted in the *Phoenix* and argues that this reprinting of poetry that originally appeared in

¹ This list doesn’t include the British Empire, which is mentioned in more than 300 articles. Because many of the articles American newspapers reprinted about European affairs came from England, this country’s role in Boudinot’s reprinting project is harder to analyze; at any rate, it is less surprising that England would receive so much attention as their affairs were much more wound up in American affairs, and their actions often directly affected Americans.

newspapers with primarily white, middle class readership is an act of “cultural reappropriation” (285). She shows that these poems take on new, politically charged meanings when they are rebroadcast in the Cherokee sphere (Gaul 285). However, even Gaul limits her analysis to reprinted poetry, without delving into the deeper significance of the reprinted articles. In the introduction to her edited selection of Boudinot’s writings, Theda Perdue offers a glimpse of the deeper intentions of Boudinot’s reprinting of articles about European events. After quoting an article which the *Phoenix* reprinted in 1829 about scavengers who “barbarically” looted the bodies of fallen soldiers after the battle of Waterloo, Perdue writes, “While Boudinot refrained from openly venturing a comparison, the intent of the article was clear” (21). In short, by reprinting an article about barbaric European soldiers, Boudinot equated European militarism with barbarism. Despite being one of the only scholarly voices to recognize agency in Boudinot’s practice of reprinting, Perdue does not develop this mode of analysis any further than this glancing mention.

The general lack of attention to reprinted articles in the *Phoenix* is likely due to a failure to recognize reprinting as an act of agency in general, stemming from a dominant view of reprinting as a passive process. However, I agree with Meredith McGill’s argument in *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting* that reprinting is “distinctly legible as an independently signifying act” (5). Like Gaul in her analysis of Boudinot’s reprinting of poetry, I build on McGill’s argument to explore how material originally printed by non-Cherokee editors for non-Cherokee audiences takes on new, politically charged meanings when reprinted by a Cherokee newspaper for a Cherokee audience. Starting by contextualizing the articles’ likely reception their original audiences, I analyze the way articles’ meanings change through reprinting by contextualizing historical events surrounding the reprinting of the article and noting parallels

between the contemporary Cherokee situation and the events described in the reprinted articles. I explore the new political meanings these articles take on in the Cherokee context by comparing the new political meanings to the dominant perception of the Russian Empire as the United States' distant twin. Finally, I examine the effect the reprinted articles would have on the *Phoenix's* readership in forming an anti-imperial worldview. Although the *Phoenix* continued to publish articles about Europe, and Russia specifically, after Boudinot's resignation in 1832, I limit my analysis to Boudinot's time as editor as I am more comfortable analyzing a single editor's editorial philosophy and project. Although I will discuss Boudinot's successor's work briefly, it is beyond the scope of this paper to go in depth into how the *Phoenix's* reprinting practices changed after Boudinot resigned. That could, however, be a rewarding avenue for future scholarship.

My analysis finds various ways in which Boudinot selectively reprinted articles about the Russian Empire to foster an anti-imperial and anti-colonial spirit among his readers. In my findings, Boudinot builds on the already popularly-established parallels between nineteenth century Russian and United States "civilizing missions." He subversively plays on the idea of Russia as the United States' distant twin by often republishing articles that portray the United States' far-away, imperial doppelganger as cruel and weak. This portrayal instills a resistant attitude in his readership against Russian-style imperialism and the countries which subscribe to it. At other times, Boudinot uses the Russian Empire's role as an ally in the fight for Greek independence (as well as its role as an obstacle to Polish independence) to highlight the hypocrisy of the United States—and imperial nations like it—that claim to support the independence of a distant nation while actively eliminating independent nations close to home.

CHAPTER TWO: READING BOUDINOT'S *CHEROKEE PHOENIX*

For this analysis, I rely on the digital Georgia Historic Newspapers Project's searchable archive of the *Phoenix* to find articles relating to specific topics that Boudinot wrote and reprinted. While this resource was invaluable, there are some problems with the archive. For the second half of 1829, no articles appear when any search term is entered, and in 1830 and 1831, many articles are illegible or the text is missing from the archive entirely. Twenty-two articles about Russia appeared in the archive for the year 1829, but the actual number is likely much higher, and as a result, we don't know what type of articles Boudinot reprinted about the end of the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829. We also miss out on some details of Boudinot's reprinting early in the Polish struggle for independence. While it would be nice to have this information, it does not have a major effect on this analysis which examines illustrative examples of general trends in Boudinot's reprinting process, and there is no indication that the process changed during the gaps in the archive.

My reading of this archive relies on the work of previous scholars, while also addressing some large gaps in the field. Much scholarship on Boudinot focuses on his political writings and role as a complicated figure in Cherokee history. This aspect of scholarship is well represented by Gaul in "'The Great Radical Political Mistake': Elias Boudinot's 1837 Letter on Cherokee Removal." In this article, Gaul notes Boudinot's neglect by native studies scholars and anthologists, and she is puzzled by the relative absence of scholarship concerning one of the most prolific early Indian writers. She partially attributes this neglect to discomfort on the part of modern readers over Boudinot's political choices in the 1830s, which led to Cherokee removal. Boudinot, in short, remains on the wrong side of Cherokee history. Gaul bemoans the fact that scholars have let current political assessments hinder exploration of earlier writings ("Political

Mistake” 28). Another reason posited is that Boudinot’s main forms of publication were journalism and letter-writing, forms for which literary scholars have traditionally had fewer methods of examining (Gaul, “Political Mistake” 28). Gaul argues that recently uncovered publications, such as Boudinot’s 1837 letter on Cherokee removal, in which he explains and defends his careful thought process in signing the treaty authorizing removal, should complicate and enrich our understanding of Boudinot as an important writer and political figure (“Political Mistake” 30). My analysis builds on this call for increased awareness of Boudinot as an important early American Indian figure by using new methods to understand his huge impact as a journalist and refocus inquiry into his work as a writer and editor preceding his controversial role in removal.

In *Removable Type: Histories of the Book in Indian Country, 1663- 1880*, Phillip H. Round devotes a chapter to Boudinot’s role in representing the Cherokee as a “reading and educated people” (123). Boudinot’s newspaper, together with Sequoyah’s Cherokee syllabary were so convincing as illustrations of civilization that non-Indians were forced to recognize the Cherokee as a “civilized tribe” (Round 123). Round characterizes Boudinot as a Christian assimilationist who accepted white racism as he sought to “civilize” the Cherokee people by making them resemble white societies in an effort to characterize themselves as separate but equal. Showing a nuanced understanding of Boudinot as a figure, Round resists the notion that Boudinot’s project is inauthentic and dismissible because of his assimilationist inclinations. While my study builds on this resistance to viewing Boudinot as a compromised figure, my study breaks with Round’s treatment of the *Phoenix* as primarily an illustration of Cherokee civility aimed to a white audience. I show that Boudinot found ways to speak to both his fellow Cherokee and to white audiences. In the process, the *Phoenix* served as much more than an

illustration of the Cherokees' ability to adapt to white standards of civilization, but as a mouthpiece for a sophisticated argument against imperialism.

While Gaul and Purdue, in analyses mentioned earlier, shine some much-needed light on Boudinot's reprinting project, Gaul neglects to extend her analysis to include the European articles, and Purdue does not produce an in-depth analysis. My paper fills this gap in scholarship by providing an extended analysis of the purposes of Boudinot's reprinting of articles about distant events. In order to do this, I use a theoretical framework which builds upon previous work done in the field of reprinting. Meredith McGill argues that reprinting is, "distinctly legible as an independently signifying act" – an act giving rise to new interpretations, dependent on a new source of distribution and a new audience, possibly disregarding and conflicting with the intentions of an original author (5). McGill's work has been foundational to a number of more recent scholars, including Trish Loughran, who have placed the U.S. culture of reprinting at the center of their analysis. For Loughran in *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770-1870*, it is important to understand the role (and limitations) of the practice of reprinting in constructing early U.S. nationalism. But even outside of nationalist contexts, reprinting matters, ultimately, because it is an agentic act that escapes analysis in author-focused studies. Gaul notes the usefulness of this type of non-author-centric analysis in her work on Boudinot's reprinting of poetry. Gaul and I both borrow from McGill's work to explore the new, politically charged meanings taken on by material reprinted into the Cherokee context.

Finally, to argue that Boudinot's reprinting project uses Cherokee modes of discourse, I borrow from Daniel Heath Justice's discussion of Chickamauga Consciousness (open resistance) and the Beloved Path (peacekeeping), which provides a basis for analyzing Cherokee resistance

and survivalist methods that aren't aggressively separatist. The idea of the Beloved Path has proven useful in recent scholarship that has shed new light on Cherokee authors who have otherwise been neglected by native studies scholars as a result of their assimilationist and non-openly-resistant modes of discourse. Justice argues that the Beloved Path is one of the main tendencies in Cherokee writing and is characterized by placing "peace and cultural continuity above potentially self-destructive rebellion" (30). Justice further argues that "most of the Cherokee people have long fought to survive on the Beloved Path by shaping Eurowestern cultural, religious, and political structures to serve the interests of Cherokee nationhood" (41). In her introduction to *Cherokee Sister: The Collected Writing of Catharine Brown 1818-1823*, Gaul uses the idea of the Beloved Path to open the door to the possibility of reading subtle resistance in Catharine Brown's writing. Brown, a missionary school-educated contemporary of Boudinot, similarly wrote in forms that scholars traditionally have lacked skills to analyze—letters and diaries. Awareness of the Beloved Path as a form of discourse allows for readings of resistance in Brown's letter-writing and Boudinot's reprinting work, which we might otherwise miss. This type of assimilationist resistance was a vital tool for members of the Cherokee Nation in the early nineteenth century. The Beloved Path rose in response to the self-destructive nature of Chickamauga Consciousness, which advocated for the total rejection of philosophical accommodational and white modes of discourse in favor of open, violent rebellion. Chickamauga Consciousness is named after the Chickamauga branch of the Cherokee, who, at the end of the eighteenth century, used violent means to defend their lands from white invaders (Justice 35). In response, the United States military resorted to pure terrorism, slaughtering everyone from babies to elders, burning crops, and razing towns (Justice 36). While there is no faulting the Chickamauga for doing everything in their power to preserve their lives and culture, the Beloved

Path suggested a potentially more effective way to resist, through a form of critique that advocated for the preservation of Cherokee culture while not provoking the violence of the United States Government. In his fight against imperialism, Boudinot followed the Beloved Path, “a tradition that saw strength and survival in adaptation” (Justice 40).

CHAPTER THREE: EDITING THE FIRST AMERICAN INDIAN NEWSPAPER

Some background information is required to understand the context that gives rise to the *Phoenix* and Boudinot's critique of imperialism. Boudinot's critique took form in the first American Indian newspaper which was produced as a means of fighting back in a land dispute between the Cherokee Nation and the state of Georgia. At the time, the government of Georgia was trying to force the Cherokee to move from their native lands and remove to the west. In 1817 and 1819, the Cherokee and Georgia concluded treaties wherein the Cherokee were forced to give up four million acres of land in the east in return for the same amount in the west, while in 1816 they gave up two million acres and received nothing in return (Holland 15). Georgia was not satisfied with these acquisitions and Georgian politicians were becoming more vocal, demanding that the federal government extinguish all native land claims (Holland 14). In 1822, the Cherokee Council passed a resolution announcing that they would no longer speak to Georgia about selling land (Holland 15). In 1824, the Cherokee sent a commission informing President James Monroe of their intention to keep all of their land. They were in turn warned that Georgia was pressing for the fulfilment of the Compact of 1802, whereby the U.S. Government had promised that the state of Georgia could have all Indian lands as soon as was possible (Holland 16). Georgian Governor George M. Troup threatened to move the Cherokees by force, while Monroe submitted a plan to civilize the Indians and advocated for their removal (Holland 16-17). In the face of this growing threat to their sovereignty, the Cherokee chose to fight back "using the weapons of the white Americans to unify opinion in the Nation and to gain support outside the Nation for maintaining their ancient lands and homes" (Holland 19). Rather than a complete rejection of white culture, the Cherokee embraced white "civilization" as a way to fight for their rights. The Cherokee delegates who made frequent visits to Washington became aware

of the power of the press in putting forth political arguments and stirring public support for a cause (Holland 19). The Cherokee sent Elias Boudinot to raise money for a printing press and later made him editor of *The Cherokee Phoenix*. As editor, he was charged with advocating for Cherokee rights from the Cherokee Nation's capital, New Echota.

Boudinot was serving as a clerk in the lower house of the Cherokee legislature before he started to work on the *Phoenix* (Holland 20). Born in 1802 and taught to read and write by Moravian missionaries, he would go on to study at the Foreign Mission School at Cornwall in 1818, where he would distinguish himself as a leading scholar (Holland 20). It was at this Christian boarding school that he dropped his Cherokee name, Buck Watie, and was given the name of Elias Boudinot, a former president of the American Bible Society (Holland 20). He would go on to briefly study at seminary before returning to the Cherokee Nation in 1822 to work as a teacher for the American Board (Holland 20). Boudinot was an assimilationist. In addition to appropriating western religion, he married a white woman, donned a white man's name, adapted to English-language modes of expression, and advocated forms of Cherokee nationalism modelled on U.S. systems of governance. For this reason, Boudinot is often dismissed as a compromised, inauthentic, or treacherous figure. However, it is in fact this very appreciation for Western ideas that helped make Boudinot such a staunch Cherokee patriot, particularly through his appropriation of the concept of nationalism in the Cherokee context. As Justice shows, the Cherokee adapted a version of nationalism that differs significantly from the coercive nationalism of industrialized countries (8). For the Cherokee, nationalism refers to the vigorous protection of nationhood to preserve a sociopolitical boundary by which sacred Cherokee practices were protected (Justice 8).

A single individual putting together a weekly newspaper for a large, heterogeneous audience can have a lot of power in broadcasting a specific argument. To understand Boudinot's anti-imperial argument, it is important to understand his beliefs, which we catch glimpses of in some of his editorials. Boudinot's editorials make quite clear that in spite of all that he accepts about the superiority of United States culture, he values Cherokee sovereignty and land integrity above all else. In the very first issue of the *Phoenix*, published February 21, 1828, Boudinot shows himself to be anti-removal, writing: "In regard to the controversy with Georgia, and the present policy of the General Government, in removing, and concentrating the Indians, out of the limits of any state... the public should know what we think of this policy, which, in our opinion, if carried into effect, will prove pernicious to us" (3). In a January 28, 1829 editorial, Boudinot writes about the fundamental importance of national integrity for the Cherokee, writing: "While he possesses a national character, there is hope for the Indian. But take his rights away, divest him of the last spark of national pride, and introduce him to a new order of things, invest him with oppressive laws, grievous to be borne, he droops like the fading flower before the noon day sun" (2). At other times, such as an April 7, 1830 editorial, Boudinot wrote directly against the United States Government and white settlers, referring to the settlers as intruders and saying that Cherokee have no intention of giving up their lands, that they will only do so through force, and that they are the victims of "systematic oppression" (2). Through this combination of open defiance and acceptance of European forms of discourse, editorializing about Georgia, and reprinting about the Russian Empire, Boudinot embraced the Beloved Path over Chickamauga Consciousness to form a full-voiced critique of imperialism.

By embracing the Beloved Path, Boudinot was able to enter into the discourses surrounding American Indian removal and influence public opinion amongst a heterogeneous

audience that was not only composed of Cherokee readers. While the *Phoenix's* most immediate audience was the membership of the Cherokee Nation, non-Cherokee Americans also had access to the newspaper. Cherokee readers could subscribe to the *Phoenix* for two dollars a year, while non-Cherokee readers paid two dollars and fifty cents (Holland 33). Early in the newspaper's run, the *Phoenix* struggled to stay afloat. Rarely running advertisements, the newspaper was largely financed through subscriptions, of which there were few in the early stages of the paper. In a July 9, 1828 editorial, Boudinot wrote, "We never supposed that [the paper] could be supported [by the Cherokee Nation], and though our little tribe has afforded as many subscribers as we could have reasonably expected, yet our subscription list must be greatly augmented in order to continue our labors without embarrassment" (2). Noting that the paper currently had only around 100 subscribers, Boudinot added that he had expected that "ample support would be freely given by the friends of Indians, at least for the sake of charity. . . . We hope our distant friends to whom we would now particularly make our appeal, will remember us" (2).

As the newspaper struggled to stay afloat on support of Cherokee readership, Boudinot had to attract and retain white readership, and as a result of a fundraising tour on Boudinot's part, the *Phoenix* attracted subscribers from nearly all parts of the United States and even Europe (Pulley). Supporters in Alabama and New York each raised another 30-40 subscribers and after a year, Boudinot probably had around 200 subscribers, a circulation which would have been fairly high for a regional newspaper at the time (Holland 50). Both within the Cherokee Nation and outside, the newspaper was delivered to subscribers through the post, with issues of the *Phoenix* collected and distributed by the Spring Place post office every week (Holland 50). It is difficult to know what proportion of his audience was Cherokee and exactly where his paper was read, but he had agents to collect subscriptions and payments in Georgia, South Carolina, Virginia,

Alabama, Massachusetts, New York, and Maine (Holland 50). As the most immediate means of forming a worldview for its Cherokee audience, the *Phoenix* had a lot of power in forming their conceptions of the world. While the Russian Empire had no immediate impact on Cherokee life, Cherokee readers would read the Russia presented to them by Boudinot and from there gain their view of how imperialist countries work, how they fail to behave morally, and how they can be resisted. By reading mostly negative articles about Russia in the *Phoenix*, white readers would be exposed to a different view of the U.S.-Russian relationship, and they would be forced to confront the selfish behavior of the nineteenth century's two major contiguous land empires.

While this heterogeneity of the *Phoenix*'s readership brought much needed funds to the paper and a wider sphere of influence, it brought problems as well. In an August 27, 1831 article, Boudinot relates his account of an encounter with a Col. Nelson, the Commander of the Georgia Guard. Col. Nelson had read the *Phoenix* and interpreted a mention of the Georgia Guard as so libelous that he wants to "whip [Boudinot] within an inch of [his] life" (2). Nelson accuses Boudinot of writing deliberate falsehoods about him. After allowing Boudinot to leave, Nelson requests another meeting with him sometime later, which Boudinot declines. In response, Nelson sends soldiers to arrest Boudinot under the false pretenses that Boudinot had fired a gun at them. This account of the incident appears designed to underscore Boudinot's bravery and patriotism. The fact that he didn't change his printing or reprinting practices in the face of such threats of violence shows the courage it took to be as active as Boudinot was in Cherokee resistance. Through both editorializing and reprinting, Boudinot put forth a thorough criticism of imperial power even while faced with direct threats of violence for this critique. Armed with the methods of open critique and the more creative practice of indirect critique through reprinting, every week Boudinot and the *Phoenix* walked the Beloved Path into battle with imperialism.

Boudinot's accountability in incidents like this one is the result of the total control he had over the newspaper in his role as editor. For most of its run, the *Phoenix* was a three or four man operation, with Boudinot as the editor, as well as a printer, a printer's assistant, and sometimes a printer's apprentice. The printers worked with a durable, iron printing press equipped with types for both the English alphabet and Sequoyah's Cherokee syllabary (Holland 25). While Boudinot was not hands-on during the printing process, the entire responsibility of editing, reporting, and choosing articles for reprinting fell to him. This led to a massive workload for Boudinot who in a letter to his brother-in-law, modestly wrote that the *Phoenix* carried "but little evidence of much labor. But I can assure you I have no time to be idle" (Luebke 53). Because Boudinot had no editorial associate, all of the editorializing, reporting, and selection of articles to be reprinted was Boudinot's task alone. With such an enormous workload, one might think that Boudinot would not be so meticulous in choosing articles to reprint, but in the same letter to his brother-in-law, Boudinot notes that he must comb through newspapers for pieces for publication, "and this requires some time in order to be judicious" (Luebke 53). As Barbara Luebke writes, "Elias did not make his selections [of material to be reprinted] haphazardly. He was not a typical 'pioneer editor,' and often the material came from books in his own library" (70). Boudinot did not simply print whatever was available; he aimed to print news that specifically would appeal to the Cherokee (Luebke 62). Luebke shows that Boudinot carefully selected advice articles to reprint based on what he believed would encourage desirable behavior (for Boudinot, this meant behavior reflecting temperance and Christian values) in the Cherokee people (66). If we accept Gaul's argument that Boudinot carefully reprinted poetry as a form of argument for his readers and Luebke's claim that he did the same for advice columns, then it would only be logical to

infer that he was not haphazardly reprinting random articles about the European affairs that consumed so much space in pages of Boudinot's *Phoenix*.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISTANT TWINS: THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE EARLY-NINETEENTH CENTURY

In building an argument against imperialism as a global practice, Boudinot would have needed a kind of surrogate nation – a distant example whose practices, like those of the United States, were also illegitimate. In this way, he could show the illegitimacy not merely of U.S. imperialism, but of imperialism writ large. A more appropriate substitute could not be found at the time than the Russian Empire. In the early and mid-nineteenth century, the Russian Empire and the United States were generally viewed as similar nations whose histories and missions mapped onto one another. Norman E. Saul interprets them as “distant friends,” as he shows over the course of his monograph *Distant Friends: The United States and Russia, 1763-1867*. While friendship wasn’t always the correct term to use to describe the frequently shifting relations between the two countries, their commonalities were frequently cited. Alexis de Tocqueville sums up the general perception of Russia and the United States during the era in a passage in *Democracy in America* (1835) which was often approvingly quoted by contemporary Americans (Saul 162):

There are, at the present time, two great nations in the world which seem to tend towards the same end, although they started from different points: I allude to the Russians and the Americans. . . . All other nations seem to have nearly reached their natural limits, and only to be charged with the maintenance of their power; but these are still in the act of growth; all others are stopped, or continue to advance with extreme difficulty; these are proceeding with ease and with celerity along a path to which the human eye can assign no term. . . . Their starting point is different, and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems to be

marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe. (De Tocqueville)

De Tocqueville, a French diplomat and observer of the trends of democracy and social conditions in the world, lays out the many parallels between the two nations. These similarities are so strong that he even notes the two nations “tend towards the same end,” instead of dwelling on their sizeable differences in government, which would be a more logical topic of focus in *Democracy in America*.

In addition to third party observers like de Tocqueville, Americans and Russians alike also happily noticed these similarities between their countries. When American Minister to St. Petersburg William Pinkney met Tsar Alexander I in 1817, he reported that the Tsar pointed out to Pinkney that there was a striking analogy between their two countries (Bernbaum). This analogy is developed in more detail by Platon Chikhachev, a Russian traveler to the United States who wrote for a Russian audience:

During my stay in North America I often thought of my country. The wealth of resources with which each of these two states has been endowed by providence, the stability of the basic principles upon which their prosperity is built, and finally, the youth of their population, keen-witted and full of life, often led me to compare them to each other. . . . one may affirm that Russia and the United States are two states before whom there is opening up a most promising future. . . . Having emerged only recently into the light of history, they have already secured for themselves a place in the future, moving with a firm and stately tread towards their goal. (quoted in Bernbaum)

And in 1835, an American named John Lloyd Stephens wrote in his travel logs, “to an American Russia is an interesting country. . . . Like our own Russia is a new country and in many respects resembles ours” (quoted in Saul 161-2). Both Chikhachev and Stephens came back from visits to distant and mysterious countries bearing messages of similarity and mutual appreciation. With these popularly recognized similarities between the two countries in terms of their relative newness to the stage of international events and resulting neo-imperial goals, it is natural that Boudinot used the Russian Empire as his surrogate for the United States in reprinted critique of imperialism. Beyond diplomacy, the appreciative view members of the two countries express takes on a deeper meaning. To condone the actions of another country when their actions and positions mirror yours is to make an argument in support of your own country’s actions. If an American citizen is looking at the Cherokee situation with some misgivings, they can read in the newspaper that Russia is doing the same thing— and that Russia is a shining example of a great country. Such friendship between countries assuages crises of conscience and provides further justifications for immoral actions.

To underscore the selective element of Boudinot’s reprinting task, consider that negative articles about the Russian Empire were likely less common than positive ones in the United States during their period of friendship with the Russia. In the 1830s, journalist William Darby regularly wrote columns on Russia in which he condemned the European perspective of antagonism with Russia and advocated for the American view of friendship: "The facts are, that as long as Russia stands a great Eastern Power, any serious collision with the United States will be avoided by both France and Great Britain. Russia is, from both position and power, the only real and natural ally the United States can have in Europe" (quoted in Saul 159-160). Darby shared this view of the United States of America and the Russian Empire united by a natural

friendship with many other Americans at the time (Saul 159). Saul goes on to show that romantic idealism also played a part in establishing this friendship: “As manifest destiny to many Americans meant not simply territorial acquisition but a triumph of the republican spirit of the United States, so a growing number of Russians perceived a national-imperial mission in civilizing indigenous people and protecting and advancing other Slavic groups and Orthodox Christians” (164). It would be overstating the relationship to call the two nations steadfast friends. Over the course of the nineteenth century, ideas of comradery between the two nations ebbed and flowed, sometimes became quite tepid, as they did during the Polish uprising of 1830-1831. But as my analysis will show, the mutual “civilizing missions” of the two countries was a major point of comradery between the two nations and one of the commonalities that Boudinot would exploit in his reprinted critique of these imperial projects. In looking through the newspapers that he had exchanged with other editors for articles to reprint, Boudinot would surely have encountered many positive articles about the Russian Empire; but he reprinted almost none of them, focusing instead on articles that would enable his critique of imperialism.

CHAPTER FIVE: REPRINTING THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN THE *PHOENIX*

During Boudinot's time as editor of the *Phoenix*, nearly every article about Russia that Boudinot reprints portrays Russia in either a neutral or negative light. Of the 131 articles reprinted about the Russian Empire during Boudinot's time as editor, at least 55 are overtly negative, while only four take a positive view of any aspect of the Russian Empire. The few positive articles serve as outliers to Boudinot's reprinting project and are illustrative of the restrictions of the form of reprinting. Boudinot couldn't fit every article he reprinted about Russia to serve his critique of imperialism because of the ideological stickiness of form. As Fredric Jameson explains, the form of a literary work inherently constrains and shapes the message that a work's content is able to produce (46). In his anti-imperial argument, Boudinot was constrained by the limits of the form of reprinting. If he wanted to reprint an article praising Christian nations, and the Russian Empire was one of the article's subjects, he had to decide whether to briefly relent his critique of imperialism in order to favor his religious convictions. He could also only print articles that he had on hand that were relevant and timely. When an article was able to take on an appropriate new meaning when reprinted in the Cherokee sphere, he reprinted it. But it seems that when no articles supporting his argument were on hand, he was forced to reprint neutral articles, or no Russian articles at all. More work needs to be done to explore how he used articles about other countries to potentially fill that gap when nothing was to be found about Russia. The following analysis focuses on some of the overtly negative articles that are illustrative of general trends in Boudinot's reprinting practice as relates to the Russian Empire. The subject matter relating to the Russian Empire that the Cherokee reprinted includes a mixture of history and current events. Boudinot did not print about every aspect of Russian imperialism at the time, neglecting to print articles about Russian imperialism in Siberia and the

Caucasus, but reprinted extensively about other events that aided his critique of imperialism. The beginning of the *Phoenix*'s print run coincided with the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829, which received considerable attention from the *Phoenix*. Mixed within these are articles interpreting various aggressive Russian actions as the potential spark of "general war" in Europe. Also included in this category are articles defending Turkish culture. Another major current event that the *Phoenix* reprinted about was the Russian Empire's armed response to the Polish uprising of 1830-1831. In addition to these major military events, the *Phoenix* also reprinted general descriptions of Russian life and politics and anecdotes about Russian leaders and landmarks. Finally, Russian imperial behavior was occasionally used as a rhetorical example in arguments during sessions of the U.S. Congress or in letters about the Cherokee struggle with the U.S. Government which the *Phoenix* reprinted.

General Russian Life, Politics, and Leaders

A striking example of the negative articles about Russia in general appears early in *Phoenix*'s print run, on April 3, 1828, and is titled "The Power of Russia." Like many of the subsequent writings on international affairs published by the *Phoenix*, this article is not sourced, but it might have originated in a New York newspaper (see next paragraph). The article argues for a vision of the Russian Empire as a contradiction: small in its largeness; weak in its strength; superficial in its vast depth ("The Power of Russia" 2). The author argues that while many see Russia's vast territory and interpret it as a great power, Russia actually has little to boast about. Yes, it has a large population, but its vast reach is sparsely populated and could easily be conquered at its extremes ("The Power of Russia" 2). For this reason, the Russian military is spread thin, far and wide in order to protect against attacks. The author notes that for all its impetus to become an imperial power, for all its striving, Russia has gained very little since the

time of Catherine the Great, and whenever it is the belligerent in a war, it concludes a peace “with a most suspicious eagerness” so that its inherent weaknesses won’t be uncovered (“The Power of Russia” 2).

Boudinot’s tendency to reprint negative articles like this is especially interesting compared to how other newspapers reacted to the same articles. On March 11, 1828, *The Republican Star and General Advertiser* in Easton, Maryland published a response to the original “The Power of Russia,” claiming it originated in “a New York Journal.” Responding to the original article’s critical tone, the *Republican Star* article argues that asking “What has Russia gained through its fixation on conquest?” is a ridiculous question, as Russia is an outstanding example of the benefits of conquest (“The Power of Russia” 2). The author goes on to approvingly enumerate all of the land gains the Russian Empire has made since Peter the Great, including half of Poland, all of Finland, and much more (“The Power of Russia” 2). The author claims that Russia’s riches acquired through expansion have allowed it to embellish St. Petersburg to the point that it is the “most magnificent” city in the world (“The Power of Russia” 2). Instead of republishing this glowing portrayal of the Russian Empire’s imperial majesty, Boudinot reprints the original as an argument against the imperial project in general. Published at this particular time and for this particular audience, Boudinot’s reprinting makes an argument against these land-hungry nations. It is not difficult to find parallels between this discussion of the Russian Empire and the contemporaneous state of U.S.-Native relations. Some of the questions the *Phoenix* is raising is: if the perpetrators of the U.S. settler-colonial project hope to achieve something comparable to Russia’s reach into Europe and Asia, what are they actually accomplishing? Will they even be able to do so? Perhaps they are already one of these nations

that is weak while appearing bold and strong, and their attempts to advance into native territory could be resisted.

In addition to articles about the Russian Empire in general and Russian current events, Boudinot also produces his argument by reprinting articles that trivialize or criminalize Russian historical figures. On January 7, 1829, the *Phoenix* published an article about Russian culture quite different in content from the above, entitled “Ivan the Terrible” and attributed as an excerpt from “Karasin’s [sic] History of Russia.” The article is likely an excerpt from Nikolay Karamzin’s 12-volume *History of the Russian State*, published in 1826. The article describes the early life of the medieval Russian Tsar, Ivan the Terrible, and notes the power struggle of his youth through which he eventually came to power, his defeat of his enemies, and his adaption of the title of tsar (Russian for “Caesar”) (“Ivan the Terrible” 1-2). The author discusses the ruler’s cruel nature in his youth, but mentions that this was curtailed by the calming influence of his wife Anastassia (“Ivan the Terrible” 2). When she died, his cruel nature returned and much of the article is devoted to a graphic description to Ivan’s massacre of 200 political prisoners over the course of one night (“Ivan the Terrible” 2).

This article is unusual not only for its content, but also its prominent placement, starting on the first page and taking up a good part of the second page; general interest or foreign affairs stories of this type generally only appeared on the third or fourth (last) pages of the *Phoenix*. Rather than publishing an article from distant Russian history about Ivan the Terrible’s grandfather, Tsar Ivan the Great and his successful efforts to free the Muscovites from Mongol rule, which might have found positive resonance with the Cherokee audience, the *Phoenix*’s selection focuses on the instability and cruelty of the tyrannical Ivan the Terrible. A clue for the article’s purpose can be gained from the state of American politics at the time. Andrew Jackson

had just been elected president a month prior and would soon take power. Over the course of the campaign, Jackson was attacked for his cruelty in massacring an Indian village, and his wife had died on December 22, 1828, after which he vowed never to forgive John Quincy Adams' campaigners, who he viewed as responsible for her death (Boller Jr 46). This episode occurred just weeks before this issue of the *Phoenix* was published. The rise of this cruel anti-Indian president must have worried Boudinot, and such parallels with Ivan the Terrible would encourage readers to resist trusting him and avoid falling under his control if possible

The Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829

In addition to descriptions of Russian life and government in general, the *Phoenix* regularly reprinted articles about Russia's role in current events. The 1828-1829 Russo-Turkish War captured the imagination of many Americans who eagerly watched to see how it would affect Greece's struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire. However, while many Americans saw Russia as the potential savior of Greece, Boudinot reprinted articles that showed the Russian Empire as selfish, land hungry, and a great threat to Greek independence. Boudinot seems to have simplified this complex struggle to reduce it to clear-cut matter of imperialist overreach, as he does not reprint articles about the long and complicated history of conflict in this region. The May 21, 1828 edition of the *Phoenix* is a good illustration of this strand of publishing, containing an article titled "Latest from England," which concerns the predicted movement of Russia against Turkey. The lengthy article is presented as a summary of news on the looming war between the two empires, collected from English newspapers which were originally published between March 15-17 and were delivered to the *New York Advertiser*. Included in the middle of the summary is some unattributed analysis. The news summary clarifies that the Russian army is expected to advance against Turkey in order to redress old war

wounds, and not for more noble reasons (“Latest from England” 3). While Britain, France, and the Russian Empire continue to uphold their alliance to support Greek independence, the former two do not plan to become involved in the current war as it relates only to a personal matter between Turkey and Russia, and it is unlikely to affect the Greek struggle (“Latest from England” 3). Concurrently, the three powers continue to support Greece’s fight so that “she may be no more subject to Turkish oppression” (“Latest from England” 3). The analysis in the middle of the article predicts an outbreak of a world war if Russia is truly advancing on Turkey, arguing that if the Russians are too successful, Russian occupation of Constantinople is just as unsavory of a prospect as a Turkish victory (“Latest from England” 3). In such an event, the British and French would need to intervene. The author sees the eventual outcome of these events as Greece being rescued from Turkish bondage and placed under the protection of France and Britain (the author is unclear about what will happen to Russia in this scenario) (“Latest from England” 3).

It is interesting that an article with such a focus on the independence of Greece should appear amongst the outbreak of a war that only tangentially relates to Greece. The Greek struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire had captivated the world, and many Americans donated financially to the cause. According to other reprintings by the *Phoenix*, the Cherokee were sympathetic to the Greeks as well. But even here, while part of an alliance fighting for Greek independence, the Russian Empire is portrayed in a negative light. The Russian Empire is presented as a means to an end. The implication is that (hopefully) Russia will weaken or destroy the Ottoman Empire and then be driven out of Constantinople by other European powers before it can make any serious territorial gains—and particularly before having any further say on the fate of Greece. It is particularly interesting that in this author’s predilection for the outcome of the war, the Russian Empire will no longer protect Greece. It’s easy to read here that the

protectors of Greece will not only no longer include Russia, but in fact may soon be defending Greece against the Russian Empire itself after the anticipated fall of the Ottoman Empire. This article combines well with the previous articles in the construction of a Cherokee worldview that is vigilant in resisting imperial empires that resemble Russia, which have only land on their mind, rather than truly upholding any ideals about liberty. Reprinted into the context of the Cherokee Nation's struggle to hold back the state of Georgia, it also allows the reader to contrast the European powers' fight for Greek independence with the United States' encroachment on the independence of the Cherokee.

This article's tone is even more striking when compared with the executive branch of the United States Government's view of these same events. John Quincy Adams served as president of the United States during this war, and in 1830 he published a glowing interpretation of Russia's role in the conflict and a condemnation of the other European powers for failing to aid Russia in liberating the Greeks. In *The American Annual Register 1827-1829*, Adams writes glowingly of the Christian Russian tsars who have been fighting the Ottomans since the time of Peter the Great and "have occasionally indulged the just, and wise, and humane sentiment, that at some future day this exe-crable imposture of Mahomet, with its sword, and its koran, should be expelled at least from Europe ; and that the principal, if not the whole glory of the achievement, was reserved for them, is not to be doubted" (275). He also criticizes the European countries who have stood idly by and allowed Greek oppression to continue. (Adams 217). Finally, Adams castigates Britain and France for "tying the hands of Russia, and thus prevent[ing] her from emancipating Greece entirely from the thralldom of Turkish oppression" (285). While the President of the United States sticks up for his friend in Russia, arguing that the Russian Empire was tragically prevented from gloriously putting an end to Greek oppression (and Islam), the

Phoenix reprints an article that treats the Russian Empire as the unruly hoodlum of Europe that would have freed Greece only to conquer it themselves. In publishing a consistent critique against the imperialistic impulses of the European country that the United States has closely aligned itself with, Boudinot produces an argument against American imperialism by extension—an argument that is especially poignant when produced by the self-identifying as independent Nation that is the object of the United States’ imperialist greed.

Along with these articles describing the war itself, the *Phoenix* reprinted several glowing articles in defense of Turkish civilization and culture, including an October 22, 1828 article primarily about Turkish literature that responds to “those prating about the ignorance of the Turks” by asking if they are aware of the “twelve hundred public schools supported by the government, in the two great cities of Constantinople and Adrianople,” the “best [library] in Europe” residing in Constantinople, and several other markers of Turkey’s high cultural standing, including the wide readership of “periodicals and the leading newspapers of the day” and the intelligence and literary output of their political leaders (“Turkish Literature” 2). But the strongest illustration of this trend of publishing is an article from the *N. Y. Courier* titled “Turkish Charity Superstition, &c.” reprinted September 17, 1828. This article begins with the assertion that beggars are rare in Turkey because all Turks closely adhere to the “fourth commandment of the Koran,” that charity should be shown to all poor relations and neighbors (“Turkish Charity” 4). In fact, Turks even extended this charity to animals, buying birds just to set them free and believing that many animals will “enter Paradise” (“Turkish Charity” 4). The article goes on to show the general kindness Turks show because of the teachings of “the fourth chapter of the Koran” (“Turkish Charity” 4). So, Turks regularly commit acts of kindness, such as voluntarily repairing roads and erecting sheds by the sides of roads so travelers can rest in

shade. Finally, the author highlights the bizarreness of the generally low view of the Turkish people compared to their fellow belligerent, the Russian Empire, writing, “And yet [the Turks] are savage *barbarians*, and the whole world cheers the *amiable* Russians in their march of rapacity, extortion, and plunder!” (“Turkish Charity” 4).

The above articles defend the Turks as civilized and kind in comparison with the rapacious Russian Empire. Such articles work well to continue the *Phoenix*'s overall critique of imperialism, as it is clear by the second author's branding of Russians as rapacious that he censures their efforts at imperial expansion in Turkey. By inverting the binary opposition of the “amiable” white, Christian nation and the “savage” brown, non-Christian nation, the author shows the absurdity of a Christian nation invading a non-Christian nation based on false notions of superior civility. Reprinted into the context of the Cherokee struggle with the U.S. Government, the parallels between the Orientalizing discourse of imperial powers is plainly shown being applied to the Turks and the Indians to justify expansion. Elsewhere, Boudinot wrote about the prevalence of this type of argument. For example, in a March 13, 1828 editorial, he wrote:

It appears that the advocates of ... civilizing the Indians are very strenuous in maintaining the novel opinion that it is impossible to enlighten the Indians ... and that they assuredly will become extinct, unless they are removed. ... We are sorry to see that some ... speak so disrespectfully ... of the present measures of improvement, now in successful operation among most of the Indians in the US -- the only measures too, which have been crowned with success and bid fair to meliorate the condition of the Aborigines. (3)

Later, President Andrew Jackson would call on this same argument in an address to congress, saying “surrounded by the whites with their arts of civilization” Indians would be doomed “to weakness and decay” (47-48).

This defense of the Turkish people as civilized fits into Boudinot’s view of the Cherokee as civilized and therefore not deserving of being conquered. Boudinot believed that “civilization” would be the saving grace of the Cherokee Nation and fought constantly to argue that the Cherokee were just as “civilized” as the citizens of the United States. Boudinot, an ardent assimilationist, was passionate in proving that there was nothing inherently inferior about American Indians and that once taught the tools of white “civilization,” Indians could wield them every bit as well as whites. In his “An Address to the Whites,” Boudinot argues directly against this type of prejudice against Indians, writing “the term Indian is pregnant with ideas the most repelling and degrading. But such impressions, originating as they frequently do, from infant prejudices, although they hold too true when applied to some, do great injustices to many of this race of beings” (Boudinot 68). Throughout this speech, Boudinot gives numerous examples of the Cherokee Nation’s civility manifest in the form of schools, churches, and government. By drawing attention to articles that show that the same fallacious arguments are used by the Russian Empire as are used by the United States, Boudinot adds to a full-throated and wide ranging exposure of the methods of imperial powers.

Additionally, the religious argument put forth by the second author invites U.S. readers to consider their priorities. The teachings that the author highlights from the Koran echo similar teaching in the Bible about the importance of kindness and charity. The Turks are presented as godly and pious, while the Christian Russian Empire is censured for its actions, characterized by “rapacity, extortion, and plunder.” The effect of this article is

obviously to extoll readers to reconsider their sympathies if they find themselves favoring a country that is rapaciously devouring an innocent nation of kind, generous, godly people. Reprinted into the Cherokee context, with the obvious parallels between the invading Russians and the invading Americans, citizens are invited to see the improper actions of their own government and stand up to these actions.

Polish Uprising of 1830-1831

Another Russian military conflict that received much attention in the pages of the *Phoenix* was the Polish uprising and subsequent war with Russia. In the eighteenth century, Poland had functioned as a Russian vassal state, and was partitioned between Austria, Prussia, and Russia. In the early nineteenth century, the Russia's Grand Duke Constantine was named viceroy of Poland and the constitution of the Kingdom of Poland was disregarded, officially ending any semblance of Polish independence. In 1829, Tsar Nicholas named himself King of Poland, one of the factors that would lead to an armed rebellion in November 1830. When Poland declined to submit to the authority of the Tsar, Russian troops were sent into Poland in February leading to the Russo-Polish War of 1831. The bloody war ended in October with the complete surrender of the remainder of the Polish army. In a situation with such strong similarities to the Cherokee struggle against the U.S. Government, it is unsurprising that Boudinot printed exclusively articles that condemned the actions of the Russian Empire in order to continue his critique of imperialism. What might be somewhat more unexpected was that the U.S. public was on the same page in condemning the actions of the Russian Empire. American public opinion, especially in New York and Washington, was decidedly anti-Russia at this time, having been stirred up by newspapers such as the *Washington Globe* to support the cause of Polish independence (Saul 115). Much like with the issue of Greek independence, Polish

independence resonated with American ideals of freedom and liberty. And just like with Greek independence, Boudinot was there to remind readers of their hypocrisy in not extending the same sympathy to the Cherokee Nation's own fight for independence. As the following analysis shows, Polish independence had a lot of rhetorical currency, and not only the Cherokee drew parallels between the American Indian and Polish struggles.

Like much of the U.S., Boudinot's focus on Russia's brutal treatment of Poland centered around ideas of liberty and democracy. On November 20, 1830 (10 days before the Polish uprising), the *Phoenix* published an unsourced article titled "France and Russia," wherein it is reported that the Russian Ambassador to France has ordered all Russians and Poles to prepare to leave France (3). The author goes on to state, "Nicholas fears that his subjects will catch the contagion of liberal ideas. This measure does not imply, on the part of the Russian Cabinet, any refusal to recognize our government, whatever difference may exist between the institutions of the two countries" ("France and Russia" 3) The author draws attention to America's French-influenced ideals of liberty. The *Phoenix* presented numerous accounts of atrocities over the next year, and on December 31, 1831 published another account illustrating the gap between countries in search of liberty and those infringing on another country's liberty. The unsourced, and largely illegible argument presents the Poles as "Patriots" oppressed by Russia, and another largely illegible article from February 11, 1832 describes the attempts of the "heroic poles" to throw off the "yoke of the Russian despot" ("Illegible Title" 4) ("Copy of a letter" 4).

The intent of the original authors is obvious: In tying Polish independence to the American Revolution, they evoke sympathy for their democratic brothers in Poland. The Poles are "patriots," like those of the American revolution. Portrayed as influenced by French ideals of liberty and democracy, they are fighting for enlightened, democratic ideas. Meanwhile, Nicholas

I is referred to in many articles republished in the *Phoenix* at this time simply as “The autocrat” and at other times “the Russian despot,” portrayed in stark contrast against the democratic ideals embodied by the Polish uprising. Much like how King George III was vilified by the founding fathers, the drive for liberty here is justified by the despotism of the leader being fought. While these articles would have the clear effect of stirring pride and sympathy in the heart of patriotic Americans, this article takes on more complicated meanings when reprinted into the context of the Cherokee people and their struggle against the United States Government. Even while stirred by pride for their young nation’s victory in the fight of democracy vs. autocracy, white readers would be forced to also confront their nation’s failure to live up to these high democratic ideals and in fact face their similarity to “the autocrat” in the story of the heroic Poles versus the despotic Russians.

The same pages where these articles appear in the *Phoenix* are also filled with Boudinot’s editorials against the injustice of Georgia’s infringement on the Cherokee Nation, reports from Congress that show the federal government supporting those injustices, and letters such as the following, explicitly shining a light on the United States’ new position as the tyrannical oppressor. An excerpted letter originally printed in the *Portland Advertiser* that argues for the rights of the Cherokee Nation and even references Boudinot specifically, reprinted in the February 18, 1832 edition of the *Phoenix* reads, in part:

Have the American People lost their pride, their sensibility, their boasted love of liberty, that they do not sacrifice personal considerations to all the paramount invocations of justice? With what face can we curse Russia for bathing Warsaw in blood, when we let loose and spur on remorseless speculators with their scourges and scorpion whips? Oh, how can we cry ‘shame to England’ for wringing from

the East Indian his blood and his gold together ... This is strong language, I know, but it is needed. Honeyed and buttered words don't convey thoughts provoked by seeing a whole nation cut up by the roots and dispersed to the four winds."

("Extract of a letter" 2).

The letter's author forces readers to acknowledge the cruel and imperial nature of the U.S. colonial project by comparing the actions of the United States against the Cherokee to the similar actions of the Russian Empire against Poland and the British Empire against India. Along similar lines, on April 9, 1831 the *Phoenix* prints some congressional proceedings under the title "A speech by Mr. Everett of Massachusetts, in the House of Representatives, on the 11th and 21st of February, 1831, On the Execution of the Laws and Treaties in favour of the Indians." In the argument in defense of the Cherokee, Everett compares the actions of Georgia against the Cherokee to the division of Poland:

It goes beyond the partition of Poland. ... Suppose that Russia and Austria and Prussia in addition to extending their laws over the Poles, had enacted a code, under which it was admitted, that they could not live, had cut up their lands districts and sections, thrown their estates into a lottery, granting to the proprietors no other privileges but that of occupancy, till they could be induced by legal duress and governmental persecution to emigrate to the deserts of Bucharin! What language would have furnished adequate terms for the condemnation of such a policy? ("A speech" 4)

At a time when feelings are so charged about the Polish fight for independence, Boudinot prints an argument that says that Georgia's injustices against the Cherokee even surpass Russia's treatment of Poland. The effect of these juxtapositions of articles that remind Americans of their

democratic ideals with news of the Cherokee struggles with the land-hungry Georgia and other articles making the connection explicit would cause readers to face their own hypocrisy, and one would hope, would drive them to stop standing by and letting their own country commit the same atrocities they criticize.

Resistance Lost

This job of constantly reminding Americans of their hypocrisy and seeing no tangible results likely wore on Boudinot. Saul notes that “the Polish cause was a transitory phenomenon to Americans and was no longer making headlines within a few months” (119). Soon Russia and America resumed their friendship based on mutual admiration, and both continued their respective efforts to gain land and power in their respective spheres. Boudinot had placed all of his hopes for Cherokee resistance on the U.S. Supreme Court case, *Worcester v. Georgia*, which ended with the ruling that Georgia had no right to extend its laws over the Cherokee Nation (Holland 59-60). By Spring 1832, when the impotency of the Supreme Court decision became obvious, Boudinot grew disillusioned and began to express doubt about continuing to struggle against such unequal odds (Holland 60). Recognizing the costs of resistance as too demanding and the odds too long, Boudinot began to see removal as the only option. On August 11, he published his resignation letter in the *Phoenix*, where he made it clear that he had done all he could for the cause of Cherokee independence (Holland 61). Throughout his time as editor, Boudinot did everything in his power to benefit the Cherokee Nation and their struggle to resist the imperial efforts of the U.S. Government. These efforts included open editorializing against Georgia’s actions and reprinting articles that illustrated a worldview for his readership aware of the unjust workings of imperial power.

On September 8, 1832, the first edition of the *Phoenix* featuring his replacement's name, Elijah Hicks, was printed. As Holland notes, following Boudinot's departure, the *Phoenix* saw a general decline in quality, as Hicks "lacked the deep emotional drive and the literary abilities of his predecessor" (65). While editorials and local news reporting lost their literary effectiveness, Hicks also struggled in general to fill columns. This is likely because, unlike Boudinot, Hicks lacked a clearly defined reprinting strategy. In contrast with Boudinot's careful selection, Hicks resorted to strategies such as reprinting articles wholesale, week after week, from an encyclopedia he had received as a gift (Holland 66). The *Phoenix* also became cumulative. Instead of printing all new articles every week, the paper reprinted much of the same material from previous weeks for several weeks in a row. In the clearest indication that he did not continue Boudinot's reprinting strategy, only 16 articles on Russia were published in the two years of Hicks' editorship before the paper ceased publishing at the end of May 1834. Hicks only printed eight articles about Russia per year, compared to Boudinot's 26 per year—a number that would likely be revealed to be much higher if the archive was searchable for the entirety of 1829, rather than just the first four months.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This critique shows the need to move beyond a bi-polar or tri-polar vision of the world. Citizens of both Russia and the United States have long been fascinated with each other and their powerful positions in the world, whether viewing one another as distant friends or existential threats. But this analysis of Boudinot's critique of imperialism shows the need to focus away from this addictive narrative of the relations between great powers and recognize that there are peoples who do not participate directly in great power politics, but get caught up in them regardless. My analysis has shown how Elias Boudinot and the Cherokee responded to being caught up in the interplay between great powers early in the nineteenth century. Future scholarship needs to help us move from a view that splits the world into two or three dominant frames of focus—such as, for instance, the United States, the Russian Federation, and the People's Republic of China. Instead of focusing exclusively on the interactions between these great powers, we must shift focus to how the relationships between these countries are understood by those whose lives are shaped by their relations to the imperial desires of such powers—Ukrainians, Chechens, Tibetans, the Dakota, the Cherokee. When we see the world in a lens that causes us to spend too much focus on great nations, we miss the specific ways people are affected by these power struggles and how they respond to them. When we shift scholarly focus instead on the newspapers of the Cherokee or on protests in Ukraine, Standing Rock, and wherever else imperial powers encroach on the sovereignty of smaller nations, we can gain a nuanced understanding of how people experience, and resist, oppression.

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