

*ASPECTS OF JOHN C. CALHOUN'S POLITICAL RHETORIC*

PhD Dissertation

by

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## **Introduction**

### **(1) Objectives and structure of dissertation**

Sarah M. Maury, an Englishwoman visiting the United States in the 1840s, employed the following words to provide a somewhat lengthy 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 worshipped 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 [...]" (Quoted in Coit 1970, 73.).

Maury's words were intended to indicate the contradictory nature of Calhoun's political career, also giving a hint about the diversity of images that his contemporaries held about him. By the same token, his political ideas have often been designated as incompatible and hence his political thought as an incoherent, unstructured whole. As one of his shrewdest 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" (Hartz 1991, 159).



Hartz's assertion notwithstanding, as I intend to argue below, a thorough investigation of Calhoun's political thought may result in a different conclusion: in spite of his inconsistencies notwithstanding he is to be regarded as an eclectic, but integrated thinker, his eclecticism informed by various political traditions, which he nevertheless managed to integrate into a coherent system. Accordingly, in this dissertation 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.<sup>1</sup> Hence I will understand Calhoun's political thought as a complex text constituted by appropriated traditions ranging from liberalism through republicanism to the American jeremiad.<sup>2</sup>

More particularly, the primary objective of this dissertation is to unravel the connection of certain aspects of Calhoun's political thought to those intellectual traditions. In the first two chapters I discuss his usage of Lockean liberalism and classical republicanism, respectively. These parts of the dissertation are intended to reconsider the previous analyses of these traditions in Calhoun's political thought and are aimed at modifying them. The subsequent chapter addresses his application of the American jeremiad and is intended to explore a hitherto unexplored problem. By the same token, the chapters on the tropological aspects of Calhoun's nullification theory and the final one providing a cultural-anthropological interpretation of the Nullification Crisis with

him as a major revitalization figure in it represent new approaches to the subject. My tropological analysis is intended to reveal some implicit assumptions of Calhoun's political thought and account for some of its ambiguities, while the last chapter, from a more contextual perspective, is aimed at reassessing the significance of Nullification and his place in it.

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 in order to generate authority in the debates over diverse political issues of his age. Whether Lockean liberalism, classical republicanism, or the American jeremiad, they all represented traditions with persuasive potential for his audience.

Each of the five chapters of the dissertation is structured in the same way: first I present the given intellectual tradition or theory, then I examine the ways in which it appears in Calhoun's political thought.

## **(2) J. G. A. Pocock's theory of political languages**

As I have stated above, I conceive of Calhoun's political thought as a complex of intellectual traditions, which, on the other hand, I treat as political languages. Such an approach is informed by J. G. A. Pocock's theory and methodology that he

developed and advocated in his works published mainly in the 1970s and 1980s (See Pocock 1989, 1975, 1981, 1985).

According to Pocock, studying political thought amounts to the studying of political languages, their nature and their interaction. As he claims, "A 'history of ideas' [...] gives way before a history of languages, vocabularies, ideologies [and] paradigms [...]" (Pocock 1981, 50-51; see also Pocock 1975, 105). As one of his commentators argues, for Pocock, political languages or discourses behave like paradigms, "conceptual and metaphorical frameworks" operating with a "relatively stable" set of vocabulary items, "conventions, usages, idioms" (Toews 1987, 891). They are not languages in the "ethnic sense" but "sublanguages, idioms, and rhetorics" (Pocock 1985, 7). Therefore, to identify the meaning of a given piece means "to establish the discourse or discourses in which the text was written" (Richter 1990, 55).

An important characteristic feature of political languages is their legitimizing 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" (55). They also provide the means by "which political argument might be conducted". They are organized according to "structures of rules" accepted by the participants involved in the political discussion (Pocock 1985, 2, 7).<sup>3</sup>

Pocock also 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 lin-

guistic functions". Therefore, a political language is "multivalent", that is, it can be put to different uses by different speakers, and hence its meaning or function varies according to the context, and "must simultaneously designate and prescribe diverse definitions and distributions of authority [...]".<sup>4</sup> 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" (Pocock 1989, 17, 18, 19).

A political community has a variety of political languages at its disposal which are more or less equal as to their command of authority and in terms of their utilitarian potential. Pocock argues for the polyphony of political languages in a given time period, enjoying paradigmatic status (Pocock 1987, 344-345; see also Toews 1987, 891). (For instance, liberalism and republicanism existed side by side on the antebellum American ideological scene.<sup>5</sup>)

Pocock also emphasizes that just as a given political society can be viewed as a reservoir of political languages, one particular text by a given author may contain several such languages: "[A]ny text or simpler utterance in a sophisticated political discourse is by its nature polyvalent [...] When a diversity of such languages is to be found in a given text, it may follow that a given utterance is capable of being intended and read, and so performing, in more than one of them at the same time [...] And the author may move among these patterns of

polyvalence, employing and recombining them according to the measure of his capacity."<sup>6</sup>

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 might say and how he might say it" (Pocock 1989, 25; see also Pocock 1981, 51). The paradigmatic force of political languages 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" (Pocock 1985, 8). The author's freedom to form an utterance, hence, is partly restricted by the language he uses (See also Pocock 1981, 52).

Nevertheless, a given political language may be appropriated by an author in a way that he, by means of his 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 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" (Pocock 1985, 6; see also 20). On the basis of this, 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" (Pocock 1981, 51; see also 1989, 29). In this way, the author's text becomes part of the context of the political language.

Finally, according to Pocock, it is part of the paradigmatic nature of political languages that they provide frameworks in which political action can take place; they "present information selectively as relevant to the conduct and character of politics, and [...] encourage the definition of political problems and values in certain ways and not in others" (Pocock 1985, 8). This understanding of political languages, then, emphasizes the ways in which their speakers make sense of their experience and give expression to it in their discussion of political problems. Another corollary of Pocock's theory is that the problem of influence often raised in intellectual history is replaced by the concern to identify the language (or languages) a given author used and the ways he used it (or them).

It will be seen that Pocock's considerations presented above can be utilized in an analysis of Calhoun's political thought, which I consider an "event [...] in the history of [political] language[s]" (Toews 1987, 885). Consequently, I will "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" (Pocock 1981, 51). 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 lan-

guages. (Hence the recurrence of some texts in various parts of my analysis.)

It is important to note that given the focus of this work, little emphasis is placed on the events of the historical period of Calhoun's career. Neither is the autobiographical element of much concern here. Context is considered merely insofar as it advances my line of argumentation and inasmuch as it demanded responses from Calhoun articulated within the framework of political languages. It will receive more emphasis in the chapter on Nullification as revitalization movement.

Admittedly, another limitation of my analysis of Calhoun's political rhetoric is that it is far from being comprehensive: there are traditions drawn upon by Calhoun (such as that of the common law or sovereignty) that will not be treated below. Furthermore, it may rightly be supposed that there are still more languages in Calhoun's political rhetoric waiting to be uncovered.

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## Notes

1. Works treating Calhoun's political thought as being based on one particular tradition are great in number. Hofstadter (1986) and Current (1943) draw a parallel between Karl Marx's class analysis of society and Calhoun's understanding of North and South as sections with antagonistic interests including his critique of northern capitalism. Conservative interpretations



of Calhoun include Kirk (1953), Rossiter (1964, 97-128), Spain (1951) and Heckscher (1939). Hartz (1991, 145-167), Baskin (1969) and Drucker (1948) view him as belonging to a liberal tradition, while Steinberger (1981) sees him as an advocate of the public interest and thus a descendent of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Garson (1985) argues that "Calhoun combined elements of utilitarianism and laissez-faire consumerism" in his defense of slavery (211). Harris (1984) labels him as "last of the classical republicans", whereas Ford (1988c) and Maier (1981) emphasize the continuity between Calhoun's and the Founders' political principles. Although Harp (1985) admits the coexistence of different political traditions in antebellum USA he fails to undertake a comprehensive and thorough exploration of Lockean liberalism and republicanism in Calhoun's thought. Ford (1988a) examines some of the republican and liberal aspects of Calhoun's political thought, but from an economic point of view only and without considering J. G. A. Pocock's analysis of republicanism.

2. 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 is more like complementary than exclusive.

3. The explanatory potential and appeal of the concept may be indicated by the fact that well before Pocock presented his theory of political languages, Hartz once made an unconscious reference to the Lockean liberal tradition in the USA as "the American liberal language" (Hartz 1991, 7).

4. 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 1989, 21).

5. See the essays by Drew McCoy, Robert E. Shalhope, Lance Banning, Peter S. Onuf, Cathy Matson and Gordon S. Wood in Klein et al. (1992). See also Appleby 1985.

6. Pocock 1985, 9; see also 16 and cf. Richter 1990, 57 and Toews 1987, 891, 892.

## Chapter 1

### Calhoun and Lockean Liberalism

#### (1) Introduction

In this chapter I will make an attempt to show in what ways Calhoun appropriated and, in a number of instances, modified Lockean liberalism as it features in John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* (Locke 1991), mainly in defense of southern slavery, an institution basically antithetical to Locke's idea of natural rights. In my discussion I will address the following topics as it is through them that the connection between Lockean liberalism and Calhoun's thought can be problematized: Calhoun's conception of liberty and inequality; the links between property, slavery and government; his appropriation of the Lockean rights of self-preservation and resistance; the significance of majority rule in his theory of government; and finally, the problem of social contract and sovereignty. Before addressing these issues, in each of the subchapters first I will discuss Locke's ideas followed by their respective appropriation in the American context over the period from the Revolution to Calhoun's time.

Links between Calhoun's and Locke's political philosophy have been discussed by previous scholarship; nonetheless, it has remained beyond the scope of historians to provide a complex

analysis of the presence of Lockean liberalism in Calhoun's political thought.<sup>1</sup>

At first sight, it may seem somewhat of a futile attempt to find traces of Lockean languages, best-known for the dictum about liberty and equality as natural rights of the individual in Calhoun's political thought, designed first and foremost to defend a culture based on inequality. Yet, in his proslavery argument, Calhoun did rely on certain Lockean tenets due to the utilitarian value that he found in them and the persuasive force that they had for his audience.

As Louis Hartz emphasizes, however strenuously southern proslavery political thinkers of the antebellum period strove to denounce the Lockean-Jeffersonian liberal tradition of natural rights, their "conservative reaction" intended to distance themselves away from a liberal present was impossible to move them back to a conservative past. The reason was that the latter simply did not exist in America, where Locke and his ideals had such a marked presence and a compelling persuasive force (Hartz 1991, 145-177). As Hartz sums it up, "Locke [...] was too real, too empirical, too historical in America to attack [...]" (153). This, on the other hand, compelled slaveholding southerners to develop a proslavery argument that could be accommodated to the Lockean theory of natural rights. "Down to the very end, to the Civil War," Hartz claims, "their theory was shot through and through with the Lockean principles they destroyed. In their glorification of 'prejudice', they could not alas overcome the prejudices they had inherited" (151). It is no peculiarity, then, that Calhoun also

appropriated elements of the Lockean tradition: although discarding the natural right of equal liberty, for instance, he retained and amplified Locke's views about the protection of property.

## (2) Liberty and inequality

In this subchapter I will attempt to show that although Calhoun's conception of liberty is basically different from that of Locke in that for him it is closely bound up with the idea of inequality, his justification of this inequality is informed by Lockean language. The argument that there is 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 to, I will claim, can be shown to derive from Locke's premise about the intimate link between liberty and rationality.

Those discussions of Calhoun's political thought that also deal with his conception of liberty emphasize his difference from the American liberal tradition, based on the tenet that liberty is a natural, hence an inalienable right of the individual, who is entitled to it from his birth. Calhoun denies the existence of the state of nature and therefore any right derived from it which would be ubiquitous, available for everyone. In his major political theoretical work, entitled *A Disquisition on Government* (Calhoun 1953, 3-81) he calls the



state of nature "purely hypothetical", and continues, "It never did nor can exist, as it is inconsistent with the preservation and perpetuation of the race" (45). Such a belief, on the other hand, is linked to his assumption about the inequality of individuals: some of them are entitled to liberty, others not.<sup>2</sup>

The only attempt at a systematic analysis of Calhoun's concept of liberty to date belongs to Paul F. Boller, Jr. (1967), who 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 (395-396). At the same time, comparing it to Locke's idea of liberty, Boller also contends that, in a sense, for Calhoun, like for Locke, liberty took on a negative aspect, insofar as it was understood by both of them as freedom from restraint, freedom from authority (395). As he puts it, Calhoun's interest in "*laissez-faire* liberty" was basically motivated by his desire to defend the South from federal interference (399, 404).

Boller also makes a comparison between Calhoun's notion of liberty and Abraham Lincoln's understanding of it. While for the former it denoted privilege for "the aristocratic few," the latter 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 [...]" (407).

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

For Locke, liberty, a natural right, is yoked with equality, that is, in the state of nature, every individual is entitled to the same degree of liberty, limited only by the law of nature, which he is capable of conceiving by means of his reason (Locke 1991, § 4-6). (In the social state, individual liberty is restricted by the positive laws made by the legislative power of government, and becomes freedom from absolute power (§ 22-23).) Locke, thus, makes rationality the condition of freedom. Only the individual with the full capacity of reasoning is capable of conceiving either the law of nature or positive laws. As he argues, 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" (§ 59, 5-7). According to him, the child does not yet possess such a 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 his control (§ 59). Until reason is fully developed in the child, and he

reaches maturity, his liberty is limited by his father. "Thus we are *born Free*,"<sup>3</sup> 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" (§ 61, 1-3, 5-7; see also § 58 and § 170).

Locke traces the reason for 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" (§ 58, 5-7). Liberty without reason, which enables the individual to conceive of the limits of that liberty, on the other hand, 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" (§ 63, 4-9).

In sum, 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, being fully, rational 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. As Raymond Polin asserts, "...[F]reedom for [Locke] is nothing but the means given by God to human creatures capable of intelligence, reason and society to incorporate themselves into the order of this world, when they grow mature enough to discover and understand its meaning" (Polin 1969, 17).<sup>4</sup>

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 (Huyler 1995, 177-187, ff.). At the same time, colonial thinkers who adopted 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 (187). This notion, on the other hand, 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 (198, 207; 220).

Familiar with concepts of liberty other than the Lockean one, revolutionary colonists, during the course of their



conflict with the mother country, often fused "the constitutional rights of Englishmen" with the more abstract, Lockean concept (221).<sup>5</sup> They gradually shifted to the latter as they realized that their argument about the Englishmen's rights received 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 (Appleby 1984, 16-22).

The clearest expression of the Lockean version of liberty is contained in the *Declaration of Independence* drafted by Thomas Jefferson, who adapted it to the colonists' struggle against Britain: "... the free, equal, and independent men of Locke's state of nature become the free, equal and independent legislatures of Jefferson's British Empire" (Sheldon 1991, 16; see also 49 and 142). For Jefferson, the colonies were independent states with the status and attributes of Locke's individual self, whose natural rights were to be protected from a remote government turning tyrannical.

By the time of the Constitution making period, Locke's natural rights theory had lost its significance in the American Republic. For the advocates of the federal Constitution of 1787, rights, including liberty derived their protection not so much from the fact that they originated from Locke's natural state but rather from the distribution and control of power within the federal system of government (Diggins 1984, 61). Nonetheless, together with other Americans of the times, the Federalists retained Locke's tenet about the equal creation of humans, "deserving of equal protection under law" (Huyler 1995, 261).

The Anti-Federalists and later the Jeffersonian Republicans reutilized the Lockean concept of liberty when they emphasized the importance of individual rights and liberties as well as the need to protect these from the federal government's centralizing tendencies (Sheldon 1991, 83; Huyler 1995, 266-275). This concern over the protection of liberty from government became a characteristic feature of Andrew Jackson's rhetoric in the early nineteenth century, too, who held "that individual freedom was best protected by a strong, united nation" (Remini 1988, 12). 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" (Watson 1990, 43-44).

The key to the presence of Lockean liberalism in Calhoun's discussion of liberty lies in his understanding of man and society. One of his basic premises presented in his *Disquisition* is that man is born into the social state, which is necessary for him to develop fully "his moral and intellectual faculties or raise himself, in the scale of being, much above the level of the brute creation" (Calhoun 1953, 3). 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 [...]" (7). On the other hand, there are differences between individuals with regard to 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" (44). Arguing with the conservative principle reminiscent of the Great Chain of Being, he contends that God "has allotted to every class of animated beings its condition and appropriate functions and has endowed each with feelings, instincts, capacities, and faculties best adapted to its condition" (7).

This inequality of condition is to be accompanied by the corresponding inequality of liberty, argues Calhoun. Liberty, for him, is not linked to equality. He accepts that, as opposed to the social state, in the state of nature individuals are equal, in terms of the amount of liberty they possess; however, as I mentioned above, he denies the existence of that state of equality: "If such a state ever did exist," he argues, "all men would have been, indeed, free and equal in it; that is, free to do as they pleased and exempt from the authority or control of others [...] but such a state is purely hypothetical. It never did nor can exist, as it is inconsistent with the preservation and perpetuation of the race" (45). Furthermore, individuals,

born into the social state, are not born free, goes Calhoun's argument: 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" (45). This assertion, on the other hand, can be taken as an appropriation of Locke's notion about the limits of liberty in the social state. As I pointed out above, liberty is not without limits for Locke in the social state: laws and parental authority place restrictions on it. On the other hand, 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 (*Works* IV, 479-512) with the purpose of rebutting proposed amendments to restrict the right of southerners to move with their slave property into the Oregon Territory (Niven 1988, 315). 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" (507). There is a qualitative difference between child and adult in the social state, which, according to Calhoun, manifests itself in the lack or presence 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" (507-508).<sup>6</sup>

Calhoun, on the other hand, expands this correlation between the development of the rational and moral faculties of the individual and liberty so as to include various groups of individuals and communities; that is, he makes the liberty for communities of people dependent on the development of their intellectual capacities. In the social state, it is not only individuals that are unequal in terms of their capacity for liberty but also social groups. As Calhoun maintains, "[I]t is a great and dangerous error to suppose that all people are entitled to liberty. It is a reward to be earned, not a blessing to be bestowed on a people too ignorant, degraded, and vicious to be capable either of appreciating or of enjoying it" (Calhoun 1953, 42-43). Calhoun makes the connection between liberty and moral and intellectual development quite obvious: "No people, indeed, can long enjoy more liberty than that to which their situation and advanced intelligence and morals fairly entitle them" (42). Later he adds, "Nor is it any disparagement to liberty that such is and ought to be the case. On the contrary, the greatest praise--its proudest distinction is that an all-wise providence has reserved it as the noblest

and highest reward for the development of our faculties, moral and intellectual" (43; see also *Works* IV, 511). He, as this last quotation shows, also suggests the possibility for the individual or group to achieve more liberty through moral and intellectual development than it momentarily has appropriate to one's condition. Nevertheless, as he is quick to add, "[t]he progress of a people rising from a lower to a higher point in the scale of liberty is necessarily slow; and by attempting to precipitate, we either retard or permanently defeat it" (Calhoun 1953, 43).

Calhoun, then, in a vein similar to Locke, 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 extends into adulthood, both in the case of the individual and the community. Thus, it seems feasible 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. At the same time, Calhoun 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 regarding liberty. Yet, like Locke, he acknowledges the possibility for the (infant) individual to reach the condition of liberty by means of education, improving his faculties. Moreover, Calhoun applies this idea to larger human communities. Hence, while for Locke, inequality characterizes the relationship of infant and adult stemming from their

different degree of rational development and thus the accompanying degree of liberty, Calhoun extends this inequality of the same nature to the relationship between adult individuals as well as between various communities. With that inequality asserted, he also expands the possibility of the child's rational improvement held by Locke to these groups.

Thus, on the basis of the above, for Calhoun, the concept of liberty would seem to be intimately bound up with the issue of progress.<sup>7</sup> If, for Locke, liberty is a potential which can be realized by every human individual, for 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 the moral and intellectual faculties is a never-ending process in the life of the individual or of a nation or of a "race", and inequality plays the crucial role in it as the motive for emulation. It drives a people to improve its condition, thus contributing to the process of 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 mainspring to progress is the desire of individuals to better their condition [...] It is, indeed, this inequality of condition between the front and the 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" (Calhoun 1953, 43-44).

The role that liberty plays in this process makes it an active force which can be grasped in terms characteristic of the positive concept of liberty: for Calhoun, it is the one that makes it possible for individuals to improve their condition: "Liberty leaves each free to pursue the course he may deem best to promote his interest and happiness, as far as it may be compatible with the primary end for which government is ordained [...]" (40). On the other hand, like Locke, Calhoun holds that liberty has its own limits: it must be controlled, otherwise it may lead to the destruction of society. In Calhoun's words: "[T]o extend liberty beyond the limits assigned would be to weaken the government and to render it incompetent to fulfill its primary end--the protection of society against dangers, internal and external. The effect of this would be insecurity; and of insecurity, to weaken the impulse of individuals to better their condition and thereby retard progress and improvement" (40-41).

The controlling force, which is supposed to counterbalance liberty, is power in Calhoun's vocabulary. The two are to be in harmony so as to ensure development. "For if power be necessary to secure to liberty the fruits of its exertions, liberty, in turn, repays power with interest--by increased population, wealth, and other advantages which progress and improvement bestow on the community" (40). The proportion of liberty to power, Calhoun argues, must be in accordance with the moral and intellectual standing of the community. Too much liberty has destructive effects on the political order. This is why "[t]o allow to liberty, in any case, a sphere of action more extended



than [appropriate] would lead to anarchy, and this, probably, in the end to a contraction instead of an enlargement of its sphere" (42).

It is fitting that Calhoun extended Locke's understanding of childhood as the period of the individual's rational and moral development to larger human communities and that he connected it with the notion that liberty is a condition to progress, since, from the 1830s onward, with the emergence of abolitionism, he took great pains to quiet voices denouncing slavery for its degrading effect on black slaves. In response to the abolitionists' charges, 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" (*Papers* XIII, 395). He, on the other hand, attributed their achievement 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 supposed to be guaranteed.<sup>8</sup>

On the basis of the above, it seems justifiable to contend that Calhoun tempered his racism by connecting it to the Lockean and contemporary American discourse about progress and self-improvement. In order to make his un-Lockean thesis about the inequality of human conditions and liberty acceptable for an audience steeped in the tradition of natural rights, with a Lockean turn, he strove to justify this inequality by connecting the development of human rationality with liberty.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, as will be seen in the next subchapter, this

was not the only case in which Calhoun applied Lockean arguments in defense of slavery.

### (3) Slavery, property and government

My argument below is concerned with Calhoun's appropriation of Locke's thesis in his explanation of the way in which slavery, property, government and the right of resistance are linked. What I attempt to show below is how the connection between slavery and property established by Locke was exploited by Calhoun in his defense of slavery as well as how he applied the Lockean right of resistance in his defiance of the federal government.

One of the basic attributes of Locke's individual is his being a property. This notion is derived from his premise which renders the individual 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 anothers Pleasure" (Locke 1991, § 6, 10-14). It is, on the other hand, not only God, who owns the individual self but also the individual himself. 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" (§ 27, 17-

19). Furthermore, it is through the self being one's own property that one can acquire private property. 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 [...]" (§ 27, 10-13).

With Locke, in the state of nature, the major rule for the individual to follow is the law of nature prescribing for him self-preservation and also the preservation of others' life, liberty and possessions. 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" (§ 6, 19-25).

On the other hand, it is not only in the state of nature that the individual as property and his "properties" are to be preserved, holds Locke. The same goes for the social state, where 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" (§ 95, 6-9). The end of government consists in protecting 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" (§ 124, 1-3; see also § 139).

In Locke's political theory, property is connected with slavery, which he identifies with the lack of liberty to dispose of one's own person and the lack of the right of self-preservation. For him, the individual cannot deprive himself of his liberty and enslave himself, because "a Man, not having the Power of his own Life, cannot, by Compact, 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" (§ 23, 4-7). The reason for this, as he argues, is that, as I mentioned earlier, the individual is ultimately to be regarded as the property of God. 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" (§ 23, 7-9). The way in which a free individual becomes slave is through force, by being captured in a just war (§ 17 and note to § 24).

Slaves do not have the freedom to dispose of their 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, their masters. 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" (§ 85, 10-16).<sup>10</sup> As opposed to the head of the family, who has only a temporary authority over his children but not over their "Life" or "Property" (§ 65, 86), 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. For, if once Compact enter between them, and make an agreement for a limited Power on the one side, and Obedience on the other, the State of War and Slavery ceases, as long as the Compact endures"* (§ 24, 2-6).

According to Locke, in civil society, the objective of government, as has been pointed out before, is the protection of property, or the life, liberty and possessions of the individuals who created it. Hence, the legislative power of the government, he argues, "can never have a right to destroy, enslave, or designedly to impoverish the Subjects" (§ 155, 22-23). 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 [...]" (§ 91, 17-20). Therefore, the individual becomes the slave of the absolute monarch (§ 91, 14).

The major obligation of civil government is the protection of private property, which was the reason for the people to enter civil society. *"Men therefore in Society having Property,"* says Locke, "they have such a right to the goods,

which by the Law of the Community are theirs, that no Body hath a right to take their substance, or any part of it from them, without their own consent; without this, they have no *Property* at all" (§ 138, 8-12). The opposite is true in an absolute government, where the monarch has power "to take from any private Man, what part he pleases of his *Property*, and use and dispose of it as he thinks good" (§ 138, 29-31). 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" (§ 172, 7-9). Consequently, for him, the state of slavery, absolute rule and the state of war are intimately bound up with one 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.

Nevertheless, Locke emphasizes that civil government can turn despotic, and work against its original task to preserve property and promote the individual's right of self-preservation. When this takes place, the people are obliged to resist such an abuse of power. As he maintains, "*whenever the Legislators endeavour to take away, and destroy the Property of the People, or to reduce them to Slavery under Arbitrary Power, they put themselves into a State of War with the People, who are thereupon absolved from any farther Obedience, and are left to the common Refuge, which God hath provided for all Men, against Force and Violence*" (§ 222, 10-16). In such a case the

people are entitled to establish a new legislative body to serve their needs.

To refute the claim that such a conception of the power of the governed and their right of revolution would lead to frequent changing of the government, Locke argues that the people do not tend to act out such revolution without proper responsibility. "*Great mistakes in the ruling part, many wrong and inconvenient Laws, and all the slips of human 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 [...]*" (§ 225, 2-11).

Locke argues that resistance to arbitrary power is, in fact, the best means to avoid rebellion, a violent act involving the use of force with the purpose to defy the laws or to change 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 [...]" (§ 226, 12-14). In doing so, they violate the idea of civil society.

It is not rebellion but justified self-defense if the people use force in order to resist the attempt of the magistrates to deprive them of their rights, argues Locke. The latter 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*" (§ 232, 1-5).

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. However, if the ruler fails to acknowledge this role of the people, force can be applied and, again, the state of war sets in. (§ 242)

Locke's tenets about property as a natural right, the role of government in protecting it, self-preservation as well as the right of revolution to resist arbitrary political power, with some modifications, took root in America. 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. Hence the notion of liberty was 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 possess an object if it can be taken away from him without his consent.) (Dworetz 1994, 74-77). For the colonists, like 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" by government (Huyler 1995, 244, 246; 304).

Similar principles were followed by those supporting the federal Constitution of 1787 for its measures aimed at the compensation for creditors whose loans were to be repaid by debtors, thereby insuring the protection of their (monied) property (256-258). On the other hand, for the Federalists, property was not so much a natural right, equally available for every individual but rather as an interest to be protected by government. Its amount depended on the individual's faculty of acquisition in the social state (Diggins 1984, 60-61; 80).

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" (Huyler 1995, 273). This was the principle on the basis of which they argued for lower tariff duties in 1789 in the first Congress, claiming that they resulted in the reduction of property for the benefit of certain interests at the expense of others (280-281).

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 (Ellis 1993, 30). In the early-nineteenth-century United States it was the radical Jacksonians who were the chief advocates of

the egalitarian conception of property claiming that every white male in America had a natural right to property and advocated its redistribution, that is, making the fruits of "improductive" labor, speculative wealth illegitimate (33). As one of them, Lemuel D. Evans asserted, "The great Locke laid it down that we could rightfully appropriate so much as we can mix our labor with" (33).<sup>11</sup> To acquire more would be illegitimate. Such a claim clearly violated the right of the protection of property under civil government.

In the early Republic, the notion of the equal protection of natural rights became supplemented by the concept of minimal government, according to which the governmental powers are to be limited to the defense of life, liberty and property and should not extend beyond that. This notion was adopted by Thomas Jefferson, who, throughout his life, was an advocate of a weak national government in order to prevent it from encroaching upon the rights of the states and local government (Sheldon 1991, 12; 86-87; see also Diggins 1984, 38).<sup>12</sup> The notion of limited government was also invoked by Jackson and his followers. Government, Jackson believed, was not to interfere with the life of the individual or the affairs of the individual states. Similarly to Jefferson, he advocated a frugal federal government, the reduction of federal expenditures and the separation of government from business interests (Remini 1988, 10-11).

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" (Dworetz 1994, 112). The American revolutionaries employed Locke's right to resistance in the name of self-preservation when rebelling against the British Crown (Huyler 1995, 248). They "used Locke's political theory to [...] define the inherent moral limits of civil authority with respect to liberty (civil as well as religious) and property and to justify resistance and revolution when government exceeds, or threatens to exceed, those limits" (Dworetz 1994, 70-71).<sup>13</sup> At the same time, similarly to Locke, they understood the possibility of war accompanying the exercise of that right (Zvesper 1997, 21). Decision about the right moment of applying the right to revolution in the Lockean fashion was held to belong to the governed, i.e. the people. They had the power to judge in cases of conflict.<sup>14</sup>

Slavery, a peculiar state of the individual, antithetical to the one defined by the existence of natural rights, enjoyed a preeminent role in the Lockean language appropriated by Americans from the time of the Revolution. It was ultimately linked with the problems of property and inequality. Adopting Locke's tenet about property, the colonists held that its lack equalled slavery; hence their argument that taxation without representation was nothing else but taking away their property



without their consent and therefore equalled the attempt to enslave them. In their eyes, slavery was distinguished from liberty through property (Dworetz 1994, 78-79). What is more, for those accepting Locke's doctrine about private property, chattel slavery, a form of property, was under the protection of natural law and hence its proposed abolition was to amount to its transgression (Jordan 1977, 350-351; see also Diggins 1984, 141).

Slaves were excluded from civil society by means of slave codes and statutes (Oakes 1990, 68-69), and 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. This can be best exemplified by Jefferson's case, who, throughout his life, strove to reconcile his own contradictory views about black slavery.

For Jefferson, with slavery, two rights of self-preservation came into collision: that of the masters and that of the slaves, and he cast his lot with the former (Zvesper 1997, 24). Nonetheless, considering the institution of black slavery an evil, he hoped to see its gradual extermination to be followed by the removal of freed blacks from America (Jordan 1977, 432; Sheldon 1991, 133-134; Miller 1977, 17). On the other hand, he attempted to resolve the contradiction between the Lockean doctrine of the equality of men and the unequal status of black slaves by stressing black inferiority, claiming that by nature blacks were not the equals of whites in terms of

intellectual capacity (Jordan 1977, 438-445; Miller 1977, 48-57). Also, the argument about their equality could be refuted by the fact that they were regarded both as humans and property, "and where the rights of man conflicted with the rights of property, property took precedence" (Miller 1977, 13). In addition, they were claimed to have arrived in the Republic in their actual condition, i.e. as slaves, thus deprived of rights belonging to free whites. Nonetheless, Jefferson held that slavery was against the moral sense and expected to accelerate its extermination by supporting the abolition of the slave trade (14; 124). On the other hand, by the end of his life, with the increasing conflict between North and South over slavery in the new territories, "he was far more concerned with the wrong done to slaveowners than with the wrongs done by them" and vindicated the right for the South to decide about the future of slavery in the Union (274). Financial considerations made it hard for him to imagine emancipation without compensation as well as to emancipate his own slaves (Jordan 1977, 431).

Tenets about black inferiority and chattel slavery as a source of profit, protected by the right to property were widely held in the South throughout the early nineteenth century (See Oakes 1982, 130-138.). Jacksonian America also tended to place 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 could not partake of its benefits (Remini 1988, 39). 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 would endanger their right to property. They also regarded abolitionist attacks upon slavery as threats to the American democratic order (89; 107).

Calhoun made extensive use of Locke's ideas about slavery, property and resistance to government, especially during the Nullification Controversy as well as in his speeches made 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.

I have emphasized before that, for Calhoun, it is the social or political state in which individuals exist and where they can best develop their faculties, improve their condition and "rise on the scale of liberty". This is the reason why he assigns a role to the government similar to the one assigned by Locke. According to Calhoun, the end of government is "to preserve and perfect society" (Calhoun 1953, 6). "And hence the danger of withholding from government the full command of the power and resources of the state and the great difficulty of limiting its powers consistently with the protection and preservation of the community" (9). If, as it has been seen above, liberty is the driving force beneath progress, power and government function to keep that progress under control and to preserve its result. In this sense, for Calhoun, like for Locke, one of the major aims of government is to protect the fruits of development, with property among them: It stands for

"security," which "gives assurance to each that he shall not be deprived of the fruits of his exertions to better his condition" (40).

In 1828, the South Carolina state legislature appointed a special committee with the purpose of preparing a document of protest against the federal protective tariff of 1828 justifying South Carolina's position on the issue. The committee was also commissioned to explore the problems caused by the protective act and to suggest a possible remedy to South Carolina's grievances. The committee submitted its report entitled "Exposition" to the House of Representatives on December 19.<sup>15</sup> It was based on a draft prepared by Calhoun, which I will use for my analysis below (*Papers X*, 444-534).

In his draft Calhoun denounces the tariff of 1828 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" (464). As he argues, "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" (464-466; see also *Papers XII*, 65). 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 making southerners pay higher prices for imported goods because of the tariff duties.

In his "Fort Hill Address" of July 26, 1831, (*Papers XI*, 413-439), a public letter in which he intended to explore his

views on the relation between the federal government and the states, he makes a similar claim and identifies the crisis as a conflict between majority and minority interests: "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." (436)

The Nullification Convention of South Carolina, to justify its decision of nullifying the duties of 1828 and 1832, among others, issued a document drafted by Calhoun, entitled "Address to the People of the United States" in November 1832, (*Papers XI*, 660-681) in which he applies Locke's concept of the right of resistance to the debate between the federal government and South Carolina. For Calhoun, nullification, or state veto is the ultimate means to settle the controversy. As he maintains, "[T]he occasion to justify a State in interposing its authority, ought to be one of necessity; where all other peaceful remedies have been unsuccessfully tried [...]" (672). The people of South Carolina, according to 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 resistance.

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" (672; see also *Papers XIII*, 64, 65).<sup>16</sup>

As has been seen, Locke claimed that if there is evidence that the rulers plan to deprive the ruled of their liberties, the latter are justified to use force, or to start 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 if it comes to subduing antitariff defiance of executing the law of 1832 in South Carolina as well as the subsequent "Force Bill" evoked a similar argument from Calhoun in his speech on the Force Bill (February 15-16, 1833; *Papers XII*, 45-93).

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 making an attempt 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." (68) In an effort at self-preservation, Calhoun suggests, South Carolina should be prepared to meet force with force, in order 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 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" (69).<sup>17</sup> The Union cannot be held together by force, since that would equal slavery, that is, in Lockean terms, the state of war. As Calhoun 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" (73; original emphasis).

Slaves and property were linked in the slaveholders' minds, likewise in Calhoun's, and part of his proslavery argument was aimed at defending the southerners' right to hold slaves as a right to hold property. For him, the reception of abolitionist petitions by Congress in 1836 represented the beginning of a process bound to culminate in the abolition of slavery in the South, equalling 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" (*Papers XIII*, 104). The assumption behind his claim that "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" (105) is that Calhoun, in the Lockean fashion, denies government the power to infringe upon the right of private property, that is, slaves. 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" (108).<sup>18</sup>

For Calhoun, the preservation of slavery is firmly connected with the preservation of southern culture, 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" (109; see also *Papers XIII*, 395). As he maintains, with emancipation, the role of black slaves and free whites would be reversed, and 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 (*Papers XIII*, 397). 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 could think of.<sup>19</sup>

In his speech on the Oregon Bill (August 12, 1849; *Works* IV, 513-535), mainly designed to kill the Polk administration's amendment to extend the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific (Niven 1988, 317), Calhoun confirmed his commitment to slavery as a legitimate form of holding property as well as 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" (*Works* IV, 529). Government is to be dissolved if it does not protect the rights of its members, says Locke. Calhoun adapts the idea to the American situation: "But strong 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 says (531). Then he adds, "Our Union and political institutions can only be preserved by preserving the rights and equality established among its members by the Constitution [...]" (531). The alternative would be secession, the dissolution of the existing government and the establishment of a new one, which one can add, in Calhoun's eyes, would better fulfill its function to protect the property of the governed.

Throughout his political career, then, Calhoun extensively drew upon Locke's arguments about property, slavery and the right of resistance. He applied them, first and foremost, to defend southern interests vis-à-vis the federal government, whether it came to the defense of their income or the institution of chattel slavery.

#### (4) The problem of majority rule

In this part of the dissertation I will examine the problem of majority rule in Calhoun's political theory. I will argue that in spite of the fact that his concept of the concurrent majority was basically aimed at protecting minority rights, it still contains the idea of majority rule as articulated by Locke in the *Second Treatise*.

Majority rule is an important principle which, for Locke, makes civil government work: in civil society political decisions are made on the basis of the will of the majority of the citizens, which the rest of the citizen body is supposed to consent to. As he contends, "When any number of Men have so consented to make one Community or Governement, they are thereby presently incorporated, and make one Body politick, wherein the Majority have a Right to act and conclude the rest" (Locke 1991, § 95, 11-14). 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 [...]" (§ 96, 9-11). The alternative of having the consent of each individual in society for political decisions would be impossible to realize.

As an issue, Locke's dictum about majority rule does not seem to have received significant attention in the revolutionary and constitutional period. The Founding Fathers, for example, were suspicious of absolute majorities and created a republican form of government in order to avoid the excesses of democracy (Remini 1988, 7). Decisions serving the common good were to be made even if violating the will of the majority (24). From 1825, however, there was an overall change taking place in the assessment of majority rule in the US. With the rise of the Jacksonian Democrats, to be victorious in the presidential elections of 1828 and 1832, democracy based on universal white male 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 exert a greater impact on political decision-making (See, for instance, the abolition of the caucus system.) (17). 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 (22). As Robert Remini argues, "Jackson tended to see himself as the embodiment of [the popular] will--no one else. He genuinely believed that the people wanted what he had decided was best for them" (40).

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 (25). 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 (26; 34).

A zealous critic of the centralizing tendencies of Jackson's government and his version of democracy, Calhoun aimed his concept of the concurrent majority, that is minority veto over the decisions of the majority,<sup>20</sup> at the protection of minority rights, and Louis Hartz argues to find its origins in Locke's concept of the natural state. According to him, "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 its separate individuals executing the law of nature for themselves" (Hartz 1991, 161-162). In other words, Hartz argues that for Calhoun each interest within society is entitled to the veto power, since it is a sovereign entity, existing in the state of nature. Thus minority veto works on every level of society and consequently, Locke's majority principle emphasizing the



overwhelming power of majority interest has no place in Calhoun's system.<sup>21</sup>

Truly enough, in the *Disquisition*, Calhoun does express his preference for the concurrent majority, contending that it has more advantages over the numerical one, which "collects the sense of the greater number of the whole as that of the community" (Calhoun 1953, 22). However, he draws upon Locke's concept of majority rule when he defines concurrent majority as that kind of rule which "takes the sense of each [interest within society] through its majority or appropriate organ, and the united sense of all as the sense of the entire community" (23). Thus, within each interest, it is the will of the majority that is considered, so the numerical majority, for Calhoun, is to represent the whole of the interest. Furthermore, with him, the principle of the concurrent majority works only on the upper (national) level in political society; below that (on the state level) the identity of the various interests is determined by the will of the majority within each. Therefore, it makes no sense to "ask about the interests of the minority within the minority, and the minority within that, and so on," as Daryl H. Rice would do, following Hartz (cf. Rice 1991, 326). The concurrent majority exists only on the national level, where the majority of interests of the states represents all the interests of the given state.

This reading of Calhoun's theory of the concurrent majority is also borne out by the examination of his writing other than the *Disquisition* investigated exclusively by Hartz and Rice. As David F. Ericson points out, 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. On the other hand, according to him, no such device is needed within the individual states. As Ericson contends, "Because states are sovereign communities, individual citizens are bound to obey state majorities but individual states are not bound to obey national majorities, at least not simple ones. In other words, the states are governed by absolute majorities and the union, by concurrent majorities of states" (Ericson 1993, 81). 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 numerical majority rule is sufficient to ensure political stability there (82).<sup>22</sup>

It seems arguable, then, that Locke's concept of majority rule left an imprint on Calhoun's political theory, and it did play a crucial role in his theory of the union. Calhoun meant his theory of the concurrent majority to regulate the interaction among diverse interests on the federal level; whereas on the state level, he found majority rule sufficient enough to sustain political harmony.

### **(5) State sovereignty and the Lockean social compact**

Below I will present Calhoun's concept of sovereignty and its relation to Locke's distinction between the state of nature and the social state. More precisely, I will argue here, in contrast to Louis Hartz's thesis, that in view of his doctrine of state sovereignty, in this particular case, Calhoun did not appropriate Locke's political language, nor did he imagine the making of the Union in the Lockean fashion, based on the social compact.

Hartz maintains that one of the characteristic elements in Calhoun's political thought is that despite his denial of the state of nature, Calhoun was compelled to draw upon this concept when creating his theory about the contractual nature of the Union and his doctrine of nullification and states' rights. Hartz maintains that "Calhoun repudiates the contractual rationalism of Locke, and yet when he assails the national tariff he advances a theory of minority rights and constitutional 'compact' which carries it forward remarkably" (Hartz 1991, 154). Later Hartz, pointing at the inconsistencies in Calhoun's political thought, asks a question repeating his claim: "What is 'consistent' about destroying Locke's state of nature and then evolving a theory of minority rights that actually brings one back there for good?" (159)

What Hartz seems to contend here is that although Calhoun repudiates the Lockean state of nature along with the idea of natural rights derived from it in order to deny black slaves those rights and to defend slavery, at the same time, he

invokes Locke to defend the South as a minority interest against the northern majority's oppression. He exploits the Lockean idea of social compact in order to argue for state sovereignty and minority rights for the South. In other words, according to Hartz, Calhoun employs a double standard here: with black slavery, he denies the Lockean state of nature, whereas in the case of the individual states, he resurrects it.

In the following I intend to take issue with Hartz and argue that Calhoun's contention about the constitutional compact with the states as parties to it is rather different from that of the English philosopher's and hence it is not inconsistent with the premises that Calhoun establishes in his proslavery ideology. As I will attempt to show, it cannot be asserted that Calhoun's appropriates Locke's social compact and that state sovereignty or states' rights are derived from a Lockean state of nature.

In the *Second Treatise*, Locke lays great emphasis on making a distinction between the state of nature, as well as the state of war and the social state. The first two differ from each other in that in the state of war, which is "a state of Enmity, Malice, Violence, and Mutual Destruction" there is no judge to appeal to and force is used to resolve a controversy (Locke 1991, § 19). Individuals enter the social state by making a social contract in order to avoid the state of war and to create an arbiter over themselves for the purpose of acting as a judge in conflicts. "For where there is an Authority, a Power on Earth," Locke argues, "from which relief can be had by appeal, there the continuance of the State of War

is excluded, and the Controversie is decided by that Power" (§ 21, 5-8). For Locke, then, entering the social state consists in the renunciation of the individual's sovereign power, because he is obliged to give up the power of executing the law of nature in the social state. By making the social contract, the individual "authorizes the Society, or which is all one, the Legislative thereof to make Laws for him as the public good of the Society shall require; to the Execution thereof, his own assistance [...] is due" (§ 89, 8-12).

Hartz is only conditionally right in saying in connection with Calhoun's application of Locke that "the idea that the Constitution is a 'compact' among 'sovereign' states, that states may therefore nullify federal legislation [...] is about as far away as you can get from the spirit of 'Divine ordination'" (Hartz 1991, 161). His assertion is true only inasmuch as state sovereignty is necessarily derived from the natural state, that is, from a state in which the individual states existed before they created the Union by entering the social state, before they made a compact among themselves. Nevertheless, this is not exactly the way in which Calhoun envisions the making of the Union and the origins of state sovereignty.

As has been seen above, for Locke, clearly, the social compact, in part, constitutes a crucial step in the transition from the natural to the social state, involving the individual's renouncing his sovereign power to legislate, judge and execute in the state of nature. Truly enough, Calhoun regards the creation of the Union as an act of the individual

states making a compact; however, as opposed to what Hartz claims, this does not seem to be identical with the move described by Locke. Calhoun does not suggest that the individual states, when creating the Union in 1787 moved from the natural into the social state. For him, originally, they existed as colonies, dependent on Great Britain, and they became independent political entities in 1776. They did not renounce their sovereignty either in the "old Confederation" or later in the Union. As Calhoun argues, "The Members of the old Congress, which preceded the declaration of independence, met as Representatives of Colonies, as forming separate communities; voted by Colonies, and finally declared when that status was terminated, that these United Colonies, 'are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States' [...]" (*Papers* XI, 496).

As for the making of the Union, Calhoun claims that "the general Government emanated from the people of the several States, forming distinct political communities, and acting in their separate and sovereign capacity, and not from all of the people forming one aggregate political community [...]" (*Papers* XI, 415). (This also implies that state sovereignty is a historical construct for Calhoun and not a natural right deriving from a state of nature.) The fact that the states retain their sovereignty in the Union manifests itself in their power to act as judges of federal laws and have the power to nullify unconstitutional ones. For Calhoun, full sovereignty consists in the same as for Locke; however, not in the, for him, non-existent natural, but in the political state. Hence,

in Lockean terms, for Calhoun, the states can behave in the post-contractual (social) state as if they were in the natural state, practicing their full sovereign power.<sup>23</sup>

It seems, then, that Calhoun, in contrast to Hartz's interpretation, does not envisage the making of the Union in the strict Lockean sense, as an instance of individual entities entering into the social compact, leading the independent, sovereign states from the natural into the social state. For him, instead, there is no qualitative difference between the pre-contractual and the post-contractual conditions in terms of the presence or absence of (state) sovereignty. In Calhoun's mind, it was not from the Lockean state of nature into the social state that the individual states made a transfer when making the Union since they did not lose of their sovereignty. According to him, the individual states, when making the contract of 1787 had already been in some kind of a social state in possession of their full sovereignty.

In consequence, the above investigation concerning the relationship between sovereignty and compact in Calhoun's thought shows that he was able to argue for full state sovereignty in the post-contractual period (i.e. in the Union) without having to resort to Locke's concept of the natural state and social compact. Even though Hartz identified Calhoun's pre-Union phase as a natural one, at most, it can be seen as a quasi-natural one, as it has its roots in history, according to Calhoun. In this particular respect, then, as opposed to Hartz's claim, he managed to remain consistent in his denial of Locke's natural state.

## Notes

1. Overlaps between Calhoun's conception of liberty and that of Locke were briefly referred to by Boller (1967). Garson (1985) pointed out the importance of property in Calhoun's argumentation in his *A Disquisition on Government*. Harp (1985) showed the presence of the Lockean concern with the disharmonizing effect of government in Calhoun's political thought. Baskin (1969) drew a parallel between Lockean individualism and Calhoun's pluralism, while Rice (1991) drew attention to the contrast between Calhoun's defense of minority rights and Lockean majority rule. The most comprehensive treatment of the connection between Locke's and Calhoun's ideas has been provided by Hartz (1991), who emphasized the appeal of natural rights to Calhoun in spite of his denial of the Lockean state of nature.

2. This has been pointed out by several authors. See, for instance, Merriam (1964), 328-330; Hartz (1991), 145-172; Garson (1985), 200, 202-203; Boller (1967), 400-403; Parrington (1954), 73-76; Spain (1951), 84-89.

3. Unless otherwise indicated, emphases in the Locke quotations will be from the original.

4. 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, only possessing the faculties of reason and sense-experience (cf. Aarsleff 1969, 108).

5. One of Huyler's examples is provided by James Otis, who, in 1764, claimed the following: "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 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" (Otis 1929, 65-66).

6. Here Calhoun makes it clear that the condition into which the individual is born puts a limit on the degree of liberty that he can potentially reach as an adult. However, according to him, as will be seen later, after all, individuals do seem to be capable of changing their condition.

7. The arguments that are presented here about the relation between liberty and progress in Calhoun's political thought can also be found in Vajda n.d..

8. It needs to be added here, though, that Calhoun does not seem to have allowed the possibility that black slaves were capable of infinite advancement or of achieving a degree of development that would make slavery unnecessary. As George M. Fredrickson argues, 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" (Fredrickson 1987, 50-51; 55).

9. In identifying the logical deficiencies of Calhoun's rhetoric, more particularly, his defense of slavery, Bert E. Bradley and Jerry L. Tarver point out that he based his arguments on false premises. For instance, he claimed that the peculiar institution had a beneficial effect on the physical, moral and intellectual development of slaves, whereas, in reality, the opposite was true. Calhoun "failed to count the cost of the loss of liberty to the human beings enslaved" (Bradley and Tarver 1970, 184-185). However, the link that Calhoun established between liberty and the development of human individuals, enabled him to explain the lack of liberty for individuals and communities with an allegedly low developmental level.

10. 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 granted every freeman "absolute power and authority over his negro slaves" (Quoted in Huyler 1995, 343 n63; see also Locke 1991, note to § 24.).

11. 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" (Ellis 1993, 33; see also Diggins 1984, 144-147 and Schlesinger 1953, 151-155; 170.).

12. Hartz also emphasizes the Lockean limitation of the state and the appeal of the idea to the colonists. (Hartz 1991, 59-64)

13. According to Dworetz, Lockean language concerning the right to revolution was applied as early as in 1747 by East New Jersey "land-rioters" rebelling against large proprietors (Dworetz 1994, 174).

14. Dworetz quotes Charles Turner from 1773: "the 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 1994, 182; original emphasis).

15. Editor's introduction to the South Carolina "Exposition" and "Protest," in *Papers X*, 442-443.



16. Cf. the Lockean language of the *Declaration of Independence*: "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 [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 ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence." *Declaration of Independence* in Jefferson 1950, 431-432.

17. Here Calhoun also seems to rely on the assumption that liberty is worth dying for and slavery is worse than death, a notion familiar for the Americans of his time from the revolutionary war, but which was basically 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" (Locke 1991, § 23, 13-15).

18. On the republican aspect of the character of the South see chapter 3, below.

19. Cf. Greenberg 1985, 87-88.

20. A more detailed definition of Calhoun's government of the concurrent majority will follow in chapter 4.

21. The absence of majoritarianism in Calhoun's political thought is also argued by Kateb (1969), esp. 585 and 600.

22. Calhoun's example in his speech on the Force Bill also makes it clear that by concurrent majority he means the majority of the two largest interests in the country embodied by thirteen and eleven states respectively: "the majority of each governing the parts, and where they concur, governing the whole, and where they disagree, arresting the action of the government" (*Papers XII*, 85). Hence it is not the minority that governs but the majority, that is the sum of the two majorities of the two large interests, and thus those interests are assuredly represented in government.

23. Perhaps Carl Becker's point about Calhoun's understanding of the "natural" explains such a stance: "Calhoun identified natural law with the positive law of particular states, the state of nature with the state of political society as history actually gave it rather than as it might be rationally conceived and reconstructed" (Becker 1951, 254-255).

## Chapter 2

### Calhoun and the Republican Tradition

#### (1) Introduction

In the present chapter I will attempt to show how Calhoun drew upon the language of republicanism by making a selective use of its vocabulary, reappropriating elements often belonging to different strains of the tradition. In doing so, I will rely on earlier studies discussing his republicanism, at the same time, demonstrating their deficiencies due either to the limited scope of their treatment of Calhoun's writings or/and of the understanding of republican ideology that they build on.

Previous analyses of Calhoun's republicanism<sup>1</sup> have laid emphasis on showing how he strove to find the means of securing virtue in the republic. They, on the other hand, have tended to focus on the institutional devices he proposed in order to mechanize virtue on the federal level (See especially Harris 1984 and Ericson 1993.). Thus, his "federal-republicanism" (Ericson 1993, 76, 89) was designed for the purpose of achieving the harmony of differing interests within the Union that he claimed to exist within the individual states. My major point in the following sections, however, will be that it was not merely constitutional devices that Calhoun, in his political thought, intended to rely on in his effort to deal with the problem of republican virtue. Virtue represented a

complex matter for him and assumed various dimensions during his political career.

Before beginning my analysis, I will give a definition of the republican interpretation of early US history as it had developed into a consensual model in American intellectual history by the mid-1970s with the purpose of referring to it later as a background and model in my analysis of Calhoun's republicanism.

## **(2) Republicanism in the history of the early republic**

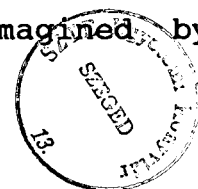
In my discussion I will draw upon the works of Bernard Bailyn, Gordon S. Wood and J. G. A. Pocock<sup>2</sup> since they have become established starting points of analyses of republican ideology in the antebellum United States and have been regarded as concise formulations of republicanism.<sup>3</sup> It needs to be pointed out that my goal here does not involve the effort to discuss the variations (regional, gender, class, ethnic, etc.) of the republican tradition;<sup>4</sup> instead, I will try to focus on those assumptions of the republican ideology that served as a legitimate basis for the "dialog" among its individual users. (For example, since the theme of corruption featured both in Federalist and Antifederalist or Jacksonian and Anti-Jacksonian republicanism I regard it as part of the model.) Finally, although it is not my purpose to indicate the diachronic variations of the paradigm, I will indeed 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 (Bailyn 1992, 35-54 and passim; Wood 1993, 10-17 and passim).

Eighteenth-century republican ideology in the Anglo-American world consisted of values and ideals making up a set of standards by 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), revered by most subjects of the British Empire for its stability and permanence, which they attributed to its mixed nature (Bailyn 1970, 53; *idem* 1992, 70; Wood 1993, 11). Its peculiarity lay in the fact, as its admirers argued, that it included all 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 (Bailyn 1992, 72-73; Wood 1993, 20).<sup>5</sup>

The reason for the urge to maintain the balance among the three elements of the mixed government was to do with the contemporary assumption 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, whose course can be curbed only by means of power (Bailyn 1970, 56; idem 1992, 56-59; Wood 1993, 21). 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 was the establishment of a government in which one of the three estates ruled, without paying respect to the liberties and interests of the others. Eighteenth-century British subjects emphasized two of these degenerated forms of government: the tyranny of the one and the anarchy of the many (Bailyn 1992, 70, 77; Wood 1993, 19-20, 23). 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 being a social animal (*zōon politikon*) by nature. They held that the individual self cannot be fully human unless he participates in public life (Pocock 1975, *passim*, especially 67-68, 527). In addition, they also believed that as citizen, the individual is expected to subordinate the pursuit of his private interest to the promotion of the public good or *res publica*, or the "common weal" (Wood 1993, 53-56, 68). Hence the importance of public virtue in republican ideology--it expresses the willingness of the individual to make that sacrifice. It 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 (Wood 1993, 68). At the same time, according to republican ideology, public virtue is rooted in the private virtues of the individual: benevolence, self-sacrifice, frugality or simplicity are essential qualities of the virtuous citizen (Wood 1993, 69, and *passim*).

In republican vocabulary, virtue, on the other hand, can also denote that trait of the individual's character which determines his social identity, making him a member of one of the social orders. 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 (Pocock 1975, 70-73). This notion explains the appeal of the mixed government ideal associated with the English constitution: it enables 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 to present it as a classical republic, whose stability is lost and disorder sets in once the balance among the estates is destroyed. This is why their presence and balance are indispensable to the stability of the constitution.

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 they 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 held that it tended to tempt and corrupt people, making even the most virtuous man turn into a tyrant (Bailyn 1992, 60). In the second place, British opposition writers of the eighteenth century picked up a line of argument developed by neo-Harringtonians of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to claim that they detected signs of corruption of the English mixed constitution. In their eyes, the Crown was attempting to destroy its balance with the purpose to establish its tyrannical rule over the two other components represented in Parliament.<sup>6</sup>

Suspicious observers of the age read current events as telling signs of corruption pointing toward the establishment of despotic rule: ministerial influence in the House of Commons, patronage, the maintenance and expansion of standing armies obeying the Crown or the emergence of a "monied interest" living off the state debt 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.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, it was not simply the corruption of the government that opposition writers express anxiety about. A return to the original, perfect state of the constitution was

deemed possible provided the people were virtuous. The appearance of luxury, avarice, selfishness, extravagance and the deterioration of republican values such as frugality, simplicity and industry, however, were signs for critics of the times that the people themselves had been contaminated by corruption, that public virtue had been in decline and hence there were no means of reforming government in order to return it to its original, ideal state (Wood 1993, 34-35).

The basic components of this paradigm were adopted by the American colonists rebelling against Britain in the 1770s (Bailyn 1970, 53-56). In the various measures of the British Parliament aimed at extracting additional financial contribution from the colonies, they claimed to have detected an emerging pattern indicating a 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, threatening to spread across the ocean corrupting the virtues of the colonists (Bailyn 1992, 94-136; Wood 1993, 112-113). Hence, in defying British rule, Americans began to regard themselves as the 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 (Bailyn 1992, 139-141; Wood 1993, 118-124).

According to Wood, the Federalists' success in their attempt to transform the principle of mixed government into



that of the separation of powers was an act to attune an old principle to the new situation, in which the government consisted of one 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. On the other hand, 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 (Wood 1993, 606-607).

Pocock has argued that this shift, understood by Wood as taking place from classical republicanism to modern liberalism, was not accompanied by the abandonment of the virtue-corruption dichotomy (Pocock 1975, 526-527). 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 Antifederalists and Jeffersonian Republicans (528-533). He points out that in the young Republic free land (linked to the westward moving frontier) was seen as the key to the sustenance of public virtue, counterbalancing the corrupting effects of commerce and industry (534-535). The ideal of the independent yeoman, the American counterpart of James Harrington's propertied warrior, sustained by the constant expansion of the frontier and accompanied by the dynamic force of commerce continued to live on in American public discourse (539-545). Although with different emphasis on

its elements, Calhoun was an active participant in this republican discourse in first half of the nineteenth century.

In the following subchapters I will concentrate on those features of Calhoun's political rhetoric that can be grasped through their link to the republican tradition. All of them are related to the dichotomy of virtue and corruption as identified in the foregoing part. In my discussion I will address the following issues: Calhoun's usage of the concept of virtue--its mechanization in his *A Disquisition on Government*; his emphasis on the moral character of the people in the maintenance of political stability; military virtue and its connection with political virtue, and the virtue of the South; the role of commerce and "monied aristocracy" in his understanding of corruption; and finally, his conception of Providence.

### (3) Calhoun and the mechanization of virtue

Interpretations addressing Calhoun's concern with republican virtue and his attempt to mechanize it largely focus on his doctrine of state veto and his concept of the government of the concurrent majority (See Harris 1984; Harp 1985 and Ford 1988a, 1988c and 1994.). Since the fullest theoretical explication of these issues can be found in his *Disquisition* (for details see chapter 1) now I turn to this work in order to provide an analysis of his understanding of the mechanization of virtue.

For my starting point I take Harris' analysis (1984), in which he argues that Calhoun's republicanism can be shown to have its origins in Renaissance Italian republicanism as interpreted by Pocock. Harris' contention, however, lacks in precision as for its details as well as his understanding of the republican tradition, and, as a result, his interpretation of the *Disquisition* misses several crucial points, with regard to Calhoun's ideas about the mechanization of virtue.

Treating the republicanism of the early modern Italian city states in a manner which results in the blurring of important differences between various strains of that tradition, Harris associates Calhoun's republicanism with notions and ideals constituting the myth of Venice (cf. Harris 1984, 265-66). Hence, despite the fact that he largely draws upon Pocock, Harris fails to be aware of a crucial distinction that the former makes between the two major strains. They are, on the one hand, the Machiavellian emphasis on active *virtù* as the key to the success of the republic, with the ancient Roman republic and the "new prince" as its ideal repositories and, on the other, concern with passive virtue or prudence, a trait of the few (the *ottimati*, i.e. aristocrats in Florence), characteristic of the model championed by other contemporary Florentine political thinkers, such as Francesco Guicciardini. It was the advocates of the latter who turned to the myth of Venice. They found the perfect embodiment of republican government in the Venetian constitution, where the stability of the mixed government was the result of an institutional arrangement based on the virtue of the aristocracy. (Cf. Pocock

1975, chs. VII-VIII) As will be seen, this distinction has far-reaching consequences as to the mechanization of virtue in the *Disquisition*.

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 somewhat reductionist reading of the Florentine tradition leaves several notions of the *Disquisition* unexplained. In the first place, Calhoun's text makes no reference, explicit or implicit, to the government of Renaissance Venice as a precursory model of his concurrent majority or the ideal way of ensuring political virtue by constitutional means. Instead, for him, it is the republic of ancient Rome that serves as an exemplary government of the concurrent majority (Calhoun 1953, 70-75).

Considering his choice of a political ideal, then, Calhoun is closer to Machiavelli than to Guicciardini, who preferred the Venice of political stability to the active Rome of constant conflict and expansion (Cf. Pocock 1975, ch. VIII, esp. 241, 246). Moreover, in a vein similar to Machiavelli, Calhoun also links the birth of the ideal Roman system with the establishment of the tribunate (Calhoun 1953, 71-72; cf. Pocock 1975, 194-196). For him, the plebeians used their veto power in order to control the political power of the patricians, thereby putting the principle of concurrent majority into practice. "By this arrangement," he maintains, "the government was placed under the concurrent and joint voice of the two orders, expressed through separate and appropriate organs; the one

possessing the positive, and the other the negative powers of the government. This simple change converted it from an absolute, into a constitutional government, from a government of the patricians only, to that of the whole Roman people,--and from an aristocracy into a republic. In doing this, it laid the solid foundation of Roman liberty and greatness" (Calhoun 1953, 72). 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 one, the few and the many as being represented in the Venetian government, for Calhoun, the Roman mixed constitution is based on the balance of the few and the many. As he contends, "The [Roman] government was, indeed, powerfully constituted; and, apparently, well proportioned both in its positive and negative 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" (74-75).

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 (See Pocock 1975, 254-255.). At the same time, Calhoun differs from Machiavelli, because, although the latter also 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, and he attributes the longevity of the Roman system to external expansion in which the military *virtù* of the armed plebeians had a crucial part to play (See 194, 198-199).

In the *Disquisition*, Calhoun also draws upon another strain of republicanism to argue for 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, as a living model of perfect government (Calhoun 1953, 69). Similarly to the authors of *His Majesty's Answer*, he assigns a prominent role to the Lords in keeping the balance of the system: they function as a filter between the King and the Commons in Parliament. For him, the Lords are essential to the equilibrium 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: "Between these great interests [i.e. the King and the Commons]," he says, "there is necessarily a constant and strong tendency to conflict; which, if not counteracted, must end in violence and an appeal to force,--to be followed by revolution[...]" (Calhoun 1953, 78).<sup>8</sup> The Lords

have a stake in keeping the equilibrium since the victory of either interest over the other would weaken their position in the government. (78)

In comparing these two forms of government--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 that prevents the emergence of political factions as well as in its "conservative character." 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, the conservative element of the British government, i.e. the Lords, is reinforced and, consequently, can exert a greater and, in his view, beneficial impact on the stability of the whole system. In his words: "For, the greater the patronage of the government, the greater will be the share which falls to the estate constituting the conservative department of the government; and the more eligible its condition, the greater its opposition to any radical change in its form" (80). The expanding Roman republic lacked in 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.

Calhoun's argument about the special features of the British constitution offers links with strains of republicanism yet left unexplored 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.<sup>9</sup> (Nevertheless, it has to be added that, for him, as will be seen later, 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 working, in his eyes, according 'to the doctrine of the concurrent majority.)

By stating that the stability of Britain, mainly derived from its mixed constitution, makes it suitable for expansion, Calhoun, on the other hand, follows Harrington's vision of Oceana, in which the stability of the Venetian mixed constitution is fused with Rome's capacity for expansion.<sup>10</sup> 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 *Disquisition*, then, Calhoun--similarly to Machiavelli--sets the example of Rome as the model republic. In contrast to the latter, however, he lays emphasis on its harmony and stability, which he attributes to its mixed government, consisting of aristocratic patricians and plebeians



representing the many, as opposed to the Machiavellian emphasis on the active *virtù* of the armed Roman plebeians and Roman instability. Thus, by means of his principle of the concurrent majority, Calhoun does propose a means of mechanizing virtue, but in doing so he "venetianizes" Rome. 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; it was a system whose stability compared to that of the Venice in the Florentine *ottimati's* vision.

On the other hand, in Calhoun's mind, 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; it is better dealt with by Britain, whose mixed constitution makes it stable and thus suitable to conquer. Truly enough, that stability, for Calhoun, does not lie, like 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, hence, amplified role in Calhoun's image of the British mixed constitution, makes them occupy as important a place in it as in the neo-Harringtonian version of British history in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Cf. Pocock 1975, 414-416).

#### (4) Republican virtue and the character of the people

Interpretations relating Calhoun to the republican tradition on account of his effort to mechanize virtue neglect the emphasis which he places on the moral character of the people in his political rhetoric. In this part, I will attempt to prove that although institutional devices feature prominently in his republicanism as embodied in his concepts of state veto and concurrent majority, 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, he expressed a hardly remitting concern with a virtuous citizenry, regarding it as a key factor in the preservation of the American Republic. Insofar as he relied on the persuasive force of this formula in his public addresses, this aspect of his republicanism connects him to the era of Jacksonian democracy with its appeal to the mass electorate whose morality was regarded as an important condition of the political virtue and stability of the republic.

The assumption that the moral character of the people forms the bedrock of republican order, played a crucial role in the republican tradition: the decline of the republic was held to be a consequence of the degenerating morale of the people. Pocock points out that for Machiavelli "[c]orruption appears, initially, as a generalized process of moral decay whose beginnings are hard to foresee and its progress almost

impossible to resist" (Pocock 1975, 204). When people turn corrupt, institutions and laws dependent upon their moral condition cease to function properly: "Institutional devices may reinforce and renew themselves, and may even prevent the onset of corruption, so long as corruption has not actually begun; once it has, however, they are probably powerless" (205).

This notion about the virtuous people gained widespread acceptance in the American Republic (541). Eighteenth-century American republicanism regarded public virtue (i.e. the capacity and willingness of the citizens to sacrifice their individual interests for the public good) as a prerequisite to any kind of popular government. In Wood's words: "A republic was such a delicate polity precisely because it demanded an extraordinary moral character in the people. [...] Although a particular structural arrangement of the government in a republic might temper the necessity for public virtue, ultimately 'no model of government whatever can equal the importance of this principle, nor can afford proper safety and security without it'" (Wood 1993, 68). During the evolving debate over the federal Constitution, the consensual view on the desired unity of the moral character of the people and their republican government began to show signs of deterioration: an increasing degree of criticism was aimed against a morally decaying citizenry, exposed to the corrupting influences of luxury, materialism and power. The Anti-Federalists believed in the necessity of "moral reform and the regeneration of men's hearts" as a solution to the problems of

the age, whereas the Federalists "looked to mechanical and institutional devices" to achieve similar goals (428). The latter argued that only a properly constructed government could guarantee political virtue in a society where the people have been losing their virtue. As Wood contends, the Federalists articulated a vision in which the republic "was not dependent on the character of [the] people." They found the guarantees of political stability in institutional means and therefore intended to create a "republic which did not require virtuous people for its sustenance" (475).<sup>11</sup>

In spite of this, references to the virtue and intelligence of the people continued to feature in contemporary political thought. James Madison, for instance, pays tribute to such qualities of the American people in *Federalist* 49 in deciding cases involving constitutional questions (Madison, Hamilton and Jay 1987, 314). At the same time, the new Constitution, from the moment of its birth, was viewed by some as being liable to degeneration; moreover, beliefs in its power to substitute for public virtue did not preclude future concerns about the moral character of the people (See Banning 1978, 111.). Such a preoccupation was also expressed by Thomas Jefferson, who, in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in "Query XIX", wrote the following: "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" (Jefferson 1984, 291; see also Pocock 1975, 541). Later on, in the early national period, the so-called old republicans maintained this emphasis on the moral character of

the people in republican rhetoric.<sup>12</sup> As shall be seen below, Calhoun's emphasis on the moral character of the people as the major condition of the stability of political institutions makes him an heir to the Anti-Federalist line, whereas his doctrine of the concurrent majority as a constitutional device positions him as a representative of the Federalist tradition.

The studies of Calhoun's republicanism (with the exception of Ford 1988a and 1994) connect him to classical or eighteenth-century versions of republicanism on the basis of his concurrent majority doctrine, regarding it as an institutional device of mechanizing virtue. The clearest formulation of this view can be found in Harris (1984), who, similarly to other republican interpretations, downplays the importance of "the virtue and intelligence of the people" 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, [...] [t]o Calhoun [...] virtue is a product of institutional--that is, constitutional--arrangements" (Harris 1984, 264, 265). Harris builds his argument on Calhoun's theoretical writings, such as the *Disquisition* and neglects those utterances of his in which he renders the virtue of the people a prerequisite to the maintenance of the republican order. Moreover, as I will attempt to show, other texts by him prove that Calhoun makes the existence and reform of democratic institutions dependent on the people, the electorate, whose moral character does have a crucial role to play for him. Truly enough, the Calhoun of

the *Disquisition* emphasizes institutional means to restore lost political virtue, and he means the concurrent majority to form the basis of such a government once the people no longer possess the republican qualities of virtue and wisdom. Nonetheless, in most of his public utterances, in a vein similar to his fellow Southerner, Alexander Stephens, whom Harris quotes as referring to the "wisdom, patriotism and intelligence" of the people (Harris 1984, 266), Calhoun also made extensive use of this component of the contemporary republican rhetoric. He tended to make such an appeal to voters whenever he felt they had a say in shaping the course of the nation through democratic elections.

During the War of 1812, as one of the young War Hawks, first demanding, then supporting military confrontation with Britain, Calhoun made repeated calls for national unity and his strategy in Congress consisted in questioning the patriotism of those opposing the war. The debate over the new army bill in January 1813 which proposed to increase the size of the infantry provided him with an excellent opportunity to present his views (*Works* II, 43-69).

Toward the end of his speech on the bill, Calhoun, in a republican fashion, denounces the opposition as a faction whose particular interest is antithetical to that of the whole (55). 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 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 freedom, not to permit themselves to be drawn into the vortex of party rage" (55-56; emphasis added). The implications are obvious: for Calhoun, support for the new army bill is in line with the common good; whereas opposing it would be fatal to the republic and a wise and intelligent electorate should no doubt vote for it.

In the after-war period Calhoun also made frequent appeals to a virtuous electorate when arguing his case. As he declared in a speech in 1825, "From the commencement of my public course to this day, I have under all circumstance been directed by one great leading principle, an entire confidence in the virtue and intelligence of the American people."<sup>13</sup> Owing to their high moral and intellectual standing, he contrasts the people 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" (*Works* II, 55).

Calhoun's ideal of the virtuous people also determines his image of good government: its decisions must be morally good and wise in order to be acceptable for an intelligent and virtuous electorate. As he once 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" (*Works* II, 151).

The significance of Calhoun's emphasis on the moral and intellectual capacities of the electorate lies in the republican assumption that only a people possessing such qualities are capable of perceiving and electing competent magistrates.<sup>14</sup> In republican thought, elections also serve to renew political virtue. As Pocock argues, Machiavelli's concept of *ridurre ai principii* informing Harrington's idea of the rotation of office was a means to secure the constant renewal of virtue in the republic (Cf. Pocock 1975, 205, 394, 519.).

For Calhoun, too, the magistrates' accountability to the morally perfect electorate is a guarantee for the proper working of the political system: "liberty is that state," Calhoun asserts, "in which those who make and execute the laws are controlled through the power of frequent elections by those on whom the laws operate" (*Papers* X, 202).

William W. Freehling maintains that in late 1827 Calhoun privately expressed his doubt about the "wisdom and intelligence" of the people (Freehling 1992, 155). This assertion is in accordance with republican interpretations of Calhoun suggesting that the Nullification Controversy was the time when Calhoun formulated his version of the mechanization of virtue as a substitute for the lost virtue of the people, insofar as he proposed his state veto doctrine as a means to restore the balance of the Constitution. Even so, textual



evidence bears out the presence of the moral argument in his rhetoric before and after the act of South Carolina's nullifying the federal tariff laws of 1828 and 1832.

Proof of this can be found, for instance, in his "Fort Hill Address," (*Papers XI*, 413-439; for details see chapter 1), in which 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. Calhoun argues that the "artificial" means of securing liberty and restraining power can be dispensed with only when the people exist in a state of high morals and intelligence which, on the other hand, 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 [...]" (432). Here Calhoun means 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 the harmony of interests can be achieved without having to rely on institutional arrangements. In other words, institutional devices of preserving public virtue are unnecessary when the people are virtuous, when the pursuit of particular interests does not harm others. Yet, Calhoun asserts, 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 [...]" (433). Calhoun, then, implies state veto as a

means of achieving this. He, nevertheless, with a somewhat unexpected turn, proposes to postpone the application of state interposition and says, "[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 the "enlightened public opinion" (433). What Calhoun seems to suggest by saying this is that through the reduction of the tariff duties it is possible to restore republican normalcy, without having to apply the mechanical device of state interposition. In other words, he contends that the virtue and intelligence of the people, although having declined from its perfect state, is sufficient enough to avoid the application of state veto. In order to appeal to the benevolence of his audience, he avoids arguing that they are entirely debased, possessing no intelligence and virtue and hence being in need of institutional means to substitute for public virtue.

Lacy K. Ford maintains that Calhoun "like most republicans of the Jeffersonian persuasion had great faith in the good judgment of the people" (Ford 1988b 135, n96). Referring to a letter of Calhoun to Duff Green from 1828, Ford presents such an understanding of the people's character in Calhoun's rhetoric with regard to the Nullification Controversy.<sup>15</sup> He suggests that Calhoun attributed the South Carolinians' endorsement of nullification to their sound moral condition. However, 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 (Ford 1988b 135, n96) 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 due at the end of 1828, Calhoun meant that the people would elect the Democrats, who would 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".<sup>16</sup> 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 likely 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--i.e. voting Democrat--in the upcoming election.

After the presidential election of 1828, Calhoun did give voice to his anxiety over the possibility that the virtuous people may fall from their currently high moral condition, which would lead to disastrous consequences. His concern with a virtuous electorate can be detected even in his "Address to the People of the United States" of November 1832 (See chapter 1 for details.). In the document he claims that the crisis has shown that the process of the concentration of power has already begun, and it will lead to the establishment of despotic rule. This, on the other hand, will be made hereditary, the last stage of the process, "as the virtue and patriotism of the people decay" (*Papers XI*, 674-675).

Calhoun employed the moral argument in the wake of President Jackson's express willingness to enforce the tariff law in South Carolina after it had been nullified by a state

convention. Calhoun's speech on the Force Bill delivered in February 1833 (*Papers* XII, 45-93; for details see chapter 1) is not a mere reiteration of the nullification doctrine but also a diagnosis about 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." In the meantime, Calhoun assures his audience that "the morals and virtue of the community at large have been advancing in improvement" (86). For him, therefore, the decline has 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 people and made an appeal to it whenever he perceived the degeneration of republican institutions. For instance, in a speech which he delivered on April 9, 1834, denouncing the Force Act of the Nullification Crisis in retrospect and demanding its repeal (*Papers* XII, 277-298), he diagnoses corruption and decay, which he attributes to the concentration of power in the federal executive having taken place ever 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 really the case, the republic would be in a hopeless 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 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 [...]" (285). Later in the speech, trying to dispel worries about the character of the people, he concludes that Andrew Jackson's reelection for president in 1832 had hardly anything to do with the corruption of a wise electorate and explains how the president "retained his power among an intelligent and patriotic people," and how his success was a result of the "working of the system" (287).

From the mid-1830s on, Calhoun voiced anxieties about the moral character of the people. One possible source of such corruption for him was executive patronage or the spoils system, i.e. President Jackson's policy to provide his followers with government offices. He saw it as a cause of the possible corruption of the character of the people, repeating 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; scorched, trodden down, and obliterated forever from the list of nations" (May, 28 1836; *Papers XIII*, 229).

With the rise of the abolitionist movement and the growing sectional cleavage, Calhoun had less rationale to appeal to a wise and virtuous electorate to win their votes in defense of southern interests. The sectional division had become too deep

for him to be able to talk about a wise electorate prepared to use its voting power to make a virtuous decision, unarmful to the South. With the reformulation of political parties on a sectional basis elections could no longer serve to guarantee the renewal of republican virtue. His attention became increasingly focused on constitutional measures, institutional means of mechanizing virtue in the American republic. Although he never referred to the people having lost their virtue as a fact, his concept of the concurrent majority, as scholarship has shown, can indeed be viewed as his attempt to find a substitute for public virtue.

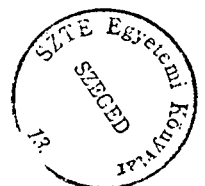
As has been mentioned above, Calhoun's concept of the government of the concurrent majority fully developed in his *Disquisition* was intended to be such a constitutional device. Nevertheless, even there, the moral character of the people is still a concern for him: the government of the concurrent majority's importance, in part, lies in that it can restore the lost virtue of a corrupted people; it serves as a remedy and not merely as a constitutional device to substitute for virtue. Harris himself quotes the passage where Calhoun emphasizes this feature of the concurrent majority, pointing out that, for him, governments based on the concurrent majority can exert a beneficial influence on the "character of the people" making them wise, patriotic and virtuous (Cf. Harris 1984, 265.). However, Harris does this without being aware of Calhoun's emphasis on transformation instead of substitution.

As I have attempted to show above, during most of his career, for Calhoun, the moral character of the people, a guarantee for political virtue and hence republican stability, was a permanent preoccupation. With him, presidential elections based on a "virtuous and intelligent" electorate held the hope of renewing political virtue. In this respect he can indeed be considered an heir to the Machiavellian-Harringtonian tradition. Calhoun's concurrent majority, in a vein similar to the Federalists' Constitution, was designed for a supposedly corrupt people, and at the same time, for making the permanent renewal of virtue unnecessary. However, as has been seen, even with Calhoun's proposed turn to institutional devices, i.e. his advocacy of the concurrent majority did not mean that he intended to substitute for the people's virtue; he hoped to see them capable of making wise and virtuous decisions including the endorsement of his doctrine of state veto.<sup>17</sup>

As will be seen in the next section, another understanding of virtue can be identified in Calhoun's republicanism, which, similarly to the one explored above, was unrelated to the problem of its mechanization.

##### **(5) Military virtue in Calhoun's republicanism**

Below I propose to examine an aspect of Calhoun's republicanism which has received no attention in studies about his political thought, namely the role of military virtue in his vision of the ideal republic.



An important line of argument in Pocock's construction of republicanism is connected with the concept of the citizen soldier, an ideal which involves the fusion of military and political virtue. He has shown that, with an altering degree of emphasis, this concept functioned as an important component of civic humanist thought. From the Renaissance Florentine Leonardo Bruni and Niccolo Machiavelli through James Harrington and eighteenth-century British opposition politicians, it was held that the ideal republic was to rely for its defense on its own citizens, who alternated their involvement in fighting with participation in political life.<sup>18</sup> The antithesis of the citizen warrior was embodied by the mercenary or paid soldier, possessing no virtue characteristic of the former.

This model also emphasizes the role of the citizen army in sustaining republican order: as well as being a soldier, the citizen of the republic practices his active virtue by being part of what he fights for. The citizen soldier 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 the people having lost their virtue and liberty. Their 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 was not necessarily identical with that of the republic, who could be employed to destroy republican liberty (197-201). In Machiavelli's republicanism, Pocock argues, military and political virtue became intimately linked: "The republic is the



common good; the citizen, directing all his actions toward that good, may be said to dedicate his life to the republic; the patriot warrior dedicates his death [...]" (201).

When the people gave up their arms and thus their duty to defend their republic and their liberties--whether in Machiavelli's Rome or in Harrington's "Gothic" England, until the coming of the Tudors (211-212; 388)--they lost their *virtù* and excluded themselves from political decision-making. Their duty was taken over by the professional army. Pocock points out that from the mid-1670s on, British neo-Harringtonians were preoccupied with the problem of standing armies, which they contrasted to the virtuous militia and interpreted their appearance as a sign of corruption. From that time on, the term "was beginning to be used to denote an army of professional officers and long-service soldiers, commanded, maintained, and above all paid by the state" (411).

Of eighteenth-century neo-Harringtonians it was Andrew Fletcher who provided the most systematic articulation of the Country's anxiety over standing armies. He connected the appearance of standing armies with the emergence of professional specialization in the early modern period. For him, the end of the Gothic age meant the end of the warrior leading a simple and frugal way of life. Modern age brought about knowledge, luxury and refinement characteristic of the Renaissance man, the hero of the new era, who, on the other hand, started to hire others to have his own liberty defended (430-431).<sup>19</sup> In its general attack on the Walpolean administration, British opposition rhetoric also utilized the

concept of the standing army, became a household term in the vocabulary of American colonists who raised arms so as to defend their liberties against a British standing army stationed in the colonies (Bailyn 1992, 61-63, 112-114). The dichotomy of the militia and standing army also played an important part in the debate between Federalists and Anti-Federalists in the 1780s (340, 355-358). Moreover, early-nineteenth-century Americans also drew upon these two concepts when they strove to account for Andrew Jackson's victory over the British "standing army" at New Orleans in January 1815. To their minds, the mythical Kentucky riflemen were able to win the battle since 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, aided by some "natural and popular energy" defeated "training, experience, and intellect" (Pocock 1975, 536).

The issue of the citizen army or militia was an important one for Calhoun in his nationalist period (i.e. before the Nullification Crisis of 1828-1833), especially at the time of the War of 1812. Similarly to the previously mentioned proponents of military virtue, he linked the maintenance 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.

In 1811, as a young member of the House of Representatives, Calhoun, responding to John Randolph's

objections to plans to establish a regular army, took the floor to dispel doubts about its expediency (*Works* II, 1-13). As Calhoun argues in the speech, a regular army of the citizens of the republic poses no danger to liberty. On the contrary, such an army tends to contribute to its security. In his argumentation, Calhoun draws upon the Machiavellian tradition of fusing military and civic virtue: "The ardent patriotism of our young men," he maintains, "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 officers, learn to condemn their government and constitution" (8; emphasis added). Thus Calhoun's praise for the regular (i.e. standing) army of the citizens echoes the Federalists' 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 aimed to "keep the people in slavery" (Quoted in Bailyn 1992, 355). Furthermore, it proves to be more efficient since, as Calhoun describes the militia, "their untaught bravery is sufficient to crush all foreign and internal attempts on their country's liberties." (*Works* II, 9)

The War of 1812, concluding with a victorious peace for the United States, 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 home industry and the military included that of Calhoun, who, in this period, acted as an ardent advocate of federal involvement in national economic

development. Similar goals were pursued by Calhoun's fellow South Carolinian Congressman, William Lowndes, then Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of Congress. He, together with Calhoun, initiated the sustenance of the direct tax levied during the war in order to ensure revenue for the development of the military. Representative Harden of Kentucky, however, moved the repeal of the laws levying this wartime measure (Niven 1988, 53-54; Wiltse 1944, 106). A debate ensued and the speech made by Calhoun as member of the House of Representatives and Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Relations was a contribution in support of the maintenance of the direct tax (*Works II*, 135-153). Part of his speech is devoted to the problem of military virtue, as a basic component of the people's patriotism.

Calhoun's major claim consists in that national defense is to be developed in preparation for another potential military confrontation. One of the first measures to be taken in this regard, he maintains, should be aimed at the reinforcement of the navy, since, in the first place, it would not require such a grave financial sacrifice on the part of the nation, and, in the second place, it would be the safest part of the military to develop (145). In arguing for this second point, Calhoun employs neo-Harringtonian language, more specifically, argumentation articulated by Charles Davenant, one of the major advocates of Britain's naval expansion in the late seventeenth century.

Davenant emphasized the importance of the navy not only in destroying the trade of rival nations such as the Spaniards or

the French but also the idea that seamen cannot pose such a great threat to the liberty of Britain as a standing army can. Hence, of all the branches of the army, Davenant considered the navy the least likely to be used against the liberty of the republic (Pocock 1975, 442). Calhoun argues in a similar fashion: "[W]e 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 has an admiral usurped the liberties of his country? Put our strength in the navy for foreign defence, and we shall certainly escape the whole catalogue of possible ills [...]" (*Works* II, 143-144).

The next measure that Calhoun proposes is extending the time of militia service for US citizens in order to allow them enough time for training, thus increasing their efficiency as soldiers (145). He argues for the maintenance of a permanent landed army made up of citizens, regularly drafted in defense of the Republic. He contrasts this way of organizing a national army to the recruitment of soldiers solely for the time of war. Option for the latter alternative would have fatal consequences to the security of the country: "Thus composed," Calhoun argues, "our armies, in a great degree, lose that enthusiasm with which citizen soldiers, conscious of liberty and fighting in defence of their country, have ever been animated. All the free nations of antiquity intrusted the defence of the country, not to the dregs of society, but to the body of its citizens; and hence that heroism, which nations, in modern times, may

admire but cannot equal." (146) A permanent citizen army would help preserve the spirit of patriotism and military as well as civic virtue in Calhoun's opinion.

The exercise of military virtue is a prerequisite to the preservation of liberty in the Republic. For him, 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. In Calhoun's words: "The least decay of patriotism, the least verging towards pleasure and luxury, will there immediately discover itself" (147). Such a decline of virtue, on the other hand, necessitates measures ultimately fatal to the liberty of the citizens: "Large standing and mercenary armies then become necessary; and those who are unwilling to render the military service adequate to the defence of their rights, soon find, as they ought to do, a master" (147).

Such an argument fits in well with the major tenet of republican thinkers, such as 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 hires someone else to defend his own liberty (see above). On the other hand, Calhoun also seems to follow the neo-Harringtonian republican argument when he claims that military training for the citizens can promote the cultivation of civic virtue as well and thus forms the basis of their patriotism (Cf. Pocock 1975, 432).

Thus, the concept of military virtue formed an important component of Calhoun's republican vocabulary during his nationalist period. He, in the Machiavellian fashion, linked it with civic virtue and the maintenance of liberty in the Republic. On the other hand, he also built on the national tradition and employed Federalist rhetoric when he strove to dissipate fears over a regular army of the Republic (Cf. Madison, Hamilton and Jay, 1987, 113-118). Since it was to consist of citizen soldiers, it could not be the equivalent of a corrupt, state-employed standing army, which was possible to be employed against the liberty of the citizens.

In the following section I will examine another conception of virtue in Calhoun's rhetoric which makes him somewhat peculiar with regard to his relation to mainstream American republicanism, and, still, organically embedded in it: the idea of the South as a factor of maintaining the balance of the Union by means of its own particular virtue.

#### **(6) The virtue of the South**

In referring to the significance of space in the republican tradition, Pocock argues on the basis of Henry Nash Smith's analysis (Smith 1970) that American followers of the republican tradition looked upon the West not simply as a reservoir of free land but also, and mainly because of this, as a source of civic virtue. In their eyes, the frontier provided for 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 (See Pocock 1975, 535 and above.).

Pocock, on the other hand, fails to consider another ideal, briefly discussed by Smith, almost as significant in the first half of the nineteenth century as that of the yeoman farmer, namely the southern plantation relying on black slave labor for its basic work force (Smith 1970, 145-154). 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. 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, as I will argue below, 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, indispensable to the stability of the Republic.<sup>20</sup>

Calhoun's contention about the South as a balancing force in the Republic has been referred to by Lacy K. Ford (1988a, 421-422) and Harris (1984, 260). However, they do not address this problem in terms of republican virtue, which, nonetheless, I hope to show, can be viewed as a concept providing the central perspective for his understanding of the relationship between the South and the rest of the Union.

For Calhoun, as his speeches on abolitionism and the sectional conflict suggest, the South possesses a virtue, peculiar to it, rooted in the system of southern slavery and



patriarchy. This is the feature that makes it distinct from the North, the other section, whose character is determined and plagued by the labor-capital dichotomy. In his reasoning, the South functions as a social estate, contributing its own particular virtue to the good of the whole, that is, the Union.

Here Calhoun applies 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. Their balance is required for the attainment of political stability. If one particular group strives to rule without respecting the virtues of the others, the result is the corruption of its own virtue, ultimately resulting in the decline of the polity (See Pocock 1975, 37, 73-76, 116).<sup>21</sup> This assumption about the complementary relationship between the various interests of the Republic, then, provides Calhoun with an argument to advocate the need to maintain the balance between North and South as well as the defense of slavery as a crucial factor in preserving that balance and hence republican order.

In a public oration which he made in 1838, Calhoun contended, "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 a prominence and influence far beyond its extent, population or wealth" (*Papers XIV*, 392).

It becomes clear only from Calhoun's other utterances that for him, part of the reason for the "prominence and influence" of the South in the Union lies in its identity, its peculiar "character," determined by the institution of slavery. It is in one of his attacks on abolitionist petitions addressed to Congress, that Calhoun makes obvious the connection between slavery and the character 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" (*Papers XIII*, 105).

By defending its character, the South also defends the Union, Calhoun argues. Since it contributes its own virtue, embodied in slavery, to the good of the whole, the abolition of slavery would be fatal to the entire Republic. Slavery is the key to the stability of the South and hence, that of the Union. As far as the South is concerned, in Calhoun's analysis, the relationship between the black and white "races" is ideal, benefiting both of them. With regard to black slaves, he concludes that they have "attained a degree of civilization never before attained by the black race in any age or country. Under no other relation could" they co-exist with the white race (*Papers XIV*, 84). 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" (84). Southern plantation households, in Calhoun's argument, fulfill a role similar to Aristotle's *oikos*: they are the basic economic units of Southern society; they make up a harmonious community, excluding labor-capital conflict from among themselves as well as from the relationship among one another, hence insuring the political stability of the South (Cf. Pocock 1975, 68).

Through its stability, the South, resting on paternalism, represents a force that also functions to keep the conflict between northern capital and labor under control. As Calhoun contends, "The condition of society in the South exempts us from the disorders and dangers resulting from this conflict; and which 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. The advantages of the former in this respect will become more and more manifest if left undisturbed by interference from without, as the country advances in wealth and numbers" (*Papers XIV*, 396). The South, Calhoun maintains, prevents the conflict between labor and capital in the North 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" (*Papers XIV*, 85).

Thus, Calhoun conceives of the Union as consisting of three major social estates: industrial laborers, capitalists and southern slaveowners, the last one standing between the former two opposing interests. It is through southern slaveholders that the whole Union is kept in balance since the

natural harmony of master and slave interests and the stability of the South are added to the political and social system. For him, then, the South fulfills the role that the Lords supposedly fulfill in the British mixed constitution, i.e. keeping the balance between the one and the many, the King and the Commons. The abolition of slavery, the cornerstone of southern economy and society, therefore, following Calhoun's reasoning, would lead to the destruction of the balancing force of the Union or, in other words, the corruption of the virtue of the South. It would prevent it from contributing its own particular virtue to the good of the whole and thus, would ultimately undermine the political stability of the Republic.

#### **(7) Calhoun's republican political economy**

In this section, I will discuss two aspects of Calhoun's republicanism, both related to his economic views. Firstly, I will address the problem of his relationship to commerce and argue that in this respect, he can be rightly regarded as an appropriator of the Country version of republican language (see note 6 above); secondly, I will attempt to show that by virtue of his assumptions pertaining to the "monied interest" and its relation to corruption he belongs to the republican line of political economy as much as to the liberal one.

Lacy K. Ford contends that the reason why certain aspects of Calhoun's political economy can be shown to differ from Country ideology is partly to do with the fact that unlike the

former, he did not regard commerce as a source of corruption. As Ford puts it, "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" (Ford 1988a, 417). Later Ford adds, "Calhoun's republicanism had long since lost whatever naked anticommercial or antimarket characteristics that might properly be attributed to classical republicanism" (422). These propositions, on the other hand, lack in accuracy with regard to the anticommercial nature of Country ideology and, hence, also concerning the links that Calhoun's political economy had with republicanism.

On the basis of Pocock's characterization of Country ideology, it is somewhat problematic to regard it as unambiguously anticommercial. British 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 because, for instance, it provided land, the main economic basis of the Country, with value. Commerce, per se, was not disapproved of by Country writers, either; it was credit, associated with bonds, paper money and dependence that they viewed as the main source of corruption. While they denounced monied interests living off the spoils of credit, they refrained from criticizing merchants involved in commerce for the same reason. The anticommercial image of the Country-Tory party of the age was, in part, created by their Whig opponents (Pocock 1975, 446-447). "The problem of trade," Pocock argues,

"was [...] the last to be perceived among the causes of the new corruption" (450). "[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," he says, "that capitalism imparted its first stock and became involved in its first major controversy in the history of English-language political theory" (460).

As 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, the former viewed monied interest as the main source of corruption and proposed to safeguard republican virtue by eliminating it (See Harp 1985, especially 114). Yet, Harp seems to ignore the presence of the same trait in Calhoun's republicanism. Ford, unlike Harp, does not neglect this aspect of Calhoun's political economy, and contends that the liberal half of Calhoun's political economy included his denunciation of "the moneyed aristocracy" as part of his fight "in defence of economic liberalism against a potentially reactionary alliance of Government and capital" (Ford 1988a, 421). Nevertheless, it seems more appropriate to argue that this component of Calhoun's republicanism is informed as much by Country and Court rhetoric as by liberal ideology, since both parties regarded the connection between government and economic interests as a major source of the corruption of republican virtue.

British 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 (Bailyn 1992, 49, 123). 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 (Pocock 1975, 447). "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 [...]" (448-449).

Calhoun also regarded "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 about restoring the Bank of the United States as an antidote to the economic perils of the country. Instead, he strongly supported Martin Van Buren's proposal for an independent treasury for the federal deposits since he saw it as a guarantee of separating government and economic interests (Niven 1988, 228-233). In his attack on 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" (Papers



XIV, 406; emphasis added). Calhoun, thus, attacks monied interest directly on the basis of its links with the government, but, ultimately, he condemns it according to the 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. Calhoun, however, depicted the end of the process 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 exacting *moneyed oligarchies*, of which history has left any record" (*Papers* XV, 584; emphasis added).

In the light of the above, it seems justifiable to claim that both as far as his attitudes toward commerce and monied interests are concerned, Calhoun followed the republican line of argument, which, on the other hand, undeniably matched 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.

#### **(8) The concept of Providence in Calhoun's republicanism**

In the foregoing sections I have attempted to identify the forms that virtue takes in Calhoun's republicanism. In this part of my discussion of Calhoun's republicanism I turn to a



different republican concept and offer an analysis of his understanding of "Providence". My goal will be to show that although through one of its senses it does play a crucial role in his republican rhetoric, Calhoun also employs it in a way that points beyond the conceptual framework of republican language, being part of another larger system, namely religious nationalism, with the American jeremiad at its core.

A republican reading of Calhoun's concept of Providence has been proposed by Robert M. Calhoon (Calhoon 1988). Drawing upon Pocock, Calhoon contends that the South Carolinian's often applied phrase "mysterious Providence" is "a perfect synonym for Machiavelli's concept of *fortuna*" (184). Calhoon adopts Pocock's understanding of *fortuna* or fortune as used in Renaissance Italy, i.e. that force of contingency and unexpectedness which rules political life, making it insecure (184-185).

By way of correcting Calhoon's definition of Providence and fortune it must be added that, as Pocock points out, Providence, in the late medieval period, 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 a larger, divine pattern (Pocock 1975, 25-30). On the other hand, Pocock argues, Providence operated as *fortuna* with faith added(48), signifying the contingency of

earthly events seen from the standpoint of humans, yet, at the same time, in the case of Providence, assuming significance and certainty from the viewpoint of God. Belief in a providential plan by God made the seemingly unrelated chain of earthly events meaningful by means of their being 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" (Pocock 1989, 84-85).

The examples which Calhoun cites in order to illustrate how Calhoun's usage of the concept of Providence is linked with the notion that chance and circumstances determine historical events do seem to support his identification of Providence with *fortuna*. However, as I propose to argue, with Calhoun, in fact, there is also another, an opposing sense of "mysterious Providence" bringing either good or bad, resisting human attempts to anticipate its workings. This alternative usage can be detected in one of the passages quoted by Calhoun where Calhoun refers to "an all-wise Providence" granting "liberty ... as the noblest and highest reward for the development of our faculties" (Quotation from Calhoun's *Disquisition* in Calhoun 1988, 184).

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.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, as will be seen below, this usage of Providence also implies the idea 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.

There are several references in his public utterances to "a kind Providence", which takes 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 (*Papers XII*, 277-298; for details see above). Here Calhoun emphasizes the role of "a kind Providence" in the making of the American system of government, peculiar in that although it extends over a vast territory, it is capable of preserving liberty and avoiding tyranny. "There never existed an example before," he says, "of a free community spreading over such an extent of territory, and the ablest and profoundest thinkers, at the time, believed it to be utterly impracticable that there should be" (283).

Thus, the making of the Constitution was somewhat of a miracle: the Framers solved a problem almost impossible to cope with. They were wise enough to devise such a system; however, their wisdom, by itself, would not have been sufficient to work the miracle. Calhoun asserts, "Yet this difficult problem [i.e. to protect liberty in a country of the size of the United States--Z.V.] 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" (283). 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" (283). 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 which Calhoun praises for its stability, a quality never associated with *fortuna* representing change and instability.<sup>23</sup>

Providence, then, also features other than a passive and unpredictable force for Calhoun; it is creative and it exerts a lasting impact on human affairs. He argues that "it is as difficult to preserve liberty, as it is to win it [because] Providence intended, that as it is the greatest blessing on this side of the grave, so it should be the most difficult to obtain and enjoy" (*Papers* XII, 345). Moreover, it also intervenes in worldly affairs when needed; it can serve as a defender for Calhoun, who writes 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" (*Papers* XII, 157-158; see also *Papers* XIII, 465).

In Calhoun's use Providence also fulfills the role of that force that guides the Republic in its course of development.

Early in his national political career, in 1816, once he declared, "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" (*Works* II, 152). This conception of Providence with the attributes of Manifest Destiny<sup>24</sup> assigning the course of American history appears in a later speech, too: "Providence has bestowed on us a new and vast region, 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" (August 24, 1841, *Papers* XV, 729).

Providence, for Calhoun, on the other hand, can also function to promote particular interests within the Union. This notion appears in a passage where he expresses his hope that the South will be able to resist federal power if need be: "We have much to do, but with united councils, and firm hearts, aided by a kind Providence, we will succeed in securing our liberty, and, I trust, in preserving the Constitution, and the Union[...]" (*Papers* XII, 147). In a similar vein, he also evokes Providence in his defense of slavery. In one of his several 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[...]" (*Papers* XII, 550-551).

In conclusion, it seems that as opposed to Calhoun's contention, Providence in Calhoun's republican vocabulary cannot be regarded as the equivalent of fortune. Although it is true that there are certain cases in his political language in which Providence features as an inscrutable force, there are also several instances when it manifests several characteristics distinguishing it from republican fortune. In the first place, it cannot be mastered by men, whereas fortune can and is supposed to be<sup>25</sup>; 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, Providence is mostly 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 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 with man (or the American Republic) assures this.

Pocock argues in his *Machiavellian Moment* that 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 were to do with human agency: corruption was seen as being rooted in

human society, linked to human action (Pocock 1975, 333). On the basis of the above, it seems groundless to argue that with his concept of Providence Calhoun revived this archaic understanding of fortune; instead, his "kind Providence" had more links with contemporary American political thought, and fitted well in a conceptual scheme other than republicanism, as I will attempt to show in the next chapter.

#### Notes

1. For discussions of Calhoun's republicanism see Maier 1981; Harris 1984; Harp 1985; Calhoun 1988; Ford 1988a, b, c, 1994 and Ericson 1993, 1995.

2. See Bailyn 1970, 1992; Pocock 1975, 1989; Wood 1993.

3. See, for instance, Shalhope 1982, 334-335; Appleby 1985, 464-465; Kruman 1992, 510, n2.

4. On these, as well as the emergence and development of the "republican synthesis" see Shalhope 1972, 1982; in Hungarian, Vajda 1998.

5. The first expression of this view in the Anglo-Saxon political tradition in the modern period was a document issued by Charles I: *His Majesty's Answer to the Nineteen Propositions of Both Houses of Parliament* of June 21, 1642 (See Pocock 1975, 361-364.).

6. Neo-Harringtonianism took shape from the 1670s on, 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 on the Crown for its attempt to build a dependent loyal Court party in the House of Commons. Later the Country acted as a gadfly harassing Walpolean robinocracy employing the rhetoric of corruption to be detailed below (See Pocock 1975, 406-408 and *passim*.).

7. Pocock 1989, 104-146; *idem* 1975, 426-427, and *passim*; Wood 1993, 33; Bailyn 1968, 49, footnote 31; *idem* 1992, 61.

8. Cf. "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 1975, 363-364.).

9. Cf. Pocock 1975, 481, 495.

10. As 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 1975, 393).

11. 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. Wood 1993, 518.).

12. See Robert M. Calhoun's discussion of Nathaniel Macon and John Randolph in Calhoun 1988, 167, 170. Instances of this attitude to the people's character appear 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 Ellis 1987, 110).

13. *Papers* X, 213; see also his letter to Andrew Jackson June 4, 1826 *ibid.*, 110.

14. Cf. Pocock's discussion of the many recognizing the talented few, or the natural elite in the republic (Pocock 1975 133, 394-395, 515). For the survival of this notion in American political rhetoric see also Thomas Jefferson's 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" (Jefferson 1984, 1306; see also 1309-1310).

15. The other such, though indirect, reference belongs to Ericson (1993 and 1995), who, on the other hand, concentrates on Calhoun's state interposition as a means to stop corruption on the federal level, thereby transforming the pluralistic Union into a federal republic. Individual states, such as South Carolina, however, due to their homogeneity of interest and their virtuous citizenry, do not have to rely on such a device (See especially Ericson 1993, 82-86 and *idem* 1995, 259-260). As I will attempt to show, however, Calhoun also emphasized the virtuous character of the American citizenry, mostly with their electoral capacity in his mind, i.e. their power to replace magistrates.

16. See Freehling 1992, 157; Wiltse 1944, 374, 379.

17. The obvious reason for Calhoun not to discard the Anti-Federalist reverence for the virtuous electorate and fully to embrace the Federalist alternative of mechanizing virtue was,



to a large extent, 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 Venetian model did appear in his vision in the form of state veto, the Roman ideal of the virtuous people did not vanish from his republicanism.

18. See Pocock 1975, esp. 89-90; 124-125; 199-201; 385-386 and 410.

19. A similar analysis of the effects of refinement and culture on specialization and transformation of the military organization was given by Adam Ferguson (Pocock 1975, 499-500).

20. For a similar view of the southern slavery system see Kaufman's discussion of Thomas Roderick Dew's political economy (Kaufman 1982, 82-121).

21. 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. 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 (See also Pocock 1975, 115-116, 364-365 as well as Pocock 1985, 41 for a sense of virtue as the essence of one's character.).

22. 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 XIII, 284).

23. Cf. also Calhoun's speech on the presidential veto power in 1842, in which he refers to "that wonderful and sublime system of government, which our patriotic ancestors established, not so much by their wisdom,--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 wiser than those who framed it" (Works IV, 99).

24. For "Manifest Destiny" in the antebellum period, I use Frederick Merk's definition, i.e. "expansion prearranged by Heaven, over an area not clearly defined" (Merk 1983, 24).

25. Pocock emphasizes the importance of manly *virtù* in the mastering of feminine *fortuna* (See Pocock 1975, 37.).

## **Chapter 3**

### **The American Jeremiad in Calhoun's Political Rhetoric**

#### **(1) Introduction**

In this chapter I will argue that several public speeches and writings of Calhoun can be shown to contain elements of the "American jeremiad," as identified by Sacvan Bercovitch (Bercovitch 1978). So far no attempt has been made to explore this aspect of Calhoun's political rhetoric.<sup>1</sup> Adhering to the methodological and theoretical considerations that I have followed in the previous chapters my approach will remain to be informed by Pocock's theory of political languages. After a discussion of those assumptions in Bercovitch's model of the American jeremiad which are relevant to my argumentation I will turn to Calhoun's speeches and writings to explore the ways in which it features in them.

As I will show below, Pocock's observations about the nature of political languages are relevant to an analysis of Calhoun's application of the American jeremiad. I will also demonstrate the changes in his jeremiadic rhetoric which can be explored by tracing the modification of its vocabulary, the various contexts in which it appeared and the functions that he intended it to fulfill during his political career.

In my examination of Calhoun's versions of the American

jeremiad I will categorize them 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 common features that Calhoun's jeremiadic utterances belonging to each respective epoch share.

It is not my task here to give an overall discussion of the texts in question, instead, I will focus on those parts only that are relevant to my analysis.

## **(2) The concept of the American jeremiad**

Bercovitch defines the American jeremiad as a "ritual designed to join social criticism to spiritual renewal" (Bercovitch 1978, xi). 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 (xii). 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 integrated into the latter and made part of a continuing revolution (152-160).<sup>2</sup>

It is Perry Miller's understanding of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Puritan jeremiad that forms the basis of Bercovitch's model. 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 declension from the fathers' way were recurrent themes in Puritan political sermons of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (See Miller 1939; 1953; 1956).

Modifying Miller's model of promise and declension Bercovitch emphasizes one more important element of the American jeremiad, namely prophecy, that is, the idea that in spite of 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 declension but also as a means of guaranteeing the ultimate success of the mission, encouraging the community to return to the original way 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," (xiv) to call on the community to return to the consensus. Therefore, the jeremiads of the American Puritans expressed "unshakable optimism" by promising the "ultimate success" of their enterprise in the New World, often applying figural correspondences (7, 8). This is, in Bercovitch's eyes, what makes the New England jeremiad essentially different from

its European counterpart, which lays stress on the general depravity of man and the impossibility of avoiding divine retribution for the waywardness of mankind (7).

Furthermore, Bercovitch expands the time span of the operation of the New England jeremiad, both backward and forward, making it "American." In the first place, while Miller identifies the second generation Puritans as the first practitioners of the political sermon in New England, 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 (3-6; 8; 18). In the second place, the tripartite structure of the American 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" (17). According to him, the Puritan jeremiads, addressing the perceived gap between the cultural ideal and experience, combining this notion with the prophecy about bridging it became popular with Jonathan Edwards of the eighteenth century, the colonial preachers of the Revolutionary War or the Americans of the Middle period (See chs. 4-5).

The continuity that Bercovitch perceives with regard to the structure of the American jeremiad throughout the centuries did not, at the same time, preclude changes in its characteristic features. 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" (93). The seventeenth-century New England jeremiads sought to achieve the "rhetorical synthesis of man's time and God's" (23) 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. 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" (94). Bercovitch emphasizes Jonathan Edwards' role in expanding the vision of the forefathers'. Edwards tried to achieve that task by awakening "all prospective American saints, north and south, to the state of their souls, the shortcomings of their society, and the destiny of their New World Canaan" (106). 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 (115-117).

Bercovitch argues that this secularized version of the New England Puritan jeremiad was adopted and further developed by the colonists during their conflict with the British Crown.<sup>3</sup> For some of them, taxation by Parliament appeared as one of the afflictions inflicted by God upon a community rambling off the path of righteousness (120). On the other hand, 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 and their own mission to carry on the errand by halting the decline. In this sense, "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" (123). In doing so, according to Bercovitch, 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 errand (123). As he maintains, in the republican jeremiads of the revolutionary era, although they 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 of mankind, in accordance with the divine plan (128-129). 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" (134). Paradoxically, while radicalism became the condition of "continuing revolution," this progress required permanent control of radical forces in order to save the budding republic from falling into the state of anarchy (134).

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 (135-136). On the other hand, despotism was a danger of similar magnitude to be avoided, especially because it was associated with the Old World (137). Therefore the ideal for the republican Jeremiahs was embodied by the American "middle way", the keeping of the balance between liberty and order, the road between the two extremes of despotism and anarchy (137-138).

According to Bercovitch, by the early nineteenth century, the jeremiad had become "the official ritual form of continuing revolution" in America (141). For the new generation of Americans it expressed the need to renew the errand. As such it also prepared the ground for nineteenth-century American millennialism penetrating "the entire spectrum of social thought" (142). Andrew Jackson and his generation, his supporters as well as his adversaries, used 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" (143). By the beginning of the Civil War, maintains Bercovitch, the American jeremiad had become a widely accepted "ritual of socialization" (172) 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 the Republic to its original state, in order to fulfill the promise of the Revolution (173-174). The language of the American jeremiad was, for instance, 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 on 174).

### **(3) The American jeremiad as political language**

The American jeremiad can be regarded as a political language in the sense conceived by Pocock since its distinctive vocabulary and stable structure made it suitable for political purposes. Beginning with Puritan times, the rhetorical ritual had a crucial role to play in the political life of the community (Bercovitch 1978, xiv). The politicians and their orations cited by Bercovitch--Samuel Danforth (11), Samuel Sherwood's election-day address (125), the Federalists' jeremiads calling for order and restraint (135-137) or William Evans Arthur's July 4 oration (145ff)--applied the standard structural elements of the jeremiad, to achieve different political goals. Its major aim being to achieve 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.

The American jeremiad operated as a political language fulfilling different semantic roles at different historical

moments and in different contexts. Its synchronically multivalent nature (Cf. Introduction above) can be proven, for instance, by the fact that it was exploited by opposing political forces: it was equally used by Tory vs. Whig or Federalist vs. Anti-Federalist Jeremiahs (See Bercovitch 1978, 134-142.).

Its multivalence was also exploited diachronically: although its structure remained stable from the early American era through the Middle period, 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 the new Jerusalem, for instance, denoted several different geographical entities from Massachusetts Bay to the thirteen colonies of the Union spreading across the entire North American continent. Another such change was the Puritans' turning away from Europe after 1660 and focusing their attention on the American wilderness (68-73).

Similarly, as the American jeremiad "accumulated" a history, it necessarily developed its own genealogy by extending the existing chain of types and anti-types, and 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." (124) For late-eighteenth-century American Jeremiahs, they represented the sacred historical model, which,

on the other hand, New England Puritans claimed to have found in the Scripture. Nonetheless, 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" (128).

#### (4) Calhoun's pre-Nullification jeremiads (1812-1828)

What can be regarded as the basic characteristic feature of Calhoun's pre-Nullification jeremiads is that his recurring arguments about the difference between fact and ideal were mainly aimed at promoting national defense. He, as one of the most ardent advocates of nationalist policies in the period 1812-1828, 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.

Anxiety and decline, two crucial elements in the vocabulary of the American jeremiad make a powerful appearance in one of Calhoun's earliest speeches.<sup>4</sup> The War of 1812 brought about a time of trial for the young Republic, and Calhoun as Member of the House of Representatives took the opportunity to denounce 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 republican 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. This is the reason why he links the reluctance to vote for the loan bill as an indispensable financial means with a general tendency of moral decay. He, at the same time, traces the root of the problem to the United States' initially feeble handling of the British aggression in 1812, which he interprets as the first sign of serious corruption. 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" (81).

Materialism, greed and avarice, then, have been the accompanying signs of corruption and declension. On the other hand, in Calhoun's argumentation, punishment for the decline, that is, British aggression fulfills the same role as God's afflictions do in the Puritan and revolutionary jeremiads. According to him, 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 end up in a catastrophe for the Republic: "The hopes and fears [...] of the whole mercantile section of this country, and all connected interests, 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" (92). This, on the other hand, would mean the loss of liberty. Similarly to other republican Jeremiahs, Calhoun evokes the specter of slavery, which, in this case, appears as the "disastrous alternative to the cultural ideal" (Bercovitch 1978, 137): "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 wrong or be slaves" (*Works II*, 92).

How can the decline be stopped, how can virtue be restored, how can ideal and experience be made to correspond again? Calhoun strives 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," Calhoun says, "a free people is degraded to the miserable rabble of a despotism; but with these, they are irresistible" (99). In this particular case, then, the "continuing revolution" consists in the restoration of the spirit of patriotism, the effort to halt the degeneration of the military potential of the nation, and the financial sacrifice is to be part of the project, according to Calhoun.

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 (*Works II*, 135-153; for details

see chapter 2).

Although Calhoun's explicit aim in the speech is to argue that the extra revenue of 3 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, also makes the speech a "state-of-the-covenant" oration (Cf. Bercovitch 1978, 4): 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.

Calhoun opens the introductory part of his speech with an affirmation of the cultural ideal, the high military and moral standing of the nation, which has recently emerged triumphant out of the war with Britain. At the same time, he draws attention to the possibility and danger of falling from 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 be past quite easily unless those being in the position to determine the future of the nation "prefer the lasting happiness of our country to present ease; its security to its pleasure; fair honor and reputation to inglorious and inactive repose" (*Works* II, 136).

Calhoun sustains anxiety while moving from the level of the general to that of the particular and names Britain as a 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 its dignity, to see it attain the summit of greatness and prosperity, regards the progress of other nations with a jealous eye" (141). Then he continues with a rhetorical question, to answer it immediately: "Will Great Britain permit us to go on in an uninterrupted march to the height of national greatness and prosperity? I fear not" (141-142).

The same tendency 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 being 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.

Here Calhoun utilizes the republican tenet about the ideal of the citizen soldiery that I explored in the previous chapter 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 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, argues Calhoun, would stop the decline of patriotism and the establishment of a standing army could be avoided. The restoration of patriotism, on the other hand, would contribute to the preservation of republican liberty. This is one of the reasons why the repeal of the direct tax, an important source of financing the extension of military service, would lead to a disaster. Calhoun's conclusion of this part of his speech is a re-evocation 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 must look on the future with dread" (151-152).

The concluding part of Calhoun's speech marks the climax of his 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.

Similarly to Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity", this jeremiadic passage appeals to national consciousness at an early stage insofar as it employs a strategy which constructs an audience being at the beginning of the errand. Calhoun magnifies the significance of the momentous decision about the direct tax by appealing to American millennialism, fusing secular and sacred history in a vein similar to Winthrop. For him, the errand is run on behalf of America but it is also aimed at the redemption of mankind (152). A few sentences later, musing on the American government's role in fulfilling this promise, Calhoun adds, "If it shall 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" (152; emphasis added).

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 sink into the list of those that have done nothing to be known or remembered" (152).

Accentuating his point, drawing on a mixture of biblical and classical imagery Calhoun ponders, "[P]leasure is a flowery path, leading off among groves and gardens, but ending in a dreary wilderness; [...] it is the siren's voice, that he who listens to is ruined; [...] it is the cup of Circe, of which whosoever drinks, is converted into a swine" (152). Calhoun's images, while they are intended to warn against present gratification that will inevitably lead to future misery, threaten with punishment for the declension.

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 the attempt to release the tension, to deal with the anxiety 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 errand

by the force of his rhetoric. With a turn from the world of swine to that of demigods, he compares the young 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" (153). 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," who apparently possesses the attributes of the ancient hero, and is constructed rhetorically as his antitype. As a result of Calhoun's metaphor, the story of the nation becomes identical with that of the demigod.

Thus, by means of figural language, Calhoun prophesies the inevitable success of the nation's errand. 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 (See Bercovitch 1978, 8).

In these nationalist jeremiads Calhoun regarded the American errand as one 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 disinterest in public matters. On the other hand, by calling for continuing revolution, Calhoun sustained the hope of filling the gap between fact and ideal, thus suggesting optimism about the ability of the nation to fulfill the promise.

#### **(5) Calhoun's Nullification jeremiads (1828-1833)**

In this subchapter I propose to show that Calhoun's application of the jeremiadic model during the Nullification Controversy primarily consisted in focusing on political decline as characterizing the current state of the Republic, accompanied with argumentation about moral corruption. On the whole, compared to his nationalist period, the theme of America's mission occupies a secondary place in Calhoun's Nullification jeremiads. He perceives the nullifiers' errand as being run 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". The mythic past strongly features in these texts and appears, in the first place, as of the Founders and, in the second place, as of the ancient Roman republic. At the same time, for Calhoun, the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 assume perhaps even greater importance: they function as "horological antecedents" of Nullification. In his argumentation, the Anti-Federalist legislation and Nullification figure as attempts to stop political and moral decline, to prevent the establishment of tyranny and to bring

the Republic back 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.

Beginning with the late 1820s, Calhoun's political position went through a radical transformation. His abandonment of a nationalist platform, which involved the broad constructionist<sup>s</sup> 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. During the Nullification Controversy Calhoun exploited the American jeremiad in the defense of states' rights. In his interpretation, the crisis, as it becomes manifest in his speeches and writings of the period, was basically the outcome of the decline of the Republic during which federal power had been getting out of control.

Owing to the similarity of the purposes that Calhoun intended to serve with his Nullification jeremiads, despite their individual differences, they apply the model with shifting emphases and details. This is the rationale for the method I will pursue in my analysis below: I will start with Calhoun's first relevant writing, his South Carolina "Exposition" (*Papers* X, 444-534; for details see chapter 1), 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 relevant variations of its

original jeremiadic pattern.

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 constitutional grounds, to a large extent, drawing upon elements of jeremiadic rhetoric.

According to him, 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 [...]" (444). Thus, in arguing his prediction about moral decay, he builds on the republican fear of losing liberty.<sup>6</sup>

Since the tariff tends to develop "the industry of one section of the country, on the ruins of another" (446) it will result in a "great inequality of property" characteristic of the countries of the Old World (480). The tariff will enrich the North and pauperize the South resulting in the same economic and social cleavage that plagues contemporary Europe. Here Calhoun evokes the traditional dichotomy between the corrupt Old World and the virtuous Republic, the latter nonetheless exposed to the danger of corruption. And the process resulting in social instability will not stop on the level of state relations. "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" (480). By the European analogy, the North will have to face the consequences of growing social

inequalities and pauperism in its own industrial cities. 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, finally resulting in the overthrow of the republican order.

Moral corruption, however, will be merely a long-term effect of the tariff. Calhoun points out that the fact that it passed 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, argues Calhoun, is the result of the fact that the federal government wields power 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 (496). Calhoun justifies 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"(486).<sup>7</sup> In other words, the unconstitutional tariff law, which is the outcome of "irresponsible power," will also destroy those having concocted it.

Calhoun links the problem of unchecked power with the issue of majority rule. The tariff law represents the will of the majority in the federal government and does not respect the interest of the minority, that is, southern states, which will

not benefit from the protection of home industry. Building government on majority rule exclusively includes the danger of self-destruction, 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 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 [...]"(492).

What is at stake at the moment, according to him, is whether majority rule can be kept under control, whether the tyranny of the majority can be avoided.<sup>8</sup> In arguing for state veto as a means to achieve that aim, 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 to check the power of the Patricians (494).<sup>9</sup> Calhoun calls for the use of 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 [...]" (494).<sup>10</sup>

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 [...]" (506). Furthermore, sovereignty also empowers the states to judge for themselves whether the "constitutional compact" made by them is violated, that is, whether a federal law is constitutional or not. Calhoun refers to the Virginia and 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 (506-508).<sup>11</sup>

Calhoun, however, in granting the veto power to one single state, goes further than the two documents, which made nullification the right of the collective body of the states only and not that of a single one. He fails to mention that the documents of 1798 and 1799 reserved the right of state interposition for the collective body of the states and not for one single state. (However, by drawing attention to this discrepancy he would have destroyed the authoritative power of the two documents in the context of the South Carolina Nullification movement. He tried to conceal the fact that he, in fact, was modifying the original language and was acting as an innovator.<sup>12</sup>)

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 it were applied in the current situation, it would put an end to declension and corruption and help restore the original state of perfection, that is, the pre-tariff state of affairs. State veto or, as Calhoun prefers to call it, "state





interposition" is a duty to perform on the part of South Carolina to save the Republic. He concludes his draft with the conventional jeremiadic threat: 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" (530-532). Through Calhoun's jeremiadic rhetoric, then, the cause of South Carolina assumes larger dimensions: it becomes part of the national errand.

He repeats these principles, although explored in more detail, in his "Fort Hill Address" of 1831 (*Papers* XI, 413-439; for details see chapter 1.). In the text Calhoun reaffirms his emphasis on the necessity to preserve the distribution of powers between the federal government and the states because, to him, it makes the American system of government exceptional (419). On the other hand, his jeremiad contains a new element, 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 sectional sentiments. 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" (427). In the language of republicanism, if the pursuit of particular goods is raised above the common good, the consequent result must be corruption (Cf. previous

chapter.).

Calhoun's later speeches and addresses concerning nullification also follow the pattern of republican jeremiads. At the same time, anxiety over the concentration of power becomes more explicit in them than in the earlier ones. This is evident in his "Address to the People of the United States" (*Papers XI*, 660-681; for details see chapter 1.).

Calhoun's main objective in the address is to argue that state interposition is a legitimate means to defend southern interests and even to save the Union from the extreme concentration of federal power. "[S]uch a power [...] 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 [...]." (673).<sup>13</sup> The concentration of power will not stop at the federal level; sooner or later the Executive will seize all the power and establish a despotic empire (674-675).

Calhoun makes his predictions based on the paradigmatic force of the republican jeremiad for an audience well-versed in the language of conspiracy rhetoric. By calling for the use of state veto, therefore, he calls for return to the ideal, by driving federal power back to its proper domain in order to prevent the "loss of liberty of all" (675). 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 she ever has been, devotedly attached.

Her object is, not to destroy, but to restore and preserve [...]" (677).

Andrew Jackson's response to South Carolina's nullification legislation (For details see chapter 1.) 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 (*Papers* XII, 45-93; for details see chapter 1.). What makes this speech different from the others of the period in terms of jeremiadic strategies are the following: the role played by Andrew Jackson in the impending crisis; the creation of 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 the 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.

Arguing in retrospect, Calhoun claims that Jackson, a politician with strong pro-southern and states' rights sentiments, before his election in 1832, had appeared to be 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, as Calhoun claims, he continued to concentrate power in the Executive, thus speeding up the process leading to military despotism. South Carolinians have 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!" (59)

In Calhoun's vocabulary, the "Force Bill" becomes the symbol of tyrannical power, similar to the one employed by Britain during the controversy with its colonies. "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" (72). Similarly to the War of Independence, in the Nullification Crisis "the controversy is one between power and liberty," (73) argues Calhoun and leaves no doubt about the place of the South in that struggle associated with the latter.<sup>14</sup> According to him, one more of the several similarities between the crisis leading up to the revolutionary war and the Nullification Debate is related to the problem of subjugation: "[T]he perversion of the taxing power, in the one case, has given precisely the same control to the Northern section over the industry of the Southern section of the Union, which the power to regulate commerce gave to Great Britain over the industry of the colonies [...]" (74). To assure his audience of the firm basis 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" (74).

Another analogy that Calhoun applies in order to legitimize the struggle for nullification is in connection with the differentiation that he makes between the European "federal" and the Asian "consolidated" form of government, between the ancient Greek republic and the despotic Persian empire (75). The former, he asserts, was based on the distribution of political power, while the latter, on its concentration. The "Teutonic race," to which Americans belong, adopted the federal form (76). 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. It would fit in the process of declension from the ideal, the result of which is "the near approach" of (Asian) "despotism" (86).

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," (92) 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 more wretched than that of the aborigines whom we have expelled" (92-93). The duty of the South is to resist the encroachment of the federal government upon states' rights.

In Calhoun's reasoning, then, 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" (93). Those Southerners who join the federal government to receive its "honours and emoluments," on the other hand, Calhoun rages, "have qualified themselves, by political prostitution, for admission into the *Magdalen Asylum*" (93; original emphasis).

In this speech on the "Force Bill", by means of the analogy between Nullification and the events leading up to the War of Independence, Calhoun raises the specter of civil war, and uses the language of the jeremiad to demand southern unity 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 European, including Teutonic "federalism," places in the mythic past.

As has been seen, Calhoun's Nullification jeremiads concentrate less on America's mission than on the necessity to restore the

original ideal state of the American government. It is state veto that serves for him as a means to stop decline, to bridge the gap between ideal and experience, to stop the degeneration of republican virtue and preserve 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. On the other hand, 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 drive the Republic back to the age of Jefferson and the Founding Fathers by means of his state veto.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, as has been shown, his conception of the continuing revolution also involves the War of Independence as a means to establish a parallel between the colonists and the nullifiers as well as British rule and the majority's abuse of power against the South in 1832-33.

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 Latner 1977.). As Richard Latner points out, the antinullifiers 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 Latner 1977, 21).<sup>16</sup> With the crisis approaching a climactic end, it also became clear that although for Calhoun, the errand was still to be run on behalf of the whole Union since its survival was also at stake, he, as his speech on the Force Bill shows, turned away from "the people of the United States" as potential addressees of his jeremiads and tended to call on southerners as the minor remnant to carry on the errand.

#### **(6) Calhoun's post-Nullification jeremiads (1833-1850)**

In the post-Nullification period, as I will argue here, Calhoun's application of the American jeremiad is characterized by a wide range of topics. Some of his speeches and writings merely refer back to the Nullification Controversy, others focus on economic and/or political declension and the need for restoration; still others, and they represent a new type of argumentation, apply the language of the jeremiad in connection with the territorial question.

Those texts by Calhoun in which he concentrates on the course and history of the decline in this period and does not address a 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 as a remedy constitute the general pattern of these speeches.<sup>17</sup>

Such a pattern is exhibited in a speech that he delivered to an audience in Covington, Georgia in August 1833.<sup>18</sup> What makes his argument peculiar here is the contradiction rather explicit in it. On the one hand, he 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 [...]" (167). On the other hand, later in the speech, he evokes the danger of *future* despotism which will be the result of the current process of decline unless it 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" (168). The obvious contradiction between his two propositions can be attributed to the force of the jeremiad: Calhoun, even if unaware, modifies his statement about the loss of liberty, the end of the decline in order to sustain hope about the possibility of the errand to call for continuing revolution.<sup>19</sup>

The history of the decline features as a major topic in

Calhoun's speech on the repeal of the Force Act (April 9, 1934, in *Papers XII*, 277-298). He attacks the federal measure because it allegedly violates the principle of distributing the powers between the federal government and the states, thus establishing the despotic power of the majority (282-283). At the same time, he links the concentration of power to the general decline--political and moral--of the Republic, "that remarkable decay of public virtue; that rapid growth of corruption and subserviency; that decline of patriotism; 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" (285).

Calhoun traces the beginning of the decline to 1824, when with the election of John Quincy Adams for president, a departure from the Jeffersonian republican principles started when the protective tariff was introduced. The process of consolidation climaxed with the Force Act, "the cause of all our evils," (288) the repeal of which, Calhoun contends, would, consequently, help stop declension. Although the Nullification Crisis is over and the compromise made in 1833 is still in force, unless the Act is repealed, Calhoun contends, the danger of consolidation remains. He applies the argument of experience by saying that the same process that led to the confrontation between South Carolina and the federal government will repeat itself unless the concentration of power is properly dealt with: "when it again revives, it will pass through all those stages which we have witnessed, and in all human probability, consummate itself and terminate our hopes in military

despotism" (298). The repeal of the Force Act, in Calhoun's optimistic estimation, would serve to close the gap between the ideal past and the degenerate present: "[H]ealth and vigor would be restored to the body politic, and greatness, which we all once so fondly hoped was our allotted destiny" (298).

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 Second Bank of the United States, the spoils system as well as patronage, which gained special importance during the presidency of Andrew Jackson.

Jackson's decision to remove the federal deposits from the Bank of the United States in 1833 and to distribute it among certain state banks provides Calhoun with the opportunity to raise anxiety over the connection between the federal government and the pet banks.<sup>20</sup> For him, the debate about 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 to extend the power of the federal government, with the mere purpose of providing the president with overwhelming power. In addition, as 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" (218).

Calhoun accentuates the gravity of the danger by drawing a

parallel between Jackson and his partisans and Julius Caesar breaking into the treasury of the Roman republic. At the same time, he adds that the American burglars 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" (221). Their maxim is: "With money we will get partizans, with partizans votes, and with votes money [...]" (221). The removal of the deposits is one step on the road at the end of which republican liberty will be destroyed, argues Calhoun, "and all the powers of our Republic [...] [will] be consolidated in the President, and perpetuated by his dictation" (222). 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" (225).

One of the targets of eighteenth-century country republican jeremiads was favoritism, patronage, the practice of the Crown to grant offices to its supporters in the executive and legislative branches.<sup>21</sup> A group of Calhoun's speeches of the 1830s and early 1840s were meant to address this problem. In these speeches Calhoun 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 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."<sup>22</sup> They would be totally dependent upon the Executive for their existence. Dependence, on the other hand, 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?" (489)

Should this power of the Executive remain unlimited "the result must be the complete corruption and debasement of those in public employ" (490). The corruption due to patronage, on the other hand, Calhoun warns, will not remain confined within the limits of the government: it will spread over the whole society, 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.

The loss of independence, that is, dependence on another man's will leads 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" (490). The ultimate result of the tendency will be that "in a few generations the American character will become utterly corrupt and debased" (491). The process of decline can be stopped only by limiting the power of the Executive to appoint and remove government officers, by reducing patronage. In Calhoun's words, "the danger which now menaces the destruction of our system may yet be arrested" (491).

In most of his writings on the topic Calhoun links the increase of patronage with the financial affairs of the Republic. In the "Report of the Select Committee on the Extent of the Executive Patronage" (February 9, 1835; *Papers* XII, 415-447), penned by him, he argues that the first step to reduce patronage and thus the only efficient means of preventing the development of despotic rule is to "reduce the public income, the prolific source from which it [i.e. patronage] exclusively flows" (427). With the disappearance of the public debt in 1832 and the emergence of the treasury surplus, a new danger has arisen, namely that money will be spent on government offices and officers thereby increasing the extent of patronage.<sup>23</sup> Calhoun's proposal of removing the surplus from the federal treasury to state treasuries is aimed at channeling the money back to the people instead of granting it via the federal

financial machinery to "directors and stockholders of the banks," "speculators and stock-jobbers" and "political managers" (227-228).

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 [...]"<sup>24</sup> 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, according to Calhoun, promote the decline of the Republic because they are aimed at enriching "the mercenary corps [...] the dependent corps, who live, or expect to live, on the Government--the office holders and expectants [...]"<sup>25</sup> They are the ones who "look to debts, stocks, banks, distribution, and taxes, as the choicest of blessings. The greater the debt, the more abundantly the stock market is supplied, the more powerful and controlling the Bank, the greater the amount of public revenue that is distributed, and the heavier the taxes, the better for them" (*Papers* XV, 583). They embody the American "moneyed aristocracy" for Calhoun (See previous chapter.). They are the chief beneficiaries of the decline of the Republic.<sup>26</sup> 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 [...]" (584).<sup>27</sup>

Conventional jeremiadic strategy appealing to the republican fear of the loss of liberty characterizes Calhoun's rhetoric in connection with the Mexican War started by the Polk administration in 1846. His major argument is based on the idea that the conquest of Mexico and its incorporation into the Union 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."<sup>28</sup> A republican form of government, he argues, cannot be imposed on a conquered people; only an aristocratic or despotic government could survive in Mexico.<sup>29</sup> Also, given the racial composition of the Mexicans--"Indians" and "mixed blood"--Calhoun maintains that once incorporated into the Union they cannot be granted a position equal to white Americans (*Works* IV, 410-411).

The conquest of Mexico, on the other hand, would lead to the destruction of the Republic primarily because it is 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" (411-412). And the outcome is predictable: "the Union would become an imperial



power," and the "end would be anarchy or despotism" (412). Conquest proved to be fatal for the ancient Roman republic, 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 felt 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" (413).

Making use of the jeremiadic model, Calhoun also highlights another aspect of the war: he charges the citizens of the Republic with the decline of their vigilance for liberty as their sometime 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" (417). 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 misbelief 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" (418). As a solution to the problem, to ease anxiety and offer an optimistic alternative of doom, Calhoun advocates peace

instead of war as a means to increase the prestige of the Republic, 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" (420).

For Calhoun, then, the conquest of Mexico would prove to be a disaster 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.<sup>30</sup> By arguing that the love for liberty is fading among Americans, Calhoun, in terms of the jeremiad, also argues that the errand, the ideal is losing its appeal to them.

Toward the end of his political career, a new argument gains more and more emphasis in his jeremiadic rhetoric, namely the consideration of the possibility that the South might be compelled to renew the errand by starting its own and trying to achieve the ideal outside the Union.

Calhoun's speech on the slavery question as linked with the admission of California into the Union as a free state, read out for him in the Senate on March 4, 1850 is, in part, a jeremiadic call for attention to the declension threatening with disunion (*Works* IV, 542-573). 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 point when it can no longer be disguised or denied that the Union is in danger" (542)<sup>31</sup> The "discontent" of the southern states with the Union may lead to their secession. (542-543)

The major reason that he 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 the encroachment and oppression" (544). Due to the dramatic increase of population 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" (551).

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, implies Calhoun. He addresses his fellow senators indicating the erroneous nature of the anticipated decision: "If you admit [California], you indorse and give your sanction to all that has been done. Are you prepared so? [...] Are you prepared to surrender virtually to the Executive Department all the powers which you have heretofore exercised over the territories? If no, how can you [...] give your assent to the admission of California as a State, under a pretended constitution and government?" (569) The decline could be stopped and the Union saved only by adopting a measure, suggests Calhoun, 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" (572). Calhoun implies that should the North not support this kind of solution to the problem, 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" (573).<sup>32</sup>

In conclusion, it can be argued that most of Calhoun's post-Nullification jeremiads manifest the pattern established during the Nullification Controversy: Calhoun's 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, develops into a new type of 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 lays more and more emphasis on the possibility for the South to continue the errand on its own. The anxiety that he arouses is no longer to do with the loss of republican liberty for 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 pleads for protective guarantees for the South by raising the specter of secession.

Bercovitch seems to suggest that the South and southern public figures fell outside the domain of the American jeremiad (Bercovitch 1978, xiii). My arguments above, however, show that Calhoun represents an exception to the rule. His version of the jeremiad, even in his sectionalist period, until the very last moment of his political career, assumed features generally characteristic of mainstream republican jeremiads. He hoped to achieve success for his states' rights doctrine by arguing on the ground of national consensus, which, on the other hand, he interpreted in a way appropriate for his sectional cause. Similarly to other dissenters applying the American jeremiad, he adopted the "logic of continuing revolution" and, although

expressing his diminishing optimism, attempted to remain, also in a rhetorical sense, within the framework of the national consensus.

## Notes

1. There have been a number of attempts to discuss the characteristic features of Calhoun's political rhetoric from a formal rhetorical point of view without trying to relate it to the jeremiadic tradition (See Bradley 1972, Bradley and Tarver 1970, Eubanks 1970, Latner 1977, Volpe 1973 and Wartofsky 1992.).
2. Although later Bercovitch modified his stand on the consensual force of the American jeremiad, more recently he has reaffirmed his view on the hegemonic nature of "American ideology and culture" (See Ellis 1993, 236, n104.) with his rhetorical ritual at its core. According to him, even though dissent has existed in American history, it has been "an appeal to, and through, the rhetoric and values of the dominant culture, and it issued in a fundamental challenge to the system [...]" (Bercovitch 1991, 984).
3. In his analysis of the survival and transformation of the republican paradigm in the United States, Pocock seems to suggest discontinuity between the American jeremiad and secular civic humanism. He contends that in the course of the eighteenth century the Puritan idea 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" (Pocock 1975, 545). Nevertheless, on the basis of Bercovitch's argumentation it seems more appropriate to argue for the survival of the jeremiadic tradition, which made it possible for republican Jeremiahs to exploit the ritual for their own purposes. They continued to utilize the old jeremiadic form to fill it with their own ideological content. As will be seen later, Calhoun was no exception in this regard.
4. "Speech on the Loan Bill," February 25, 1814, in *Works* II, 69-103.
5. 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 is claimed to rely on powers that are not mentioned explicitly by the document.
6. For a similar argument in Calhoun's other nullification jeremiads see his "Address to the People of the United States," in *Papers* XI, 675 and his "Remarks on the President's

Message on South Carolina," in *Papers XII*, 14.

7. Cf. Bailyn 1992, 60.

8. 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 *Papers XI*, 275.

9. See also his "Speech on the Force Bill," in *Papers XII*, 90-91.

10. 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 XI*, 270; "Address to the People of the United States," in *Papers XI*, 673, 676; "Draft Report on Federal Relations," in *Papers XI*, 489; his letter to James Hamilton, Jr., in *Papers XI*, 630; as well as "The Fort Hill Address," in *Papers XI*, 425-426.

11. 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," he 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" (*Papers XI*, 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. A rigid adherence to them, I believe to be the rock of our political salvation" (*Papers XI*, 465). See also his letters to Samuel D. Ingham, in *Papers XI*, 404 and *Papers XII*, 8; to Bolling Hall, in *Papers XI*, 566 and to Virgil Maxcy, in *Papers XI*, 464; See also his "Address on the Relation, which the States and General Government Bear to Each Other" ("Fort Hill Address"), in *Papers XI*, 414, 415-416; "Speech in Reply to Daniel Webster on the Force Bill," in *Papers XII*, 105; "The Fort Hill Address," in *Papers XI*, 415-416.

12. As William W. Freehling argues, Calhoun's version of nullification was basically different from the one of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions in that the latter did not suppose that one single state could remain within the Union after having applied state veto (Freehling 1992, 208-209; See also Volpe 1973, 171-172.). Therefore, the Resolutions can hardly be seen as precedents of Calhoun's doctrine of state interposition.

13. The danger of consolidation, culminating in military despotism, appears in almost all of Calhoun's nullification jeremiads. See "Rough Draft of an Address to the People of South Carolina," in *Papers XII* 267, 277; his letter to James Hamilton, Jr., in *Papers XI*, 628, 642, 645; "Speech on the Force Bill," in *Papers XII*, 45-46; "Remarks on the President's

Message on South Carolina," in *Papers XII*, 15; "Speech Introducing Resolutions Declaratory of the Nature and Power of the Federal Government," in *Papers XII*, 24-26; "Speech in Reply to Daniel Webster on the Force Bill," in *Papers XII*; 132-133.

14. 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" (*Papers XII*, 135).

15. Calhoun's task is aptly described by Pauline Maier: "To save the Founders' achievements, to adopt them to more recent developments in American politics, demanded innovation, but innovation of a peculiar sort that would become familiar in the history of American constitutional law--innovation that justified itself by claiming consistency with the work of the Founding Fathers" (Maier 1981, 17).

16. Understandably, antinullifiers also resorted to the device of horological antecedents in the rhetorical struggle of the Crisis. "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 1977, 22).

17. See his speeches "To a Committee at Farmville, Virginia," in *Papers XII*, 344-347 and "To George N. Sanders and Others," in *Papers XV*, 281-282.

18. "To Charles Kennon and Others," in *Papers XII*, 166-168.

19. If doom sets in, the American Jeremiah can no longer call on his audience to continue the errand, 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 sense. The continuous "state of unfulfillment" that characterizes the American jeremiad according to Bercovitch implies not only the constant "distance between promise and fact" (1978, 23) but also the preclusion of failure and thus the affirmation of optimism, which is also at work in this speech of Calhoun.

20. "Speech on the Removal of the Deposits," in *Papers XII*, 200-225.

21. See, for example, the colonists' denunciation of the British Crown for sending officers to the North American continent in the wake of the new tax laws (Wood 1993, 143-150 and Bailyn 1992, 102-112.).

22. "Speech on the President's Power of Removal," February 25, 1835 in *Papers XII*, 489.



23. "Speech on the Bill to Regulate the Deposits of Public Money," May 28, 1836 in *Papers XIII*, 212.
24. "Speech on the Bill to Prevent the Interference of Certain Federal Officers in Elections," February 22, 1839, in *Papers XIV*, 566.
25. "Speech on the Report of the Secretary of the Treasury" June 21, 1841, in *Papers XV*, 580; 583.
26. See also "Report of the Select Committee on the Extent of the Executive Patronage," in *Papers XII*, 418.
27. For Calhoun's denunciation of the American "Court" see also his "Speech on the Passage of the Tariff Bill" August 5, 1842, in *Works IV*, 199-200.
28. "Speech on the 'Three Million Bill'" February 9, 1847, *Works IV*, 308.
29. "Speech on his Resolutions in reference to the War with Mexico" January 4, 1848, in *Works IV*, 405.
30. 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 prowar 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 prowar republican rhetoric see Johannsen 1985, chapter 10.
31. See also his "Speech on the Oregon Bill," August 12, 1849, in *Works IV*, 526.
32. 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 IV*, 534.

## Chapter 4

### Tropological Aspects of Calhoun's Political Thought

#### (1) Introduction

In this chapter, chiefly drawing upon Hayden White's theory of tropes, I will make an attempt to identify tropological components in Calhoun's political thought in order to account for some of its ambiguities. Previous studies highlighting problematic features of his argumentation have done so from a logical perspective.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, I will argue here that certain instances of Calhoun's defiance of logic would be more appropriate to be seen as deriving from "tropologic",<sup>2</sup> insofar as he often turned to tropes bridging gaps in his argumentation for the purpose of legitimization. In his system, tropes function to facilitate his arbitrary "turns" between various entities (individual and community, interests or different forms of government) connecting them.

After providing an outline of the main points of White's tropology to ground my analysis I will turn to Calhoun's *Disquisition* to investigate its tropological "deep structure", that is, the way in which he constructs the relationship between individual and community and the tropological modes in which he casts his concepts of the numerical and the concurrent majority. Finally, I will examine the possibility of investigating the dynamic features of his political theory, through the prism provided by Hayden White relying on his

tropological analysis of Giambattista Vico's *New Science*, supplemented by Hans Kellner's (1981) follow-up study. It will be seen that in spite of the presence of other tropes in Calhoun's tropologic, it is synecdoche that functions as the dominant one in his system.

## (2) Hayden White's theory of tropes

Hayden White's work has, in part, been aimed at exploring the tropological structure of human consciousness and its manifestation mainly in the fields of historiography, intellectual and cultural history. His theory of tropes developed from his analysis of nineteenth-century western historians and philosophers of history, which he performed in his *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (White 1973). In this work he set out to identify the characteristic features of the "styles" in which the historians whose works he investigated constructed their narratives. His chief concern was to unravel the poetic "deep structure" of those works in order to identify the "metahistorical" components of their structure (ix).

The deep structure of the historical narrative, according to White, is constructed by means of poetic tropes, or figures of thought, the varieties of which he identifies as *metaphor*, *metonymy*, *synecdoche* and *irony*.<sup>3</sup> He argues that the tropological mode in which a work of history is cast also assigns to it an appropriate mode of historical consciousness, and determines

the explanatory strategies applied by the historian in that particular work. White also contends that by exploring the deep structure of the historical works that he investigates he intends to emphasize the partially artistic nature of the writing of history (x-xi).

It was in a collection of previously published articles, entitled *The Tropics of Discourse*, (White 1978) where White further developed his theory of tropes in two ways. In the first place, he extended his focus of investigation in order to include domains of human experience other than history and to hypothesize that the system of tropes he works with may underlie the various modes of human consciousness related to these domains. In the second place, he more consciously emphasized the ways in which his tropes were linked so that he identified a cycle of tropes in the texts he analyzed.

White defines his master tropes as follows: *Metaphor*, which is a trope of "representation", expresses a connection of identity between two entities which are in relation to each other as whole and whole. *Metonymy*, on the other hand, is "reductionist" since it reduces "the whole to one of its parts" (White 1973, 34) and expresses a part-part relationship, whereas *synecdoche* is integrative in that it integrates "the two parts within a whole that is qualitatively different from the sum of the parts and of which the parts are but *microcosmic* replications" (35; original emphasis). As opposed to these "naive" tropes, which are based on the belief that the "nature of things can be grasped in figurative terms," (36) and language is transparent in the representation of reality, White

defines *irony* as the trope of negation, which expresses the author's "real or feigned disbelief in the truth of his own statements" (37). It points at the impossibility of the representation of the order of things through language (See also White 1978, 6.).

White also argues that every type of discourse is by nature tropological (White 1978, 2), and that human consciousness and hence culture can be shown to be grounded in the tropological nature of understanding, making sense of phenomena of reality. According to him, the "archetypal plot of discursive formations" consists in the following: "the narrative 'I' of the discourse should move from an original metaphorical characterization of a domain of experience, through metonymic deconstructions of its elements, to synecdochic representations of the relations between its superficial attributes and its presumed essence, to, finally, a representation of whatever contrasts or oppositions can legitimately be discerned in the totalities identified in the third phase of discursive representation" (5). This connection between the four master tropes, therefore, suggests the idea of a regular tropic cycle in which they develop from one another, throwing light also on the dynamics of the work that they underlie.'

It is a basic characteristic feature of tropes, then, that they can be employed to establish relations and connections between various disparate phenomena. A tropological analysis of some major concepts of Calhoun's political thought facilitates

an exploration of the arbitrary connections that he established between them.

### (3) Individual and community in the *Disquisition*

In this part of the chapter I will argue that in Calhoun's *Disquisition* it is synecdoche as a trope that prefigures the relation between individual and society, and I will attempt to show that as regards their main characteristics, Calhoun constructs them as microcosm and macrocosm, respectively, that is, in his political theory, the individual is constituted as a replica of the community sharing commonalities such as selfishness and inequality in terms of liberty and moral and intellectual development. This analysis, on the other hand, as I will finally argue, allows hypothesizing about the connection between Calhoun's political ideas and his racism, his belief in the racial inequality of human beings and communities.

One common attribute of the individual and the community alike is the Lockean rule of self-preservation (Cf. chapter 1.). For Calhoun, the individual is basically a "social being", who, on the other hand, "is so constituted that his direct or individual affections are stronger than his sympathetic or social feelings" (Calhoun 1953, 3, 4). This is the reason why individuals, inclined to follow their own interests obeying the basic law of "self-preservation", tend to get involved in conflicts with one another. Government is necessary to keep conflicting individuals under control (5). The same goes for

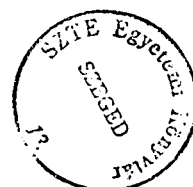
communities. As Calhoun contends, "Self-preservation is the supreme law as well with communities as with individuals" (9). The former, similarly to individuals, tend to pursue their own good and therefore are often in collision with one another. In Calhoun's words: "Between these is the same tendency to conflict--and from the same constitution of our nature--as between men individually; and even stronger, because the sympathetic or social feelings are not so strong between different communities as between individuals of the same community" (9). The underlying cause of such an attitude of communities is the one that Calhoun has already identified in the case of the individual, namely, the urge of self-preservation: when in conflict, communities tend to use all their resources to defend themselves.

By the same token, Calhoun uses his proposition about the selfishness of individuals and their being different, having diverse interests to account for the appearance of divisions within society through the formation of interests and factions, ultimately developing into majority and minority interests. As he maintains, "[T]he right of suffrage, by placing the control of the government in the community, must, from the same constitution of our nature which makes government necessary to preserve society, lead to conflict among its different interests--each striving to obtain possession of its powers as the means protecting itself against the others or of advancing its respective interests regardless of the interests of others" (14). Interests tend to coalesce into two major ones--the minority and the majority--, as a result of "the sure workings

of that principle or constitution of our nature in which government itself originates" (14). Once in government, given its selfish nature, the majority tends to oppress the minority, argues Calhoun, and the minority is not exempt from this attribute either, once it becomes majority. This behavior, on the other hand, is derived from the similar propensity of the individual with power to abuse it. "Be it greater or smaller," Calhoun says, "a majority or minority, it must equally partake of an attribute inherent in each individual composing it; and, as in each the individual is stronger than the social feelings, the one would have the same tendency as the other to oppression and abuse of power" (19).<sup>5</sup>

For Calhoun, as I suggested in my analysis of his conception of inequality in chapter 1, individuals and communities alike are characterized by inequality in terms of the development of their moral and intellectual faculties and the corresponding degree of liberty that they are entitled to (Cf. Calhoun 1953, 41-44 and *passim*). The absence of the Lockean state of nature is the key to such an inequality of their condition and to his assumption that certain individuals and communities can enjoy more liberty than others.

Given their tendency to pursue their self-interest, and to get engaged in conflict, as well as their inequality in terms of their moral and intellectual development and the degree of liberty accompanying it, it can be argued that for Calhoun, individuals function as the political communities that they compose: they assume similar patterns of behavior, which require similar mechanisms of control.





As has been seen above, in chapter 1, Calhoun strove to reconcile the ideas of liberty and inequality by applying the argument of development. In doing so his can be seen as an attempt to cope with the logical inconsistency derived from the presence of Lockean liberalism and his racist ideas. On the other hand, it is the synecdochic relationship between the individual and the community, as it appears in the *Disquisition*, that may, in part, be used to account for his racism and also for his defense of slavery criticized by Bradley and Tarver (1970) for its false premises (see chapter 1): For Calhoun, some individuals are inferior to others owing to their lower level of intellectual and moral development, and, for the same reason, a community consisting of inferior individuals is also inferior to a morally and intellectually more developed community.

At the same time, the synecdoche underlying the link between individual and community allows Calhoun to apply the Lockean language of resistance: for him, individual states as communities assume the urge for self-preservation characteristic of Locke's individuals. The synecdoche informs this connection between individual and community, and so it does Calhoun's concept of the concurrent majority, as will be seen in the next subchapter.

#### (4) The tropology of Calhoun's concept of the concurrent majority

In the following I will attempt to show that by applying Hayden White's tropology it seems plausible to argue that, for Calhoun, numerical majority and concurrent majority rule, as two different means of political representation, rest on two different kinds of tropological figuration: the former establishing a relation between part and whole, while the latter, in Calhoun's analysis, is supposed to connect the whole to the whole, since he claims that the concurrent majority represents all interests within society. Taking issue with this, I will argue that, in fact, Calhoun's claim is ungrounded because the latter also rests on a part-whole relationship. Thus both numerical majority and his concurrent majority are based on an underlying structure of representation governed by synecdoche. Consequently, as opposed to his claim, his concept of the concurrent majority cannot assure full representation in government.

In his analysis of the numerical and the concurrent majority, Calhoun's starting point is that since government, in part, functions to prevent the abuse of power, in order to protect the governed from those who govern, the latter are to be made responsible to the former by means of suffrage, which makes it possible for the governed to control those who govern through elections (Calhoun 1953, 10-11). However, as he points out, this is not a sufficient device to exclude the possibility of oppression because it merely shifts the center of authority

from the rulers to the ruled: "[T]he right of suffrage [...] transfers, in reality, the actual control over the government from those who make and execute the laws to the body of the community and thereby places the powers of the government as fully in the mass of the community as they would be if they, in fact, had assembled, made, and executed the laws themselves without the intervention of representatives or agents," Calhoun maintains (12). However, given that society is a conglomerate of diverse interests in conflict with one another (cf. above), the decisions made by the government affect the various interests differently, benefiting some, disfavoring others. As Calhoun claims, "[N]othing is more difficult than to equalize the action of the government in reference to the various and diversified interests of the community; and nothing more easy than to pervert its powers into instruments to aggrandize and enrich one or more interests by oppressing and impoverishing others [...]" (13). As a result of this, different interests tend to combine with one another in their struggle to gain control over the government. Ultimately, two great parties are formed, "a major and a minor--between which there will be incessant struggles on the one side to retain, and on the other to obtain the majority and, thereby, the control of government and the advantages it confers" (14). Suffrage, therefore, cannot serve as a guarantee against the oppression of the minority for the time of the majority's rule. "Be it as it may," Calhoun argues, "the minority, for the time, will be as much the governed or subject portion as are the people in an aristocracy

or the subjects in a monarchy" (19). This is what Calhoun calls the government of the numerical majority.

In describing the attributes of the numerical majority, Calhoun gives an analysis in which he, as a matter of fact, points at its tropological nature. He contends that the supporters of popular democracy based on the rule of the numerical majority identify the majority with the people, that is, the part with the whole, which is a great mistake to do: They "regard the numerical majority as in effect the entire people; that is, the greater part as the whole, and the government of the greater part as the government of the whole. It is thus the two come to be confounded and a part made identical with the whole" (24). In contending this, Calhoun, unaware of the tropological analysis that, in fact, he is doing, draws attention to the synecdoche that structures representation in the case of the numerical majority.

Those who identify the part with the whole, not being conscious of the tropological move involved in such an act, also regard the government of the numerical majority as the perfect "popular constitutional government." However, it is not so, claims Calhoun, "as the numerical majority, instead of being the people, is only a portion of them, [and] such a government [...] is but a government of a part over a part--the major over the minor portion" (24).<sup>6</sup>

As an alternative to the numerical majority, Calhoun offers the concurrent majority, which is to represent each interest of the community through its majority, having the power of veto in government. "The necessary consequence of

taking the sense of the community by the concurrent majority is [...] to give to each interest or portion of the community a negative on the others" (28). This is what makes the government of the concurrent majority, as Calhoun maintains, a type of "constitutional government", since it "take[s] the sense of the community by its parts--each through its appropriate organ--and regard[s] the sense of all its parts as the sense of the whole" (29). Hence it is the opposite of absolute governments, including the governments of the numerical majority, "which concentrate power in one uncontrolled and irresponsible individual or body whose will is regarded as the sense of the community" (29). Calhoun, then, implies to construct the concurrent majority in the metaphorical mode insofar as, for him, it represents the will of the whole society in the government: that is, it represents a relationship between whole and whole.

On the other hand, since each interest of society, as he asserts, is represented through its majority part in government (See Calhoun 1953, 23 and chapter 1 above.), based on the assumption that it is not homogeneous, the minority part is left unrepresented in government. Thus, in fact, this kind of representation is still based on the part-whole relationship, that is, on the synecdoche and hence it is still the part that is to represent the whole in Calhoun's government of the concurrent majority. This, at the same time, implies that it is similar to the type of the "absolute government" which he defines as the one that "concentrate[s] power in one uncontrolled and irresponsible individual or body whose will is

regarded as the sense of the community" (29). In the case of the concurrent majority, contrary to Calhoun's argument, the same problem is presented because the will of the minority parts of all interests in that society is left disregarded: the government of the concurrent majority--as its name implies, is, then, the government not of all interests but only that of the majority of all the interests within society, hence excluding the will of each minority interest (See also 20.).

Thus, Calhoun, in his concept of the concurrent majority, identifies the part with the whole, after all, excluding minority interests from representation. At the same time, this allows him to avoid resorting to the Lockean law of nature as opposed to what was claimed by Hartz (see chapter 1). He does not envision minorities as Locke's sovereign individuals each having the veto power in the natural state. Synecdochic representation enables him to be consistent about his denial of Locke's state of nature while, at the same time, he can remain consistent about his assertion of inequality when it comes to the problem of political representation.

In practice, all this meant that the South Carolina nullification convention of 1832, by nullifying the federal tariff laws of 1828 and 1832 failed to express the will of the whole of the state, since it excluded the unionists' will, which was against nullification. Calhoun denied the difference of opinion and interest between the majority and the minority within the state. For him, states are homogeneous with regard to political interests, hence in South Carolina, for example, the numerical majority was an appropriate way to tackle the

problem of representation. At the same time, in either case, as I have attempted to make the point, synecdoche structures representation.<sup>7</sup>

#### (5) From democracy to tyranny--the tropological dynamics of Calhoun's political theory

In this part I will attempt to demonstrate that Hayden White's analysis of Giambattista Vico's tropology as supplemented by Hans Kellner's understanding of *ricorso* as an inter-trope can be used to shed light on Calhoun's conception of democracy and tyranny and the transition from one to the other and back. Hence examining Calhoun's political thought from this point of view also allows me to grasp its dynamic and to identify the function of the trope irony in his system.

In his analysis of Vico's theory of the development of human culture, society and language, Hayden White emphasizes that what is original in the argument of the *New Science* is Vico's "use of the tropological analysis of figurative language for the construction of a model by which both the stages in the evolution of consciousness can be defined and the transition from one to another of them can be accounted in terms of 'the modifications of the human mind'" (White 1978, 209). Vico constructs the development of human society and consciousness in a way that it corresponds to the metaphorical transformation of language; that is, for him, human society goes through a transition from bestiality to civilization whose stages cor-

respond to the appropriate elements of the tropic cycle, and transitions from one to the other in Vico's system are in parallel to those of the system of tropes. In this schema, White points out, "[T]he transition from synecdochic constructions to ironic statement is analogous to the transition from democracies ruled by law to the decadent societies whose members have no respect for the law" (209). The transition from the synecdochic democracy is to ironic anarchy; in Vico's words: it is the "fall from a perfect liberty into the perfect tyranny of anarchy of the unchecked liberty of the free peoples, which is the worst of all tyrannies" (Quoted in White 1978, 213; emphasis added). The age of the new barbarism sets in: people live like beasts, like atomistic individuals pursuing their own self-interests. On the other hand, this makes possible a new beginning for civilization "so that the *corso* of the original transition from barbarism to civilization is lived through again, as a *ricorso*, with new contents but ruled by the same laws of structure and process" (214).

Vico's concept of *ricorso*, in Hans Kellner's phrase, works as an "inter-trope", the move from irony to metaphor (Kellner 1981, 28). It is, in his understanding, a catastrophic event, in the sense that it also denotes a "turn", a transition from one trope to another. "And these turns, in turn," Kellner states, "are catastrophic, as in *strophe*, the turning of the chorus in Greek drama from one side of the orchestra to the other" (28).



As I have argued above, by means of his concept of the concurrent majority, Calhoun strove to achieve a representation that would substitute a metaphorical relation for the synecdochic one as embodied by popular democracy based on the rule of the numerical majority. His main reason for doing so is his contention that the majority of popular democracy may turn tyrannical and hence synecdoche will change into irony. As he argues in the *Disquisition*, the numerical majority is the absolute government of popular democracies: "The numerical majority is as truly a *single power*--and excludes the negative as completely as the absolute government of one or of the few. The former is as much the absolute government of the democratic of popular form as the latter of the monarchical or aristocratical. It has, accordingly, in common with them the same tendency to oppression and abuse of power" (Calhoun 1953, 29; original emphasis). The election campaigns as part of the system of the government of the numerical majority would lead to the ultimate destruction of democracy. "These vibrations," he says, "would continue until confusion, corruption, disorder, and anarchy would lead to an appeal to force--to be followed by a revolution in the form of the government. Such must be the end of the government of the numerical majority [...]" (33). As opposed to this tendency of the numerical majority to irony, the concurrent majority, according to him, has the effect "to force [the various interests of society] to unite in such measures [and thus] only would promote the prosperity of all, as the only means to prevent the suspension of the action of the government, and thereby, to avoid anarchy, the greatest of

all evils" (30). (Somewhat later, on the same page Calhoun repeats his claim: "No necessity can be more urgent and imperious than that of avoiding anarchy.")

Calhoun, then, with the assistance of his concurrent majority, strives to achieve a turn from a dangerous, potentially anarchical, i.e. ironic stage to that of a new beginning, a new metaphor. The same purpose was to be served by his nullification doctrine, too: by means of it, he aimed at dealing with a political crisis, which, according to him, was rooted in the federal government becoming tyrannical through the concentration of power. He, therefore, advocated his concurrent majority and state veto as a device to achieve a tropic turn, to carry out Vico's *ricorso* (an "inter-trope"), to turn America from the absolute, i.e. the ironic (back) to the constitutional, i.e. metaphorical stage.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, Calhoun's concept of the concurrent majority is also intended to stabilize the tropic cycle, i.e. to achieve the permanency of constitutional government, to freeze the cycle in the metaphoric stage. This, however, is against the dynamic nature of Vico's system. Moreover, for Vico, it is, ironically, the democracy based on the tribunal system of the Roman "democracy", one of Calhoun's examples of the perfect government of the concurrent majority, that deteriorates into tyranny (Cf. White 1978, 213).

Hayden White emphasizes the connection between the tropological modes and the forms of consciousness that a culture exhibits. In the following chapter I will make an attempt at exploring the cultural aspects of Calhoun's political

thought, mainly relying on Anthony F. C. Wallace's theory of revitalization movements connecting it to problems explored in connection with his republicanism.

#### Notes

1. These studies include Volpe 1973, Hartz 1971 and 1991, and Bradley and Tarver 1970.

2. My usage of the term denotes simply logic based on and achieved by means of tropes rather than the diachronic application of tropes as understood by Kellner's "tropo-logic" (Cf. Kellner 1980, 29).

3. White adapts the theory of the "four master tropes", systematized by Petrus Ramus in the sixteenth, developed by Giambattista Vico in the eighteenth and Kenneth Burke in the twentieth century.

4. White's examples include the work of Sigmund Freud, Jean Piaget, E. P. Thompson (White 1978, 1-25), Vico (218-30) and Michel Foucault (230-261).

5. He also explicates the links between majority, minority as well as individual and community in his "Rough Draft of an Address to the People of South Carolina" (December 1, 1830): "Till the multitude shall become less ambitious and avaricious than the individuals who compose it, there will be as much danger in trusting power to the majority, where their interests are opposed to the minority" (*Papers* XI 264-279).

6. This is, of course, not to deny the basically synecdochic nature of representation in the numerical majority, which is to express the representation of the will of the whole through one of its parts.

7. Calhoun's synecdochic construction of the relation between the individual and community or of the concurrent majority from the mid-nineteenth century can also serve as a proof to justify Hayden White's claim that in his *Order of Things*, Michel Foucault's nineteenth-century "episteme" is informed by the synecdoche (See White 1978, 230-261.).

8. It seems justified to argue that the adversaries of his doctrine would have regarded this act as an "inter-trope" not between irony and metaphor but between the synecdoche of numerical majority and the irony of anarchy or secession.

## Chapter 5

### Nullification as Cultural Revitalization Movement

#### (1) Introduction

In the following I will attempt to examine the Nullification Crisis of 1828-1833 from a cultural anthropological point of view. I will argue, drawing upon anthropologist Anthony F. C. Wallace's theory of revitalization movements, that it can be interpreted as a series of events functioning to reduce stress within South Carolina's slaveholder community.

In order to contextualize my argument, before presenting the major points of Wallace's model, I will briefly refer to the US and southern US historical context of the early nineteenth century as a background against which South Carolina's case is to be investigated. This will be followed by my Wallacean event analysis of the Nullification Crisis, based primarily on William W. Freehling's (1992) discussion of its course as well as Lacy K. Ford's (1988b) republican interpretation of the South Carolinians' response to the protective tariffs of 1828 and 1832. Finally, I will make an attempt to connect my conclusions here to those of the ones on Calhoun's republicanism, establishing links between the republican paradigm and cultural revitalization.

This chapter, in contrast to the previous ones, lays more emphasis on the historical context of the issues it addresses. In this regard, it represents a move from a prevailingly tex-

tual, rhetorical analysis to a socially and culturally focused investigation. Yet, as I hope to be able to demonstrate by the end, the two approaches do assume links, since, after all, rhetoric or tropology are both rooted in culture.

## (2) Early-nineteenth-century transformation of the American Republic

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the USA went through a number of interrelated dramatic economic, social and cultural changes that transformed the face of the country. In the sphere of economy, one could observe the growing significance of market relations in the wake of the accelerating industrial revolution and westward expansion. US agriculture, thriving on cheap, fertile land, the introduction of machinery and the transportation revolution, began to cater for an increasing the number of markets, whereas the spreading of the factory system, the availability of cheap labor and the establishment of low cost means of transportation facilitated an ever-increasing rate of industrial output. Economic changes were accompanied by social transformation including the growing pace of urbanization, the influx of immigrants or the rise of the new middle class actively involved in the market revolution.

The industrial revolution also had its disruptive effects on traditional social structures and institutions, chiefly in the rapidly modernizing northern regions of the republic,

resulting in long-lasting cultural changes, increasing stress and tensions in certain pockets of US society. The transformations quickly evoked cultural reactions. A symptom of these turmoil, the Second Great Awakening of the first decades of the century, consisted of a cluster of religious responses. In William G. McLoughlin's (1978) interpretation, on the other hand, it was not merely a series of nationwide religious revivals, but a cultural revitalization movement aimed at coping with the stress caused by the emerging cultural crisis, at the heart of which lay a discrepancy between the old cultural myths and consensus and the new social reality which was being born in the wake of change (See McLoughlin 1978, 98-140; especially 104).<sup>1</sup> Issues related to national identity, connected with the changes also fuelled a sense of crisis in the Union. The victorious War of 1812 assured Americans about their survival as a nation; however, some of them soon felt compelled to launch a new search for national identity, the meaning of which, on the other hand, was given diverse interpretations.<sup>2</sup> The lack of a unanimous sense of America's "Trust" was accompanied by anxieties about the development of party politics dividing the nation and the challenges made by "mammon and passion", as materialism and the pursuit of self-interest was often referred to, to patriotism.<sup>3</sup>

The South was not exempt from the impact of the changes affecting contemporary US society. Economically, it was the economic crisis or Panic of 1819 that had a lasting effect on the pre-Nullification South by placing a heavy burden on

southern states from Virginia to Louisiana. The boom of European demand for southern products created by the Napoleonic wars was soon to be followed by a slump, which badly hit southern exporters. As a result of the crisis, cotton and tobacco prices fell whereas prices of subsistence commodities rose. Thousands of debtors were sent to prison for failing to meet their financial obligations (Sydnor 1948, 104-105). Although southern states launched debtor relief programs to deal with the impact of the depression, these provided only temporary relief for producers, who tended to put the blame on banks for their financial losses (114-116). Hostility toward banks turned into hostility toward the East owing to the fact that most southern banks were in the hand of eastern owners. The South found its ally in the West and thus "the Panic had divided the nation by a diagonal line running from northwest to southeast" (117-118). Measures necessary to handle the crisis united southern Congressmen on a common platform.

The Panic, on the other hand, also accelerated the process of broadening the basis of political democracy: debtors could exert influence on the legislations of those states only where universal white male suffrage made it possible for them to participate in political decision-making. This contributed to the desire of citizens without the franchise in areas struck by the depression to work for widening the basis of democracy (120).

Economic unease was augmented by political tensions such as the ones evoked by the Missouri debate of 1820, whose effect was the reopening of the sectional debate over the expansion of slavery in the United States. In their defense of the peculiar

institution, toward the early 1830s, many Southerners turned to strict constructionist, states' rights arguments, which meant a complete break with their earlier, nationalist, broad constructionist line (125). The South was compelled to confront the fact that in the shape of radical abolitionism a new argument had been developing in the northeast against slavery, regarding it as a moral evil. This also contributed to the widening of the sectional gap and had far-reaching consequences since with the prospect of losing allies in the Senate, the South was becoming anxious over losing power to curb anti-slavery legislation in Congress in the future (132-133).

Federal economic policy carried out in the name of developing the nation's economy (the protective tariffs of 1816 and 1824, the second bank of the United States and internal improvements were the most important markers of such a policy) resulted in the alliance of North and West against southern interests (153). Charles Sydnor argues that "[t]he growing realization within the slave states that they were being injured by the new trends in national policy is extremely significant, for thus it was that political self-consciousness [that] was implanted in the South" (155). The formation of a common southern political platform had started by the 1820s, which, on the other hand, took several decades to solidify as the basis of an extreme sort of sectionalism, given the lasting division between the Southwest and the South Atlantic states (156).

The tensions of the 1820s developed in a political context which was basically determined by the minority consciousness of



the South, permeated by the feeling of economic exploitation by the North (Carpenter 1930, 4). Slave states had been in a minority position in a political sense in the Union ever since its foundation. Mainly as a result of the lag in their population growth<sup>4</sup> they were constantly behind the North, and hence witnessed a weakening control over most departments of the government. They suffered an unfavorable "sectional distribution of states and population" (21). Except for their position in the Senate, southern states showed a tendency of increasing minority position and decreasing control over the power centers of the nation (Cf. 21-23).

Aware of their minority position as a section, southern politicians, from time to time, gave expression to their resentment about their oppression by the majority--usually represented by the North, and hence they envisioned a Union where the federal government's powers are strictly limited and controlled in order to ensure the protection of the South (36-37). The division of powers between the federal government and state governments by the Constitution as well as a strict constructionist interpretation of the Constitution were to serve this purpose (39-41; 54-66).<sup>5</sup>

The Nullification Controversy can be interpreted as an attempt of South Carolina planters at putting strict constructionism to use in order to revitalize their own culture. This reading of the crisis is informed by Anthony F. C. Wallace's model, which I will present in the next subchapter.



### (3) Anthony F. C. Wallace's model of cultural revitalization processes

Wallace developed his model of revitalization processes in the 1950s in the wake of his study of religion and Native American cultures (Wallace 1956; see also Wallace 1966, 157-163 and Wallace 1970, 188-199.).

Wallace defines a revitalization movement "as a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture." Therefore, it is a type of culture change, but of a special sort because those participating in it "must perceive their culture, or some major areas of it, as a system (whether accurately or not); they must feel that this cultural system is unsatisfactory; and they must innovate not merely discrete items, but a new cultural system, specifying new relationships as well as, in some cases, new traits" (Wallace 1956, 265). According to Wallace, the basic differences between a revitalization movement and other types of cultural change are that in the latter the changes are "gradual" and independent from the "deliberate intent by members of a society", while in revitalization movements changes are sudden, "and frequently within a few years the new plan is put into effect by the participants in the movement" (265).

Another important feature of a revitalization movement is the assumption that the integrity of a given culture depends upon the maintenance of a "minimally fluctuating, life-suppor-

ting matrix for its individual members, and [it] will, under stress take emergency measures to preserve the constancy of this matrix" (265). In Wallace's definition stress is "a condition in which some part, or the whole, of the social organism is threatened with more or less serious damage" (265-266). So as to be able to avoid such damage, the individual is to "maintain a mental image of the society and its culture, as well as of his own body and its behavioral regularities, in order to act in ways which reduce stress at all levels of the system" (266). Wallace calls this mental image "mazeway", which "is nature, society, culture, personality, and body image, as seen by one person" (266). Revitalization movements are aimed at changing this mazeway so that the stress which individuals are under can be reduced by means of action made possible by the new mazeway. Thus, as Wallace emphasizes, for the stress to be reduced successfully, the "real" system may have to be changed as well "in order to bring mazeway and 'reality' into congruence," (267) which is the basic mechanism of a revitalization process.

A complete process of revitalization, according to Wallace, consists of five stages. In the "*Steady State*" the level of stress is tolerable. In the "*Period of Increased Individual Stress*" stress becomes increasingly severe because existing methods of "stress-reduction" show "decreasing efficiency" (269). This is the stage in which alternative ways are considered, which, nevertheless, may further increase stress owing to fear over its potentially even worse effect than that of the existing one. In the "*Period of Cultural Distortion*" "the cul-

ture is internally distorted; the elements are not harmoniously related but are mutually inconsistent and interfering" (269). Individuals become disillusioned with the mazeway for its perceived discrepancies, and this can lead to the total disintegration of the society. A revitalization movement is aimed at preventing this outcome of the process (270).

As Wallace maintains, revitalization movements, in order to be successful, are to fulfill six tasks. "*Mazeway reformulation*", the first task, consists in "a restructuring of elements and subsystems which have already attained currency in the society and may even be in use, and which are known to the person who is to become the prophet or leader" (269). Wallace contends that religious revitalization movements tend to start with a vision of the prophet, who communicates the new mazeway formulated in that vision to others (271). The personality transformation processes "involve persons who are faced with the opportunity (if not necessity) of assuming a new cultural role and of abandoning an earlier role in order to reduce stress [...]" (272). The second task is "*Communication*", the process in which the "prophet" communicates his vision about the new mazeway to society (273). "*Organization*", the third task, denotes that the prophet recruits converted disciples and, with their help, followers (273). The fourth task to be fulfilled during the revitalization process, according to Wallace, is "*Adaptation*". Because of resistance that the movement encounters, it "may [...] have to use various strategies of adaptation: doctrinal modification; political and diplomatic maneuver; and force" (274). They may be applied at

once or replace one another or appear in the movement's strategy temporarily only. "*Cultural Transformation*", the fifth task, denotes "noticeable social revitalization", with stress reduced through common "group action" (275). Wallace calls the sixth task "*Routinization*" by which the "group action [...]" becomes established as normal in various economic, social, and political institutions and customs" (275). The last stage of the revitalization process is the "*New Steady State*", the result of the cultural transformation, different from the steady state before that transformation (275).

Wallace supplements this model with some more elements of which I will present only those with relevance to my own analysis. As to "*Choice of Identification*", he distinguishes among three types: "movements which profess to revive a traditional culture now fallen into desuetude; movements which profess to *import* a foreign cultural system; and movements which profess neither revival nor importation, but conceive that the desired cultural end-state, which has never been enjoyed by ancestors or foreigners, will be realized for the first time in a future *Utopia*" (275). Finally, as to possible causes of the failure of a revitalization movement, Wallace asserts that its success largely depends on the movement's ability to "predict successfully the consequences of its own moves and of its opponents' moves in a power struggle" as well as on the degree of resistance it encounters (279).

#### (4) The course of the Nullification Crisis as cultural revitalization process

As I will argue below, although confined to South Carolina as its major area of operation, Nullification as a "revitalization movement", proposed goals to accomplish which reached beyond the borders of the state thereby enlarging its scope of mission. In the first place, nullifiers intended to unite the South in an effort to defend the planter's culture, based on slavery in the face of external attacks; in the second place, as part of their defense strategy, they connected this with the alleged necessity to defend republicanism state- and nationwide. The *mazeway reformulation*, as part of the revitalization process chiefly consisted in the shift from broad constructionism and qualified nationalism to strict constructionism and a states' rights platform. I will also attempt to show that regarding the part that Calhoun had to play in it, he can rightly be considered a leading figure in the movement and thus a culture hero, a major revitalization figure. He had a crucial role in performing the tasks of *mazeway reformulation*, *communication*, *organization* as well as *adaption*.

Given that the focus of my analysis is, in part, on cultural processes and factors, in my discussion of the Nullification Crisis I will dwell upon the major characteristics of the economic, political and cultural context as a background against which I will be able to apply Wallace's model. It will be part of my effort to identify the mazeway of South Carolina planters.

Of the factors that made South Carolina planters receptive to the principles inherent in the doctrine of nullification, the crucial role was played by economic as well as cultural factors (Freehling 1992).

Although geographically divided into two different regions, upcountry and lowcountry,<sup>6</sup> South Carolina planters manifested similar social and cultural traits all over the state. First and foremost, they strove to approximate the lifestyle of the English gentry to be financed from revenue coming from a cotton economy that produced mainly for overseas markets. This, on the other hand, was made possible by the plantation system exploiting black slave labor. The plantation ideal, as Freehling points out, had an appeal to a great number of yeoman farmers of the state who hoped to start their own plantation one day employing slave labor. These social groups formed a culturally unified community sharing similar economic and political interests. "All types of slaveholders, and yeoman farmers who hoped to become slaveholders, wanted to protect slavery, raise cotton prices, decrease the cost of living, and ease debtor-creditor relations" (Freehling 1992, 22). The cultural unity of lowcountry and upcountry planters was often strengthened by family ties built upon marriages. They, at the same time, were proud of the planter ideal and were ready to defend it together with their honor (20-21; 234-235).<sup>7</sup>

In spite of the unity of the planters' community and culture, there were differences between upcountry and lowcountry with regard to the ways in which they understood events leading up to the Nullification Crisis causing stress within their

society. As Freehling argues, upcountry planters, largely involved in cotton production and therefore more severely affected by falling cotton prices, resented the protective tariffs of the 1820s and 1832 mainly for posing a threat to the basis of their economic subsistence. Lowcountry planters, who were less affected by the depression of the early 1820s, on the other hand, were more concerned about the slavery issue getting into the focus of attention in the wake of the emerging abolitionist movement of the late 1820s (23-24).

Stress was present in the society of upcountry planters in the form economic hardships and was increasing from the beginning of the depression in 1819. Deflation resulting in a shortage of money supply made it difficult for debtor planters, who had acquired credit in the boom period following the War of 1812 to start or enlarge plantations in the upcountry, to pay back their debts. The second phase of the depression (1822-1829), on the other hand, brought about overproduction in the cotton economy as well as the subsequent reduction of prices, thereby, again, increasing the financial burden of upcountry planters (26-27). Lowcountry planters were able to fight the second phase by developing the production of extra quality, fine, long-staple cotton in the early 1820s which even enabled them to increase their income by 1832, thus easing their financial burden (29-32).

Two other social groups joining the nullifiers' camp as a result of their worsening economic situation were the retailers of Charleston and white mechanics. The former, owing to the changing commercial situation generated by the appearance of



steamboat freight transportation system below the river fall line, were forced to move their business from King Street, the retail center of the city, while the latter were hit by the depression and new competition posed by the appearance of free as well as slave black mechanics (39-40). According to Freehling, these social groups, badly affected by the economic developments of the 1820s, joined "the campaign against the tariff, [which] was the most articulate expression of South Carolina's slowly awakening desire to end the avoidable aspects of the depression of the 1820s" because they felt "in danger of losing land, shops, and slaves" and hence they "focused their frustration and anger on the protective tariff" (47).

Lowcountry planters, whose financial standing did not suffer such heavy blows had a different sort of stress to suffer from, namely anxiety over the future of black slavery.<sup>8</sup> As Freehling points out, this anxiety had an ever increasing presence in South Carolina since the early 1820s. He, at the same time, emphasizes that the state had areas in the lowcountry where an enormous concentration of black slaves posed a constant threat to plantation owners. Their large number was, in part, due to South Carolina's reopening of the African slave trade between 1803 and 1807 providing labor supply from Africa, whose freshly imported natives they regarded as dangerous, fierce savages, ready to rebel against their masters at any moment (11). As Freehling contends, this deep-set, constant stress caused by the existence of the institution of slavery accounts for the "South Carolina lowcountry's morbid sen-

sitivity to a relatively undeveloped abolitionist crusade in the 1820's [...]" (49).

Another constant element of their anxiety over slavery inherent in the planters' culture was the fear over the consequences of the emancipation of black slaves. Economically, they identified emancipation with the loss of property embodied by the slaves, while they also expressed anxiety over a prospective race war between white planters and manumitted slaves (51). The planters' concern about these aspects of slavery were fuelled and kept alive by the aborted Denmark Vesey conspiracy of 1822 in Charleston, the Charleston Fire Scare of 1826, the Georgetown slave conspiracy of 1829 and Nat Turner's slave revolt of 1831 in Virginia. According to Freehling, these events became associated with the early abolitionist movement in the slaveholders' minds (53-64).

Such an attitude toward slavery was accompanied and complicated by the guilt that some South Carolinian planters tended to feel about the institution. Their conception of slavery included an idealized, paternalistic relationship between master and slave, based on mutual benefits, exempt from violence and cruelty. On the other hand, the sustenance of the "real" system of slavery required the use of violence, hence the opposite of this idealized relationship. This gap between the maze and reality generated a feeling of guilt in the planters, thus augmenting the stress derived from slavery (65-68).<sup>9</sup>

Due to these ambiguities about the moral aspects of "the peculiar institution", slaveholders tended to adopt the view

of slavery as a "necessary evil" violating the natural rights of man expressed in the Declaration of Independence in order to cope with the stress they were bound to suffer; however, they also claimed that they could not change the situation because it might turn even less tolerable (77-81). (Partly as a result of the Nullification Controversy, as part of their maze way reformulation, the slaveholders designed the ideology of slavery as a "positive good" (82).) Temporarily, however, they attempted to reduce stress by trying to repress its discussion in the power centers of the nation and the South in the hope of preventing potential slave insurrections and slaveholders feeling guilty from becoming supporters of emancipation (82-83).

As part of the maze way of South Carolina's political community, the period between the War of 1812 and the Nullification Crisis was also characterized by the planter elite's advocacy of economic and political nationalism. This manifested itself in the state's support of the war itself as well as of the federal government's promotion of the development of the national economy in its aftermath. Calhoun as a participant of national policy making, as has been mentioned in previous chapters, was also a follower of the nationalist line, and he justified his support of the protective tariffs at the time by pointing at their aim to promote home industry (92-94).

In this period attempts at turning South Carolina to the states' rights creed, such as Senator William Smith's campaign against Calhoun in Congress were bound to fail. The Smithites' advocacy of the state's leaving the broad constructionist

platform for a strict constructionist one failed to gain the approval of the nationalist planters. In 1820, for example, the Smithites' proposal to rule protective tariffs unconstitutional was repudiated by the state House of Representatives (97-101). Another piece of evidence of the solid nationalist standing of South Carolina was the election of Robert Y. Hayne, a nationalist at this time, to replace Smith in the Senate in 1822 (103-104). In this *period of individual stress*, Smith's decision to promote states' rights in South Carolina can be seen as an alternative offered to solve the problems of the first phase of the economic crisis.<sup>10</sup>

This steady cultural state with tolerable stress and hence abortive attempts at an overall mazeway change was beginning to undergo a transformation by the mid-1820s, when a partial mazeway reformulation was about to take place in South Carolina in the form of a shift from broad to strict constructionism. In the first place, the federal tariff law of 1824, which raised woolen and cotton duties from 25% to 33,33% on average, evoked harsh criticism from once nationalist South Carolinians, who used arguments later to be appropriated by nullifiers in trying to prove the harmful effects of the tariff on South Carolina's staple economy (106-108).<sup>11</sup> In the second place, the shift to strict constructionism was also promoted by the slavery issue as it emerged after the Denmark Vesey conspiracy. The fear over repeated slave insurrections and an anticipated series of manumissions to be followed by the inevitable deterioration of slave property in value and the subsequent collapse of the system were turning most low country South Carolina planters

toward strict constructionism, in the hope that by such a reading of the Constitution they would be able to prevent Congress from interfering with the slavery issue in their state as well as in the entire South (108-111). (This shift was accompanied by the establishment of the South Carolina Association, which aimed at policing the slaves in the state by making sure the local Black Codes were properly observed after the Vesey conspiracy (113).)<sup>12</sup> A temporary shift was marked by the state legislature's decision to pass the "Smith Resolutions" of 1825, which "proclaimed protective tariffs and internal improvements unconstitutional" (117-118).

The American Colonization Society's plead for Congressional aid and northern industrialists' request for higher protective tariffs in 1827 pushed South Carolina's planters further on to the strict constructionist creed. In the lowcountry, it was the Colonization Society's petition to Congress, with the potential to evoke federal intervention in the slavery question, that evoked anger, whereas in the upcountry the newly proposed tariff bill contributed to the increase of stress. States' rights doctrines came to be popularized by two ardent pamphleteers, Robert J. Turnbull and Thomas Cooper (126-130). Yet, as Freehling argues, in the summer of 1827, "most Carolinians were not ready for southern conventions or the Cooper-Turnbull doctrines", that is to nullify federal laws (131). They had strong hopes that if southerner and slaveholder Andrew Jackson was elected president in 1828, the situation would take a favorable turn. Consequently, "[t]he state legislature merely adopted another

remonstrance, upholding strict construction and denouncing protective tariffs, internal improvements, and appropriations" (131). Nevertheless, by this time, the *period of cultural distortion* had fully set in, most planters having adopted strict constructionism so as to cope with increasing stress. As Freehling claims, "By 1827, with their slaves apparently restless and their economy seriously depressed, planters were beginning to place loyalty to their section over loyalty to their nation" (132).<sup>13</sup>

Nullification as a revitalization movement proper can be argued to have begun with the South Carolina legislature's reaction to the tariff of 1828, which raised duties on imported products from an average of 33,33% to 50%. Radicals began their campaign in June 1828 to call for the nullification of the federal tariff law, to resist the federal government openly (148). However, as Freehling emphasizes, in 1828, state veto did not enjoy sufficient popular support in South Carolina, in spite of a massive general sentiment against the tariff. "When the legislature [of South Carolina] met at the closing of the year 1828, nullification was rejected by overwhelming majorities" (153). This was due to the Carolinians' hope in Jackson to have the tariff law repealed. On the other hand, the process of *communication* had already begun, and Calhoun had a preeminent role to play in it.

Calhoun's role in the Nullification movement was peculiar in the sense that although until 1831 he remained silent in public on his commitment to state veto, he was the first to systematically formulate the doctrine in his "Exposition" (See

previous chapters). Therefore, it can be argued that he was crucially involved in the reformulation of that component of the South Carolina planters' mazeway that concerned the nature of the Union, minority rights and state sovereignty.

Calhoun's role in the process of communication consisted in enlightening his fellow-statesmen about the principles of nullification, the need to consider a shift from the principle of numerical to concurrent majority rule (158). Thus Calhoun undertook "a campaign of public education" in order to convince its opponents that nullification did not equal disunion but was to serve the security of the South within the Union and hence that of the Union itself (158). As has been pointed out in chapter 3, Calhoun, to legitimize his nullification doctrine, referred to the authority of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and the Founders, in general, with the purpose of denying its radicalism. Thus, in terms of Wallace's revitalization model Calhoun chose identification with the past. (Instead of choosing a utopia or an imported system.) He constantly appealed to an ideal past to be revived by means of the state veto, which he also claimed to have been rooted and justified by the tradition of the Fathers.

The new mazeway, the development of which was largely due to Calhoun consisted of the following: assertion of the compact nature of the Union; the idea that the individual states as independent and sovereign bodies are parties to that compact and retain their full sovereign power under the constitution; and they can use it to judge whether a federal act is un-

constitutional and make it null and void if they deem it to be such.

Calhoun's *personality transformation process*, then, had been completed by 1828, but until 1831 he was not yet ready to assume a "new cultural role" of being one of the leaders of the Nullification movement (Cf. Wallace 1956, 272 and above). Furthermore, as Freehling contends, Calhoun had no intention, in the period 1827-1831, of applying nullification since he had hope in the reduction of the tariff and thus a less dramatic resolution of the crisis (Freehling 1992, 158). Hence, in Wallace's terms, he rejected to apply the new mazeway in order to achieve the transformation of the "real" system thereby contributing to the slow pace of the development of the Nullification movement.

As Freehling argues, the radicals' effort to put nullification into practice also suffered delay since most of them believed in the necessity of maintaining the alliance with western interests which would have been threatened even by the very discussion of the nullification doctrine. Also, there was hope that with the prospects of the disappearance of the public debt Jackson would be prepared to lower the tariff (183). The Hayne-Webster Senate debate of January 1830, according to Freehling, on the other hand, indicated that South Carolina nullifiers had moved from the strategy of majority coalition between the South and the West to the adoption of state veto as a means to resolve the crisis. As he states, "By supporting nullification, as in Hayne's second oration, Calhounites weakened the possibility of achieving the victory within the





majoritarian tradition" (186). This move was promoted by Jackson's overt support for the protective tariff, the alienation of Calhoun and Jackson from each other owing to the Peggy Eaton and the Seminole Affairs as well as Jackson's open hostility toward nullification, which he found unconstitutional (187-189).<sup>14</sup>

Although in spring 1830, Congress lowered tariff duties on certain items, South Carolina's anti-tariff forces remained dissatisfied, since, as they argued, most of the reductions favored northern interests; also, Jackson, in his Maysville road veto message (May 27, 1830) "endorsed the protective principle, denied the connection between improvement appropriations<sup>15</sup> and protective duties, and advocated a distribution of the surplus reserve" (200). All these events amounted to resistance to the new mazeway and made nullifiers realize the need to recruit more supporters.

In the course of the year 1830 the anti-tariff interests of South Carolina began to organize themselves into an efficient political force capable of achieving the cultural and political transformation of the whole state so that nullification would be able to win sufficient support and a state convention could be held for the purpose of declaring the protective tariff of 1828 null and void. On the other hand, the great diversity of the anti-tariff alliance posed initial difficulties for the organizers. The opinions expressed at the July 1, 1830 public dinner held in Charleston, were far from unanimous as regards the solution to the problems caused by the protective tariff. Some argued for immediate nullification in

South Carolina, others preferred a southern convention to do the same. Moreover, as Freehling points out, "with few exceptions, slaveholding regions usually opposed nullification" because they were not so painfully affected by the tariff (201-203). By the same token, other southern states failed to express their approval of South Carolina's nullification as an appropriate remedy since, in the first place, as Freehling argues, they did not suffer from the same economic depression as upcountry planters of the Palmetto state did.<sup>16</sup> In the second place, "states with a less concentrated black population were less tense about slavery and not so worried about abolitionists." Thirdly, in other states there was no such link among planters of various regions as in the South Carolina piedmont and tidewater, which worked in the direction of the united action of the planters (204).

At this stage of the Nullification movement, "doctrinal modification" was being performed as a strategy to adapt it to the circumstances in the face of strong resistance. Warren Davis and George McDuffie, radical nullifiers, in order to make the doctrine acceptable for the still hesitant proposed "nullification by jury", that is, that South Carolina should nullify the tariff in a convention but those citizens of the state who were bound to oppose it, such as East Bay merchants, could avoid paying the duties.<sup>17</sup> Another similar modification was to do with "political maneuvering". Becoming increasingly aware of lack of support for a state convention to nullify the tariff, as a shift to a moderate solution, radicals proposed to

call a convention with the objective to "petition Congress for a redress of grievances" (212).<sup>18</sup>

1830 ended in a defeat for radicals who wanted a state convention of nullification, since although their victory at the election testified their numerical majority in the state they failed to have a two-third majority in the state legislature. As Freehling argues, "The majority of Carolinians [...] remained hopeful of congressional redress and fearful of radical action," and "Nullifiers had not yet converted their state" (218).

Wallace maintains that the organization stage of the revitalization process also involves the conversion of non-believers (Wallace 1956, 273). In 1831 the nullifiers launched a fierce political campaign to popularize their doctrine in the hope of gaining a sufficient amount of support for their cause, i.e. to convert non-believing citizens of their state. Their major effort was aimed at proving to the general public in South Carolina that contrary to what was stated by Jackson and the antinullifier "Unionists" of the state, nullification did not equal secession and the breakup of the Union.

In order to reach their goal, on July 12, 1831 "Charleston nullifiers created a statewide States Right and Free Trade Association [...] to unify the nullifiers' campaign, to distribute propaganda and arrange meetings [...] (Freehling 1992, 224-225). At the same time, they also aimed to force Calhoun to declare his position on nullification to the public, which he, in fact, did in his "Fort Hill Address" (July 26, 1831) (225). Freehling contends that Calhoun's move was a sig-

nificant contribution to the success of the campaign. In Wallacean terms, he fulfilled the role of a prophet, a leader of the movement working to persuade the yet skeptical about the legitimacy of nullification.<sup>19</sup> In Freehling's words: "In the long and arduous campaign ahead no one else could have so successfully persuaded the timid and fearful that the remedy was both rightful and peaceful. Calhoun's massive prestige and conservative essays perfectly complemented [James] Hamilton's managerial genius and [George] McDuffie's wild oratory" (228).<sup>20</sup>

In accounting for the success of the nullifiers' campaign Freehling emphasizes the importance of the Free Trade Association in fulfilling a social function, too: by providing an opportunity for poor farmers and planters to leave behind their isolated environment for the time of an anti-tariff meeting in Charleston or another major city they were capable of participating in the community of white planters and could feel to be equal with the notable. It was "a welcome relief from the loneliness, boredom, and tedium of life in rural Carolina," he contends (228). Therefore, these occasions could also function to reduce the level of stress in South Carolina society: "The slaveless farmer, the small slaveholder, the Charleston mechanic, and the lowcountry cadet class, although becoming nullifiers in part because of financial difficulties, also found joining the association a welcome relief from social tensions which economic depression had made particularly severe" (228). The Nullification movement also served to ease social tensions and psychic stress by offering political power and social esteem to those lacking them. As Freehling maintains,

"At a time when economic depression erected impassable obstacles for everyone seeking wealth and prestige, the gentry had seemingly invited the impoverished to share all the trappings of power" (230).

The nullifiers' willingness to modify their strategy is indicated by the fact that after the appearance of Jackson's public letter to the 1832 Fourth of July Unionist celebration, in which he identified nullification with a move toward civil war, the radicals made efforts to minimize the possibility of violence in their pamphlets and other pieces of public utterance. They strove to prove that nullification was "legal resistance, not illegal insurrection" (231). They also attempted to fight back the president's threat to use force in case nullification became effective by arguing on the basis of state sovereignty maintaining that "the federal government, as a mere agent of sovereign states, could not question the commands of a nullification convention" (234). And in accordance with honor, an important cultural concept in their mazeway, nullifiers conceived of the controversy as a duel between South Carolina and the federal government in defense of their honor (234).

In their attempt to fight nullification, the unionist party fell behind the nullifiers in their organizational capacities, as Freehling points out (235-236). They refrained from any attempts at mazeway reformulation and advocated the conservative policy of remonstrating instead of adopting nullification, which they regarded as "secession in disguise"

(237). Their position, on the other hand, was impaired by further developments of the crisis.

The new tariff law of 1832, decreasing the average rates to about 25%, failed to reduce stress among the anti-tariff forces of South Carolina because the cca. 50% rates on cotton and woolen products were retained. In some of its components it was more protective than the tariff of 1828, which fact outraged even those who were otherwise opposed to nullification (248-250). Tension was further augmented by the reemergence of the slavery issue on the national scene: as Freehling contends, Garrison's launching of his *Liberator*, Nat Turner's revolt in 1831 as well as the Virginia legislature's discussion of the possibility of abolishing slavery in the state in January 1832 promoted the nullifiers' cause (250-251) by further increasing the level of stress in hesitant sympathizers.

State elections took place in fall 1832 and ended with the nullifiers' victory, which secured their control over three-fourths of the Senate and four-fifths of the House, (252-255) opening the road to nullification. The Nullification Convention of South Carolina gathered on November 22, 1832 and in an Ordinance of Nullification declared the tariff laws of 1828 and 1832 null and void. It also ruled that the document would take effect from February 1, 1833 allowing time for finding a way to make a compromise with the federal government. It was done under the pressure of the conservatives, who wished to avoid secession, presumed to be caused by the tariff laws (262).

By this time, the revitalization process had been completed in the bulk of South Carolina's planter community and

the act of nullification signified the cultural transformation of the state. On the other hand, its unfavorable reception by other southern states which refused to follow suit, as well as Jackson's determination to apply force against nullifiers show the limited scope of the maze way reformulation.

Jackson's willingness to reduce the tariff under the pretext of fighting special privilege can be viewed as an attempt to reduce tensions by means of changing the "real" system. (This was expressed in his annual message to Congress in December 1832. (266)) The modification of the original Nullification Ordinance, in order to make the clause about the test oath less severe was intended to achieve the same effect (270).<sup>21</sup>

Yet, Jackson's threat to apply force in his Nullification Proclamation of December 10, 1832 as well as the unionists' convention in Columbia in December 10-14, which implied the possibility of a civil war within the state rekindled the fire of animosity and intensified tension (267-268). Therefore, in parallel to the attempts to find a political solution to the crisis, South Carolina nullifiers started to make preparations for an anticipated military confrontation with federal troops (275-278). The Force Act compelled the antitariff radicals to modify their policy further together with the Compromise Tariff of February 1833. The Nullification Convention, which reopened on March 11, 1833, repealed the Nullification Ordinance and nullified the Force Act (284-296).

It is Freehlings' contention that, all things considered, the nullifiers suffered a defeat by the end of the Nul-

lification Crisis, since the tariff rates were not lowered enough to satisfy them. It can be argued that Freehling is right insofar as his assertion regards the "real" system part of South Carolina's culture. However, as a revitalization movement, Nullification was successful in achieving the reformulating of the planters' mazeway, by shifting from broad to strict constructionism, from nationalism to the states' rights creed in order to cope with the increasing stress caused by federal protection policy accompanied by economic depression and the emerging antislavery movement. The modification of the "real" system, although not favorable to the nullifiers, also took place in the form of tariff reduction. The revitalization of the slaveholders' culture in South Carolina, on the other hand, was an important stage on the road to disunion: having adopted state sovereignty, it became easier for a new generation of radical politicians of the state to argue against any reform concerning the "peculiar institution" and when time came, to sever ties with the Union.

As has been seen, the Nullification movement, aimed at reducing growing stress in South Carolina's planter society by means of mazeway reformulation and changing the "real" system, manifested most features of the revitalization process as described by Wallace. On the other hand, it also shows differences from that model in some respects.

In the first place, Nullification was not the matter of a sudden change of a mere few years. On the contrary, the road to it took nearly a decade, since it involved a number of setbacks and had to accommodate its principles in the face of constant



resistance. In the second place, Calhoun's central role in the movement was not evident until its major phase, since it took him relatively long to change his earlier position, so as a culture hero, the scope of his activity was limited in time. On the other hand, he can be regarded as a major revitalization figure due to his involvement in the maze way reformulation, communication and organization stages of the movement both at the state and national levels; other Carolinians like Hamilton, McDuffie or Hayne were more involved in organization at the state level.

#### **(5) Nullification as the revitalization of republicanism**

Nullification as revitalization movement can also be interpreted as an attempt to revitalize republicanism in the US. It was not merely about protesting against the protective federal tariffs as an indirect response to abolitionism, but also about the nationwide restoration of republican values. According to Lacy K. Ford, "Nullification should be viewed not so much as a harbinger of future radicalism as the logical, though not inevitable, culmination of the continuing debate over how best to defend the republican principles inherited from the Founding Fathers against the centralizing and corrupting tendencies of the age" (Ford 1988b, 125). South Carolina nullifiers drew upon Country ideology, which had a long tradition in the state, when they denounced "high tariffs as a threat to basic republican values" and "South Carolinians

responded vigorously, because their political heritage was so rich and meaningful and because that tradition continued to speak to their condition" (122; see also 134.). Calhoun meant to revive republicanism by means of nullification not only on the state but also on the Union's level. "The Union, as Calhoun saw it," Ford maintains, "could only be a sanctuary for republican values as long as it was governed by republican principles. Nullification was simply another mechanism to thwart the natural tendency of power to corrupt or aggrandize those who wield it" (135-136).

In southern culture, republicanism was intimately connected with the problem of slavery as the state of being deprived of liberty, and southern planters understood being enslaved as being submitted to unrestrained power, a major republican fear. Hence, nullification provided a means of defending not only republican values but also of avoiding being enslaved by the federal government. "The voters' burning desire was to defend their liberty, the personal independence and virtue which allowed them to control their own persons, property, and family. Their gravest fear was that they would fall into slavery, that state of abject degradation which became the plight of those deprived of independence and basic political rights. [...] It was precisely this fear of political enslavement, of becoming the political vassals of a Northern majority, that spurred the Nullifiers to action" (138).<sup>22</sup>

The major change in South Carolina's political system which took place as a by-product of the Nullification Controversy was the "large-scale political mobilization" of

voters. "Nullification", Ford asserts, "took partisan politics to the hustings literally to the stumps, muster fields, and 'forks of creek,' even in the most remote or isolated areas of the state [...]" (142). That is, Jacksonian democracy struck root in South Carolina as a result of Nullification.

#### **(6) Nullification, republicanism and revitalization**

The republican doctrine about the exceptional circumstances necessary for the creation of the republic and revitalization as a type of change can be shown to fit into the same pattern.

In *The Machiavellian Moment*, Pocock argues that according to the republican tradition the creation of the republic takes place under exceptional circumstances--it is the work of divine grace. "The justice of the republic," he argues, "might be the form into which civic virtue organized the circumstantial matter of human life: but the triumph of republican virtue over historical fortune could not, within this conceptual scheme, be assured unless grace were at work in history in such a way that the republic in its temporal finitude occupied an eschatological moment" (Pocock 1975, 85; see also 395-396 and *passim*).

It is an exceptional moment, for Calhoun, too, at which "constitutional" governments--his word for the ideal type--are established except that he does not get grace involved in the process. As he contends in the *Disquisition*, "[T]heir construction has been the result, not so much of wisdom and

patriotism, as of favorable combination of circumstances" (Calhoun 1953, 59; see also 61-62).<sup>23</sup> This is also necessary in order for the government of the concurrent majority to be formed, in which the two parties in conflict are both present. Of this Calhoun has the following to say: "Where this [i.e. the compromise between the two parties--Z.V.] has not been the case, they have been the product of fortunate circumstances, acting in conjunction with some pressing danger, which forced their adoption, as the only means by which it could be avoided" (59-60).

For Calhoun, by implication, the Nullification Crisis represented such an exceptional moment: he hoped that the constitutional government of his concurrent majority would be realized by the federal government acknowledging South Carolina's right to nullify the tariff acts of 1828 and 1832. This would have meant the application of state veto, the defense of minority against majority interest on the federal level. The "pressing danger" was clearly present for the contemporaries, including Calhoun.

On the other hand, as we have seen above, Calhoun's doctrine of state veto can be viewed as leading from the state of the tyranny of the absolute (numerical) majority to the renewed state of "real" democracy of the concurrent majority. This move, at the same time, was also linked for him to "fortunate circumstance". As he argues in the *Disquisition*, "It would [...] seem almost necessary that governments should commence in some one of the simple and absolute forms, which, however well suited to the community in its earlier stages,

must, in its progress, lead to oppression and abuse of power, and, finally, to an appeal to force,--to be succeeded by a military despotism,--unless the conflicts to which it leads should be fortunately adjusted by a compromise, which will give to the respective parties a participation in the control of government; and thereby lay the foundation of a constitutional government, to be afterwards matured and perfected. Such governments have been, emphatically, the product of circumstances" (60-61).

Nullification in 1832, then, can be interpreted as an attempt to provide the USA with the opportunity to move from the tyranny of the majority to the constitutional government of the concurrent majority. The Nullification Crisis was an act through which the potentiality of Machiavelli and Vico's *ricorso* could be realized: for Calhoun, the restoration of the lost virtue of the republic by means of state veto equalled the "same fortunate turn" (59).

In the light of the above, *ricorso*, in the political sense of the term, also gains the meaning of cultural revitalization, or the shift from one cultural-political paradigm to another. The move from corruption to the renovation of the republic through the regaining of lost virtue can be seen as equaling the revitalization of republican culture in Calhoun's political thought.

#### Notes

1. Another consequence of the dramatic transformation of the USA was, for example, that alcohol consumption and the rate of alcoholism, important indicators of cultural distortion and stress rose to unprecedented heights in the United States by

the 1820s. According to W. J. Rorabaugh, it was a non-ideological way of American society to ease its stress, and its failure to do so gave way to the temperance movement, which provided successful "ideological responses" to maintain the "social structure" (Rorabaugh 1979, 190 and 191).

2. See Somkin 1967, 34. He also emphasizes the role of a new generation of American politicians and intellectuals in carrying out the cultural changes.

3. Cf. Nagel 1971, 47-128. Somkin also makes the point about the denunciation of growing prosperity for its supposed impact on morality and social cohesion (Somkin 1967, chapter 1).

4. Between 1800 and 1850, for instance, population in the North increased from cca. 2.6 million to 14.6 million, whereas in the South the figures for the same years are cca. 2.6 million and 11 million (Bureau of the Census 1975, 22).

5. Social stress present in southern society was also reflected in cultural artifacts of the period. As William R. Taylor argues, by the 1850s, "feelings of social decline" derived from the gap between the planters' world and that of the revolutionary fathers had appeared in the Old South and became manifest in the plantation novel as a popular genre (Taylor 1961, 146). Writing literature was one way for some southerners to reduce stress. In Taylor's words, "[I]t is probable that a good many of those who wrote their first novels under the stimulus of these years did so as a means of resolving problems and working through anxieties which could not be handled in any other way" (151).

6. In Freehling's definition, lowcountry, with Charleston as its cultural and economic center, denotes the coastal, tidewater area of the state with rice and sea-island cotton plantations, whereas the upcountry signifies the rest, with Columbia, the state capital as its center (Freehling 1992, 7 note 1).

7. On the general significance of honor as a cultural concept regulating social interaction in the Old South, see Wyatt-Brown 1983. On the political relevance of the concept see Greenberg 1996.

8. In the face of subsequent criticism Freehling confirmed his view about the importance of the slavery issue in the South Carolina planters' responses to stress (See Freehling 1990, 277, n16.).

9. The planters also expressed guilt over having to expose their slaves to the perils of malaria and the cruelty of unsupervised overseers on absentee plantations (Freehling 1992, 70-72).

10. The Smithites blamed federal interventionist economic policy for the deteriorating financial condition of the planters in the state and argued against the policy of internal

improvements and the Second Bank of the United States.

11. On the other hand, as Freehling points out, this reaction was far behind the one of the nullifiers in terms of intensity, (Freehling 1992, 108) that is, at this stage, the revitalization process did not yet penetrate the whole of the culture and was aborted in its initial stage, since, in Wallace's terms, the stress failed to reach the level of *cultural distortion*.

12. Furthermore, when South Carolina continued imprisoning black seamen of foreign countries arriving at its ports in order to prevent them from communicating with native blacks for fear of inciting them to insurrection, the state performed state interposition by declaring federal law null and void. This act signified another important step in South Carolina's shift from broad to strict constructionism (Freehling 1992, 111-115).

13. It must be noted here that there were social groups in South Carolina which, throughout the crisis, remained unreceptive to Nullification. They consisted of mountain farmers of the upcountry and the so-called East Bay merchants of Charleston, virtually unaffected by the economic crisis or the growing apprehension about slavery. Many of them became supporters of the Unionist party, which opposed Nullification and allied itself with the federal government (Freehling 1992, 23-24).

14. The tensions between Calhoun and Jackson became public at the Jefferson Day dinner on April 13, 1830.

15. I.e. revenue from protective tariff duties turned to internal improvements.

16. As Freehling argues, one reason for their lack of concern was that some states (Virginia or North Carolina) were already over with the impact of the depression, while others (southwestern states) were still to be affected by it. The land expansion, on the other hand, also made it easier for them to cope with economic problems (Freehling 1992, 203).

17. The assumption was that they could do so by refusing to pay the bond for the tariff duty signed at the customs office and when brought to a state trial by jury for not meeting their obligation they could still decline to do so by claiming that the tariff had been declared unconstitutional by the state convention (Freehling 1992, 210-211).

18. The convention issue, on the other hand, also triggered important changes in the mechanism of the state's politics. Personal politics was temporarily replaced by party politics, and the disappearance of the Smith and Calhoun factions was accompanied by the development of a two party system (213).

19. On Calhoun's charismatic qualities as a political and cultural leader and his high standing among Carolinians, see Ford

1988b, 123-125.

20. Hamilton, a lowcountry aristocrat, played a crucial role in the organization of the movement, often seconded by the militant McDuffie.

21. "The legislature made the test oath less odious by requiring officers elected before the Ordinance was enacted to swear allegiance only when their duties involved enforcing nullification." Most officers were unaffected by this modified clause since they took office before the Ordinance passed (Freehling 1992, 270).

22. Cf. also Greenberg (1985, 86-87) on liberty and slavery in republican thought.

23. Lerner (1963), before Pocock's articulation of the republican paradigm, and republican interpretations of Calhoun's thought, had already put his finger on "Fortune's" role in the making of Calhoun's ideal government (See Lerner 1963, 921, 924.).



## Conclusion

In addition to my major claim in the foregoing chapters which has been that Calhoun drew upon a pool of diverse political languages constituted by various vocabularies, idioms and structural frameworks, he tended to utilize them for largely similar purposes, centering around the themes of restoration and preservation. Whether virtue, Lockean rights or the balance of power, Calhoun's pertaining speeches and writings analyzed above expressed either concern about their loss or ways to restore them. The traditions that he drew upon were perfectly fitting for his critical purposes in order to fight the process of losing power, to stop tendencies presupposedly harmful to his state and his section.

Calhoun's major target of criticism being the federal government in most cases, Lockean liberalism with its emphasis on natural rights, including property, self-preservation and the right of resistance could be effectively used. So could republican vocabulary structured by the dichotomy of virtue and corruption provide 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. With shifting focus, his jeremiads also functioned to create anxiety in his audience and, at the same time, to urge them to act in a way which would facilitate the bringing together of the present with the promised but lost ideal. The tropological connection that he established in his political theory also show his general concern with the problem

of creating a political system where the balance of power and interests can be achieved. His participation in the nullification movement was also to further the cause of defending the South through achieving cultural change and defying federal power.

As Pocock argues, the individual user of a given political language may modify it in order to exploit it for his own purposes. (cf. Introduction above) Calhoun often performed innovation on the political languages that he employed. In the light of my analysis, it can be concluded that whenever he acted as an innovator, the South or the states as corporate entities were involved in a number of instances. This is most obvious in the case of his appropriation of the elements of Lockean liberalism, his basic innovation being the extension of Locke's argument about the link between the rationality and liberty to the adult individual as well as of Lockean rights to his section and making individual states the equivalents of Locke's independent individuals.

Calhoun's corporate perspective also lends novelty to 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. In addition, in making Rome the exemplar of the successful mechanization of virtue he performed a significant modification of earlier republican visions with the Venetian Republic as their ideal. Calhoun's contributions to the tradition of the American jeremiad consisted in his gradual shifting of the ground for the "horological antecedent", for the ideal to restore: from

the ancient Rome through the Founding Fathers and Thomas Jefferson.

By making the South and individual states assume attributes characteristic of individuals in the political languages of Lockean liberalism and republicanism, Calhoun performed a tropological act, ruled by the synecdoche, which, as I attempted to show, also underlay his concept of the concurrent majority. The tropological structure of the *Disquisition* underscores Calhoun's vision about the analogy between the South as a community and the individual self. On the other hand, his participation in the revitalization movement during the Nullification Crisis, affecting both Calhoun, the individual and his community, can be regarded as an attempt on his part to put his principles into practice but also as a sign of how his fate as a politician became linked with that of his community in South Carolina and the slave South.

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