PAPERS IN ENGLISH & AMERICAN STUDIES XIII.
Monograph Series 4.

Zoltán Vajda

INNOVATIVE PERSUASIONS:

ASPECTS OF JOHN C. CALHOUN'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

JATEPress
Szeged 2007

SZEGEDI
EGYETEMI
KIADÓ

Papers in English & American Studies XIII

Papers in English & American Studies XIII.
Monograph Series 4.

ZOLTÁN VAJDA

INNOVATIVE PERSUASIONS:
ASPECTS OF JOHN C. CALHOUN'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

JATEPress
Szeged 2007

Papers in English & American Studies is published by the
Institute of English & American Studies (IEAS)
of the University of Szeged
H–6722 SZEGED, HUNGARY
Egyetem u. 2.
<ieas@lit.u-szeged.hu><www.arts.u-szeged.hu/ieas>

The production of the present volume was sponsored by
the Textbook Fund of the University of Szeged

General editor:
GYÖRGY E. SZÔNYI
the Director of IEAS

Publisher's Reader:
PAUL KANTOR

Cover design:
ETELKA SZŐNYI

ISSN 0230–2780
ISBN 978 963 482 807 5

CONTENTS

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some years ago, when asked by a Hungarian colleague of literary studies about the subject of my doctoral dissertation in the making, I told her John C. Calhoun, making her quip: "Such an obscure topic." Yet being attracted by the beauty of his system, I felt this a trifling excuse for distraction. Furthermore, obscure as he may seem in a contemporary Hungarian context, six thousand miles and more than a century from his own world, Calhoun's political theory does have relevance reaching beyond national boundaries precisely because it has intricate ties with the more general problems of the modern nation state. To a considerable extent, Calhoun's concerns were similar to those of Magyars, for instance, who, in the mid-nineteenth century, discussed the importance of an independent nation state, trying to break free from Hapsburg rule.

The analogy is, of course, not without problems: Calhoun aimed to *preserve* independence for the South within the Union, while a reform-minded Hungarian nobility allied by a feeble bourgeoisie faced the task of *achieving* independence. Furthermore, Calhoun was painfully aware of the pitfalls of majoritarian democracy, a political system that the Revolutionaries of 1848 were only beginning to dream about. Nonetheless, what connects the cause of the Hungarian revolutionaries with that of Calhoun and the slave-holding South is the problem of diversity that they both faced.

In the case of Hungary, which started a modernizing reform movement in the 1830s aimed ultimately at abolishing feudal economic and social conditions, the progressive part of the Hungarian elite hoped to make an alliance with the peasantry, raising them out of serfdom, into nationhood. Thus, the platform of the revolution of 1848 included the abolition of serfdom as well as privileges for the once-feudal elite. Their refusal to grant special ethnic rights to ethnic minorities such as Romanians, Croats, Serbs or Slovaks turned these groups away from and against the cause of the Magyars, largely contributing to the defeat of the revolution. Calhoun, at the same time, was preoccupied with dealing with the divisions within the white male elite, hoping to maintain a republican order and status quo.

Thus, my road from studying the ideology of Hungarian nationalism in the early nineteenth century led me relatively easily to South Carolina. Calhoun's relevance became even more marked for me with the re-birth of Hungarian independence after the changes of 1989 and the eventually successful attempt to establish liberal parliamentary democracy based on majoritarian rule after forty years of occupation by a foreign power. Thus, my visit to the United States as an "international exchange student" in the early 1990s, in the midst of the turbulent age of new nation states appearing on the scene came at a topical moment. I hoped to have the chance to continue investigating the beauty of Calhoun's system of political thought, fa-

miliarizing myself with novel perspectives and receiving new impulses and I was not disappointed.

I wish to thank all the people who, in one way or another, inspired me to conceive and complete this text which developed out of my dissertation. First of all, I owe thanks to David W. Noble of the University of Minnesota for familiarizing me with the work of J. G. A. Pocock, Sacvan Bercovitch as well as to John R. Howe of the University of Minnesota, who directed my attention to Calhoun's republicanism. I am particularly grateful to Bálint Rozsnyai for his invaluable comments on my work in progress, his criticism of an earlier version of the manuscript, his several important suggestions for improvement as well as for his patience and encouragement.

Several short term grants and study trips helped me struggle my way through: a TEMPUS grant at the University of Hull, another offered by the John F. Kennedy-Institut at Freie Universität, Berlin, yet another by USIS at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo. Since I acquired most of the research material via interlibrary loan, Éva Ötvös and the late Zsófia Németh of the interlibrary loan division of the one-time József Attila University of Szeged's Central Library provided me with indispensable assistance. So did James Carlson, W. Kirk Wood, and Randy Hanson who were kind enough to provide me with pertinent materials. I also owe debts to Dwight Hoover, Paul Kantor as well as Zsolt Virágos, Ádám Anderle, and György Novák for their comments on different versions of my writing. For the same reason and much more, I am also grateful to Robert Hughes, a faithful friend and a great southerner.

I also wish to thank those colleagues who helped me with their comments at conferences where I read parts of the work as well as colleagues at the Institute of English and American Studies of the University of Szeged, whose work inspired me in more ways than they would think. Last but not at all the least, I wish to convey my deepest thanks to Liz Driver, a keen-eyed outsider to this subject, for reading and scrutinizing the manuscript in its entirety for language and style and giving me the benefit of her suggestions and evaluation. Needless to say, all the errors and oversights that remain are my own responsibility.

I wish to express my gratitude to *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* and its publisher, Michigan State University Press for their kind permission to reprint parts of my article "John C. Calhoun's Republicanism Revisited" published in *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* Vol. 4, No. 3 (2001), appearing in a modified and extended version in Chapter 2 of this book.

Publication of this book has been aided by a grant from the Faculty of Arts, University of Szeged.

ABBREVIATIONS AND SHORT TITLES

Disquisition John C. Calhoun, *A Disquisition on Government*, in *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, ed. Robert L. Meriwhether, W. Edwin Hemphill and Clyde N. Wilson (Columbia, S.C.: The University of South Carolina Press, 2003) vol. 28, 1–67.

Papers of Calhoun John C. Calhoun, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, ed. Robert L. Meriwhether, W. Edwin Hemphill and Clyde N. Wilson. 28 vols. (Columbia, S.C.: The University of South Carolina Press, 1959–2003)

PTJ Thomas Jefferson, *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York, etc.: Penguin, 1977)

Second Treatise John Locke, "An Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent, and End of Civil Government" ("*The Second Treatise of Government*"), in *Two Treatises of Government,* ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 265–428.

Works of Calhoun John C. Calhoun, *The Works of John C. Calhoun*, ed. Richard K. Crallé, 6 vols. (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1851–1857; repr., New York: Russell & Russell, 1968)

INTRODUCTION

Sarah Mytton Maury, an Englishwoman visiting the United States in 1846, used the following words to provide a vividly dynamic description of John C. Calhoun:

> The champion of Free Trade; a Slaveholder and Cotton Planter; the vindicator of State Rights, and yet a firm believer in the indestructibility of the Federal Union; now the advocate of war, and now of peace; now claimed as a Whig; now revered as a Democrat; now branded as a Traitor; now worshiped as a Patriot; now assailed as a Demon; now invoked as a Demi-god; now withstanding Power, and now the people; now proudly accepting office, now as proudly spurning it; now goading the Administration, now resisting it; now counselling, now defying the Executive.[1]

Being in regular correspondence with Calhoun, even proposing him to President Polk for Minister to England,[2] Maury intended these words to suggest the ambiguous nature of Calhoun's political career and to show the diversity of images that his contemporaries held about him. By the same token, modern scholarship has suggested Calhoun's ambiguities, identifying inconsistencies in his political ideas, sometimes going so far as to designate them as incompatible and hence his political thought as incoherent and unstructured. As one of his less sympathetic critics, Louis Hartz, has observed, "[D]espite the outward literary appearance of 'rigor' and 'consistency' in Calhoun's work, one is bound to affirm that the man is a profoundly disintegrated political theorist."[3]

I intend to argue the contrary in this book. A thorough investigation of Calhoun's political thought will result in a different conclusion: instead of blaming him for being inconsistent, I suggest he is to be regarded as a pluralistic but integrated thinker, his political rhetoric informed by various traditions which he nevertheless managed to integrate into a coherent system. Admitting his creativity and versatility as a political thinker, it is thus important to emphasize the complexity of his argument. Accordingly, I undertake to show that although Calhoun's political philosophy cannot be interpreted as a homogeneous derivation of a single tradition, it is to be viewed as an amalgam of diverse traditions or "political languages," often modified by Calhoun to match his purposes. Hence I will understand his political thought as a complex text constituted by various traditions ranging from liberalism through repub-

---

1 Sarah Mytton Maury, *The Statesmen of America in 1846* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1847), 169.

2 *Papers of Calhoun,* 23:271n.

3 Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1955; San Diego, etc.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991), 159. Citations are to the Harcourt Brace Jovanovich edition.

licanism to the American jeremiad. He was a "polyglot," that is, part of mainstream American political traditions, in more ways than has been previously recognized.[4]

Scholarly attempts at linking Calhoun with individual traditions abound.[5] Conservative interpretations include Russell Kirk's work, which claims Calhoun's conservatism on the basis of his rejection of "'progress,' centralization, and abstract humanitarianism," the Lockean conception of liberty, or the corporative principle in political representation. Within the same paradigm, Clinton Rossiter discusses Calhoun on account of, among other features, his emphasis on the community as the basic social unit, his assertion of human inequality or his rejection of the majority principle in organizing government. August O. Spain connects Calhoun with Aristotle and Edmund Burke as primary influences in his rejection of the natural rights theory and its tenets about man, society and government, while Gunnar Heckscher considers Calhoun a representative of European conservative thought, rejecting the doctrine of natural rights. According to Vernon Louis Parrington, Calhoun reproduced principles of the ancient Greek democracy based on inequality with the elite representing the interests of those excluded from the political sphere.[6]

Other scholars view Calhoun as belonging to a liberal tradition. For instance, Louis Hartz claims that despite his explicit rejection of Locke's natural state in an affirmative manner, Calhoun, in fact, adopted it with all its consequences in his doctrine of state interposition. Darryl Baskin, at the same time, emphasizes Calhoun's vision of atomistic individuals competing to acquire, leaving their community behind following the principles of liberty and progress, whereas Peter F. Drucker, arguing for Calhoun's concurrent majority characterizing the American system of government, which he understood basically as an arena of competing pluralistic interests.[7]

Differing from both the conservative and liberal interpretations, Richard Hofstadter and Richard N. Current drew a parallel between Karl Marx's class analysis of society and Calhoun's understanding of labor relations, specifically in the context of North and South as sections with antagonistic interests and with Calhoun's critique of northern capitalism.[8]

---

[4] Scholars have detected the "influence" of various thinkers in Calhoun's political theory, yet such an approach fails to do justice to political languages as ideas with persuasive force, clustering into coherent traditions, spanning centuries and communities. See Richard N. Current, *John C. Calhoun* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), 43; and John Niven, *John C. Calhoun and the Price of the Union: A Biography* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 47–48, 330–331, 333. Calhoun drew upon coherent systems of ideas instead of making indiscriminate choices.

[5] For literature on and by Calhoun in general see the comprehensive bibliography by Clyde N. Wilson, *John C. Calhoun: A Bibliography* (Westport, Conn.: Meckler, 1990).

[6] Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind from Burke to Santayana* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953), 132, 146–57; Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion* (New Work: Knopf, 1964), 120–23; August O Spain, *The Political Theory of John C. Calhoun* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1951), 82–95, 263–64; Gunnar Heckscher, "Calhoun's Idea of 'Concurrent Majority' and the Constitutional Theory of Hegel," *American Political Science Review* 33 (1939): 585–90; and Vernon L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, vol. 2, *The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800–1860* (1927; repr., New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1954), 65–78, esp. 74.

[7] Hartz, *Liberal Tradition*, 145–67; Darryl Baskin, "The Pluralist Vision of John C. Calhoun" *Polity* 2 (1969): 49–66; and Peter Drucker, "A Key to American Politics: Calhoun's Pluralism" *Review of Politics* 10 (1948): 412–26.

[8] Richard Hofstadter, "John C. Calhoun: The Marx of the Master Class," in *The American Political Tradition. And the Men Who Made It* (1948; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 67–69; and Current, *John C. Calhoun*, 86–102, 105.

More recently, with the emergence of the republican perspective in early American history, scholars have also turned their attention to a republican Calhoun. William J. Harris labels him the "last of the classical republicans," whereas Ford calls him a "post-Madisonian" republican, as opposed to a classical one, integrating liberal economic tenets into his creed, as well as "last of the Fathers," who aimed to secure virtue in the republic by institutional means. Pauline Maier, H. Lee Cheek, Jr. and Irving H. Bartlett also emphasize the continuity between Calhoun's and the Founders' political principles. In the same line, W. Kirk Wood also points out that Calhoun was an integral part of the American republican tradition through his doctrines of states' rights and Nullification.[9]

Of the scholars attempting to find more individualistic links in Calhoun, Peter J. Steinberger sees him as an advocate of the public interest and thus a descendent of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Robert A. Garson, in turn, argues that "Calhoun combined elements of utilitarianism and laissez-faire consumerism" in his defense of slavery.[10]

There have been a number of efforts to discuss the characteristic features of Calhoun's political rhetoric from a formal rhetorical point of view.[11] Yet these have failed to integrate him into the American traditions, while I contend that his political rhetoric is to be seen as a

---

[9] J. William Harris, "Last of the Classical Republicans: An Interpretation of John C. Calhoun," *Civil War History* 30 (1984): 255–67; Lacy K. Ford, "Republican Ideology in a Slave Society: the Political Economy of John C. Calhoun," *The Journal of Southern History* 54 (1988): 405–24; Lacy K. Ford. "Recovering the Republic: Calhoun, South Carolina, and the Concurrent Majority." *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 89 (1988): 146–59; Pauline Maier, "The Road not Taken: Nullification, John C. Calhoun, and the Revoltuionary Tradition in South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 82 (1981): 1–99; H. Lee Cheek, Jr., *Calhoun and Popular Rule: The Political Theory of the* Disquisition *and* Discourse (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 79; Irving H. Bartlett, *John C. Calhoun: A Biography* (New York: Norton, 1993), 78; and W. Kirk Wood, "In Defense of the Republic: John C. Calhoun and State Interposition in South Carolina, 1776–1833" *Southern Studies*, n.s., 10 (2003): 9–48. Although Gillis J. Harp admits the coexistence of different political traditions in antebellum America, he fails to undertake a comprehensive and thorough exploration of Lockean liberalism and republicanism in Calhoun's thought. Gillis J. Harp, "Taylor, Calhoun, and the Decline of a Theory of Political Disharmony," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46 (1985): 107–120.

[10] Peter J. Steinberger, "Calhoun's Concept of the Public Interest: A Clarification," *Polity* 13 (1981): 410–24, and Robert A. Garson, "Proslavery as Political Theory: The Examples of John C. Calhoun and George Fitzhugh," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 84 (1985), 211.

[11] Bert E. Bradley and Jerry L. Tarver, for instance, have examined Calhoun's pro-slavery rhetoric. See Bradley and Tarver, "John C. Calhoun's Rhetorical Method in Defense of Slavery," in *Oratory in the Old South, 1828–1860*, ed. Waldo W. Braden (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 169–90. Bradley also examined the rhetorical tools employed by Calhoun in refuting his opponents' arguments. Bradley, "Refutative Techniques of John C. Calhoun," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 37 (1972): 413–23. Steven A. Wartofsky, in turn, has argued that there is a paradox in Calhoun's attempt in his speech against the Force Bill in 1833 to construct a heterogeneous, diverse Union while at the same time proposing homogeneous state sovereignty. Wartofsky, "Critique of the Upright Self: Everett, Webster, Calhoun and the Logic of Oratory," *Massachusetts Review* 33 (1992): 419–26. William Lyon Benoit and Alexander Moore characterize Calhoun as a deliberative orator making influential speeches. See Benoit and Moore, "John C. Calhoun (1782–1850), spokesperson for the South and the Union," in *American Orators before 1900: Critical Studies and Sources*, ed. Bernard K. Duffy and Halford R. Ryan (New York, Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood Press, 1987), 68–78. Herbert L. Curry, at the same time, while exploring the general pattern of his speeches and focusing on the logical devices that Calhoun employed, argues that he was a fiasco as a speaker in the Senate in striving to achieve his aims through rhetoric. Herbert L. Curry, "John C. Calhoun," in *A History and Criticism of American Public Address*, ed. William Norwood Brigance (McGraw-Hill 1943; New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), 2:659–61.

collection of different political languages, which, at the same time, were rooted in times and periods going beyond the Founders backward in time.

As part of my aim, I will identify and discuss layers of Calhoun's political rhetoric so far unexplored. I will demonstrate how he explained and justified his claims and political stance through his use of the broader rhetorical patterns. More particularly, my primary objective is to unravel the connections between certain aspects of Calhoun's political thought and those intellectual traditions. In doing so I investigate the meanings of various concepts in Calhoun's texts by focusing on their context, usage and relationship to tradition, how he meant them and how he modified their original meanings.

In order to discuss all this I will draw upon J. G. A. Pocock's theory of political languages. A political language is a compound of political ideas and beliefs often rooted in broader philosophical, religious and moral premises, usually coalescing around some core structures with distinct boundaries. At the same time, political languages function as linguistic entities in the sense that they exert rhetorical power within a particular political community. Due to their communal aspect, it is essential to view them in a historical perspective, as traditions spanning over various historical periods. Finally, political languages are "spoken" and "written" by agents who communicate in them in a way that the meanings of the "idioms" that they are made of are prone to change, although their core ideas tend to remain stable at the same time.

In the first two chapters I discuss Calhoun's use of republicanism and Lockean liberalism, respectively. They are intended to reconsider the previous analyses of these traditions in his political thought and are aimed at modifying them. I will argue that Calhoun made extensive use of the republican tradition, employing more components, drawing upon more layers of the paradigm than has previously been recognized. Republicanism was a political language with its core structure containing the concept of virtue and the public good. Having a long tradition in its various forms from ancient Greece and Rome to nineteenth-century USA, it structured contemporary political discourse to a great extent. As far as his republicanism is concerned, I hope to show that Calhoun articulated several visions of the way virtue was to be preserved in the Republic: the people's moral character assumed great significance for him, and once he saw it deteriorating, in various epochs of his career he alternatively turned to military virtue and to institutional means of securing it. His vision of the South with its own virtue contributing to national republican stability was an important element in that. In his political economy, Calhoun also expressed concerns and ways to tackle them very much in line with the republican tradition: the dynamic relationship between population growth and expansion as well as his emphasis on free trade and independence all fit into a republican framework, as does his denunciation of financial interests as a source of corruption, done in the manner advocated by previous representatives of republican rhetoric.

Lockean liberalism, with its concern with individual rights, derived from the state of nature. It also contained elements that Calhoun, who otherwise rejected its basic premises, nevertheless adopted and employed Locke's ideas for his own purposes. The South Carolinian was compelled to talk to a contemporary audience steeped in Lockean language, and I argue that he appropriated more elements of the English philosopher's system than identified before. I first contend that Locke's emphasis on rationality as a criterion of self-government informed

his conception of liberty and (in)equality. Calhoun also drew upon Locke's labor theory of value in his conception of property and hence in his defense of slavery. His understanding and use of self-preservation and the interrelated concept of revolution was also Lockean in nature. Complementing the widely-held belief that Calhoun's political theory was a fundamental defense of political minority rights, I will finally aim to show that it was also, in part, an evocation of Lockean majority rule, but with important distinctions.

Chapter 3 addresses his application of the American jeremiad and is intended to explore a problem hitherto completely ignored in Calhoun's political rhetoric. Originating in Puritan times, the American jeremiad functioned as a rhetorical ritual expressing the community's fears over declension from the cultural ideals that the people were expected to conform to in their lives. In its original form, the American jeremiad involved belief in God's afflictions for waywardness manifest in moral corruption; at the same time, it also suggested the assurance of ultimate redemption for the individual and the community. The American jeremiad as a rhetorical strategy expressing the exceptional nature of America's venture in the world informed Calhoun's political rhetoric throughout his career. Various political and economic issues provided occasions for him to articulate his anxieties about the state of the republic, and, at the same time, ensure optimism by proposing different solutions in the times before, during and after the Nullification Controversy. Although using the jeremiad to address a national audience throughout, by the late 1840s, Calhoun placed his hope in the South as the saving remnant of the mission.

Republicanism, Lockean liberalism and the American jeremiad were rhetorical traditions of major political force in Calhoun's times. Little wonder, then, that he drew upon them in an extensive manner. It is somewhat of a puzzle, however, that scholarship has ignored the simultaneous existence of a number of elements of these traditions that otherwise Calhoun selectively drew upon. Therefore, the discussion of these thematic aspects offers an opportunity to make up for this gap in Calhoun scholarship.

The book is organized according to a thematic structure, but within certain themes, the chronological principle will also be followed. Several of the chapters are interlocking due to the similar idioms that I examine in them, and I will often provide an analysis of different excerpts of the same text, which indicates that Calhoun drew upon several traditions even in the same text.

In examining the connection between the abovementioned traditions and Calhoun's political ideas, I also address the problem of legitimization insofar as he exploited those traditions to generate authority in debates over the diverse political issues of his age. Whether Lockean liberalism, classical republicanism, or the American jeremiad, all represented traditions with persuasive potential for his audience. He was a participant in the political struggle over meaning, whether it concerned a contemporary issue or past event.

An important presupposition of my approach to Calhoun's political rhetoric is that he applied these conventions to give meaning to the events he responded to, making sense of what was happening, ascribing meaning to events. They enabled him (like others) to speak about political experience as well as to understand it, at the same time providing him with arguments in political debates. This feature of political languages also accounts for what as one

scholar of Calhoun's rhetoric, Herbert L. Curry has argued, namely that "The total effect of Calhoun's methods was to produce speeches characterized by dry intellectuality. He seems to have been more interested in displaying intellectual processes than in moving men to accept his point of view."[12] Nevertheless, Calhoun's use of political languages was precisely an attempt to address an audience and persuade them.

Calhoun ranks among those orators who, in historian of rhetoric Edwin Blacks's term, can be categorized as applying "structural aesthetic" in their rhetoric. Their public utterances are primarily aimed at providing their audience with a sense of structure of the external world, imposing order on fluid experience. In doing so, they communicate through a "rhetoric of power;" "structural aesthetic is an exhibition of conformity with the scruples of the public domain."[13] If such were the case, a possible way of studying the Calhounian persuasion would be to address the issue of his employment of "structural aesthetic" in conveying a sense of order to his audience.

Finally, I am aware that my assumption about the pluralism of political languages in Calhoun's thought may be in sharp contrast to the consensual theses of Hartz and the early Pocock, who presumed the exclusivity of the traditions—liberal and republican, respectively—that they identified in American political thought. However, as Calhoun's case will demonstrate, the relation of these traditions to one another—even in the same person's thought—is more complementary than exclusive. Calhoun's political rhetoric exemplifies the compatibility of various elements of different political languages even in the same text. Furthermore, republicanism, Lockean liberalism or the American jeremiad appeared in his texts with alternating significance, in no regular sequential order. The political languages that existed side by side in his political rhetoric, also make testimony to a pluralistic American political tradition. He was as "multilingual" as the Founders.[14]

J. G. A. POCOCK'S THEORY OF POLITICAL LANGUAGES

My understanding of Calhoun's political thought as a complex of political languages is informed by J. G. A. Pocock's theory and methodology, developed and advocated in his works published mainly in the 1970s and 1980s.[15] As one of his commentators argues, for Pocock,

---

12 Curry, "John C. Calhoun," 661.

13 Edwin Black, "Aesthetics of Rhetoric, American Style," in *Rhetoric and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Thomas W. Benson (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 4, 7.

14 See Forrest McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1985), 235.

15 See Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989); Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1975); Pocock, "*The Machiavellian Moment* Revisited: A Study in History and Ideology," *The Journal of Modern History* 53 (1981): 49–72; Pocock, "The concept of a language and the *métier d'historien*: some considerations on practice," in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge, London, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19–38; and Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, etc: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

political languages or discourses behave like "conceptual and metaphorical frameworks" operating with a "relatively stable" set of vocabulary items, "conventions, usages, idioms." They are not languages in the "ethnic sense" but "sublanguages, idioms, and rhetorics."[16] They consist of recurring vocabularies, structures and rules, based on the consensual use of the political community. They are distinct "ways of talking about politics, distinguishable language games of which each may have its own vocabulary, rules, preconditions and implications, tone and style."[17]

A further important characteristic feature of political languages is their legitimating function: "Each entails a set of linguistic conventions placing constraints on how politics might be conceptualized, and on the ways in which its institutions and practices might be legitimated." They also provide the means by "which political argument might be conducted." They are organized according to various rules accepted by the participants involved in the political discussion.[18] Through them ideas are conveyed; their users communicate, justify, and explain political phenomena to others for the purpose of making sense of the nature of reality experienced by the political community. In this way, political languages can be regarded as paradigms; that is, to a large extent, they determine what can be said, what problems can be raised, how political events and other phenomena can be interpreted within a particular political community. Their paradigmatic force also means that "each will present information selectively as relevant to the conduct and character of politics, and it will encourage the definition of political problems and values in certain ways and not in others."[19] After the analyst has identified the political language appropriated by the author, Pocock argues, "he is to show how it functioned paradigmatically to prescribe what he [i. e. the author] might say and how he might say it."[20]

The paradigmatic feature of political languages creates constraints on the individual speaker. The author's freedom to form an utterance is partly restricted by the language(s) that he uses.[21] Since the authority of political languages as paradigms rests on consensus and is a condition for common political thinking and action, their communicative effectiveness rests

---

16 John E. Toews, "Intellectual History after the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience," *The American Historical Review* 92 (1987): 891; Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 7.

17 J. G. A. Pocock, "Between Gog and Magog: The Republican Thesis and the *Ideologia Americana*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (1987): 21.

18 Melvil Richter, "Reconstructing the History of Political Languages: Pocock, Skinner, and the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*," *History and Theory* 29 (1990): 55; and Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 2.

19 Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 2, 8.

20 Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time*, 25; see also Pocock, "*The Machiavellian Moment* Revisited," 51. For this, he relies on Thomas S. Kuhn's influential scientific paradigm concept, an important component of which is that scientific (interpretive) communities develop their own particular methods of raising problems and solutions to them or theories that are intended to explain the phenomena under investigation. See Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed., enlarged (1962; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970). For an explanation of Kuhn's understanding of scientific paradigms see, for instance, Paul Hoyningen-Huene, *Reconstructing Scientific Revolutions: Thomas S. Kuhn's Philosophy of Science*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 131–62. For the Kuhnian connection in Pocock's model, see Joyce Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 284–85 and 329–30.

21 See also Pocock "*The Machiavellian Moment* Revisited," 52.

on their consensual nature, namely that they are accepted by the political community in which they operate. Consequently, the political individual is able to partake of the authority of a political community only by applying its language, and thus his or her "freedom of political speech" is largely constrained by the paradigmatic force of the language that he or she is speaking.[22]

All this is derived from Pocock's treating language as exercise in power. In the first place, for him, communication consists in the individual's borrowing of already existing languages that are institutionalized, that is, having been used by other speakers, often for purposes and in situations different from his or her own. Those original sources and purposes, however, are distanced from the individual speaker's own to such an extent that he or she cannot be aware of them. This institutional understanding of language results in control exerted over the speaker's use of his or her language, the power of the sources of his or her utterance. In Pocock's words: "Each of us speaks with many voices, like a tribal shaman in whom the ancestor ghosts are talking at one; when we speak, we are not sure who is talking or what is being said, and our acts of power in communication are not wholly our own."[23]

The problem of power, however, also plays a crucial role in Pocock's theory in another way. In "two-way" communication (as in the case in political communication), the speech situation is basically defined by the equal sharing of power in the community of communication. Institutionalization results in the ambiguous nature of communication: the individual's utterance is subject to usage, response and thus interpretation by another person. Hence the power wielded through the individual utterance can be shared by the receiver of communication: "Language gives me power, but power which I cannot fully control or prevent others from sharing," says Pocock. In institutionalized communication, then, speech-acts are performed "in ways defined by others' acceptances of the words you have used,"[24] and thus the individual speaker does not only wield power in a given speech situation but is also exercised power upon.

Pocock argues that ignoring this nature of power sharing results in the breakdown of "two-way" communication. Trying to exclude its ambiguity by using power to control the meaning of a given utterance in an arbitrary way leaves no room for a chain of "statement, reply, and counter-reply." Fixed meanings cannot result in a communicative situation.[25]

Pocock, then, also acknowledges the relative freedom of the individual to modify available political languages through his or her capacity to utilize them by restructuring or reinterpreting them. A given political language may be appropriated by an author in a way that he or she, by means of his or her individual utterance, contributes to and even modifies it. "The language he employs," Pocock maintains, "is already in use; it has been used and is being used

---

[22] Pocock's understanding of the function of political languages is similar to Gordon S. Wood's description of the nature of ideas as related to social experience. Wood, "Intellectual History and the Social Sciences," in *New Directions in American Intellectual History*, ed. John Higham and Paul K. Conkin (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 35–36.

[23] Pocock, "Verbalizing a Political Act: Toward a Politics of Speech," in *Language and Politics* ed. Michael J. Shapiro (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 29.

[24] Ibid., 31, 32.

[25] Ibid., 30, 31.

to utter intentions other than his. At this point, an author is himself both the expropriator, taking language from others and using it to his purposes, and the innovator, acting upon language so as to induce momentary or lasting change in the ways in which it is used."[26] On this basis, he also asserts that "the historical agent is sometimes the language or thought-pattern which the author used, sometimes the author as modifier of the thought pattern." In this way, the author's text becomes part of the context of the political language.[27]

The possibility of innovation or change in a given political language results from the fact that it can be considered "multivalent," that is, it can be put to various uses by different speakers (or the same speaker) and hence its meaning or function may vary according to context. Pocock asserts that "[i]t is of the nature of rhetoric and above all of political rhetoric . . . that the same utterance will simultaneously perform a diversity of linguistic functions" and "must simultaneously designate and prescribe diverse definitions and distributions of authority."[28] The synchronic multivalence of a political language is accompanied by a diachronic multivalence of individual utterances in time. Moreover, these utterances "may transform one another as they interact under the stress of political conversation and dialectic."[29]

One crucial implication of Pocock's theory thus concerns the problem of authorial intention and mis-reading. By acknowledging the potential multivalence of meaning in political texts, Pocock also separates authorial intention from the act of their reading. In other words, the intended meaning will not necessarily be realized through reader response, which is an-

---

[26] Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 6; see also 20 and Pocock, "Between Gog and Magog," 32–37.

[27] Quotation in Pocock, "*The Machiavellian Moment* Revisited," 51; see also Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time*, 29. Given Pocock's understanding of political language as distinguished from individual utterance, it is not surprising that at some point he borrows the distinction that Ferdinand de Saussure made between *langue*, language as a system of rules and *parole*, language as individual usage. According to Pocock, "the history of political thought becomes a history of speech and discourse, of the interactions of *langue* and *parole*." Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 5; see also Pocock, "The concept of a language." For a more recent explanation of the work of the founder of structural linguistics see Paul J. Thibault, *Re-reading Saussure: The dynamics of signs in social life* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997). Intellectual historian Ralph Lerner argues that "new historians," among whom he includes Pocock, individual thinkers "count for little." Ralph Lerner, *The Thinking Revolutionary: Principle and Practice in the new Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 5. See also Lerner, "The Constitution of the Thinking Revolutionary," in Richard Beeman, Stephen Botein, and Edward C. Carter II, eds., *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 38–69. Despite critical claims to the contrary, however, in Pocock's system, the individual does have a role and power in shaping a political language, even to the extent of innovation. Pocock's theory of political languages also emphasizes the role of ideas in deliberation or political communication. For him, they make political interaction (in theory as well as in practice) possible. Lerner takes issue with his "new historians," when he charges them with ignoring "deliberating individuals" (ibid., 14). On the contrary, as Pocock's example shows, in so far as "deliberation" denotes not simply thinking but also deliberation, i.e., debate, the exchange of views among "thinking" individuals, Pocock's system does seem to hold.

[28] Pocock explains this multivalence by reference to political pluralism: "It is part of the plural character of political society that its communication networks can never be entirely closed, that language appropriate to one level of abstraction can always be heard and responded to upon another, that paradigms migrate from contexts in which they have been specialized to discharge certain functions to others in which they are expected to perform differently." Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time*, 21.

[29] Ibid., 17, 18, 19.

other consequence of the multivalence of political texts.[30] The explanation is that the meaning of a given utterance is determined by the context of communication. However, to complicate the issue, at a given moment, there are a number of contexts available for the speaker, who has the task of choosing from those in order to make his or her utterance meaningful for an audience that, in turn, has the power to understand it in a way different from the intended one, by assigning different contexts to it. Hence the speaker cannot fully control the meaning of his or her own utterance.[31]

A political community often has a variety of political languages at its disposal which are more or less equal with regard to their command of authority and their utilitarian potential. Pocock argues for the polyphony of political languages in a given time period, which therefore enjoy equal paradigmatic status. At the same time, they can be in competition with each other, the new one being "in intimate interaction" with the old.[32] Pocock also emphasizes that just as a given political society can be viewed as possessing a reservoir of political languages, one particular text by a given author may exhibit traces of a variety of such languages.[33]

Furthermore, in Pocock's theory and methodology, political languages appear as contexts in which the political rhetoric of a given actor can be placed, resulting in recognition of new meanings of the terms and idioms he uses.[34] In other words, his understanding of political languages also implies that the same political idiom or utterance can gain a different meaning in a different context.[35] Hence, Pocock's theory of political languages suggests that the ana-

---

[30] Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 20. He maintains, "any and all of the speech acts the text has been performing can be re-performed by the reader in ways nonidentical with those in which the author intended and performed them; they can also become the occasion for the performance of new speech acts by the reader as he becomes an author in his turn" (ibid.). See also Pocock, "Verbalizing a Political Act," 32. For a recent consideration of reader-response approaches in early American history, see Saul Cornell's *The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788–1828* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1999). In view of the Anti-Federalists, he also points out the possible discrepancy between intended meanings, expectations of writers and undisciplined readers in the public sphere.

[31] Terence Ball and J. G. A. Pocock, introduction to *Conceptual Change and the Constitution*, ed. Terence Ball and J. G. A. Pocock (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1988), 8.

[32] Pocock, "Between Gog and Magog," 344–345; quotation on 345; see also Toews, "Intellectual History," 891. On Pocock's claim about the coexistence of various idioms belonging to "all sorts of structurally incompatible languages" see also Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: The Career of a Concept," *Journal of American History* 79 (1992): 35.

[33] Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, 9; see also 16, and cf. Richter, "Reconstructing the History of Political Languages," 57, Toews, "Intellectual History," 891, 892, and Rodgers, "Republicanism." Pocock's position that different political languages can be used by the same individual in different contexts is reinforced by Jan Lewis' "The Problem of Slavery in Southern Political Discourse," in *Devising Liberty: Preserving and Creating Freedom in the New American Republic*, ed. David Thomas Konig (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 273. All that can be added here, as Calhoun's example may demonstrate, is that even the same context may facilitate the application of different languages by the same individual.

[34] Pocock, "States, Republics, and Empires: The American Founding in Early Modern Perspective," in *Conceptual Change and the Constitution*, ed. Terence Ball and J. G. A. Pocock (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1988), 56–57.

[35] Interestingly, in a critique of Pocock Joyce Appleby has also pointed this out in her "What Is Still American in the Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson?" *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 39 (1982): 306–307). One should add, though, the reverse possibility: different terms may denote the same concept, different linguistic forms (i.e. signifiers) denoting the same/similar concepts (i.e. signifieds).

lyst's task should be to identify the political languages and their idioms in which a particular author wrote and investigate the ways in which they function in relation to the original paradigmatic language. Therefore, to identify the meaning of a given piece means "to establish the discourse or discourses in which the text was written."[36]

Perhaps the most important overall effect of Pocock's work has been to rhetoricize political thought and intellectual history. According to him, studying political thought amounts to studying political languages, their functioning and interaction in texts. In this way, the "'history of ideas' . . . gives way to a history of languages, vocabularies, ideologies."[37] For Pocock, political ideas and ideology are deeply rooted in rhetoric and are expressed through political languages, which therefore have a double nature: they can be regarded as "conceptual languages," that is, linguistic *and* conceptual, ideological and rhetorical constructs at the same time.

The legitimizing power of political languages derives from their being vital to the act of producing meaning in political communication. This quality of theirs is rooted in more general features of the Western epistemological tradition. According to Christian thinking, particulars have no meaning in themselves, and they can become intelligible only through their relationship to the universal, the timeless order of things, by excluding "temporal and secular history." In a similar vein, early modern thinkers attempted to make the particular meaningful, together with time, both representing originally less intelligible phenomena than the universal: "the knowledge of particulars was circumstantial, accidental, and temporal."[38] Consequently, in Saussurean terms, the *parole* of the individual speaker can make sense and gain legitimacy and power only through its connection with the *langue(s)* of the community. Concepts and meanings can function only through communication, hence the intimate relationship between the ideological-conceptual and linguistic-rhetorical aspects of political languages, the difficulty of separating them, and, finally, the interchangeability of terms such as ideology, language, discourse, and rhetoric in Pocock's vocabulary.

Another corollary of Pocock's theory is that the problem of influence often raised in intellectual history can be replaced by the concern with identifying the language that a particular author employed and the purposes that he or she meant to achieve through it, instead of seeking evidence of direct textual reference to the source of origins. In this way, emphasis can be shifted from the personal source of influence to linking individual usage to a certain "linguistic tradition," becoming aware of the presence and workings of a particular language in the text of the author "under influence."[39] An important consequence is that one can speak a political language without being aware of it, admitting it, even when denying it explicitly.

---

36 Richter, "Reconstructing the History of Political Languages," 55.

37 Pocock, "*The Machiavellian Moment* Revisited," 50–51; see also Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 105.

38 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 8, 4.

39 Applying the concept of political language facilitates a method of inquiry which avoids the question of origin, instead attempting to establish the nature of the given rhetorical utterance by linking it to a certain "linguistic" tradition. A similar attitude to the problem of influence is professed by Steven M. Dworetz, *The Unvarnished Doctrine: Locke, Liberalism and the American Revolution*, 2nd ed. (1990; Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 67, 87.

Furthermore, he or she may not necessarily be borrowing from the immediate source of origins.[40]

Another feature of Pocock's theory of political languages, as one of his commentators points out, is that it largely builds on the problem of time. A basic component of a political community's identity is the way it relates itself to time through its political language, which also largely defines the nature, possibilities and limits of its "political order" and "political activity," its "continuing identity through time."[41] This understanding of political languages, then, emphasizes the ways in which their speakers make sense of their experience, how they respond to what is happening to them and give expression to it in their discussion of political problems.

Finally, studying the history of political thought as political languages acknowledges the relevance of the historical context: a political utterance is made in response to a historical situation or event, and as such it is bound to contain the speaker's understanding of the given context that he or she reflects upon.[42]

Pocock's theory of political languages offers a perspective on the study of Calhoun's political thought facilitating a better understanding both its diversity and his relationship to the traditions that the South Carolinian drew upon. More particularly, the Pocockean approach allows the revealing of idioms in Calhoun's political rhetoric that he would otherwise deny and/or even was unaware of (cf. his denial of Lockean premises, for instance). Thus, idioms of political languages that might remain hidden in Calhoun's political discourse can be brought to surface and examined. Also, linking his own utterances to the larger traditions in the Pocockean manner raises awareness of the flexibility of those in terms of assigning new meanings to already existing signifiers. Furthermore, such a perspective facilitates a move beyond the explicit meanings of Calhoun's texts by bringing in meanings generated through the interaction of those texts and the traditions, thereby making possible a perception of the richness of South Carolinian's political thought. Accordingly, a Pocockean reading is a contextualist reading, thereby lifting Calhoun's political utterances out of isolation, rendering them meaningful in terms of their relation to tradition. Without the Pocockean approach much of Calhoun's thought would be obscured. For instance, relying only on the principle of authorial intention would be insufficient to open up Calhoun's texts as completely.

Pocock's "political linguistics" presented above can, then, be utilized in an analysis of Calhoun's political thought, which I consider an "event . . . in the history of [political] language[s]." Consequently, I will follow the method that Pocock suggests, that is, I will in-

---

[40] Michael O'Brien has observed that although Calhoun relied on several authors in developing his arguments, he rarely named the sources of his ideas. *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810–1860* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 2:921; see also Guy Story Brown, *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics: A Study of* A Disquisition on Government (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2000), 6, 36 and 322n17). This also underlines the relevance of political language as a concept by which to approach Calhoun's texts: it is *what* languages he "spoke" and *how* that becomes important and not their author's influence.

[41] Iain Hampsher-Monk, "Political Languages in Time—The Work of J. G. A. Pocock," *British Journal of Political Science* 14 (1984): 99.

[42] Pocock, for instance, makes the point clear discussing Machiavelli's response to the return of the Medici in 1512, and its articulation in his *Il Principe*. Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 156.

vestigate his relationship to various political rhetorical traditions and "decompose" his "writings into the various languages which he used and transmitted, and in whose history he played a part, rather than reconstructing the unity which his thought may have conferred upon them."[43] As will be seen, the structures and components of these languages were retained after their appropriation by Calhoun. Yet, in some instances, he modified them, often putting them to different use, exploiting their multivalence. He often did so in the same text, which therefore shows traces of different political languages.

It is important to note that given the focus of this work, the events of the historical period of Calhoun's career will be important only to the extent that they evoked responses from Calhoun articulated within the framework of political languages.

---

[43] Toews, "Intellectual History," 885; and Pocock, "*The Machiavellian Moment* Revisited," 51.

CHAPTER 1
CALHOUN AND THE REPUBLICAN TRADITION

INTRODUCTION

Previous analyses of Calhoun's republicanism have had limited scope in either their understanding of the republican ideology that he built on or in their recognition of the components of the republican tradition in his writings. Laying emphasis on how he strove to find the means of securing virtue in the republic, these analyses tended to focus on the institutional devices that Calhoun proposed in order to mechanize virtue and, on that account, connected him to the tradition of the Founders in general.[1] My major point here, however, will be that Calhoun, in fact, drew upon various strains of the republican tradition by making selective use of its vocabulary, reappropriating more of its idioms than identified by these scholars. Virtue represented a complex matter for him and assumed various forms and dimensions during his political career. He offered means other than constitutional devices to deal with corruption; at the same time, institutional means for securing virtue assumed various forms for him, linking him to several strains of the republican tradition. My aim is, therefore, to show that Calhoun's republicanism was by no means a homogeneous construct but rather contained

[1] See especially David F. Ericson, *The Shaping of American Liberalism: The Debates over Ratification, Nullification and Slavery* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993); David F. Ericson, "The Nullification Crisis, American Republicanism, and the Force Bill Debate," *The Journal of Southern History* 61 (1995): 249–70; J. William Harris, "Last of the Classical Republicans: An Interpretation of John C. Calhoun," *Civil War History* 30 (1984): 255–67; Lacy K. Ford, Jr., "Republican Ideology in a Slave Society: The Political Economy of John C. Calhoun," *The Journal of Southern History* 54 (1988): 405–24; Lacy K. Ford, Jr., *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800–1860* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Lacy K. Ford, Jr., "Recovering the Republic: Calhoun, South Carolina, and the Concurrent Majority," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 89 (1988): 146–59; Lacy K. Ford, Jr., "Inventing the Concurrent Majority: Madison, Calhoun, and the Problem of Majoritarianism in American Political Thought," *The Journal of Southern History* 40 (1994): 19–58. Other discussions of Calhoun's republicanism include Pauline Maier, "The Road not Taken: Nullification, John C. Calhoun, and the Revolutionary Tradition in South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 82 (1981): 1–19; Gillis J. Harp, "Taylor, Calhoun, and the Decline of a Theory of Political Disharmony," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46 (1985): 107–20; Chandra Miller, "'Title Page to a Great Tragic Volume:' The Impact of the Missouri Crisis on Slavery, Race, and Republicanism in the Thought of John C. Calhoun and John Quincy Adams," *The Missouri Historical Review* 94 (2000): 365–88; H. Lee Cheek, Jr. "Recovering Popular Rule: Calhoun, Sectional Conflict, and Modern America," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 10 (Spring 2002): 35–55; H. Lee Cheek, *Calhoun and Popular Rule: The Political Theory of the* Disquisition *and* Discourse (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2001); K. R. Constantine Gutzman, "Paul to Jeremiah: The Disillusionment of John C. Calhoun," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 16 (2002): 3–33; and W. Kirk Wood, "In Defense of the Republic: John C. Calhoun and State Interposition in South Carolina, 1776–1833," *Southern Studies* New Series 10 (2003): 9–48.

elements of various strains of the political languages, and that by placing him in a broader republican context, new layers of his political rhetoric can be brought to light.

As we shall see, the republican features of Calhoun's political rhetoric were informed by the dichotomy of virtue and corruption in the following issues: the moral character of the people in the maintenance of republican political stability; military virtue and its connection to political virtue; the mechanization of virtue; the virtue of the South; and, finally, the republican features of his political economy, as related to the problem of virtue.

As background to my analysis of his republicanism and in order to explore the connections between Calhoun's republican rhetoric and the major components of the paradigm, these must first be related to the republican interpretation of early US history as it developed into an interpretive model in American intellectual history

REPUBLICANISM IN THE HISTORY OF THE EARLY REPUBLIC

The works of Bernard Bailyn, Gordon S. Wood and J. G. A. Pocock have become established starting points for analyses of republican ideology in the antebellum United States and have been regarded collectively as concise formulations of republicanism.[2] However, as several authors have demonstrated, republicanism is not to be regarded as a unified, homogeneous tradition; instead, its diversity of regional, ethnic, class or gender based varieties of its core elements is to be recognized and appreciated.[3] My goal here, however, does not involve the

---

[2] Bernard Bailyn, *The Origins of American Politics* (1967; New York: Vintage Books, 1970). Citations refer to the Vintage edition.; Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1967; Cambridge, Mass. and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992); Gordon S. Wood, *Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787* (University of North Carolina Press, 1969; New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1993). Citations refer to the W. W. Norton edition.; J. G. A. Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1975); and Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History*. (New York: Atheneum, 1971; rep. with new preface Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 104–47. Citations refer to the University of Chicago Press edition. On the paradigm-generating effect of these works see Robert E. Shalhope, "Republicanism and Early American Historiography," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 39 (1982), 334–35; Joyce Appleby, "Republicanism and Ideology," *American Quarterly* 37 (1985), 464–65; Marc W. Kruman, "The Second American Party System and the Transformation of Revolutionary Republicanism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 12 (1992), 510n2; and Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: The Career of a Concept," *The Journal of American History* 79 (1992), 15–16. Although the republican paradigm is usually associated with these three authors, the earliest attempt at a comprehensive identification of the major elements of American republican ideology with a focus on the 1790s is John R. Howe's "Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790s," *American Quarterly* 19 (1967): 147–206.

[3] On these, as well as on the emergence and development of the "republican synthesis," see Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 29 (1972): 48–80; and Shalhope, "Republicanism," 334–56. The numerous works elaborating on the development of the variations of republican ideology in the early Republic include Robert Kelly's "Ideology and Political Culture from Jefferson to Nixon," *American Historical Review* 82 (1977), 531–46 (on regional varieties); Sean Wilentz's *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788–1850* (1984; New and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) (on the urban working class version); Linda Kerber's *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (University of North

variations of the republican tradition; I will rather attempt to focus on those assumptions of republican ideology that served as a legitimate basis for the "dialogue" among its individual users. Finally, although it is not my purpose to indicate the diachronic variations of the paradigm, I will also discuss the historical transformation of some of its elements relevant to my analysis.

The main tenets of republicanism, in their crystallized form, became available for eighteenth-century American colonists through a corpus of literature produced by eighteenth-century British opposition thinkers, who provided them with an ideological framework in which to articulate their vision of the British Empire and of themselves.[4] Eighteenth-century republican ideology in the Anglo-American world consisted of values and ideals comprising a set of standards by means of which the perceived state of government and society could be assessed.

One such ideal was that of the mythic "English constitution" (referring to the structure of government), which had started to develop in mid-seventeenth-century England, ultimately deriving from the ancient Aristotelian-Polybian model. This constitution was revered by most subjects of the British Empire for its stability and permanence, which they attributed to its mixed nature. Its uniqueness lay in the fact, as its admirers argued, that it included each of the three estates or orders existing in English society, namely the King, the Lords and the Commons, creating a balance among them by assigning each to its appropriate sphere and providing them with means of checking one another. The revered stability and permanence of the English government was attributed to its involving all three estates, each contributing its own peculiar character or virtue to the common good.[5]

The reason that balance needed to be maintained among the three elements of the mixed government was, as contemporaries assumed, that power tends to encroach upon liberty, ultimately destroying it. Power was imagined by eighteenth-century Englishmen on both sides of the Atlantic as an active, dynamic force tending to expand at the expense of liberty, one whose course could be curbed only by means of power. Therefore, in their belief, if one social estate wielded more power than it was entitled to, it necessarily endangered the liberties of the others, and the outcome would be the establishment of a government in which one of the three estates ruled, without considering the liberties and interests of the others. Eighteenth-century British subjects emphasized two of these degenerated forms of government: the

---

Carolina Press, 1980; New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1986) Citations refer to the W. W. Norton edition. (on the role of women in revolutionary republicanism); or Stephanie McCurry's *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) and "The Two Faces of Republicanism: Gender and Proslavery Politics in Antebellum South Carolina," *The Journal of American History* 79 (1992): 1245–64 (on white women and slavery in South Carolina).

4 Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, 35–54 and passim; and Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, 10–17 and passim.

5 Bailyn, *Origins of American Politics*, 53; Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, 70, 72–73; Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, 11, 20. The first expression of this view in the Anglo-Saxon political tradition was a document issued by Charles I: *His Majesty's Answer to the Nineteen Propositions of Both Houses of Parliament* of June 21, 1642. It was meant to argue for the mixed nature of the English political system. See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 361–64.

tyranny of the one and the anarchy of the many.[6] The ideal English mixed constitution, then, was seen as making it possible to counter power with power, preserving liberty for each component of government and society.

Another ideal of republican ideology was related to the notion of public or civic virtue rooted in Aristotelian civic humanism. Eighteenth-century republicans shared Aristotle's view of man as a social animal *(zōon politikon)* by nature. They held that the individual self could not be fully human unless he[7] participated in public life.[8] In addition, they also believed that as citizen, the individual was expected to subordinate the pursuit of his private interest to the promotion of the public good or *res publica*, the "common weal." Hence the importance of public virtue in republican ideology: it expresses the willingness of the individual to make that sacrifice. Self-sacrifice was seen as vital to the stability of the republic, the existence of which was dependent upon a virtuous citizenry able and willing to pursue the good of the whole. At the same time, public virtue was seen as being rooted in the private virtues of the individual: benevolence, self-sacrifice, frugality or simplicity were essential qualities of the virtuous citizen.[9]

The notion of political participation also had an aspect that connected it with the ideal of mixed government. The ideal republican government was to realize the greatest possible number of values (or interests, goods) in a given society; in other words, it was to provide universal representation for every interest,[10] utilizing their potentials. The mixed government was conceived to be designed for such a purpose.

The republican emphasis on the need to pursue the public good was intimately linked to the problem of time and human society's relationship to it. The republic existed in time and represented the particular, a concept that in Renaissance epistemology, was understood as limited and inferior to the universal. Hence the major concern of political human beings was to "realize the university of values within a particular, and therefore finite and mortal political structure."[11] The only way to attempt the assurance of the survival of the polity was to make it universal by ensuring the realization of all values in society. The concern with universal representation of values also had implications for the ideal size of the republic. Republics were

---

6 Bailyn, *Origins of American Politics*, 56; Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, 56–59, 70, 77; Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, 19–20, 21, 23.

7 The use of the masculine third person singular indicates the fact that women were excluded from the political community of republican citizens both in the ancient and the modern period.

8 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, passim, esp. 67–68, 527.

9 Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic*, 52, 53–56, 61, 65–70; quoted phrase on 68. In a later attempt at clarifying the concept of public virtue that was being formulated in revolutionary America and the early Republic, Lance Banning emphasized that it was not regarded as a "conscious and continuing self-abnegation" of particular interests. Public good unfolded as a result of conflicting interests, taking into consideration each taking each other into consideration. Once a political decision was made, however, particular interests were to be subordinated to public good, expressed through that decision. See Banning, "Some Second Thoughts on Virtue and the Course of Revolutionary Thinking," in *Conceptual Change and the Constitution*, ed. Terence Ball and J. G. A. Pocock (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1988), 199, 198–200. Public virtue, then, meant the willingness and capacity of political actors—whether individual or communal—to follow the common good arbitrated in that way.

10 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 67–68, 402, passim.

11 Ibid., 84, see also 3 and passim.

thought to be viable only in relatively small countries with a homogeneous population.[12] Large countries implied heterogeneous peoples, with consequent greater difficulty in attaining the public good.

A corollary was that in the case of a people with relatively homogeneous interest—when, for instance, the many ruled the republic—the pursuit of private interests of the individuals comprising the polity formed a major threat to the republic. Hence appeal was made to the common good and the (public) virtue of the people. By contrast, in a more heterogeneous republic, institutional means of providing representation for corporate interests was desirable, creating equilibrium among them, but more importantly, ensuring that all virtues and values in the political domain could make their contributions to the public good. In the latter model of civic humanist rhetoric, excluding one corporate interest from government or, conversely, assigning too much of a role to it, could result in corruption, hence the significance of mixed government in the sustenance of republican virtue.

In republican vocabulary, virtue could also denote that trait of the individual's character that determines his social identity, making him a member of one of the social estates. The significance of such a conception of virtue is that each social order of the republic, incorporated into the citizen body, is expected to contribute its own virtue to the polity.[13] This notion explains the appeal of the mixed government ideal associated with the English constitution: it enables an estate to contribute its own particular virtue to the common good. This idea was the application of the Polybian concept of mixed government to the English monarchy, presenting it as a classical republic in which stability has been lost and disorder has set in once the balance among the estates is destroyed. The difference and tension between particular interests and the common good was transposed to the relationship between estates and the common good. This is why their presence and balance were seen as indispensable to the stability of the constitution.[14]

Pocock argues that an important stage in the development of the republican paradigm can be associated with the seventeenth-century English political theorist James Harrington, who, in his political work *Oceana* (1656), made the possession of land a prerequisite for civic virtue by assigning the distribution of political authority to that of land. Following Renaissance political theorist Niccolo Machiavelli, Harrington also connected civic participation to the notion of the citizen soldier, who takes arms in order to defend the republic when need be and is ready to give his life to the *res publica*. In this way, Harrington also created a rationale for expansion as a means to provide landed property for an ever-growing population of virtuous armed citizens of the many.[15]

---

[12] Ibid., 75; Howe, "Republican Thought," 159; see also Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, 57–58, 356, 499–500.

[13] Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 70–73.

[14] Pocock, throughout his study of civic humanism, emphasizes the importance of the republican assumption, predominant at least until the appearance of modern commerce in the eighteenth century, that one major source of corruption was the exclusion of any particular good or virtue from the good of the whole (ibid., 115–16). The exclusion of one social estate from government led to the destruction of its virtue, at the same time resulting in the corruption of the virtue of the encroaching power and that of the whole republic (ibid., 364–65).

[15] Ibid., 383–400.

These ideals and values constituting the core of the republican paradigm with its demand for public virtue at the same time form the basis of its strong critical potential exploited by its practitioners both in Britain and in America. Whenever people using republican language voiced their critique of those currently in power, they tended to do so within a framework essentially centered around the concept of corruption. Since the preservation of the republican order was a complex matter, in the eyes of eighteenth-century Englishmen its vulnerability exposed it to a multifaceted threat of havoc. In the first place, given the dangerously, though also creatively, dynamic nature of power, it was widely believed to have the tendency to tempt and corrupt people, making even the most virtuous man turn into a tyrant.[16] In the second place, British opposition writers of the eighteenth century picked up a line of argument developed by the "Neo-Harringtonians" of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in order to claim that they detected signs of corruption of the English mixed constitution. In their eyes, the Crown was attempting to destroy its balance in order to establish its tyrannical rule over the two other components represented in Parliament.[17]

Suspicious observers of the age read current events as telling signs of corruption pointing toward the encroachment of despotic rule: ministerial influence in the House of Commons, patronage, the maintenance and expansion of standing armies obeying the Crown and the emergence of a "monied interest" living off the state debt all served as evidence that the Crown was up to making every politician dependent on itself and was about to concentrate all power in its own hands.[18] At the same time, it was not simply the corruption of the gov

---

16 Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, 60.

17 Neo-Harringtonianism took shape from the 1670s onwards and involved the antithesis of the "Court" and "Country" parties in the British Parliament. It was the Country mainly consisting of landed property interests that launched its attack upon the Crown for its attempt to build a dependent loyal Court party in the House of Commons. Later, members of the Country acted as gadflies, harassing Walpolean "Robinocracy" with the rhetoric of corruption to be detailed below (see Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 406–408 and passim). In what has probably been the most concise attempt at a critique of elements in Pocock's civic humanist model, Michael P. Zuckert takes issue with his construction of Neo-Harringtonianism, questioning its connection with Harrington's thought, and most importantly, charging Pocock with missing the whole point of British Whig opposition rhetoric, the struggle "to secure a limited rather than an absolutist monarchy for England" See Zuckert, *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 178. A similar concern is formulated by Iain Hampsher-Monk on the connection: Hampsher-Monk, "Political Languages in Time—The Work of J. G. A. Pocock," *British Journal of Political Science* 14 (1984), 107–108. Nonetheless, even this objective fitted in with the republican ideal of avoiding dependence on another man's will in the effort to realize all values in the polity. Absolutist rule, the tyranny of the one, was seen as a degenerated form of government in which one value was made to stand in for all the others. It is true that Shaftesbury was no Harringtonian; his concern was not about the many but the few, yet his concern was related to the same problem: the fear of losing independence, virtue, separate identity and function for the few in government. For instance, his denunciation of an army dependent on the King was a cry against confusing functions and virtues in balance within government, against the principles of the (mixed) Ancient Constitution, with its three distinct estates (Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 413–14). Leaving out one component from government meant loss of the balance and thus degeneration into absolute power that Zuckert's Whigs were anxious about.

18 Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time*, 104–47; Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 426–27, and passim; Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, 33; Bailyn, *Origins of American Politics*, 49n31; and Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, 61. Ronald Hamowy argues, using ample textual support, that *Cato's Letters*, an important link between British and American republicanism in the eighteenth century, should be seen as an exercise in the Lockean idiom derived from natural rights rather than civic humanism (Hamowy, "Cato's Letters, John Locke, and the Republican Paradigm," *History of Political Thought* 11 (1990), 273–94. Yet, Cato's references to corrupt, "dishonored magistrates," "the

ernment that opposition writers expressed anxiety about. A return to the original, perfect state of the constitution was deemed possible provided that the people were virtuous. However, for critics of the times, the appearance of luxury, avarice, selfishness, extravagance and the deterioration of republican values such as frugality, simplicity and industry were signs that the people themselves had been contaminated by corruption, that public virtue was in decline, and thus there was no means of reforming government in order to return it to its original, ideal state.[19]

The basic components of this paradigm were adopted by the American colonists rebelling against Britain in the 1770s.[20] In the various measures of the British Parliament aimed at extracting additional financial contributions from the colonies, the colonists claimed to have

---

Benefit and Safety of the People," or "the Benefit and Security of Society" (quoted in ibid., 281, 282, 283) clearly indicate republican concerns: corrupt magistrates qualify as such because they do not serve the public, and due to sparse elections, they do not feel dependent on the people, hence failing to represent their people's interest, the public good. As Pocock points out, the demand of Neo-Harringtonians (that is, radical Whigs) for frequently elected parliaments can be regarded as a means to secure the renewal of virtue in a Harringtonian manner: magistrates are sent back to the people, on whom they are supposed to depend, in order to be measured from time to time (Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 407, 519). Cato's emphasis on independence and property as a way to it (see Hamowy, "Cato's Letters," 284) is also a republican feature, fitting in with Pocock's paradigm. Hence Cato's preference for a relatively equal distribution of property and power. See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 468; see also John Ashworth, "The Jeffersonians: Classical Republicans or Liberal Capitalists?" *Journal of American Studies* 18 (1984), 430. (This aspect of Pocock's interpretation of Cato seems to be ignored by Hamowy.)

[19] Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic*, 34–35. John R. Howe also emphasizes the threat of luxury and wealth to virtue in republican rhetoric and remarks how in republican thinking the state of the people's character was seen to correspond to the rising or declining stage of the republican cycle (Howe, "Republican Thought," 156, 162). Daniel T. Rodgers emphasizes the differences between the ways Bailyn, Wood and Pocock conceive of republicanism, arguing that Pocock's "St. Louis" republicanism moved beyond Wood's "Harvard" republicanism, his "end of classical politics" (Rodgers, "Republicanism," 18–20). Michael P. Zuckert also draws attention to the differences between the republican models developed by Bailyn, Wood and Pocock, and questions the viability of the effort to treat them together (Zuckert, *New Republicanism*, 150–64). He, for instance, distinguishes Wood's focus on the common good from Pocock's concern with political participation as the major criterion of the republican mindset. In claiming so, however, Zuckert ignores that Pocock manages to incorporate Wood's thesis through the concept of virtue: Public good cannot be realized without the participation of each social group in government contributing its own virtue. Furthermore, Pocock's extension of the republican paradigm backward and forward in time safely includes Bailyn's treatment of mixed government, whose significance in republican thought was further elaborated by Wood and Pocock himself by connecting it to the problem of virtue. A similar misunderstanding of Pocock's conception of continuity in republicanism can be attributed to Garrett Ward Sheldon, who argues that in his *Il Principe* and *Discorsi*, Machiavelli championed no Aristotelian virtue based on the notion of civic humanism. See Sheldon, *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 164–166. Pocock, however, is explicit that both works represent the issue of virtue based on participation. For the new prince as innovator, breaking with legitimate political rule, the major problem is dealing with a body of people who no longer possess virtue since they do not participate in ruling themselves. Therefore they are defined in relation to *fortuna* since the political system ceases to represent the university of values and becomes particular, hence exposed to contingency. The innovator has to rely on his own *virtù* in confronting *fortuna* in order to rule such a people (Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 156–157). In the *Discorsi*, the problem is also how to confront *fortuna*, Rome no longer being capable of relying on its citizens' virtue. Rome also existed in the world of political contingency and developed its own *virtù*, based on the armed plebeians, in order to survive, starting expansion in an attempt to dominate *fortuna* (ibid., 198–99). In either case, paradoxically, it was through its absence that the citizens' virtue based on *vivere civile* played a role in Machiavelli's vision: he wanted to explain how *virtù* as a surrogate had to be used in the world of particulars and contingency, dominated by *fortuna*, in the lack of universal values.

[20] Bailyn, *Origins of American Politics*, 53–56. On republican virtue in an early American context, see also Howe, "Republican Thought," 155–56.

detected an emerging pattern of conspiracy designed to destroy their liberties. Consequently, they explained their decision to become independent of the mother country as an act to avert this danger and also to avoid the corruption plaguing Britain, which threatened to spread across the ocean and in turn corrupt the virtues of the colonists. In defying British rule, Americans began to regard themselves as a chosen people whose task was to achieve "republican regeneration," to replace the old and corrupt government of Britain by a new and perfect system based on the principles of the original mixed constitution, thereby enabling a virtuous people to preserve its moral character.[21]

The Federalists' success in transforming the principle of mixed government into that of the separation of powers was an act of attuning an old principle to the new situation, one in which the government consisted of a single social estate, that is, the people. The new federal Constitution marked "the end of classical politics:" in the American Republic, the aim could no longer be to harmonize various social orders in a mixed government. At the same time, although at first imagined to be homogeneous, American society turned out to consist of individuals with often conflicting interests, which were deemed possible to keep under control within the framework of the Federalists' constitution.[22]

Pocock has argued that this shift, understood by Wood as moving from classical republicanism to modern liberalism, was not accompanied by the abandonment of the virtue-corruption dichotomy. He shows that the fear of corruption and the preoccupation with virtue retained their strong presence in the political vocabularies of the Federalists as well as Anti-Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans.[23] He points out that in the young Republic, free

---

[21] Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, 94–136, 139–41; Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic*, 112–13, 118–24. At the same time, they emphasized the experimental nature of their undertaking, the fragile nature of the republic (Howe,"Republican Thought," 154–55, 164). Isaac Kramnick argues that a shift in British opposition thought from republicanism to middle-class liberalism occurred starting in the 1760s, resulting in the development of "bourgeois radicalism" opposed to Court and Country alike. See Kramnick, "Republicanism Revisited: The Case of James Burgh," in *The Republican Synthesis Revisited: Essays in Honor of George Athan Billias*, ed. Milton M. Klein, Richard D. Brown and John B. Hench (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1992), 22–23. Kramnick's main protagonist in this tradition is Protestant dissenter, James Burgh, who widely employed Locke in his texts. Nonetheless, he also argued for a more proportionate distribution of power for the manufacturing middle-class interests, a demand which was otherwise in accordance with the republican requirement to represent all social interests, balancing them in government (ibid., 30–31). In other words, Burgh can be seen to have argued simply for the inclusion of the rising middle classes in the British political structure in a republican participatory manner.

[22] Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic*, 606–7. Relying on Wood, Pocock points out that the crisis of virtue leading to the making of the new, federal Constitution was related to the recognition that in America there seemed to be no distinct categories of individuals within the people, who would have to consider each other's virtue (Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 316). Virtue lay in difference. According to Pocock, "consisted in a particular being's regard for the common good, and was contingent upon his association with other particular beings who regarded the same good through different eyes . . . and without some theory of qualitative and moral differentiation between individuals, it was hard to see how the relations between citizens that constituted virtue could be established" (ibid., 520). Also, according to republican ideology, the promotion of the public good could hardly be imagined without participation. Women practicing "Republican Motherhood," for instance, contributed to the common good through domesticity and not participation in public life (see Kerber, *Women of the Republic*), thus representing merely an intermediary stage to *vivere civile*.

[23] Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 526–27, 528–33. Gordon S. Wood connects the Federalists assertions about disinterestedness as a requirement for the public official and belief in its impossibility with the Anti-Federalists. See Wood, "Interests and Disinterestedness in the Making of the Constitution," in *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the*

land (linked to the westward-moving frontier) was seen as the key to the sustenance of public virtue, a counterbalance to the corrupting effects of commerce and industry. The ideal of the independent yeoman, the American counterpart of James Harrington's propertied warrior, sustained by the constant expansion of the frontier, the continuous supply of land, and accompanied by the dynamic force of commerce, continued to live on in American public discourse.[24]

Further research confirms the survival of republican rhetoric well into the mid-nineteenth century, although not without transformation. For instance, the development of the second party system resulted in both Whigs and Democrats accepting practices originally denounced by republicanism, such as patronage or an active governmental role in the economy, identifying their own party as the one promoting the public good and emphasizing their role in fighting corruption. It was those politicians trying to keep themselves away from parties who still clung to the earlier ideal of independent, disinterested statesman.[25]

Constitution and American National Identity, ed. Richard Beeman, Stephen Botein, and Edward C. Carter II (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 83–103. For a republican perspective on the Federalist era, see Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788–1800* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). That the dichotomy of private interest and public good continued to inform the way in which American thinkers addressed problems related to political life can be illustrated by Jefferson's famous dialogue of "the Head" and "the Heart," his letter to Maria Cosway in 1786. As the Heart reflects on revolutionary times, it warns that the War of Independence could not have been won without sacrificing private interest for the common cause (*PTJ*, 409–410).

[24] Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 534–35, 539–45. The Harringtonian conception of landed property as a prerequisite for political participation, due to its link to independence and virtue, in part, informed the American understanding of property in the early Republic. See William B. Scott, *In Pursuit of Happiness: American Conceptions of Property from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1977), 35, 40–41 and passim. Works that discuss the further relevance of republican discourse in antebellum America include Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*; Kruman, "Second Party System;" Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Rowland Berthoff, "Independence and Attachment, Virtue and Interest: From Republican Citizen to Free Enterpriser, 1787–1837," in *Unprooted Americans: Essays to Honor Oscar Handlin*, ed. Richard Bushman, et al. (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 97–124; and Kelly, "Ideology and Political Culture." The relatively equal distribution of property as a prerequisite for a republican way of distributing power in the Harringtonian manner in early US republican thought has also been pointed out by John R. Howe (Howe, "Republican Thought," 157–58). In an interesting attempt to reconcile liberal with republican interpretation, Jeffrey C. Isaac argues that Harrington's political thought exhibited liberal traces, while Adam Smith's political economy was not exempt from republican ones. See Isaac, "Republicanism vs. Liberalism? A Reconsideration," *History of Political Thought* 9 (1988), 349–77. This claim can be well taken, but Isaac's conclusion, namely that "liberalism incorporates Aristotelian, republican values" is hardly tenable, since Harrington's liberalism is very far from that of Adam Smith and so is the latter's republicanism from the former's (cf. ibid., 375). Harrington's world is still not that of the *homo economicus* and *homo faber*, like that of Smith, but of the unspecialized, political personality. His notion of independence, for instance, implies independence from the market—the lack of dependence on any factors and men outside the community of landowners (cf. ibid., 365). Smith's economic man is, however, not independent in the republican sense, for he is part of an increasingly intricate network of mutual dependence in a world of specialization and diversified social personality and function.

[25] Kruman, "Second Party System," 529–537.

Although the republican interpretation came to be modified in response to the challenge posed by the renascent argument about the Lockean liberal roots of American political philosophy, mainly with regard to claims of its exclusivity, its major components have remained unaltered.[26] Pocock was accused by his critics of suppressing other traditions in his *Machiavellian Moment* and related works. In response to such charges about what might be called his "monolingual" bias, he reasserted the pluralism thesis in subsequent works, at the same time claiming that his exclusive emphasis on republicanism in *Machiavellian Moment*, "was a legitimate use of historiographical rhetoric."[27] As a result of the ensuing debate over the relative importance of liberalism and republicanism in early American political thought, more and more scholars have pointed out the co-existence of idioms belonging to these traditions.[28]

---

[26] The republican interpretation evoked a strong reaction from scholars who advocated the primacy of Lockean liberalism as the basic intellectual tradition in early American history. Among others, for instance, Joyce Appleby has consistently argued that both economic and political liberalism, ultimately based on the sanctity of natural rights, constituted the ideological foundation of modern America from the Jeffersonian period onward. See Joyce Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1984); and her conveniently collected essays in her *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), or her recent reiteration and extension of her thesis in her *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000). For the reassertion of the liberal thesis see also Isaac Kramnick, "Republican Revisionism Revisited," *The American Historical Review* 87 (1982): 629–65; John Patrick Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundations of Liberalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); Diggins, "Comrades and Citizens: New Mythologies in American Historiography" *The American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 614–38; Thomas L. Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American Founders and the Philosophy of Locke* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988); Steven M. Dworetz, *The Unvarnished Doctrine: Locke, Liberalism, and the American Revolution* (Durham, N.C. and London: Duke University Press, 1994); Jerome Huyler, *Locke in America: The Moral Philosophy of the Founding Era* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Zuckert, *New Republicanism*; Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*; and Zuckert, "Founder of the Natural Rights Republic," in *Thomas Jefferson and the Politics of Nature*, ed. Thomas S. Engeman, 11–58 (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000).

[27] Pocock, "Between Gog and Magog: The Republican Thesis and the *Ideologia Americana*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (1987), 345. See also Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 9, 16; and Pocock, "Cambridge paradigms and Scotch philosophers: A study of the relations between the civic humanist and the civil jurisprudential interpretation of eighteenth-century social thought," in *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. István Hont and Michael Ignatieff (Cambridge, London, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 235–52.

[28] See Lance Banning, "Jeffersonian Ideology Revisited: Liberal and Classical Ideas in the new American Republic," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 43 (1986), esp. 12; Forrest McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1985); James T. Kloppenberg, "The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Political Discourse," *The Journal of American History* 74 (1987): 9–33; Michael Lienesch, *New Order of the Ages: Time, the Constitution, and the Making of Modern American Political Though* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1988); Pangle, *Spirit of Modern Republicanism*; Milton M. Klein, Richard D. Brown and John B. Hench, eds., *The Republican Synthesis Revisited: Essays in Honor of George Athan Billias* (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1992); Richard C. Sinopoli, *The Foundations of American Citizenship: Liberalism, the Constitution, and Civic Virtue* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Bailyn, Preface to the enlarged edition of *Ideological Origins*, vi; and Gordon S. Wood, afterword in Klein, Brown and Hench, *Republican Synthesis Revisited*, 145–146; Sheldon, *Political Philosophy of Jefferson*.

For the argument that diverse political languages such as Lockean liberalism and republicanism could co-exist in the same person's thought, see John M. Murrin, "Can Liberals be Patriots? Natural Right, Virtue, and Moral Sense in the America of George Mason and Thomas Jefferson," in *Natural Rights and Natural Law: The Legacy of George Mason*,

With alternating emphasis on its elements, Calhoun was an active participant in this republican discourse.

To many of his contemporaries, Calhoun embodied the virtuous politician, rising above particular party or personal interests. Even John Quincy Adams, one of his major political adversaries, shared this view, claiming that "He is above all sectional and factious prejudices more than any other statesman of the Union with whom I have ever acted." Calhoun also formulated similar views regarding himself.[29]

Such an image of Calhoun was a faithful expression of his own understanding of republican virtue. For him, in the words of Guy Story Brown, virtue consisted in "the love of the impartial and common good" and "moral perfection" as the major aim of government.[30] Very much in the original republican line, then, he understood virtue (and intelligence) as the ability and willingness to consider the good of the whole, instead of making the pursuit of particular interest a republican ideal. This belief, for instance, fuelled his hope in a successful resolution of the Missouri Crisis in 1820: "Our true system is to look to the country;" he declared, "and to support such measures and such men, without regard to sections, as are best calculated to advance the general interest."[31]

At the same time, he also stressed the need for particular interests to respect one another. As he wrote in 1838, the Republic must protect "the interest of all." For Calhoun, corruption began when one particular interest began to dominate the whole, thereby creating the "factious and despotick [*sic*] democracy."[32] Furthermore, in his political rhetoric he regarded virtue as an important component of the people's character, a prime factor in maintaining republican order.

---

ed. Robert P. Davidow (Fairfax, Va.: The George Mason University Press, 1986), 35–65. Even such scholars as Isaac Kramnick, Joyce Appleby, or Michael P. Zuckert emphasizing the liberal component accept the presence of the republican line, too. See Kramnick, *Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism: Political Ideology in Late Eighteenth-Century England and America* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990); Appleby, "Republicanism in Old and New Contexts," in *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 320–39; and Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*. Zuckert, for instance, claims that "the founding generation . . . saw no line of division between their commitment to republicanism and to the natural rights/social contract account of the issues of political philosophy" (Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 208). See also Lance Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 215. Even Jerome Huyler, who advocates the primacy of the Lockean stance in his assessment of *Cato's Letters* states that it "represented a comprehensive synthesis of republican and Lockean thought that would inform the American struggle for political independence" (Huyler, *Locke in America*, 210; see also 227, 228).

29 Merril D. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 86–87; quotation on 87; *Papers of Calhoun*, 25:668; See also William Freehling, "Spoilsmen and Interests in the Thought and Career of John C. Calhoun," *The Journal of American History* 52 (1965), 25–43.

30 Brown, *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics: A Study of* A Disquisition on Government. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2000, 212; see also 387n57 on educating virtue.

31 *Papers of Calhoun*, 5:413.

32 Ibid., 14:474.

REPUBLICAN VIRTUE AND THE CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE

The preservation of virtue, a central concern in republican ideology, assumed alternative perspectives. On the one hand, the republican genius or character of the people was held to be a prerequisite for republican stability; on the other, from time to time, it was claimed that political institutions should be constructed in a way to secure public virtue in society, virtually, by "mechanizing" it through institutional means. Emphasis on the two factors alternated in republican discourse, often with the implication that if either means of securing virtue failed, the other was to be applied in its stead. For instance, in the revolutionary period, when republican rhetoric claimed the corruption of the "ancient English constitution,"—an institutional framework—attention was turned to the character of the people in the North American colonies.[33] At the same time, anxieties about the degeneration of the virtuous citizenry as the cause of the political unrest in the 1780s were claimed by Federalists to be eased by the new federal constitution of 1787. As Wood argues, they "looked to mechanical and institutional devices" and argued that only a properly constructed government could guarantee political virtue in a society where the people no longer possessed virtue.[34]

With varying degrees of emphasis, both of these arguments about the location and conditions of virtue played a significant part in Calhoun's republican rhetoric, and it was not merely constitutional devices that he proposed to rely on in his effort to deal with the problem of republican virtue.[35]

---

33 Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, 10–17, 28–36, 93–107.

34 Ibid., 428.

35 Drawing on Forrest McDonald's distinction between a New England "puritanical" and South Atlantic "agrarian" varieties of American republicanism (McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, 70–77), H. Lee Cheek, Jr. associates Calhoun with the latter because of his emphasis on "dissent and diffusion of political power" as well as "localism in theory and practice" (Cheek, *Calhoun and Popular Rule*, 5–6). At the same time, he distinguishes him from that tradition by contending that Calhoun "challenges the 'mechanistic' epistemology usually ascribed to the agrarian tradition" (ibid., 10). Nevertheless, according to my reading, Calhoun's republicanism seems to have been informed by both traditions, which we can see from the presence of institutional devices in his vision of the ideal republican polity, together with the moralistic aspect with his stress on the peoples' character. McDonald himself admits the overlaps between the two republican traditions, but demarcates the "puritanical" version from the "agrarian," claiming the latter's abandonment of private virtue as a prerequisite for public virtue and instead advocating institutional means to guarantee it (McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, 70; 75). It seems though, that such a regional distinction does not do justice to the simultaneous presence of these different senses of virtue in both traditions. In the first place, "the structure of political institutions" (ibid., 75) was just as important for New England Federalists, supporting the Constitution as an institutional device to ensure public virtue in the Republic as it was for John Taylor of Caroline, cited by McDonald. In the second place, his identification of the Southern agrarian "leisure ethic" as opposed to frugality and Puritan work ethic (ibid., 74)—attributes of private virtue—may not hold. Slaveholders, as convincingly argued by James Oakes, who explicitly identifies them with the "Protestant work ethic," were believers in and practitioners of "upward mobility," "unlimited westward migration." See Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 127. In a recent reading of the *Disquisition*, Guy Story Brown has denied that "the question of morality or virtue is . . . a technical or mechanical question" for Calhoun (Brown, *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics*, 43). Ironically, at the same time he argues that in his work Calhoun offers constitutional government, based on the concurrent majority, to handle the natural course of republican decline (ibid., 164, 168–169). Employing constitutional means to ensure stability is, in fact, a mechanical means of securing virtue in the republican tradition.

The assumption that the character of the people forms the bedrock of republican order entailed the notion that the decline of the republic was ultimately to do with the degeneration of republican morals. According to this logic, when the people turn corrupt, institutions and laws dependent on their moral condition cease to function properly.[36] In the young Republic, it was in the evolving debate over the federal Constitution that the consensual view on the moral character of the people began to change: increasing criticism was aimed against a morally decaying citizenry, exposed to the corrupting influences of luxury, materialism and power. Whereas, as seen above, the Federalists argued that only a properly constructed government could guarantee political virtue in a society where the people have been losing their virtue, the Anti-Federalists articulated the necessity of "moral reform and the regeneration of men's hearts" as a solution to the problems of the age.[37]

In spite of the shift to the mechanization of virtue advocated by the Federalists, references to the virtue and intelligence of the people continued to prevail in American political rhetoric. James Madison, for instance, paid tribute to such qualities of the American people in *The Federalist* 49 in deciding cases involving constitutional questions.[38] Moreover, the new federal Constitution from the moment of its creation, was viewed by some as being liable to degeneration; beliefs in its power to substitute for public virtue did not preclude future concerns about the moral character of the people.[39] It was the Anti-Federalists who continued to emphasize the significance of a virtuous electorate in maintaining the republic by pointing out their corruptible nature. Their worries about the future decline of the people's virtue also expressed their skepticism about the pervasive power of constitutional frameworks as a panacea to corruption. It was not only them who put their trust in a virtuous people.[40]

---

36 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 204–5.

37 Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, 428. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that in the development of Federalist rhetoric there was also a moment when, because of the concept of natural aristocracy and the notion of recognizing those belonging to it, the argument about the moral character of the people assumed importance (cf. ibid., 518).

38 James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (London: Penguin, 1987), 314. In the Virginia state ratification convention, Madison made the point that a virtuous people was indispensable to republican government. They are the only ones to be able to perceive and choose appropriate representatives (see Banning, "Second Thoughts on Virtue," 194).

39 See Lance Banning, *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978), 111.

40 Lienesch, *New Order*, 152. Such a belief was sustained also by Thomas Jefferson, for instance, who, in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in "Query 19", wrote, "It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigor. A degeneracy in these is a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution." (*PTJ*, 217). This emphasis on the moral character of the people was kept up in the early national period by the "Old Republicans," a conservative faction within the Republican party. See, for instance, Robert M. Calhoon's discussion of Nathaniel Macon and John Randolph in his *Evangelicals and Conservatives in the Early South, 1740–1861* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 167, 170. Instances of this attitude to the people's character appeared even as late as the Nullification era. One of them belongs to Wilson Lumpkin, Governor of Georgia, who, in a speech against nullification, called for reliance on "the virtue and intelligence of the people of the United States, to sustain her unquestionable constitutional rights." Quoted in Richard E. Ellis, *The Union at Risk: Jacksonian Democracy, States' Rights, and the Nullification Crisis* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 110.

Interpretations which address Calhoun's links to the republican tradition through his effort to mechanize virtue neglect the emphasis which he placed on the moral character of the people in his political rhetoric. Nonetheless, although institutional devices prominently feature in his republicanism, the moral character of the electorate, "the virtue and intelligence of the people," as he repeatedly referred to this notion, also played an important role in his republicanism. Throughout his life, Calhoun expressed a consistent concern with a virtuous citizenry, regarding them as a key factor in the preservation of political stability and looking upon the American electorate as such.

The clearest formulation of the view that Calhoun's republicanism was centered around the mechanization of virtue belongs to J. William Harris, who, similarly to other republican interpretations, downplays the importance of the moral argument in Calhoun's political rhetoric. He contends that, in contrast to late-eighteenth-century Americans, who "continued to be concerned with the importance of virtue in the people, . . . [for] Calhoun . . . virtue is a product of institutional—that is, constitutional—arrangements."[41] Harris develops his argument relying mainly on Calhoun's theoretical writings such as his *A Disquisition on Government*, his major work of political theory finished by 1849,[42] and neglects those utterances such as speeches in which the latter renders the virtue of the people a prerequisite for the maintenance of republican stability. Calhoun's other texts, nonetheless, reveal that he made the existence and reform of democratic institutions dependent on the people, whose moral character therefore did have a crucial role to play for him.

It was during the War of 1812 that Calhoun first made repeated calls for national unity, and his strategy in Congress consisted of questioning the patriotism of those opposing the war. The debate in January 1813 over the new army bill proposing to increase the size of the infantry provided him with an excellent opportunity to present his views.[43] Toward the end of his speech on the bill, Calhoun, in republican fashion, denounces the opposition as a faction whose particular interest is antithetical to that of the nation.[44] With him, the difference has never been greater between private interest and public good, and the harmful tendencies of the anti-war faction can be countered only by reliance on the people: "The evil is deeply rooted in the constitution of all free governments, and is the principal cause of their weakness and destruction. It has but one remedy, *the virtue and intelligence of the people*—it behooves them as they value the blessings of their freedom, not to permit themselves to be drawn into the vortex of party rage."[45] The implications are obvious: for Calhoun, support for the new army bill is in line with the common good. Opposing it would be fatal to the republic; a wise and intelligent electorate should therefore support it.

---

41 Harris, "Last of the Classical Republicans," 264–65; see also Lacy K. Ford, "Recovering the Republic: Calhoun, South Carolina, and the Concurrent Majority," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 89 (1988): 146–59; and Ford, "Republican Ideology," 411.

42 John Niven, *John C. Calhoun and the Price of the Union: A Biography* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 339.

43 *Papers of Calhoun*, 1:150–61.

44 Ibid., 1:160.

45 Ibid., 1:160–61; emphasis added.

In the post-war period Calhoun continued to make frequent appeals to the virtue and intelligence of the people when arguing his case. His ideal of the virtuous people also determined his image of good government in this period: its decisions were to be morally appropriate and wise in order to be acceptable to an intelligent and virtuous electorate. As he declared in 1816,

> The people, I believe, are intelligent and virtuous. . . . The very existence of your government proves their intelligence: for, let me say to this House that, if one who knew nothing of this people were made acquainted with its government and with the fact that it had sustained itself for thirty years, he would know at once that this was a most intelligent and virtuous people. Convince the people that measures are necessary and wise, and they will maintain them.[46]

Owing to their high moral and intellectual standing, the people in Calhoun's discourse are contrasted to parties which are driven by their selfish interests. As he contends, "The people are always ready, unless led astray by ignorance or delusion, to participate in the success of the country, or to sympathize in its adversity."[47]

Calhoun continued expressing his belief in the high moral standing of the people even in 1825, after the making of the "corrupt bargain" resulting in the elevation of John Quincy Adams to the presidency. As he declared in a speech at Abbeville, South Carolina, "From the commencement of my public course to this day, I have under all circumstances been directed by one great leading principle, an entire confidence in the virtue and intelligence of the American people."[48]

The significance of Calhoun's emphasis on the moral and intellectual capacities of the electorate lies partly in the republican assumption that only a people possessing such qualities are capable of perceiving and electing competent magistrates.[49] It also lies partly in the fact

---

[46] Ibid., 1:328–29.

[47] Ibid., 1:160.

[48] Ibid., 10:21; see also Calhoun's letter to Andrew Jackson dated June 4, 1826, ibid., 10:110. This questions the thesis that, after the "corrupt bargain" between Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams which raised the latter into power, Calhoun saw the South as the only place in the Union where virtue had survived: in this regard, he kept referring to the people of the United States in general, making no sectional distinction (cf. Gutzman, "Paul to Jeremiah," esp. 3, 18–19).

[49] In republican thinking, the many are supposed to recognize the talented few, or the natural leaders in the republic. Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 133, 394–95, 515. For the survival of this notion in American political rhetoric see also Thomas Jefferson's oft-cited letter to John Adams (October 28, 1813): "I think the best remedy, [to the political machinations of the pseudo-aristocracy in the American Republic] is exactly that provided by all our constitutions, to leave the citizens the free election and separation of the aristoi from the pseudo-aristoi, of the wheat from the chaff. In general they will elect the really good and wise." See Jefferson, *Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: The Library of America, 1984), 1306; see also ibid. 1309–10. Calhoun's continual praises for the "virtue and intelligence of the people" when addressing national political issues also informed, covertly though, his views on state politics when opposing its further democratization. He argued that in rural South Carolina the electorate could have no proper knowledge of political candidates and would stand a good chance of making the wrong choice. Therefore, for instance, the election of presidential electors could not be entrusted to the popular electorate. See Lacy K. Ford, *Origins*, 287. In such a case, the people could not be virtuous and intelligent enough to choose the most suitable representatives having hardly any knowledge about them.

that in republican thought, elections serve to renew political virtue. As Pocock argues, Machiavelli's concept of *ridurre ai principii,* restoring republican order, informing Harrington's idea of the rotation of office, was viewed as a means to secure the constant renewal of virtue in the republic, achieved through elections.[50]

William W. Freehling maintains that in late 1827 Calhoun privately expressed his doubt about the "wisdom and intelligence" of the people.[51] This assertion is in accordance with previous republican interpretations of Calhoun's political thought, suggesting that it was during the Nullification Controversy that he formulated his state veto doctrine as an institutional substitute for the lost virtue of the people. Even so, textual evidence bears out the presence of the moral argument in his rhetoric in this period, when South Carolina's nullifiers conducted their campaign against the federal tariff laws of 1828 and 1832.

In his "Fort Hill Address,"[52] published on July 26, 1831, in the Pendleton, S.C. *Messenger*, to make known his sentiments supporting the states' rights doctrine, Calhoun makes it clear that he regards state veto as a legitimate means of resisting and containing federal power; yet, he does not advocate its immediate application because of his faith in the people. He argues that "artificial" means of securing liberty and restraining power can be dispensed with only when the people maintain a state of high morals and intelligence, which implies that "every class and every section of the community are capable of estimating the effects of every measure, not only as it may affect itself, but every other class and section."[53]

In this case Calhoun applies the republican tenet that social groups are to wield power respecting the interests of one another, subordinating their own interest to the public good, and that under such conditions a harmony of interests can be achieved without having to rely on institutional arrangements. In other words, he implies that institutional devices for preserving public virtue are unnecessary when the people are virtuous and therefore able to respect the interests of others.

However, he continues, this ideal is no longer met in the American Republic: "I fear experience has already proved that we are far removed from such a state, and that we must consequently rely on the old and clumsy, but approved mode of checking power in order to prevent or correct abuses."[54] Calhoun, then, offers a state veto, or "state interposition," as he preferred to call it, as a means of achieving this aim. Nevertheless, with a somewhat sudden turn, he proposes to postpone the application of state interposition, saying, "[B]ut I do trust that though far from perfect, we are at least so much so as to be capable of remedying the present disorder in the ordinary way," relying on "enlightened public opinion."[55] What Calhoun suggests here is that through the reduction of tariff duties, it is still possible to restore republican normalcy without having to apply the mechanical device of state interposition. In

---

50 Cf. Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 205, 394, 519.

51 William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816–1836* (Harper & Row, 1965; New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 155. Citations refer to the Oxford University Press edition.

52 *Papers of Calhoun*, 11:413–39.

53 Ibid., 11:432.

54 Ibid., 11:433.

55 Ibid.

other words, he contends that the people, although having declined from the original perfect state of their character, are still virtuous and intelligent enough to be relied on to avoid the application of state veto.[56]

Calhoun also employed the moral argument in the wake of President Jackson's willingness to enforce the tariff law in South Carolina, expressed in the President's special message to Congress on January 16, 1833. His speech on the Force Bill, evoked by Jackson's message, delivered on February 15–16, 1833[57] is not a simple reiteration of the nullification doctrine, but rather a diagnosis of the corruption of the republican order, characterized by "the growth of faction, corruption, anarchy," due to "a departure from the fundamental principles of the Constitution." At the same time, Calhoun also assures his audience that "the morals and virtue of the community at large have been advancing in improvement."[58] For him, therefore, the Nullification Crisis and the decline of the republican order have affected the government but not the morality of the people.

In the post-Nullification era, Calhoun preserved his trust in the firm moral standing of the American people and made an appeal to it whenever he perceived signs of the degeneration of republican institutions. For instance, in a speech delivered on April 9, 1834, denouncing in retrospect the Force Bill of the Nullification Crisis and demanding its repeal,[59] he diagnoses corruption and decay, which he attributes to the concentration of power in the the executive branch of the federal government having taken place since the passing of the bill. An alternative explanation could be, he says, the people's "want of sufficient intelligence and virtue for self-government," but then, he immediately adds, if that were truly the case, the republic would be in an irredeemably disastrous situation: "If such be the fact, that our people are indeed incapable of self-government, I know of no people upon earth, with whom we might

---

[56] Lacy K. Ford maintains that Calhoun "like most republicans of the Jeffersonian persuasion had great faith in the good judgment of the people" (Ford, *Origins*, 135n96). Referring to a letter of Calhoun to Duff Green in 1828, Ford presents such an understanding of the people's character in Calhoun's rhetoric with regard to the Nullification Controversy. He suggests that Calhoun attributed the South Carolinians' endorsement of nullification to their sound moral condition. Nonetheless, Ford fails to prove that Calhoun's optimism concerning the moral state of the people, who "will find a remedy for" the tariff law of 1828 (ibid.) was a reference to their willingness to nullify it. Instead, it seems more reasonable to argue that since he was still hopeful of achieving a change of administration as a result of the upcoming election at the end of 1828, what Calhoun meant was that the people would elect the Democrats into power, who would, then, repeal the tariff law. With their prospective victory in mind he still believed that South Carolina would not have to apply state veto as a "remedy." See Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 157; Charles M. Wiltse, *John C. Calhoun: Nationalist, 1782–1828* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1944), 374, 379. Hence Ford's implication about Calhoun's trust in an electorate which is virtuous because of endorsing nullification is not tenable. Instead, it seems more reasonable to argue that Calhoun held the people to be virtuous and intelligent because, in his eyes, they were capable of changing the course of political events by making the correct choice—that is, voting Democrat—in the upcoming election. Bearing in mind the possibility of appeal to a sympathetic audience, he really hoped to avoid arguing that the electorate no longer possessed the intelligence and virtue and hence was in need of institutional means to substitute for public virtue. Moreover, the upcoming election of 1832 promised a chance to reduce tariff duties. Calhoun tended to emphasize the virtuous character of the American citizenry, mostly with their electoral capacity in his mind, that is, their power to replace magistrates.

[57] *Papers of Calhoun*, 12:45–93.

[58] Ibid., 12:86.

[59] Ibid., 12:277–98.

not desire to change condition. When the day comes, when this people shall be compelled to surrender self-government . . . it will be indeed a day of revolution, of convulsion and blood, such as has rarely, if ever, been witnessed in any age or country."[60]

Later in the speech, trying to dispel worries about the sound character of the people, he concludes that Andrew Jackson's reelection as president in 1832 had hardly anything to do with the corruption of a wise electorate and explains that the president "retained his power among an intelligent and patriotic people," and that his success was a result of the "working of the system."[61]

From the mid—1830s on, Calhoun did, in fact, voice anxieties about the state of the character of the people. One possible source of such corruption for him was executive patronage or the spoils system, President Jackson's policy of providing his followers with government offices. As he argued in 1836, that practice would even be a cause of the corruption of the character of the people, applying the republican tenet that once the people of the republic have become corrupt, their virtue cannot be restored: "Piracy, robbery, and violence, of any description, may, as history proves, be followed by virtue, patriotism, and national greatness; but where is the example to be found, of a degenerate, corrupt, and subservient people, who have ever recovered their virtue and patriotism? Their doom has ever been the lowest state of wretchedness and misery; scorned, trodden down, and obliterated forever from the list of nations."[62]

Calhoun's understanding of the people's character and its liability to change can be explained by the important distinction between man's "first nature," referring to man's essence in the abstract, and his second nature, expressing man's identity or the "genius" of a people acquired through social custom.[63] Republican self-government requires a high level of virtue and intelligence, which was a result of development and civilization and also prone to degeneration. In republican terms, then, Calhoun also suggested that the second nature of the people had the tendency to undergo some transformation with the concomitant change of the loss of self-government. Diminishing virtue and intelligence were bound to result in the end of republican government due to change in the second nature of the people unless some other means was found to secure it.

With the rise of the abolitionist movement and the growing sectional divisions, Calhoun made diminishing reference to a wise and virtuous electorate, hoping for their votes in defense of Southern interests. Yet, from time to time, he did voice his belief in a virtuous and intelligent people as a prerequisite to changes necessary to evoke in the political system and return the republic to the right track. In 1840, for instance, he refused to put down the current vices of the system to the departure from the original principles to "the want of sufficient patriotism and intelligence in the people for self government."[64]

---

60 Ibid., 12:285.

61 Ibid., 12:287.

62 Ibid., 13:229.

63 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 25, 85.

64 *Papers of Calhoun*, 15:281–82.

Moreover, even when employing different terms for the virtue and intelligence of the people, he repeatedly expressed his hope in an electorate capable of making judicious decisions for the public good. In 1844, for instance, when arguing against electing Henry Clay as President because of Clay's opposition of the admission of Texas, Calhoun pointed out that Clay's unwillingness would allow the expansion of Britain on the American continent. "I trust," he claimed, "the good sense and patriotism of the American people, by defeating Mr. Clay & electing Mr. Polk will avert the danger & disasters to which the madness of faction has exposed both countries [i.e. Britain and the USA]."[65]

By the end of his life, Calhoun felt the sectional division was becoming far too deep to permit him to talk about a wise electorate prepared to use its voting power to make a virtuous decision, harmless to the South. With the reformulation of political parties on a sectional basis, in his view elections could no longer serve to guarantee the renewal of republican virtue.[66] His attention became increasingly focused on constitutional measures, institutional means of mechanizing virtue in the American republic. Calhoun's concept of the government of the concurrent majority, fully developed in his *Disquisition,* was intended to be such a constitutional device. Nevertheless, even there, the moral character of the people is still a concern for him: the importance of the government of the concurrent majority, in part, lies in the fact that it has the capacity not only to substitute for the lost virtue of a corrupt people as an institutional device but also to restore it. Arguing for the beneficial effect of the government of the concurrent majority, Calhoun claims in the *Disquisition*, "So powerful, indeed, is the operation of the concurrent majority . . . that, if it were possible for a corrupt and degenerate community to establish and maintain a well-organized government of the kind, it would of itself *purify and regenerate* them."[67]

In identifying the people as sufficiently virtuous and intelligent, Calhoun fused two lines of early modern republican rhetorical strains: one emphasizing the virtue of the many, the other the prudence of the few as represented by Renaissance Florentine political theorist Francesco Guicciardini. Machiavelli's preference for the popular element in government was coupled with his constructing the people as virtuous—mainly due to their military virtue (cf. *popolo armata*). In contrast to the democratic element, Guicciardini, champion of the Florentine elite, gave primacy to the aristocratic element, which employed its wisdom or prudence in order to meet the challenges of *fortuna*.[68] In other words, through Calhoun's idiom, the people or many also came to manifest a virtue of the aristocracy.

During most of his career, then, the moral character of the people, a guarantee for political virtue and hence republican stability, was a permanent preoccupation for Calhoun, and

---

65 Ibid., 19:632.

66 In June 1848, he did not refer to the people of the United States as one virtuous and intelligent body but rather placed his hope in "the patriotic and intelligent in every quarter" (ibid., 25:533).

67 *Disquisition*, 39 (emphasis added). Harris himself quotes this passage without being aware of Calhoun's emphasis on the idea of *transformation* instead of *substitution*, that the doctrine was meant to restore the virtue of the citizenry instead of substituting for it (see Harris, "Last of the Classical Republicans," 265). Guy Story Brown also points out such a regenerative impact of the government of the concurrent majority (Brown, *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics*, 214; see also Cheek, *Calhoun and Popular Rule*, 58, 158).

68 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 238, 252.

in view of this, he can be rightly considered an heir to the Machiavellian-Harringtonian tradition. Even with his proposed shift to institutional devices through his advocacy of the concurrent majority, he did not mean to substitute for the people's virtue but to regenerate it.[69] Calhoun's insistence on the people's virtue testifies to his consistent appeal to a nationwide audience and to his attempts to be part of a national discourse outside any peculiar kind of regionalism.

In addition to turning to institutional devices when perceiving moral decadence in the people, in his early national period, Calhoun evoked military virtue as a means of preventing the deterioration of public virtue, of preserving the virtue and patriotism of the people.

MILITARY VIRTUE IN CALHOUN'S REPUBLICANISM

An important line of argument in Pocock's construction of republicanism pertains to the concept of the citizen soldier, an ideal involving the fusion of military and political virtue. Pocock has shown that, with a varying degree of emphasis, this ideal functioned as an important component of civic humanist thought. From Leonardo Bruni and Niccolo Machiavelli of Renaissance Florence through Harrington and eighteenth-century British opposition politicians, it was held that for its defense, the ideal republic was to rely on its own citizens, who alternated their involvement in fighting with participation in political life.[70] The antithesis of the citizen soldier was embodied by the mercenary or paid soldier, possessing no such virtue.

This model also emphasized the role of the citizen army in sustaining republican order: in addition to being a soldier, the citizen of the republic practices his active virtue by being part of the republic that he fights for. He is virtuous because in defending his own liberty he also defends the liberty of the whole, thereby serving the common good. Machiavelli had no reverence for the peaceful stability of Venice achieved at the expense of its people having lost their virtue and liberty. The citizens' duty to bear arms in defense of themselves and the republic had been taken over by mercenaries, that is, full-time paid soldiers whose interest

---

[69] Calhoun's continual references to a virtuous and intelligent people do not seem to bear out the generalizing contention that he "displayed a strong skepticism about the virtue of a majority of the citizenry." See Manisha Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 26. The obvious reason for Calhoun not to discard the Anti-Federalist reverence for a virtuous electorate and fully to embrace the Federalist alternative of mechanizing virtue possibly had to do with the unfavorable reception of both South Carolina's state veto in 1832 and his concept of the concurrent majority. This might also account for the fact that although from Nullification onward the mechanization of virtue did appear in his vision, the Roman ideal of the virtuous people did not vanish from his republicanism. Calhoun's support for the broadening of the boundaries of political citizenship in South Carolina in the form of the extension of the suffrage to propertyless white adult males in 1810, indicating his advocacy of democratization also bears out his emphasis on a virtuous people. See *Papers of Calhoun*, 16:499–500; and also Lacy K. Ford, "Republics and Democracy: The Parameters of Politcal Citizenship in Antebellum South Carolina," in *The Meaning of South Carolina History: Essays in Honor of George C. Rogers, Jr.*, ed. David R. Chesnutt and Clyde N. Wilson (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 125–26, 128. (Calhoun, wrongly, associated the extension of suffrage with the Compromise of 1808.)

[70] See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, esp. 89–90; 124–25; 199–201; 385–86 and 410.

was not necessarily identical with that of the republic, and hence could be employed to destroy republican liberty for material gains.[71]

Once the people decided to give up their arms and thus their capacity and duty to defend their republic and their liberties—whether in Machiavelli's Rome or in Harrington's "Gothic" England, prior to the coming of the Tudors[72]—they lost their military *virtù* and excluded themselves from political decision-making. Their military duty was taken over by the professional regular army. Pocock points out that British Neo-Harringtonians were preoccupied with the problem of standing armies paid and sustained by the state, which they contrasted to the virtuous militia and interpreted as a sign of corruption. Of early-eighteenth-century Neo-Harringtonians it was Andrew Fletcher who provided the most systematic articulation of anxiety over the emergence of standing armies. He connected their appearance with professional specialization in the early modern period. For him, the end of the Gothic age equaled the end of the citizen warrior leading a simple and frugal life. The modern age brought about the accumulation of knowledge, luxury, and refinement characteristic of the Renaissance man, the hero of the new era, who, at the same time, started to hire others to have his own liberty defended.[73]

By the same token, concern about standing armies became a constant idiom in the vocabulary of American colonists at the time of the Revolution.[74] Moreover, early-nineteenth-century Americans also drew upon the opposing concepts of the militia and standing armies when they strove to account for Andrew Jackson's victory over the British "standing army" at New Orleans in January 1815. In Pocock's reading, according to the explanation of patriotic Americans, the mythical Kentucky riflemen were able to win the battle because they represented the virtuous citizen army consisting of independent yeoman farmers, successful in their effort to defend their liberty against a corrupt British standing army. The former, as the myth went, aided by some "natural and popular energy," overwhelmed the "training, experience, and intellect" embodied by the British.[75]

The issue of the citizen army first became relevant for Calhoun during the War of 1812. Similarly to the previously mentioned proponents of military virtue, he linked the main-

---

71 Ibid., 197–201.

72 Ibid., 211–12; 388.

73 Ibid., 411, 430–31. A similar analysis of the effects of refinement and culture on specialization and transformation of the military organization was given by Adam Ferguson (ibid., 499–500). For a positive assessment of the rise of the professional army in Britain as an expression of growing specialization and complexity of society as well as an answer to the military challenges of the modern world, see Lawrence Delbert Cress, *Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 25–32. Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 434.

74 Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, 61–63, 112–14.

75 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 536. John William Ward, whose analysis Pocock draws upon on this point, has demonstrated the gap between fact and fiction concerning the event. According to his analysis, Andrew Jackson's success at New Orleans had very little to do with the marksmanship of the Kentucky riflemen. Instead, several other factors, such as cannon fire and other units of U.S. troops, made a greater contribution to the American victory. See John William Ward, *Andrew Jackson—Symbol for an Age* (1953; New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 13–29, esp. 21, 26. Citations are to the Oxford University Press edition.

tenance of civic virtue with the holding of arms and saw the citizen army as a means to sustain or, if necessary, revive virtue and patriotism in the Republic.

Persisting naval and commercial hostilities between the United States and Britain at the beginning of the second decade of the nineteenth century prepared the ground for open military confrontation. The American attitude gradually came to be controlled by the War Hawks, young representatives from the western regions of the country who, in defense of their country's honor and trading interests, advocated massive military development in preparation for an impending collision. They labored hard to achieve the transformation of a peacetime army and navy into a more efficient defense force through a series of resolutions which they introduced in late 1811. These included swelling the ranks of the regular army from the existing 2,765 to 10,000 troops, raising an additional force of 25,000, authorizing the use of militia, and reinforcing the navy by building new frigates and arming commercial ships.[76]

Responding to the most active antiwar advocate, John Randolph of Virginia, who objected to the resolution to increase the size of the regular army, Calhoun took the floor on December 12, 1811, with the aim of dispelling doubts about the expediency of the proposed measure.[77] As he argues in the speech, a regular army of the citizens of the republic poses no danger to liberty; on the contrary, such an army, in fact, tends to contribute to its security. In his argumentation he draws upon the Machiavellian tradition of fusing military and civic virtue praising the ideal of the citizen soldier in the USA: "The ardent patriotism of our young men, and the reasonable bounty in land, which is proposed to be given, will impel them to join their country's standard and to fight her battles; they will not forget the *citizen in the soldier*, and in obeying their officer, learn to contemn their Constitution."[78]

Employing republican language, too, Calhoun then counters Randolph's charges about attempts to establish a standing army in America by pointing out that the additional troops to be raised would have their roots in the citizen body. His praise for the regular army of the citizens echoes the Federalists' earlier defense of the regular army of the Republic: since it draws its members from the people, it cannot be an equivalent of European standing armies designed to "keep the people in slavery."[79] Furthermore, it proves to be more efficient since, as Calhoun describes the proposed citizen army, "their untaught bravery is sufficient to crush all foreign and internal attempts on their country's liberties."[80]

Despite the successful performance that the general public associated with the milita, mainly as a result of the US victory at New Orleans, the War of 1815 testified to its low efficiency in the US war effort. Lack of organization, low morale, poor discipline and failure

---

76 See Wiltse, *Calhoun: Nationalist*, 55–62.

77 *Papers of Calhoun*, 1:75–85.

78 Ibid., 1:81; emphasis added.

79 Words quoted in Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, 355; See also Madison, Hamilton and Jay, *Federalist Papers*, 113–18.

80 *Papers of Calhoun*, 1:81. Although arguing for a shift toward a professional army, Calhoun was, indeed, using republican rhetoric derived from the militia ideal, to argue his case. Cf. Michael O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810–1860*, vol. 2. (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 927.

of the federal government to coordinate uniformly characterized the militia before, during and after the War of 1812. Attempts to improve efficiency and organization, however, were aborted, and militias could not become the basis of a centralized national army mainly for fear of the federal government's employing them against the people's liberty.[81] At the same time, growing understanding of the deficiency of the militia system as a defense force contributed to its erosion as a military ideal after the War of 1812 and resulted in increasing support for the professionalization of the army.[82]

Although Calhoun saw military virtue as a factor in the cultivation of the general republican virtue of the people, which he regarded as ultimate, he was aware of these problems and had a leading role to play in the actual as well as conceptual shift from a citizens' army of wartime to a regular (standing) army of citizens. He was instrumental in the process of combining the standing army principle with the militia: a regular citizen army at the time of peace, seemed to possess the military virtue connected with the citizen.

The War of 1812, besides highlighting problems with US military organization, also resulted in a surge of nationalism, the effects of which could be felt well after the peace treaty of Ghent. The proliferating voices in Congress demanding an intensive development of domestic industry and the military included that of Calhoun. As a member of the House of Representatives and Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Relations, he contributed a speech in support of maintaining the direct tax, a measure introduced during the war, again in response to John Randolph's attack.[83] A substantial part of the speech, which he delivered on January 31, 1816, was devoted to the problem of military virtue, as a basic component of the people's patriotism.

Calhoun's major claim in the speech consists in the argument that national defense is to be developed in preparation for another potential military confrontation with Britain. One of the first measures to be taken in this regard, he maintains, should be to reinforce the navy, since, in the first place, doing so would not require such a grave financial sacrifice on the part of the nation, and, in the second, the navy would be the safest part of the military to develop.[84]

In arguing this second point, Calhoun employs Neo-Harringtonian language, more specifically, argumentation developed by advocates of Britain's naval expansion in the late seventeenth century. One of these advocates, Charles Davenant, for instance, emphasized that the importance of the navy lay not only in destroying the trade of rival nations such as France or Spain, but also in the idea that seamen cannot pose as great a threat to the liberty of Britain as a standing landed army can. Hence, of all the branches of the army, Davenant considered

---

81 C. Edward Skeen, *Citizens Soldiers in the War of 1812* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 2–3, 7–8, 38, chapter 3. Leonard D. White argues that the bulk of the problem in creating efficient militias was rooted in the fact that powers over them were divided between federal and state governments, thereby frustrating any effort at uniform and efficient action. See White, *The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1801–1829* (The Macmillan Company, 1951; New York: The Free Press; London: Collier-Macmillan, 1965), 529, 535. Citations are to the Free Press–Collier-Macmillan edition; see also Skeen, *Citizen Soldiers*, 5.

82 Skeen, *Citizen Soldiers*, 178, 184.

83 *Papers of Calhoun*, 1:316–330.

84 Ibid., 1:323–324.

the navy the least likely to be used against the liberty of the republic.[85] Calhoun argues in a similar fashion: "We have heard much of the danger of standing armies to our liberties—the objection cannot be made to the navy. Generals, it must be acknowledged, have often advanced at the head of armies to imperial rank and power; but in what instance had an admiral usurped the liberties of his country? Put our strength in the navy for foreign defence, [*sic*] and we shall certainly escape the whole catalogue of possible ills."[86]

The next measure that Calhoun proposes in the speech is the extension of the time of militia service for American citizens to allow them enough time for training, thus increasing their efficiency as soldiers.[87] He argues for the maintenance of a permanent landed army of the citizens, regularly drafted in defense of the Republic, and contrasts this way of organizing a national army to the recruitment of soldiers solely for the time of war. A permanent citizen army, he points out, would help preserve the spirit of patriotism and military, as well as civic virtue. Opting for the militia alternative, by contrast, would have fatal consequences for the security of the country:

> Thus compounded our army, in a great degree, lose that enthusiasm which citizen-soldiers, conscious of liberty, and fighting in defence of their country, have ever been animated.
>
> All the free nations of antiquity entrusted the defence [*sic*] of the country, not to the dregs of society, but to the body of its citizens; hence that heroism which modern times may admire but cannot equal.[88]

The exercise of military virtue is a prerequisite for the preservation of liberty in a Republic. For Calhoun, therefore, the unwillingness of the citizen to participate in regular military service is a sign of the decline of military virtue and hence the beginning of the general corruption of public virtue. The ultimate cause of that decline is the appearance of luxury, the pursuit of particular interests and the consequent decline of patriotism. Such a decline of virtue, on the other hand, necessitates measures ultimately fatal to the liberty of the citizens. As Calhoun warns, "Large standing and mercenary armies then become necessary; and those who are not willing to render the military service essential to the defence of their rights, soon find, as they ought to do, a master."[89]

Such a line of argument by Calhoun resounded with the major tenet of republican writers such as the above-mentioned Fletcher, namely that with the growth of material wealth, refinement and specialization the citizen becomes increasingly reluctant to take arms and practice his military virtue. He begins to hire others to defend his liberty and thus loses his independence. At the same time, Calhoun also seems to follow the Neo-Harringtonian re-

---

85 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 442.

86 *Papers of Calhoun*, 1:322.

87 Ibid., 1:324.

88 Ibid., 1:324–25.

89 Ibid., 1:325. On the linkage of military virtue and civic virtue in Calhoun's rhetoric, see also ibid., 1:289.

publican argument when claiming that military training for the citizens can promote the cultivation of civic virtue as well and thus forms the basis of their patriotism.[90]

By emphasizing the virtuous nature of a peacetime regular army consisting of citizen soldiers, Calhoun also attempted to dissipate republican fears attached to the image of a corrupt government coercing citizens to serve in the army. From 1818 onwards, however, he abandoned his plan to establish and maintain a peacetime militia, due to the nation's reluctance to finance a military of wartime size. Hence the regular army he advocated designing would mainly consist of officers but ready to be expanded when war came. By the 1820s, then, Calhoun had moved away from the idea of a virtuous peacetime militia in order to embrace and advocate a small-sized, professional army.[91] He was ready to point out in 1820, for instance, that "Not all the zeal, courage and patriotism of our militia, unsupported by regularly trained and disciplined troops, can avert [dangers to the Republic in peace time]." His concern was no longer with virtue but with officers' and soldiers' pay, rationing, and creating a standing army of professional soldiers.[92]

In this way, Calhoun played a decisive role in generating a conceptual change in the language of the republican citizen army by establishing an intermediary stage in the shift to a regular professional army in the United States.[93] At the same time, in a wise and gradual manner, he steered the shift from the wartime militia to a permanent standing army as a desirable ideal. In 1818, for instance, he still praised the militia for its role in national defense, yet belittled the danger that a regular army might pose to republican liberty. As he argued, "our ultimate reliance for defense, ought to be on the militia. Its most zealous advocate must, however, acknowledge, that a standing army, to a limitted [*sic*] extent, is necessary." Furthermore, since the standing army of the United States was not concentrated in one small area but was spread out, he assured, there was no such danger.[94]

The concept of military virtue, then, formed an important component of Calhoun's republican vocabulary during his nationalist period. He, in Machiavellian fashion, linked it with civic virtue and saw it as a condition for the maintenance of liberty in the Republic. At the same time, he also built on the national tradition and employed Federalist rhetoric when he strove to dissipate fears over developing a regular army of the Republic for the time of peace.

---

90 See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 432.

91 Cress, *Citizens in Arms*, 173, 174–75, 176.

92 December 12, 1820, in *Papers of Calhoun*, 5:482; ibid., 3:374–86; and ibid., 5:480–90. C. Edward Skeen demonstrates how political strife within the Republican party served as a background to the debate over the reduction of the size of the army in 1818–21, in which Calhoun argued for reducing the number of privates instead of the officer corps, thereby allowing Crawfordites to accuse his plan, in the republican manner, of supporting the standing army principle. They intended to employ the issue to discredit Calhoun as a viable political rival in the next election. C. Edward Skeen, "Calhoun, Crawford, and the Politics of Retrenchment," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 73 (1972), 141–55.

93 As Secretary of War (1817–1825), Calhoun played a decisive and positive role in reorganizing the army, doing a great service to national defense, as widely acknowledged by his contemporaries. See White, *The Jeffersonians*, 246–50.

94 *Papers of Calhoun*, 3:347. Moreover, as late as 1841, with regard to the settlement of public lands, he was still ready to use the language of the citizen soldier, when he argued for relying on the military capacities of "small freeholders, . . . the class that would furnish the hardiest and best soldiers" (ibid., 15:435).

Since this army was to consist of citizen soldiers, it was not to be seen as the equivalent of corrupt, state-employed standing armies of earlier times. Calhoun's preoccupation with the defense of the republic, however, also became manifest through his efforts to find other means of securing virtue, including various ways of mechanizing it.

CALHOUN AND THE MECHANIZATION OF VIRTUE

In spite of his persistent references to a virtuous people as the bedrock of republican order, Calhoun was familiar with and utilized important registers of the institutionalization of virtue in his rhetoric, more than pointed out by existing scholarship. He saw the need for the mechanization of virtue in modern society as a consequence of progress and civilization, resulting in an increase in the number of interests, which were to be managed by governmental means.[95]

Scholars analyzing Calhoun's concern with republican virtue and his attempt to mechanize it have largely focused on his doctrine of state veto of federal acts and his concept of the government of the concurrent majority.[96] Based on the principle of strict constructionism limiting the powers of the federal government to those explicitly granted by the federal Constitution, Calhoun's doctrine of state veto, formulated at the time of the Nullification Crisis of 1828–1833, vindicated the right of individual states, by virtue of their sovereignty, to judge the constitutionality of federal acts. According to this principle, a single state has the power to nullify a federal act, that is, to declare it null and void within its domain on account of its being against the constitution.

At the core of Calhoun's theory of the government of the concurrent majority is the principle that the major interests of society are to have veto power over each other's political decisions, which, consequently, are made on a consensual basis, excluding legislation harmful to their interests. In this way, minority rights could be protected on the level of national politics, since instead of the rule of the numerical majority, the minority was to be provided with an equal share of power in political decision-making. Calhoun offered these doctrines as a means of mechanizing virtue and in elaborating on them, he appropriated strains of the republican paradigm. This element has been missed by existing scholarship.

Since the fullest explication of the mechanization of virtue by Calhoun can be found in his *Disquisition*, I now turn to this text. In his analysis of the *Disquisition*, J. William Harris argues that Calhoun's republicanism originated in Renaissance Italian republicanism as interpreted by Pocock.[97] Harris's contention, nevertheless, needs to be qualified as to his understanding of the republican tradition; his interpretation of the *Disquisition* misses several crucial points with regard to Calhoun's ideas about the mechanization of virtue through the concurrent majority.

---

95 *Disquisition*, 15–16, 30–31.

96 See Harris, "Last of the Classical Republicans;" Harp, "Taylor, Calhoun, and Decline;" Ford, "Republican Ideology;" Ford, "Recovering the Republic;" and Ford, "Inventing the Concurrent Majority."

97 Harris, "Last of the Classical Republicans."

Drawing upon Pocock, Harris associates Calhoun's republicanism with notions and ideals constituting the "myth of Venice," which enjoyed widespread popularity in Renaissance Italy.[98] In doing so, however, Harris ignores a crucial distinction that Pocock makes between two strains of contemporary political thought. One of them is the Machiavellian tradition, placing emphasis on active *virtù* as the key to the survival of the republic, with the ancient Roman republic and the "new prince" as its ideal repositories. The other strain concerned itself with passive virtue or prudence, a trait attributed to the few (the *ottimati*, that is, aristocrats in Renaissance Florence), characteristic of the model championed by such contemporary Florentine thinkers as Guicciardini. It was the advocates of the latter variety of republicanism that turned to the myth of Venice, finding the perfect embodiment of republican government in the Venetian mixed constitution, where stability was seen as the result of an institutional arrangement ultimately based on the virtue of the local aristocracy.[99]

Inasmuch as he considers Calhoun's concept of the concurrent majority a mid-nineteenth-century American attempt at the mechanization of political virtue in the Venetian fashion, Harris's reading of Pocock and the Florentine tradition leaves Calhoun's appropriation of the original republican language in the *Disquisition* unexplained. Significantly, Calhoun makes no reference, explicit or implicit, to the government of Renaissance Venice as a precursory model of his concurrent majority or as the ideal way of ensuring political virtue by constitutional means. Instead, for him, it is the republic of ancient Rome that serves as the exemplary government of the concurrent majority.[100]

Considering his choice of a political ideal, then, Calhoun is closer to Machiavelli than to Guicciardini, the latter preferring the Venice of political stability to the active Rome of permanent conflict and expansion.[101] Moreover, in a vein similar to Machiavelli, Calhoun also links the birth of the ideal Roman system with the establishment of the tribunate. For him, the plebeians used their veto power in order to bring the political power of the patricians under control, thereby putting the principle of concurrent majority into practice.[102] Thus, Rome becomes a model for Calhoun for the same reason that Guicciardini or other Florentine *ottimati* regarded Venice as their ideal: because of its stability based on mechanized virtue.

Nevertheless, the causes of that stability are different in each case. While Florentines saw the roots of stability in the one, the few, and the many as being represented in the Venetian government, for Calhoun, the stability of the Roman mixed constitution is based on the balance of the few and the many, the two politically significant social groups of the ancient republic. It was through lifting the few into government by means of the tribunate that the Roman system got reinforced. According to Calhoun, "The [Roman] government was, indeed, powerfully constituted; and, apparently, well proportioned both in its positive and negative

---

98 Ibid., 265–66. According to the myth of Venice, the government of the Venetian city state was exceptionally stable due to its mixed nature based on the participatory principle: it incorporated each element of society—the one, the few and the many, creating a perfect balance among them (see Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 102).

99 See ibid., chaps. 7–8; and above.

100 *Disquisition*, 59–62.

101 See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, ch. 8, esp. 241, 246.

102 *Disquisition*, 60; Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 194–96.

organs. It was truly an iron government. Without the tribunate, it proved to be one of the most oppressive and cruel that ever existed; but with it, one of the strongest and best."[103]

Calhoun, then, in his praise for the Roman tribunate as an antecedent of his concurrent majority, places emphasis on the role of the popular element, that is, the plebeians, who insured the stability of the constitution of the ancient Republic. This suggestion is, nonetheless, in contrast to Guicciardini's and other Renaissance Florentine *ottimati*'s desire to attribute the success and stability of the Venetian mixed government to the virtues of the participating aristocracy.[104] At the same time, Calhoun's republican ideal differs from Machiavelli's, too, because, although the latter regards the plebeians, that is, the many as the key to Rome's success, he does this on grounds different from the ones presented in the *Disquisition*: Machiavelli does not emphasize the role of the plebeians in achieving social harmony in the Roman republic; instead, he highlights the ongoing conflict between the few and the many, attributing the longevity of the Roman system to external expansion in which the military *virtù* of the armed plebeians had a crucial part to play.[105]

In the *Disquisition*, Calhoun also draws upon another strain of republicanism to persuade his readers of the viability of his concept of the concurrent majority as a means of mechanizing virtue: he finds the British mixed constitution, supposedly based on that concept, a living model of perfect government.[106] Similar to the proponents of the English mixed constitution, Calhoun assigns a prominent role to the Lords in keeping the balance of the system: it functions as a filter between the King and the Commons in Parliament. For him, the Lords is essential to the balance existing between the "tax-consuming interest"—the monarch—and the "taxpaying interest"—the people—because they can prevent the latter two from initiating a deadly conflict. The Lords has a stake in keeping the equilibrium since the victory of either interest over the other would weaken their position in the government.[107]

In comparing the Roman republic and the British mixed constitution, Calhoun points out that their fates were affected differently by conquest: while Rome's decline can be attributed to territorial expansion, Britain has succeeded in expanding its territory without having impaired the stability of its political system. He argues that the reasons for the latter's defiance of corruption rooted in expansion lie in its hereditary executive, which prevents the emergence of political factions and results in its "conservative" character.[108] Paradoxically enough, while patronage, as Calhoun argues, was the main cause of Rome's fall, in the British system, it has a tendency to contribute to its stability. His implication is that, by means of patronage,

---

103 *Disquisition*, 62.

104 See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 254–55.

105 See ibid., 194, 198–99.

106 Calhoun, *Disquisition*, 58

107 Ibid., 64–65. Cf. the language of the *Answer to the Nineteen Propositions*: "And the Lords, being trusted with a judicatory power, are an excellent screen and bank between the prince and people, to assist each against any encroachments of the other[s], and by just judgements to preserve that law which ought to be the rule of every one of the three" (quoted in Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 363–64).

108 *Disquisition*, 66–67. In republican thought, political factions, as representing private, selfish interests, posed a danger to the public good (Howe, "Republican Thought," 158–59; see also Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, 58–59).

the conservative element of the British government—the Lords—is reinforced and, consequently, can exert a greater and, in his view, beneficial impact on the stability of the whole system. The expanding Roman republic lacked both these features, and it was unable to avoid corruption through patronage and factions. Britain, however, Calhoun maintains, is capable of increasing its domain almost infinitely within the limits imposed by the people's tolerance of the increase of the burden of taxation, the main financial resource for its maintenance.[109] Thus the British government has "a greater capacity of holding under subjection extensive dominions, without subverting the constitution or destroying liberty, than has ever been possessed by any other."[110]

Calhoun's argument about the special features of the British constitution offers links with further strains of republicanism surfacing in his *Disquisition*. His positive evaluation of patronage in connection with the British government echoes eighteenth-century Court praises for the system in the face of Country attacks.[111] Court representatives, such as moral philosopher David Hume, argued that influence by the Crown through the device of patronage was an indispensable element of British constitutional stability. It functioned to work toward a unity of interest within government amidst the one, the few, and the many, even though, admittedly, constricting liberty.[112]

By stating that the stability of Britain, mainly derived from its mixed constitution, makes it suitable for expansion, Calhoun also follows James Harrington, who fuses the stability of the Venetian mixed constitution with Rome's capacity for expansion.[113] Yet, while Harrington finds the key to that special blend in the virtue of the many, the citizen soldiers of Oceana, Calhoun emphasizes the importance of the constitutional checks exerted by the three estates of the British government over one another.

In his own version of the republican language presented in the *Disquisition*, then, Calhoun—similarly to Machiavelli—sets the example of Rome as the model republic. Nonetheless, in contrast to the latter, who focuses on the active *virtù* of the armed Roman plebeians and Roman instability, Calhoun lays emphasis on Rome's harmony and stability, which he attributes to its mixed government. Thus, by means of his principle of the concurrent majority, he does speak the republican idiom of the mechanization of virtue in connection with

---

109 *Disquisition*, 67.

110 Ibid.

111 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 481, 495. Calhoun's leaning toward the British Court's attitude to patronage can be explained by the fact that his major source on Britain and its history is provided by Hume (See Brown, *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics*, 156). Nevertheless, it has to be added that, for Calhoun, patronage as such does not feature as a positive phenomenon in the American Republic, only in the peculiar context of the British system of government that worked, in his eyes, according to the doctrine of the concurrent majority.

112 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 494–95. On the relevance of the Country-Court dichotomy to the understanding of political debates in the early Republic involving Federalists and Anti-Federalists on the one hand, and Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans on the other, see James H. Hutson, "Country, Court, and Constitution: Antifederalism and the Historians," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 38 (1981), 337–68; Banning, *Jeffersonian Persuasion*, 92–302; and John M. Murrin, "The Great Inversion, or Court versus Country: A Comparison of the Revolution Settlements in England (1688–1721) and America (1776–1816)," in *Three British Revolutions: 1641, 1688, 1776*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), 368–453.

113 Pocock reads Harrington on this as follows: "Oceana was to be a Rome in respect of unlimited expansion, [while] a Venice in respect of perpetual stability, liberty, and virtue" (Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 393).

Rome, but in doing so he, in fact, "venetianizes" the ancient republic. For him, unlike for the Renaissance admirers of Venice, the Roman republic did not fall because of the constant strife between its plebeians and patricians; on the contrary, in his interpretation, it appears as a system whose stability is comparable to that of the Venice in the Florentine *ottimati*'s vision.

At the same time, according to Calhoun's republican argumentation, the Roman republic's failure to survive was due to the fact that its "concurrent majority" had not been designed to tackle the problem of corruption emerging as a result of expansion; expansion is better dealt with by Britain, whose mixed constitution makes it stable and thus suitable to conquer and possess other territories. Apparently, that stability, for Calhoun, does not lie, as it did for Harrington, in the (military) virtue of the many, but rather in the balance of the three estates with special emphasis on the "conservative department" of the Lords. Their amplified role in Calhoun's image of the British mixed constitution makes them occupy as important a place in it as they did in the Neo-Harringtonian version of British history in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[114]

Given the democratic sentiments of contemporary America, Calhoun's employment of the Roman ideal with its focus on the popular element, the many, seemed an appropriate choice: he modified the Florentine republican language in a way that made the Roman tribunate the exemplifying locus of the mechanization of virtue. Yet, ironically, he also drew upon the more aristocratic, Neo-Harringtonian version of English republicanism when depicting the English system as balanced by the Lords.

In Pocock's reading, it is when the people have lost virtue that Machiavelli's new prince, relying on his own *virtù,* takes over. The rule of the many is then replaced by the rule of the one.[115] For Calhoun, in the case of Rome and Britain, the mechanization of virtue was an alternative to a declining republic with no virtuous people to rely on. Mechanization was a way to avoid despotic rule—although not the only one: Calhoun also offered the slave-holding South as a conservative force in the republican system of balance of powers.

THE VIRTUE OF THE SOUTH

An important variety of mechanizing virtue in Calhoun's thought concerns the South and its capacity to ensure virtue in the Union. Interestingly, such a vision of the South enabled Calhoun to fuse the two strains of republican language, that is, evocation of a virtuous people and the mechanization of virtue. In Calhoun's system, the South functions as a means of mechanizing virtue in the Republic at the federal level, resulting in republican harmony through its balancing force, in an artificial way. However, it is capable of achieving this only because it itself is constructed so that it epitomizes non-mechanical virtue, with its unity and

---

[114] Neo-Harringtonianism emphasized the decline of the "Ancient Constitution" of England, regarding English history after "Gothic" medieval times as permanent degeneration, at the same time focusing on the aristocracy as a key element in the political structure of the country. See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment,* 415–17.

[115] Ibid., 156, 157, 161.

homogeneity of interest, a prerequisite of stability resting on a virtuous people. It is basically the North that needs virtue mechanized by the virtuous South.

In pointing out the significance of space in republican thought, Pocock argues on the basis of Henry Nash Smith's analysis[116] that American followers of the republican tradition looked upon the West not simply as a reservoir of free land but also as a source of civic virtue. In their eyes, the frontier provided an infinite supply of free land to sustain an increasing number of freeholding farmers, whom they regarded as the bulwark of the Jeffersonian and later the Jacksonian vision of the American republic. At the same time, Pocock, curiously enough, fails to consider another significant ideal, briefly discussed by Smith, also significant in antebellum America, namely the Southern plantation relying on black slave labor for its basic work force.[117] Especially from the 1830s on, this plantation ideal had a widening appeal to southern slaveholders, and, as such, it functioned as the major rationale for their defense of the slavery system.[118] Calhoun, with a brief lag following his shift from nationalism to sectionalism, joined those Southerners who began to regard slavery as a "positive good," and in doing so, he contributed to the creation of the ideal of the South as a geographical and cultural unit with its own virtue, rooted in the slavery system and indispensable to the stability of the Republic through its balancing force.[119]

Pocock points out that one understanding of virtue in civic humanism is linked to the Aristotelian notion of virtue as a character trait essential to one's identity, making it distinct from others.[120] The South also had such a trait, according to Calhoun. In Calhoun's eyes, the South as a geographical and cultural entity exhibits peculiar characteristics distinguishing it from the rest of the Union, making it a crucial factor in preserving political balance and hence

---

116 Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950; Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1970).

117 See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 535; Smith, *Virgin Land*, 145–54.

118 See William R. Taylor's classic *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (New York: George Braziller, 1961); and Oakes, *Ruling Race*, 153–60. In a more recent analysis, Jeffrey Robert Young has emphasized the influence of bourgeois sentimental family ideals of the North in the southern defense of slavery by the 1830s. He argues that instead of the paternal ideal of the reciprocity of obligations, planters would claim their relationship with slaves was governed by familial love, expressing the equal status of the partners. Slaveholders of Georgia and South Carolina widely held the belief that they actually treated their slaves in a benevolent manner. See Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670–1847* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). For a similar view of sentimental love underpinning slave-master relations in the rhetoric of proslavery writers, see Jan Lewis, "The Problem of Slavery in Southern Political Discourse," in David Thomas Konig, ed., *Devising Liberty: Preserving and Creating Freedom in the New American Republic* (Standford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1995), 288–89.

119 Young points out that the "positive good" argument appeared in the South as early as 1820, although the image of slavery as "necessary evil" among Southern planters did not disappear immediately. Young, *Domesticating Slavery*, 164–65. Calhoun's contention that the South contributed to the equilibrium of the Republic has been recognized by other studies, without an attempt to address this problem in terms of republican virtue, which, nonetheless, I hope to show, can be viewed as a concept that provides the central perspective for his understanding of the relationship between the South and the rest of the Union. See Richard Hofstadter, "John C. Calhoun: The Marx of the Master Class," in Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition: And the Men Who Made It* (1948; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 67–91. Harris, "Last of the Classical Republicans," 260; and Ford, "Republican Ideology," 421–23.

120 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 41.

republican order. The identity of the South, its "character" is, at the same time, determined by the institution of slavery. It is in one of his attacks upon abolitionist petitions addressed to Congress in 1836, where Calhoun makes obvious this connection between slavery and the identity of the South. As he argues, the abolitionist petitions are part of "a war of religious and political fanaticism, mingled, on the part of the leaders, with ambition and the love of notoriety, and waged, not against our lives, but *our character*. The object is to humble and debase us in our own estimation, and that of the world in general; to blast our reputation, while they overthrow our domestic institutions."[121]

Referring to the South as a distinct entity with its peculiar features constituting its identity, Calhoun evokes the argument of civic humanism rooted in the Aristotelian-Polybian assumption about the necessity for each social order to participate in government with its own virtue structuring its character and identity. Their balance is required for the attainment of political stability. If one particular group strives to rule without respecting the common good, subjecting the goods of the others, the outcome is the corruption of its own virtue, ultimately resulting in the decline of the polity.[122]

In Calhoun's analysis, then, slavery is the key to the stability of the South and hence, that of the Union since, in the South, the relationship between the black and white "races" is ideal, excluding any difference of interest between master and slave. The southern slaveholder, ruling his plantation community as a benevolent patriarch or *pater familias* "concentrates in himself the united interests of capital and labor, of which he is the common representative."[123] Southern plantation households, in Calhoun's analysis, thus fulfill a function similar to Aristotle's *oikos*:[124] they are the basic economic units of Southern society; they make up a harmonious community, excluding the labor-capital conflict from among themselves as well as from the relationship among one another, thereby insuring the political stability of the South. As Calhoun points out this advantage of the South over the North: "The condition of society in the South exempts us from the disorders and dangers resulting from this conflict;" he says, and "explains why it is that the political condition of the slave holding States has been so much more stable and quiet than those of the North."[125]

By defending its character the South also defends the Union, Calhoun argues. Through its stability, it represents a force that functions to keep the conflict between Northern capital and labor under control by exerting its conservative influence "against the aggression of one or the other side, which ever may tend to disturb the equilibrium of our political system."[126] Fur

---

121 *Papers of Calhoun*, 13:105; emphasis added.

122 See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 73–76, 116.

123 *Papers of Calhoun*, 14:84. This unity of interest of slaves and masters as part of Calhoun's republican defense of slavery is emphasized by Jan Lewis (*Problem of Slavery*, 293). That Calhoun himself followed the principles of paternalism in his treatment of his own slaves is convincingly argued by Irving H. Bartlett in his *John C. Calhoun: A Biography* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1993), 279–81.

124 See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 68.

125 *Papers of Calhoun*, 13:396; see also ibid., 16:111, and ibid., 18:278.

126 Ibid., 14:85–86, quotation on 85. Calhoun makes an eloquent statement on the significance of the South reaching beyond its boundaries: "I have long regarded the South as the balance wheel of our beautiful, but complex system of government, and I consider its Union, not only as necessary to its own prosperity and safety, but indispensable to the proper working of the whole machine. Circumstances to which I need not refer, have given the State

thermore, in his reasoning, with progress and economic growth, due to the resulting intensification of the conflict in the North, the significance of the pacifying impact of Southern harmony is bound to increase.[127] This is why Southern interests, and most of all, the institution of slavery, are to be respected. Since the South contributes its own virtue, rooted in slavery, to the good of the whole, the abolition of slavery would be fatal to the entire Republic in that it would destroy that virtue.

In this way, through his identification of the South as a guardian of republican virtue, Calhoun resurrected the republican notion of social estates, conceiving of the Union as consisting of three major social groups:[128] industrial laborers, capitalists and Southern slaveholders—the last one standing between the former two opposing interests. It is ultimately through the Southern slaveholders that the whole Union is kept in balance due to the supposed harmony of master and slave interests, resulting in the stability of the South. For Calhoun, then, the South fulfills the same role that in Neo-Harringtonian rhetoric the Lords did in the British mixed constitution, that is, keeping the balance between the one and the many, the King and the Commons. In doing so, he sublimated the concept of mixed government, constructing a new balance of powers.

Calhoun's vision of the South as a region dominated by the planter class or his conception of the North determined essentially by the capital-labor dichotomy had no place for the yeoman farmer, a crucial element in the Jeffersonian version of republicanism. Such a suppression of the freeholders of the South on Calhoun's part may indicate his rhetorical effort to forge a unity within the South along lines determined by the planters' value system.

The notion of the South as an entity offering a means of mechanizing virtue in the Republic was promoted by Calhoun on the understanding that the Union had become divided by the plurality of interests, but precisely because the South supposedly managed to avoid that, it could compensate for this lack of homogeneity on the federal level. In this way, Calhoun can be argued to have followed the Anti-Federalist fashion of imagining the South as the ideal republic, a homogeneous political entity, whereas regarding the entire Union, he adopted the Federalist line of mechanizing virtue in a heterogeneous society, with a parallel emphasis on the virtue and intelligence of the people. All this may also indicate Calhoun's increasingly desperate effort to keep the South's position in the federal power structure, proving its own importance in contributing to the (federal) common good through its own virtue, rooted in slavery.

CALHOUN'S REPUBLICAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

A significant part of Calhoun's republicanism concerns issues of political economy; he appropriated several idioms of mainstream republican language related to the problem of eco-

---

a prominence and influence far beyond its extent, population or wealth" (ibid., 14:392). See also ibid., 24:190; and ibid., 25:669–70.

127 Ibid., 13:396.

128 In doing so, Calhoun revived the "classical politics" in the Woodean sense.

nomic dependence, its consequences as well as the ways to deal with them. He drew upon the notion of expansion—both territorial and economic—when offering solutions to the problem of population growth and unemployment, as well as the special capacity of the South to fight the vicissitudes of the modern market economy by returning, if only temporarily, to the classical ideal of self-sufficiency. His support of commerce or the denunciation of the "moneyed interest" link him with eighteenth-century Country as well as Court republicanism, whereas his emphasis on territorial and market expansion aligned him with the agrarian and commercial republicans of the early Republic.

Lacy K. Ford and Clyde N. Wilson have already addressed several aspects of Calhoun political economy, emphasizing its double nature, naming him both as a free trade liberal and a republican thinker with regard to various elements of his thought.[129] What they have failed to do, however, was to place him in the republican tradition identified by Pocock, hence missing important features of Calhoun's political economic thinking.

Perhaps the single most important structuring theme in Pocock's interpretation of the development of republicanism in modern times is the replacement of the classical concept of unified personality with the modern fragmented self. Whereas the classical citizen was to represent the political, the economic and the military selves as united, with the proliferation and specialization of social functions, republican discourse became increasingly focused on the loss of that unity and its concomitant consequences. Modernity implied growing specialization and interdependence of the members of society; the individual's dependence on others for subsistance, in turn, involved the possibility of corruption, serving particular interests instead of the public good.[130] The classical unity of political participant and economic producer in the person of the citizen of the republic was gone: the modern self appeared as a fragmented one, incapable of performing all social functions necessary to sustain republican order. This change, at the same time, resulted in speculation over the means to fight it, and political economy became the field where the split between *homo politicus* and *homo economicus* generated tensions, calling for treatment by economic means. The conception of the modern self also explains the contrast between the liberal and the republican concepts of liberty, which are so crucial to the understanding of Calhoun's political economic thinking.

Liberal thinking has often been characterized as being based on the negative concept of liberty, that is, freedom from governmental interference, while its positive conception of freedom to participate in political life has been associated with republicanism.[131] Nonetheless, the concept of negative freedom was also present in the language of republicanism. As Pocock argues, a precondition for republican virtue was independence, freedom from others' will. It underlay the argument of Country politicians when they identified the roots of corruption as dependence of one governing component on the other: members of the legislature dependent on the Crown for their subsistence, receiving offices, pensions for their loyalty—in-

---

129 Ford, *Origins*, and Ford, "Republican Ideology;" and Clyde N. Wilson, "'Free Trade: No Debt: Separation from Banks:' The Economic Platform of John C. Calhoun," in *Slavery, Secession, and Southern History*, ed. Robert Louis Paquette and Louis A. Ferleger (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 81–100.

130 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, chap. 14, esp. 501–502, 551.

131 Banning, "Liberal and Classical Ideas," 17, 18; see also Ford, "Republican Ideology," 419.

dependence, in turn, they saw to be secured by landed property ownership.[132] In other words, what these typical Court representatives lacked was liberty from the Crown, because it had the power to make them dependent. The Country, by contrast, possessed landed property, which secured their independence.

The sharp distinction, then, between the negative and positive concepts of liberty as liberal and republican ways of seeing the individual's relationship to government may not be as unequivocal as it may first seem. The protection of liberal rights from government as expressed by negative freedom can be successful only if the individual becomes a participant in political decision-making. Paradoxically, only by controlling government can one be free from it, and in this sense, the negative and positive varieties of liberty go hand in hand: the latter can be seen as a means to achieve the former.[133] At the same time, when it came to issues related to political economy the concept of negative liberty and independence proved crucial in republican ideology.

Political economy in the early republic evolved largely in response to processes of modernization, accommodating itself to critical changes taking place in the economy and society. Therefore, since its very beginnings, a major concern of thinkers of republican political economy in the USA had been to devise an economic policy to deal with problems generated by tensions between social change and republican ideals resulting from the shift from self-sufficiency representing economic independence to a market economy based on mutual dependence. Jeffersonian agrarians, for instance, promoted the vision of a republic that would presumably avoid the problems of European countries undergoing modernization, having reached the "commercial" stage of social development with all its undesirable side effects. Hoping to keep the numbers of urban poor low in America in order to save the nation from great social inequalities and possible unrest, these agrarian republicans advocated reining in industrial development to slow down the transition to the commercial stage of development. The key to their efforts was westward expansion: they hoped that by bringing new lands into

---

132 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 126, 232, 407–8; On the importance of the link between property-holding and independence for revolutionary Americans, see Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1992; New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 234. On the role of independence in revolutionary republican ideology see also Richard L. Bushman, "'This New Man': Dependence and Independence, 1776," in *Uprooted Americans: Essays to Honor Oscar Handlin*, ed. Richard L. Bushman et al. (Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 77–96. He clearly demonstrates that discourse about dependent wage laborers and debtors was a republican concern (ibid., 92; see also Berthoff, "Independence and Attachment," 107, 113–15). Liberal economic thinking seems to have understood independence only in relation to the economic competition of individuals and government intervention in economy: the moral aspect of independence was outside its focus.

133 Concerning positive and negative liberty in the United States, Judith Sklar concludes that they were intimately intertwined as far as the problem of slavery was concerned—freedom from government for masters as a guarantee against enslavement and positive liberty for black slaves, a fight to achieve rights being privileges for white persons. See Judith N. Sklar, "Positive Liberty, Negative Liberty in the United States," transl. from the French by Stanley Hoffmann, in *Redeeming American Political Thought*, ed. Stanley Hoffmann and Dennis F. Thompson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 111–26.

cultivation to provide subsistence for immigrants from the East, it would be possible to build up a society of independent yeoman farmers—virtuous citizens, devoted to the public good.[134]

Even though accepting the transition of American society to commercialism as an inevitable process, being only the question of time, republican critics believed that accelerating the process through artificial promotion of commerce by government interfered with the natural course of economic and social development.[135] At the same time, even though Jeffersonians promoted the ideal of the self-sufficient yeoman farmer, they gradually accustomed themselves to the idea of commercial agriculture with American farmers producing for markets increasingly located overseas. In this way, defying time, that is, slowing down the shift to a commerce-based society, entailed not merely expansion through the constant acquisition of land for an ever increasing virtuous agricultural population but also markets for them.[136] James Madison, for instance, himself advocated westward expansion in the 1780s as part of his effort to secure free navigation of the Mississippi, unhindered by foreign powers. Such free navigation would provide an alternative to the growth of domestic manufacturing, at the same time encouraging trade with European countries to exchange US agricultural goods for their industrial ones. Furthermore, the agricultural surplus was to be used for acquiring manufactured goods produced in the sweatshops of a decaying Europe, rather than having sweatshops in America—this still serving the Jeffersonian agrarian ideal.[137]

Nevertheless, Jefferson was willing to subordinate his agrarianism to the republican notion of independence, and this can be illustrated by the fact that during the Embargo of 1807 he

---

[134] Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 185–95; and Lienesch, *New Order*, 88–89. Republican political economy stressed having few wealth-based distinctions in society through the relatively equal distribution of landed property, and associated Europe, especially England, with a capitalist economy producing large differences in wealth, a situation to be avoided in a republic. See the views of Jefferson and Madison in the mid—1780s, in Banning, "Political Economy and the Creation of the Federal Republic," in *Devising Liberty: Preserving and Creating Freedom in the New American Republic*, ed. David Thomas Konig (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1995), 33–34, 41; see also Ashworth, "Jeffersonians," 431–32; and Lienesch, *New Order*, 89. The link between industrialization and growing social inequality was also claimed by proslavery thinkers such as Thomas Roderick Dew. See Allen Kaufman, *Capitalism, Slavery, and Republican Values: Antebellum Political Economists, 1819–1848* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 103. Robert G. Kennedy has recently pointed out that Jefferson's vision of a republic of fee-simple yeoman farmers never came to be realized in the South due to the expansion of the plantation system, which kept constantly pushing small producers westward. See Roger G. Kennedy, *Mr. Jefferson's Lost Cause: Land, Farmers, Slavery, and the Louisiana Purchase* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Furthermore, due to their commercial dependence, Jefferson's yeomen became "extensions of the workforce of the mills" in Britain (ibid., 114).

[135] McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 171–74, 175; and Banning, *Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 359. This was the theoretical basis on which Jeffersonian Republicans criticized protective Federalist economic policies (McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 175; see also Banning, "Political Economy," 32–33).

[136] Drew McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 197–99, 207–8; Appleby, "Commercial Farming and the 'Agrarian Myth' in the Early Republic," *The Journal of American History* 68 (1982), esp. 844–45. Hence Michael Lienesch seems wrong when placing Jefferson in a category distinct from the one that he defines as "agricultural market thinkers" (cf. Lienesch, *New Order*, 88–89, 89–96; phrase quoted from 91, 93). Kramnick also emphasizes the commercial nature of agricultural production in the early republic as part of the Jeffersonian ideal (Kramnick, "Republican Revisionism Revisited," 644).

[137] Banning "Political Economy," 30–33, 34; see also Banning, *Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 62. See Jefferson's oft-quoted remarks on the desired form of the division of labor between Europe and America: *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "Query 19," in *PTJ*, 216–17.

supported household manufacturing so that the country would be less dependent on imported foreign manufactured goods. Furthermore, following the War of 1812, which was a critical incentive to domestic industrial and market development, Jeffersonian Republicans looked upon manufacturing and commerce with less suspicion, arguing that when combined with free trade, these would not tend to breed corruption and misery in American society as they had in mercantilist Europe.[138] In watching the evolution of the capitalist economic system with reservations, mainly due to its side effects, Jeffersonians advocated a "pre-capitalist" version of commerce. They clearly denounced the loss of republican independence that the capitalist relations of production entailed in making the wage laborer dependent upon the owner of the means of production. For them, the acquisition of arable lands as well as markets for independent, virtuous producers was a major strategy for preserving this pre-capitalist independence.[139]

One alternative to this vision was offered by "commercial republicans," who saw no tension between manufacturing and republican virtue, and they regarded urbanization rather than Western lands as the safety valve for any excess population that found no more opportunities in farming. These republicans had no intentions whatsoever of preserving US society and economy in the agricultural stage; in fact, they advocated governmental intervention in the economy to promote the transition.[140] In search of new outlets for channeling surplus goods and thereby dealing with the problem of unemployment, Madison gradually adopted such a stance, envisioning a republic with the surplus population employed in manufacturing, producing foods for markets both in the agricultural South and in Latin America. By the 1830s, he had accepted the idea that manufacturing had the potential to provide a safety valve for the US population surplus, which would contribute to republican stability; moreover, he also argued that sectional strain could be handled by the South adopting manufacturing as a major occupation for its laborers.[141] As will be seen, a significant portion of these considerations came to inform Calhoun's republican political economy.

Drew McCoy has pointed out that in early American republicanism "a corrupt political system" was regarded as an "artificial" source of corruption of a people. In addition to it, he has identified another "natural" one derived from uncontrolled population growth, accom-

---

138 McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 227–28, 246.

139 Ashworth, "Jeffersonians," 431–32.

140 Lienesch, *New Order*, 96–102, 101; see also McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 101. In connection with republican political economy, Ralph Lerner also uses the expression "commercial republicanism," but in a slightly different, more general sense. He discusses the rise of the "man of commerce" in the eighteenth-century Anglo-American world, propelled by economic ambitions and the benefits that commerce may bring, identifying his own interest with the public good, having no worries about the future commerce will bring. Yet, at the same time, even he points out that while welcoming such changes Americans voiced mixed feelings. See Ralph Lerner, "Commerce and Character: The Anglo-American as New-Model Man," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 36 (1979), 22–23. Interestingly, though, he does not talk about Jefferson in this way, but groups him among the "commercial republicans" (ibid., 19n46).

141 Drew R. McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 183–85, 189, 190–91.

panied by the end of the supply of free land.[142] Although with Calhoun, it was the artificial way of corruption and its consequences to confront—hence his various efforts to secure virtue in the American republic in a political way, by institutional means—the Jeffersonian idiom of land supply as a cause for concern did have some relevance to him. Although he never seems to have regarded the acquisition of new land specifically as a solution to the problem of labor and capital tension, the issue emerged in his rhetoric connected with the problem of population growth and expansion in the 1840s.

Calhoun drew upon this idiom of republican political economy during the Mexican War when he strove to justify the acquisition of Mexican territories. Sharing the Jeffersonian-Madisonian concern about US overpopulation, he advocated the occupation of California and New Mexico in a speech that he delivered in the Senate on February 9, 1847. For him, these territories with low population densities provided America with the safety valve that Jefferson and other agrarian republicans had associated with the Louisiana Territory at the beginning of the century. "What we want is space for our growing population," Calhoun argued. "We want room to grow." The pace at which the American population was growing at the time required more and more land for new generations.[143] As he claimed in another speech, "For this rapidly growing population, all the territory we now possess, and even that which we might acquire, would, in the course of a few generations, be needed. It is better for our people and institution[s], that our population should not be too much compressed." The area had already been penetrated by settlers representing an "industrious and civilized race" which would be able to develop it into a prosperous economy.[144] Like Jeffersonian republicans, then, Calhoun hoped to use the fruits of territorial expansion to compensate for the perils of progress by providing the population surplus with subsistence based on land. Furthermore, he also employed the idioms of economic expansion and free trade for similar purposes.

Scholars have already identified free trade as an important issue in Calhoun's political economy, emphasizing his advocacy of it as a liberal economic policy. Ford, for instance, associates Calhoun with the classical liberal tenet of economy free from government intervention aimed at fostering its advancement mainly through protectionism, thus favoring certain economic factors over others.[145] At the same time, such an attitude by Calhoun, however liberal it may seem, I argue, can also be regarded as one serving republican ends, unexplored in the literature, fitting in with the mainstream understanding of the role of free trade in republican political economy.

In addition to territorial expansion as a means to deal with the surplus of agricultural population, for Calhoun, free trade also played an important role in economic expansion, which, as in the case of Jeffersonian republicans, he also regarded as a way to respond to population growth and the problem of unemployment.

---

142 McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 189.

143 *Papers of Calhoun*, 24:311.

144 Ibid., 24:121, 122. Calhoun also supported the settlement of public lands by members of a "large, though poor class," who by acquiring land would turn into "small freeholders," precious to the Republic (ibid., 15:435).

145 Ford, "Republican Ideology," 419; see also Wilson, "Free Trade."

Free trade played a pivotal role in the republican political economy. It insured a way for the agricultural surplus of the virtuous American producers to reach overseas markets and be exchanged for manufactured goods produced by societies having attained the commercial stage of social development. Free trade was thus a key both to westward expansion and to acquiring markets, a means to achieve republican goals and integrate liberal principles into a republican political economy. Furthermore, Jeffersonian political economists regarded any connection between government and economic interests as "unnatural" and thus inimical to republican goals.[146] Their economic policy favoring free trade was given up only as a result of the pressures in the wake of the War of 1812, when protective governmental policy and the Second Bank of the United States were established to meet the challenges posed by economic development. These, at the same time, were seen as necessary to keep the republic on course in development and were not seen as threats to republican virtue.[147]

Free trade was vital for Calhoun for two reasons. First, as he understood, protective economic policy indirectly contributed to the impoverishment of Southern exporters by reducing their capacity to compete in the world market, undermining the subsistence of cotton planters as virtuous producers. Second, free trade was a key to expanding markets, and thus, indirectly, an important means of preserving virtue in the Jeffersonian manner.

In this sense, in Calhoun's mind, commerce was to fulfill the same role for the Northern economy as it did for republican thinkers who considered commerce a dynamic force when coupled with the expansion of land.[148] The Machiavellian-Jeffersonian *virtù* of agrarian expansion could be transformed into industrial expansion by acquiring new markets in the name of free trade, instead of relying on constricted home markets kept limited by protective economic policy. Calhoun applied such arguments about the need to create outlets for US producers, advocating free trade and competition as a solution to market problems and, consequently, hoped to tackle population growth as well as unemployment in the North.

Calhoun attributed pre-eminent, almost transcendental significance to free trade in his diatribes against protective economic policy. In his argumentation, he depicted unrestricted trade as the indispensable catalyst for generating growth and wealth, a derivation of liberty that made progress possible: "The freedom of trade has its foundation in the deep and durable foundation of truth, and will indicate itself," as Calhoun maintains. "It draws its origin from on high. It emanates from the Divine will, and is designed in its dispensation to perform an important part in binding together in concord and peace the nations of the earth, and in extending far and wide the blessings of civilization."[149]

---

146 Banning, "Political Economy," 34, 41, 47–48.

147 Ibid., 49. Those opposing the adoption of free trade policies, however, also did so on republican grounds, arguing that similarly to England, America would be exposed to its harmful consequences, first and foremost, in the form of degraded labor. Separated from their tools of production, propertyless wage laborers would by no means represent the republican ideal. Furthermore, free trade opponents claimed to perceive the first victims of such a process, poor whites of the South. Thus they advocated protective policy and a controlled distribution of property in order to prevent excessive inequalities of wealth. In the vision of the protective thinkers, laborers appeared propertied and skilled and thus independent producers whose status was maintained through the intervention of a state aiming to minimize the degrading impact of capitalism (Kaufman, *Capitalism, and Republican Values*, 44–59).

148 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 539–40.

149 *Papers of Calhoun*, 16:188.

However, Calhoun also put his finger on the side-effects of the expansive nature of *laissez-faire*: it leads not only to economic growth and efficiency but also, consequently, the saturation of the home market. Highly developed nations are capable of producing far more than necessary for supplying themselves. As he says, "all civilized people, with little exception, are producing their own supply, and even overstocking their own market. It results, that no people, restricted to the home market, can, in the present advanced state of the useful arts, rise to greatness and wealth by manufactures."[150]

The solution to this problem, Calhoun argues, is foreign markets: domestic producers of developed economies must seek markets outside, in the developing ones: "they must compete successfully for the foreign market, in the younger, less advanced, and less civilized countries."[151] The same strategy is to be followed by the US, a developed economy, Calhoun argues, since its saturated home market cannot accommodate more domestic manufactures, which would result in rising unemployment in industry, adversely affecting the economy of the North: "The home market cannot consume our immense surplus production of provisions, lumber, cotton, and tobacco; nor find employment in manufacturing, for home consumption, the vast amount of labor employed in raising the surplus beyond the home consumption, and which can only find a market abroad." Therefore, laborers in industries producing for sluggish home markets must face either "loss and impoverishment" or "be forced into universal competition in producing the protected articles for the home market."[152]

Protective policy, then, would not ameliorate the problems of oversupply and unemployment. This is partly why Calhoun calls on Northern producers to give up advocating high import tariffs on manufactured goods and instead to compete in the world market, like Southerners. "Instead of looking to the home market, and shaping all our policy to secure that, we must look to the foreign, and shape it to secure that," he demands.[153]

In Calhoun's mind, then, free trade as a means of both economic expansion and territorial expansion would not only spread the blessings of civilization but would also serve the purposes of republican political economy, preserving republican order. He proposed to achieve this by avoiding tensions caused by groups that could find no subsistence due to the shortage of space or markets. He regarded free trade as a republican way of expansion compensating for losing virtue as a result of modernization, in a Machiavellian-Jeffersonian fashion. Industry was no cause of trouble for Calhoun, as long as it was combined with free trade.

As far as Calhoun's attitude to free trade and commerce is concerned, despite certain views otherwise, it was very much in line with the Country republican version: as has been seen, he

---

150 Ibid., 16:369.

151 Ibid.

152 Ibid., 16:370. Thus, Calhoun's economic vision was not necessarily agrarian, based on "independent though morally responsible freeholders," (cf. Wilson, "Free Trade," 98, 85) since it did not exclude the industrial North relying on dependent wage labor. That he was far from being a politician against industry or commerce has also been pointed out by Theodore R. Marmor. See Marmor, *The Career of John C. Calhoun: Politician, Social Critic, Political Philosopher* (New York: Garland, 1988), 154–206; and Marmor, "Anti-Industrialism and the Old South: The Agrarian Perspective of John C. Calhoun," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 9 (1966–67), 377–406.

153 *Papers of Calhoun*, 16:368; see also ibid., 15:92.

had a positive view of it, far from regarding it as a natural source of dependence and therefore corruption. This was the way eighteenth-century republican thinkers in Britain related to commerce.

Lacy K. Ford contends that certain aspects of Calhoun's political economy can be shown to differ from Country ideology partly because, unlike the members of the Country party, he did not regard commerce as a source of corruption. Identifying the Country with classical republicanism, he contends, "Calhoun was certainly not a classical republican in the traditional sense. Calhoun never considered commerce, in and of itself, an enemy of virtue, nor did he advocate agrarian self-sufficiency and the creation of a hermetic economy as an alternative to continued commercial development." Later he adds, "Calhoun's republicanism had long since lost whatever naked anti-commercial or anti-market characteristics that might properly be attributed to classical republicanism."[154] These assertions, however, should be re-considered with regard to the anti-commercial nature of Country ideology and, hence, to the links that Calhoun's political economy had with republicanism.

However, to regard British Country ideology as unambiguously anti-commercial is somewhat problematic. Country writers of Queen Anne's reign joined their Court adversaries in their assertion that trade played a positive role in the economy of the times, since, for instance, it provided land, the main economic basis of the Country, with value. Commerce, per se, was not disapproved by Country writers, either; they refrained from criticizing merchants involved in commerce. The anti-commercial image of the Country-Tory party of the age was, in part, created by their Whig opponents. "The problem of trade," Pocock argues, "was . . . the last to be perceived among the causes of the new corruption."[155] Hence Calhoun can be justly regarded as an appropriator of the Country version of republican language on account of his embracing commerce as an economic activity. This is the result of the inquiry both into the general modern British and American republican attitudes to commercialization. At the same time, his attitude to commerce in general and free trade in particular, as modern means of securing republican independence for certain segments of society, did not prevent him from offering other means as well, more specific to the South.

Modernity brought about growing economic interdependence in areas shifting from a subsistence economy to a market economy, and the process also affected the plantation South. Lacy K. Ford has pointed out how the ideal of "country-republicanism," as he puts it, informed the ethos of white male South Carolinians with its emphasis on personal independence based on "productive property," which distinguished themselves from dependent slaves. Nevertheless, this republican independence was threatened by involvement in international market economy: through cotton production growers moving beyond a subsistence economy became dependent on the market as well as on relationships with other actors.[156]

---

154 Ford, "Republican Ideology," 417, 422.

155 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 446–47, 450. The anticommercial nature of British republicanism has also been denied by Lance Banning ("Political Economy," 21) For the same position, also in view of a Jeffersonian context, see Banning, "Liberal and Classical Ideas," 5–6.

156 Ford, *Origins*, 50–51, 54–55, 94, 52.

Therefore the truly independent economic actor in the South was the yeoman farmer producing all the necessities that guaranteed self-sufficiency. Commercial farmers as well as planters, as Roger G. Kennedy points out, were equally dependent on markets, the latter also depending on their slaves' labor. As he argues in regard to Virginia, planters' dependence was deepened by the fact that their investments in a monocultural economy—tobacco and later cotton—frustrated the development of a diversified economy, resulting in Southern producers falling prey to the vicissitudes of fluctuating overseas markets.[157]

Neither complete self-sufficiency nor full devotion to the market could protect, for instance, South Carolina Upcountry farmers and planters from the threat to personal independence, so they were compelled to combine both economic strategies in order to preserve their property, avoiding its exposure to the fluctuations of the market, the key to their survival as independent producers.[158] As Joyce E. Chaplin has pointed out, South Carolina planters were able to alternate commercial economic activity with self-sufficiency in accordance with the cyclical nature of market demands. They managed to adjust their production to fluctuating market demands by combining elements of domestic and commercial agriculture.[159] Calhoun also regarded himself and Southern planters as independent producers, capable of making such a shift if need be.

We have seen how Calhoun employed republican language in depicting the South as being virtuous due precisely to the institution of slavery, which contributed to securing virtue on the federal level in a mechanical way, through its potential to counterbalance a precarious North plagued by the labor and capital dichotomy. Yet, the plantation South also played a preeminent role in his political economy: he envisioned it as an economic system able to fight dependence caused by free trade through republican independence. He vindicated the capacity of the plantation system to fight both, depicting it as a flexible economic system, capable of oscillating between self-sufficiency and market economy.

Such a stance was intimately linked to the problem of negative liberty. As Paul Boller points out, the liberal, negative concept of liberty also had a place—a major one—in Calhoun's thought. For him, like for Locke, liberty assumed a negative aspect, insofar as Locke and Calhoun both understood it as freedom from restraint, freedom from authority. As Boller says, liberty meant "absence of external compulsion and restraint upon overt

---

157 Kennedy, *Jefferson's Lost Cause*, 43–46, 85, 47, 59. Kennedy describes Southern dependence on Britain for its market as its "recolonization." (ibid., 86) Having achieved political and economic independence, the South gradually became dependent on Britain for its imports of manufactured products as well as its exports of cotton. Thus, the lack of economic diversity became a major factor in the dependence and recolonization of the South (ibid., 89–90, 106–107, 109–14, and passim).

158 Ford, *Origins*, 56–84; see also ibid., 2–3.

159 Joyce E. Chaplin, "Creating a Cotton South in Georgia and South Carolina, 1760–1815," *The Journal of Southern History* 57 (1991), 173–74. The dependence that masters could feel in relation to their slaves did not necessarily impair their sense of independence as republican producers. See Kenneth S. Greenberg, *Masters and Statesmen: The Political Culture of American Slavery* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 85, 137; see also Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy & Society of the Slave South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 32.

action."[160] Nonetheless, the republican version of negative liberty through the problem of dependence also was crucial in Calhoun's political economic thinking.

Calhoun strongly argued for the supremacy of "independent producers," who are free from government or other people's intervention, whose freedom was made possible by the "ownership of productive property." He also viewed slave owners as such producers.[161] In other words, what Thomas Jefferson or most of his fellow Southerners would identify as the virtuous yeoman, the ideal producer of the republic, Calhoun found in Southern planters.[162] It was not "the once proud, hardy, and independent yeomanry of New England" now depending on the blessings of the protective policy of the government that he regarded as capable of fulfilling the expectations of republican independence.[163] Rather, it was Southern planters who managed to remain virtuous by preserving their independence from government, since they were not forced to rely on its protection and could thrive on free trade. Thus, in Calhoun's rhetoric, the South came to embody the same ideal as the independent yeoman did for Jefferson primarily because of its potential for self-sufficiency.

The Southern planter operates in an economic system that, according to Calhoun, is capable of adopting itself to various economic situations, leaving the home or the world market when necessary and returning to self-sufficiency. As the South Carolinian argues,

> A plantation is a little community of itself, which, when hard pressed, can furnish within itself almost all of its supplies. Ours is a fine provision country, and, when needs be, can furnish most of its supplies of food and clothing from its own resources. In prosperous times, when the price of our staples is high, our labor is almost exclusively directed to their production, and then we freely and liberally part with their proceeds in exchange for horses, mules, cattle, hogs, and provisions of all description from the West, and clothing and all the products of the arts with the North and East; but when prices fall and pressure comes, we gradually retire on our own means, and draw our own supplies from within. [When this happens, h]ousehold industry revives; and strong, substantial coarse clothing is manufactured from cotton and wool, for their families and domestics. In addition to cotton, corn and other grains are cultivated in sufficient abundance, not only for bread, but for the rearing of stock of various descriptions—hogs, horses, mules, cattle, and sheep.[164]

---

160 Paul F. Boller, Jr. "Calhoun on Liberty," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 66 (1967), 396.

161 See Ford, "Republican Ideology," 422.

162 John Ashworth remarks that such an image of planters, as "cultivators of the earth" also characterized the Democratic party's ideology. See Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic*, vol. 1, *Commerce and Compromise, 1820–1850* (Cambridge, New York, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 338–39; quoted phrase on 338.

163 *Papers of Calhoun*, 16:431.

164 Ibid., 16:194. Calhoun also praised slavery as an economic system superior to the one based on free labor, on account of labor efficiency (ibid.). In doing so, he internalized the proslavery view that due to racial and climatic factors, the South was an exception to the rule of relative slave labor inefficiency. This was in response to "the bourgeois critique of slavery," claiming the lower efficiency of slave labor. See James Oakes, "The Peculiar Fate of the Bourgeois Critique of Slavery," in *Slavery and the American South*, ed. Winthrop D. Jordan (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), 29–48.

Paradoxically, then, in Calhoun's argument, it is the South's capacity for republican self-sufficiency and thus independence from market economy that provides it with an advantage over Northern manufacturers, so specialized and advanced that they cannot make themselves independent from markets; they must depend on the federal government for economic protection as well as on wage laborers. By contrast, when compelled, the South is able to make the shift from modern market capitalism back to pre-modern ways of production in adapting itself to sluggish markets. In this way, Calhoun emphasized economic interdependence among the sections of the US, as well as the ability of the South to make itself free from such a bind when necessary, implicitly refuting the claim of Southern economic dependence on foreign and home markets.[165]

Calhoun, then, found several ways rooted in republicanism to deal with the problem of economic dependence for both the North and the South. Moreover, he also followed republican principles when offering a means to break the links between the federal government and financial interest.

Scholars have pointed out that Calhoun advocated the separation of banks and government as a condition for the right use of paper currency and credit to disempower the "moneyed aristocracy." These scholars, however, fail to identify this advocacy as a reassertion of the Country and Court attitudes to the financial revolution of the eighteenth century. For instance, Gillis J. Harp maintains in connection with the difference between John Taylor of Caroline and Calhoun as regards their attitudes toward political disharmony caused by government, that the former viewed monied interest as the main source of corruption and proposed to safeguard republican virtue by eliminating it.[166] However, Harp seems to ignore the presence of the same trait in Calhoun's republicanism. Ford, unlike Harp, does not neglect this aspect of political economy, but he links Calhoun's denunciation of "the moneyed aristocracy" to the liberal half of his political economy as part of his fight "in defence of economic liberalism against a potentially reactionary alliance of Government and capital."[167]

Nevertheless, it seems more appropriate to argue that this component of Calhoun's political economy is informed by Country and Court republican rhetoric rather than by liberal ideology, since both of these political groupings regarded the connection between government and economic interests as a major source of the corruption of republican virtue. British

---

[165] Interestingly, Calhoun's emphasis on the republican features of the planters' economic capacity may add to James Oakes' analysis of the "ideological change" in the Old South. Cf. Oakes, "From Republicanism to Liberalism: Ideological Change and the Crisis of the Old South," *American Quarterly* 37 (1984): 551–71. The shift from the republican ideal of free white farmers to the planters' liberal world, which, according to Oakes, was spreading alongside the plantation system in space and time as well was, in fact, imagined by Calhoun as involving the possibility for planters to revert to a republican world of political economy. Roger G. Kennedy argues that despite Calhoun's claims about the independence of plantations, they were very much dependent—on overseas markets. "Powerless against the vagaries of the international market, the planters nonetheless sought to persuade themselves that they were living in self-sufficient communities insulated from the world outside" (Kennedy, *Jefferson's Lost Cause*, 111).

[166] See Harp, "Taylor, Calhoun, and Decline," esp. 114.

[167] Ford, "Republican Ideology," 421; and 418; see also Ford, *Origins*, 92–93; O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 932–33; and Wilson, "Free Trade," 93–97.

opposition ideology, as Bernard Bailyn has shown, regarded "monied interest" as one of the forces responsible for the conspiracy against liberty and the corruption in England. Pocock also points out that British Tory and Whig spokesmen of the Augustan period, in spite of their ideological differences, unanimously denounced "monied interests" living off the public debt. "No writer of either party," he argues, "presumed to defend stockjobbing, the speculative manipulation of the market values of shares in the public debt; it was universally agreed to be evil." Instead of the merchant who became associated with the public good through his commercial activity, financiers, thriving on the public debt came to be seen as negative actors in society. "[I]t was through the image of the rentier, the officer, and the speculator in public funds, not through that of the merchant or dealer upon a market," Pocock says, "that capitalism imparted its first stock and became involved in its first major controversy in the history of English-language political theory."[168] It was the republican conception of dependence as a sort of corruption that they had in mind when denouncing the links between government and financiers, who through financing the public debt were regarded as parasites, "corrupting parliament and society," making them dependent.[169] They were identical with Calhoun's "stock-jobbers," "speculators," and "moneyed aristocrats."

Calhoun also looked upon "monied interest" as an antirepublican force. With the economic crisis of the late 1830s setting in, he increasingly denounced the system of "pet banks" introduced by the Jackson administration for handling federal deposits, at the same time criticizing Whig plans for restoring the Bank of the United States as an antidote to the economic problems of the country. Instead, he strongly supported Martin Van Buren's proposal for an independent treasury for federal deposits, since he saw such a treasury as a guaranteed separation of government and economic interests.[170] In his attack upon the connection between the federal government and banks in 1838, he claimed that "the larger the patronage of the General Government, the greater its expenditure, and the greater its surplus, so much more were the profits of the Banks increased, and that therefore this powerful *monied interest* was directly interested in promoting all these *antirepublican* ends, and would assuredly lend its influence to promote them."[171]

Calhoun, thus, attacked monied interest directly on the basis of its links with the government, but, ultimately, he condemned it following the Country—and Court—republican principle that dependence breeds corruption and the destruction of the Republic. As he argued in 1841, the Whig party was about to revive old economic policies including a national bank, protective tariff and connection between the government and the banks. He, however, depicted the end of the process as even more formidable, arguing that power would finally be shifted from the people to the monied interest: "The seat of the Government and power would change, and pass from the people into the hands of one of the most corrupt and

---

168 Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, 49, 123; and Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 447, 448–49, 460.

169 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 427, 439ff.

170 Wilson, "Free Trade," 93–94.

171 *Papers of Calhoun*, 14:406; emphases added.

exacting *moneyed oligarchies*, of which history has left any record."[172] It seems, then, that as far as his attitudes toward monied interests are concerned, Calhoun followed the eighteenth-century Country (and Court) line of republican argument, which, undeniably, fit with the liberal one with its emphasis on the separation of government and business as well as on the positive role of commerce in the economy.

Calhoun, then, in a republican fashion, was concerned with the problems that specialization caused in the modern transformation of the public personality. His solution connected him to both the agrarian and the commercial versions of American republicanism: when promoting territorial expansion, he supported Southern and Western interests, but when advocating finding overseas markets for American industrial goods, he proposed to serve Northern interests by easing the labor-capital tension in industrial areas. His republican political economy was neither exclusively agrarian nor industrialist, but rather embraced elements of both strains. Nonetheless, emphasizing the South's ability to shift between market production and self-sufficiency, he also evoked the classical idiom, thereby reinforcing the image of the South as a stable, indigenous domain of virtue within the union. In Calhoun's mind, the modernist dependence on markets was to be compensated either by their expansion or turning away from them.

To sum up, Calhoun appropriated a considerable selection of idioms that formed an integral part of the political language of republicanism. He seems to have exhibited no preference for any particular strain of the tradition but he boldly appropriated ideas and values that had often been held by representatives of opposing views. Thus, he employed several senses of virtue, ranging from an understanding of the morally capable people through military virtue as well as its mechanistic, institutionalized version, which he even expanded on to secure protection for the South with its peculiar institution of slavery. In doing so, he tended to draw upon opposing components of the tradition in mechanizing virtue in the republic, such as ones utilized by Anti-Federalists versus Federalists or the Harringtonian-Machiavellian military virtue of the many as opposed to the Neo-Harringtonian emphasis on the few. Calhoun's pluralistic attitude to the republican tradition also manifested itself in his use of the idioms of economic expansionism as well as his denunciation of the monied interest or his stress on the South's ability to shift between self-sufficiency and commercial agriculture.

In order to make his case, Calhoun spoke republican languages of diverse idioms that were supposed to appeal to a contemporary political community. This can explain why he, for instance, made the popular element in the Roman constitution the lynchpin of the system in a country where the people's rule was taken as an axiom. Nonetheless, his emphasis on the moral character of the people as a prerequisite for republican virtue and stability in the republic clearly separated him in this regard from the Founders on account of their emphasis on assuring virtue by institutional means. Furthermore, by assigning military virtue to the regular army of the people that the republican tradition originally associated with a wartime citizen army, Calhoun also relied on contemporary republican sentiments. At the same time,

---

[172] *Papers of Calhoun*, 15:584; emphasis added. Calhoun also refers to them as "the banking and other associated interests," such as "stock jobbers, brokers, and speculators" (ibid., 16:374).

he expanded on the republican tradition represented by the Founders, who devised a political system for America based on the mechanization of virtue: Calhoun applied that notion to his own vision of the South as a balancing force within the union. As for his usage of the political-economic idioms of the republican tradition, he followed Jefferson and Madison in their expansionist attitude to providing the nation with a sufficient amount of arable land in the West as well as free trade opportunities, as opposed to their Federalist adversaries. Yet, all things considered, republicanism was not the sole political language that Calhoun employed in order to drive his point home in the rhetorical arena of antebellum politics, with similar force, Lockean liberalism also constituted a significant part of his political rhetoric. To this theme, I now turn in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2
CALHOUN AND LOCKEAN LIBERALISM

INTRODUCTION

Scholars investigating Calhoun's political thought have tended to emphasize his difference from Lockean liberalism.[1] I contend, however, that Lockean liberalism was a major force in the political rhetoric of Calhoun, who selectively drew upon its various elements. Despite his explicit rejection of Locke's natural rights theory, Calhoun, in fact, extensively drew upon the political language of Lockean liberalism, although with important distinctions, without accepting its premises, yet adopting and utilizing a number of its implications. Paradoxically, he embraced Locke's ideas, discarding his state of nature yet, at the same time, retaining several of idioms and tenets of the Lockean language.

This ambiguous attitude toward Locke is indicated by the sporadic, yet still explicit references Calhoun made to Locke throughout his career, and, even more peculiarly, approvingly naming him as one of the thinkers whose principles had informed the creation of the US political system. At times, Calhoun even understood Locke's natural rights theory as grounds for this connection. In 1816, for example, he referred to the American government

[1] For instance, H. Lee Cheek claims that Calhoun's explicit denial of the state of nature or the social compact makes a strong case against a Lockean connection and thus contends the irrelevance of Calhoun's references to social contract theory. See Cheek, *Calhoun and Popular Rule: The Political Theory of the* Disquisition *and* Discourse (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 17, 96–97. He also points out that for Calhoun, the Declaration of Independence was not a document based on natural rights. Instead, the South Carolinian referred to the "chartered rights of Englishmen" as mentioned by the Declaration, thereby clearly arguing from a position necessarily un-Lockean, rooted in the historical rather than the natural rights tradition (ibid., 139–40). Another recent articulation of the distinction between "social contract philosophy" and Calhoun's "true science of government" is by Guy Story Brown, who argues that through his *Disquisition*, Calhoun intended to establish a new political science by replacing the state of nature hypothesis associated with Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others. See Brown, *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics: A Study of* A Disquisition on Government (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2000), x, and 4; see also 39, 353n79, 122, 261, 310. For other discussions of Calhoun's political thinking pointing out his rejection of the Lockean state of nature and derived natural rights, see Eugene D. Genovese, *The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 53; Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made; Two Essays of Interpretation* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969), 158, 211–13; Harry V. Jaffa, *A New Birth of Freedom: Abraham Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 412–14; John Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic*, vol. 1, *Commerce and Compromise*, 1820–1850 (Cambridge, New York, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 206; and Charles A. Kromkowski, "The Declaration of Independence, Congress, and Presidents of the United States," in *The Declaration of Independence: Origins and Impact*, ed. Scott Douglas Gerber (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2002), 128.

as one "founded on the rights of man, resting not on authority, not on prejudice, not on superstition, but reason."[2] By approving of the "rights of man," formulated by Tom Paine, and ultimately derived from natural rights, Calhoun clearly allied himself with Lockean liberalism at that time.

Furthermore, in 1821, clearly referring to the Declaration of Independence, Calhoun wrote of the United Sates as a country where "equality [was] first proclaimed."[3] Calhoun's endorsement of the American liberal tradition was emphatically underlined by his call for support of the resolutions of the Democratic caucus made public in 1840, including endorsement of "the liberal principles embodied by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, and sanctioned in the Constitution" which "have ever been cardinal principles in the Democratic faith."[4] In this way, he expressed support for tenets derived from Lockean liberalism, and which he would later denounce. With the emergence of the slavery issue, it would not have been feasible for Calhoun to uphold Lockean-based "rights of man" rhetoric, while asserting his belief in the natural inequality of man as part of his proslavery argument.[5] The fascinating tension between his refutation of the Lockean state of nature and his employment of its implication is worth closer scrutiny.

Links between Calhoun's and Locke's political philosophy have been discussed by previous scholarship. Overlaps between Calhoun's and Locke's conceptions of liberty were briefly referred to by Paul F. Boller, while Gillis J. Harp showed the presence of the Lockean concern with the disharmonizing effect of government in Calhoun's political thought. Darryl Baskin,

---

2 *Papers of Calhoun*, 1:329.

3 Ibid., 6:38.

4 Ibid., 15:329.

5 Calhoun's ambiguous, half-hearted rejection of Lockean principles can also be illustrated through his attitude to Robert Filmer's absolutist creed, which Locke strove to refute first and foremost in his *Two Treatises*. Peter Laslett, introduction to John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (1960; repr., Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp. 50–51. As opposed to the view of H. Lee Cheek, who detects several parallels between Calhoun and Filmer, mainly by way of the influence of Aristotle (Cheek, *Calhoun and Popular Rule*, 97–98), there seems to be not a connection but a fundamental gap between them, and this difference positions Calhoun closer to Locke than to Filmer. Calhoun explicitly demarcated himself from Filmer as a theoretician of the absolute power of the monarch to rule, derived from God. See *Papers of Calhoun*, 13:391 and ibid., 17:285. The purpose for which Calhoun employs Filmer is to denounce democracy based on numerical majority as a form of absolute government, no different in nature from the one supported by the latter. Thus their respective critiques of democracy are diametrically opposed: Filmer proposes absolute rule as an alternative, whereas Calhoun offers the concurrent majority to deal with the democracy of "absolute" majority, i. e., for the latter absolutism is the problem, while the former finds it a solution to the problem of authority and order. Furthermore, as we shall see below, Calhoun makes the expedience of absolute rule relative: it fits some people, but not others, depending on the degree of their rationality and morality. Filmer's stance also allowed for the appropriation of private property without consent, which, as will be seen later, Calhoun would never approve. Finally, it was a revealing rhetorical moment when, on February 6, 1837, Calhoun refuted the claim that he was a follower of Filmer, in response to the charges of Senator William C. Rives of Virginia, who identified his "positive good" thesis of slavery with the denial of natural rights. Rives also identified the American revolutionary tradition as one rooted in natural rights, which Calhoun did not deny. Still, when characterizing his own views, he associated himself with liberty, not qualifying it as "natural." See Charles Grier Sellers, Jr. "The Travail of Slavery," in *The Southerner as American* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1960), 46. This, then, also indicates Calhoun's disturbing relationship to Lockean liberalism: although accepting it as a basis of the American political tradition, which he would strongly identify with, he was compelled to embrace it in a qualified manner, so as not to subvert his own claims about natural human inequality.

in turn, drew a parallel between Lockean individualism and Calhoun's pluralism. Perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of the connection between Locke's and Calhoun's ideas has been offered by Hartz, who emphasized the appeal of the Lockean state of nature to Calhoun on the level of states in spite of Calhoun's explicit denial of such a state as well as Lockean natural rights. Carl Degler identifies Calhoun as a liberal thinker on account of his theory of the concurrent majority, based on the presumption that in its recognition of minority interests, the political majority is led by reason, a liberal trait.[6]

Calhoun, nevertheless, adopted and employed Lockean language in more ways than recognized by these scholars, appropriating idioms of the Lockean language as they are featured in John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, in a number of instances, modifying them. I will concentrate on those elements of convergence between Locke's and Calhoun's liberal idioms that have received no attention in existing scholarship. The connection between Lockean liberalism and Calhoun's thought yet unexplored can be problematized through the following topics: Calhoun's conception of liberty and rationality; the links between property, slavery and government; his appropriation of the Lockean notions of self-preservation and the rights of revolution and resistance; the significance of majority rule in his theory of government; and finally, the problem of the state of nature, social contract and sovereignty. I contend that these issues offer points of convergence between Calhoun's and Locke's political theory.

Calhoun appropriated these important idioms from Lockean terminology through their being embedded in the American political rhetorical tradition. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss Locke's ideas together with their appearance in the American context from the period of the Revolution to Calhoun's time.

Locke's significance in the making of the USA and its political value system has long been a subject of discussion. Concentrating on his *Two Treatises of Government*, especially on the *Second Treatise,* scholars have considered how and to what extent his concepts of natural rights, the law of nature, the social compact and related issues informed documents of the early national period, often claiming exclusive interpretive force of Lockean liberalism in explaining early modern American political thought.[7]

---

[6] Paul F. Boller, Jr., "Calhoun on Liberty," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 66 (1967): 395–408; Gillis J. Harp, "Taylor, Calhoun, and the Decline of a Theory of Political Disharmony," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46 (1985): 107–20; Darryl Baskin, "The Pluralist Vision of John C. Calhoun," *Polity* 2 (1969): 49–66; Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955; San Diego, etc.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991), 158–66. Citations refer to the 1991 edition.; Carl Degler, *Place over Time: The Continuity of Southern Distinctiveness* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1977), 86–87.

[7] These works include Carl L. Becker, *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas* (1922; repr., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951); Clinton Rossiter, *Seedtime of the Republic: The Origin of the American Tradition of Political Liberty* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1953). On the American revolutionaries' adoption of the Lockean concept of the state of nature, see ibid. 364. For the same in the case of John Taylor of Caroline, see Leslie Wharton, *Polity and the Public Good: Conflicting Theories of Republican Government in the New Nation* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1979), 15–16. Mainly as a result of the republican reconsideration of the roots and character of the founding era, most recent proponents of the Lockean liberal paradigm give testimony to the presence of Locke in America in one way or another, at the same time admitting the relevance of

Locke's premises about the natural rights of life, liberty and property and their ubiquitous character became influential in North America from the mid-eighteenth century on. Nevertheless, the concept of liberty had gained increasing preeminence even prior to the revolutionary period. The lack of constraints on the ownership and exchange of land, the denial of feudal primogeniture and entail as well as the introduction of religious tolerance in some of the colonies can be seen as Locke's principles put into practice. American colonists drew extensively upon the English natural rights tradition, which emphasized the sanctity of these rights in the face of governmental power.[8]

The Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson, was embedded in the Lockean natural rights tradition as formulated in the *Second Treatise*. As Forrest McDonald writes, "Almost to a man, Patriots were agreed that the proper ends of government were to protect people in their lives, liberty, and property." Similarly, Michael P. Zuckert claims that "Doctrinally and verbally . . . the Declaration and the *Two Treatises* are remarkably alike. It is clear that by the time of the Revolution the American Whigs had adopted the Lockean political philosophy."[9]

---

other intellectual strains. See Michael P. Zuckert, "Founder of the Natural Rights Republic," in *Thomas Jefferson and the Politics of Nature*, ed. Thomas S. Engeman (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 11–58; Zuckert, *The Natural Rights Republic: Studies in the Foundation of the American Political Tradition* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996); Zuckert, *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); Steven M. Dworetz, *The Unvarnished Doctrine: Locke, Liberalism and the American Revolution* (1990; Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994); Jerome Huyler, *Locke in America: The Moral Philosophy of the Founding Era* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Patrick Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundations of Liberalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); Joyce Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1984); Paul A. Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern*, vol. 3, *Inventions of Prudence: Constituting the American Regime* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994); and Forrest McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution* (Lawrence, Kans.: The University Press of Kansas, 1985). Even Pocock himself did not deny the importance of Locke in eighteenth-century Anglo-American political thought, but he associated Lock with "radical," off-mainstream ideology, demarcating his use from the "official" one, having no part to play in the contemporary virtue—commerce debate. See Pocock, "The Myth of John Locke and the Obsession with Liberalism," in J. G. A. Pocock, and Pocock, and Richard Ashcraft, *John Locke: Papers Read at a Clark Library Seminar 10 December 1977* (University of California, Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1980), 7–8, 17.

[8] Huyler, *Locke in America*, 177–87, and passim; Benjamin Fletcher Wright, Jr., *American Interpretations of Natural Law: A Study in the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931; repr., New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 9.

[9] McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, 1; Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 18; see also Allen Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration of Independence: Origins, Philosophy and Theology* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 41–56; Ronald Hamowy, "Jefferson and the Scottish Enlightenment: A Critique of Garry Wills' *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence*," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 36 (1979): 512–14; Jaffa, *New Birth of Freedom*, 410; and Morton White, *The Philosophy of the American Revolution* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), passim. Gary Wills' attempt to connect the Declaration with Scottish moral philosophy was to suggest another alternative tradition. See Garry Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (Doubleday and Company, 1978; repr., New York: Random House, 1978). Citations refer to the Random House edition. However, as Ronald Hamowy has persuasively argued, the father of this tradition, Francis Hutcheson, referred to by Wills himself, adopted several Lockean tenets which thus appear in the Declaration. See Hamowy, "Jefferson and the Scottish Enlightenment," 508–509. In a similar vein, trying to dissociate the Declaration from Locke, Wills connects it with Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* (Wills, *Inventing America*, 207). Yet, it was also a writing conceptually informed by Locke's theory of natural rights.

In the spirit of the Declaration, the U.S. Constitution of 1787 was a reassertion of Lockean tenets. According to the spirit of the document, government was established to protect rights as natural rights. Furthermore, together with other Americans of the time, the Federalists retained Locke's tenet about the equal creation of humans, "deserving of equal protection under law."[10]

This tradition based on Locke also affected Southern slaveowners' political ideas. As Louis Hartz emphasizes, however strenuously the southern proslavery political thinkers of the antebellum period strove to denounce the Lockean-Jeffersonian liberal tradition of natural rights, "Locke . . . was too real, too empirical, too historical in America to attack." This strong presence of Locke, in turn, compelled slaveholding southerners to develop a proslavery argument that could be accommodated to the Lockean theory of natural rights.[11] It is no peculiarity, then, that Calhoun also appropriated elements of the Lockean tradition.

CALHOUN AND THE LOCKEAN STATE OF NATURE

Calhoun's ambiguous relationship to Locke is truly expressed through his rejection of the state of nature, which he, nevertheless, understands as being rather different from Locke's own construction of it. In fact, the original Lockean state of nature exhibits several features also advocated by Calhoun himself. Calhoun's Locke stands for a "hypothetical and misnamed state of nature" that is asocial and hence characterized by unlimited liberty. Accordingly, such a reading of Locke turns the state of nature into anarchy or war. Calhoun's eradication of the law of nature from his application of the Lockean language warrants this view as well as the negation of its logical consequence, the natural equality of men.[12]

One of the reasons that Calhoun refutes Locke's state of nature as having real existence is that, as he claims, it is a state of perfect freedom. He describes Locke's state of nature as "a state of individuality," where "[e]very man would be his own master, and might do just as he pleased."[13] Such a state cannot exist since, according to Calhoun, man is "by nature social,"[14] and only an individual by him/herself can live in perfect freedom without subjecting others or being subjected to them. Calhoun also rejects the concept of the natural state of man because, in his view, it is identical with anarchy, and, as he argues, "any, the worst form of government, is better than anarchy." For him, the natural state of man is the social and the political, with government necessary "to protect society against anarchy within or destruction without."[15] In other words, Calhoun identifies anarchy with the absence of government, the

---

10 Scott Douglas Gerber, *To Secure These Rights: The Declaration of Independence and Constitutional Interpretation* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 19–94; Richard C. Sinopoli, *The Foundations of American Citizenship: Liberalism, the Constitution, and Civic Virtue* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 7; quotation in Huyler, *Locke in America*, 261.

11 Hartz, *Liberal Tradition*, 153, 151.

12 *Papers of Calhoun*, 25:537.

13 Ibid., 25:535–36; see also *Disquisition*, 39.

14 *Papers of Calhoun*, 25:536.

15 Ibid., 25:536.

bedrock of political society. If there is no government, there is no control of individual liberty, which, in turn, leads to the destruction of society (and the individual). Calhoun, then, constructs the state of nature as a pre-political formation that can have no existence. This is why he terms it "hypothetical:" he identifies it with the state of anarchy or no government, which, at the same time, has no natural, i. e. preceding, existence before the social state.

Interestingly, a closer look at Locke's theory reveals that Calhoun's painful awareness of the limits of liberty is a far cry from the former's concern with the problems of unlimited freedom. The movement from the individual to the government of the concurrent majority is not peculiar to Calhoun: such a movement is a crucial organizing principle in Locke's *Second Treatise*, where it is, in fact, the failure of constraint of the individual self in the state of nature, when judging in cases involving himself, that necessitates a third party and thus civil government.

In fact, Calhoun offers a misreading of Locke's state of nature, identifying it with the state of unrestrained liberty, a claim that Locke himself clearly denies in the *Second Treatise.* As opposed to Calhoun's perception, for Locke, in the state of nature, the law of nature exerts constraints upon man's freedom by preventing the invasion of the natural rights of others. The state of nature is not the state of perfect freedom, or as Locke says, "*not a State of Licence,*" because it is regulated by the law of nature.[16] Individuals are bound by the law of nature, thus far from being "free to do as they please," as Calhoun argues. (This is, in fact, the main reason that he calls Locke's state of nature "purely hypothetical.")[17]

Another point in Calhoun's reading of Locke concerns the role of government. Thomas L. Pangle argues that for Locke, the major attribute of the state of nature is that it is without government, that is, it is a state precariously preserved only through the law of nature. This precariousness, in turn, generates the demand for government. With Locke, the state of nature, in Pangle's words, "is just beneath the surface of all civil existence and explains the *raison d'être* of that existence. The latent becomes actual when law and order break down, or when men find themselves temporarily beyond the reach of the 'terror' of civil government."[18]

Discussing Calhoun's conception of individual, society and government, H. Lee Cheek suggests that for Calhoun, all the possible means of "restraint" in the polity ultimately fail to work on the various levels of the individual, society and government. From this failure comes the need for the government of the concurrent majority, which is to provide a harmony of diverse political forces by limiting these spheres of power. Cheek lucidly demonstrates the movement in the *Disquisition* from self-motivated individuals in society through the need for government to concurrent majoritarian rule, each move driven by the failure of implemented

---

16 *Second Treatise,* sec. 6. Unless indicated otherwise, emphases in the Locke quotations will be from the original.

17 *Papers of Calhoun*, 25:536; see also *Disquisition*, 39.

18 Thomas L. Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American Founders and the Philosophy of* Locke (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 246–47.

restraint. He also marks this as a major trait of Calhoun's work, suggesting that the successive shifts are the results of successive failures to achieve political stability.[19]

At the same time, in a vein similar to Calhoun, Locke is concerned with failure of the means of restraint. The law of nature is a restraining force; however it cannot fully work in the state of nature due to the natural executive power of man: executing God's law when it affects one's or a friend's own case may lead to injustice since man is selfish, motivated by "Self-Love."[20] This necessitates the social compact, erecting a civil government providing independent judicial and executive power to protect individuals in their estates. The main rationale for establishing civil government, then, is fundamentally to provide impartial legislation, execution and judiciary power. In this way, as Locke says, "all private judgement of every particular Member being excluded, the community comes to be Umpire, by settled standing Rules, indifferent, and the same to all Parties." For him, the major criterion of "Political Society" is the community assuming these powers. Where there is no such common judge, that society is in the state of nature.[21]

Furthermore, Calhoun's own understanding of the natural, that is the social, state of man exhibits several overlaps with Locke's language. As we have seen, Calhoun offers the social state as man's natural state; for him, man is a social animal. Yet, for all the differences from Calhoun, with Locke, man is also a social being even when in the state of nature: "God having made Man such a creature, that, in his own Judgement, it was not good for him to be alone, put him under strong Obligations of Necessity, Convenience, and inclination to drive him into *Society*."[22]

Government, as envisioned by both Calhoun and Locke, serves to deal with a society in which individual liberty may go out of control. For both thinkers, selfish sentiments of the individual, with no governmental control, will result in a state inimical to the existence of individual and society. For Locke, selfish and partial individuals in the state of nature executing the law of nature in their own law cases necessitates government as an impartial arbiter; Calhoun's individuals in the "state" of anarchy, being a threat to society and ultimately to themselves, also require government as a controlling body.

In either case, then, whether it is Locke's state of nature or Calhoun's social state, the natural state of man is neither of unlimited liberty nor asocial. In the first place, as we have seen, Calhoun's "hypothetical" natural state is, in fact, not that of Locke, whose individuals are not "free to do as they please," being under the constraints of the law of nature. In the second place, Calhoun's "empirical" social state is identical with that of Locke in terms of conditions regulating liberty and equality.

---

19 See Cheek, *Calhoun and Popular Rule*, chap. 3; see also 11–13.

20 *Second Treatise*, sec. 13.

21 See ibid., sec. 87. Calhoun obviously went beyond Locke in that he did not find the consent of the governed a sufficient mode of restraint on governmental power. Expanding republican skepticism from the individual to the majority, Calhoun also found the element of selfish unrestraint on the level of (majority) government and attempts to tackle it through the concurrent majority.

22 *Second Treatise*, sec. 77; see also Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 24; Zuckert, *New Republicanism*, 286; McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, 62.

What Calhoun also ignored in connection with Locke, although he never came to discuss it, is the latter's admission of the inequality of individuals in the concrete sense. Calhoun's claim about the state of nature being "hypothetical," in fact, does not necessarily equal a complete refutation of Locke as far as the connection between liberty and equality is concerned. At the same time, while discarding the natural right of equal liberty, Calhoun drew upon Locke's understanding of the connection between rationality as a criterion for liberty and self-government, an issue that I now turn to.

LIBERTY AND RATIONALITY

Paul F. Boller argues that, for Calhoun, throughout most of his political career, the liberty of the individual "was intimately bound up with the liberty of the community—nation, section, state—to which one belonged," and it was subordinated to the latter. First it was the nation, then the section and the state, and finally the few as masters whose liberty he was concerned about.[23] Nonetheless, perhaps it is more important to point out that as far as liberty is concerned, Calhoun makes a clear distinction between those entitled to and those unworthy of either kind of liberty.

Calhoun's conception of liberty distinguishes him from the American liberal tradition, based on the tenet that liberty is a natural, hence inalienable, right of the individual. Calhoun, as seen above, denies the existence of the state of nature and therefore any right derived from it that would be ubiquitous, available for everyone. Calhoun's denial of the state of nature is linked to his assumption about the inequality of individuals: some of them are entitled to liberty, others not.[24] Boller also compares Calhoun's notion of liberty and Abraham Lincoln's understanding of it. While for Calhoun it denoted privilege for "the aristocratic few," Lincoln regarded it as a "promise." Lincoln, according to Boller, believed that liberty and equality, because of the reality of black chattel slavery, did not exist as facts in contemporary America, but "as moral ideals to be endlessly striven for in the present and in the future."[25]

As I will argue below, in a sense, through his very strong emphasis on progress and the perfection of the moral and intellectual capacities of the individual, Calhoun also suggested the notion of liberty as a promise for those lacking it. Therefore, he can be claimed to have extended Locke's argument about the development of the child's rational faculty as a prerequisite to his full enjoyment of freedom. Thus, although Calhoun's conception of liberty is

---

[23] Boller, "Calhoun on Liberty," 395–96, 397, 398, 406–407.

[24] This has been pointed out by several writers. See, for instance, Charles Edward Merriam, "The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun," in *Studies in Southern History and Politics* 13, ed. James W. Garner (New York: Columbia University Press 1914; Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1964), 328–30. Citations are to the Kennikat Press edition.; Hartz, *Liberal Tradition*, 145–72; Robert A. Garson, "Proslavery as Political Theory: The Examples of John C. Calhoun and George Fitzhugh," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 84 (1985), 200, 202–203; Boller, "Calhoun on Liberty," 400–403; Vernon L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, vol. 2, *The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800–1860* (1927; repr., New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1954), 73–76; and August O. Spain, *The Political Theory of John C. Calhoun* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1951), 84–89.

[25] Boller, "Calhoun on Liberty," 407.

fundamentally different from the Lockean version in that for him it is closely bound up with the idea of inequality, he justifies this yoking by means of Lockean language. The argument that there is a correlation between the unequal moral and intellectual level of development of the individual or a group of people and the degree of liberty they are entitled is arguably derived from the Lockean idiom about the intimate link between the individual's liberty and rationality.

A basic tenet of Lockean liberalism is the close relationship between equality and liberty. Locke emphasizes human equality in the state of nature, in the sense that the equality of liberty characterizes man. As Zuckert puts is, "Human beings are naturally equal in their original freedom."[26] At the same time, Locke admits that although individuals are equal in the sense that they are equally entitled to natural freedom and cannot dominate one another, they cannot be equal in other respects: "*Excellency of Parts and Merit* may place others above the Common Level: *Birth* may subject some, and *Alliance* or *Benefits* others, to pay an Observance to those to whom Nature, Gratitude or other Respects may have made it due."[27]

Yet, natural equality eliminates such differences. In the state of nature, every individual is entitled to the same degree of liberty; this liberty is limited only by the law of nature, which the individual is capable of conceiving by means of reason.[28] In this way, Locke makes rationality the condition of freedom. Only individuals with the full capacity to reason are capable of conceiving either the law of nature or positive laws. As Locke argues about the individual, it is the "State of Maturity wherein he might be suppos'd capable to know that Law, that so he might keep his Actions within the bounds of it."[29] According to Locke, the child does not yet possess this degree of reason and, consequently, his liberty is limited not so much by the laws which, lacking full reason, he could not obey, but by the fact that he is under the authority of his father: his life, liberty and property are under the father's control.[30] Until reason is fully developed in the child, and he reaches maturity, his liberty is limited by his father. "Thus we are *born Free*," says Locke, "as we are born Rational; not that we have actually the Exercise of either; Age that brings one, brings with it the other too. . . . A *Child* is *Free* by his Father's Title, by his Father's Understanding, which is to govern him, till he hath it of his own."[31] As McDonald also points out, with Locke, each individual starts with a clean slate, and it is education and their conditions that are to result in differentiation with regard to their identities as adults.[32]

---

26 Zuckert, *New Republicanism*, 16; see also McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, 53.

27 *Second Treatise*, sec. 54.

28 Ibid., sec. 4–6; and Laslett, introduction to *Two Treatises*, 94–95.

29 *Second Treatise*, sec. 59.

30 Ibid., sec. 59.

31 Ibid., sec. 61; see also ibid., secs. 58, 170.

32 McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, 53. On the centrality of the child's dependence on parental custody due to his nonrational condition in Anglo-American Enlightenment political and legal thought see Holly Brewer, *By Birth or Consent: Children, Law, and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

Locke traces the lack of a fully developed rational faculty in the child to the Calvinist argument that although Adam, the first man, being perfect in the prelapsarian state, was in possession of a share of divine reason, his descendants, that is, all individuals brought to life following him were born without that capacity: they "are all born Infants, weak and helpless, without Knowledge or understanding."[33] Liberty without reason, which enables the individual to conceive of the limits of that liberty, at the same time, leads to his degradation. In Locke's words: "To turn him loose to an unrestrain'd Liberty, before he has Reason to guide him, is not the allowing him the privilege of his Nature to be free; but to thrust him out amongst Brutes, and abandon him to a state as wretched, and as much beneath that of a Man as theirs."[34] In other words, providing the child with liberty prematurely equals excluding him from civil society even before he has the opportunity to enter it.

Thus, for Locke, the child, with the help of his parents, gradually develops his understanding of the law of reason, learns how to exercise his own reason and to obey that law. Until he becomes capable of doing so he has no free will; his liberty is limited by his parents, who, as fully rational beings can comprehend the law of reason. It is only when the child reaches maturity, adulthood and the full capacity to exercise his reason that his father's authority over him ceases to exist because he can understand the law that limits his liberty.[35]

Colonial thinkers adopting Lockean liberty also linked it to human rationality, contending that reason makes it possible for the individual to act independently without encroaching upon others' liberty. This notion was accompanied by the idea of self-improvement, the individual's capacity to enhance his moral and intellectual abilities and retained its significance into and beyond the revolutionary period.[36] Colonials also understood Locke's emphasis on rationality as a prerequisite for liberty. As one of his American followers claimed, musing on equality and liberty: "Altho true it is that children are not born in this full State of Equality, yet they are born to it. . . . So that we are born Free as we are born Rational."[37] In asserting the rights of American colonists, for instance, in 1764, James Otis claimed: "In order to form an idea of the natural rights of the Colonists, I presume it will be granted that they are men, the common children of the same Creator with their brethren of Great-Britain. Nature has placed all such in a state of equality and perfect freedom, to act within the bounds of the laws of nature

---

33 *Second Treatise*, sec. 58.

34 Ibid., sec. 63.

35 Raymond Polin, "John Locke's Conception of Freedom," in *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives: A Collection of New Essays*, ed. John W. Yolton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 17; see also Laslett, introduction to *Two Treatises*, 95; and Pangle, *Modern Republicanism*, 224. Such a conception of the link between the degree of the individual's rational capacity, his liberty and the development of human understanding is rooted in Locke's anthropology and his theory of the human mind discussed in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. For him, the individual is born without inherent ideas, possessing only the faculties of reason and sense-experience (see Hans Aarsleff, "The State of Nature and the Nature of Man in Locke," in *John* Locke: *Problems and Perspectives: A Collection of New Essays*, ed. John W. Yolton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 108.

36 Huyler, *Locke in America*, 186–87, 198, 207; 220.

37 Quoted in Fletcher Wright, *Natural Law*, 46–47.

and reason, without consulting the will or regarding the humor, the passions or whims of any other man, unless they are formed into a society or body politic."[38]

The clearest expression of the Lockean version of liberty during the Revolution is contained in the Declaration of Independence, which expresses the natural equality of men in Lockean fashion. However, in the making of the Constitution of 1787 Locke was also evoked to justify the protection of the "natural rights of individuals."[39] The Constitution also has other Lockean features: the Preamble, for instance, echoing the Lockean principle of "the consent of the governed," or the Bill of Rights "most concerned with" natural rights, the first Amendment securing "the individual's natural rights to liberty and the pursuit of happiness," and the fifth concerning the right to property.[40]

Various state constitutions incorporated elements of the natural rights theory. The Bills of Rights in most state constitutions included Locke's natural rights of life, liberty and property, and well into the 1820s, Lockean principles found their way into political discourse. The debates of Virginia's constitutional convention of 1829–30 revealed a very strong concern with property rights, for instance.[41]

The Anti-Federalists and later the Jeffersonian Republicans also utilized the Lockean concept of liberty when emphasizing the importance of individual rights and liberties as well as the need to protect these from the federal government's centralizing tendencies.[42] This concern over the protection of liberty from government became characteristic of Andrew Jackson's rhetoric in the early nineteenth century, too, and he held, in Robert Rimini's words, "that individual freedom was best protected by a strong, united nation."[43] By this time, for Americans, liberty included Lockean elements, meaning that "no white man would be subject to the arbitrary rule of another" or the "freedom of the individual to improve himself, both morally and materially; freedom from an established religion" and also "that liberty was not the same as 'license,' or the absence of all personal or social restraints."[44] Furthermore, those proslavery thinkers who defended slavery on natural rights grounds had to face the paradox of claiming that certain men were not entitled to natural rights. They tried to find a

---

[38] James Otis, "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved," in *Some Political Writings of James Otis*, part 1, collected with an introduction by Charles F. Mullett. *The University of Missouri Studies. A Quarterly of Research* 4 (1929), 65–66.

[39] Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration*, 58–59, 60; quoted phrase in Fletcher Wright, *Natural Law*, 129.

[40] Gerber, *To Secure These Rights*, 60, 68, 69.

[41] Fletcher Wright, *Natural Law*, 112–23, 209; Richard Schlatter, *Private Property: The History of an Idea* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1951), 188–89. Most conspicuously, the constitution of Virginia articulated natural rights as stated by the Declaration (Fletcher Wright, *Natural Law*, 116).

[42] Garrett Ward Sheldon, *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 83; and Huyler, *Locke in America*, 266–75.

[43] Robert V. Remini, *The Legacy of Andrew Jackson: Essays on Democracy, Indian Removal and Slavery* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 12.

[44] Harry L. Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), 43–44.

way out by implicitly regarding blacks as naturally inferior beings, appropriate for enslavement.[45]

As a counter-explanation for the presence of Lockean language in the early republic, it has been suggested that at the time of the American founding, alongside the natural rights tradition, colonials, regarding themselves as British subjects, also championed "the rights of Englishmen," derived from English common law and custom; Lockean natural rights were affirmed alongside the Englishmen's rights tradition, colonists often fusing them with the more abstract, Lockean concept.[46] However, even when revolutionary colonials referred both to Englishmen's rights and natural rights, the latter seemed more comprehensive for them. They regarded English law as an expression of natural, unalienable rights but by no means thought it exhaustive. As Bernard Bailyn writes: "Laws, grants, and charters merely stated the essentials (which everyone summarized, with minor variations in phrasing, as 'personal security, personal liberty, and private property') insofar, and only insofar, as they had come under attack in the course of English history. They marked out the minimum, not the maximum boundaries of right."[47] Furthermore, in the course of their conflict with the mother country, revolutionary colonists gradually shifted their emphasis from Englishmen's liberties to natural rights and the republican concept of positive liberty as they realized that their argument about the Englishmen's rights was receiving no favorable response from the Crown. They were compelled to employ the natural rights of Locke in order to appeal to the whole of mankind.[48]

With independence won, rights other than those derived from natural ones ceased to inform arguments of the Americans. As McDonald argues, "to claim rights on the basis of natural law was to go outside the forms and norms of English law and the squint toward independence. . . . When the decision for independence was made, all claims to rights that were based upon royal grants, the common law, and the British Constitution became theoretically irrelevant."[49]

For instance, references to Magna Carta in the spirit of Englishmen's rights could no longer make sense: the document derives all particular liberties from the king, not from nature, as Locke's Declaration does. Also, through the act of declaring independence, Amer-

---

[45] William B. Scott, *In Pursuit of Happiness: American Conceptions of Property from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1977), 102.

[46] See McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, chap. 2; Jack N. Rakove, *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 293; and Huyler, *Locke in America*, 221.

[47] Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1967; enlarged ed., Cambridge, Mass. and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1992), 77, quotation on 78. In other words, when compared to Englishmen's rights, natural rights enjoyed precedence over the former. See also Zuckert's *Natural Rights Republic*, 110–11, where he points out Rakove's source, John Philip Reid's ignorance of the natural rights references in his own text.

[48] See Appleby, *Capitalism*, 16–22; and Rahe, *Republics*, 13. Garrett Ward Sheldon emphasizes a similar shift to natural rights language in the case of Jefferson. See his *Political Philosophy of Jefferson*, 186.

[49] McDonald *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, 13, 58, quotation on 41; see also McDonald, *States' Rights and the Union: Imperium in Imperio, 1776–1876* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 7.

icans created a new identity for themselves, diametrically opposed to that of their once fellow countrymen, thus ceasing to regard themselves as Englishmen.[50]

The key to the presence of Lockean liberalism in Calhoun's discussion of liberty lies in his understanding of man and society. One of the basic premises in his *Disquisition* is that man is born into the social state, which is necessary for him fully to develop "his moral and intellectual faculties or raise himself, in the scale of being, much above the level of the brute creation."[51] It is in the social state, according to Calhoun, that the individual can best develop his faculties: "To man, he [i.e. God] has assigned the social and political state as best adapted to develop the great capacities and faculties, intellectual and moral, with which he has endowed him."[52]

At the same time, he argues, there are differences between individuals in the degree of the development of their moral and intellectual faculties. In Calhoun's words, "[A]s individuals differ greatly from each other in intelligence, sagacity, energy, perseverance, skill, habits of industry and economy, physical power, position and opportunity, the necessary effect of leaving all free to exert themselves to better their condition, must be a corresponding inequality between those who may possess these qualities and advantages in a high degree and those who may be deficient in them."[53] This inequality of condition is to be accompanied by a corresponding inequality of liberty, argues Calhoun. For instance, absolute monarchy, being the simplest form of government allowing the lowest degree of liberty, requires the minimum level of intelligence from the people.[54] Furthermore, individuals, born into the social state, are not born free: they are under the control of their parents and the laws of the state. In his words: "instead of being born free and equal, [men] are born subject, not only to parental authority, but to the laws and institutions of the country where born, and under whose protection they draw their first breath."[55]

This assertion, however, is, in fact, not a denial but an appropriation of Locke's notion about the limits of liberty in the social state. As seen above, for Locke, liberty is not without limits in the social state: laws and parental authority place restrictions on it. Calhoun's claim regarding the infant's relation to liberty can also be argued to be an adaptation of Locke's proposition about the link between reason and liberty.

Calhoun provides a more detailed exploration of this issue in his "Speech on the Oregon Bill," delivered in the Senate on June 27, 1848, to rebut the proposed amendments to restrict

---

50 See Edward J. Erler, "The Great Fence to Liberty: The Right to Property in the American Founding," in *Liberty, Property, and the Foundations of the American Constitution*, ed. Ellen Frankel Paul and Howard Dickman (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York, 1989), 49, 60–61n28. Englishmen's rights expressed privileges granted by the monarch, difficult to sustain when he no longer had power over his formal subjects.

51 *Disquisition*, 7.

52 Ibid., 10.

53 Ibid., 38–39.

54 Ibid., 38, 54.

55 Ibid., 39, 40.

the right of southerners to move with their slave property into the Oregon Territory.[56] Here, in a vein similar to Locke, he emphasizes the child's inability to use his rational faculty. Ironically, he argues this when striving, at the same time, to refute the Lockean-Jeffersonian proposition about equality. "Men are not born," he says. "Infants are born. They grow to be men. . . . They are not born free." Calhoun also denies the principle of the equal creation of men as asserted in the Declaration: "All men are not created. According to the Bible, only two, a man and a woman, ever were, and of these one was pronounced subordinate to the other."[57]

There is a qualitative difference between child and adult in the social state, which, according to Calhoun, manifests itself in the presence or lack of reason and liberty. As he continues, "While infants they are incapable of freedom, being destitute alike of the capacity of thinking and acting, without which there can be no freedom. Besides, they are necessarily born subject to their parents, and remain so among all people, savage and civilized, until the development of their intellect and physical capacity enables them to take care of themselves. They grow to all the freedom of which the condition in which they were born permits, by growing to be men."[58] Thus, similarly to Locke, Calhoun makes the appropriate degree of rationality indispensable to liberty, but whereas in the *Second Treatise* the development of this faculty is confined to childhood, with Calhoun, moral and intellectual development is extended into adulthood in the case of the individual. Hence, it seems reasonable to argue that he appropriates and develops Locke's conception of childhood, in which learning and education play a crucial role in the development of the individual, extending the idea to the world of adults. Calhoun also differs from Locke in arguing for the unequal level of development of the individuals' moral and rational faculties and their unequal conditions including their differences in liberty. Yet, like Locke, he acknowledges the possibility of the (infant) individual reaching the condition of liberty by means of education, improving his faculties.

For Calhoun, then, liberty seems intimately bound up with progress. If, with Locke, liberty is a potential which can be realized by every human individual like a child developing into rational adulthood, with Calhoun, it is rather a promise, the fulfillment of which depends on the successful perfection of the individual, whose development, as opposed to what Locke contends, is not completed by the end of infancy. Instead, for Calhoun, the development of

---

[56] *Papers of Calhoun*, 25:513–39; and John Niven, *John C. Calhoun and the Price of the Union: A Biography* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 315.

[57] *Papers of Calhoun*, 25:534.

[58] Ibid. The lack of fully developed reason in the child probably also accounts for Calhoun's understanding of childhood as a state of low level "self-knowledge and awareness" (cf. Brown, *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics*, 230) Here, in fact, Calhoun discusses two different norms fused in his understanding of development: one is abstract—children, independent of any culture are to be able "to take care of themselves" to count as adults, whereas, in turn, freedom for adults is qualitatively dependent on their "conditions." In other words, independence from parents is a ubiquitous criterion of abstract freedom for children in order to count as adults, whereas different conditions result in different degrees of freedom, more in a concrete sense. For Calhoun, then, when it comes to freedom and independence, the adult world is diversified, whereas that of children is not; his abstract world of the universal child is identical with that of Locke, his world of adults, however, is not, it being not universal but concrete, based on differences admitted by Locke which, for Calhoun, eliminate the principle of natural equality of adult men.

the moral and intellectual faculties is never-ending in the life of the individual, and inequality plays the crucial role in development as the motive for emulation. It drives the individual to improve his condition, thus contributing to civilization and progress. As he argues, the "inequality of condition, while it is a necessary consequence of liberty, is, at the same time, indispensable to progress . . . [since] the main spring to progress is, the desire of individuals to better their condition. . . . It is, indeed, this inequality of condition between the front and rear ranks, in the march of progress, which gives so strong an impulse to the former to maintain their position, and to the latter to press forward into their files. This gives to progress its greatest impulse."[59]

In his conception of human bondage, Calhoun extended to blacks Locke's understanding of childhood as the period of the individual's rational and moral development, connecting it with the notion of liberty being a precondition to progress. He, in the Lockean manner, also talked about children being under the guidance of their parents until they were developed enough "to take care of themselves,"[60] and he employed such notions in his understanding of slavery. From the 1830s onward, with the emergence of abolitionism, Calhoun took great pains to quiet voices denouncing slavery for its degrading effect on black slaves. In response to the abolitionists, he argued that slavery in the South had a beneficial effect on the moral and intellectual development of black slaves, since through it, they had reached a "comparative level of civilized condition" and their emancipation would lead to the destruction of one race or the other. As far as black slaves were concerned, he claimed that "Never before has the black race of Central Africa, from the dawn of history to the present day, attained a condition so civilized and so improved, not only physically, but morally and intellectually." This is why he declared that slavery "is, instead of an evil, a good—a positive good."[61] He, in this way, attributed the black slaves' achievement of civilization to the paternalistic nature of the relationship between master and slave, that is, the extension of the father-child relationship, in which the development of the latter was supposedly guaranteed.

The subjection of black slaves to white masters was also essential to the social and political order of the South, according to Calhoun. He believed abolitionism posed a threat to the South by destroying the existing race relations "by raising the inferior to be the favored and superior, and sinking the superior to the inferior and despised."[62] Abolition would have disastrous consequences for slaves, because they would be raised to a level of liberty inappropriate to their developmental level: "the effect of what is called abolition, where the number is few, is not to raise the inferior race to the condition of freemen, but to deprive the negro of the guardian care of his owner, subject to all the depression and oppression belonging to his inferior condition."[63]

---

59 *Disquisition*, 38–39. Harry V. Jaffa contends that American revolutionaries understood the "enlightenment" of citizens as a prerequisite for free government. Jaffa, *New Birth of Freedom*, 419. With his emphasis on reason as a basis of self-government, then, Calhoun was clearly part of an American tradition.

60 *Papers of Calhoun*, 25:534.

61 Ibid., 13:395; see also ibid., 13:63; ibid., 14:84; ibid., 15:99; ibid., 16:112, 342, 349; and ibid., 18:278.

62 Ibid., 25:667; see also ibid., 24:190.

63 Ibid., 19:576; see also ibid., 18:278.

To provide blacks with liberty that they were unsuited for would have been destructive to social relations, according to Calhoun's logic, and the improvement of blacks would be inhibited. Their level of development was not sufficient to enable them to live in civil society. Calhoun, however, did not believe that black slaves were capable of infinite advancement or of achieving a degree of development that would make slavery unnecessary.[64] He did not see blacks as being capable of growing up, leaving their supposedly childlike conditions. Hence, he constructed slavery as perpetual (Lockean) childhood for blacks.

In this way, Calhoun tempered his racism by connecting it to Lockean and contemporary American discourse about progress and self-improvement. He strove to justify this inequality by connecting the development of human rationality with liberty, which was Lockean language, extended into the time of adulthood.

SLAVERY, PROPERTY, AND GOVERNMENT

A close reading of Calhoun's texts reveals that he appropriated Lockean language in his explanation of the connections among slavery, property, government and the rights of revolution and resistance. What I attempt to show below is how the concept of property and the links between slavery and property, as established by Locke, were exploited by Calhoun in his defense of slavery, as well as how he applied the Lockean rights of revolution and resistance in his defiance of the federal government.

Calhoun's theory of property right is accessible through his usage of the concept and not through his premises, which, indeed, were rooted in the denial of Lockean natural rights. Nonetheless, his usage does fall in line with contemporary American understandings of the Lockean argument. This theory of property did involve the Lockean notion of its legitimate acquisition through one's labor and thus self.

---

[64] Jaffa, *New Birth of Freedom*, 420. George M. Fredrickson argues that the claim about black inferiority as a constant trait emerged as part of the "positive good" argument, in response to abolitionism in the 1830s. Proslavery writers held that slavery could not totally eradicate "natural" inferiority, only ameliorate it. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971; repr. Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 43, 47, 53. The "unchangeability of the black character" was a consensus view among white planters of the antebellum South, and "even those apologists who accepted the possibility that blacks might someday be ready for freedom maintained that additional centuries of servitude would be required to transform the essential Negro character" (ibid., 50–51; 55). Calhoun's positing of slavery as permanent childhood fitted in with the American tradition. For instance, in the minds of revolutionary Americans, slavery differed from the state of childhood only in that the latter meant temporary authority of the parent over the child. Otherwise the control was necessary for the same reason in either case: the lack of developed rationality. Kenneth S. Greenberg, "Revolutionary Ideology and the Proslavery Argument: The Abolition of Slavery in Antebellum South Carolina," *The Journal of Southern History* 42 (1976), 369. By the nineteenth century black slaves in the South were seen as inferior but human creatures, yet, at the same time, basically incapable of existing outside bondage. As Willie Lee Rose argues, "they were to be treated as children expected never to grow up." Willie Lee Rose, "The Domestication of Domestic Slavery," in Willie Lee Rose, *Slavery and Freedom*, ed. William W. Freehling (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 25. See also Jeffrey Robert Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670–1837* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 181, 213 Jefferson, for instance, drew a parallel between the condition of black slaves and that of children, being degraded, unable to provide for themselves (Jefferson to Edward Coles, August 25, 1814, in *PTJ*, 546).

Property is probably the most crucial concept in Locke's political philosophy. Its restricted usage denotes possessions, while in an extensive sense it includes man's "Life, Liberty and Estate." Fundamentally, property provides the reason that men enter civil society: they intend to preserve it by erecting a civil government.[65] One of the basic attributes of Locke's individual is his being a property. This notion is derived from his premise rendering the individual the creation and thus the possession of God. "For Men being all the Workmanship of one Omnipotent, and infinitely wise Maker; All the Servants of one Sovereign Master, sent into the World by his order and about his business," Locke contends. "[T]hey are his Property, whose Workmanship they are, made to last during his not one another['s Pleasure." However, not only the divine proprietorship of the individual self but also the individual himself are annulled by Locke's later claim that the individual self is his own proprietor. As Locke asserts, "Though the Earth, and all inferior Creatures be common to all Men, yet every Man has a *Property* in his own *Person*. This no Body has any Right to but himself."[66] Zuckert explains this contradiction by pointing out Locke's move from the primacy of the law of nature argument, with God at its center, to the natural rights argument, which revolves around the individual, through self-ownership. At the same time, he points out that the former still keeps its importance in Locke's discussion of property since he "keeps reverting to" it.[67]

Furthermore, with Locke, it is through the possessing of one's own body that one can acquire private property. All this is expressed through the labor theory of value, which suggests that by means of his labor belonging to the self, in the course of work, the individual turns a given part of nature into his private property, making it exempt from claims by others. "For this *Labour* being the unquestionable Property of the Labourer," says Locke, "no Man but he can have a right to what that is once joyned to." Man acquires property through his labor, therefore he has a right to the fruits of his labor.[68]

---

65 *Second Treatise,* sec. 87; Laslett, introduction to *Two Treatise*, 101.

66 *Second Treatise,* secs. 6, 27.

67 Zuckert, *New Republicanism* chapters 8 and 9, esp. 278, 285; 257–58. Pangle also points out the importance of self-ownership in Locke (Pangle, *Modern Republicanism*, 160). Laslett, at the same time, argues that here Locke's major aim is to explain the making of private property, its demarcation of common possessions granted to whole mankind by God. Hence, in taking issue with Sir Robert Filmer, he is compelled to refute the claim that property was not so much the result of communal consent, as individual appropriation based on the natural right to property. Laslett, introduction to *Two Treatises*, 101. For Filmer's argument in brief see Schlatter, *Private Property*, 152–53.

68 *Second Treatise*, sec. 27. On Locke and labor see also Pangle, *Modern Republicanism*, 166–70. See also James L. Huston, *Calculating the Value of the Union: Slavery, Property Rights, and the Economic Origins of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 10. Scholars have claimed that Locke's concept of property as a natural right, based on self-ownership, implies the notion of unlimited acquisition of property by the self in the sense that he does not have to take into consideration others' needs for or claims to property (Pangle, *Modern Republicanism*, 162; Zuckert, *New Republicanism*, 268–69). Furthermore, with the help of money even "spoilage limitation," that is, the principle that one cannot take more than one can use, became annulled (Zuckert, *New Republicanism*, 256; see also 256 and 269). All this notwithstanding, it seems that there is still a limit to the acquisition of private property left by Locke, which is labor: the individual's capacity to acquire private property, his own share of the common stock: "No Mans Labour could subdue, or appropriate all," Locke says (*Second Treatise*, sec. 36). So limitless acquisition is only a theoretical possibility; the self's ability to acquire is limited by his ability to mix his labor with nature. This, in turn, implies that the amount of private property that one can possess, to a very large extent, depends on one's personal qualities, which are necessary for acquisition. From this comes the critical role of industry in the accumulation of wealth for Locke. Mainly due to its egalitarian tones amplified by Thomas Paine and used by

Richard J. Ellis argues that, with Locke, both "egalitarian" and "individualist" conceptions of property can be identified. The egalitarian reading suggests that man in the state of nature can rightfully acquire only as much as necessary to meet his needs, whereas the individualist reading emphasizes the sanctity of private property in the social state.[69] The egalitarian conception emphasized "spoilage limitation," the limits on the acquisition of property or goods set by one's capacity to consume without leaving it spoiled.

Locke's "labor theory of value," his derivation of property from the self through human labor has further significance. As Peter Laslett argues, in Locke's reasoning, property can become alienable only through individual consent exactly because it is "part" of the individual's personality, yet "distinguishable" from it. Taking away property without consent thus was inadmissible by Locke's theory as opposed to Filmer's claim, which had argued that no consent was needed for the "king" or "the law" to "change property relations."[70]

Locke's theory of property was one for the rising middle classes, a new social group, who produced goods for the market relying on their own labor, unlike medieval lords exploiting serfs. Also, by making the right to property ubiquitous, such independent producers could claim security for their own private property, no longer based on the medieval principle of privilege distributed by the king, who thus also had the power to take it back. Property as natural right knew no distinction between privileged and underprivileged groups. Laws based on it, as Schlatter claims, "secured to each man the fruits of his labour [*sic*]."[71]

In Locke's political theory, property is intimately linked with slavery, which he identifies with the lack of liberty to dispose of one's own person and the lack of the right and duty of self-preservation. With him, in the state of nature, the chief rule for the individual to follow is the law of nature, which prescribes for him self-preservation as well as the preservation of others' life, liberty and possessions. At the same time, self-preservation takes precedence over respecting others' rights. As he argues, "Every one as he is bound to preserve himself, and not to quit his station wilfully; so by the like reason *when his own Preservation comes not in Competition*, ought he, as much as he can, to preserve the rest of Mankind, and may not unless it be to do Justice on an Offender, take away, or impair the life, or what tends to the Preservation of the Life, the Liberty, Health, Limb or Goods of another."[72] In other words, self-preservation takes precedence over preserving others.

Connected to Locke's concept of self-preservation is the suicide taboo, rooted in the law of nature, and in the notion that man should be regarded as God's property. This reading of

---

French radicals, paradoxically, to destroy private property, even Edmund Burke, though refuting a theory of natural rights, clearly adopts Lockean language describing the acquisition of property through labor: "[The people] must respect that property of which they cannot partake. They must labour to obtain what by labour can be obtained" (Reflections on the Revolution in France [1790], quoted in Schlatter, *Private Property*, 180–81.

69 Richard J. Ellis, *American Political Cultures* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 30.

70 Laslett, introduction to *Two Treatises*, 103, 112; and Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 111.

71 Schlatter, *Private Property*, 155–56.

72 *Second Treatise*, sec. 6; emphasis added.. The ambiguous nature of Locke's self-reservation as right as well as duty has been pointed out by Gerber (*To Secure These Rights*, 43). See also Pangle, *Modern Republicanism*, 188, Huyler, Locke *in America*, 244; and H. Jaffa, *New Birth of Freedom*, 417.

self-preservation emphasizes it as a duty, ultimately derived from God, who, through his ownership of man prescribes his adherence to life. Such an interpretation prohibits suicide and forms the basis of resistance to tyrannical power taking one's life.[73] It is only in an extreme case, in the exceptional state of slavery, that Locke treats self-preservation as a right, based on self-ownership, and not a duty, making it possible for the self to commit suicide when in the state of slavery.[74] This, however, is an abnormal case, when the individual lives with no freedom, but in bondage, in the state of war. In the state of slavery, therefore, God suspends his ownership of unfree man, who is possessed by someone else, but the unfree man can also commit suicide. Slavery is thus a state in which someone else possesses the self through coercion and thus liberty is suspended.

The slave's "drawing on himself the Death he desires" is, at the same time, not necessarily motivated by the suicide drive but rather can be seen a consequence of being in a state of war with his owner and resisting him—in Locke's words "resisting the Will of his Master."[75] Nonetheless, according to Locke, no one can have the right to submit oneself to slavery by one's own will.

Since for Locke, property "seems to give the political quality to personality," slaves are denied political rights due to their lack of property.[76] Slaves do not have the freedom to dispose of their own persons and lives; they have no right to property. They do not own themselves as property, either; they are owned by somebody else, that is, by their masters. Hence they do not, in fact, exist in civil society but in the state of slavery. They "are by the Right of Nature subjected to the Absolute dominion and Arbitrary Power of their Masters. These Men having . . . forfeited their Lives, and with it their Liberties, and lost their Estates; and being in the *State of Slavery*, not capable of any Property, cannot in that state be considered as any part of *Civil Society*; the chief end whereof is the preservation of Property," as Locke contends.[77] As opposed to the head of the family, who has only a temporary authority over his children but not over their "Life" or "Property," the master has an absolute power over his slave. Hence, for Locke, slavery is also the state of war "*between a lawful Conquerour, and a Captive,*"[78] because the state of slavery and the state of war equally lack both a contractual basis and a civil authority, unlike in civil society.

At the same time, for Locke, the free individual cannot deprive himself of his liberty and enslave himself, because "a Man, not having the Power of his own Life, cannot, by Compact,

---

73 Sinopoli, *Foundations of American Citizenship*, 41–42; Dworetz, *Unvarnished Doctrine*, 30, 131; McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, 61; Zuckert, *New Republicanism*, 239. Locke himself claims that "Men . . . have a right to their preservation." *Second Treatise,* sec. 25. The fact that the right of self-preservation is inalienable implies that "we cannot surrender to another our right to life . . ., and a person may give up life but not the right to life," says Zuckert (*New Republicanism*, 245–46).

74 Zuckert, *New Republicanism*, 240–44.

75 *Second Treatise*, sec. 23.

76 Laslett, introduction to *Two Treatises*, 102.

77 *Second Treatise*, sec. 85. That Locke himself was prepared to see his principles put into practice can be shown by the fact that he was involved in drafting the constitutions for Carolina (1669) which sanctioned slavery by granting the master "absolute power and authority over his negro slaves" (Quoted in Huyler, Locke *in America*, 343n63; see also *Second Treatise,* note to sec. 24).

78 *Second Treatise*, sec. 65; see also sec. 86; and sec. 24.

or his own Consent, enslave himself to any one, nor put himself under the Absolute, Arbitrary Power of another, to take away his Life, when he pleases." In addition, as Locke says, "Nobody can give more Power than he has himself; and he that cannot take away his own Life, cannot give another power over it."[79] However, through the notion of suicide that a slave is allowed to commit according to Locke, he confirms the self-ownership principle.[80] Slaves own themselves only to the extent that they can dispose of their lives. The way in which a free individual becomes a slave is through force, by being captured in a just war.[81]

In Locke's theory, property is also a major rationale for people to enter civil society. According to Locke, individuals "joyn and unite into a Community, for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure Enjoyment of their Properties, and a greater Security against any that are not of it."[82] Civil government is established to protect the property of individuals, now members of civil society. "The great and chief end therefore, of Mens uniting into Commonwealths, and putting themselves under Government," Locke argues, "is the Preservation of their Property."[83] Furthermore, although civil society and government are established by property holders, in Locke's model, as Thomas L. Pangle points out, people outside it can become members through the acquisition of property, through their labor.[84]

Locke further develops the contrast between the states of slavery and freedom by claiming that the legislative power of the government "can never have a right to destroy, enslave, or designedly to impoverish the Subjects." Property is endangered in an absolute monarchy, where the monarch unites all the powers, and hence if the individual's "Property is invaded by the Will and Order of his Monarch, he has not only no Appeal, as those in Society ought to have, but as if he were degraded from the common state of Rational Creatures, is denied a liberty to judge of, or to defend his Right." Therefore, the individual becomes the slave of the absolute monarch.[85]

Absolute or "despotical" power for Locke is outside both the natural and the social state: it is, rather, the equivalent of the state of war, since "it is *the effect only of Forfeiture*, which the Aggressor makes of his own Life, when he puts himself into the state of war with another." It is in civil society, based on compact, where the individual can dispose of his property (life, liberty and estates) freely within the limits set by civil government, which can dispose of their properties only with their consent.[86] Consequently, for Locke, the state of slavery, absolute

---

79 Ibid., sec. 23.

80 Zuckert, *New Republicanism*, 242. See also *Second Treatise,* note to sec. 23. Zuckert has pointed out that since slavery means ownership by the other, it violates both the divine ownership and the self-ownership theses. Zuckert, *New Republicanism*, 241.

81 *Second Treatise,* sec. 17 and note to sec. 24.

82 *Second Treatise*, sec. 95.

83 Ibid., sec. 124; see also ibid., secs. 138, 139; and Zuckert, *New Republicanism*, 216, 258.

84 Pangle, *Modern Republicanism*, 168.

85 Ibid., secs. 155, 91; see also sec. 138.

86 Ibid., secs. 172 and 138; see also Pangle, *Modern Republicanism*, 255. Rahe also emphasizes Locke's point that "all legitimate governments actually rested on the consent of the governed." Rahe, *Republics*, 32.

rule and the state of war are intimately bound up with one another in that there is no security of property as self or possession.

At the same time, Locke also emphasizes that civil government can turn despotic and work against its original task of preserving property and securing the individual's right of self-preservation. When this takes place, the people are obliged to resist such an abuse of power and change government. In such a case, the people are entitled to establish a new legislative body to serve their needs, and the governed have the right to withdraw the power that they originally invested in their rulers and "by the Establishment of a new Legislature (such as they shall think fit) provide for their won Safety and Security, which is the end for which they are in Society." In other words, they appeal to God, taking into their hands the power to execute the law of nature and start a revolution.[87]

The basis for Locke's people having the power to change civil government lies in the act of its founding. As Peter Laslett has pointed out, for Locke, the making of civil government consists of two stages: the first creates civil society through the social compact, the second civil government. The latter, however, is not so much a contractual act as a "process by which the community entrusts political power to a government." Thus "the relation between government and governed" is based on trust, and hence "the people are not contractually obliged to government." Furthermore, the concept of trust involves the notion that it is the people, the governed, that are "to act as umpire in any dispute between the governors and a part of their body." Thus, for Locke, it is the people—parties to the social compact—that have the power to arbitrate in cases of debate between themselves and civil government, and in an extreme case of the breach of trust they can withdraw their trust or consent.[88] Due to the two-stage-process, Locke's individuals, when applying their right of revolution do not fall back into the state of nature: although civil government is dissolved, the people as community remain in the social state.[89] The contract among themselves survives the trust that they have withdrawn from the government.

In treating the dissolution of government, Locke makes a clear distinction among the right of revolution, resulting in the change of government, the right of resistance, and rebellion involving the use of force. The right of resistance is aimed at curbing an unlawful act of the government by means of force whereas rebellion is using force in a way that violates the law resulting in restoring the state of war. Rebellion is a violent act involving the use of force with the purpose of defying the law or changing the government: "[T]hose who set up force again in opposition to the Laws, do *Rebellare*, that is, bring back again the state of War, and are properly Rebels." Locke, at the same time, makes it clear that legislators may also become "*Rebellantes* Rebels" [i.e. the most rebellious rebels], that is using unlawful force, when acting against the trust that they were invested with by the people.[90] Locke deems the right of revolution vital and in accordance with the aims of civil society in the sense that by changing

---

87 *Second Treatise*, sec. 222; Pangle, *Modern Republicanism*, 204.

88 See Laslett, introduction to *Two Treatises*, 114, 109, 115; and *Second Treatise*, secs. 222, 240, 242.

89 Laslett, introduction to *Two Treatises*, 115.

90 *Second Treatise*, secs. 226 and 227.

a government that is turning tyrannical unlawful action can be prevented, and thus force can be avoided, saving society from the state of war.[91]

Therefore, it is, in turn, not rebellion but justified self-defense if the people use force to resist the attempt of the magistrates to deprive them of their rights, argues Locke. Encroaching upon the people's rights equals the violation of the social compact and the beginning of the state of war: "Whosoever uses *force without Right*, as every one does in Society, who does it without Law, puts himself into a *state of War* with those, against whom he so uses it, and in that state all former Ties are cancelled, all other Rights cease, and every one has a *Right* to defend himself, and *to resist the Aggressor*."[92] In other words, the people have the right to resist force when exerted in a way that violates the law, because such an act re-establishes the state of war, when law becomes defunct. Locke also deals with the problem of the controversy between the ruler and the ruled and assumes that it is the people who, having created the government, have the right to act as arbiters in controversies. It is in the people's power to deem whether the government has violated the compact. However, if the ruler fails to acknowledge this role of the people, force can be applied and, again, the state of war sets in.[93]

Nonetheless, Locke's people have no disposition to change their government hastily: they are prone to bear its abuses with patience. To refute the claim that the power of the governed and their right to revolution would lead to frequent changing of the government, Locke argues that the people do not tend to start such a revolution without due responsibility. "*Revolutions happen* not upon every little mismanagement in publick [*sic*] affairs. *Great mistakes* in the ruling part, many wrong and inconvenient Laws, and all the *slips* of humane frailty will be *born by the People*, without mutiny or murmur," he asserts, then adds, "But if a long train of Abuses, Prevarications, and Artifices, all tending the same way, make the design visible to the People, and they cannot but feel, what they lie under, and see, whither they are going; 'tis not to be wonder'd, that they should then rouse themselves, and endeavour to put the rule into such hands, which may secure to them the ends for which Government was first erected." It is only the accumulation of abuses that will make the people rise against those governing them. As he adds later, "For till the mischief be grown general, and the ill designs of the Rulers become visible, or their attempts sensible to the greater part, the People, who are more disposed to suffer, than right themselves by Resistance, are not apt to stir."[94]

Locke's tenets of property as a natural right, the role of government in protecting it, self-preservation and the right of revolution to resist arbitrary political power took root in America with some modifications. Either in revolutionary times or later, they became intertwined in the service of defending property.

As far as property is concerned, as James L. Huston claims, "Most commonly, Americans upheld the idea of private property by referring to it as a natural right, and justified it by using the natural right argument of the late seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke."

---

91 Ibid., secs. 204, 209; 226 (quotation).

92 Ibid., sec. 232.

93 Ibid., sec. 242.

94 *Second Treatise*, secs. 225, 230.

Furthermore, both in revolutionary times and in the nineteenth-century, Americans adopted Locke's labor theory of value to justify the acquisition of private property as well as its defense from outside forces.[95] The revolutionaries understood property not simply as an object but as a relationship between possessor and possession: the individual owned an object because he had exclusive control over its disposal. The notion of liberty was thus intimately linked with that of property in that the owner was to have the freedom to dispose of his possession. In addition, Locke's move to make the possessor's consent the basis of property transfer was also adopted by the American colonists. (The individual does not truly possess an object as long as it can be taken away from him without his consent.)[96]For the colonists, as for Locke, property was to be protected by civil government, since it was a manifest expression, a product of their industrious activities as well as the basis of their subsistence. Also, as a natural right, property required "equal protection under law." These principles also informed the argumentation of the Declaration of Independence, where the problem of consent in connection with representation evokes the right to property, to which all property holders should have free access, at the same time implying that people cannot be deprived of property without their consent.[97]

The protection of property rights was also seen as a main priority by the Founders, and similar principles were adopted by those supporting the federal Constitution of 1787 for its measures aimed at the compensation of creditors whose loans were to be repaid by debtors, thereby insuring the protection of their (monied) property.[98] For the Federalists, property was not a natural right, in the sense of being equally available for every individual but rather an interest to be protected by government. Its amount depended on the individual's capacity of acquisition in the social state.[99] In other words, they advocated the individual version of the Lockean concept of property as a natural right. Adopting the Lockean argument, the Anti-Federalists also emphasized "the fundamental desire to protect human industry and the enjoyment of its product from the excesses of public power." This was the principle from

---

95 Huston, *Value of the Union*, 9, 10–11.

96 Dworetz, *Unvarnished Doctrine*, 74–77.

97 Huyler, *Locke in America*, 244, 246; quotation 304. Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 110; and Erler, "Great Fence to Liberty," 58. The significance of property rights for the Revolutionaries is indicated by the identification of property with "the pursuit of happiness." Erler has shown how Locke's concept of property and the pursuit of happiness were intertwined in Jeffersonian rhetoric, meaning "that civil society must, above all, provide the security for the external goods in Lockean terms 'properties'—necessary for the 'pursuit of happiness'." Erler, "Great Fence of Liberty," 51. For Locke's equivalent treatment of "property" and "the pursuit of happiness" see Gerber, *To Secure These Rights*, 28.

98 Huyler, *Locke in America*, 256–58. As Rahe claims, they "recognized that, where human beings are denied a right to the fruits of their labor, their lives and liberties . . . are similarly at risk." Rahe, *Republics*, 17, see also 19. Seven states declared the protection of property rights Lockean-style in the constitutions or Bills of Rights to fulfill the requirement for states to protect property. McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, 152, 270. When drafting the Massachusetts bill of rights, besides life and liberty as "natural rights," John Adams included "acquiring, possessing, and protecting property." Quoted in Rahe, *Republics*, 17; see also Erler, "Great Fence of Liberty," 51. At the same time, the Constitution also sanctioned slavery as property. According to Edward J. Erler, the Constitution did it in three ways: Article 1, Section 3 (3/5 clause); Article I, Section 9, clause 1 (on slave trade); Article IV, Section 2, Clause 3 (on fugitive slaves). Erler, "Great Fence to Liberty," 48, footnote.

99 Diggins, *Lost Soul*, 60–61, 80.

which they argued for lower tariff duties in 1789 in the first Congress, claiming that they had resulted in the reduction of property for the benefit of certain interests at the expense of others.[100]

Thomas Jefferson also seems to have understood property rights from a Lockean point of view. In his First Inaugural Address, Jefferson made a memorable plea to the Lockean conception of government as one respecting the right of property, based on human labor: "a wise and frugal government, which, . . . shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned."[101] Furthermore, he also applied the principle of spoilage limitation: adopting the egalitarian conception of property, he criticized on Lockean principles the unequal distribution of land in France when, in 1785, he wrote to Madison: "Whenever there is in any country, uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural right. The earth is given as a common stock for man to labour and live on."[102] Jefferson's understanding was that uncultivated land was there to be appropriated, turned into private property by those having none. Leaving land appropriated as private property unused violated the Lockean requirement of spoilage limitation. As long as there was uncultivated land available, it was to be made use of.

In the early-nineteenth-century United States, the radical Jacksonians were the chief advocates of the egalitarian conception of property, claiming that every white male in America had a natural right to property. They advocated its redistribution, that is, making the fruits of "improductive" labor, speculative wealth, illegitimate. As one of them asserted, "The great Locke laid it down that we could rightfully appropriate so much as we can mix our labor with."[103] To acquire more would be illegitimate.

In the minds of Americans following Locke, closely bound up with property and other natural rights was the right of self-preservation. They appealed to it whenever they felt that government was jeopardizing their rights by moving beyond its assigned limits. In Steven M. Dworetz's words, "[I]t is precisely this duty to preserve one's life that delegitimizes absolute, arbitrary power and makes political freedom, which implies limited government, a moral imperative." The American revolutionaries employed Locke's right to resistance in the name of self-preservation when rebelling against the British Crown.[104] The Declaration of Inde-

---

100 Huyler, *Locke in America*, 273, 280–81.

101 In *PTJ*, 293. James Madison joined Jefferson in emphasizing that work was the basis of property to be protected by government. See Drew R. McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 193–94. Jefferson also appealed to property as a natural right when questioning the inventors' right to their inventions. According to him, the private property of land is justified by usage. "By an universal law," Jefferson argues, "whatever, whether fixed or movable, belongs to all men equally and in common, in the property for the moment of him who occupies it, but when he relinquishes the occupation, the property goes with it" (To Isaac McPherson, August 13, 1813, in *PTJ*, 529).

102 To James Madison, October 28, 1785, in *PTJ*, 396–97.

103 Ellis, *American Political Cultures*, 33. His words can be supplemented by those of George Henry Evans, another radical Jacksonian: "If every man had a natural right to property . . . the current distribution of property, which left many laborers landless, must be unnatural and unjust." ibid.; see also Diggins, *Lost Soul*, 144–47; and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *The Age of Jackson* (1945; repr. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), 151–55; 170.

104 Dworetz, *Unvarnished Doctrine*, 112; and Huyler, *Locke in America*, 248.

pendence, similarly to Locke, regards self-reservation both as a right and a duty and, as such, is a motivating force in resisting tyrannical government. Self-preservation, at the same time, was closely connected with slavery, and the two concepts were, for instance, discussed as intimately related issues by the Continental Congress, the former serving as an impediment to emancipation.[105]

Slavery, a peculiar state of the individual, antithetical to the concept of natural rights, enjoyed a preeminent role in the Lockean language that Americans appropriated from the time of the Revolution. Slavery was ultimately linked with the problems of property and inequality. Adopting Locke's tenet of property, the colonists held that its lack equaled slavery; hence their argument that taxation without representation was nothing else but appropriating their property without consent, equaling an attempt to enslave them. In their eyes, slavery was distinguished from liberty through the possession of property.[106]

The property status of slaves resulted in their exclusion from civil society by means of slave codes and statutes. They were made outsiders by being denied the Lockean rights necessary for freedom, which, in turn, white men could enjoy. As a result, the revolutionary generation, relying on Locke's natural rights argument in their struggle for independence, had to face the serious dilemma of denying them the natural rights of life, liberty and property equally belonging to every individual.[107] Those accepting Locke's doctrine of private property regarded chattel slavery as a form of property, under the protection of the law of nature, and hence they understood its proposed abolition as amounting to the transgression of natural law. They also believed it to be under the protection of the Constitution, which guaranteed slavery due to the chattel status of slaves.[108]

---

105 In Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950), 1:430; See also Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration*, 47, 51; and Rahe, *Republics*, 95.

106 Dworetz, *Unvarnished Doctrine*, 78–79.

107 James Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 68–69, 70. This can be best exemplified by Jefferson's case, who, throughout his life, strove to reconcile his own contradictory views about black slavery. For him, with slavery, two rights of self-preservation came into collision: that of the masters and that of the slaves, and he supported the former. See John Zvesper, "Jefferson on Liberal Natural Rights," in *Reason and Republicanism: Thomas Jefferson's Legacy of Liberty*, ed. Gary L. McDowell and Sharon L. Noble (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 24. Nonetheless, considering the institution of black slavery as a "necessary evil," he hoped to see its gradual extermination to be followed by the removal of freed blacks from America. See Winthrop Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968; New York and London: W.W. Norton and Co., 1977), 432. Citations are from the University of North Carolina Press Edition; Sheldon, *Political Philosophy of Jefferson*, 133–34; John Chester Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery* (New York: The Free Press. A Division of Macmillan Publishing Co., 1977), 17.

108 Jordan, *White Over Black*, 350–51; see also Diggins, *Lost Soul*, 141. Huston, *Value of the Union*, 22–23. Moreover, southern chattel slavery formed the basis of white male social mobility: through acquiring slaves as property one could rise on the social scale, becoming an independent producer. See Huston, *Value of the Union*, 40–41. It could be argued that since the slave was deprived of his or her own produce, violating the Lockean principle, the master's "fruits of labor" were ultimately not his but those of his slaves. See Scott, *In Pursuit of Happiness*, 94. Huston shows, for instance, how the labor theory of value proved appealing to antislavery forces that denounced slave economy as being based on aristocratic planters' depriving black slaves of their fruits of labor. See Huston, *Value of the Union*, 14–15. However, given that masters possessed their slave's self as property, whatever that self produced, they argued, legally belonged to the former. (Oakes *Slavery and Freedom*, 5) Moreover, Locke also admits the right of the master to acquire the slave's fruits of labor (Laslett, introduction to *Two Treatises*, 105). In addition,

In defending slavery, the crux of the matter for Southern slaveowners was to preserve their power to define slavery legally as an institution based on property. What made this difficult was that, as they admitted, slaves were also human beings—although of a presumably inferior sort, hence their task being to define humans as objects to possess in a democratic society. Consequently, their concern was to exclude federal legislation from the legal definition of human slaves as property, whom whites outside the South had no interest in defining as such.[109]

Jacksonian America also tended to rank the right to slave property over the right to life and liberty. With Jackson, a slaveowner himself, equality belonged to the white males of the republic; blacks were not to partake of its benefits. For him and for the Jacksonians in general, the government had no right to address the problem of slavery in America, for in doing so it was bound to endanger their right to property. They also regarded abolitionist attacks upon slavery as threats to the American democratic order. Furthermore, Jacksonian Democrats held that slavery was protected by the Constitution, and hence abolitionists were simply troublemakers, acting against constitutional order.[110]

In tandem with the issue of slavery and government, it was Lockean political philosophy that underlay the colonials' late-eighteenth-century "theory of rebellion."[111] The American revolutionaries, drawing on Locke, employed their right of revolution to change a government that had, in their eyes, lost its legitimacy failing to fulfill its function of protecting their natural rights.[112] In this sense, their deed was indeed revolutionary, innovative and was not concerned with restoration—they were about to create a new order, breaking with the old one. They strove to justify doing so by claiming the revolution to be just against a government turning despotic. This is why the Declaration of Independence adopted the Lockean attitude to tyrannical government: when it becomes despotic, the people have the right to change it.[113]

Furthermore, the decision about the proper moment to apply the right of revolution in the Lockean fashion was held to belong to the governed, i.e. the people. They were seen as the ones having the power to judge in cases of conflict.[114] Both Locke and the Declaration invested the people with the power to arbitrate whether governmental power was getting out of

---

slaveowners tended to claim that what they wielded power over was not the person of the slave but his labor, thus denying the total enslavement of human beings. It was not a one-sided appropriation of labor without consent but rather its exchange for masterly provision and care. See Kenneth S. Greenberg, *Masters and Statesmen: The Political Culture of American Slavery* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 92–94. This argument, in turn, conformed to Locke's labor theory of value.

109 Huston, *Value of the Union*, 46–47, 49.

110 Remini, *Legacy of Jackson*, 39, 89, 107; and Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, Politics*, 333–34.

111 Hamowy, "Jefferson and the Scottish Enlightenment," 506. Donald Lutz has demonstrated the relatively low citation rate of Locke among the late colonials. Yet, even he admits the revolutionaries' turning to Locke, who was thus the most frequently cited writer in the turmoil of the revolution. See his "The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought," *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984), 192. This, in turn, is understandable given Locke's status as a major theoretician of revolution at the time.

112 Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 6, 27–28. On the right of revolution in the Declaration see also Fletcher Wright, *Natural Law*, 10.

113 Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 13; and Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration*, 44–46.

114 Dworetz quotes Charles Turner from 1773: "[T]he people have a right to judge of the conduct of government, and its tendencies." They are "capable of judging in things of such a nature" (Dworetz, *Unvarnished Doctrine*, 182).

control. It was their reason that made them capable of making such decisions. At the same time, the Declaration also adopted the Lockean notion of the enduring people under abusive power. As the document reads, "Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed."[115]

These idioms of the Lockean language adopted by Americans became integral to Calhoun's political rhetoric and came to inform his argumentation on various issues. Calhoun made extensive use of Locke's ideas about slavery, property and resistance to government, especially during the Nullification Controversy and in his speeches in defense of slavery. His argument about the right of property and the preservation of slavery was intimately linked to the planters' discourse about self-preservation, about avoiding being enslaved by the North.

According to Guy Story Brown, a logical corollary of Calhoun's rejection of the state of nature philosophy in the *Disquisition* is that the issue of property and its protection play no role, his major concern being moral and intellectual development under the protection of government and not material progress. Therefore, Calhoun's position is in sharp contrast with Locke's, which held that government merely serves "as a protector of property." Understandably, Brown claims, "the term 'property,' so far from providing the basis of government or providing the essential ends whence the necessity of government is itself derived, does not even occur in *A Disquisition on Government*."[116] In other words, with Calhoun property enjoys no primary importance as far as the rationale for civil government is concerned.

Brown's argument notwithstanding, it seems feasible to argue for the indirect yet strong presence of property in the *Disquisition* and its explicit role in Calhoun's system in general. In the first place, similarly to Locke, Calhoun also defined government as a body protecting property, and thus he assumed a society of property holders. The South Carolinian held that it was the government's duty to protect property; "with most of its institutions [it was] intended to protect life and property."[117] Even those outside civil society had the opportunity to become part of it by acquiring property through hard work. In the second place, the word "property" may not occur in the *Disquisition*, but its surrogate does and quite in the Lockean sense. It is in the context of his discussing liberty and equality that Calhoun addresses the problem of property.

As pointed out before, with Calhoun, the inequality of human condition based on the different levels of moral and intellectual development is the basis of the unequal degrees of liberty. This, at the same time, is a motive for the individual's development: to acquire more liberty, people are compelled to achieve moral and intellectual improvement. In the *Disquisition*, the issue of property is expressed through the Lockean value of labor theory, in relation to the problem of government and progress. For Calhoun, it is the social or political

---

115 Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration*, 47–48, 60; and Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1950), 1:429–30.

116 Brown, *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics*, 217, 76, 134; see also 40.

117 February 4, 1836, in *Papers of Calhoun*, 13:62; see also ibid., 16:358; and Garson, "Proslavery as Political Theory," 210.

state in which individuals exist, and where they can best develop their faculties, improve their condition and rise "in the scale of liberty." This is why he assigns a twofold role to government similar to the one assigned by Locke: government is designed "to preserve and perfect society." For Calhoun, as for Locke, one of the major aims of government is to protect the fruits of one's labor, with property among them; in his words: "to secure to all the *fruits of their exertions*."[118] These "fruits of exertion" which come into being through the creative power of liberty and progress, also need to be protected—otherwise liberty and its resulting benefits would be pointless. Calhoun makes clear that progress does involve the notion of material aggrandizement, the protection of which should be an important element of politics: Therefore, "to deprive [individuals] of the *fruits of their exertions*, would be to destroy the desire of bettering their condition."[119] Hence, the original twofold function of government works in this case as well: progress or perfection simply cannot form the basis of social existence without the principle of protection, the protection of the fruits of labor, liberty and development. The lack of security for property would undermine the drive for progress. Improving one's condition by means of moral and intellectual development involves the acquisition and protection of the "fruits" of one's "exertions."[120]

Calhoun also addressed the problem of property in the Lockean spirit elsewhere, in other contexts. He similarly employed the Lockean idiom about property rights during the Nullification Controversy, when anti-tariff South Carolinians denounced the tariff of 1828 as inimical to their properties. In 1828, the South Carolina state legislature appointed a special committee to prepare a document of protest against the federal protective tariff, justifying the state's position on the issue. The committee was also commissioned to explore the problems the protective act caused and to suggest a possible remedy for South Carolina's grievances. The committee submitted its report entitled "Exposition" to the House of Representatives on December 19, 1928. It was based on a draft prepared by Calhoun, which I will use for my analysis below.[121]

The tariff of 1828 raised the duties on imported manufactured goods from an average of 33.33 percent to 50 percent on average, thereby forcing domestic consumers to purchase them at higher prices. At the same time, since the tariff was introduced as part of an attempt to protect and foster home manufacturing, it had the discriminatory effect of benefiting Northern producers, who had to face foreign competition, and disfavoring Southern consumers, who had no significant capacity for industrial production.[122]

---

118 *Disquisition*, 9, 38 (first and last quotation); see also 36; my emphasis.

119 Ibid., 39; my emphasis.

120 Although, then, the *Disquisition* takes issue with the basics of Locke's theory, the latter's concern with "the accumulation and protection of property" (Brown, *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics*, 40) also is a primary element of Calhoun's understanding of progress and hence government: conditions necessary for the creation of property match in importance with conditions necessary to protect it, and moral and intellectual development is only a *means* to improve one's condition.

121 Editor's introduction to the South Carolina "Exposition" and "Protest," in *Papers of Calhoun*, 10:442–43; and ibid., 10:444–534.

122 William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816–1836* (Harper & Row, 1965; New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 138. Citations are taken from the Oxford University Press edition.

In his draft Calhoun denounces the tariff on the grounds that by making imported goods more expensive for southerners to buy, it drains their financial resources and moves their "property annually to other sections of the country."[123] Employing argument grounded in the individualist conception of property he claims, "Our complaint is that we are not permitted to consume *the fruits of our labour*, but that, through an artful and complex system, in violation of every principle of justice, they are transferred from us to others."[124] Here, Locke's ideas about the violation of property rights by a tyrannical government appear in a modified form: for Calhoun, it is the federal government that abuses power by taxing southerners without their consent, making them pay higher prices for imported goods because of the tariff duties.[125] Calhoun, at the same time, did not apply Locke's egalitarian concept of property: his main concern was to have governmental protection of private property, in the form of income for Southern exporters. Instead, he drew upon the individualist version of Lockean language, which was designed "to justify the right of each man to keep what he has acquired."[126]

The other way in which Calhoun appropriated the Lockean defense of property right pertains to the problem of slavery. Like in the slaveholders' minds, slaves and property were linked in Calhoun's, and part of his proslavery argument defended the southerners' right to hold slaves as a right to hold property. As Calhoun made explicit to Northerners, their ancestors, trading in slaves, had exchanged them to Southern masters for money.[127] Sold by Northern slave merchants, black slaves came to assume the status of property, whose value was expressed through money, in turn the result of the exchange of goods based on human labor.

Since slaves had the status of property for Calhoun, he posited the reception of abolitionist petitions by Congress in 1836 as the beginning of a process bound to culminate in the abolition of slavery in the South, equaling the violation of the right of property: "Here the subject of abolition would be agitated session after session, and from hence the assaults on the property and institutions of the people of the slaveholding States would be disseminated, in the guise of speeches, over the whole Union." That, in turn, would be a violation of southerners' property rights in their slaves. In response to this danger, Calhoun, in Lockean fashion, denies

---

123 *Papers of Calhoun*, 10:464. As he explained later, referring to the tariff of 1828: "A tax [i.e. the tariff] is but a mode of taking away property" (October 11, 1838, in ibid., 17:437).

124 Ibid., 10:464–66; emphasis added; see also ibid., 12:65.

125 In his "Fort Hill Address" of July 26, 1831 (in *Papers of Calhoun*, 11:413–39), exploring his views on the relation between the federal government and the states, he made a similar claim and identified the crisis as a conflict between majority and minority interests, involving an unjust appropriation of property: ". . . if taxes, by increasing the amount and changing the intent only, may be perverted, in fact, into a system of penalties and rewards, it would give all the power that could be desired, to subject the *labour* and *property* of the minority to the will of the majority, to be regulated without regarding the interest of the former, in subserviency to the will of the latter" (ibid., 436; emphases added; see also ibid., 14: 11, 437). Here, the majority interest appears as Locke's tyrannical government, violating the property rights of the minority.

126 Ellis, *American Political Cultures*, 30.

127 *Papers of Calhoun*, 14:207, 208. Calhoun's argument was in harmony with the more general proslavery claim about the rightful appropriation of the slave's labor in return for the master's care. See David F. Ericson, *The Debate over Slavery: Antislavery and Proslavery Liberalism in Antebellum America* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2000), 21–22.

government the power to infringe upon the right of private property, that is, slaves. As he claims, ". . . our right to reject this petition is a truth as clear and unquestionable as that Congress has no right to abolish slavery in the States."[128] Should slaveholders be deprived of their slaves as a result of abolition, the South, Calhoun argues, would be prepared to resist and defend its chattels with all its might: "Come what will, should it cost every drop of blood, and every cent of property, we must defend ourselves; and if compelled, we would stand justified by all laws, human and divine."[129]

As Calhoun understood, the preservation of slavery was firmly connected with the preservation of southern culture and identity, so the two senses of Lockean property (possession and self) can be traced here clearly. In the face of abolitionist attacks, the South should make a firm stand: "There would be to us but one alternative," he argues, "—to triumph or perish as a people. We would stand alone, compelled to defend life, character, and institutions."[130] With emancipation, the role of black slaves and free whites would be reversed, and, according to him, the manumission of the former would result in the enslavement of the latter. "They and their northern allies would be the masters, and we the slaves," asserts Calhoun.[131] Accordingly, as a consequence, having become slaves, that is, the property of others, white masters would lose their right to dispose of their life, liberty and property—the worst a free individual can think of.[132]

Jan Lewis argues that Southern slaveholders shifted from the Lockean defense of slavery as property protected by the Constitution in the early national period to a republican one by the 1830s, and Calhoun had a leading role in that shift. Furthermore, James Oakes also excludes Calhoun from the community of liberal proslavery thinkers by the 1840s, arguing that while the latter increasingly reverted to rights, such as the right of property, the South Carolinian had rejected "the primacy of rights." However, evidence shows that, much in line with Oakes's major examples, Calhoun remained committed to inequality on the one hand, and the protection of property rights and slavery on the other. Similarly to William Harper, for instance, he rejected the doctrine of natural rights, but, also like him, "could not break completely from prevailing liberal assumptions."[133] The Lockean-based property right defense of slavery continued to appear in Calhoun's rhetoric well into the 1840s.

In 1848, for example, in the debate over the Oregon Bill, he made a clear connection between slavery and the founding document of the Republic. For Calhoun, slaves represented private property falling under its protection. "Slavery existed in the South when the Con-

---

128 Ibid., 13:104, 105.

129 Ibid., 13:108. David F. Ericson points out that proslavery Southerners also referred to the liberal idiom of the consent of the governed when arguing that abolition was against the will of slaveholders. See *Debate over Slavery*, 22.

130 *Papers of Calhoun*, 13:109; see also ibid., 13:395.

131 Ibid., 13:397; see also ibid., 25:667. As he thundered in a similar speech: Northerners "are striving to divest us of our property, to reduce us to the level of those whom they sold to us as slaves" (ibid. 14:208).

132 On this, see also Huston, *Value of the Union*, 24, 53.

133 Jan Lewis, "The Problem of Slavery in Southern Political Discourse," in *Devising Liberty: Preserving and Creating Freedom in the New American Republic*, ed. David Thomas Konig (Standford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 271, 292–93; Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom*, 168–74, see also 179; and ibid., 176.

stitution was framed. . . . It is the only property recognized by it. . . . It is well known to all conversant with the history of the formation and adoption of the Constitution, that the South was very jealous in reference to this property; that it constituted one of the difficulties both to its formation and adoption, and that it would not have assented to either, had the Convention refused to allow to it its due weight in the Government, or to place it under the guarantee of the Constitution."[134]

Furthermore, in another speech on the Oregon Bill that he delivered on August 12, 1849, mainly designed to kill the Polk administration's amendment to extend the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific,[135] Calhoun confirmed both his commitment to slavery as a legitimate form of holding property and the dictum about the protection of property: "No one doubts but we have the right to hold slaves, and all admit that neither this Government, nor any state government, has the right to abolish slavery in the States where it exists. But, if we have the right to hold them as property, we have also the right to hold them in peace and quiet; and all attempts to disturb or question our right, with the view to its subversion, are direct and dangerous outrages."[136]

In claiming protection for property on the basis of the Constitution, Calhoun thus followed a tradition that was essentially tied up with Lockean liberalism. In this sense, too, he adopted the language of the Founders used for both pro- and anti-slavery purposes. He employed a discourse widely accepted throughout the nation.[137] By employing Locke's labor theory of value, Calhoun clearly aligned himself with the former's theory of property and consequently, government as its protector.[138]

Calhoun also adopted the idea that government is to be dissolved if it fails to protect the rights of the governed: "But strong as is my attachment to the Union, my attachment to liberty and the safety of the section where Providence has cast my lot, is still stronger . . .," he once claimed, then added, "Our Union and political institutions can only be preserved by

---

134 *Papers of Calhoun*, 25:515–16. For further instances of Calhoun's understanding of slavery as property right see ibid., 14:66, 208, 512; ibid., 16:301; 18:220; and ibid., 25:667. On Calhoun's defense of slavery as property in the 1840s, see also Calhoun to Percy Walker, October 23, 1847, in ibid., 24:617.

135 John C. Calhoun, *The Works of John C. Calhoun*, ed. Richard K. Crallé, 6 vols. (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1851–1857; repr., New York: Russell & Russell, 1968), 4:513–35; and Niven, *Price of the Union*, 317.

136 *Works*, 4:529. Ericson argues that some slaveholders were disturbed by the fact that they held human beings as property, an act against liberal principles. (Ericson, *Debate over Slavery*, 21) Calhoun seems to have been one of the exceptions.

137 As Forrest McDonald points out, the Lockean tenet that government cannot deprive the individual of property without his consent became the basis of "specific property rights," which were, in turn, expressed through the laws of the land. These, then, were directly rooted in political society and not in the state of nature but were to accord with it. McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, 65. It can be argued, then, that Calhoun was able to refer to such positive laws, without overtly accepting Lockean natural rights, which they were nevertheless derived from—indirectly, through the Constitution of 1787.

138 Historian Richard N. Current has connected Calhoun's use of the labor theory of value to the Marxian notion of the exploitation of labor, unaware of the contradiction between the two. Current, *John C. Calhoun* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), 44, 87–88. Current's argument is concerned with Calhoun's justification of depriving the slave of his property as in the case of the laboring classes. Calhoun's problem, however, pertains to the exchange of property as the fruits of one's labor with or without consent. He employed the labor theory of value in order to defend owners' right in movable and immovable property, as well as in slavery.

preserving the rights and equality established among its members by the Constitution."[139] The alternative would be secession, the dissolution of the existing government and the establishment of a new one.

Calhoun drew upon the Lockean concepts of revolution and resistance as well as self-preservation in an effort to defend South Carolina's position during the Nullification Crisis.[140] Historian Pauline Maier has argued that Calhoun's attempts to legitimise state veto derive from the eighteenth-century notion that the right of resistance, when practised by the people, was to be understood as a sign for the government to change its course of policy, and thus it was seen as a legitimate means of preventing revolution, the complete overthrow of government. She maintains that the nullification doctrine "was not . . . a plea for revolution on the model of 1776; it was instead a revival of the old right of resistance, with all of its conservative connotations." Thus, making nullification serve the purpose of the right of resistance, Calhoun intended it as a conservative tool for saving the Union. He made every effort to avoid making nullification appear a natural right and giving a chance of identifying it with the idea of secession—as anti-nullifiers did not fail to make that connection.[141]

Calhoun's use of political languages, nevertheless, I argue, had ambiguous effects, his rhetoric pointing toward the right of revolution as featured in the *Second Treatise* and the Declaration. Furthermore, as will be seen, Calhoun's understanding of the right of resistance, paradoxically, like in the case of Locke, linked to the concept of force and the state of war, did not serve as a deterrent, to prevent revolution, but to resist force in a state of war.

For Calhoun, the whole American system of government was based on revolution in the Lockean sense. In 1837, in his speech on a bill to admit Michigan as a state, responding to a challenge he claimed the Revolution of 1776 as a legitimate basis of the US and endorsed the Lockean principle of government resting on the consent of the people, who have the power to dissolve it by means of revolution: "I never denied the right of revolution: I contended for it. All our institutions rest on that right; they are the fruits of revolution. That was the proposition which led to the revolutionary war. I said that a convention of the people had power to put up and throw down any and every form of government; but that is, *per ex*, a revolution."[142] In other words, Calhoun understood the War of Independence as a revolutionary act, connected with innovation, a radical change of government. He employed such an act of innovation to legitimize nullification, a purportedly restorative, conservative measure.

The Nullification Convention of South Carolina, to justify its decision to nullify the duties of 1828 and 1832, among others, issued a document drafted by Calhoun, entitled "Address

---

139 *Works*, 4:531.

140 Kenneth Greenberg has argued that Calhoun, through his "own conceptions of man's nature" implicitly endorsed the "right to revolution." ("Revolutionary Ideology," 371) However, he fails to examine the problem in view of its Lockean connection and outside the *Disquisition*. Hence, he identifies the cause of revolution only with the failure of government to fulfill its end of restraining selfish humans. Calhoun, however, as will be seen, went beyond that and was not implicit but quite explicit about the Lockean right of revolution. H. Lee Cheek finds Calhoun's references to the right of revolution irrelevant, along with other Lockean idioms in Calhoun's political theory. See Cheek, *Calhoun and Popular Rule*, 97.

141 Pauline Maier, "The Road not Taken: Nullification, John C. Calhoun, and the Revolutionary Tradition in South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 82 (1981), 3, 7, and 18.

142 *Papers of Calhoun*, 13:353; original emphasis.

to the People of the United States" in November 1832, in which he applied Locke's concept of the right of revolution and the protection of rights by government to the debate between the federal government and South Carolina.[143] In the document Calhoun introduces a new Lockean idiom which he means to defend state interposition as a non-revolutionary act, functionally identical with the right of resistance and legitimately applied for the purpose of preventing the national government from wielding unconstitutional powers. It is the duty of a state "to resist the Government," Calhoun says, "should it, under color of exercising the delegated, encroach on the reserved powers."[144] He claims that, by means of nullification, South Carolina is trying to defend itself "without the slightest feeling of hostility towards the interests of any section of the country, or the remotest view to revolution."[145]

However, the rhetoric that Calhoun employs to demonstrate the patience of South Carolinians in hope of the repeal of the tariff laws with the payment of the public debt, in fact, also alludes to Locke's right of revolution. For him, nullification, or state veto is the ultimate means of settling the controversy. As he maintains, "The occasion to justify a State in interposing its authority, ought to be one of necessity; where all other peaceful remedies have been unsuccessfully tried."[146] The people of South Carolina, in Calhoun's argument, have been tolerating the unjust measures of the federal government patiently—like Locke's people before they would resort to the right of revolution.

Furthermore, similarly to Jefferson, who extended the individual's right of revolution to the individual colonies, Calhoun applies the same right to the case of South Carolina vs. the federal government. "During this long period," Calhoun says, "all the ordinary means of opposition—discussion, resolution, petition, remonstrance, and protest—have been tried and exhausted, without effect. We have, during the whole time, waited with patience under the unequal and oppressive action of the system, hoping that the final payment of the public debt . . . would bring it to a termination."[147]

This way of argumentation did, in fact, invoke the spirit of 1776, inasmuch as the Declaration of Independence also applies a similar line of argument to introduce and justify the colonists' demand for independence, the application of the right of revolution. Employing Lockean language to justify the act of revolution, the complete overthrow of existing government, the Declaration of Independence reads: "In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. . . . We have warned them [i.e. the British] from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. . . . [W]e have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity and we have conjured them by the

---

143 Ibid., 11:660–81.

144 Ibid., 11:670. On lawful resistance, Locke says the following: "Supposing a Government wherein the Person of the Chief Magistrate is not thus Sacred; yet this *Doctrine* of the lawfulness of *resisting* all unlawful exercises of his Power, *will not* upon every slight occasion indanger him, or *imbroil the Government*. For where the injured Party may be relieved, and his damages repaired by Appeal to the Law, there can be no pretence for Force, which is only to be used, where a Man is intercepted from appealing to the Law" (*Second Treatise*, sec. 207).

145 *Papers of Calhoun*, 11:677.

146 Ibid., 672.

147 *Papers of Calhoun*, 11:672; see also, ibid., 13:64, 65.

ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence."[148]

So, through his allusion to the sacred document, Calhoun's use of the Lockean idiom took on a radical tone. In doing so, he evoked the right of revolution formulated by Locke, through appropriating the language of the Declaration. Such a move, however, subverted his strategy to depict nullification as a conservative, restorative measure. His appeal to a text concerning the dissolution of government contested his explicit aim of preserving the Union. In this way, Calhoun employed Lockean language originally meant to justify revolution, also appropriated by the Revolutionaries in 1776 to ground their cause on. What they and he appealed to was no right of resistance to stop the "long train of abuses," but a preliminary measure taken before applying the right to revolution.[149]

During the Nullification Controversy, Calhoun also employed the notion of revolution intertwined with the concept of self-preservation. As has been seen, Locke claims that if there is evidence that the rulers plan to deprive the people of their liberties, the latter are justified in using force, or starting a fight in self-defense, and then the state of war sets in. Andrew Jackson's Nullification Proclamation (December 10, 1832) and "Force Bill Message" (January 16, 1833), asking Congress for authorization to use force in an attempt to subdue anti-tariff defiance in executing the law of 1832 in South Carolina evoked a similar argument from Calhoun in his speech on the Force Bill.[150]

Calhoun's basic point is that the culmination of the "train of abuses" is near; the country is fast approaching despotism due to the executive's policy. By means of the "Force Bill," he argues, the executive is attempting to take up arms against South Carolina. "And for what purpose is the unlimited control of the purse and of the sword thus placed at the disposition of the executive?" asks Calhoun. "To make war against one of the free and sovereign members of this confederation. . . . Thus exhibiting the impious spectacle of this government, the creature of the States, making war against the power to which it owes its existence." In an effort at self-preservation, Calhoun suggests, South Carolina should be prepared to meet force with force, to defend its liberty and avoid being enslaved: "It is to South Carolina a question of self-preservation; and I proclaim it, that, should this bill pass, and an attempt be made to enforce it, it will be resisted, at every hazard—even that of death itself. Death is not the

---

[148] Declaration of Independence, in Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 1, 1760–1776, ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950), 431–32.

[149] William Freehling points out that Locke's concept of the consent of the governed involves the notion that they must assent to laws even if against their will: "In contracting to give up a general power [i. e. sovereignty], the governed agreed to obey particular laws of which they disapproved." Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 171. While this is true, yet, as we have seen above, Locke allowed for the possibility of withdrawing trust whenever a breach of the contract occurred—and the power to judge this ultimately belonged to the governed, that is, the people and, in Calhoun's case, the people of the states.

[150] February 15–16, 1833, in *Papers of Calhoun*, 12:45–93.

greatest calamity; there are others still more terrible to the free and brave, and among them may be placed the loss of liberty and honour."[151]

Here Calhoun also seems to rely on the assumption that liberty is worth dying for, and slavery being worse than death, a notion familiar to Americans of his time from the revolutionary war, but which, again, is Lockean language. Locke claims that the individual, "whenever he finds the hardship of his Slavery out-weigh the value of his Life, 'tis in his Power, by resisting the Will of his Master, to draw on himself the Death he desires."[152] Calhoun's duty of self-preservation corresponds to Locke's, rooted in God's ownership of mankind. However, when he sets up a choice between surrendering to federal tyranny, i. e. slavery and death, during the Nullification Crisis, and opts for the latter, he dispenses with the duty part of self-preservation. Calhoun also argues in the speech that the Union cannot be held together by force, since that would equal slavery, that is, in Lockean terms, the state of war. As he maintains, "You cannot keep the States united in their constitutional and federal bonds by force. Force may, indeed, hold the parts together, but such union would be the bond between master and slave: a union of exaction on one side, and of unqualified *obedience* on the other."[153]

Thus, Calhoun also appropriated Locke when arguing that resistance was justified when aimed against sheer force. Furthermore, as we have seen, Locke also identified the state of war with slavery, a state also ruled by sheer force. In such cases, in turn, the right of resistance to force and the duty of self-preservation, as Locke argues and Calhoun agrees—when denouncing the Force Bill—came into effect.

Especially during the Nullification Controversy, then, Calhoun drew extensively upon Locke's arguments about property, slavery, self-preservation and the right of resistance and revolution. Following that period, with the rise of the abolitionist movement, slavery and property remained important issues in his rhetoric. He applied them, first and foremost, to defend southern interests vis-ŕ-vis the federal government, whether it came to the defense of their income or the institution of chattel slavery. Quite remarkably, while being explicit about the denial of the state of nature, Calhoun found the implications of other components of Lockean liberalism usable.

---

151 Ibid., 12:68, 69. This appeal to the right and duty of Lockean self-preservation is also articulated in the *Disquisition*, where Calhoun defines the individual self as being, in part, motivated by self-preservation. This drive is stronger than social feelings and is strongest in man, "all animated existence" considered (*Disquisition*, 8). On this point, see also Guy Story Brown, who connects Calhoun to Hobbes, then, to Locke, but without exploring the nature of connection with the latter (Brown, *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics*, 10, 385n47).

152 *Second Treatise*, sec. 23. H. Lee Cheek argues that for Calhoun, self-preservation is represented as a duty, not a right. See Cheek, *Calhoun and Popular Rule*, 102. Locke also posits self-preservation as a duty or obligation, since the individual "cannot take away his own Life," having no power over it (*Second Treatise*, sec. 23; see also sec. 135). As seen above, there is one exception to this, namely when slavery, the loss of freedom makes life intolerable for the individual. (ibid.) Interestingly, Calhoun also argues that death is a viable alternative to slavery, arguing the drive for freedom overruling the obligation of self-preservation in such a situation of extremity.

153 *Papers of Calhoun*, 12:73; emphasis in original. Ironically, Calhoun's emphasizing the benevolent nature of slavery can also be understood as a denial of the Lockean conception of the institution as a state of war, because such a view would have justified the use of force by the slave against the master or against himself. This is why he would not see slave rebellions as justifiable acts, and not because "he did not wish to create a justification for revolution, which might give sanction to slave insurrections," as Greenberg says. Greenberg, "Revolutionary Ideology," 372.

THE PROBLEM OF MAJORITY RULE

According to the prevailing scholarly view, Calhoun's nullification theory was invented first and foremost to defend minority interests. In his efforts, he is claimed to have discarded numerical majority as a possible basis of republican politics, denounced democracy based on numerical majority and preferred rule by the concurrent majority. A zealous critic of centralizing tendencies of Jackson's government and his conception of democracy, Calhoun offered his concept of the concurrent majority, and nullification resulting in consensual political decisions as a means to protect minority rights from majoritarian democratic rule.[154] Calhoun's critique of Jacksonian democracy was, therefore, also targeted at Locke's numerical majority rule. As Guy Story Brown argues, Calhoun's aim was to protect the governed from oppression by the government by making the latter responsible to the former. His rationale was that Locke's majority principle results in absolute majority rule in a democracy: "a majority rules, 'for the time,' over the minority." The basic situation does not change, though the roles may get reversed as a result of democratic elections.

All this notwithstanding, I contend, Calhoun's political theory also involved the Lockean concept of majority rule; in several ways, the principle of numerical majority did play a decisive role in his political theory. Despite his predominant interest in minority rights, he utilized the idea of majority rule as formulated by Locke in the *Second Treatise*.

Interestingly, scholars asserting the primacy of minority veto in Calhoun's political thought represent only one point of the spectrum concerning his views on majority rule. At the other end are those who argue for the ubiquitous presence of the majority principle in his theory of the concurrent majority. As John Niven argues, "Even his notion of concurrent majorities simply split popular majorities into many parts, each of which would be subject to the same majority-rule, minority-right problem he had faced in the first place," and in Daryl H. Rice's words, with Calhoun, "the majority is finally absolute." They, however, fail to see the limits of the effect of majority rule in Calhoun and ignore the specific, diverse ways in which Calhoun puts this Lockean idiom to use. A thorough look at his doctrine of the concurrent majority and the mechanism of nullification can help understand the nature of Calhoun's appropriation of the Lockean concept of numerical majority. As will be seen, it informs

---

[154] Brown, *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics*, 182. On Calhoun's preoccupation of minorities as opposed to majorities, which "could look out for themselves" see also Margaret Coit Elwell's "The Continuing Relevance of John C. Calhoun," *Continuity: A Journal of History* 9 (1984), 73. The absence of majoritarianism in Calhoun's political thought is also argued, for example, by George Kateb, "The Majority Principle: Calhoun and His Antecedents." *Political Science Quarterly* 84 (1969): 583–605, esp. 585 and 600; and Fletcher Wright, *Natural Law*, 204. See also Manisha Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 22, 26, 81; Huston, *Value of the Union*, 53–54; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 154; Herbert L. Curry, "John C. Calhoun," in *A History and Criticism of American Public Address*, ed. William Norwood Brigance, vol. 2 (McGraw-Hill 1943; repr., New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), 651; Hartz, *Liberal Tradition*, 161–62; and Michael O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 2:832. Even contemporaries such as James Madison identified the principle of nullification as being opposed to majority rule. See McCoy, *Last of the Fathers*, 136, 138–39. Madison himself identified the doctrine of nullification with the denial of the idea that the majority should rule. Madison to Edward Everett, August 28, 1830, in Madison, *The Writings of James Madison*, ed. Gaillard Hunt (New York and London: G. G. Putnam's Sons, 1910), 9:399.

Calhoun's thought in a qualified manner in more ways than identified before: numerical majority rules the top level of decision making, within federal government as well as on the level of states in the form of convention, finally in the community of the qualified majority of the states, blocking nullifying minority (state) veto.[155]

Majority rule is an important principle for Locke, enabling civil government to function properly: in civil society political decisions are made based on the will of the majority of the citizens, to which the rest of the citizen body is supposed to consent. As he contends, "When any number of Men have so *consented to make one Community* or Government, they are thereby presently incorporated, and make *one Body politick*, wherein the *Majority* have a Right to act and conclude the rest." If it fails to happen so, if the rest of society does not accept majority rule, the outcome is the deterioration of governmental power since, "it is impossible it should act or continue one Body, one Community, which the consent of every individual that united into it, agreed it should."[156] The alternative of having the consent of each individual in society for political decisions would be impossible to realize. Furthermore, according to Locke, the decisions of the majority "are binding upon the minority," and the individual members of the community. The minority's disobedience to the will of the majority results in the dissolution of civil government.[157]

The Lockean principle of majoritarian government struck root in American soil: as it was understood under the Articles of Confederation, majority rule was expressed and practiced through the majorities of individual states, which acted to execute Congressional laws. Later it became the foundational basis of the American political system created in 1787. The Constitution made Congress a legislative body representing the majority embodied by the people of the whole Union, and the decisions of the new government formulated by the Constitution were to express majority will. Madison, for instance, explicitly identified the republican form of government with majority rule.[158] Thomas Jefferson even saw majority rule as an antidote to secessionist tendencies, arguing that when local discontents on a particular issue became shared by the majority in the Union, they could be remedied through the legislating power of the majority.[159]

For all the reverence attached to it, in the early Republic the majority principle was limited to a minority of the US adult population. Until the 1820s, with property and taxpaying qualifications, both on the state and the federal levels, the right to vote as well as the right to hold office was restricted to a minority of the adult white male population. Furthermore, in most Atlantic states, older districts in the East with population level well below those of western districts still sent the same number of representatives into the state assemblies. Even where broader franchise existed, local politics was controlled through the appointment of

---

155 Niven, *Price of the Union*, 329; and Daryl H. Rice, "John C. Calhoun," *History of Political Thought* 12 (1991): 327.

156 *Second Treatise,* secs. 95, and 96.

157 Willmoore Kendall, *John Locke and Majority-Rule* (Urbana, Ill.: The University of Illinois Press, 1941), 112, quotation on 114.

158 Jaffa, *New Birth of Freedom*, 381, 46; and Rahe, *Republics*, 71.

159 Jefferson to Destutt de Tracy, January 26, 1811, in *PTJ*, 524–25.

office holders by state magistrates instead of having the election of magistrates by the electorate.[160] It was from the mid—1820s on that an overall change began to take place in the assessment of majority rule. By the time of the rise of the Jacksonian Democrats, victorious in the presidential elections of 1828 and 1832, democracy based on universal adult white manhood suffrage began to replace the old system in which political elites had the opportunity to evade majority will. As a result, the will of the electorate came to play a greater role in political decision-making. (See, for instance, the abolition of the caucus system.)[161]

Andrew Jackson repeatedly reaffirmed his position on majority rule as the basis of democracy, as well as his image as the representative of the majority interest of the nation. Taking Locke's majority principle to the extreme, Jackson held that having elected their magistrates, the people remained active in the law-making and governing process and their consent to laws made by the government was understood. In addition, he believed sovereignty to remain with the people, and advocated the popular election of the president and the senators so that the people's will would rule in every sphere of US politics.[162]

At the same time that the US political system privileged majority rule, minority rights were often seen as needing protection from the majority, because they were regarded as identical with Lockean natural rights. Debate could arise only with regard to the means of achieving this. The Founding Fathers, for example, were suspicious of absolute majorities and thought to have created a republican form of government in order to avoid the excesses of democracy.[163] Although Calhoun was mainly concerned with this problem himself, his theory of the concurrent majority and nullification also contained elements adopted from the Lockean majority rule, but only with significant limitations and, at the same time, in more ways than thought before.

The presence of the majority principle in Calhoun's political theory was, in part, due to his general understanding of the American political system, which he found his own theory of state sovereignty compatible with. According to him, the American government is based on the combination of the concurrent principle and numerical majority rule. As he maintained, the principle of concurrency was at work at the making of the Constitution of 1787, when its ratification was made conditional on the concurrent opinions of the states.[164] The confederacy under the Articles was solely based on the concurring principle; however, the new Constitution created a system that endowed the federal government with powers of the absolute

---

160 Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 107–108.

161 Remini, *Legacy of Jackson*, 17.

162 Ibid. 22, 25, 26, 34.

163 Jaffa, *New Birth of Freedom*, 47; and Remini, *Legacy of Jackson*, 7. Concerns about the tyranny of the majority were expressed through arguments for the ratification of the Constitution. Awareness of the diversity of interests in American society and the danger of a given interest acquiring overwhelming power through its majority status made Madison argue for an extended republic where no permanent rule of a given majority was possible. According to him, the relatively large number of diverse interests would prevent the formation of stable majorities. "Federalist 10," in James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (London, etc.: Penguin, 1987), 127–28; and Rakove, *Original Meanings*, 49–50.

164 *Papers of Calhoun*, 11:641; ibid., 11:87–88.

majority in the making of laws, whereas states retained the constitution-making power, based on concurrency.[165]

The law-making body consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives, Calhoun admits, is based on majority vote: "a majority of the States considered as bodies politic, which prevails in this body; and a majority of the people of the States, estimated in federal numbers, in the other house of Congress."[166] In other words, within federal government majority rule prevails in the Senate representing states as well as in the House of Representatives, which represents the overall population of the states. Yet, besides his understanding of the US system of government, the Lockean majority principle, in part, also lay beneath Calhoun's own theories of the concurrent majority and nullification.

In addition to his understanding of federal government, numerical majority rule informs Calhoun's political theory in three more ways: by virtue of his concurrent majority, the nullifying state convention, and finally, the three-fourth majority of the states overwhelming the state interposition.

In the *Disquisition*, Calhoun expresses his preference for the concurrent majority, contending that it has more advantages over the numerical one, which is based on the majority principle and "collects the sense of the greater number of the whole as that of the community."[167] However, he, in fact, draws upon Locke's majority rule when he defines concurrent majority. In the *Disquisition*, Calhoun understands concurrent majority as the one that "takes the sense of each [interest] through its majority or appropriate organ."[168] This way of seeing interests, however, is based on the presupposition that they are not unanimous constructs. Paradoxically, then, Calhoun admits that interests may be heterogeneous. In other words, his definition of interest makes it an impossible entity to identify. Yet, he immediately adds that "whatever diversity each interest might have within itself . . . the individuals composing each would be fully and truly represented by its own majority or appropriate organ, regarded in reference to the other interests."[169] What Calhoun seems to be assuming here is that one interest may consist of various individuals differing from one another, yet still the majority within that given interest can legitimately represent all the rest, that is, individuals that make up the minority interest.

Louis Hartz claims to find the origins of Calhoun's concurrency principle, aimed at restricting majority rule in Locke's concept of the natural state. He claims, "It is here, in his passionate defense of the minority interest, that Calhoun goes back to Locke's state of nature after having destroyed it in a blaze of organic glory. For there are of course minorities within minorities . . ., and since Calhoun offers no reason why there should not be given a policy veto too, the idea of the 'concurrent majority' quickly unravels itself into separate individuals executing the law of nature for themselves."[170] In other words, Hartz argues that for Calhoun,

---

165 Ibid., 10:643–44.

166 Ibid., 6:88.

167 *Disquisition*, 22.

168 Ibid. See also Rice, "John C. Calhoun," 326.

169 *Disquisition*, 22.

170 Hartz, *Liberal Tradition*, 161–62.

each and every interest within society is entitled to the veto power, since they are sovereign entities, existing in the state of nature. Accordingly, to Hartz's mind minority veto works on every level of society, and consequently, Locke's majority principle emphasizing the overwhelming power of majority interest has no place whatsoever in Calhoun's system. This however, is not the case in which Calhoun's system works.

For him, as seen above, concurrent majority is composed of interests, which, in turn, are constituted by individuals. Furthermore, interests are represented in the government of the concurrent majority through their majorities. Consequently, there is no further level between the interest and the individual. Hence, the numerical majority principle cannot work further down than the level of interest. In other words, the "seeping down" effect of minority veto depends on the presence of majority rule, which it presupposes. Concurrent majority, then, cannot function without the numerical majority principle in Calhoun's system. However, where one ends, the other finishes, too. The concurrent principle or minority veto works only on the top level of Calhoun's system—below that, numerical majority rules. The two "supermajorities" on the top are empowered to veto each other's political decisions; however, their identities are strictly based on the numerical majority principle: interests are not defined through a minority veto but through majority decision. Below them, however, are the individuals in Calhoun's system and following his logic, the way their interaction generates an interest remains a mystery. Hence, in Calhoun's system there are clear-cut limits both to minority veto and majority rule: although numerical majority rule is a prerequisite for minority veto, neither of them is unlimited. Therefore, it is not helpful to "ask about the interests of the minority within the minority, and the minority within that, and so on," as Rice would do, following Hartz.[171] Instead, it seems more fruitful to examine the concrete forms that majority rule takes in Calhoun's political philosophy.

Another of Calhoun's applications of the majority principle concerns the process of nullification by a state, through its convention. Taking issue with the view that Calhoun's principle of the concurrent majority is confined to the federal government, Guy Story Brown argues for its ubiquitous nature in Calhoun's political philosophy. In his opinion, "the constitutional principle" applies to any kind of government including "the governments of the individual states composing the American Union, as well as the federal government, because they are all governments." For Calhoun, such a kind of government, Brown argues, prevents the tyranny of the majority on the state level, too.[172]

Furthermore, Lacy K. Ford has persuasively argued that Calhoun was aware of the political division in his own state between the Lowcountry and the Upcountry, and attempted to forge unity even at the price of curbing further democratization, such as the popular election of the state governor and presidential electors. He was anxious to keep the political balance between the two regions and hence also disapproved of giving proportional representation to upcountry parishes. Democratization would have granted overwhelming power to the Upcountry, break-

171 Cf. Rice, "John C. Calhoun," 326; see also Current, *John C. Calhoun*, 116.

172 Brown, *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics*, 130, 131.

ing the presumed political unity of the state. He was, in short, against giving numerical majority power to the Upcountry.[173]

Yet, at the same time, the numerical principle was at work during the Nullification Crisis in South Carolina, and the triumphant nullifiers did rely on the Lockean majority rule.

With their views, Brown and Ford get close to the universalist argument about Calhoun's concurrent majority held by Hartz or Rice. This position, however, is untenable in light of the analysis of Calhoun's nullification texts. As David F. Ericson points out, during the Nullification Crisis, Calhoun found his concept of the concurrent majority indispensable to political stability only on the federal level because he found there a plurality of interests, which he thought to be manageable only by means of this mechanical device. At the same time, according to Calhoun, no such device was needed within the individual states.[174] For Calhoun, as far as economic interests are concerned, the federal union is heterogeneous and hence requires the rule of the concurrent majority, while states are homogeneous, and therefore he found numerical majority rule sufficient to ensure political stability there.[175]

As for Calhoun's doctrine of nullification, majority rule on the state level was realized through the concept of nullification convention, with the two-thirds majority of votes required for calling the state convention of South Carolina in order to nullify the tariffs of 1828 and 1832. The state convention nullifying a federal law deemed unconstitutional was to be summoned by a state legislature with a minimum requirement of two-thirds majority support. (Popular votes for nullifier representatives did not reach that limit in October 1832.) The will of the state convention thus stood for qualified majority will.[176] Had the requirement not been fulfilled, it would have meant the defeat of minority rule, and, in fact, the victory of the principle of (qualified) majority. However, the nullification convention expressed the will of a numerical majority of the state, not a concurrent one: Unionists were against nullification and remained a numerical minority whose voice was not considered in an act of consensual

---

[173] Lacy K. Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800–1860* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press), 282–86; see also 289–90.

[174] David F. Ericson, *The Shaping of American Liberalism: The Debates over Ratification, Nullification and Slavery* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 81, 82–86; see also Ericson, "The Nullification Crisis, American Republicanism, and the Force Bill Debate," *The Journal of Southern History* 61 (1995), 259–66.

[175] Ericson, *Shaping of American Liberalism*, 82. Such a vision of state majorities by Calhoun, assuming some kind of harmony between majority and minority interests making political stability possible within a state, was also furthered by the notion of virtual representation. As Kenneth Greenberg has argued, in South Carolina, the concept of virtual representation remained a dominant understanding of representation in the antebellum era, assuming that an identity of interests could exist between the governed and those who governed, despite their identities being different. Hegemonic planters' interests were seen as identical with those of the community. South Carolina embodied "a unity of real interest," expressed through those of the planters, who therefore could virtually represent all other interests including slaves. Greenberg, *Masters and Statesmen*, 69–72, 78; quoted phrase on 75. Greenberg also sees virtual representation at work in Calhoun's *Disquisition*: the government of the concurrent majority "encourages the election of men who could best use their reason to determine the good of the whole—the election of virtual representatives" (ibid., 78). Needless to say, this sort of representation was to create a "virtual" unity of interests, too.

[176] See *Papers of Calhoun*, 10:516; and Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 255, 165.

decision making as posited by the *Disquisition*.[177] Paradoxically, then, a numerical majoritarian political mechanism was cleverly used by a hegemonic minority in South Carolina society.[178] Thus, Calhoun intended his theory of the concurrent majority to regulate the interaction among diverse interests on the federal level; whereas on the state level, he found numerical majority rule expedient as embodied by the state convention. Drawing upon Locke's majority rule designed for the representation of individual interests, he extended it to states acting while applying their state veto.

The third way in which Calhoun appropriated the Lockean idiom of majority rule concerns the process in which nullification by one state can be overruled by a qualified majority of states. His assertion of majority rule even supersedes his doctrine of absolute state sovereignty. According to his nullification doctrine, when a state deems a federal law unconstitutional and hence null and void and ineffective in its territory, the three-fourths majority of the states has the power to "nullify" the decision by amending the Constitution. The amending process making the unconstitutional measure constitutional requires the qualified amending majority of three-fourths of the states. As Calhoun argues in the "Exposition:" "Admit then the power in question to belong to the States, and admit its liability to abuse and what is the utmost consequence, but to create a presumption against the constitutionality of the power exercised by the General Government, which, if it be well founded, must compel them to abandon it, but if it be not the General Gvt. [*sic*] may remove the difficulty by obtaining the power contested by amendment to the Constitution."[179] By granting three-fourths of states, a qualified majority power, to overwhelm state veto, rooted in state sovereignty, Calhoun was, indeed, a follower of Lockean majority rule, which, then, left an imprint on Calhoun's political theory, and it did play a crucial role in his theory of the union.

---

[177] Madison pointed out that once rejecting majority rule in the federal government, nullifiers had difficulty arguing against its presence on the level of state governments. See McCoy, *Last of the Fathers*, 139. As Ralph T. Eubanks argues, by implementing the test oath, "the nullifiers themselves became [...] an oppressive majority." Eubanks, "The Rhetoric of the Nullifiers," in *Oratory in the Old South, 1828–1860* ed. Waldo W. Braden (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 64. William Freehling also draws attention to the fact that Calhoun's nullification theory results in absolute majority rule within the states when it comes to the overwhelming power of the nullification convention, because in it he fuses sovereignty with governmental power, allowing sovereign conventions to judge or make laws. In this way, the governing power assumes the absolute power of the sovereign thereby overwhelming minority interest in the state (Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 170–71).

[178] Furthermore, as Harry V. Jaffa argues, Calhoun's and later the secessionists' stance on citizens' loyalty was that it belonged to the states, and not to the Union, and that therefore they "were morally bound by majority rule within their states" (Jaffa, *New Birth of Freedom*, 366).

[179] *Papers of Calhoun*, 10:520; see also ibid., 522, 528; and ibid., 11:636, 421. See also Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 167. Manisha Sinha's contention that Calhoun's nullification theory promoted minority rule in that one-fourth of the states plus one could prevent the three-fourths' majority of states from overwriting a nullification ordinance does not seem to hold (Sinha, *Counterrevolution of Slavery*, 23). In fact, Calhoun's application of the principle of majority rule in his nullification doctrine is based on the idea of qualified majority. Making a constitutional amendment requires a qualified majority decision—its failure is not the consequence of minority rule, but rather the lack of a sufficient degree of majority support for the decision. A single state's nullifying act based on its sovereign power was confronted by the rest of the states as parties to the contract and measured in that way based on the (qualified) majority principle.

As we have seen, Calhoun made extensive use of Lockean liberalism despite the fact that he overtly denounced its theoretical basis, the state of nature. He adopted the intimate link that Locke established between liberty and human rationality as a prerequisite for participation in civil society. In this way, Calhoun was able to argue for the just nature of human bondage for those who lacked the intellectual capacity to live free under government. To the same purpose, he was also able to utilize Locke's right to property in defending slaves as chattel. In addition, Calhoun's individualist defense of property was ultimately based on the same labor theory of value in which Locke grounded his own concept of property rights. In his defense of slavery as property on account of the Lockean labor theory of value for its ultimate baseline, Calhoun thus adopted a stance that was similar to that of the Founders. As seen above, they gave primacy to property rights, explicitly linking slaves as chattel to the Lockean protection of natural rights. The Founders, however, unlike Calhoun, did sense the conflict between these rights.

During the Nullification Crisis, Calhoun had the opportunity to draw upon Lockean idioms intensively, given that it was a situation in which issues related to government arose in an especially dramatic way. He appropriated Locke's concept of the duty of self-preservation, combining it with the right of resistance, and similarly to the English thinker, he thought possible the suspension of the duty of self-preservation when he regarded enslavement as a viable threat. Moreover, although introducing nullification as a conservative measure, he, in fact, evoked Lockean language justifying revolution and the changing of government.

Finally, Calhoun also drew upon the Lockean idiom of majority rule, but applying it with significant limitations: his theory of the concurrent majority posited only each interest in society as ones defined through majorities within. This way of seeing political society, at the same time, determined Calhoun's views of federal relations, too, in so far as he understood individual states as political entities based on the numerical majority rule: even though Upcountry and Lowcountry in South Carolina were supposed to balance each other through minority veto, the nullification convention, an important component of Calhoun's theory of state interposition, was truly based on majority rule.

Alongside the republican tradition, then, Calhoun spoke the language of Lockean liberalism, too. Aware of it or not, he utilized these in an attempt to appeal to a political community steeped in them. Moreover, besides these rather secular political languages he was ready to draw upon idioms more related to religious nationalism, namely the American jeremiad, as I hope to show in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3
THE AMERICAN JEREMIAD IN CALHOUN'S POLITICAL RHETORIC

INTRODUCTION

In a recent discussion of Calhoun's political thought, H. Lee Cheek calls for more attention to its "spiritual" aspect, including his concept of Providence.[1] This notion, indeed, provides a useful perspective for exploring, in part, the link between religion and Calhoun's political thought; moreover, it offers a starting point for investigating the interface of Calhoun's religious and nationalist rhetoric, which, I contend, can be successfully grasped through the concept of the "American jeremiad." In addition to Lockean liberalism and republicanism, his rhetoric was also informed by the language of the American jeremiad, as identified by Sacvan Bercovitch.[2] The American jeremiad was a rhetorical construct which comprised a decisive part of the American political tradition. It provided a space for members of the political community to articulate their anxieties about their failure to meet their cultural ideals. Informed by the Old Testament genre of the jeremiad that explains current social or political troubles as punishment for the chosen nation living against God's will, jeremiads in the New World, from New England Puritans through the generation of Founders, also often explained crisis symptoms in their society by linking them to divine punishment. More importantly, however, this ancient rhetorical ritual gained a new aspect in their hands; at the same time that it criticized transgression of moral and other nature, the American jeremiad exhibited a high degree of optimism, prophesizing restoration of the ideal confirming Americans' special status as God's elect nation. As will be explained, the American jeremiad functioned as a political language in the Pocockean sense both in the larger national rhetorical context and also in Calhoun's discourse.

Before exploring Calhoun's appropriation of the American jeremiad, I will offer an analysis of his understanding of Providence as it relates to his religious nationalism. Then, after a discussion of those assumptions in Bercovitch's model of the American jeremiad which are relevant to my argument, I will turn to Calhoun's speeches and writings in order to identify

---

[1] Cheek, *Calhoun and Popular Rule: The Political Theory of the* Disquisition *and* Discourse (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 81.

[2] Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).

the ways in which the jeremiad appears in them.[3] I will demonstrate the changes in his jeremiad rhetoric which can be explored by tracing the modification of its vocabulary, the various contexts in which it appeared, as well as the functions that he intended it to fulfill during his political career.

I will categorize Calhoun's versions of the American jeremiad as belonging to three periods of his political career: his pre-Nullification or nationalist period, the time of the Nullification Crisis (the beginning of his sectionalist period) and, finally, his post-Nullification period. My rationale for such a division lies in the recognition of the shared features of Calhoun's jeremiad utterances in each epoch. This division of Calhoun's life into various periods is not intended to suggest inconsistency in his political rhetoric.[4] Instead, my aim is to point out his persistent use of the American jeremiad which, nonetheless, was not without some differences. Such an understanding of Calhoun's jeremiad rhetoric is not to question his consistency in this respect, nor is it to deny the detectable changes in the various components of his version of it as a political language.

CALHOUN AND PROVIDENCE

Robert M. Calhoon has shown that Providence plays a significant role in Calhoun's republican rhetoric. Drawing upon Pocock, Calhoon contends that the phrase "mysterious Providence," often applied by Calhoun, is "a perfect synonym for Machiavelli's concept of *fortuna,*" that is, fortune as understood in Renaissance Italy: the force of contingency and chance ruling political life, making it insecure for political participants.[5] At the same time, it should be added to Calhoon's definition of Providence and fortune, that, as Pocock points out, in the late medieval period, Providence denoted God's mysterious, inscrutable will unknown to humans, who, positioned in their finite world, watched and experienced the sequence of particular events from within. It was beyond their power to occupy the *nunc-stans* of God, which would have enabled them to understand the meaning of worldly occurrences by identifying their position in the larger, divine pattern. Therefore, although Providence operated as *fortuna* with faith added, signifying the contingency of earthly events seen from the viewpoint of humans, it assumed significance and certainty from the viewpoint of God. Belief in a providential plan by God made the seemingly unrelated chain of earthly events meaningful through their being

---

[3] It would be an exaggeration to claim that Calhoun's political utterances were permeated with the strategy of the American jeremiad throughout his political career. Several speeches and writings by him, however, did manifest the conventional pattern, which demonstrates that Calhoun was very much part of a mainstream American rhetorical tradition and utilized it in various contexts.

[4] H. Lee Cheek, Jr. criticizes such a periodization as "questioning his consistency" based on the "South Atlantic republican vision." See his *Calhoun and Popular Rule*, 63, 64, and 18.

[5] Calhoon, *Evangelicals and Conservatives in the Early South, 1740–1861* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 184, 184–85.

part of that plan. It was only once this faith was lost that having been rid of its religious content, Providence became irrational fortune, "the atheist's version of providence."[6]

By the late seventeenth century the republican concept of fortune, signifying randomness and contingency, was beginning to lose its appeal and was gradually replaced by the concept of corruption as a force that was not external to human society, not independent of and beyond human will. The corruption of virtue came to be attributed to "secondary" causes, which had human agency: corruption was seen as rooted in human society, linked to human action.[7] Calhoun's "kind Providence" had more links with contemporary American political thought and served as a basis for the exceptional status that he constructed for America through his American jeremiad.

The examples which Calhoon cites to illustrate how the South Carolinian's usage of the concept of Providence is linked with the notion that chance and contingency determine historical events do seem to support his identification of Providence with *fortuna*. However, with Calhoun, in fact, there is also another and opposing sense of "mysterious Providence," bringing either good or bad, resisting human attempts to anticipate its workings. This alternative usage can even be detected in one of the passages quoted by Calhoon, in which the South Carolinian refers to "an all-wise Providence" granting "liberty . . . as the noblest and highest reward for the development of our faculties."[8]

Here, Providence can hardly be understood as completely unpredictable: since it functions as a rational force (rewarding people for their proper behavior in this case) it appears rather as the antithesis of irrational *fortuna*, hostile to man, and assumes qualities of a benevolent and reliable force.[9] Furthermore, as will be seen below, this usage of Providence also implies that, as opposed to fortune, the workings of the former *can* indeed result in political stability. Providence may stand for contingency, but in connection with the American republic, past events turn out to be favorable in Calhoun's texts, narrated and interpreted from the *nunc-stance* of retrospection.

Calhoun's public utterances contain several references to "a kind Providence," which seems to have taken an active part in the shaping of American history. One such instance can be located in his speech demanding the repeal of the Force Act in 1834.[10] Here Calhoun emphasizes the role of "a kind Providence" in the making of the American system of government, peculiar in that although spanning over a vast territory, it is capable of preserving liberty and avoiding tyranny. Thus, in Calhoun's reading, the making of the Constitution was

---

6 Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1975), 25–30, 48; and Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (New York: Atheneum, 1971; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 84–85. Citations are from the University of Chicago Press edition.

7 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 333.

8 Quotation from Calhoun's *Disquisition*, in Calhoon, *Evangelicals and Conservatives*, 184.

9 See also the rewarding function of Providence linked with faith in another passage by Calhoun: "Let us stand fast in the faith and persevere to the end in the confident belief, that, if we but do our duty honestly and fearlessly, a righteous Providence will reward us in the end by the redemption and restoration of the Government to its primitive purity and the establishment of our liberty on a more solid foundation than ever" (*Papers of Calhoun*, 13:284).

10 Ibid., 12:277–98.

something of a miracle: the Framers solved a problem almost impossible to cope with. Although they were wise enough to devise such a system, their wisdom, by itself, would not have been sufficient to work the miracle. "Yet this difficult problem" [i.e. to protect liberty in a country of the size of the United States], Calhoun claims, "was solved—successfully solved—by the wise and sagacious men who framed our constitution."—only to add immediately, "No, it was above unaided human wisdom—above the sagacity of the most enlightened." They needed to rely on the aid of divine Providence: "It was the result of a fortunate combination of circumstance, co-operating and leading the way to its formation; directed by that kind Providence, which has so often and so signally disposed events in our favor."[11] Hence, for Calhoun, in this particular case, Providence functions more like a benevolent helper than unpredictable fortune, a hostile force to be mastered and subdued. Furthermore, its workings resulted in the birth of a system that Calhoun praises for its stability, a quality never associated with *fortuna* representing change and instability.[12]

Providence, then, also features as other than a passive and unpredictable force for Calhoun; it is creative, exerting a lasting impact on human affairs. Moreover, it also intervenes in worldly affairs when needed; it can serve as a protecting force. Calhoun, for instance, wrote in connection with the Nullification Controversy: "May that kind Providence, which has long protected our country, watch over us in this great and dangerous crisis, and so enlighten the people, and inspire their hearts with love of their liberty and country, that they may clearly see the danger, and put down effectually and forever the present and all future attempts on their rights."[13]

In Calhoun's use, Providence also is that force that guides the Republic in its course of development. This conception of Providence exhibits the attributes of Manifest Destiny[14] assigning the course of American history: "Providence has bestowed on us a new and vast region," Calhoun claimed in 1841, "abounding in resources beyond any country of the same extent on the globe. Ours is a peaceful task—to improve this rich inheritance; to level its forests . . . stud its wide surface with flourishing cities, towns, and villages; and spread over it richly cultivated fields."[15] Providence, for Calhoun, at the same time, also appears in a sectional context and can function to promote particular interests within the Union. This notion, for example, appears in a passage in which he expresses his hope that the South would be able to resist federal power if need be: "We have much to do, but with united councils, and

---

[11] Ibid., 12:283.

[12] Cf. also Calhoun's speech on presidential veto power in 1842, where he refers to "that wonderful and sublime system of Government which our patriotic ancestors established, not so much by their wisdom, as wise and experienced as they were, as by the guidance of a kind Providence, who, in his divine dispensation, so disposed events as to lead to the establishment of a system of government wiser than those who framed it" (ibid., 16:99).

[13] Ibid., 12:157–58; see also ibid., 13:465.

[14] For "Manifest Destiny" in the antebellum period, I take Frederick Merk's definition, i.e. "expansion prearranged by Heaven, over an area not clearly defined." Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation*, rev. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983), 24.

[15] August 24, 1841, in *Papers of Calhoun*, 15:729.

firm hearts, aided by a kind Providence, we will succeed in securing our liberty, and, I trust, in preserving the Constitution, and the Union."[16]

Thus, it seems that in Calhoun's republican vocabulary Providence can be regarded as more than the equivalent of fortune. Although one can detect certain instances in his political language in which Providence appears as an inscrutable force, there are also several instances when it manifests several characteristics distinguishing it from republican fortune. In the first place, Providence cannot be mastered by men, whereas fortune is supposed to be;[17] in the second place, fortune is a passive principle, while Providence, as it functions for Calhoun, is always active and is in complete control of the course of events; in the third place, Calhoun's references to "a kind Providence" indicate that, for him, it has attributes of a benevolent force, especially when it works in the context of American history, whereas *fortuna* is never "kind" per se—it is to be made as such; finally, Calhoun's Providence is not irrational as fortune is because it also involves faith, i.e. the notion of a purpose, a divine plan. His faith in a divine force having a purpose for man (or the American Republic) assures this. Furthermore, as will be seen below, "kind Providence" is also linked to the notion of exceptionalism in Calhoun's political rhetoric within the framework of the American jeremiad.

THE CONCEPT OF THE AMERICAN JEREMIAD

The concept of the American jeremiad facilitates an analysis of the interface of religion and politics from a rhetorical perspective. Relying on this concept, Bercovitch undertakes to explore a religious aspect of American culture, from Puritan times to the nineteenth century, with particular focus on its rhetorical workings.[18] Bercovitch defines the American jeremiad as a "ritual designed to join social criticism to spiritual renewal." It is rhetorical in nature, fulfilling an ideological role insofar as it has been used by its practitioners to forge a consensus in US society. Hence, in Bercovitch's interpretation, the American jeremiad has functioned as the major legitimizing rhetorical ritual in American culture, even inviting the participation of dissent in the national middle-class consensus as long as its social criticism could be

---

[16] Ibid., 12:147. In a similar vein, Calhoun also evoked Providence in his defense of slavery. In one of his speeches on the subject he remarks, "As to our duties, it is enough to declare, what all wise and temperate minds acquainted with the subject will admit, that our slaves are probably in the best hands to which a kind Providence could have assigned their happiness" (ibid., 12:550–51).

[17] Pocock emphasizes the importance of manly *virtù* in the mastering of feminine *fortuna* in the Renaissance period. See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 37.

[18] Other works discussing the connection between religion and American political culture include Ruth Bloch's *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756–1800* (1985; Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1988), focusing on the interaction of religious millennialism and political discourse in the late-eighteenth-century United States. Michael Lienesch discusses the sacred and secular readings of the past, while the constitutional era is covered by Paul C. Nagel. See Lienesch *New Order of the Ages: Time, the Constitution, and the Making of Modern American Political Thought* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 17–37; and Nagel, *This Sacred Trust: American Nationality, 1798–1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

integrated into the latter and made part of a continuing revolution, that urged a restoration of cultural ideals and values formulated during the American Revolution.[19]

What provides the American jeremiad with its nation-specific trait is the affirmation of the middle-class cultural ideal, based on commitment to free enterprise, with its roots extending back to Puritan times and unfolding in the early nineteenth century. It is part of a rhetorical strategy, therefore, underpinning the American middle-class "way of life."[20] The cultural significance of the American jeremiad is indicated by Bercovitch's statement that as a ritual it provided "spiritual cohesion" for a society with no tradition, by generating its identity through offering "the figural correlative to the theory of democratic capitalism. It gave the nation a past and future in sacred history, rendered its political and legal outlook a fulfillment of prophecy."[21]

The basis of Bercovitch's model is Perry Miller's understanding of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Puritan jeremiad. In Miller's account, the jeremiads of the second and third generations of the New England Puritans were intended to express anxiety over the moral state of their community, and, consequently, the success of their mission. Moral degeneration, dread of the failure to carry out their "errand into the wilderness" and to build a second Jerusalem in the New World as God's chosen people, as well as God's afflictions intended as punishment for their departure from the Founding Fathers' way were recurrent themes in Puritan political sermons of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[22]

Modifying Miller's model of promise and declension Bercovitch emphasizes one more important element of the American jeremiad: prophecy, that is, the idea that despite a temporary declension from the original state of perfection, God's chosen people will ultimately fulfill His promise and will build His kingdom on earth. God's afflictions were interpreted by Puritan ministers not simply as punishment for declining but also as signs pointing to the ultimate success of the mission, encouraging the community to return to its original path of righteousness by achieving correction through castigation. As Bercovitch argues, "the Puritans' cries about declension and doom were part of a strategy to revitalize the errand,"

---

19 Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, xi, xii, 152–60.

20 Ibid., xiii-xiv. Bercovitch maintains that the southern way of life was different from the American middle-class one. He even accepts C. Vann Woodward's claim about the South being "un-American" (ibid. xiii, note*). Bercovitch's contention notwithstanding, Calhoun's case shows that the American jeremiad, originally designed to substantiate northern middle-class ways, could be appropriated by southern planters whose culture was, to a considerable extent, not alien but rather akin to the Yankee free-enterprise ethos. Cf. James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 69–95.

21 Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 140.

22 See Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1939); Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1953); and Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1956). Bercovitch's analysis of the American jeremiad also stresses the notion of election, the belief that it is God's chosen people who are to carry out the mission of establishing His kingdom on earth as part of the covenant made with Him (Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 117). On the notion of Americans as an elect nation see also Ernest Lee Tuveson's classic *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968.) With the Civil War as a closing event, he also explores the theme of America as a chosen nation to redeem the world. Puritans returned to the notion of an earthly millennium instead of the notion of the City of God, the "mystical body of the faithful," elaborated by St. Augustine (ibid., ix-x and *passim*).

to call on the community to return to the consensual cultural model.[23] Therefore, the jeremiads of the American Puritans expressed "unshakable optimism" by promising the "ultimate success" of their enterprise in the New World. This is, in Bercovitch's eyes, what makes the New England jeremiad essentially different from its European counterpart, which laid stress on the general depravity of man and the impossibility of avoiding divine retribution for the waywardness of mankind.[24] Thus, the optimism of the American jeremiad ultimately lay in the premise of election. Nevertheless, as a rhetorical ritual, the American jeremiad also expressed an attitude that was future oriented, and through a sense of anxiety suggested the impossibility of meeting the ideal in the present. As Bercovitch contends, "The very concept of errand . . . implied a state of *un*fulfillment . . ., the distance between promise and fact."[25]

Another significant element of the American jeremiad is related to the figural way of thinking and persuasion, based on the dichotomy as well as the connection between "type" and "antitype." The term "antitype" comes from biblical typology, which establishes the identity of type or *figura* as found in the Old Testament and antitype, identified as Christ, in the New Testament, thus establishing figural correspondences between characters in the two portions of Scripture. Thus Christ may appear as the antitype of Moses or John the Baptist, and so on. In the New World, the Puritans were the first practitioners of typology, using biblical events as "horological antecedents" to foreshadow their own venture, or biblical figures to refer to themselves.[26]

Establishing a connection between antitype and type through figural correspondence, the metaphorical power of the jeremiad can be employed in a process of legitimization, insofar as it offers a means to identify the type or *figura* in terms of the antitype. The New England Puritans' New Israel or Cotton Mather's John Winthrop as "Nehemias Americanus," for that matter, according to the culture of the jeremiad, could gain significance for the community only by means of its rhetorical identification with its antitype.[27] In the case of the jeremiad, the desire of legitimization, the ultimate drive of rhetorical persuasion, then, is intimately linked with that of familiarization, the effort to make sense to an audience, hence, as will be seen later, Calhoun's attempts to draw upon historical precedents to explain the significance of nullification as well as the details of the declension.[28]

Bercovitch's analysis increases the time span of the operation of the New England jeremiad, both backward and forward, making it "American." While Miller identifies the second generation Puritans as the first practitioners of the political sermon in New England,

---

23 Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, xiv.

24 Ibid., 7–8, quoted phrases on 7.

25 Ibid., 23; original emphasis.

26 On the significance of figuralism in New England Puritanism, see Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), 35–39.

27 On Cotton Mather's rendering Winthrop as the American Nehemiah, see Bercovitch, *Puritan Origins, passim.*

28 The problem that Calhoun faced can be seen as similar to the one confronting the early modern thinkers discussed by Pocock in his *Machiavellian Moment.* As Pocock argues, the major dilemma for late medieval and Renaissance epistemology was how to render the particular meaningful given that it was regarded as "less intelligible and less rational" than the universal. (4) One way to solve the problem in Christian thinking was to relate particulars to universals, to the sacred, by way of typology, for instance (ibid., 8).

Bercovitch argues that representatives of the first generation such as John Winthrop and John Cotton delivered sermons already featuring the basic elements of the American jeremiad. Bercovitch also demonstrates that the tripartite structure of the jeremiad (i.e. promise, declension and prophecy) was exploited by later generations of Americans, and spread geographically from New England to other parts of the would-be United States. In Bercovitch's words, "the vision survived—from colony to province, and from province to nation."[29]

The continuity in the structure of the American jeremiad throughout the centuries does not, at the same time, preclude changes in its characteristic features. Its major feature being the generation of political and social consensus, the American jeremiad as public speech belonged to a political community which underwent a transformation, and so did its concerns and objectives. Its development involved not only the widening boundaries of the community belonging to its domain but also the secularization of the errand and thus the appearance of the "Yankee Jeremiahs." The seventeenth-century New England jeremiads sought to achieve the "rhetorical synthesis of man's time and God's," thus ensuring the community's participation in the divine project by building the New Israel in America. Hence their profane deeds in the New World assumed sacred significance.[30] The eighteenth century brought about the substitution of a regional past for a biblical one and the moment of transforming "sacred history into a metaphor for limitless secular improvement." In the colonies of the eighteenth century, westward expansion was interpreted as part of the errand into the wilderness, which, on the other hand, was intimately linked with the American ideal of worldly progress.[31]

This secularized version of the New England Puritan jeremiad was adopted and further developed by the colonists during their conflict with the British Crown. For some, taxation by Parliament was one of the afflictions inflicted by God upon a community rambling off the path of righteousness. At the same time, Whig revolutionaries also used the American jeremiad to legitimize their defiance of foreign rule by establishing a link between the Puritan forefathers fleeing the corrupt Old World with the purpose of realizing God's ideal in the New One and their own mission to carry on the mission by controlling the decline. In this sense, in Bercovitch's words, "the Whig leaders . . . turned the jeremiad into a lesson in national genealogy. The lesson led to the familiar figural imperative: what the fathers began, the sons were bound to complete." In doing so, the colonists denied the radicalism of their pursuit of independence: the Revolution was to be seen as one great step in the history of progress, an attempt to stop declension from the original ideal, to regenerate the mission.[32]

Although the republican jeremiads of the revolutionary era addressed secular problems, the sacred biblical past (partly by force of the genealogy of the Puritan ancestors) retained its importance: in the eyes of the contemporary Jeremiahs, the Revolution embodied the antitype of all great previous historical events, each of which had ushered in a new era in the history

---

29 Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 3–6, 8, 18, quotation on 17.

30 Ibid., 93, 29.

31 Ibid., 94, 115–17.

32 Ibid., 120, 123.

of whole mankind, in accordance with the divine plan.[33] During the time of the Revolution "patriot Whigs" contributed to the rhetoric of the American jeremiad by amplifying "the Puritan distinction between the Old World and the New" and by increasing "the Puritan emphasis both on process and control." Paradoxically, while radicalism became the condition of continuing revolution, this progress required permanent control of radical forces to save the infant republic from falling into the state of anarchy.[34]

In the post-revolutionary era, Federalists and Anti-Federalists alike regarded the Revolution as the ideal, the promise fulfilled, which present and future generations were obliged to hold on to. Any deviation from the revolutionary heritage equaled a break with the sacred past and the violation of the consensus. At the same time, despotism was seen as a danger of similar magnitude to be avoided, especially because it was associated with the Old World regime. Therefore the ideal for the republican Jeremiahs was embodied by the American "middle way," keeping the balance between liberty and order, the road between the two extremes of despotism and anarchy.[35]

According to Bercovitch, by the early nineteenth century, the jeremiad had become "the official ritual form of continuing revolution" in America. It expressed the need for the new generation of Americans to renew the errand. As such it also prepared the ground for nineteenth-century American millennialism penetrating "the entire spectrum of social thought."[36] Andrew Jackson and his generation, his supporters as well as his adversaries, employed the Revolution as an ideal by which to measure experience and if needed, to call for continuing the revolution in order to close the gap between ideal and experience. In contemporary jeremiads, therefore, the Revolution functions as an example, as "the climax of history and the pattern of things to come." By the beginning of the Civil War, the American jeremiad had become a widely accepted "ritual of socialization" exerting enormous legitimizing power. So much so that northerners tended to apply it in order to exclude slaveholding southerners from the genealogy of the fathers. They did this in the name of revitalizing the errand by restoring

---

[33] Ibid., 128–29. Michael Lienesch also emphasizes that the American Revolution was regarded as heralding a new era "in both providential and human history" (Lienesch, *New Order*, 22). On the American Puritans' conception of exemplum as a cultural force, connecting self with community within the framework of the imitation of the life of Jesus see Bercovitch, *Puritan Origins*, 2–15. Nathan O. Hatch also emphasizes the notion of American exceptionalism in the Revolution among New England clergymen, as a sacrilegious "new seat of liberty." See Nathan O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), 24–25. The notion that America should serve as an example for the rest of the world in an effort to effect a revolution of deliverance from tyrannical power became widely accepted in the antebellum South, too. (See Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., "The Travail of Slavery," in *The Southerner as American*, ed. Charles Grier Sellers (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1960), 42.

[34] Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 134.

[35] Ibid., 135–36, 137–38. On republicanism in a jeremiadic context see also Richard J. Carwadine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 19.

[36] Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 141, 142. The linking of sacred and political discourse in the revolutionary era in a millennial republican rhetorical context has been explored by Nathan O. Hatch (*Sacred Cause of Liberty*). Millennial thinking also characterized proslavery argument in the antebellum South. For a discussion of the connection between millennial thinking and the justification of slavery see Jack P. Maddex, Jr., "Proslavery Millennialism: Social Eschatology in Antebellum Southern Calvinism," *American Quarterly* 31 (1979): 46–62.

the Republic to its original state, in order to fulfill the promise of the Revolution.[37] It was revolution in the "secular sense: overturning, undoing, doing away with" that did not fit into the symbol of America, since it presupposed an opposing alternative that cannot co-exist with what it opposes.[38]

The American jeremiad has operated as a political language fulfilling varying semantic roles at different historical moments and in different contexts. Its synchronically multivalent nature as a political language allowed for its utilization by opposing political forces: it was used equally by Tory vs. Whig or Federalist vs. Anti-Federalist Jeremiahs. Its multivalence was also exploited diachronically: it assumed different meanings for different generations of Americans. The Puritans applied it to revitalize an errand the nature and scope of which were different in the political sermons of later generations of Americans. The idea of a New Jerusalem, for instance, denoted several different geographical entities from Massachusetts Bay to the thirteen colonies of the Union. Another such change was the Puritans' turning away from Europe after 1660 and focusing their attention on the American wilderness.[39]

As the American jeremiad accumulated a history, it necessarily developed its own genealogy by extending the existing chain of types and antitypes, enriching it with further members. Each new stage in the development of the rhetorical ritual created new interpretations of its figural tradition. For the American revolutionaries and later generations of republicans, for instance, ancient republics served as horological antecedents, whose fate was to serve as an example to them. For late-eighteenth-century American Jeremiahs, they represented the sacred historical model, which, New England Puritans claimed to have found in the Scripture. At the same time, by establishing a secular link between themselves and the Puritan fathers by means of rhetoric, the colonists also made their enterprise, the Revolution, the antitype of "biblical reality."[40]

In his analysis of the survival and transformation of the republican paradigm in the United States, Pocock suggests discontinuity between the American jeremiad and secular civic humanism. He contends that in the course of the eighteenth century the American Puritans' founding tenet of their covenant with God was replaced by the republican ethos in the North American colonies, and "the dread of corruption"—for him a major element of republicanism—became "the true heir of the jeremiad." He demonstrates how, in Anglo-American political thought, republicanism was merged with millennialist ideology. The community of citizens could be seen as the "Fifth Monarchy" and corruption as a manifestation of "the work of Antichrist," rooted in history.[41]

---

37 Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 143, 172, 173–74. The language of the American jeremiad was also appropriated by Abraham Lincoln, who in 1863 spoke of the American Civil War as "a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins to the end that the whole people might be redeemed" (quoted in ibid., 174).

38 Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent* (London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1993), 184.

39 See Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 134–42, 68–73.

40 Ibid., 124, 128.

41 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 545, 512–13.

Nevertheless, it seems more appropriate to argue for the survival and transformation of the (American) jeremiad tradition, which made it possible for republican Jeremiahs to exploit the ritual for their own purposes. They continued to utilize the old jeremiad form, filling it with their own ideological content and exploiting it for its strong emphasis on exceptionalism, ultimately rooted in divine sanction. For instance, expansion that Pocock identifies as a compensatory force for dealing with corruption in the early nineteenth-century American political imagination also assumed a crucial place in jeremiad discourse: it fitted with the idea of the mission to spread liberty on the continent—the focus of the Puritan mission transformed.

In addition, Pocock's understanding of the community as a subject of both republican theory and the jeremiad suggests their limited nature and associates them with pessimism. The concept of the "Fifth Monarchy," for instance, as applied to America, made its enduring glory dependent upon the reservoir of free land—which was ultimately conceived as anything but unlimited.[42] By contrast, Bercovitch's concept of the American jeremiad emphasizes the crucial element of chosenness, whose affirmation and hence optimism is suggested. Thus the American jeremiad compensated for the republican pessimism in the New World.

We see then, that although the American republic was simply regarded as a worldly experiment, employment of the jeremiad suggested the ultimate success of the mission. This contrast between the two languages is expressed through Calhoun's distinction between "mysterious" and "kind" Providence, the former belonging to the republican idiom, the latter to the jeremiad. It is also indicated by Calhoun's relentless references to his optimism about the people of American democracy.[43]

Calhoun often drew upon the past to make predictions about the future. As he once declared in 1837, "From the past we learn to anticipate the future."[44] However, in his jeremiad rhetoric he went further than that, using epistemology for legitimizing purposes. His speaking of the language of the American jeremiad, as will be seen, had the potential to familiarize his audience with his arguments by linking them to broader ideological patterns. In this way, he exploited an attribute of the jeremiad that could be found in general republican rhetoric, too: rendering the particular meaningful by means of its link to the universal. In this particular case, according to the rules of western epistemology, the profane could gain meaning only through the sacred. For Calhoun, the sacred past of revolutionary times fulfilled a similar function, thereby becoming part of his legitimizing strategy.

Finally, in Calhoun's rhetoric, Republican renovation, that is, return to the original principles, equaled the renewal of the covenant. It established the link between declension and prophecy. Furthermore, his American jeremiads were also secularized versions of the original vernacular: in them, according to the general pattern, American exceptionalism was achieved through the fulfillment of type in the antitype. Bercovitch's model provides a subtle way of making sense of this phenomenon and analyzing its ramifications with regard to the changes in Calhoun's application of the American jeremiad.

---

42 Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time*, 99–100.

43 See Chapter 1, above.

44 *Papers of Calhoun*, 13:457.

CALHOUN'S PRE-NULLIFICATION JEREMIADS (1812–1828)

In his early political career, Calhoun drew extensively upon the rhetorical ritual of the American jeremiad in arguing his case. For him, the ideal was embodied by the political system and culture created by the Constitution of 1787. In 1821, for instance, he referred to the United States as "this favored land, where the shackles of tyranny were *first* broken and equality *first* proclaimed." Moreover, he believed it America's mission to promote the cause of liberty in the world, in the name of "that high destiny which is ours."[45]

Calhoun's pre-Nullification jeremiads featured his recurring arguments about the difference between fact and ideal and were mainly aimed at promoting national defense. As one of the advocates of nationalist economic policies from 1812–1828, in his early jeremiads he employed a language in which the republic experienced was not identical with the republic imagined, because, in his eyes, the former was deficient in means to protect republican liberty. His proposed measures for improving the state of the Republic, including national security, aimed at bringing experience and ideal together.

It was at the time of the War of 1812 that Calhoun first articulated the jeremiadic paradigm, applying it to the current situation. He put it forth in his speech delivered in the House of Representatives on May 6, 1812, when he took issue with those supporting the repeal of the embargo on British goods.[46] Calhoun defined the situation and the state of the nation as one of declension, in the form of the jeremiadic structure providing a measure to deal with such a case. In this regard his strategy was similar to that of Winthrop: through the ritual presented to the community, the aim was to remind them of the consequences of declension.

In the speech, Calhoun argues for maintaining the embargo, but more importantly, he advocates war as a means to preserve independence and the republican nature of the United States. He queries: "... what more favorable could we desire than that the nation is, at last, roused from its lethargy and, that it has determined to vindicate its interest and honor [*sic*]." The alternative to the ideal state of the nation that he identifies is "a nation so sunk in avarice, and so corrupted by faction, as to be insensible to the greatest injuries, and lost to its independence."[47] Calhoun, then, understands moral corruption as a process of declension ultimately leading to the loss of independent identity.

He identifies the remedy for the current situation as resistance to England. As he ponders, "if we submit to the pretension of England, now openly avowed, the independence of this nation is lost—we will be, as to our commerce, re-colonized." Yet, there is hope: "this is the

---

[45] *Papers of Calhoun*, 6:38; emphases added. On the notion that the making of the American Republic represented an exceptional historical moment in the eyes of the contemporaries, see John R. Howe, Jr. "Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790s." *American Quarterly* 19 (1967), 163–64. Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969; New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1993), 46–48. Citations are to the Norton edition.; Wood, *The American Revolution: A History* (2002; New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 4, 57–62; and Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (1991; New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 189–91.

[46] *Papers of Calhoun*, 1:103–7.

[47] Ibid., 1:107.

second struggle for our liberty;" Calhoun continues, "and if we but do justice to ourselves, it will be no less glorious and successful than the first. Let us but exert ourselves, and we must meet with the prospering smile of heaven." At the same time, Calhoun sees war as a means to close the gap between ideal and experience, ensuring national security in the future: "war just and necessary in its origin, wisely and vigorously carried on, and honorably terminated, would establish the integrity and prosperity of our country for centuries." In Calhoun's speech, then, the second war of independence, that is, the War of 1812, thus appears not simply as a means of restoring the republic to its original, ideal state, but as laying the foundations of a "glorious" future, that of an infallible nation prophesied by young Representative Calhoun, employing the concept of continuing revolution.[48]

The War of 1812 was a time of trial for the young Republic. Calhoun, as a Member of the House of Representatives who had been in support of open military confrontation with Britain since the beginning of the War, was working on providing for the financial means necessary for a successful war effort. Anxiety and decline, two crucial elements in the vocabulary of the American jeremiad, make a powerful appearance in one of his earliest speeches, made in support of the loan bill of 1814,[49] in which he denounced those politicians opposing the motion to provide loans for the Madison administration in order to consolidate the federal budget.

In the speech Calhoun lays most emphasis on the theme of corruption and the need to handle it. Ignoring the idea of America's mission, his main concern is to secure the financial basis for the survival of the country. Thus, he links the reluctance to vote for the loan bill as an indispensable financial means to a general tendency toward moral decay. At the same time, he traces the root of the problem to the United States' initially feeble handling of British aggression in 1812, which he interprets as the first sign of serious decline. Calhoun contends, "We yielded [to Britain] because we wished to enjoy the blessings of peace; its ease, its comforts, above all, its means of making money. The practical language of the Government to the people was—it is better to be rich than to be virtuous. Can we, then, wonder at the alarming growth of avarice? It is to be traced back, in part, to this original sin of our government."[50]

Materialism, greed and avarice, then, have been the accompanying signs of corruption and declension. At the same time, in Calhoun's argumentation, punishment for the decline, that is, British aggression, fulfills the same role as God's afflictions did in the Puritan and revolutionary jeremiads. Submission to British oppression has resulted in the country's loss of honor and the establishment of British control over American commerce. Nonetheless, "divine retribution," Calhoun warns his audience, will not stop there. The process of declension will be catastrophic for the Republic because control over the American economy will ultimately

---

48 Ibid. War also appears as a similar force of arresting declension or the "degradation" of Americans by Britain in the Report of the Committee of Foreign Relations, on June 3, 1812 (*Papers of Calhoun*, 1:122). Furthermore, by alluding to the work of the Fathers achieving independence, which the present generation must preserve, Calhoun also appeals to continuing revolution.

49 "Speech on the Loan Bill," February 25, 1814, in ibid., 1:208–39.

50 Ibid., 1:219.

be taken over by the British Parliament: "The hopes and fears . . . of the whole mercantile section of this country, and all connected interests," Calhoun claims, "would be turned towards Great Britain; for the power of legislation over our commerce would be virtually transferred from the American Congress to the King in Council."[51] This, in turn, would mean the loss of liberty. Similarly to other republican Jeremiahs, Calhoun evokes the specter of slavery: "It is impossible to allow any right, much less independence, to that which creeps and licks the dust. Such is the condition of our nature. We must have the spirit to resist wrongs or be slaves." The peculiar institution, then, in this case, appears, in Bercovitch's words, as the "disastrous alternative to the cultural ideal."[52]

How can the decline be stopped, how can virtue be restored, how can ideal and experience be made to correspond again? Calhoun attempts to raise anxiety in order to achieve consensus on the question at issue. He calls on the opposition to support the loan bill, demanding the elimination of dissent. He calls for "union and zeal," which, in the current situation, are qualities necessary for successful resistance to oppression. "Without these," he says, "a free people is degraded to the miserable rabble of a despotism; but with these, they are irresistible."[53]

In this particular speech, then, the "continuing revolution" consists of restoring the spirit of patriotism, halting the degeneration of the military potential of the nation, and according to him, making the necessary financial sacrifices for the project to succeed. With the War ending in victory for the young Republic, Calhoun, nonetheless, understood the importance of meeting the still viable military and economic rivalry of Great Britain.

The major structural elements of jeremiadic rhetoric—promise, declension and prophecy—form the major structural parts of the speech that Calhoun delivered on the repeal of the direct tax on January 31, 1816.[54] Although Calhoun's explicit aim in the speech is to argue that the extra revenue of three million dollars expected to be provided by the direct tax is indispensable to the development of a sufficient defense policy and, ultimately, to the prosperity of the country, the way in which he argues his case, makes the speech a "state-of-the-covenant" oration:[55] The topics that he covers, such as US foreign and defense policy or the problem of internal improvements and taxation, closely link up with the problem of the moral state of the Republic, presented within the thematic framework of preparation for a possible confrontation with Britain as a major foreign power.

Calhoun opens the introductory part of his speech with an affirmation of the cultural ideal, the high military and moral standing of the nation, having recently emerged triumphant from the war with Britain. At the same time, he draws attention to the possibility and danger of falling out of this ideal state. He creates anxiety by evoking the specter of decline, a process in which the repeal of the direct tax would be a crucial step. Calhoun's binary pairs suggest that present greatness may become past rather easily unless those who are in the position to determine the future of the nation "prefer the lasting happiness of our country to its present

---

51 Ibid., 1:228.

52 Ibid., 1:229; Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 137.

53 *Papers of Calhoun*, 1:235.

54 Ibid., 1:316–30; for details see Chapter 1, above.

55 See Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 4.

ease, its security to its pleasure, fair honor and reputation, to inglorious and inactive repose."[56]

Calhoun sustains anxiety while moving from the general to the particular and names Britain as the foreign power posing the most serious threat to America's security because of the rivalry between the two countries for world leadership. He attempts to justify his fears by appealing to experience. He claims, "Every statesman, every one who loves his country, who wishes to maintain the dignity of that country, to see it attain the summit of greatness and prosperity, regards the progress of other nations with a jealous eye." Then he continues with a rhetorical question, which he answers immediately: "Will Great Britain permit us to go on in an uninterrupted march to the height of national greatness and prosperity? I fear not."[57]

The same tendency to voice his anxiety characterizes his line of argument about the necessity of lengthening the duration of military service for US male citizens as one of the measures to avert the threatening dangers. (The others are the development of the navy, the building of roads and the protection of domestic industry by means of tariffs.) In connection with this particular issue, jeremiadic anxiety appears in the form of the republican fear of the loss of liberty.

Calhoun utilizes the republican tenet of the ideal of the citizen soldiery[58] and links his jeremiadic argument about declension to this problem. For him, the republican ideal is no longer met by experience. He claims to detect the deterioration of patriotism amongst the citizens of the United States, who, according to him, tend to neglect their military duties. The tragic consequence should be obvious to anyone well read in the history of republics: liberty will be lost, and a standing army will have to be established as a necessary substitute for the citizen soldiers. In this context, extended military service, Calhoun argues, would stop the decline of patriotism, and the establishment of a standing army could be avoided. The restoration of patriotism, conversely, would contribute to the preservation of republican liberty. Similarly, the repeal of the direct tax, an important source of financing the extension of military service, would lead to disaster. Calhoun's conclusion to this part of his speech is a reevocation of anxiety: "We may dispense with the taxes; we may neglect every measure of precaution, and feel no *immediate* disaster; but, in such a state of things what virtuous, what wise citizen, but what must look on the future with dread!"[59]

The response to such worries is provided in the conclusion of the speech, which marks the climax of Calhoun's argumentation. The climactic effect is derived not only from the elevated style but also from the fact that here all the structural elements of the American jeremiad appear in a systematic way. Similar to Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity," this jeremiadic passage appeals to national consciousness at the early stage of the nation's development insofar as the passage employs a strategy which constructs an audience being at the onset of the mission. Calhoun magnifies the significance of the momentous decision on the direct tax by appealing to American millennialism, fusing secular and sacred history in a vein

---

56 *Papers of Calhoun*, 1:316.

57 Ibid., 1:320–21.

58 Cf. Chapter 1.

59 Ibid., 1:329.

similar to Winthrop's. For him, the errand is carried out on behalf of America, but it is also aimed at the redemption of mankind. As Calhoun says, "I know of no situation so responsible, if property considered, as ours. We are charged by Providence not only with the happiness of this great and rising people, but in a considerable degree with that of the human race." A few sentences later, musing on the American government's role in fulfilling this promise, Calhoun adds, "If it succeed, as fondly hoped by its founders, it will be *the commencement of a new era in human affairs*. All civilized governments must in the course of time conform to its principles."[60]

According to the paradigmatic force of the jeremiad, promise, the initial structural component, is to be followed by the idea of declension. Similarly to the Puritan Jeremiahs, Calhoun's words also ring with concern about the possibility of losing the exemplary status: the failure to make the right decision of the moment means that the American nation "will certainly sink into the list of those that have done nothing to be known or remembered."[61]

Accentuating his point, drawing on a mixture of biblical and classical imagery in one of his rare moments of figural eloquence, Calhoun ponders, "[P]leasure is a flowery path, leading off among groves and meadows, but ending in a gloomy and dreary wilderness; . . . it is the siren's voice, which he who listens to is ruined; . . . it is the cup of Circe, which he who drinks, is converted into a swine."[62]

These images, while they are intended to warn against present gratification that will inevitably lead to future misery, threaten punishment for the declension, because they connect the fate of the classical victim with that of the modern Republic. Yet, for all the declension that Calhoun's images suggest, the very last part of this section of Calhoun's speech is constructed in a manner that, in accordance with the paradigmatic conventions to the jeremiad, suggests release of the tension, an attempt to deal with the anxiety that he has built up and to imply optimism. Although the Republic is about to choose between "present ease" and future happiness, the choice is not a real one since Calhoun predetermines the favorable outcome of the mission by the force of his rhetoric. With a sudden turn from the world of animals to that of demigods, he compares the budding American Republic to the young Hercules, who, getting prepared for his future career in the "wilderness" was to choose between "ease and pleasure" and "labor and virtue." By making the correct decision in the very beginning, Hercules finally won fame among future generations of humans. The same fate awaits America, in Calhoun's words, "the youthful Hercules," apparently possessing the attributes of

---

60 Ibid., emphasis added. Here, arguing from the classic position of exceptionalism, Calhoun combines millennialism with a move to expand the scope of America's mission, in order to include the whole of mankind. The American republic, like Winthrop's Puritan community, is to reform the rest of the world through its example. The striking resonance with John Winthrop's paradigmatic Arbella sermon is obvious: "The eyes of all people are upon us, so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause him withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made as story and a by-word through the world." See John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," in *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology*, ed. Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco (Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1985), 91.

61 *Papers of Calhoun*, 1:329.

62 Ibid., 1:330. This seems to be one of the few, but probably most graphic and remarkable metaphorical, images used by Calhoun.

the ancient hero.[63] This rhetorical move becomes possible since the South Carolinian constructs his own country, rhetorically, as the ancient hero's antitype. Through Calhoun's metaphor, the nation becomes identical with the demigod.

Thus, by means of figural language, Calhoun prophesies the inevitable success of the nation's mission. In doing so, he applies a rhetorical strategy similar to the one exploited by those practitioners of Bercovitch's American jeremiad, who, such as John Winthrop or John Cotton, applied "figural correspondences" and merged sacred images taken from the Bible with the secular represented in their own communal enterprise, and thus "preclude[d] the prospect of failure" of their mission.[64]

In these early, nationalist jeremiads Calhoun regarded the American errand as taking place on behalf of the whole of mankind. For him, the cultural ideal to be spread all over the "civilized" world was represented by the American republican form of government. He saw declension from the ideal mainly as moral decay, the substance of which varied from declining patriotism to excessive materialism or indifference in public matters. At the same time, by calling for continuing revolution, Calhoun sustained the hope of filling the gap between fact and ideal, suggesting optimism about the ability of the nation to fulfill the promise.

CALHOUN'S NULLIFICATION JEREMIADS (1828–1833)

Beginning in the late 1820s, Calhoun's political position underwent a radical transformation. His abandonment of a nationalist platform, which involved the broad constructionist view of the Constitution as well as interventionalist economic policy meant, at the same time, the adoption of the states' rights position with a program of minimal government, low tariffs and strict constructionism.[65] During the Nullification Controversy, Calhoun exploited the American jeremiad in defense of states' rights. In his interpretation, the crisis, as it becomes manifest in his speeches and writings of the period, resulted essentially from the decline of the Republic during which federal power had become overly dominant.

With its basic structural components remaining constant, certain details of Calhoun's jeremiadic rhetoric nevertheless underwent modifications depending on the actual state of the crisis and went beyond the principles that he originally formulated. These differences include his perception of the nature of the crisis, its predictable outcome, the means of restoration and his use of figural correspondences.

In contrast to his early period, Calhoun's application of the jeremiadic model during the Nullification Controversy primarily consisted in portraying political decline as the current

---

63 Ibid.

64 See Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 8.

65 Broad constructionism allows the interpretation of the Constitution by implication, whereas strict constructionism follows a literal approach to it and deems federal or state legislation unconstitutional if it relies on powers that are not stated explicitly by the document. Calhoun himself admitted that there was a shift in his attitude toward nationalism. In the Senate in 1837, he claimed that he had been closer to consolidation than states' rights. See Drew R. McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 169.

state of the Republic, accompanied by argumentation about moral corruption. On the whole, compared to the topics of his nationalist period, the theme of America's world mission occupies a secondary place in Calhoun's Nullification jeremiads. Instead, he places emphasis on national problems, perceiving the nullifiers' mission as one being performed for the Republic, and, simultaneously, carried out in the interest of South Carolina and the South. It is aimed at preserving both "Liberty" and the "Union."[66]

Calhoun's use of the past can be detected in his justification of state veto, his definition of the ideal from which the republic had degenerated, as well as the state of affairs that would inevitably result should his jeremiadic threats did not meet favorable response. A further significant difference with the previous period is that the mythic past is strongly featured in these texts and appears, in the first place, as that of the Founders and, in the second place, as that of the ancient Roman republic. At the same time, for Calhoun, the Virginia Resolutions of 1798 and the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 and 1799 assume perhaps even greater significance: they function as horological antecedents of Nullification in his rhetoric. In his argumentation, the Antifederalist legislation and Nullification figure as attempts to stop political and moral decline, to prevent the establishment of tyranny and to restore the Republic to its original state of perfection. In this sense, Calhoun constructs state interposition as a remedy functioning to close the gap between ideal and experience, within the rhetorical framework of his republican jeremiad.

Due to the similarity of the purposes that Calhoun intended to serve with his Nullification jeremiads, despite their individual differences, he applies the same model with shifting emphases and details. In my analysis below, I will start with Calhoun's first relevant writing, his South Carolina "Exposition,"[67] and since it contains most of the elements characteristic of later documents of the same type, I will confine my further investigations to those that show important variations of its original jeremiadic pattern. In Calhoun's understanding, the crisis caused by the tariff has economic, moral, political and constitutional aspects, which are, at the same time, intimately linked.

In the "Exposition," Calhoun accompanies his argument about the harmful impact of the tariff on South Carolina's economy with his attack on the tariff on economic, moral, political and constitutional grounds, largely drawing upon elements of jeremiadic rhetoric. In the speech, like in his previous jeremiads, he regards the making of the American Republican form of government as a unique event, occurring at an exceptional, divine moment. It was created for an exceptional nation by the Founders who were "no ordinary men."[68] However, he says, the protective tariff will have negative moral and political consequences, as it is "calculated to corrupt the publick virtue and destroy the liberty of the Country." In arguing his prediction of moral decay, he thus builds on the republican fear of losing liberty.[69]

---

66 He seems to have claimed to be conforming to the cultural ideal of the American jeremiad, following the "'middle way,' the happy union of liberty and order" (Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 137).

67 *Papers of Calhoun*, 10:444–534.

68 Ibid., 10:526.

69 Ibid., 10:444. For a similar argument in Calhoun's other nullification jeremiads, see his "Address to the People of the United States," in ibid., 11:675; and his "Remarks on the President's Message on South Carolina," in ibid., 12:14.

Furthermore, since the tariff tends to develop "the industry of one section of the country, on the ruins of another," it will result in a "great inequality of property" characteristic of the countries of the Old World.[70] It is bound to enrich the North and impoverish the South, resulting in the same economic and social cleavage plaguing contemporary Europe. Here Calhoun evokes the traditional dichotomy between the corrupt Old World of great social differences and the virtuous Republic of relatively homogeneous population, the latter nonetheless also exposed to the danger of corruption. The movement toward social instability, however, will not stop on the level of state relations. By the European analogy, the North will have to face the consequences of growing social inequalities and poverty in its own industrial cities: "Heretofore in our country this tendency has displayed itself principally in its effects as regards the different sections, but the time will come, when it will produce the same result between classes in the manufacturing states."[71] Calhoun's diagnosis and the conclusions he draws are based on the assumption that corruption, if unstopped, tends to destroy even those who initiated it, resulting finally in the overthrow of the republican order.

Moral corruption, however, will be merely a long-term effect of the tariff. The constitutional aspect of the declension lies in Calhoun's argument that the tariffs are unconstitutional since, as nullifiers claimed, they have been levied for the protection of Northern manufacturing interests, a power not granted to the Federal government by the Constitution. Thus they represent a decline from its spirit,[72] that is, from strict constructionism. Calhoun points out that its passage in Congress despite being unconstitutional is also a sign of the deterioration of the republican political system. Levying duties for the protection of the economy of one section is against his strict constructionist interpretation of the Constitution, which sanctions such a measure only for the regulation of commerce. Therefore the tariff of 1828, Calhoun argues, is the result of the federal government wielding powers not granted by the sacred document. Furthermore, powers are divided between the federal government and the states; those not enumerated specifically in the Constitution belong to the states. Calhoun explains such a division of powers by means of the traditional republican argument that "irresponsible power is inconsistent with liberty and must corrupt those who exercise it."[73] In other words, the unconstitutional tariff law, an outcome of "irresponsible power," will also destroy those who concocted it.

Calhoun also links the problem of unchecked power with the issue of majority rule. The tariff embodies the will of the majority as represented in the federal government and fails to respect the interest of the minority, that is, southern states, which cannot benefit from the protection of home industry. Calhoun claims that building government exclusively on majority rule includes the danger of self-destruction through the abuse of majority power. "No government, based on the naked principle, that the majority ought to govern . . . ever preserved its liberty even for a single generation," Calhoun asserts. "Those governments only which

---

70 Ibid., 10:446, 480.

71 Ibid., 10:480.

72 Ibid., 10:444–46.

73 Ibid., 10:496, 486. Cf. Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, enlarged ed. (1967; Cambridge, Mass. and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 60.

provide checks, which limit, and restrain within proper bounds the power of the majority have alone had a prolonged existence, and been distinguished for virtue, patriotism, power and happiness."[74] What is at stake at the moment, according to Calhoun, is, then, whether majority rule can be kept under control, whether the tyranny of the majority can be avoided.[75]

Throughout the crisis, part of Calhoun's nullification rhetorical strategy, derived from the logic of the American jeremiad, consisted in his effort to justify state interposition and related assumptions by means of historical references and allusions that can be regarded as figural correspondences. In arguing for state veto as a means to prevent the tyranny of the majority, Calhoun turns to the example of the ancient Roman republic, the "great commonwealth," as he refers to it, whose decline, after the kings had been expelled, continued until the tribunate was introduced as an effective means of checking the power of the Patricians.[76] He calls for a similar measure to stop the decline of the American Republic: "May we profit by the example, and restore the almost lost virtue and patriotism of our Republick, by giving due efficiency in practice to the check which our Constitution has provided against a danger so threatening."[77] As part of the mythic past, Calhoun also evokes the Constitutional period as the age of perfection, to be realized in the present.[78]

Another segment of the mythic past for Calhoun concerns the origins of nullification. State veto, which stems from the sovereign nature of the states, as Calhoun argues, is not revolutionary, it is not his own invention; it is rooted in the Constitution "to prevent the encroachment of the General Government on the reserved rights of the States."[79] Furthermore, sovereignty also empowers the states to judge for themselves whether the "constitutional compact" they made is violated, that is, whether a federal law is constitutional or not. Calhoun refers to the Virginia Resolutions of 1798 and the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 and 1799 to justify his claim, to deny the revolutionary character of nullification, to argue that state veto had been legitimately applied before in US history.[80] By alluding to these historical events, Calhoun's major aim was to familiarize his audience with nullification, to deny its

---

74 *Papers of Calhoun*, 10:492.

75 On the dangers of constructing the government on mere majority rule, see also his "Rough Draft of an Address to the People of South Carolina," in ibid., 11:275.

76 Ibid., 11:494; see also his "Speech on the Force Bill," in ibid., 12:90–91.

77 Ibid. For such a function of the state veto, see also the documents "Rough Draft of an Address to the People of South Carolina," in *Papers of Calhoun*, 11:270; "Address to the People of the United States," in ibid., 11:673, 676; "Draft Report on Federal Relations," in ibid., 11:489; his letter to James Hamilton, Jr. of South Carolina, in ibid., 11:630; as well as "The Fort Hill Address," in ibid., 11:425–26.

78 Ibid., 10:496.

79 Ibid., 10:506.

80 Ibid., 10:506–8. The argument that the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 are to be seen as antecedents of nullification legislation appears in several other texts by Calhoun in the Nullification period. "I am no more of a nullifier, than Tho[ma]s Jefferson, Judge [Thomas] McKean, John Taylor of Caroline, Spencer Roane and the whole body of the Republican party of '98," Calhoun wrote Virgil Maxcy on September 1, 1831, and added, "The bolder the better. Timidity would be fatal. No man can distinguish my views from that of the party in '98" (ibid., 11:464). He wrote Bolling Hall on September 8, 1831: "If my experience has taught me thoroughly any one truth, it is, the extreme danger of departing from those principles [i. e. those of 1798]. A rigid adherence to them, I believe to be the rock of our political salvation" (ibid., 11:465). See also his letters to Samuel D. Ingham, in ibid, 11:404; ibid.; 12:8; ibid, 11:566; ibid., 11:464; and ibid., 11:414, 415–16; see also ibid., 12:105.

novelty as well as its revolutionary character. South Carolina's defiance of the Federal government as understood through the prism of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, then, appears in Calhoun's rhetoric as an act of participating in a continuing revolution.

The tariff, then, in Calhoun's analysis, becomes a symptom of declension from the ideal Republican form of government, in which the balance of power between the federal and state governments can be restored only by means of nullification. If the tariff were applied in the current situation, it would arrest declension and corruption and help restore the original state of perfection, that is, the pre-tariff state of affairs. State interposition is a duty South Carolina must perform to save the Republic. He concludes his draft with the conventional jeremiadic turn arguing the greater significance of the cause of South Carolina: state interposition is "a duty to herself [i.e. South Carolina], to the Union, to the present, and to future generations, and to the cause of liberty over the world, to arrest the progress of a usurpation which, if not arrested, must in its consequences, corrupt the public morals and destroy the liberty of the country."[81] Through Calhoun's jeremiadic rhetoric, then, the cause of South Carolina assumes larger dimensions: it becomes part of the national mission, also performed on behalf of the world.

Calhoun repeated these principles in more detail in his "Fort Hill Address" of July 26, 1831.[82] In the text he reaffirms his emphasis on the necessity of restoring the distribution of powers between the federal government and the states because, to him, it makes the American system of government exceptional. As he claims, the special "distribution of power, settled solemnly by a constitutional compact, to which all the states are parties, constitutes the peculiar character and excellence of our political system. It is truly and emphatically *American, without example, or parallel.*"[83] At the same time, his jeremiad contains a new element, namely the stress that he lays on the troubles caused by the increase of sectionalism in the Union, which he criticizes in a moralistic tone. As he argues, the tariff controversy has resulted in the weakening of patriotism and the strengthening of sectionalism. It is part of a struggle between North and South, "in which all the noble and generous feelings of patriotism are gradually subsiding into sectional and selfish attachments." Calhoun asserts that the tariff of 1828, affecting geographical interests in different ways, "has divided the country into two great geographical divisions, and arrayed them against each other."[84] Thus, the crisis is also a political one: it has destroyed the harmony that he believes has characterized pre-tariff-law-America. In the language of republicanism, if the pursuit of particular goods is raised above the common good, the consequent result must be corruption.[85]

Calhoun's later speeches and addresses concerning nullification follow the pattern of republican jeremiads. In them, anxiety over the concentration of power becomes more explicit than in the earlier ones, and he puts more emphasis on the nature of the declension as having resulted in the concentration of power within the national government and the

---

81 Ibid., 10:530–32.

82 Ibid., 11:413–39.

83 Ibid., 11:418–19; original emphasis.

84 Ibid., 11:427.

85 Cf. Chapter 1, above.

Executive. This is evident in his "Address to the People of the United States,"[86] commissioned by the Convention, aimed at justifying nullification for the American citizenry. In the document Calhoun claims that the crisis has shown that the process of the concentration of power has already begun, and it is bound to lead to despotism. This, at the same time, will become hereditary "as the virtue and patriotism of the people decay."[87] Calhoun's main objective in the address is to argue that state interposition is a legitimate means of defending southern interests and even of saving the Union from this extreme concentration of federal power. "[S]uch a power . . . ," he claims, "must, ultimately, concentrate the whole power of the community in the General Government, and abolish the sovereignty of the States; and . . . discord, corruption, and, eventually despotism must follow, if the system be not resisted."[88] At the same time, he points out, the concentration of power will not stop at the federal level; sooner or later the Executive will seize all the power and establish despotic rule.[89] When emphasizing the danger of "consolidation," i.e. the uncontrolled growth of federal power, Calhoun was, in fact, echoing Anti-Federalist fears. The Antifederalists, on the grounds of divided sovereignty, criticized Federalists for creating a more centralized, nationalist government in place of a federal one.[90]

Calhoun makes his predictions based on the paradigmatic force of the republican jeremiad for an audience well-versed in the language of conspiracy rhetoric.[91] By proposing the use of state veto, therefore, he calls for a return to the ideal, by driving federal power back to its proper domain to prevent the "loss of liberty of all." For him, then, nullification equals a return to the original principles. South Carolina, as he explains, is without "the remotest view to revolution, or wish to terminate her connection with the Union—to which she is now, as

---

86 *Papers of Calhoun*, 11: 669–81.

87 Ibid., 11:674–75.

88 Ibid., 11:673. The danger of consolidation, culminating in military despotism, appears in almost all of Calhoun's nullification jeremiads. See his "Rough Draft of an Address to the People of South Carolina," in ibid., 12:267, 277, or his letter to James Hamilton, Jr., in ibid., 11:628, 642, 645; see also ibid., 12:45–46; ibid., 12:15; ibid., 12:24–26; and ibid., 12:132–33.

89 Ibid., 11: 674–75.

90 Lienesch, *New Order*, 153; and Saul Cornell, *The Other Founders: Antifederalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788–1828* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1999.)

91 Gordon S. Wood demonstrates how, rooted in eighteenth-century epistemology, conspiratorial argument was common in the Atlantic political discourse. By emphasizing the intimate, "mechanistic" link between cause and effect, it aimed at inferring real intentions of politicians by scrutinizing their deeds. In spite of changes in social epistemology, the conspiratorial mindset survived into the early nineteenth century. See Wood, "Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and deceit in the Eighteenth Century," in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 39 (1982), esp. 410–11, 423, 438, 440. For conspiratorial rhetoric in the Jacksonian era, see Marc W. Kruman, "The Second American Party System and the Transformation of Revolutionary Republicanism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 12 (1992), 532. Calhoun's rhetoric based on the American jeremiad, similarly to others, clearly showed traces of conspiratorial idioms. As Richard B. Latner points out, the major motivating force behind Calhoun's turning to historical antecedents of the Nullification Crisis was the attack of the anti-nullifier side, which took great pains to discredit nullification by identifying it with "civil war," "disunion," "secession," "treason," "conspiracy" and "republican subversion." See Richard B. Latner, "The Nullification Crisis and Republican Subversion," *The Journal of Southern History* 43 (1977): 19–38. The anti-nullifiers often claimed nullification to be only the beginning of a series of disasters. For instance, once Jackson warned, "The loss of liberty, of all good government, of peace, plenty and happiness, must inevitably follow a dissolution of the Union" (quoted in ibid., 21).

she ever has been, devotedly attached. Her object is, not to destroy, but to restore and preserve."[92]

In this text Calhoun also goes beyond the established paradigm by proposing a convention of the states. Parallel to justifying the nullification of the tariffs by the South Carolina convention in November 1832, Calhoun calls upon the states for continuing revolution: according to him, the state veto is not a sufficient device to complete regeneration, the states should gather in a convention for the purpose of "restoring harmony and confidence to the country."[93] His aim was, in jeremiadic terms, to expand the errand to involve other states as well.

Andrew Jackson's response to South Carolina's nullification legislation made Calhoun repeat his jeremiadic tirades against the Executive and the tendency to "consolidation." Of these, the most powerful application of the republican jeremiad can be found in his speech on the Force Bill of February 15–16, 1833.[94] What makes this speech different from the others of the period in terms of jeremiadic strategies are the following: presenting the role played by Andrew Jackson in the impending crisis; introducing the War of Independence as *figura* of the Nullification Crisis, thus creating an explicit analogy between the nullifiers and the revolutionaries of 1776 taking arms against Britain in defense of their liberties; depiction of the concentration of executive power as a moment of declension from the ideal European-American form of government, and finally, a detailed treatment of the process of decline.

In this speech on the "Force Bill," by means of the figural correspondence between Nullification and the events leading up to the War of Independence, Calhoun raises the specter of military confrontation and uses the language of the jeremiad to demand southern unity in order to resist federal power representing majority will. He also applies analogy to denounce consolidation as declension from tradition, the origins of which he, by force of reference to Asian despotism and European, including Teutonic "federalism," places in the mythic past.

Arguing in retrospect, Calhoun claims that, before his election in 1832, Jackson, a politician with strong pro-southern and states' rights sentiments, had appeared as a prospective savior expected to stop the decline of the Republic. However, he failed to fulfill those expectations by refusing to destroy the protective tariff system. To make matters worse, Calhoun claims, he continued to concentrate power in the Executive, thereby accelerating the process leading to military despotism. South Carolinians had become disappointed with Jackson: "[T]he very individual to whom they looked as a deliverer, and whom, under that impression, they strove for so many years to elevate to power," claims Calhoun, "is now the most powerful instrument in the hands of his and their bitterest opponents to put down them and their cause!"[95] Jackson, then, proved to be an inappropriate solution in order to stop decline.

---

92 *Papers of Calhoun*, 11:675, 677.

93 Ibid., 11:679. Calhoun's purpose in a convention of all the states is not clear. One explanation could be that he sought to forge a nationwide consensus on the way of handling a crisis, and the convention would have served such a purpose.

94 *Papers of Calhoun*, 12:45–93; for details see Chapter 1, above.

95 Ibid., 12:59.

Calhoun constructs the American Revolution rhetorically as the horological antecedent of the nullifiers' struggle against the Federal Government. In his vocabulary, the "Force Bill" becomes the symbol of tyrannical power, similar to the one employed by Britain during the controversy with its colonies, and the tariff laws become identified, even fused with the British measures working revolution in 1776. "The law must be enforced," says Calhoun in a mocking tone. "Yes, the act imposing the 'tea-tax' must be executed. This was the very argument which impelled Lord North and his administration to that mad career which for ever separated us from the British Crown." Jackson's "tea-tax" bill is aimed "to enforce robbery by murder."[96]

Similarly to the War of Independence, in the Nullification Crisis "the controversy is one between power and liberty," Calhoun's argument leaves no doubt as to the place of the South in that struggle associated with the latter.[97] Calhoun claims that one of the several similarities between the crisis leading up to the revolutionary war and the Nullification Debate is related to the problem of subjugation, the North assuming the role of tyrannical Britain overwhelming the Southern minority. To assure his audience of the soundness of the analogy, Calhoun concludes, "The very arguments resorted to at the commencement of the American Revolution, and the measures adopted, and the motives assigned to bring on that contest (to enforce the law), are almost identically the same."[98]

Calhoun also introduces a new analogy to legitimize the struggle for nullification: a differentiation that he makes between the European "federal" and the Asian "consolidated" forms of government, between the ancient Greek republic and the despotic Persian empire. The former, he asserts, was based on the distribution of political power, while the latter was based on the concentration of political power. The "Teutonic race," to which Americans belong, adopted the federal form.[99]

The implication of Calhoun's argument is clear: the American Republic must not abandon the system of the government developed by the ancestors and adopt the alien Asian alternative, which the "Force Bill" is aimed at establishing. Adopting the bill would fit in with the process of decline from the ideal, the result of which would be "the near approach" of (Asian) "despotism."[100] Here, then, Calhoun moves beyond the jeremiadic strategy of revolutionary Americans: for him it is not the "Old World" that embodies a despotic form of government but Asia.[101] According to him, the South can keep standing in the republican struggle between power and liberty only as long as it is capable of maintaining its "reserved rights," with state interposition among them. The alternative, expressed in the language of the jeremiad, would be catastrophe: "[I]f we yield," warns Calhoun, "and permit the stronger interest to concentrate within itself all the powers of the government, then will our fate be

---

96 Ibid., 12:72.

97 Ibid., 12:73. By 1833, the identification of the South with liberty and the North with power had become an explicit claim in Calhoun's rhetoric. See also his "Speech in Reply to Daniel Webster on the Force Bill:" "It is a great struggle between power and liberty—power on the side of the North, and liberty on the side of the South" (ibid., 12:135).

98 Ibid., 12:74.

99 Ibid., 12:75–76.

100 Ibid., 12:86.

101 Cf. Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 137.

more wretched than that of the aborigines whom we have expelled."[102] Therefore, the duty of the South is to resist the encroachment of the federal government upon states' rights.

In Calhoun's reasoning, it is for the South to carry out the task of restoration, to preserve liberty. Calling for Southern unity, in the jeremiadic fashion, he concludes his speech with anxiety, offering two alternatives:

> "To discharge successfully this high duty [i.e. the defense of states' rights] requires the highest qualities, moral and intellectual, and should we perform it with a zeal and ability proportioned to its magnitude, instead of being mere planters, our section will become distinguished for its patriots and statesmen. *But, on the other hand*, if we prove unworthy of this high destiny—if we yield to the steady encroachment of power, the severest calamity and most debasing corruption will overspread the land." Those Southerners who join the federal government to receive its "honours and emoluments," at the same time, Calhoun rages, "have qualified themselves, by political prostitution, for admission into the *Magdalen* Asylum."[103]

Calhoun, then, in his construction of the end of declension, employs images of historical and more recent "Others" of white Americans, including the earlier mentioned slaves and lunatics, to make clear to his audience what choices they have if they do not consent to regeneration.

As has been seen, Calhoun's Nullification jeremiads compared to those before the crisis concentrate less on America's mission in the world than on the necessity of restoring the original ideal state of the American government. It is state veto that serves for him as a means of stopping decline, to bridging the gap between ideal and experience, halting degeneration and preserving liberty. In a vein similar to other republican Jeremiahs, he positions ancient republics such as Greece or Rome as *figura* of which the American federal republic appears as an antitype. At the same time, he also draws upon US history for historical precedent in these speeches. The constitution-making period appears to Calhoun as the age when the perfect US system of government was born. However, declension soon set in, and it was left for Jefferson to restore the Republic to its original state on the basis of the "principles of 1798" by demanding and securing for the states their reserved powers. Hence Calhoun, historically speaking, claims to intend to drive the Republic back to the ideal age of Jefferson and the Founding Fathers by means of his state veto. Yet, adopting the concept of continuing revolution, he evokes the War of Independence as a means of establishing a parallel between the colonists and the nullifiers as well as between British rule and the majority's abuse of power against the South in 1832–33.[104]

---

102 *Papers of Calhoun*, 12:92–93.

103 Ibid., 12:93; original emphases.

104 That Calhoun's evocation of struggles from the nation's past was no exception is clearly suggested by Andrew W. Robertson's study *The Language of Democracy: Political Rhetoric in the United States and Britain, 1790–1900* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). According to Robertson, as part of a shift to a more familiar political style, to narrow the gap between the discourse of political elite and that of the popular voters, electioneering rhetoric in the Jacksonian era extensively drew upon "historical folklore," with more and more emphasis on national rather than

When using historical examples to familiarize his audience with nullification, establishing parallels between the nullifiers' cause and past events, Calhoun achieved ambiguous effects. During the crisis, however painstakingly he strove to deny the links that anti-nullifiers established between the application of state veto and secession, the idioms he employed had implications that he was unable to control: Roman plebeians, his archetypes of the nullifiers, seceded from the ancient republic before establishing their tribunate, and the North American colonies did break their ties with Britain.

As we have seen, due to its basically jeremiadic structure, Calhoun's nullification rhetoric was governed by metaphors, most prominently by the metaphor of two worlds, which took several shapes in his writing and oratory: corrupt, poverty stricken, industrialized Europe versus virtuous, socially homogeneous America, or "despotic" Asian versus "federal" European government. Even more importantly, another set of "two worlds" in Calhoun's rhetoric was North versus South, through which he implied the possibility of moving away from the mainstream American jeremiad. This metaphor was also reinforced and complicated by the connotations of disunion through references to the American Revolution. The course of events having made Calhoun disappointed with "the people of the United States" as the major addressees of his jeremiads, by the time of the Force Bill he turned to Southerners as the minor remnant to carry on the national mission by regenerating the Republic through defying Federal government. In doing so, however, he also raised the possibility of the South initiating its own sectional version of the national errand. Calhoun, thus, formulated a Southern version of the American jeremiad, in which US exceptionalism merged with the uncorrupt Southern exceptionalism, creating a sectionalist idiom for the national ritual. Thus Calhoun had a significant role in developing a regional variation of the hegemonic national mission through rhetoric, the idea of starting a new revolution instead of continuing the old one. Throughout the crisis, as has been seen, Calhoun did not give up the mission of continuing revolution: he hoped to close the gap between the ideal of the Founders, 1798 and 1799, and the experience of declension. However, he introduced the element of the South as the protagonist of the errand and this feature gained increasing emphasis in his later jeremiads.

CALHOUN'S POST-NULLIFICATION JEREMIADS (1833–1850)

In the post-Nullification period, Calhoun applied the American jeremiad to a wide range of topics. Some of his speeches and writings merely reflect upon the Nullification Controversy, while others focus on economic and/or political declension and the need for restoration. Still

---

classical elements (73–74). Calhoun, at the same time, seemed to find the classical age still appealing, especially when his performances were located in Congress, in front of elite audiences. Understandably, anti-nullifiers also resorted to the device of horological antecedents in the rhetorical struggle of the Crisis. As Richard B. Latner claims, "Editorials . . . drew parallels between ancient republican subversives described in Plutarch, such American counterparts as Aaron Burr and the Blue Light Federalists of the Hartford Convention, and the nullifiers" (Latner, "Nullification Crisis," 22).

others—and they represent a new type of argumentation—apply the language of the jeremiad to the territorial question.

Regarding these issues, in the post-nullification period Calhoun also testified to the exceptional nature of the American Republic, an ideal, from which, however, he often perceived declension. In August 1841, for instance, he, in the manner of the American jeremiad, talked about "the high destiny which certainly awaits our country if we should be but true to ourselves."[105] Moreover, as he explained later, in urging the use of presidential veto in 1842, the US political system was perfect, being the result of divine intervention, a "wonderful and sublime system of Government which our patriotic ancestors established, not so much by their wisdom, as wise and experienced as they were, as by the guidance of a kind Providence, who, in his divine dispensation, so disposed events as to lead to the establishment of a system of government wiser than those who framed it."[106] Its perfection notwithstanding, he saw it liable to degeneration but available for restoration, too.

Those texts in which he concentrates on the course and history of the decline in this period and refrains from addressing a particular current political issue follow the logic of his Nullification jeremiads: the concentration of power in the federal government and the Executive, the threat of despotic rule, the consequent loss of liberty and the need to return to the principles of 1798 and 1801 as a remedy constitute the general pattern of these speeches.[107] Calhoun addressed the problem of declension in his proposal to repeal the Force Act in his speech in the Senate on April 9, 1834.[108] The American system of government based on the principle of the division of power is far from its original, enviable state, he claims. Power has become concentrated in the federal government. "If we now raise our eyes and direct them towards that once beautiful system, with all its various, separate, and independent parts, blended into one harmonious whole, we must be struck with the mighty change!" Calhoun explains. "All have disappeared, gone; absorbed; concentrated and consolidated in this Government; which is left alone in the midst of the desolation of the system, the sole and unrestricted representative of an absolute and despotic majority."[109]

The Force Act created a situation which, unless reversed, Calhoun argues, will culminate in a complete loss of liberty and the establishment of "military despotism."[110] Using the characteristic idiom of declension, he depicts the current state of the Republic as a far cry from the once ideal one. The centralization of power has serious consequences for the polity, too: "To this fruitful source of woes may be traced," Calhoun claims, "that remarkable decay of public virtue; that rapid growth of corruption and subserviency; that decline of patriotism;

---

105 *Papers of Calhoun*, 15:730.

106 Ibid., 16:154; see also ibid., 15:281; and ibid., 16:409.

107 See, for instance, his speeches "To a Committee at Farmville, Virginia," June 23, 1834, in ibid., 12:344–47 or "To George N. Sanders and Others," June 19, 1840 in ibid., 15:281–282; "To a Committee at Charlotte, N. C.," June 30, 1844, in ibid., 19:227–28.

108 Ibid., 12:277–98.

109 Ibid., 12:283.

110 Ibid., 12:284–85.

that increase of faction; that tendency to anarchy; and, finally, that visible approach of the absolute power of one man, which so lamentably characterizes [these] times." [111]

State interposition applied by South Carolina was beneficial, Calhoun argues, in that it prevented the establishment of despotic government. However, it was only a temporary block to the process of consolidation. The existence of the Force Act still poses a threat to republican order. As Calhoun maintains, "The seed still remains in the system." Therefore consolidation may start all over again and, Calhoun repeats his point made at the beginning of the speech, "pass through all those stages which we have witnessed, and in all human probability, consummate itself and terminate our hopes in a military despotism."[112]

Repealing the Force Act, then, would equal killing the principle and halting the tendency toward consolidation and the restoration and preservation of the exceptional system of American government, "that admirable and beautiful federative system," as Calhoun says, closing his discourse with the standard jeremiadic prophecy: "and our country may yet realize that permanent state of liberty, prosperity, and greatness, which we all once so fondly hoped was our allotted destiny." [113] Repealing the Act, then, in Calhoun's rhetoric, becomes a key to fulfilling the prophecy of the American jeremiad.

A similar pattern is exhibited in a speech that Calhoun delivered to an audience in Covington, Georgia in August 1833.[114] What makes his argument peculiar here, though, is the contradiction it contains. On the one hand, Calhoun claims that with Jackson's Nullification Proclamation and the passing of the Force Bill, consolidation culminated in the establishment of despotism, the loss of liberty for the entire American people: "[W]e are no longer a free people," he claims, "but under the absolute will of an unchecked majority, which has usurped the power according to my conception, constituting the very essence of despotism."[115] In other words, Calhoun interprets the current situation as a complete breakdown of the ideal: the Republic is beyond the ultimate point of declension. At the same time, later in the speech, he evokes the danger of *future* despotism which he claims will result unless the current process of decline is stopped. He contends, "The pressure of despotic power will first fall on us [i.e. southerners]; and if we do not meet it, with the lofty and determined spirit of freemen, ready to sacrifice all rather than surrender our liberty, our doom, and that of our institutions, will be fixed forever."[116] The obvious tension between his two propositions can be attributed to the force of the jeremiad: Calhoun, even if he is unaware of it, modifies his statement about the complete loss of liberty, the end of the decline in order to sustain hope about the possibility of the mission calling for continuing revolution.[117]

---

111 Ibid., 12:285.

112 Ibid., 12:297.

113 Ibid., 12:298; see also ibid., 12:334–37, 344–46.

114 "To Charles Kennon and Others," August 10, 1833, in ibid., 12:166–68.

115 Ibid., 12:167.

116 Ibid., 12:168.

117 Once doom sets in for once and all, the American Jeremiah can no longer call on his audience to continue the mission, to bridge the gap between ideal and experience because at that hypothetical moment the concept of chosenness would be questioned and the errand would lose its meaning. The continuous "state of unfulfillment" that characterizes the American jeremiad, according to Bercovitch, implies not only the constant "distance between

The bulk of Calhoun's post-Nullification jeremiadic rhetoric deals with the theme of decline from an economic-moral point of view and addresses issues related to the President's financial policy, the Second Bank of the United States, the spoils system as well as patronage, which gained special importance during the presidency of Andrew Jackson. Another form of declension from the republican ideal that concerned Calhoun was related to a particular aspect of corruption and dependence. One of the targets of eighteenth-century country republican jeremiads was favoritism, patronage, or the Crown's practice of granting offices to its supporters in the executive and legislative branches.[118] A group of Calhoun's texts of the 1830s and early 1840s were intended to address this problem. In them, he appealed to the republican fear that the Executive granting offices to his party members aggravates political and moral corruption. In doing so, he made extensive use of the framework of the American jeremiad.

For Calhoun, patronage is also associated with the dangerous increase of the executive power. In the first place, as he points out, the President of the United States is not granted unlimited power by the Constitution to appoint and remove officers: "To give him the power to dismiss, at his will and pleasure, without limitation or control, is to give him an absolute and unlimited control over the subsistence of almost all who hold office under Government."[119] They would be totally dependent upon the Executive for their existence. Dependence, according to republican logic, leads to corruption: "Who does not see that a power so unlimited and despotic over this great and powerful corps must tend to corrupt and debase those who compose it, and to convert them into the supple and willing instruments of him who wields it?"[120]

Should this power of the Executive remain unlimited, Calhoun argues, "the result must be the complete corruption and debasement of those in public employ." The corruption due to patronage, in turn, he warns, will not remain confined within the federal government: it will contaminate the entire society, because its tendency is to destroy the spirit of the people, thus subverting the Republic. Patronage caused the decline of the Roman republic by destroying the independent spirit of the people. Growing dependence on another man tends to lead to the loss of republican liberty. As Calhoun contends, "With the growth of executive patronage, and the control which the Executive has established over those in office by the exercise of this tremendous power, we witness among ourselves the progress of this base and servile spirit, which already presents so striking a contrast between the former and present character of our people."[121] The ultimate result of the tendency will be that "in a few generations the American character will become utterly corrupt and debased." The process of decline can be stopped only by limiting the power of the Executive to appoint and remove

---

promise and fact," (Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 23) but also the preclusion of failure and thus the affirmation of hope, which is also at work in this speech of Calhoun.

118 See Chapter 1, above.

119 "Speech on the President's Power of Removal," February 25, 1835, in *Papers of Calhoun*, 12:489. On patronage see also ibid., 23:107–10.

120 Ibid., 12:489.

121 Ibid., 12:490.

government officers, by reducing patronage. In Calhoun's words, "the danger which now menaces the destruction of our system may yet be arrested."[122]

In most of his writings on the topic Calhoun links the increase of patronage with the financial affairs of the Republic. Jackson's decision to remove federal deposits from the Bank of the United States in 1833 and to distribute them among certain state banks provided Calhoun with the opportunity to raise anxiety over the connection between the federal government and the pet banks.[123] For him, the removal of the federal deposits is, in reality, a struggle between the Executive and Congress to gain control over the national currency. In his eyes, the pet bank system is designed merely to extend the power of the federal government, providing the president with overwhelming power. In addition, he warns his audience, as a result of such a policy "[n]ot only the selected banks, but the whole banking institutions of the country, and with them the entire money power, for the purpose of speculation, peculation, and corruption, would be placed under the control of the Executive."[124]

Calhoun accentuates the gravity of the danger by drawing a parallel between Jackson and his partisans and Julius Caesar's breaking into the treasury of the Roman republic. At the same time, he denounces the American counterparts, who are of a different character: They are "artful, cunning, and corrupt politicians and not fearless warriors. They have entered the treasury, not sword in hand, as public plunderers, but with the false keys of sophistry, as pilferers, under the silence of midnight." All they want is to acquire the financial means necessary to develop patronage and win the elections. The removal of the deposits is, therefore, one step down the road to the destruction of republican liberty.[125] Calhoun's conclusion is a conventional evocation of jeremiadic doom: "Confidence is daily withdrawing from the General Government. Alienation is hourly going on. These will necessarily create a state of things inimical to the existence of our institutions, and, if not arrested, convulsions must follow, and then comes dissolution or despotism, when a thick cloud will be thrown over the cause of liberty and the future prospects of our country."[126] Returning public deposits to the Treasury is the way to deal with the crisis.

In Calhoun's rhetoric, the attempts to establish links between the federal government and the banks as well as the increase of patronage appear as part of the intention to revive old Federalist policies. For him, Alexander Hamilton was the first US politician to show a positive attitude toward patronage, which he considered "not as bone but an essential ingredient, without which the Government would be impracticable."[127] Other "measures" originated by the Federalist school, such as the "funded debt," "a National Bank," high tariffs, a strong connection between the federal government and the banks promote the decline of the Republic, because they are aimed at enriching "the mercenary corps . . . the dependent corps, who live,

---

122 Ibid., 12:491.

123 "Speech on the Removal of the Deposits," in *Papers* 12:200–25.

124 Ibid., 12:218.

125 Ibid., 12:221, 222.

126 Ibid., 12:225.

127 "Speech on the Bill to Prevent the Interference of Certain Federal Officers in Elections," February 22, 1839, in ibid., :566.

or expect to live, on the Government—the office holders and expectants."[128] The Democratic party in power aims to revive these policies. Were it to succeed, catastrophe would take place, warns Calhoun. "Adopt these measures," he prophesies, "and . . . the power would depart from the people . . . and would pass into the hands of the master spirits, who would, for the time, control the Government by their herds of dependants and partisans."[129] Calhoun also denounces the protective tariff of 1842 on account of its tendency to corrupt "politics and morals." Only the adoption of free trade principles can save the Union from the loss of liberty.[130]

Calhoun also resorted to the rhetoric of the American jeremiad in political debates over territorial expansion that emerged in the mid—1800s. For instance, conventional jeremiadic strategy appealing to the republican fear of the loss of liberty characterizes his rhetoric regarding the Mexican War, started by the Polk administration in 1846. By February 1847, Calhoun argued that despite the series of military successes, the United States should refrain from conquering the whole of Mexico, subduing and incorporating it into the union. Instead, he advocated the establishment of a border separating the already occupied territory of the country from the unoccupied rest of it. [131]

One of his major arguments against the conquest of Mexico and its incorporation into the Union is that these would result in disastrous consequences for the Republic. In his words, "Mexico is to us the forbidden fruit, the penalty of eating it would be to subject our institutions to political death."[132] To integrate the people of Mexico into the American Republic would be an impossible task, suggests Calhoun, due to the difference between them and the citizens of America, who had been practitioners of self-government: "Can we incorporate a people so dissimilar from us in every respect—so little qualified for free and popular government—without certain destruction to our political institutions?" he asks. His answer is "No."[133]

A republican form of government, he argues, cannot be imposed on a conquered people against its will; only a government of the aristocratic or despotic kind could survive in a Mexico conquered by the United States. "I must say," Calhoun declares, "I am at a loss to see how a free and independent Republic can be established in Mexico under the protection and authority of its conquerors. I can readily understand how an aristocracy or a despotic Government might be, but how a free republican Government can be so established, under such circumstances, is to me incomprehensible."[134] Also, given the racial composition of the Mexicans—"Indians" and "mixed blood"—Calhoun maintains that once incorporated into the

---

128 "Speech on the Report of the Secretary of the Treasury," June 21, 1841, in ibid., 15:580, 583.

129 Ibid., 12:584.

130 Ibid., 16:372, 375.

131 "Speech on the War with Mexico," in ibid., 24:115–33.

132 Ibid., 24:118. He also opposed the war due to the financial consequences, believing that military expenses would increase both tariffs and the national debt. See Ernest McPherson Lander, Jr. *Reluctant Imperialists: Calhoun, the South Carolinians, and the Mexican War* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 32.

133 *Papers of Calhoun*, 24:131.

134 "Speech on the War with Mexico" (Revised Report) January 4, 1848, in ibid., 25:81.

Union they cannot be granted a position equal to white Americans. "Ours is the Government of a white man. The great misfortune of what was formerly Spanish America, is to be traced to the fatal error of placing the colored race on an equality with the white. That error destroyed the social arrangement which formed the basis of their society."[135]

The conquest of Mexico would lead to the destruction of the Republic, according to Calhoun, primarily because such a conquest would be bound to increase the power of the Executive. Calhoun draws on historical experience to justify his claim: "The nations conquered and held as a province have, in time, retaliated by destroying the liberty of their conquerors, through the corrupting effect of extended patronage and irresponsible power. Such, certainly, would be our case." And the outcome is predictable: "the Union would become an imperial power," and the "end would be anarchy or despotism."[136] Conquest proved fatal to the ancient Roman republic, the model for the Union. Calhoun warns against the conquest so that the American Republic can avoid the fate of the ancient one: "[W]hen the Roman power passed beyond the limits of Italy, crossed the Adriatic, the Mediterranean, and the Alps, liberty fell prostrate; the Roman people became a rabble; corruption penetrated every department of the Government; violence and anarchy ruled the day, and military despotism closed the scene."[137]

Making use of the jeremiadic model, Calhoun also highlights another aspect of the war: he charges the citizens of the Republic with a decline in their vigilance for liberty as their top priority. In "the early days of the republic [liberty] was the first object of our solicitude," says Calhoun. Today, however, he adds, "other topics occupy the attention of Congress and of the country—military glory, extension of the empire, and the aggrandizement of the country."[138] The long time of peace and prosperity has made the people of the American Republic believe that liberty is their God-given lot, lasting forever, unconditionally. This mistaken belief is the reason, maintains Calhoun, why "we plunge into war, contract heavy debts, increase vastly the patronage of the Executive, and indulge in every species of extravagance, without thinking that we expose our liberty to hazard. It is a great and fatal mistake. The day of retribution will come."[139]

---

135 Ibid., 25:85. As seen above in Chapter 1, Calhoun made the degree of liberty that a people could live with proportionate to the actual level of intelligence and moral development. Obviously, for him, the people of Mexico had a level incompatible with Republican government allowing the utmost level of liberty.

136 Ibid., 25:86; see also ibid., 24:431.

137 Ibid., 25:87. Manisha Sinha claims that Calhoun's opposition to the annexation of Mexico was induced by his fear of the end of slavery if Mexicans, an allegedly inferior race, became full-fledged U.S. citizens. Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 67. However, it seems more plausible to argue that what Calhoun was, in fact, concerned about was the corruption of government in order to accommodate to a presumably degraded people: steeped in despotism, Mexicans would be unable to exist under self-government and whites would have to suffer their government turning despotic in order to be able to control the degraded others.

138 *Papers of Calhoun*, 25:90.

139 Ibid. Calhoun also opposed the annexation of all Mexico due to his belief in the Mexicans' adverse attitude to slavery, which most probably would result in the exclusion of the peculiar institution from the occupied territories (ibid., 25:19).

To ease anxiety and offer an optimistic alternative to doom, Calhoun advocates peace instead of war as a means of increasing the prestige of the Republic, in order to make America's mission more effective. "By pursuing such a course," he argues, "we may succeed in combining greatness and liberty . . . and do more to extend liberty by our example over this continent and the world generally, than would be done by a thousand victories."[140] In other words, here Calhoun evokes the Winthropean conception of the errand: converting the rest of the world through example; the American Republic, instead of continuing the war, is to rely on the power of its free institutions, as an example for Mexico to follow. For him, choosing war would entail fiasco in two senses: as far as domestic republican order is concerned, whose breakdown he so eloquently envisions, and also concerning the errand, the failure of which would also be jeopardized.[141]

For Calhoun, then, the conquest of Mexico would prove disastrous for the Republic because its incorporation into the Union would promote the process of corruption, leading to the destruction of republican institutions. At the same time, even the thought of conquest on the part of the citizens of the Republic, in his interpretation, is to be taken as a sign of decline.[142] By arguing that the love for liberty is fading among Americans, Calhoun, in terms of the jeremiad, also argues that the mission, the ideal, is losing its appeal for them.[143]

The territorial question brought to surface the tensions over slavery between the two sections. The Wilmot Proviso of 1846, proposing the banning of slavery in territories to be acquired as well as intensifying abolitionism in the North, made southern slaveholders increasingly sensitive to the changing balance of power within the federal system, when, as a result of expansion, new states were to be admitted to the Union.

Toward the end of Calhoun's political career, a new argument gained more and more emphasis in his jeremiadic rhetoric, namely the possibility that the South might be compelled to renew the mission by starting its own and trying to restore the ideal *outside* the Union. By the late 1840s he regarded the abolitionist threat to the South as the main danger subverting the foundations of the Republic. The concentration of power within the federal government, according to Calhoun, poses a threat to slavery in the South because of the importance of the

---

140 Ibid., 25:92.

141 See also ibid., 25:235–45. On Calhoun's understanding expansion as part of America's mission, see also his eloquent argument on the occupation of Oregon, March 16, 1846 (ibid., 22:701–2).

142 Calhoun's jeremiadic denunciation of the war as leading to the corruption of republican virtue and the fall of the American republic was also a response to pro-war rhetoric, which, in sharp contrast to his attitude, hailed the military confrontation as a means to renew virtue and to halt the process of corruption. On pro-war republican rhetoric, see Johannsen 1985, chapter 10. Calhoun's reluctance to conquer all Mexico was also related to the North's attempt to restrict the expansion of slavery in Mexican territory as manifest in the Wilmot Proviso (Lander, *Reluctant Imperialists*, 63). In connection with Calhoun's attitude to the War of Mexico in a broader South Carolinian context, Lander also points out that the speech received massive reaction nationwide regardless of sectional affiliation (ibid., 161–63).

143 When lamenting the loss of the love of liberty in the American people, Calhoun uses republican language: liberty was always conceived of as the distinctive trait or virtue of the many and had thus become second nature of the American people (cf. Chapter 1). The loss of liberty would necessarily implicate a change in government, which would turn despotic, appropriate for a people without liberty.

balance between the two sections. The day it is gone, he argues, "is a day that will not be for removed from political revolution, anarchy, civil war, and wide-spread disaster."[144]

These notions are articulated in an accentuated manner in Calhoun's last speech on the slavery question which he made in connection with the admission of California into the Union as a free state, and which was read out for him in the Senate on March 4, 1850. It is, in part, a jeremiadic call for attention to the declension threatening with disunion.[145] In his view, the abolitionist movement has developed to such an extent that it endangers the Union. As he contends, "[T]he agitation has been permitted to proceed, with almost no attempt to resist it, until it has reached a period when it can no longer be disguised or denied that the Union is in danger."[146] The "almost universal discontent" of the southern states with the Union may lead to their secession.[147]

The major reason that Calhoun gives for the alienation of the South from the North is the loss of the balance of power between the two sections within the federal government. The once "perfect equilibrium" has deteriorated to such an extent that the South can place no control over northern power. In Calhoun's words: "[O]ne section has the exclusive power of controlling the Government, which leaves the other without any adequate means of protecting itself against its encroachment and oppression."[148] Due to the dramatic population increase in the North, the South has lost a considerable number of seats in both chambers of the federal legislature as well as its influence over the Executive. Another aspect of the decline is the concentration of power in the federal government. As Calhoun points out, "What was once a constitutional federal Republic, is now converted, in reality, into one as absolute as that of the Autocrat of Russia, and as despotic in its tendency, as any absolute government that ever existed."[149] In other words, republican order based on the principle of self-government has broken down.

The admission of California into the Union as a state based on the popular sovereignty formula, which would put the decision in the hands of the inhabitants over the status of their state concerning slavery, signifies a further degree of the loss of balance between North and South, presuming that the principle would tend to favor the North. Hence the hope of restoring the balance is totally destroyed, Calhoun implies. He addresses his fellow senators indicating the erroneous nature of the anticipated decision: "If you admit [California], you endorse and give your sanction to all that has been done. Are you prepared to do so? . . . Are you prepared to surrender virtually to the Executive Department, all the powers which you

---

144 *Papers of Calhoun*, 24:172; see also ibid., 25:658–59 on the significance of consolidation and the sectional issue.

145 Ibid., 27:187–211.

146 Ibid. 27:128. See also his "Speech on the organization of government in Oregon Territory," August 12, 1849, in *Works of Calhoun*, 4:513–35. Calhoun suggests that although small in number, abolitionists are capable of exerting political influence through parties and elections (*Papers of Calhoun*, 24:252–57). Fitting for the rhetoric of declension, Calhoun defines abolitionism as a disease: "There are diseases of the body politick, as well as our natural bodies, that never will stop of themselves. Abolition is one of them" (ibid., 25:657 see also ibid., 25:661, 665).

147 Ibid., 25:188–89.

148 Ibid., 25:189.

149 Ibid., 25:195. On the South having lost power in the federal government, see also ibid., 24:169–71; and ibid., 24:249.

have heretofore exercised over the territories? If not, how can you . . . give your assent to the admission of California as a State, under a pretended constitution and government?"[150]

Calhoun identifies decline with the South gradually losing power within the Union. The decline could be stopped and the Union saved only by adopting several measures, including permitting slavery in California Territory, banning abolitionism, as well as an amendment that would "restore to the South in substance the power she possessed of protecting herself, before the equilibrium between the sections was destroyed by the action of this Government." He demands justice for the South so that "she could remain honorably and safely in the Union," a settlement that would "restore the harmony and fraternal feelings between the sections, which existed anterior to the Missouri agitation." Then, he concludes, "Nothing else can, with any certainty, finally and forever settle the questions at issue, terminate agitation, and save the Union."[151] Calhoun regards the admission of California as the test case: if slavery were excluded from the new state, the South would not hesitate to leave the Union. "We [i.e. southern politicians]," he says, "would be blind not to perceive in that case, that your real objects are power and aggrandizement, and infatuated not to act accordingly."[152]

In conclusion, most of Calhoun's post-Nullification jeremiads manifest the pattern established during the Nullification Controversy: his main target remains consolidation, the concentration of power in the Executive, the tendency to establish tyranny in place of the republican form of government. Patronage, the spoils system, or the surplus revenue of the federal treasury, in his application of the jeremiadic paradigm, become signs of decline, of majority power getting out of control.

This argument, accompanied by his warning against the dangers of territorial expansion contributing to the increase of majority power, developed into a new version of the jeremiad by the late 1840s. As his last major speech shows, at the end of his political career, with the compromise of 1850 in the making, Calhoun laid more emphasis on the possibility of the South continuing the errand on its own. The anxiety that he aroused had no longer to do with the loss of republican liberty for the whole of the Republic but, instead, the loss of liberty for the South. With the broken balance of power between the two sections and the growing antislavery sentiment in the North, he pleaded for protective guarantees for the South by raising the specter of secession as an alternative.

John Ashworth argues that from the 1830s through the 1840s, Calhoun employed different strategies to defend Southern interests. While in the 1830s he tried to create a United Southern front, cutting across party lines, in the late 1830s and early 1840s, back in the Democratic party, he looked for Northern support. In the mid—1840s, in turn, he courted Western interests through his advocacy of internal improvements, whereas in the late 1840s,

---

150 Ibid., 25:207–8.

151 Ibid., 25:210.

152 Ibid., 25:211; see also ibid., 25:670–71. On Calhoun's argument for the necessity of northern guarantees for the protection of slavery in the South as a condition to preserve the Union, see also his "Speech on the Oregon Bill," in *Works of Calhoun*, 4:534.

he, again, turned to his strategy of creating a unified South.[153] Whichever period we take, however, through the rhetorical ritual of the American jeremiad, Calhoun spoke to the whole nation as his audience. Even when voicing the possibility of the South being the "stewards of the trust,"[154] he did so with an eye on the trust with a meaning independent of sectional interpretations: he emphasized the same continuing revolution for the same purpose that his sectional adversaries also adopted.

As has been seen, Bercovitch claims that the South and southern public figures fell outside the domain of the American jeremiad. My arguments above, however, suggest that Calhoun's case does not seem to bear that out. His own version of the American jeremiad assumed features generally characteristic of mainstream republican jeremiads. He persisted in arguing on the ground of the national republican consensus, which, at the same time, he interpreted in a way fitting for his sectional cause. Similar to other dissenters applying the American jeremiad, he adopted the "logic of continuing revolution" and remained, also in a rhetorical sense, within the framework of the national consensus. The alternative of secession was still about carrying on the original errand but outside the Union.

Calhoun's concern with abolitionism was intimately intertwined with the pattern of declension as represented by consolidation from his earlier jeremiads. For him, the northern denunciation of slavery and attempt to bar its expansion into new territories gained real significance with the presumed concentration of power in the federal government and the North's control of it. Hence, he managed to transpose the conventional jeremiadic structure invented for the nation to the cause of the slave South, at the same time, retaining its core elements.

---

153 John Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic*, vol. 1, *Commerce and Compromise, 1820–1850* (Cambridge, New York, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 136, 202, 451–54. In fact, Calhoun started talking about the necessity for the South to act on a common platform instead of relying on national parties as early as 1844. See *Papers of Calhoun*, 19:525, 613.

154 The term belongs to Paul C. Nagel. See his *This Sacred Trust*, xii.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters I have attempted to show how Calhoun drew upon a pool of diverse political languages consisting of various vocabularies, idioms and structural frameworks, tending to utilize them in order to amplify the impact of his political rhetoric, for largely similar purposes, centering around the themes of protection and preservation. Whether virtue, Lockean liberalism or the balance of power, the speeches and writings of Calhoun analyzed above expressed either concern about their loss or ways to restore them. The traditions that he drew upon fitted his critical purposes of fighting the process of losing power gradually, stopping tendencies he deemed harmful to his state and his section.

Calhoun's major target of criticism usually being the federal government, he could use republican vocabulary structured by the dichotomy of virtue and corruption providing him with a tool by means of which to accentuate his apprehensions about deteriorating republican order, tendencies of the central power to jeopardize individual and southern rights. Such was the case with Lockean liberalism; with its emphasis on the protection of property, self-preservation or the right of revolution.

With shifting focus, his jeremiads functioned to create anxiety in his audience as well as to urge them to act in a way that would facilitate bringing together the present with the promised but deteriorating ideal. Furthermore, the typological structure of the jeremiad provided Calhoun with another tool, by which he could establish a figurative, metaphorical relationship between past, present and future.

Calhoun's peculiarity lay in the fact that he spoke the languages of the Union to a national political community. Yet he did so for sectional purposes, in an attempt to defend Southern slaveholding interest—he hoped to gain empowerment through the persuasive power of those languages.[155] As we have seen, Calhoun's political languages ran throughout his career, cutting across national and sectional concerns: their idioms, with varying degrees of intensity, informed his political rhetoric, mostly independently from the nationalist/sectionalist divide. Different idioms of the languages gained emphasis in different periods in accordance with the political issues that Calhoun addressed. Nevertheless, it was the Nullification Crisis, the most turbulent period of his life, that brought about an important change: this was the time when the consolidation idiom developed in Calhoun's jeremiads with the momentary appearance of the Lockean right of revolution. Still, it was the emergence of the slavery issue in the

[155] In a recent study, Lacy K. Ford, Jr. has argued that the various political strategies that Calhoun employed during his political career with the purpose of defending Southern minority interests met unfavorable reception, resulting in his ultimate failure to create a politically unified South. Ford maintains that this fiasco was due mainly to his unremitting effort to implement "consensus-building" politics in the age of conflicting party and other interests dominated by governments of the numerical majority. Ford, "Prophet with Posthumous Honor: John C. Calhoun and the Southern Political Tradition," in *Is There a Southern Political Tradition?* ed. Charles W. Eagles (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996), 21. Yet, as we have seen, Calhoun was very much into a politics that also acknowledged the significance of party politics and the legitimacy of majority power.

mid—1830s that, combined with fear of the abuse of central power, gained increasing significance. (This was in obvious contrast to the Missouri Crisis, during which Calhoun saw no danger of consolidation, or a real threat to the peculiar institution.)

By relying on Pocock's theory of political languages one can understand how, in his republicanism, for instance, Calhoun was capable of drawing upon such diametrically opposed approaches to securing virtue in the republic as the Federalist and Antifederalist ways. My Pocockean reading of Calhoun's republicanism or his American jeremiad has also shown how multivalent meanings structure a given thinker's discourse. For example, virtue or causes of declension took on several forms and meanings in the South Carolinian's rhetoric. Furthermore, through the perspective of political languages we have also been able to see how Calhoun, in part, still spoke the language of Lockean liberalism or at least utilized its idioms in several cases despite his own intentions as expressed through his denial of the Lockean state of nature and natural right. Needless to say, Calhoun's own reading of Locke, as I tried to show above, was not exempt from instances of misreading. Yet, by applying the Pocockean paradigm I am able to show that these instances are better seen as modifications of the original meaning. Further, my analysis reveals that various, often contradictory idioms of political languages informed Calhoun's way of argumentation in accordance with Pocock's theory. Finally, the Pocockean reading of Calhoun's political thought has allowed a better understanding of how this thought interacted with its political contexts, constantly responding to them, as, for instance, the transformation of his jeremiadic rhetoric indicates.

As Pocock argues, the individual user of a given political language may modify it in order to exploit it for his or her own purposes, effecting a conceptual change in it, which may amount to a "conceptual revolution," the birth of a new paradigm.[156] Did Calhoun, then, in any way participate in transforming the languages that he appropriated? Can he be considered to have implemented a revolution as described by Pocock?

In the light of my analysis, it can be concluded that Calhoun did tend to modify the political languages that he employed to achieve a persuasive effect, based on idioms and beliefs already known to his audience, and whenever he acted as an innovator, the South or the states as corporate entities were involved. This is most obvious in the case of his version of republicanism in which the South appears as a quasi-social estate of classical republicanism, with its own virtue, maintaining balance and order in the Union as social estates function in the mixed government type. Through this vision of the South, Calhoun returned from the mainstream Federalist to a pre-Federalist conception of the mixed government based on the balance of social orders, uniting individuals along common interests. In addition, in making Rome the exemplar of the successful mechanization of virtue, he performed a significant modification of earlier republican visions having the Venetian Republic as their ideal. Calhoun also performed innovation on the original republican idiom of the connection between virtue and the citizen soldier by claiming virtue for a standing army in peacetime, an army consisting of citizen soldiers—an important step on the road to a modern professional army of the Republic. He did so by making the Southern plantation system appear a peculiar one, capable

---

[156] Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (New York: Atheneum, 1971; repr. with new preface, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 277.

of shifting from modernity to pre-modern self-sufficiency, thereby regaining republican independence when need be.

His corporate perspective also lends novelty to his appropriation of the elements of Lockean liberalism, his basic innovation being the extension of Locke's argument about the link between rationality and liberty to the adult individual as well as, in the Jeffersonian fashion, making individual states the equivalents of Locke's independent individuals. By the end of his career, Calhoun's contributions to the tradition of the American jeremiad consisted in proposing the South as a saving remnant to continue the revolution. Yet, his most influential innovation is related to the nullification movement in South Carolina, when he worked out his theory of state interposition developed on the basis of certain antecedents and putting it into practice. In fact, he did not prove successful in employing the power of tradition in order to make his innovative additions to the original languages acceptable to an increasingly sectional audience. He had partial successes only, when his efforts were unrelated to sectional issues, such as his strategic move to republicanize the concept of the regular army. The latter ultimately proved essential in the reform movement of American defense. His effort built on the concept of military virtue as a significant trait of the citizens' army, defending the liberty of the republic. However, Calhoun's innovative doctrine of nullification by one state as presented in the antagonizing context of the Nullification Crisis was ineffective in winning enough support even though it appealed to tradition. Using the language of Lockean liberalism, with particular allusions to the idiom of the American Revolution could not sell state veto as a non-revolutionary measure even though the heritage of the revolutionary fathers was evoked: after all, the tradition was born out of revolution.

Calhoun's participation in effecting conceptual changes in the original languages did indeed amount to a revolution. His efforts to make sense of his innovations, however, found no favorable response outside his own section. This failure contributed to the slave South's alienation from the Union and its compensating for being rejected through the formation of an independent nation state. Growing increasingly aware of their minority position within the Union, southern slaveholders were ready to embrace the sectionalized versions of traditional political languages offered by Calhoun. In doing so, however, they also alienated themselves from the political majority within the Union, drawing sectional boundaries that became irredeemably divisive, in that way planting the seeds of political distrust and paranoia.

Calhoun's quarrel with growing antislavery sentiments in the North, as well as his sense of the South losing power within the Union, may shed light on a fatal dilemma that he and his section had to face: fighting a multi-front battle along class, racial and sectional lines. Blurring the class line inside the South proved successful on the rhetorical level, with the help of republican ideology: Southern yeomen were ready to follow their social betters (that is, slaveholding planters) in defending republican values in the face of attack by a Northern majority that they increasingly associated with corrupting power. However, sectional divisions could not be tackled due to the coupling of the race and territorial issues. The 1840s and 1850s showed the fatality of this mixture. When the admission of new states into the Union provoked debate over the westward expansion of slavery, the national party structure was undergoing a sectional transformation that amplified cultural divisions. Southerners, who believed

slavery to be an integral part of their republican and liberal world showed no willingness to renounce their intention to spread it in new territories—let alone their right to slave property. They accepted racial division within their region between whites and blacks, because it reinforced white solidarity overarching class divisions. Yet, they did that at a price of keeping black slaves antagonized.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES:

Calhoun, John C. *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*. Edited by Robert L. Meriwhether, W. Edwin Hemphill and Clyde N. Wilson. 28 vols. Columbia, S.C.: The University of South Carolina Press, 1959–2003.

—— *The Works of John C. Calhoun*. Edited by Richard K. Crallé. 6 vols. Reprint, New York: Russell & Russell, 1968. First published 1851–1857 by D. Appleton & Co.

Jefferson, Thomas. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. Vol. 1, 1760–1776. Edited by Julian P. Boyd. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950.

——. *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*. Edited by Merrill D. Peterson. New York, etc.: Penguin, 1977. First published 1975 by Viking Penguin.

——. *Writings*. Edited by Merrill D. Peterson. New York: The Library of America, 1984.

Locke, John. "An Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent, and End of Civil Government" ("*The Second Treatise of Government*"). In *Two Treatises of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 265–428. First published 1960.

Madison, James, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers*. Edited by Isaac Kramnick. London, etc.: Penguin, 1987.

Madison, James. *The Writings of James Madison*. Edited by Gaillard Hunt. Vol. 9, New York and London: G. G. Putnam's Sons, 1910.

Maury, Sarah Mytton. *The Statesmen of America in 1846*. Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1847.

Otis, James. "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved." In *Some Political Writings of James Otis*. Part 1. Collected with an introduction by Charles F. Mullett. *The University of Missouri Studies. A Quarterly of Research* 4 (1929): 45–91.

Winthrop, John. "A Model of Christian Charity." In *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology*. Edited by Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco, 81–92. Cambridge, Mass. and London, Engl.: Harvard University Press, 1985.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

Aarsleff, Hans. "The State of Nature and the Nature of Man in Locke." In Yolton, *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives*, 99–136.

Appleby, Joyce. *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s*. New York and London: New York University Press, 1984.

——. "Commercial Farming and the 'Agrarian Myth' in the Early Republic." *The Journal of American History* 68 (1982), 833–49.

——. *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans*. Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000.

——. *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1992.

——. "Republicanism and Ideology." *American Quarterly* 37 (1985): 461–473.

——. "Republicanism in Old and New Contexts." In *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination*, 320–39. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1992.

——. "What Is Still American in the Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson?" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 39 (1982): 287–309.

Ashworth, John. "The Jeffersonians: Classical Republicans or Liberal Capitalists?" *Journal of American Studies* 18 (1984): 425–35.

——. *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic*. Vol. 1, *Commerce and Compromise, 1820–1850*. Cambridge, New York, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Bailyn, Bernard. *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992, enlarged edition. First published 1967 by Harvard University Press.

—— *The Origins of American Politics*. New York: Vintage Books, 1970. First published 1967 by the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History, Harvard University.

Ball, Terence and J. G. A. Pocock, eds. *Conceptual Change and the Constitution*. Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1988.

Banning, Lance. "Jeffersonian Ideology Revisited: Liberal and Classical Ideas in the New American Republic." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 43 (1986): 3–20.

——. *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978.

——. "Political Economy and the Creation of the Federal Republic." In Konig, *Devising Liberty*, 11–50.

——. *The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995.

——. "Some Second Thoughts on Virtue and the Course of Revolutionary Thinking." In Ball and Pocock, *Conceptual Change*, 194–212.

Bartlett, Irving H. *John C. Calhoun: A Biography*. New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1993.

Baskin, Darryl. "The Pluralist Vision of John C. Calhoun." *Polity* 2 (1969): 49–66.

Becker, Carl L. *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951. First published 1922.

Beeman, Richard, Stephen Botein, and Edward C. Carter II, eds. *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1987.

Benoit, William Lyon and Alexander Moore. "John C. Calhoun (1782–1850), spokesperson for the South and the Union." In *American Orators Before 1900: Critical Studies and Sources*.

Edited by Bernard K. Duffy and Halford R. Ryan. New York, Westport, Conn. and London, 1987, 68–78.

Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The American Jeremiad*. Madison, Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978.

——. *The Puritan Origins of the American Self*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975.

——. *The Rites of Assent*. London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1993.

Berthoff, Rowland. "Independence and Attachment, Virtue and Interest: From Republican Citizen to Free Enterpriser, 1787–1837." In Bushman, *Uprooted Americans*, 97–124.

Black, Edwin. "The Aesthetics of Rhetoric, American Style." In *Rhetoric and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*. Edited by Thomas W. Benson, 1–14. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997.

Bloch, Ruth. *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756–1800*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1988. First published 1985.

Boller, Paul F., Jr. "Calhoun on Liberty." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 66 (1967): 395–408.

Braden, Waldo W., ed. *Oratory in the Old South, 1828–1860*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970.

Bradley, Bert E. "Refutative Techniques of John C. Calhoun." *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 37 (1972): 413–23.

Bradley, Bert E. and Jerry L. Tarver. "John C. Calhoun's Rhetorical Method in Defense of Slavery." In *Oratory in the Old South, 1828–1860*. Edited by Waldo W. Braden, 169-190. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970.

Brewer, Holly. *By Birth or Consent: Children, Law, and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Brown, Guy Story. *Calhoun's Philosophy of Politics: A Study of* A Disquisition on Government. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2000.

Bushman, Richard L. "'This New Man': Dependence and Independence, 1776." In Bushman, *Uprooted Americans*, 77–96.

Bushman, Richard L. et al., ed. *Uprooted Americans: Essays to Honor Oscar Handlin*. Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1979.

Calhoon, Robert M. *Evangelicals and Conservatives in the Early South, 1740–1861*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1988.

Carwadine, Richard J. *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.

Chaplin, Joyce E. "Creating a Cotton South in Georgia and South Carolina, 1760–1815." *The Journal of Southern History* 57 (1991): 170–200.

Cheek, H. Lee, Jr. *Calhoun and Popular Rule: The Political Theory of the* Disquisition *and* Discourse. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2001.

——. "Recovering Popular Rule: Calhoun, Sectional Conflict, and Modern America." *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 10 (2002): 35–55.

Coit, Elwell Margaret. "The Continuing Relevance of John C. Calhoun," *Continuity: A Journal of History* 9 (1984): 73–85.

Cornell, Saul. *The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788–1828*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1999.

Cress, Lawrence Delbert. *Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

Current, Richard N. *John C. Calhoun*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1963.

——. "John C. Calhoun, Philosopher of Reaction." *Antioch Review* 3 (1943): 223–234.

Curry, Herbert L. "John C. Calhoun." In *A History and Criticism of American Public Address*. Edited by William Norwood Brigance. Vol. 2, 639–64. Reprint, New York: Russell and Russell, 1960. First published 1943 by McGraw-Hill.

Degler, Carl N. *Place over Time: The Continuity of Southern Distinctiveness*. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1977.

Diggins, Patrick. *The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundations of Liberalism*. New York: Basic Books, 1984.

——. "Comrades and Citizens: New Mythologies in American Historiography." *The American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 614–38.

Drucker, Peter. "A Key to American Politics: Calhoun's Pluralism." *Review of Politics* 10 (1948): 412–426.

Dworetz, Steven M. *The Unvarnished Doctrine: Locke, Liberalism and the American Revolution*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994. First published 1990.

Elkins, Stanley, and Eric McKitrick. *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788–1800*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Ellis, Richard E. *The Union at Risk: Jacksonian Democracy, States' Rights, and the Nullification Crisis*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Ellis, Richard J. *American Political Cultures*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Elwell, Margaret Coit. "The Continuing Relevance of John C. Calhoun." *Continuity: A Journal of History* 9 (1984): 73–85.

Ericson, David F. *The Debate over Slavery: Antislavery and Proslavery Liberalism in Antebellum America*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2000.

——. "The Nullification Crisis, American Republicanism, and the Force Bill Debate." *The Journal of Southern History* 61 (1995): 249–70.

——. *The Shaping of American Liberalism: The Debates over Ratification, Nullification and Slavery*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Erler, Edward J. "The Great Fence to Liberty: The Right to Property in the American Founding." In *Liberty, Property, and the Foundations of the American Constitution*. Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul and Howard Dickman, 43–63. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York, 1989.

Eubanks, Ralph T. "The Rhetoric of the Nullifiers." In Braden, *Oratory in the Old South*, 19-73.

Fletcher Wright, Jr., Benjamin. *American Interpretations of Natural Law: A Study in the History of Political Thought*. Reprint, New York: Russell and Russell, 1962. First published 1931 by Harvard University Press.

Foner, Eric. *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Ford, Lacy K. "Inventing the Concurrent Majority: Madison, Calhoun, and the Problem of Majoritarianism in American Political Thought." *The Journal of Southern History* 40 (1994): 19–58.

——. *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800–1860*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

——. "Prophet with Posthumous Honor: John C. Calhoun and the Southern Political Tradition," In *Is There a Southern Political Tradition?* Edited by Charles W. Eagles, 3–25. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996.

——. "Recovering the Republic: Calhoun, South Carolina, and the Concurrent Majority." *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 89 (1988): 146–59.

——. "Republican Ideology in a Slave Society: The Political Economy of John C. Calhoun." *The Journal of Southern History* 54 (1988): 405–24.

——. "Republics and Democracy: The Parameters of Political Citizenship in Antebellum South Carolina." In *The Meaning of South Carolina History: Essays in Honor of George C. Rogers, Jr.* Edited by David R. Chesnutt and Clyde N. Wilson, 121–45. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991.

Fredrickson, George M. *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914*. Hanover, N. H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1987. First published 1971 by Harper and Row.

Freehling, William W. *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816–1836*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. First published 1965 by Harper & Row.

——. "Spoilsmen and Interests in the Thought and Career of John C. Calhoun." *The Journal of American History* 52 (1965), 25–43.

Garson, Robert A. "Proslavery as Political Theory: The Examples of John C. Calhoun and George Fitzhugh." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 84 (1985): 197–212.

Genovese, Eugene D. *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy & Society of the Slave South*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.

——. *The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994.

——. *The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays of Interpretation*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1969.

Gerber, Scott Douglas. *To Secure These Rights: The Declaration of Independence and Constitutional Interpretation*. New York: New York University Press, 1995.

Glickstein, Jonathan H. *American Exceptionalism, American Anxiety: Wages, Competition, and Degraded Labor in the Antebellum United States*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2002.

Greenberg, Kenneth S. *Masters and Statesmen: The Political Culture of American Slavery*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

——. "Revolutionary Ideology and the Proslavery Argument: The Abolition of Slavery in Antebellum South Carolina" *The Journal of Southern History* 42 (1976): 365–84.

Gutzman, K. R. Constantine. "Paul to Jeremiah: The Disillusionment of John C. Calhoun." *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 16 (2002): 3–33.

Hamowy, Ronald. "Cato's Letters, John Locke, and the Republican Paradigm." *History of Political Thought* 11 (1990): 273–94.

——. "Jefferson and the Scottish Enlightenment: A Critique of Garry Wills' *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence*." *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 36 (1979): 504–23.

Hampsher-Monk, Iain. "Political Languages in Time–The Work of J. G. A. Pocock." *British Journal of Political Science* 14 (1984): 89–116.

Harp, Gillis J. "Taylor, Calhoun, and the Decline of a Theory of Political Disharmony." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46 (1985): 107–20.

Harris, J. William. 1984. "Last of the Classical Republicans: An Interpretation of John C. Calhoun." *Civil War History* 30: 255–67.

Hartz, Louis. *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution*. San Diego, etc.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1991. First published 1955.

Hatch, Nathan O. *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977.

Heckscher, Gunnar. "Calhoun's Idea of 'Concurrent Majority' and the Constitutional Theory of Hegel." *The American Political Science Review* 33 (1939): 585–90.

Hofstadter, Richard. "John C. Calhoun: The Marx of the Master Class." In *The American Political Tradition. And the Men Who Made It*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986. First published 1948.

Hoyningen-Huene, Paul. *Reconstructing Scientific Revolutions: Thomas S. Kuhn's Philosophy of Science*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Howe, John R., Jr. "Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790s." *American Quarterly* 19 (1967): 147–206.

Huston, James L. *Calculating the Value of the Union: Slavery, Property Rights, and the Economic Origins of the Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Hutson, James H. "Country, Court, and Constitution: Antifederalism and the Historians." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38 (1981): 337–68.

Huyler, Jerome. *Locke in America: The Moral Philosophy of the Founding Era*. Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1995.

Isaac, Jeffrey C. "Republicanism vs. Liberalism? A Reconsideration." *History of Political Thought* 9 (1988): 349–77.

Jaffa, Harry V. *A New Birth of Freedom: Abraham Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War*. Lanham, etc.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

Jayne, Allen. *Jefferson's Declaration of Independence: Origins, Philosophy and Theology*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1998.

Johannsen, Robert W. *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Jordan, Winthrop D. *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812*. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Co., 1977. First published 1968 by The University of North Carolina Press.

Kateb, George. "The Majority Principle: Calhoun and His Antecedents." *Political Science Quarterly* 84 (1969): 583–605.

Kaufman, Allen. *Capitalism, Slavery, and Republican Values: Antebellum Political Economists, 1819–1848*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982.

Kelly, Robert. "Ideology and Political Culture from Jefferson to Nixon." *American Historical Review* 82 (1977): 531–62.

Kendall, Willmoore. *John Locke and Majority-Rule*. Urbana, Ill.: The University of Illinois Press, 1941.

Kennedy, Roger G. *Mr. Jefferson's Lost Cause: Land, Farmers, Slavery, and the Louisiana Purchase*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Kerber, Linda. *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1986. First published 1980 by the University of North Carolina Press.

Kirk, Russell. *The Conservative Mind from Burke to Santayana*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953.

Klein, Milton M., Richard D. Brown, and John B. Hench et al., eds. *The Republican Synthesis Revisited: Essays in Honor of George Athan Billias*. Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1992. (Also published as Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society. Vol. 102 Part 1, April 1992).

Konig, David Thomas, ed. *Devising Liberty: Preserving and Creating Freedom in the New American Republic*. Standford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1995.

Kloppenberg, James T. "The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Political Discourse." *The Journal of American History* 74 (1987): 9–33.

Kramnick, Isaac. *Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism: Political Ideology in Late Eighteenth-Century England and America*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990.

——. "Republican Revisionism Revisited." *The American Historical Review* 87 (1982): 629–65.

——. "Republicanism Revisited: The Case of James Burgh." In Klein, Brown, and Hench, *Republican Synthesis Revisited*, 19–37.

Kromkowski, Charles A. "The Declaration of Independence, Congress, and Presidents of the United States." In *The Declaration of Independence: Origins and Impact*. Edited by Scott Douglas Gerber, 118–141. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2002.

Kruman, Marc W. "The Second American Party System and the Transformation of Revolutionary Republicanism." *Journal of the Early Republic* 12 (1992): 509–37.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970. First published 1962.

Lander, Ernest McPherson, Jr. *Reluctant Imperialists: Calhoun, the South Carolinians, and the Mexican War*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1980.

Laslett, Peter. Introduction to John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1991. First published 1960.

Latner, Richard B. "The Nullification Crisis and Republican Subversion." *The Journal of Southern History* 43 (1977): 19–38.

Lerner, Ralph. "Calhoun's New Science of Politics." *American Political Science Review* 57 (1963): 918–32.

——. "Commerce and Character: The Anglo-American as New-Model Man" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 36 (1979): 3–26.

——. "The Constitution of the Thinking Revolutionary." In Beeman, Botein, and Carter, *Beyond Confederation*, 38–69.

——. *The Thinking Revolutionary: Principle and Practice in the New Republic*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Lewis, Jan. "The Problem of Slavery in Southern Political Discourse." In Konig, *Devising Liberty*, 265–97.

Lienesch, Michael. *New Order of the Ages: Time, the Constitution, and the Making of Modern American Political Thought*. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Lutz, Donald. "The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought." *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984): 189–97.

Maddex, Jack P., Jr. "Proslavery Millennialism: Social Eschatology in Antebellum Southern Calvinism." *American Quarterly* 31 (1979): 46–62.

Maier, Pauline. "The Road not Taken: Nullification, John C. Calhoun, and the Revolutionary Tradition in South Carolina." *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 82 (1981): 1–19.

Marmor, Theodore R. "Anti-Industrialism and the Old South: The Agrarian Perspective of John C. Calhoun." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 9 (1966–67): 377–406.

—— *The Career of John C. Calhoun: Politician, Social Critic, Political Philosopher*. New York: Garland, 1988.

McCoy, Drew R. *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980.

—— *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

McCurry, Stephanie. *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

——. "The Two Faces of Republicanism: Gender and Proslavery Politics in Antebellum South Carolina." *The Journal of American History* 79 (1992): 1245–64.

McDonald, Forrest. *Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution*. Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1985.

——. *States' Rights and the Union: Imperium in Imperio, 1776–1876*. Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 2000.

McDowell, Gary L. and Sharon L. Noble, eds. 1997. *Reason and Republicanism: Thomas Jefferson's Legacy of Liberty*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Merk, Frederick. *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983. First published 1963 by Alfred A. Knopf.

Merriam, Charles Edward. 1964. "The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun." In *Studies in Southern History and Politics*. Edited by James W. Garner. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 319–38. First published 1914 by Columbia University Press.

Miller, Chandra. "'Title Page to a Great Tragic Volume:' The Impact of the Missouri Crisis on Slavery, Race, and Republicanism in the Thought of John C. Calhoun and John Quincy Adams." *The Missouri Historical Review* 94 (2000): 365–88.

Miller, John Chester. *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery*. New York: The Free Press. A Division of Macmillan Publishing Co., 1977.

Miller, Perry. *Errand into the Wilderness*. Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1956.

——. *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1953.

——. *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*. New York: Macmillan, 1939.

Murrin, John M. "Can Liberals be Patriots? Natural Right, Virtue, and Moral Sense in the America of George Mason and Thomas Jefferson." In *Natural Rights and Natural Law: The Legacy of George Mason*. Edited by Robert P. Davidow, 35–65. Fairfax, Va.: The George Mason University Press, 1986.

——. "The Great Inversion, or Court versus Country: A Comparison of the Revolution Settlements in England (1688–1721) and America (1776–1816)." In *Three British Revolutions: 1641, 1688, 1776*. Edited by J.G.A. Pocock, 368–453. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980.

Nagel, Paul C. *This Sacred Trust: American Nationality, 1798–1898*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Niven, John. *John C. Calhoun and the Price of the Union: A Biography*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1988.

Oakes, James. "The Peculiar Fate of the Bourgeois Critique of Slavery." In *Slavery and the American South*. Edited by Winthrop D. Jordan, 29–48. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003.

——. "From Republicanism to Liberalism: Ideological Change and the Crisis of the Old South." *American Quarterly* 37 (1984): 551–71.

——. *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982.

——. *Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990.

O'Brien, Michael. *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860*. Volume 2. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Pangle, Thomas L. *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American Founders and the Philosophy of Locke*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Parrington, Vernon L. *Main Currents in American Thought*. Vol. 2, *The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800–1860*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1954. First published 1927.

Peterson, Merrill D. *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Pocock, J. G. A. "Between Gog and Magog: The Republican Thesis and the *Ideologia Americana*." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (1987): 325–347.

——. "Cambridge paradigms and Scotch philosophers: A study of the relations between the civic humanist and the civil jurisprudential interpretation of eighteenth-century social thought." In *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*. Edited by István Hont and Michael Ignatieff, 235–52. Cambridge, London, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

——. "The concept of a language and the *métier d'historien*: some considerations on practice." In *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*. Edited by Anthony Pagden, 19–38. Cambridge, London, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

——. *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1975.

——. "*The Machiavellian Moment* Revisited: A Study in History and Ideology." *The Journal of Modern History* 53 (1981): 49–72.

——. "The Myth of John Locke and the Obsession with Liberalism." In J. G. A. Pocock and Richard Ashcraft, *John Locke: Papers Read at a Clark Library Seminar 10 December 1977*, 1–24. Los Angeles: University of California, 1980.

——. *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989. First published 1971 by Atheneum, New York.

——. "States, Republics, and Empires: The American Founding in Early Modern Perspective." In Ball and Pocock, *Conceptual Change and the Constitution*, 55–77.

——. "Verbalizing a Political Act: Toward a Politics of Speech." In *Language and Politics*. Edited by Michael J. Shapiro, 25–43. New York: New York University Press, 1984.

——. "Virtue and Commerce in the Eighteenth Century." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 3 (1972): 119–34.

——. *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge, etc: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Polin, Raymond. "John Locke's Conception of Freedom." In Yolton, *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives*, 1–18.

Rahe, Paul A. *Republics Ancient and Modern*. Vol. 3, *Inventions of Prudence: Constituting the American Regime*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994.

Rakove, Jack N. *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution*. New York: Vintage Books, 1997.

Remini, Robert V. *The Legacy of Andrew Jackson: Essays on Democracy, Indian Removal and Slavery*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1988.

Rice, Daryl H. "John C. Calhoun." *History of Political Thought* 12 (1991): 317–28.

Richter, Melvin. "Reconstructing the History of Political Languages: Pocock, Skinner, and the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*." *History and Theory* 29 (1990): 38–70.

Robertson, Andrew W. *The Language of Democracy: Political Rhetoric in the United States and Britain, 1790–1900*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Rodgers, Daniel T. "Republicanism: The Career of a Concept." *The Journal of American History* 79 (1992), 11–38.

Rose, Willie Lee. "The Domestication of Slavery." In Willie Lee Rose, *Slavery and Freedom*. Edited by William W. Freehling (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 18–36.

Rossiter, Clinton. *Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion*. New York: Knopf, 1964. First published 1955.

——. *Seedtime of the Republic: The Origin of the American Tradition of Political Liberty*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1953.

Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr. *The Age of Jackson*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953. First published 1945.

Scott, William B. *In Pursuit of Happiness: American Conceptions of Property from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1977.

Sellers, Charles Grier, Jr. *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

——. "The Travail of Slavery." In *The Southerner as American*. Edited by Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., 40–71. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1960.

Shalhope, Robert E. "Republicanism and Early American Historiography." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 39 (1982): 334–56.

——. "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 29 (1972): 48–80.

Sheldon, Garrett Ward. *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Sinha, Manisha. *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Sinopoli, Richard C. *The Foundations of American Citizenship: Liberalism, the Constitution, and Civic Virtue*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Skeen, C. Edward. "Calhoun, Crawford, and the Politics of Retrenchment," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 73 (1972), 141–55.

——. *Citizen Soldiers in the War of 1812*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999.

Sklar, Judith N. "Positive Liberty, Negative Liberty in the United States." Translated from the French by Stanley Hoffmann. In *Redeeming American Political Thought*. Edited by Stanley Hoffmann and Dennis F. Thompson, 111–26. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1970. First published 1950.

Spain, August O. *The Political Theory of John C. Calhoun*. New York: Bookman Associates, 1951.

Steinberger, Peter J. "Calhoun's Concept of the Public Interest: A Clarification." *Polity* 13 (1981): 410–24.

Taylor, William R. *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character*. New York: George Braziller, 1961. First published 1957.

Thibault, Paul J. *Re-reading Saussure: The dynamics of signs in social life*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

Toews, John E. "Intellectual History after the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience." *The American Historical Review* 92 (1987): 879–907.

Tuveson, Ernest Lee. *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Volpe, Michael. "The Logic of Calhoun's Constitutional Theory." *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 39 (1973): 161–72.

Ward, John William. *Andrew Jackson—Symbol for an Age*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962. First published 1953.

Wartofsky, Steven A. "Critique of the Upright Self: Everett, Webster, Calhoun and the Logic of Oratory." *Massachusetts Review* 33 (1992): 401–26.

Watson, Harry L. *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1990.

Wharton, Leslie. *Polity and the Public Good: Conflicting Theories of Republican Government in the New Nation*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1979.

White, Leonard D. *The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1801–1829*. New York: The Free Press; London: Collier-Macmillan, 1965. First published 1951 by The Macmillan Company.

White, Morton. *The Philosophy of the American Revolution*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Wilentz, Sean. *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788–1850*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986. First published 1984.

Wills, Garry. *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence*. New York: Random House, 1978. First published 1978 by Doubleday and Company.

Wilson, Clyde N. "'Free Trade: No Debt: Separation from Banks': The Economic Platform of John C. Calhoun." In *Slavery, Secession, and Southern History*. Edited by Robert Louis Paquette and Louis A. Ferleger, 81–100. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2000.

——. *John C. Calhoun: A Bibliography*. Westport, Conn.: Meckler, 1990.

Wiltse, Charles M. *John C. Calhoun: Nationalist, 1782–1828*. Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1944.

Wood, Gordon S. Afterword to Klein, Brown, and Hench, *Republican Synthesis Revisited*, 143–51.

——. *The American Revolution: A History*. New York: The Modern Library, 2003. First published 2001.

—— *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787*. New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1993. First published 1969 by the University of North Carolina Press.

——. "Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century," in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 39 (1982): 401–41.

——. "Intellectual History and the Social Sciences." In *New Directions in American Intellectual History*. Edited by John Higham and Paul K. Conkin, 27–41. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979.

——. "Interests and Disinterestedness in the Making of the Constitution." In Beeman, Botein, and Carter, *Beyond Confederation*, 83–103.

——. *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993. First published 1991 by Alfred A. Knopf.

Wood, W. Kirk. "In Defense of the Republic: John C. Calhoun and State Interposition in South Carolina, 1776–1833." *Southern Studies*, n.s., 10 (2003): 9–48.

Wyatt-Brown, Bertram. *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South*. Oxford, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Yolton, John W., ed. *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives: A Collection of New Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.

Young, Jeffrey Robert. *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670–1847*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

Zuckert, Michael P. "Founder of the Natural Rights Republic." In *Thomas Jefferson and the Politics of Nature*. Edited by Thomas S. Engeman, 11–58. Notre Dame, Ind.:
University of Notre Dame Press, 2000.

——. *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism*. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.

——. *The Natural Rights Republic: Studies in the Foundation of the American Political Tradition*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996.

Zvesper, John. "Jefferson on Liberal Natural Rights." In *Reason and Republicanism: Thomas Jefferson's Legacy of Liberty*. Edited by Gary L. McDowell and Sharon L. Noble, 15–30. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1997.

INDEX

A tördelést a JATEPRINT,
a Bölcsészettudományi Kar Kiadványszerkesztősége végezte
WordPerfect 8 kiadványszerkesztő programmal.

Kiadja a JATEPress
6722 Szeged, Petőfi Sándor sugárút 30–34.
http://www.jate.u-szeged.hu/jatepress/

Felelős kiadó: Dr. Szőnyi György Endre egyetemi tanár, intézetvezető
Felelős vezető: Szőnyi Etelka kiadói főszerkesztő
Méret: B/5, példányszám: 100, munkaszám: 3/2006.

"Zoltán Vajda's book conveys a vivid sense of John C. Calhoun's political thought by placing it in the context of other great thinkers and intellectual traditions of the era. This includes the Founders, Locke, the Puritan traditions in America and the various interpretations of republicanism that played a large role in early American political development. By looking at Calhoun's rhetoric and ideas around the three themes of republicanism, Lockean liberalism, and the American jeremiad, Calhoun stands out strongly as an important contributor to the evolution of politics in the USA and to the governmental controversies of the 19th century. To me this was an unexpected and very enlightening discovery because Calhoun is a historical figure who is often overlooked. I have no doubt that this subject would be of interest to others in my discipline.

❁

The other big contribution of *Innovative Persuasions* is to the analysis of rhetorical style in political thought. I found this book to be very enlightening in using these techniques to identify layers of meaning in the political thought of Calhoun. The author is able to clearly convey the special insights that this approach could offer by pointing out how Calhoun was a master of rhetorical construction. Despite the technical complexity of this analysis, Professor Vajda was able to clearly bring the reader along with him to conclusion in all of the chapters. In particular, his explication of technical concepts, his clear and logical organisation of each of the chapters and the careful prose throughout accomplishes a very interesting way of understanding political discourse.

❁

I was particularly impressed with the quality of his writing. I could hardly believe that this book was written by someone whose first language is not English. I have reviewed many articles and book length manuscripts for American academic journals and publishers. Ironically, in reading this book I have found in Hungary there is a Hungarian who actually writes better than many American academics!"

Paul Kantor
Professor of Political Science