Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, *The Partisan Leader*, and Southern Romantic Nationalism

But for the Sir Walter Disease, the character of the Southerner, or Southron – according to Sir Walter’s starchier way of putting it – would be wholly modern, in place of modern and medieval mixed….

Mark Twain

Influenced by the decentralizing *Tertium Quid* state’s rights of John Randolph, Nathaniel Beverley Tucker (1784-1851) synthesized Randolph’s politics, Anglophilia, and love for British Romantic literature into a new form of Romantic nationalism for the South. Tucker, a professor of law and political science at the College of William and Mary, was one of the first southerners to conceptualise the Union as an unnaturally heterogeneous joining of two inherently opposed nations, namely, a hierarchical, agricultural, and romanticized “Cavalier” South and a cold, industrializing, and materialistic “Puritan” or “Yankee” North. Yet if Tucker thought that the South’s “old fogey” adherents of the Jeffersonian Enlightenment such as his own father St. George Tucker had foolishly united the “Cavalier” South to the “Cromwellian” North, he did not reject all of their ideals, for he was dedicated to state’s rights in general and to Randolph’s extreme Old Republican version thereof in particular. This commitment forced him to shun the centralized nation-state concept so prevalent among European Romantic nationalists. Yet he defied the “old fogies” at the same time by arguing that only secession could save state’s rights, for the “Puritan” North was, in his view, bent on destroying state’s rights and subjugating the

---


Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
South by consolidating the Union economically and politically. Tucker thought, moreover, that a loose confederation of agrarian slave slaves would maintain its independence in a world of aggressive and industrializing central governments because Britain would renounce abolitionism and protect its “Cavalier” descendants as soon as the South repudiated its misguided union with the un-English “Puritans” of the North. As he expounded in his notorious 1836 novel *The Partisan Leader: A Tale of the Future*, southerners armed with imported British weapons could rely upon guerilla tactics and the unshakeable “organic” solidarity of their Burkean social order to foil any northern invasion of the southern states, which would thus never need to industrialize, urbanize, militarize, or consolidate themselves into a centralized nation-state.

According to Michael O’Brien, Tucker was “John Randolph’s spiritual heir.” Tucker and Randolph were drawn together by their mutual antipathy toward St. George Tucker, who was a famous Virginian judge, legal scholar, professor at William and Mary, planter-merchant, critic of slavery, Democratic Republican statesman, and friend of Thomas Jefferson. Randolph had probably always disliked St. George Tucker for marrying his mother Frances Bland Randolph in 1778 and thus usurping the place of the deceased father he idolized. Be that as it may, he broke off all contact with his father-in-law in 1814 after quarreling with him over inheritance matters. For his part, Randolph’s half-brother Beverley Tucker had always resented his father for taking long absences from home to ride the circuit courts, and he never forgave him for his absence from the deathbed of his and Randolph’s beloved common mother. Although Tucker did not become as estranged from St. George Tucker as did Randolph, he sought to irk

---

4 St. George Tucker was also a friend of George Wythe, who mentored Jefferson at William and Mary.

Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
his father by doing the opposite of what he thought he wanted and believed, striking a contrarian tone in his letters and moving close to Randolph’s home in 1809 against his father’s advice. Accepting Randolph’s gift of a small plantation and fifteen slaves, Tucker also defied his father by marrying Mary “Polly” Coalter.\(^7\) St. George Tucker did not attend the wedding.

Describing himself as a “wild and wayward boy” and as a “high mettled colt,” the young Tucker’s character complemented Randolph’s famously emotional, eccentric, and high-strung personality.\(^8\) Their friendship was so close that Randolph always carried a miniature portrait of Tucker on his person.\(^9\) And there was always their shared antipathy to St. George Tucker and the Enlightenment values he represented. According to Philip Hamilton, St. George Tucker was a demanding and controlling parent who tried to foist the ideals of the Jeffersonian Enlightenment on his step-sons and sons.\(^10\) These values condemned the “passions,” upholding emotional moderation, self-control, rationality, and the need for pragmatic compromise in political matters. As St. George Tucker informed Randolph in a 1788 letter, young men had to learn to “check every Emotion of passion or disgust....”\(^11\) Beverley Tucker’s older brother Henry St. George Tucker, who became a moderate Jeffersonian Republican congressman, prominent Virginia lawyer, and professor at the University of Virginia, responded well to these lessons, and he sought to aid his father rein in the “freaks and eccentricities” of his younger brother.\(^12\) But the young Tucker rejected their lessons and efforts, informing his father in an 1815 letter that his

---


\(^8\) Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, “Notes for an autobiography, Stories, Anecdotes, and Sketches,” Box 83, Tucker-Coleman Papers, William and Mary (hereinafter “T-C”).


\(^11\) “St. George Tucker to Theodorick Bland Randolph and John Randolph,” August 13, 1788, Bryan Papers, University of Virginia.

\(^12\) “St. George Tucker to John Coalter,” July 20, 1790, Bryan Papers, University of Virginia. Also see “Henry St. George Tucker to St. George Tucker,” October 13, 1805, T-C.


c

Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
own infant son’s “violent temper” was delightful, and so he would raise his son according to Randolph’s example by working to encourage rather than “check” his passions. After all, Tucker had named his son not after St. George Tucker but rather John Randolph of Roanoke.

Tucker and Randolph truly were examples of the “monstrous phænomenon” that Thomas Jefferson could not “place among possible things in this age & this country” – of “the enthusiasm which characterizes youth” raising “parricide hands” against the Enlightenment. Tucker and Randolph, however, rebelled against their “old fogy” fathers not by adopting the “priestcraft” and monarchical centralization that Jefferson associated with the Federalists, but rather by embracing the early nineteenth century’s cutting-edge Romantic literature. Several historians have noticed a sharp cultural gap between St. George Tucker’s generation in Virginia and the succeeding one, but they have, with the notable exception of Tucker’s biographer Robert J. Brugger, generally neglected Romanticism’s crucial role in facilitating and shaping the younger generation’s break with the Jeffersonian Enlightenment. Jefferson himself certainly thought that nineteenth-century Romantic poetry “destroys” the mind’s tone, decrying the “poison” of Sir Walter Scott’s novels in 1818 as his granddaughters pored over them at Monticello for creating “bloated imagination[s]” among youthful readers, whose “inordinate passion” for Romanticism was leading to “sickly judgment, and disgust towards all the real business of life.”

---

13 “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to St. George Tucker,” May 8, 1815, T-C.
14 See Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 43.
17 “To Nathaniel Burwell,” Monticello, March 14, 1818, Thomas Jefferson: Writings, 1411.
Ironically, nineteenth-century Romantics borrowed from and elaborated upon aspects of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment such as the Noble Savage cult, as well as the sentimental novels that Jefferson had read in his youth.\textsuperscript{18} Romantics like Tucker understood themselves, however, as antithetical critics of the Enlightenment, celebrating what they perceived their eighteenth-century predecessors had despised. They thus denounced the Enlightenment for creating an insipidly boring, materialistic, standardized, and deeply alienating world order, idealizing instead adventures in exotic lands, passionate romances, political upheavals, duels, and wars, all of which were productive of emotional extremes. Randolph introduced Tucker to Romantic literature, prompting Henry St. George Tucker to worry in 1806 that his younger brother’s Romanticism would result in “acts of imprudence.”\textsuperscript{19} And so Tucker, from his youth onward, loathed the philosophes of the French Enlightenment and what he called in an 1808 letter to Randolph “the empire of reason” which they had built on both sides of the Atlantic.\textsuperscript{20}

Like Randolph and other Romantics, Tucker constantly sought to feel intense emotions, alternating between highs and lows. The “destructive ravages” of melancholy he periodically experienced were, he confided to Randolph in 1829, comparable to those experienced by the famous British Romantic poet Lord Byron.\textsuperscript{21} “[F]ew in this world,” he declared in another 1829 letter, could understand “distempers of a mind like mine.”\textsuperscript{22} But Tucker also sought emotional highs. One important source for him was religion, which attracted many other Romantics who were more interested in experiencing exultation than doctrinal orthodoxy. After his son and


\textsuperscript{19} Quoted in Brugger, \textit{Beverley Tucker}, 41.

\textsuperscript{20} “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to John Randolph,” March 3, 1808, T-C.

\textsuperscript{21} “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to John Randolph,” March 23, 1829, T-C. One such period began when Tucker nearly died of illness in 1826 and his wife passed away the following year, and it lasted into the early 1830s. See Brugger, \textit{op. cit.}, 162.

\textsuperscript{22} “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to Elizabeth Tucker Coalter Bryan,” May 13, 1829, Bryan Papers, University of Virginia.
daughter Fanny died of disease in 1816, Tucker became an evangelical Presbyterian.\textsuperscript{23} Besides, St. George Tucker had always liked to “deride religion,” and Tucker found his father’s Deistic rationalism arid and unfulfilling.\textsuperscript{24} It thus surely pleased him to think that his “infidel” father would be enraged “to see his own child bowing to the cross that he had spurned thro’ life.”\textsuperscript{25}

Like many other Romantics, Tucker also believed that he possessed an “instinct for genius” and was destined for “the highest pinnacles of fame and excellence,” working to emulate Randolph by cultivating a reputation for brilliant eccentricity.\textsuperscript{26} He yearned for the masses to appreciate his “genius” and hoped to shake up the world as a great leader. He accordingly despised political moderation and compromise as cowardly, hypocritical, and degrading, informing Randolph in 1807 that he yearned for a great crisis in which the people “who can neither see nor hear would be made to feel.”\textsuperscript{27} These desires did not fade with his youth, for he informed his friend and protégé James Henry Hammond of South Carolina in 1849 that he still burned with “Ambition,” loathed “coward compromise,” and yearned for “the high rewards which popular favor is eager to bestow, at the end of any revolutionary movement, on those who begin it.”\textsuperscript{28} He longed to experience battle, moreover, confessing in 1826 that he would relish “a

\textsuperscript{23} Tucker annoyed the more staid and Calvinistic members of his Presbyterian church when he indulged in excessive partying and dancing during his 1832 wedding to his second wife Lucy Smith Tucker, who was decades his junior and bore him seven children. Tucker grew less active as a Presbyterian thereafter. According to Rollin G. Osterweis, the antebellum South’s evangelical revivals were in part the result of Romanticism reaching the masses by means of Romantic novels circulating among an increasingly literate population, as well as the efforts of southern literary elites such as Tucker to popularize those novels and their own Romantic writings. See Rollin G. Osterweis, \textit{Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949).

\textsuperscript{24} Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, “Notes for an autobiography, Stories, Anecdotes, and Sketches, Box 83,” T-C.

\textsuperscript{25} Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, “Sermons and Religious Writings, folder 325, box 85,” T-C.

\textsuperscript{26} Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, “Notes for an autobiography, Stories, Anecdotes, and Sketches, Box 83,” T-C. See Brugger, \textit{Beverley Tucker}, 49-50.

\textsuperscript{27} “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to John Randolph,” December 30, 1807, T-C.

little taste of danger.”29 And so he adulated the Romantic “WILL” to glory and exultation through combat, writing of the southerners wresting Texas from Mexico in an unpublished 1844 essay that “to a stout heart and strong will in a good cause nothing is impossible.”30

Tucker was also, like so many other Romantics, critical of the “satanic mills” associated with industrialization.31 The philosophes’ obsession with “progress” and science was, he lamented in 1845, revealing “the secrets of the abyss,” removing all wonder from the world by standardizing and categorizing everything.32 “Even when... change is from worse to better there is always some loss,” he explained in an 1849 article, “and it will not do to rely on any calculations which, looking only to the gain, do not take that loss into account.”33 The Enlightenment’s demand that men subdue the “wayward sway of appetite and passion” was, he explained in an 1845 publication, bound to leave the “HEART” desperately restless, unfulfilled, and ripe for rebellion.34 His writings therefore excoriated the “men of cold heads and cold hearts” who preached the “Gospel of enlightened selfishness that calls itself utilitarian.”35 And those writings were prolific indeed. In 1834, Tucker helped found Richmond’s The Southern Literary Messenger, which was the antebellum South’s premiere literary journal. He helped edit it and published his own Romantic poetry and novels therein as well. He also reviewed works by the era’s literary giants in the Messenger, reinforcing southerners’ fondness for Romanticism by applauding such Romantics as Alphonse de Lamartine, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Friedrich

29 Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, “Sermon dated May 19, 1826, No. 1, Sermons and Religious Writings, folder 325, box 85,” T-C.
30 Quoted in O’Brien, Conjectures of Order, 869; Quoted in Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 161.
31 See Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 145.
32 Quoted in O’Brien, op. cit., 866.
34 Quoted in O’Brien, op. cit., 866.

Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
Schiller, Walter Scott, Thomas Carlyle, and Benjamin Disraeli while denigrating non-Romantics like Charles Dickens, Alexis de Tocqueville, Thomas Macaulay, and Gustave Flaubert.  

Tucker also mentored the writer who became the most famous of all antebellum southern Romantics, namely, Edgar Allan Poe, who admired Tucker’s poetry and edited the Messenger into 1837 guided by “[t]he mind of... Judge Beverly Tucker.” Poe therefore praised Tucker’s 1836 novel George Balcolmbe as, “upon the whole, the best American novel,” highlighting such Romantic content as its “skirmish with Indians,” “duel scene,” and “great variety of what the German critics term intrigue.” Tucker, however, viewed not Poe but rather Randolph as the South’s greatest tortured Romantic soul, writing in an 1851 article in The Southern Quarterly Review that “[c]ould they who envied him have exchanged places with him, who does not shudder to think of the yell of despair which might have accompanied the first sense of that agony of body and mind, which clung to him through all his splendid career.” Randolph was “[t]he martyr of disease, of body and mind,” but he was also an “eccentric and portentous star, shot from another system” to inspire his fellow southerners to great deeds. He was therefore a “marvel and a mystery,” a prophet possessing “innumerable particulars in which he was utterly unlike all other men.” Randolph’s life was, in short, altogether like that of “poor Byron.”

Randolph, Tucker thought, had reminded southerners of their true nationality as “Southrons” descended from England’s Cavaliers. Tucker had always instinctually disliked the a priori abstractions, natural rights doctrines, and social contract theories advocated by

38 Ibid., 58.
39 Quoted in O’Brien, Conjectures of Order, 671. Both Tucker and Randolph shared a fascination with the life and works of Byron. See ibid., 866. The Southern Quarterly Review was established and managed by Tucker’s friend William Gilmore Simms, who was a well-known Romantic writer in South Carolina.

Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
democratic Enlightenment *philosophes* and English-speaking sympathizers with the French Revolution, denouncing “the pernicious doctrines of Godwin” and teachings of Thomas Paine in an 1807 letter to Randolph as “cold speculative calculation.” Few things hence aggravated him more than those Romantics who would seek personal glory in championing revolutionary movements dedicated to implementing the Enlightenment’s political philosophy, which Tucker viewed as the antithesis of Romanticism. He thus bemoaned the fact in an 1848 letter to Hammond that the “sky-scraping” Romantic poet Alphonse de Lamartine had helped lead the French revolution of that year, explaining in *The Southern Quarterly Review* a few years later that Lamartine had thereby furthered the anti-Romantic “communist” doctrines of the *philosophes* and their heirs among the Jacobins and “the faculty of the college of Gironde.”

In Tucker’s view, Randolph had sensed that such Enlightenment projects as perpetual peace and the pursuit of happiness were intrinsically incompatible with Romanticism. Randolph had, after all, utterly repudiated the ardent Francophilia and enthusiasm for the French Revolution of his youth, doing so in large part thanks to Edmund Burke’s writings, to which he introduced the young Tucker as well. Burke was one of the leading pioneers of Romantic aestheticism, arguing that the neo-classical artistry favored by such Enlightenment critics as Viscount Bolingbroke could merely produce the “beautiful.” The “sublime,” in contrast, was found beyond reason in irrationality: “Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects,

---

40 “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to John Randolph,” January 12, 1807, T-C. See “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to St. George Tucker,” March 10, 1822, T-C. Also see Hamilton, *The Making and Unmaking of a Revolutionary Family*, 147. Unbeknownst to Tucker, his father’s faith in the future of Virginia’s Enlightenment experiment had been badly shaken by George Wythe’s notorious murder. As St. George Tucker opined in an 1809 letter to John Page, “[w]e have refined upon the words philosophy, philanthropy, and the Rights of Man until we are in real danger of that system of Anarchy with which the adversaries of a republican government reproach it.” Quoted in Tate, *Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals*, 136.


42 See Brugger, *op. cit.*, 28, 29.
or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.”

In his famous 1790 critique of Enlightenment political philosophy, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Burke argued in passages which arrested the attention of Randolph, Tucker, and many other southerners that the *philosophes* had brought so much discord and upheaval to France that military despotism was inevitable, passages such as the following: “As the colonists rise on you [France], the negroes rise on them. Troops again – Massacre, torture, hanging! These are your rights of men!”

Lamenting that “[t]he age of chivalry is gone: that of sophisters, economists and calculators has succeeded: and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever,” Burke did not merely lambast the *philosophes*; he also expounded what Maurice Cranston has called “a romantic form of conservatism” that was inherited by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Scott, Carlyle, and other British Romantics critical of the French Revolution, as well as by Randolph and Tucker in Virginia. According to Burke, a nation was not a contractual arrangement agreed to by abstract rational individuals but rather an intricate social organism that had existed from time immemorial composed of different classes working together in hierarchical harmony like organs in a body. An individual, then, was bound to his or her nation by “organic” ties of language, soil, blood, inherited status, and historical memories, ties which produced powerful feelings of loyalty and belonging that the rationalistic and utilitarian Enlightenment could not comprehend or rival. An “organic” society would thus inherently resist the efforts of the *philosophes* to treat the nation’s various organs as if they were all equal and alike, a situation which had prompted

---


Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
France’s frustrated *philosophes* to become Jacobin tyrants but had, in Virginia’s case, rendered the Jeffersonian *philosophes* disappointed and largely ineffectual “old fogies.”

Michael O’Brien has observed that Tucker was a “disciple of Burke,” and Burkean themes did indeed dominate his lectures at William and Mary. These lectures were published by Carey and Hart of Philadelphia in 1845 as *A Series of Lectures on the Science of Government, Intended to Prepare the Student for the Study of the Constitution of the United States*, in which Tucker claimed that a nation’s character and origins were not to be found in “theories of social compact” but rather in the “testimony of history.” There was no original abstract state of nature, he insisted; instead, mankind had always been divided into variegated groups which each had “a sort of collective personality.” Society was thus not “an affair of convention freely entered into,” and “the individual member is responsible to none but his own community.”

It followed for Tucker that the worst possible government was “the creature of theory.” By encouraging individuals to pursue their own self-interest, he claimed in his *Lectures*, the *philosophes* had brought out the worst in mankind, stimulating greed and cowardice rather than loyalty and bravery. The Jeffersonian pursuit of happiness could never call forth “[t]hat sentiment; that subordination of the heart; that devotion of Spirit, which accounts the surrender of life itself a cheap sacrifice.” The Enlightenment savants had, Tucker thus always insisted, actually debased liberty, worsened inequality, and undermined social fraternity, for meritocracy had encouraged the wealthy to scorn the old aristocratic ideal of paternalism as they ruthlessly exploited the poor, provoking the masses to in turn heed “the cant of demagogues about the

---

47 Quoted in ibid., 871.
48 Quoted in ibid., 867.
49 Quoted in ibid., 867.
50 Quoted in ibid., 871.
51 Quoted in Tate, *Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals*, 159.
inherent right of a majority to govern” as they disregarded the old feudal loyalty to chivalric rulers so as to wage class warfare by means of Jacobin state-building and militarization.52

As Romantics throughout Europe strove to develop and popularize new national identities rooted in blood, soil, language, and history, Tucker applied what Brugger has termed “Burkean organicism” to the South and thereby created a new Romantic southern national identity.53 He was one of the first intellectuals in the Old Dominion to depict Virginian planters as descendants of the aristocratic English Cavaliers, and the whole southern planting class was, he insisted with reference to Virginia, “an emanation, & as it were, a part of her.”54 And so he angrily denied George Bancroft’s claim that Virginia’s planters were of plebeian origin in an 1835 Messenger review of the New Englander’s works, for Virginian planters had always been a “chivalrous and generous race.”55 As for Virginia’s poor whites, Tucker thought of them as the South’s volk essence, romanticizing them as simple, honest, and loyal folk who were close to the soil and happy to defer to the dashing “Cavaliers” who had always benevolently ruled Virginia.

Tucker thought that the Jeffersonian philosophes had betrayed Virginia by trying to reform and rationalize its “organic” English social structure according to the dictates of the alien French Enlightenment, and they had to no small degree fostered animosity between classes and sub-regions as well as disrespect for authority in Virginia where harmony and deference had previously reigned by encouraging democratic egalitarianism among all Virginian white men.

As he complained in an 1819 letter to his father blasting “the spirit of the French Revolution” for

52 “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to St. George Tucker,” March 10, 1822 T-C. According to Tucker, those who “profess to make the greatest good of the greatest number the sole object of all their legislation… proclaim an irreconcilable war of the poor against the rich.” Quoted in Tate, Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals, 224. Tucker’s reference to the “greatest good of the greatest number” was probably a dig at Bentham.

53 Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 166. Tucker therefore truly was, in O’Brien’s words, “the first Southerner to offer a Romantic theory of government.” O’Brien, Conjectures of Order, 865.

54 Quoted in Tate, op. cit., 211. For more on the southern intellectuals who expounded this theme, see the classic work of William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character (1961; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).


Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
sully Virginia, “I was brought up among people who hated kings – despised priests – derided religion – and disclaimed authority of all sorts except the authority of laws emanating from the majority of the people for the time being.”56 Hoping that Virginia would never “relinquish her limitations on the right of suffrage” or abolish “her little harmless aristocracy,” Tucker opposed every effort to reform and democratize Virginia’s constitution, fighting the “demon of frantic democracy” during both the 1829-1830 and 1850-1851 state constitutional conventions.57 Jefferson’s abolition of entail and primogeniture in Virginia had already harmed “the ancient aristocracy of Land-holders,” and he expressed his abhorrence of further democratizing reforms to Virginia’s former governor Littleton Waller Tazewell in an 1838 letter using Burkean language, for “the admirable colonial constitution, which we had the sense to retain with none but indispensable alterations, we have since treated as a boy treats his watch, which he pulls to pieces to find out the secret of its movement.”58 Jefferson and his fellow universalistic “political theorists,” he explained in his Lectures, saw Virginia’s constitution as “a stumbling block and an offence” because it was not democratic or rationalized yet “worked well,” refusing to accept the fact that “[t]here are features in the constitution of Virginia, especially, utterly at variance with all theory, but in exact conformity to the wants, habits, and prejudices of the community.”59

The Virginian philosophes had also imbibed the anti-slavery ideals of the French Enlightenment, and where Jefferson and St. George Tucker had denounced slavery as an evil, Tucker declared slavery to be a “salutary influence” on the South as early as 1819.60 Jefferson and St. George Tucker had famously claimed that slaveholding rendered slaveholders cruel,

56 Quoted in Tate, Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals, 202.
57 “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to St. George Tucker,” March 10, 1822 T-C; Quoted in Tate, op. cit., 185.
58 “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to Littleton Waller Tazewell,” January 8, 1838, T-C.
59 Quoted in O’Brien, Conjectures of Order, 871.
60 Quoted in Tate, op. cit., 229. For Henry St. George Tucker’s famous criticisms of slavery but dearth of anti-slavery actions, see Hamilton, The Making and Unmaking of a Revolutionary Family, 154.

Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
despotic, and potentially unfit for democratic society. In contrast, Tucker echoed Burke by boasting in his *Lectures* that “the spirit of servitude can never enter deeply into the heart made haughty by the habitual exercise of unquestioned and inherent authority.”

Thanks to slaveholding, then, southern masters were inherently commanding figures who would lead the poor whites in battle to defend the community’s liberty and independence against foreign threats. Extrapolating the paternalistic relationship that Randolph had sought to cultivate with his “poor creatures” to the whole South, moreover, Tucker claimed that if Virginia’s poor whites were akin to the hardy British yeomanry of Sir Walter Scott’s novels, then southern slaves were equivalent to the English aristocracy’s domestic servants. Each slave was, he insisted, humble, happy, and full of “loyal devotion” to his or her master, who in turn cherished a “reciprocal feeling of parental attachment to his humble dependent.” The emotional bond between master and slave, Tucker explained in an 1836 *Messenger* article, belonged “to a class of feelings ‘by which the heart is made better.’” And so emancipation, whether immediate or gradual, compensated or not, “presents not a question of profit and loss, but the sundering of a tie in which the best and purest affections are deeply implicated. It imports the surrender of friendships the most devoted, the most enduring, the most valuable.”

Thus, where Jefferson and St. George Tucker wished to eventually free the slaves and “colonize” them in Africa, Tucker wanted them to be perpetually protected by what he claimed was the South’s “beautiful system of domestic harmony.”

---

61 Quoted in O’Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 872.
63 Quoted in Tate, *op. cit.*, 221.
65 Quoted in Tate, *op. cit.*, 223.
66 Quoted in *ibid.*, 223. Also see O’Brien, *op. cit.*, 872.
For Tucker, the “Puritan” North was the polar opposite of what he proudly called the South’s “unenlightened, unpretending, uncanting community of white and black.” Having rejected traditional English mores since the days of Cromwell, the North’s levelling and centralizing “Puritan” fanatics could never, he opined, understand or tolerate the South’s “organic” social order, which allowed southerners to “act together in a common spirit and in perfect harmony” without any need for strong governments. And so the North’s demagogical leaders would not rest, he explained in an 1835 *Messenger* article based on his lectures at William and Mary, until they had assimilated the South into “the prostrate democracy of free labor and universal suffrage” by means of abolitionist agitation and federal power.

Jefferson and his fellow *philosophes* had thus unwittingly betrayed and endangered Virginia not only by foisting the French Enlightenment on it through their democratic reforms and anti-slavery posturing, but also by uniting the South to the North. According to Tucker, the Union was too different in terms of its “variety of soil, and climate, and production,” to be a natural political entity even if its population were actually homogeneous in character, and so only a deluded “old fogey” could have thought that such antagonistically dissimilar societies as the “Cavalier” South and “Puritan” North might live under the same government in harmony. After all, he always insisted, Virginia and Massachusetts supported opposite sides in the English Civil War. Beguiled by their “fair and fanciful theories,” Jefferson and his compatriots had, he explained in his *Lectures*, needed to defy and suppress Virginia’s natural “Cavalier” character in

---

68 Quoted in Tate, *Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals*, 226.
70 Quoted in Tate, *op. cit.*, 163.

Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
order to forge the Union, which could only ever be an artificial and dysfunctional multinational polity in Tucker’s view, a polity which was inherently un-Romantic in character.\textsuperscript{71}

Tucker constantly sought to turn his Burkean Romanticism into social and political realities. For instance, he sought to emulate Randolph by cultivating a paternalistic relationship with his slaves, whom he termed his “humble and dependent friends.”\textsuperscript{72} He hence called Phyllis, one of his “humble, faithful, affectionate and cheerful” slaves, a “treasure beyond all price” in an 1810 letter to his father.\textsuperscript{73} Disappointed that his service as a Virginia militia officer in the War of 1812 had not seen him acquire glory or experience exultation in battle, as well as feeling that his career prospects in Virginia were being held back by the “old fogies” and that he was living too much in Randolph’s shadow, Tucker moved to Missouri after the war to work as a circuit court judge.\textsuperscript{74} Seeking to cultivate a reputation for brilliant eccentricity there as per Randolph’s example, Tucker opened his first law office inside the hollow of a large sycamore tree and styled himself “Tucker of Ardmore,” which was his “beautiful and romantic” plantation in Missouri’s Dardenne area and the future seat of a “powerful and noble family.”\textsuperscript{75} But he was also trying to extend the “Cavalier” nation, informing his father in an 1816 letter that he had moved to Missouri so as to turn it into a “true Virginia settlement.”\textsuperscript{76}

Tucker had taken care not to break up any slave families during his move to Dardenne, and he encouraged his wife’s prestigious South Carolina relatives to join him there with their

\textsuperscript{71} Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, “Literary Notices,” \textit{Southern Literary Messenger}, 1 (1835), 587. See O’Brien, \textit{Conjectures of Order}, 865. 871. While Tucker allowed that a few of the Founders had possessed “sound practical wisdom,” he rarely praised them, although he often lauded Randolph as a hero in his writings and lectures. Quoted in ibid., 871.

\textsuperscript{72} Quoted in Hamilton, \textit{The Making and Unmaking of a Revolutionary Family}, 152.

\textsuperscript{73} Quoted in Tate, \textit{Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals}, 222; “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to St. George Tucker,” January 14, 1810, T-C.

\textsuperscript{74} Tucker’s friendship with Randolph was also temporarily soured by Randolph’s sister Judith, who feared that the childless Randolph would leave his inheritance to Tucker’s children rather than to her own.

\textsuperscript{75} “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to Elizabeth Coalter Bryan,” October 3, 1830, Bryan Papers, University of Virginia. See Brugger, \textit{Beverley Tucker}, 49-50.

\textsuperscript{76} Quoted in Brugger, \textit{op. cit.}, 58.
own slaves. William Harper, who became a prominent pro-slavery theorist in the 1840s, and the future U.S. senator William Campbell Preston were among the relations who answered his call.  With the South’s “finest materials” joining his “choice society” and a powerful ally in Missouri politics in his friend and fellow Virginian Frederick Bates, Tucker hoped that Missouri would soon attain “homogeneity” with the South as a full-blown slave state. He therefore organized political rallies, arranged grand jury petitions, and wrote editorials in St. Louis newspapers to foil the 1819 Tallmadge Amendment, which would have restricted slavery in Missouri. He took “pride” thereafter that Missouri became a slave state which was “not just like the other western states, and that the difference has been in part produced by me,” although it always irked him that Missouri was not “becoming more homogenous” as quickly as he desired. And so he urged Missourians in 1826 to amend their state constitution so as to forbid all future immigration by “yankeys,” and to expel all the “foreign” northerners already present.

State’s rights decentralism was, thanks to Randolph’s influence, the only “old fogey” ideal which Tucker did not reject, for he had revered Tertium Quid principles ever since Randolph took him to North Carolina to visit the Old Republican leader Nathaniel Macon in 1810 on what Brugger calls a “pilgrimage.” Insofar as Tucker participated in electoral politics, he backed whichever candidate or party he deemed most hostile to federal “consolidation.” He and Randolph were therefore pleased to see Andrew Jackson defeat the “yankey” John Quincy

77 See Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 224.
79 See Brugger, op. cit., 77.
80 “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to St. George Tucker,” July 2, 1825, T-C; quoted in Hamilton, op. cit., 186. Many of the most prominent settlers at Dardenne such as Harper and Preston had left by the mid-1820s. Tucker therefore feared that he was “bleeding away his life in obscurity.” “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to St. George Tucker,” May 13, 1822, T-C.
81 “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to St. George Tucker,” August 7, 1826, T-C. The “yankey” targets of Tucker’s wrath countered by highlighting St. George Tucker’s anti-slavery legacy. See Brugger, op. cit., 60-61.
82 See Brugger, op. cit., 56, 43. According to Brugger, Tucker had an “ingrained suspicion of government” and a “suspicious regard for a distant, central government.” Ibid., 56. Also see Tate, Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals, 160.
Adams in the 1828 presidential election, and Tucker backed Jackson and Senator Thomas Hart Benton against Henry Clay’s National Republicans in the 1830 mid-term election as a member of the Missouri Democratic convention.\textsuperscript{83} He even tried to run for Congress as an extreme state’s rights Democrat but was passed over in favor of a more moderate candidate. Expecting that Jackson would bless his plans to repeat his Missouri feats by expanding the slave South into Texas, Tucker instead returned to Virginia to care for the dying Randolph on the eve of the Nullification Crisis, although he did end up leasing most of his fifty or so slaves in Texas.\textsuperscript{84}

Tucker broke with the Democrats in 1832, however, when Jackson quashed South Carolina’s attempt to nullify the federal tariff, claiming that the sinister influence of New York’s Martin Van Buren had beguiled Jackson into turning the Democracy into “the highest church of centralism.”\textsuperscript{85} In response, Tucker helped found the state’s rights wing of the Whig party in the South, supporting Senator Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee in the 1836 election against both Van Buren and Clay.\textsuperscript{86} One of his fellow Virginian state’s rights Whigs, moreover, was his friend the future U.S. president and Confederate congressman John Tyler, who cast the only vote in the Senate against Jackson’s “Force Bill” during the Nullification Crisis (the other southern senators merely abstained). Acting in part on Tucker’s advice, Tyler resigned from the Senate and defected from the Democracy after the Virginia legislature instructed him to help expunge the Senate’s censure of Jackson’s conduct. Tyler went on to become White’s running mate in the 1836 election. As one of William and Mary’s Visitors, he also helped Tucker acquire his

\textsuperscript{83} See Brugger, \textit{Beverley Tucker}, 71.
\textsuperscript{84} Tucker rationalized parting from his slaves by viewing his act as an indirect contribution to the spread of the southern social order into Texas. See William W. Freehling, \textit{The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 392-393.
\textsuperscript{85} Quoted in Tate, \textit{Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals.}, 169.
\textsuperscript{86} Tucker was also a relation of White’s through his wife Lucy Ann Smith Tucker.
deceased father’s professorship at the college, where Tucker in turn educated Tyler’s eldest son Robert, who ended up as the Confederacy’s Register of the Treasury.87

Tucker served as one of Tyler’s informal advisors when “His Accidency” ascended to the presidency after President Harrison’s death in 1841, and he sought to exacerbate the differences between the state’s rights and Clay Whigs. He therefore wrote articles in Virginia newspapers such as Thomas Ritchie’s influential Enquirer condemning Clay’s national bank legislation, which Tyler vetoed. Working with his friend and fellow Romantic conservative Abel P. Upshur, who was a Virginian politician, judge, lawyer, Messenger contributor, and William and Mary Visitor, as well as Tyler’s Secretary of the Navy and later Secretary of State, Tucker also encouraged Tyler to seek Texas’s annexation.88 Fearing that waging war against Mexico would strengthen the federal government, Tucker wished to see Texas acquired without any fighting breaking out. Although he ended up endorsing “Mr. Polk’s War,” he hoped that it would be conducted primarily by volunteer southern militias operating locally in Texas. He was therefore discomfited to see the U.S. government successfully conduct an ambitious campaign against the Mexican capital. Hoping that the Virginia-born war hero Zachary Taylor would prove to be another Tyler Whig, Tucker attended Taylor’s inauguration in order to gauge the new president. But as he informed Hammond in 1849, his conversation with Taylor was interrupted by the “impudent Yankeys” who would, in Tucker’s view, go on to corrupt Taylor and ruin the Whig Party as a vehicle to protect state’s rights, expand the South, and cripple the U.S. government.89

This result did not particularly upset Tucker, however, because his primary political goal had always been to bring about southern secession, and so federal elections were, he claimed in

87 See Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 138-139.
88 Waddy Thompson, whose son was studying under Tucker at William and Mary, was also appointed the U.S. minister to Mexico in 1842 by the Tyler administration thanks to Tucker’s influence. See ibid., 149.
89 Quoted in Brugger, op. cit., 176.
an 1841 pamphlet, ultimately a “waste of excitement which, once spent, leaves the mind unfit for action.”90 If both he and the “old fogies” believed in state’s rights decentralism and held that every state had a reserved right to secede from the Union, the “old fogies” did not want the slave states to exercise that right, hoping to preserve both state’s rights and the Union while arguing that secession would destroy not just the Union but also state’s rights by forcing the new northern and southern polities to establish large standing armies under central control for the sake of security. Tucker, in contrast, believed that state’s rights would only be pure and secure if the South seceded from an inherently anti-state’s rights Union dominated by the North, with which the temporizing “old fogies” had continually and foolishly compromised. Southerners could only expect to live under a true state’s rights constitution as a league of sovereign states when, he told Hammond in an 1848 letter, they “had a country,” revering a new constitution purged of all the centralizing elements which the North had introduced into the unnatural and discordant bundle of ultimately untenable compromises that was the 1787 Constitution.91

Although Tucker cooperated at times with the “old fogies” to temporarily foil the “consolidating” North, he also encouraged or goaded them to perceive the necessity of secession, insisting that the North would never accept state’s rights. For instance, while both Tucker and Jefferson perceived the Tallmadge Amendment as a power-grab by northern centralizers, Tucker was, unlike Jefferson, “ready to go all lengths” during the Missouri Crisis, publicly calling for the South to secede and for the southern states to ready their militias for war.92 When Jefferson denounced those “sons” of his generation who were stoking “unwise and unworthy passions” in

90 Quoted in Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 135.
91 Quoted in ibid., 199. “So anomalous is their plan,” Tucker explained in his Lectures with reference to the Founders, “that, to this day, the ablest expounders of the constitution are not agreed upon its fundamental principles, and so little does it resemble any other government, whether past or present, that all attempts to illustrate and explain it by analogies to them, are sure to lead to dangerous mistakes.” Quoted in O’Brien, Conjectures of Order, 783.
92 “Nathaniel Beverley Tucker to Thomas A. Smith,” May 15, 1819, T-C.
the South so as to produce a “scission” among the states and urged southerners to defeat northern “consolidation” by restoring the Union to state’s rights federalism in 1820, Tucker was disappointed but not surprised. According to a letter written to President Monroe congratulating him for securing Missouri’s admission as a slave state, he also lamented that disunion and war had been averted. Tucker was also delighted to discover during the Nullification Crisis that the dying Randolph was now fully committed to secession and looking forward to war with the North. With Randolph’s support, he called for South Carolina to go beyond nullification by seceding, promising South Carolinians that the South would emulate their secession in Virginia and Missouri newspapers. Informing his wife in early 1833 that he yearned for a “bloody struggle,” he offered his military services to South Carolina and even barged into the White House to harangue Jackson. Much to Tucker’s disappointment, however, the Nullification Crisis did not result in southern secession, and so he lamented in a Missouri newspaper in 1833 that the “old fogies” had ruined another chance for the South to have “sprung up among the nations of the earth.” Yet he remained confident that disunion “cometh and will come,” and his next attempt to get the “ball of Revolution” rolling was to encourage Hammond, who had become a U.S. congressman, to aggravate the 1835-36 abolitionist petitions controversy in order to cause a secession crisis. Stirred by Tucker’s 1836 letter informing him that “decisive action” on his part might trigger the formation of a “homogenous and united” southern nation, Hammond called for Congress to reject the so-called

94 See Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 57.
96 Quoted in Brugger, op. cit., 86. See ibid., 88-89.
97 Quoted in ibid., 86. While Henry St. George Tucker condemned Jackson’s high-handedness in the name of state’s rights during the Nullification Crisis, he, in contrast to his younger brother, utterly deplored nullification and the prospect of secession for the sake of the Union.
98 Ibid., 90.
“gag rule” compromise endorsed by the “old fogies,” proposing instead that Congress reject all abolitionist petitions outright rather than merely table them.\(^9\) “Let the decisive step be taken,” Tucker declared in another letter to Hammond in 1836, assuring him that South Carolina’s secession would place Virginia’s “old fogies” in a position wherein they “would be constrained to join you, or see their own dwellings consumed by the flames kindled to destroy you.”\(^10\)

Although Hammond had shared Tucker’s secessionist correspondence with South Carolina’s governor George McDuffie, who had thanked Hammond in 1836 “for Judge Tucker’s letter,” with which he “entirely concur[red],” Tucker was disappointed once again to see South Carolina balk.\(^11\) Nevertheless, he continued to hope that his South Carolinian friends might force the “old fogies” of Virginia and the rest of the South to side with their southern kin in a conflict between the Palmetto State and U.S. troops invading from the North, telling Hammond in an 1849 letter that he wished “to God I were with you in S. C. It is a theatre where a man can act.”\(^12\) And so he informed his friend the South Carolinian Romantic writer William Gilmore Simms in an 1851 letter that he had “vowed” during the Missouri Crisis to, with reference to the Union, “never give rest to my eyes nor slumber to my eyelids until it is shattered into fragments. I strove for it in ’33... and I will strive for it while I live....”\(^13\) Tucker, however, did not place all of his hopes in South Carolina, predicting that the honor of serving as the South’s secessionist vanguard might instead go to Young Virginia, as it were, for “there is now no escape from the many-headed despotism of numbers, but by a strong and bold stand on the banks of the Potomac....”\(^14\) Thus, even as he urged South Carolina to exacerbate the sectional tensions

\(^10\) Quoted in Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 316.
\(^11\) Quoted in ibid., 316.
\(^12\) Quoted in ibid., 483.
\(^14\) Quoted in ibid., xii
unleashed by the 1850 crisis over slavery’s westward expansion by hanging abolitionists found within its borders, executing its recovered fugitive slaves, and enslaving its free blacks, Tucker reposed his hopes in the young, college-educated Virginians whom he called “my boys.”

Romantic nationalist movements in Europe aiming to shatter multinational polities and replace them with new homogeneous nation-states such as Young Italy often targeted youthful audiences, and Tucker’s version was no different. Tapping into his students’ enthusiasm for Romantic literature, Tucker recited Lord Byron’s poetry in his classes and regaled his students with Randolph’s beloved tales of the Arabian nights even as he taught them that they owed no loyalty to the heterogeneous, multinational Union of the “old fogies” but rather only to their “organic” nation of Virginia and, by extension, the South. Indeed, he even had his students turn daily toward William and Mary’s Muse of Virginia in imitation of Muslims praying toward Mecca. Many Virginians thought that Virginia was in decline by the 1830s, and Tucker provided his students with an explanation for this perceived declension as well as a solution. Virginia’s “estimation abroad is not what it has been,” he claimed in his Lectures, because the “old fogies” had damaged it by importing Enlightenment notions from France and by putting it at the mercy of the “Puritan” North. The “men with grey beards,” he informed his students, were starting to at last “put on their spectacles” and see their errors, but even if they were now more leery of the North’s “centralism” than in the past, their residual loyalty to the Union remained a frustrating obstacle to secession, which alone could avert “the evil day when the history of the liberty and happiness of Virginia shall furnish school-boy’s themes in distant lands.”

\[105\] Quoted in Tate, *Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals*, 159.
\[107\] See Brugger, *Beverley Tucker*, 129.
\[108\] For more on antebellum Virginians’ perceptions of decline, see Carmichael, *The Last Generation*.
\[109\] Quoted in O’Brien, *op. cit.*, 868.
\[110\] Quoted in O’Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 796, 868. See Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, *A Discourse on the Dangers That Threaten the Free Institutions of the United States, Being An Address to the Literary Societies of*
therefore up to his students to overcome that obstacle, and their rebellious efforts to take Virginia out of the Union would, he promised them in 1842, “summon them from obscurity, and marshal them to their places as leaders of men, and masters of circumstance and destiny.”

Yet how could Tucker have expected a seceding South to resist the industrial North’s might? Several historians have noticed that Tucker’s hostility to what the famous British Romantic poet William Blake called the “satanic mills” of industrialization was strong even for a Romantic. No matter how zealous its youth might be in battle, surely an agricultural South could not hope to prevail against a U.S. government whose armies had advanced through the heart of Mexico in 1847. Historians have therefore deemed Tucker an unrealistic dreamer who was bound to bring nothing but death and ruin to his followers. That may well be an accurate assessment, but it has been made without taking Tucker’s geopolitical thought into consideration, for he expected that southern secession would be abetted by the British Empire.

Like Randolph, Tucker thought that Virginia had been right to declare its independence in 1776 as the British government grew increasingly tyrannical, but Virginia did so, he claimed, in order to preserve its traditional English social order from an oppressive central government, insisting alongside Randolph that Burke and the majority of Britons had endured the same yoke

---

Hampden Sydney College, Virginia, Read on the 22nd of September, 1841, at the Request of the Philanthropic Society of That College (Richmond: John B. Martin & Company, 1841).

111 Quoted in Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 131. See Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, An Address Delivered Before the Society of the Alumni of William and Mary College, Upon the 5th of July, 1842 (Richmond: P. D. Bernard, 1842).


Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
and sympathized with Virginia. Virginians, then, seceded from the British Empire not to become part of an experimental democratic “American” nation but rather to preserve their “Cavalier” character. In contrast, the “Puritan” North revolted in 1776 so as to build a new Cromwellian republic as antithetical to English “Cavalier” ways as Cromwell’s original. Britain had begun promoting abolitionism, Tucker thought, partly because the “Puritans” were rising to power not just in the Union but in Britain itself, and so Tucker, appalled by the prospect of universal suffrage among Virginia’s white men, denounced the 1848 Chartist demonstrations in Britain as yet another example of growing “Puritan” power. Yet Britain’s anti-levellers also supported abolitionism, doing so, Tucker surmised, to punish the South for joining the Union and abetting the North’s industrialization. Although “[t]he history of the world affords no parallel to the advance of Great Britain in wealth,” he observed in his Lectures, “and in all elements of prosperity, during the present century,” the North’s industrial might was rapidly catching up to Britain’s. Northerners, he argued, were exploiting their electoral dominance within the U.S. government to siphon capital from the South through the tariff, taxing southerners for importing British manufactured goods so as to make the South a captive market for the northern industries that were consuming an ever-greater share of the South’s cotton production at Britain’s expense.

This entire situation would change, Tucker predicted, as soon as the South seceded and offered free trade to Britain while cutting off trade with the North, arguing in an 1851 letter to Hammond that “[t]he only hope that Virginia can ever again recover her place in her own regard,

---

113 See Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, “Political Science; A discourse on the question, ‘What is the seat of sovereignty in the United States, and what the relation of the People of those States to the Federal and State Governments respectively,’ read before the Petersburg Lyceum on the 15th of May, 1839,” Southern Literary Messenger, 5 (August, 1839), 566. Also see Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 128.


and in the respect of the world, is in disunion.” And the only part of “the world” that really mattered to him was the British Empire. Claiming in an 1850 letter to Hammond that the British knew from their own supposedly disastrous emancipation experiments in the West Indies that “civilization cannot exist in Southern latitudes without slavery,” Tucker held that the abolitionist conspiracies which Britain had apparently instigated against the South, conspiracies such as the attempts which he and Upshur had perceived on Britain’s part to induce Texas to abolish slavery and eschew annexation by the Tyler administration, were actually attempts to goad the southern states to secede and align themselves with Britain against the North. If the South were to heed Britain’s hints, he mused, the British manufacturers who perceived the threat posed to them by an industrializing North and who were hungry for southern cotton would, with the blessing of such conservative British Romantic intellectuals as Thomas Carlyle, quickly induce the British government to drop abolitionism. Exchanging cotton and other staple crop exports for British manufactured goods under terms of free trade under the protection of the Royal Navy, the South would, Tucker calculated, be able to withstand any of the “Puritan” North’s invasions.

While the “old fogies” dreamed that free trade would lead to universal peace and prosperity in perpetuity, free trade was for Tucker a means to the end of forging an alliance with Britain, destroying the North’s economy, and stirring up war, for with its invading armies and blockading navies shattered and its industries deprived of their southern cotton supplies and captive market, the North would, he thought, collapse, rendering industrial Britain supreme and the South’s agricultural “organic” society truly pure and independent. Southern secession would give British conservatives the political leverage needed to defeat the abolitionist “Puritan”

116 Quoted in Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 208.
117 Quoted in Freehling, The Road to Disunion, 484. See ibid., 392.
elements of old England even as it would destroy the power and plans of New England. The two great branches of the “Anglo-Norman” English “Cavalier” family which had been severed by the tyranny of George III would thus draw close once more, foiling the ascendancy of trans-Atlantic “Puritanism” in the process. Indeed, the disconnected branches of the Tucker family might even be reunited as well, for while St. George Tucker had moved to Virginia from British Bermuda, his nephew Henry Tucker had cast his lot with Britain and rose eventually to the rank of treasurer of the British East India Company. And so a dying Tucker wrote joyfully to Hammond in 1851 of two English travelers he encountered, one of whom told him that in Williamsburg there was “more here to remind him of what England was than anywhere else,” while the other declared that Virginia was, in contrast to New England, “so much like old England.”

Tucker therefore urged Hammond to travel to England to secure British backing for southern secession in 1851, even suggesting to South Carolina’s secretary of state that the Palmetto State and other seceding southern states ought to be “ready to meet her more than halfway” by excluding Britain’s black sailors from the restrictions imposed on black sailors from the North in southern ports. Britain could not be expected to instantly embrace the South’s pro-slavery position, particularly if only a few rather than all of the southern states seceded and declared their hostility to the North. When Tucker wrote to Thomas Carlyle, who had famously denounced the “magniloquent Philosophism” of the French Revolution, in 1851 to ask the celebrated Scottish Romantic to publicly endorse southern slavery, he was therefore frustrated but not devastated when Carlyle refused to do so. Tucker, after all, had previously criticized

120 Quoted in Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 201.
121 Quoted in ibid., 190.
Carlyle for adulating the nation-state and admiring Cromwell.\textsuperscript{123} It would be difficult, he surmised, to wean the British entirely away from “Puritan” abolitionism, and since Britain would have to remain industrialized to offset the North’s power, it might not ever fully accept the South’s pro-slavery values. Tucker therefore believed that an independent South would most truly embody the English “Cavalier” way of life in the future, not industrial Britain.\textsuperscript{124}

Yet Britain’s Romantics could still serve the South as a source of cultural revival and purification. Southerners, Tucker insisted, ought to read British Romantic literature and develop their own southern Romantic literature in imitation thereof while eschewing all authors from the North, which was, in its “intellectual arrogance,” trying to debase and subsume southern culture by flooding the South with “Puritan” novels masquerading as “American” literature.\textsuperscript{125} “Our reading men are familiar with the best writers of England,” he boasted in an 1849 Southern Quarterly Review article, “and try to keep up with the literature of the day. In doing this they have little time to spare for those who write only because they think that \textit{what they call America} ought to have a literature of its own. We, here in the South, are not aware of any such necessity. We are for free trade, and go for... the best quality and at the cheapest market.”\textsuperscript{126} And so he hoped that southerners would read his own Romantic novels, particularly his 1836 work \textit{The Partisan Leader: A Tale of the Future}, for as Tucker declared in 1850, “I would rather be known, ten years hence, as the author of that book, than any thing ever published on this continent.”\textsuperscript{127}

Tucker wrote \textit{The Partisan Leader} hoping, in the short term, to turn the abolitionist petitions controversy in Congress into a secession crisis, as well as to bolster Hugh Lawson

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{124} See Brugger, \textit{Beverley Tucker}, 161. “We too are English,” Tucker declared in 1851 on behalf of his fellow southerners, who might well prove to be, he suggested, even more English than the English themselves. Quoted in ibid., 201.
\textsuperscript{125} Quoted in ibid., 78.
\end{flushleft}
Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia

White’s electoral prospects in the nascent Whig Party and to harm Van Buren’s campaign. In the long run, however, he wanted his novel to change “the premises from which other men commonly begin to reason,” for, as he informed Hammond in an 1836 letter, secession might be a long-term project because the “old fogies” would likely convince Virginians to compromise on the abolitionist petitions issue even though “[t]he mind of Virginia is with you....”\textsuperscript{128} Virginia, then, would only secede when Tucker had turned more Virginians in general and young Virginians in particular into “Virginians” who were conscious of their society’s true “mind.”\textsuperscript{129}

Receiving support from his old Dardenne friend the state’s rights Whig senator William Campbell Preston, Upshur, who wrote a glowing review of The Partisan Leader in the Messenger, and from other subscribers to the Richmond Whig, which also endorsed Tucker’s novel in an 1837 review, Tucker did his best to finish his work before the 1836 presidential election. Yet because he and his backers desired anonymity and because he was finishing up another southern Romantic novel called George Balcombe, which Tucker had written, Preston observed, holding “the little finger of [Walter] Scott,” The Partisan Leader was not completed in time.\textsuperscript{130} In the end, 2,000 copies of Tucker’s novel were published in late 1836.\textsuperscript{131}

C. Hugh Holman has observed that The Partisan Leader “embodies in almost pure form the complex of sentiments that shaped the southern secessionist movement.”\textsuperscript{132}Narrated by Edward William Sydney, who is the fictitious author of and a character within the novel, The Partisan Leader is “a tale of the future” because it purports to have been published in 1856 as a

\textsuperscript{129} Quoted in O’Brien, \textit{op. cit.}, 340.
\textsuperscript{130} “William Campbell Preston to Nathaniel Beverley Tucker,” November 6, 1836, T-C.
\textsuperscript{131} The original edition of The Partisan Leader was sold in a two-volume set, each volume selling for $1. See Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 241. As for George Balcombe, 2,200 copies were published by Harper & Brothers of New York in 1836 and all but 700 had been sold by 1838. See ibid., 241.
\textsuperscript{132} Holman, “Introduction,” The Partisan Leader, viii. Holman oddly claims, however, that Tucker’s primary intention was “not to prophesy disunion and strife” but rather “to warn against the grave dangers to the nation that would result from the election of Van Buren.” Ibid., vii.
historical romance that describes events which supposedly occurred in 1849, when young Virginian “Cavaliers” pushed their “old fogey” elders into secession and drove the “Yankee” soldiers of Martin Van Buren’s centralized, demagogical, and abolitionist Union from Virginia. The novel’s “old fogies” are represented by Hugh Trevor, who is seventy years old and a retired statesman with “an amiable disposition, and all the accomplishments that can adorn a gentleman.” Holding fast to the values of the Jeffersonian Enlightenment as received from his father’s generation, “[t]he steadiness of his principles could never be questioned, but, it was thought, he had sometimes deemed it wise to compromise, when men of less cautious temper would have found safety in prudent boldness.” “Bred up in the school of State rights,” Hugh had “been accustomed to look, with a jealous eye, on the progressive usurpations of the Federal Government,” and so he supported Jackson against the centralizing tendencies of “the younger Adams.” Yet thanks to his “habitual reserve and moderation,” as well as to his reverence for the Union, Hugh had condemned secession during the Nullification Crisis, for “though he recognized the right of secession, he deprecated all thought of resorting to that remedy.” As his “infirmity” steadily increased, Hugh finally “brought himself to believe union, on any terms, better than disunion, under any circumstances,” endorsing Van Buren in the 1836 election and striving thereafter to “subdue the spirit and tame down the State pride of Virginia.”

Van Buren won Virginia in the 1840 and 1844 elections thanks to Hugh and the “old fogies,” as well as to vote-rigging and lavish amounts of federal patronage. As a result, the Deep South states took “decisive action” by seceding, and they “immediately formed a Southern

---

133 Tucker, The Partisan Leader, 36.
134 Ibid., 36.
135 Ibid., 37.
136 Ibid., 37.
137 Ibid., 57, 38, 78.

Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
Confederacy.” Yet it “would have seemed as if the spirit of John Randolph had risen from the sleep of death” in 1848, when rising secessionism among young Virginians induced Van Buren to impose martial law in Virginia, and so “the power and will of a fixed majority in the North, to give a master to the South, had been made manifest.” Hugh, “when it was too late,” now “saw and lamented his former overcaution. He now began to suspect that they had been right who had urged him, eighteen years before, to lend his aid to the work of arousing the people to a sense of their danger, and preparing them to meet it as one man.”

Hugh therefore at last comes to support secession, for “the change was now complete, and it brought to the conscientious old gentleman a conviction that on him, above all men, it was incumbent to... remove the mischiefs of which he felt his own supineness to have been in part the cause.”

When forced to choose between secession and state’s rights or unionism and centralism once state’s rights unionism is taken off the table, however, a few “old fogies” decide to utterly betray Virginia by backing the U.S. government. One of them is the “able and brave” but aging Colonel Mason, who is likely descended from George Mason and fights Virginia’s young secessionists until he is killed in combat. Similarly, Hugh’s son Owen is a younger “old fogey” who ultimately rejects state’s rights altogether in favor of “Yankee” centralism. Sent by Hugh to West Point, Owen, “overlooking his allegiance to his native State,” came “to consider himself as a sworn soldier of the Federal Government.” “It was certainly not the wish of Mr. Trevor to teach his son to regard Virginia merely as a municipal division of a great consolidated empire,” but under Van Buren’s tutelage, Colonel Owen “learned to deride the idea of State

---

138 Tucker, The Partisan Leader, 40, 41.
139 Ibid., 40.
140 Ibid., 43.
141 Ibid., 46. As a result, the U.S. soldiers place Hugh under house arrest, and he ends up an utterly broken and rueful old man.
142 Ibid., 323.
143 Ibid., 48.

Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
sovereignty” and developed “a disgust at all that is peculiar in the manners, habits, institutions, and character of Virginia,” for Virginians were now “strangers to him; and he only knew them as men defying the supremacy of the Federal Government, and hostile to the President...”  

Suspecting that Hugh Trevor was based on himself, an offended Henry St. George Tucker canceled his subscription to the *Messenger* after it published Upshur’s enthusiastic review of *The Partisan Leader*. Hugh’s younger sibling in the novel Bernard, moreover, was surely based on the younger Tucker brother. In contrast to Hugh, Bernard’s uncompromising personality, “added to a hasty temper, gave him the appearance and character of a man rash, inconsiderate, and precipitate, always in advance of the progress of public opinion, and too impatient to wait for it.” Possessing a touch of “the caustic wit of John Randolph,” Bernard had long been a secessionist, and Hugh, who is “always cold” while Bernard is “ardent,” deems his brother’s politics “rash, reckless, and inconsiderate,” although his own unionism stems in part from the fact that Bernard is, unlike him, heroic and “eminently gifted by nature.” Bernard thus declares that “nothing but physical inability shall keep me from sustaining, with my sword, a cause that I have always advocated with tongue and pen,” and, despite his age, he directly confronts the occupying U.S. soldiers in Virginia, for he and all the older secessionists such as his South Carolinian friend Mr. B— are “bold spirits” who are young at heart.

Virginia’s “young people” in the novel usually scorn Hugh’s “old fogey” Enlightenment ideals in favor of Bernard’s Romanticism, which encourages them to feel “rapt enthusiasm” and other strong emotions. Indeed, *The Partisan Leader* itself uses Romanticism to attract young

145 See Brugger, *Beverley Tucker*, 133.
146 Tucker, *op. cit.*, 44.
147 Ibid., 326, 46, 115, 44.
148 Ibid., 109, 57. Mr. B— is described as “a tall and fine-looking man, powerfully made.” Ibid., 238.
149 Ibid., 78, 200.
Virginians, featuring epigraphs by Byron and Scott, quotations from the poetry of Robert Burns, references to the “Oriental tales” of the Arabian nights, and stock characters who resemble Don Juan, “the illustrious bard immortalized by Lord Byron,” or personages “drawn by Sir Walter Scott.”¹⁵⁰ Tucker, however, did not want young Virginians of “the romantic age” to waste their emotional energies “affect[ing] an enthusiasm for the beauties of nature” or “prat[ing] about hues and scents, and light and shade, and prospects in all the variety of the grand, the beautiful, and the picturesque....”¹⁵¹ Bernard thus encourages Virginia’s youth to reject not just “old fogey” literary preferences and standards of deportment but “old fogey” politics as well, channeling their Romantic desires for emotional intensity and personal glory into secessionism.

Hugh’s son Douglas becomes Bernard’s star pupil. He is a “handsome youth” who possesses “talents of no common order” and yearns, like the South’s other “gallant and generous youths” of “chivalrous character,” to “taste” the “high excitement” of war and feel “the stormy joy of battle,” confessing his hope to a friend that “we shall stand shoulder to shoulder in the strife of battle, as, in our day dreams, we have so often thought of doing....”¹⁵² Hugh had Douglas educated at West Point as well and taught him that secession would lead to “[w]eakness, dissension, and the danger to liberty from the standing armies of distinct and rival powers.”¹⁵³ “I have long ago learned from my father,” Douglas informs Bernard, “that the whole South has been much oppressed. I know, too, that he attributes the oppression to the exercise of powers not granted by the constitution. But, with every disposition to resist this oppression, he taught me to bear it sooner than incur the evils of disunion.”¹⁵⁴ Bernard soon changes Douglas’s mind by

¹⁵⁰ Tucker, The Partisan Leader, 61, 328, 147. See ibid., 200, 127, 128. Also see O’Brien, Conjectures of Order, 770. Tate highlights the “Romantic” nature of the novel as well. Tate, Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals, 143.
¹⁵¹ Tucker, op. cit., 25.
¹⁵² Ibid., 59, 67, 89, 294, 310, 227.
¹⁵³ Ibid., 171.
¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 171.
showing him that the North is bent on destroying state’s rights and utterly subjugating the South. Even more importantly, however, Bernard’s “cheerful, sprightly, and intelligent” daughter Delia puts Douglas’s heart so strongly into secession that there was “left nothing for reason to do.”

She and Douglas had always been drawn to each other “due to the effect of what Byron would call ‘blind contact,’” but Douglas’s service as a federal officer caused Delia to feel “disgust” and “abhorrence.” Yet thanks to the memory of her love, Douglas was still, “in feeling, the same warm-hearted, generous, unsophisticated youth, as formerly,” and so his “long residence in the North had not weaned him from his native State.” Returning to “his native land,” at the name of which his “heart had never ceased to glow,” Douglas’s conversion to secessionism allows Delia to at last fully reciprocate his “single-hearted love” with “all her heart.”

Where the democratizing efforts of the “old fogies” had stimulated demagoguery as well as class and sectional resentments within Virginia, secession revitalizes the “organic” social solidarity of all white Virginians in The Partisan Leader. With eastern Virginia having fallen under U.S. military occupation, Douglas and other “young men from the lower counties, of good families and education,” head to the mountains of western Virginia to raise soldiers in “that warlike district.” The poor whites of western Virginia instinctively rally to the standard of the “Cavaliers,” each of whom “was apparelled like a king in comparison with the rustics that surrounded him.” The “rustics,” however, are impressed not just by the finery and education of the “Cavaliers” but also by their aristocratic mien, skill with weapons, enthusiasm, bravery, striking physiques, and willingness to endure privation, for Douglas and his fellow “Cavaliers”

---

155 Tucker, The Partisan Leader, 61, 201.
156 Ibid., 62, 58.
157 Ibid., 53, 52.
158 Ibid., 53, 263. Also see ibid., 129. Allowing Douglas to place “on her pure cheek the kiss that holy nature prompts...,” Delia soon agrees to marry him. Ibid., 264.
159 Ibid., 340, 268.
160 Ibid., 5.
eat the crude Appalachian fare without complaint, eschew “foppery,” and dispense charity among the “simple” mountain folk.161 And so Tucker urged his students in his William and Mary Lectures to engage in the “hardy sports and vigorous exercises that ‘toughen manhood,’” encouraging them to become the kind of heroic “Cavaliers” who would strengthen Virginia’s “community of feeling” by earning the admiration and deference of Virginian poor whites.162

Western Virginia’s poor whites in the novel soon realize that they have been misled by traitorous demagogues seeking to foster divisions among white Virginians for personal gain and the North’s benefit, for they see that the eastern planters are not decadent would-be exploiters but rather “our own sort of folks, and true as steel.”163 For their part, the “Cavaliers” come to adore the “faithful yeomanry and peasantry of that devoted section,” romanticizing each “mountaineer” as a “true Virginian” who embodies the South’s blood-and-soil volk essence.164 As one of them informs a poor white leader, “I heard it in your voice; I saw it in their eyes; and I felt it in my heart....”165 Surrounded by Virginia’s wildly beautiful mountain scenery, “Cavaliers” and “mountaineers” alike feel intense emotions of authenticity, belonging, and patriotic purpose. One Tidewater youth therefore declares his devotion to “OLD VIRGINIA FOR EVER,” striking “a tone in which exultation rung through a deeper emotion, that half stifled his voice. It reached the heart of his auditors, and was echoed in a shout that pealed along the mountain sides....”166

“Cavaliers” and “mountaineers” are not the only “southron[s]” in the novel united by “ties of blood” rooted in “soil and climate,” however, for there is also “the peculiar character of

162 Quoted in Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 161.
163 Tucker, op. cit., 284. The “mountaineers” hence inform the “Cavaliers” that they “are heartily welcome among us – to all we can give you – and that an’t much – and all we can do for you; and that will depend upon whether stout hearts, and willing minds, and good rifles can help you.” Ibid., 11. Tucker’s George Balcome also features humble and loyal poor white folk from western Virginia who aid the Tidewater planter protagonist. See Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, George Balcombe: A Novel (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1836).
164 Tucker, op. cit., 272, 10.
165 Ibid., 9.
166 Ibid., 8-9.
their laboring population.”

Where Hugh and the “old fogies” had urged young Virginians to strive to gradually emancipate and colonize Virginia’s blacks, Bernard tells them that the slaves are not wolves held by the ear but rather “faithful creatures” akin to loyal pet dogs. Thus, when Douglas visits Bernard’s plantation, Bernard’s dog greets him with “boisterous fondness,” prompting Bernard to declare, “[g]ive me a rough coat, or a black skin, for a true friend; one that will not grudge any superior advantages that I may possess.” Bernard hence calls an elderly slave named Tom “my good old friend.” Yet when Douglas speaks to Tom as if he were addressing an equal, Bernard chides him, insisting that Douglas should call Tom “daddy.” A “blushing” Douglas explains that his error was due to “a vice the northern air has blown upon me,” and he calls Tom “my good old daddy.” And so Bernard and Mr. B—purge not only levelling northern abolitionist notions from Douglas’s mind but also the “old fogey” anti-slavery notion that the slaves are an alien and hostile race that should ultimately be deported. If Virginian poor whites are analogous to the English yeomanry for Bernard, then the slaves are equivalent to the domestic servants of Britain’s great estates in the South’s “organic” social order, and so the English grammar of Tom and the other slaves is “better than the peasantry of most countries, though he said some things that a white man would not say....”

A planter’s “earliest and strongest attachments” are to his slaves, Mr. B— informs Douglas – to the “mammy” of his infancy and to such life-long friends as the young slaves “with whom you ran races, and played at bandy, and wrestled in your boyhood....” As Mr. B— elaborates, the “grateful and admiring affection” of the slaves for their masters and the paternal

---

168 Ibid., 224. See ibid., 100.
169 Ibid., 96, 97.
170 Ibid., 97.
171 Ibid., 98.
172 Ibid., 98-99. See ibid., 203.
173 Ibid., 98.
174 Ibid., 203, 204.
affection of the masters for the “true hearts” of their slaves are “the filaments which the heart puts out to lay hold on what it clings to.... These are the fibres from which the ties that bind man to man are spun.”¹⁷⁵ Each group of plantation slaves is therefore “one integral part of the great black family, which, in all its branches, is united... to the great white family....”¹⁷⁶ And so the slaves will, Mr. B—explains to Douglas, defend their masters against foreign enemies just as would English servants, for Bernard’s slaves “will shed their last drop, before one hair of your uncle’s head shall fall.”¹⁷⁷ When Bernard travels to the polls to confront the U.S. soldiers who are seeking to prevent secessionists and anti-Van Buren “old fogies” alike from voting, he not only takes his own weapons but also “provided with arms both the servant who drove him, and one who attended on horseback.”¹⁷⁸ “Give me the world to choose from,” he declares, “and old Tom’s son Jack is the man I would wish to have beside me in the hour of danger.”¹⁷⁹ After the U.S. troops move to arrest him, Bernard even trusts his slaves to execute a federal officer whom he takes hostage: “my orders to you both, boys, are, that if we are attacked, you are both to shoot this gentleman upon the spot.”¹⁸⁰ Declaring that “[w]hat is to become of my plantation, is a question of less importance,” Bernard temporarily flees to North Carolina to avoid the U.S. army’s wrath and takes his slaves with him, “distributing arms and ammunition to the negroes” because “the trusty body-guard[s] of a Virginia gentleman” are “his own faithful slaves.”¹⁸¹

Contrary to the “old fogey” prediction that a war with the North would result in massive slave rebellions, a prediction based upon “the fanciful theories of the Amis de [sic] Noirs,” the

¹⁷⁵ Tucker, The Partisan Leader, 204-205.
¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 204. Oddly, Michael O’Brien claims that The Partisan Leader is “indifferent to slavery.” O’Brien, Conjectures of Order, 770.
¹⁷⁷ Tucker, op. cit., 204-205.
¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 174.
¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 174.
¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 184.
¹⁸¹ Ibid., 224, 215, 194.
slaves loyally serve their masters as camp laborers and military auxiliaries in the novel. When abolitionist “Yankee” soldiers come to loot Bernard’s plantation, they assume that the slaves will join them, but they instead trick and ambush the soldiers: “Judge their astonishment, when... they found themselves surrounded by a dusky ring, from which issued a voice... which informed them, in good English, that they were prisoners.” “We propose... to arm the negroes in defence of their master,” Mr. B— hence declares, because “there is an exhibition to be made, which will have a good effect on friend and foe – I mean an exhibition of the staunch loyalty and heart-felt devotion of the slave to his master. We must show that that which our enemies, and even some of ourselves, consider as our weakness, is, in truth, our strength.”

According to Bernard and Mr. B—, the Union had always been an inherently “unnatural condition.” By uniting the Virginian “Cavaliers” who had “defied Cromwell, in the plenitude of his power,” to the “Puritan” North, it joined together “things most dissimilar, and binds up, in the same bundle, things most discordant,” for believing that the “Yankee and the Virginian are one” is akin to thinking that “light and darkness, heat and cold, life and death, can be identified....” Having reviled England’s traditional “organic” social order for centuries, the North’s “Puritan” men are thus, unlike southern “Cavaliers,” greedy, “coldly selfish,” cowardly, and even rather effeminate. Van Buren tries to buy the allegiance of western Virginia, but the manly poor whites there instinctively despise the bullying “blue coats” and greedy “Yankee pedlers [sic]” swarming into Virginia. Van Buren, moreover, describes Douglas as having “a superabundance of what fools call honor and gallantry,” and the “dexterous pimp[s]” who

---

183 Ibid., 221.
184 Ibid., 202, 203.
185 Ibid., 172.
186 Ibid., 40, 172, 246.
187 Ibid., 389.
188 Ibid., 177, 259.

Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
surround him deride “the fantastic notions of what southern men call chivalry.” But they never say such things in Douglas’s presence, and the “Yankee” invaders in Virginia who boast of “liv[ing] like fighting cocks” on loot and the public purse usually flee from the battlefield.  

If the beautiful and patriotic young Virginia belles in the novel find the younger Virginian men who cling to “old fogey” doctrines disappointing, “Yankee” men are utterly repulsive and contemptible to them. Almost all of the young Virginian men in the novel are hence abandoning “old fogeyism” for secessionism, but a few of the worst specimens among them adopt northern “consolidation” instead, following Owen Trevor’s treasonous path into “Yankee” unionism. One such specimen is Philip Baker, a member of the “northern faction in Virginia” that is opposed to “the advocates of State rights,” “old flogies” and “Cavaliers” alike. In contrast to Douglas, Baker is “awkward and disfigured by a mortal stoop,” and he also has no “taste for the picturesque,” though he “reasoned with great precision” using “chopt logic.” Obsessed with Delia’s beauty, he tries to woo her “with a directness which startled, and a confidence that offended her,” and when she rebuffs him with “disgust,” “loathing,” and “resentment,” his angry denunciations of her father prompt Douglas to challenge Baker to a duel with Delia’s “gratitude and approbation,” a duel which Baker refuses to fight with Delia’s “cavalierly” protector, “blenching and cowering” under Douglas’s “fierce glance.”

189 Tucker, The Partisan Leader, 326, 157, 149. Also see ibid., 140.
190 Ibid., 287.
191 When Delia encounters Van Buren at the novel’s conclusion, he cowers in the presence of her “proud and bold spirit.” Ibid., 389. Similarly, when a captured Union officer dines with Bernard and his wife, she serves him dinner with “all her high feelings subdued to the duties of hospitality and courtesy,” and the “stately grace of a high-bred lady” causes the abashed northerner to feel “a sense of admiring awe....” Ibid., 213, 214.
192 Ibid., 77, 82.
193 Ibid., 73, 86, 74.
194 Ibid., 73, 74, 70, 76, 85.

Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
Yet while Virginia’s “high-spirited” ladies are brimming with patriotic “enthusiasm,” they also “gratefully” accept the “protection” of their “Cavaliers.”195 The North’s unfeminine and unromantic “Puritan” women, in contrast, reject the “domestic circle,” for even “kissing was in very bad taste” among the “Yankees.”196 As Bernard explains, not only are the “Yankee school-mistresses, whose prurient imaginations are shocked at the name of a bed,” holding to an “exploded superstition” by decrying the South’s old English custom of marrying cousins, they are seeking to destroy traditional society altogether by “un-sexing” themselves in the public sphere as they all “write books; patronize abolition societies; or keep a boarding-school.”197 No “Yankee” woman, Mr. B—therefore insists, is “fit to be the wife of a Virginia gentleman.”198

After Douglas is convinced by Bernard and Mr. B— that slavery is a beautiful and harmonious “organic” relationship but has yet to become a committed secessionist, he remarks to Mr. B— that disunion might still be averted if only “our northern brethren could be made to take the same view of it.”199 “Our northern brethren,” Mr. B—retorts, “as you call them... never can take this view of it,” for “[t]hey have not the qualities which would enable them to comprehend the negro character. Their calculating selfishness can never understand his disinterested devotion. Their artificial benevolence is no interpreter of the unsophisticated heart.”200 “They know no more of the feelings of our slaves,” he concludes, “than their fathers could comprehend of the loyalty of the gallant cavaliers from whom we spring; and for the same reason. The

195 Tucker, The Partisan Leader, 58, 87. Bernard’s wife is “matronly in her dress and air; tall, majestic, and graceful in her person; and with a countenance beaming with frankness, animation, and intelligence.” He “had trained her mind; he had furnished her with materials for thought; and he had taught her to think. She was in all his confidence, and he consulted her habitually on plans which involved the welfare of his country.” Ibid., 102-103, 167. Also see Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 156-157.
196 Tucker, op. cit., 58, 130.
197 Ibid., 261, 123. See ibid., 108.
198 Ibid., 123.
199 Ibid., 206.
200 Ibid., 206.
generous and self-renouncing must ever be a riddle to the selfish.”

Thus, even as the “Yankee” soldiers in Virginia inform the slaves that they “hope it will not be long before we set you all free from these damned man-stealers,” their “insatiate rapacity” leads them to secretly plan ways to make a “profitable speculation” by exploiting the freedmen’s labor.

Yet if there is no chance that the North will ever see southern slavery as a benevolent institution, the British move in that ideological direction even though they ally with the southern Confederacy in the novel mainly for economic and strategic reasons. According to Brugger, The Partisan Leader advocates not just “states’ rights constitutionalism” and “pro-slavery paternalism,” but also “free-trade economics.” Tucker’s “free-trade economics,” however, were not those of the “old fogies,” for he warped their free trade ideals into destroying rather than preserving the Union, as well as into foiling rather than furthering the Enlightenment’s global goals, just as he did with regard to their state’s rights principles. “[I]n the northern States,” Mr. B— explains to Douglas, “there was a manufacturing interest to be advanced by the very course of legislation most fatal to the South.”

Instituting “the odious tariff” against “the great European manufacturer,” the “Yankees” had obtained “a monopoly of the southern market” for their industries, “enrich[ing] themselves” by taxing the South through the tariff to boot. Accordingly, the “system of free trade” favored by the new Confederacy is not a means to the “old fogey” end of universal peace and prosperity, but rather a cynical measure to win Britain’s favor and “weaken the North.” The Confederate government therefore cuts off all trade with the North even as it offers a free trade treaty to the British, who seize the chance to export tariff-

---

201 Tucker, The Partisan Leader., 206.
202 Ibid., 253, 219.
203 Brugger, Beverley Tucker, 122.
204 Tucker, op. cit., 244.
205 Ibid., 173, 244.
206 Ibid., 65, 173.
free manufactures to the South, causing “the manufactories of Great Britain” to be “multiplied” while breaking the power of Britain’s “envious rival in the North.”207 And so Virginia’s secession “put an end forever to that artificial prosperity engendered by the oppression and plunder of the southern States....” 208 As the cotton-starved North begins to fragment and de-industrialize, a delighted Mr. B— asks Douglas, “[w]hat would become of the Yankees? As I don’t call them WE, I leave them to find the answer to that question.”209

The South, however, is the biggest winner of all in the novel. Since southerners can now import high-quality British manufactures at low prices instead of expensive, low-quality northern products, and since they no longer have to pay tariff taxes on their imports, the South becomes “the granary of the world” and “the most flourishing and prosperous country on earth,” a country which has no need for “satanic mills” and large cities rife with crime and poverty.210 Free trade with Britain sees the old British retaliatory tariffs dropped for the Confederacy but not for the Union “in the English ports,” thereby defeating the “monopolizing spirit of the landed aristocracy in England.”211 Tucker, after all, thought that the “Cavalier” way of life was destined to be preserved and perfected in the South rather than in England, and so the Tory gentry had to give way to the Whig industrialists in Britain so that the British Empire might supply the South’s “Cavaliers” with not just consumer goods but a torrent of advanced weaponry as well.

“[T]he southern States,” Mr. B— declares, “including Virginia, are properly and almost entirely agricultural.”212 Since the “southern confederacy” has no industries to make weapons and no tariff to raise tax revenues to maintain a large standing army, the only aid it can give

207 Tucker. The Partisan Leader, 66.
208 Ibid., 66.
210 Ibid., 247, 66.
211 Ibid., 240, 244.
212 Ibid., 242.
Virginia’s secessionists is to send a few officers such as the novel’s young South Carolinian narrator, who helps “the rebels” use artillery imported from Britain or captured from U.S. regiments. 213 Instead, dozens of “southern friends” and “gentlemen of property” in each Confederate county volunteer to “stand by us; and are ready, in their individual capacity, to aid us with purse and sword...”214 But the fact that “the Southern League” does not have the industrial or governmental capacity to field mighty regular armies is celebrated rather than lamented in The Partisan Leader, for the South’s agricultural nature and unshakeable “organic” solidarity would, Tucker predicted, assure the annihilation of any invading armies from “the Old United States” through guerilla warfare. 215 The North’s soldiers thus find themselves adrift in an ocean of hostile Virginians because there are no key industrial sites or governmental centers whose loss would prove crippling for them to capture. Their numbers are continually whittled down by the ambushes and raids of secessionist partisans who are familiar with the terrain and know how to live off the land, for in western Virginia “every man... lives by hunting, more or less; and every man has a rifle for himself...”216

One of the most effective guerilla outfits proves to be the “partisan corps” that Douglas commands, and he becomes the novel’s eponymous partisan leader, “with whose exploits the country rung.”217 His guerilla “Cavaliers” and “sturdy mountaineer” partisans use “good rifles” imported from Britain to snipe the U.S. “riglars” from a distance or kill them up close with

---

214 Ibid., 268, 238.
215 Ibid., 50.
216 Ibid., 290. Tate also stresses the political and strategic implications of the fact that Virginia’s secessionist partisans are not controlled or supplied by any centralized government or military command in the novel. See Tate, Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals, 165.
217 Tucker, op. cit., 240, 274.
“knives and tomahawks.” The “martinet of the regular service” respond with musketry volleys and bayonet charges, tactics which prove ineffective against the partisans, who can always dash back to their Appalachian hideouts if necessary. Terrorized by ruthless Virginian partisans motivated by “animosity,” the greedy and cowardly “Yankees” eventually fall back from the Old Dominion. "Hence the formidable character of partisan warfare,” a venerable southern tradition revived once more in the novel with the spirit of “a Marion, a Sumpter, or a Pickens.” Not surprisingly, Tucker romanticized the exhilarating outlaw life that Douglas and his fellow “Cavaliers” experience in an 1835 Messenger article titled “The Romance of Real Life,” which hailed “[t]he great art, and the great charm of Walter Scott,” as well as a famous Romantic novel that glorified outlawry, namely, “Schiller’s masterpiece, ‘The Robbers.’”

In all, where the “old fogies” had predicted that a war with the North would rip Virginia apart, Tucker claimed in The Partisan Leader that fighting the “Yankees” would instead strengthen the bonds between the various classes within the Virginia’s hierarchical “organic” society, for under Douglas’s inspiring leadership, Virginians of all social stations felt a profound sense of “harmony” stemming “from a sense of danger, a high purpose, and confidence in a leader.” Tucker’s secessionist “Cavaliers” thus receive unflagging support from Virginia’s romanticized volk, who are untainted by the Enlightenment and possess, as the novel’s dedication puts it, “simple virtue,” “instinctive patriotism,” and an “untaught wisdom, which

218 Tucker, The Partisan Leader, 32, 299, 271. Furthermore, Bernard’s band of loyal armed slaves is nicknamed the “black watch” like the famous British regiment, suggesting that white Virginians can count on aid from both Britain and their slaves. Ibid., 194.
219 Ibid., 348.
220 Ibid., 348.
218 Ibid., 348, 241.
http://www.history.org/foundation/journal/autumn01/tucker.cfm.

Jeffrey L. Zvengrowski, PhD candidate, University of Virginia
finds its place in minds uncorrupted by artificial systems of education....” Older Virginian white women from all social classes help sustain the partisans in the novel with their skills in “housewifery and hospitality,” and Virginia’s young white women exhort their men to fight bravely, for Delia “feels as becomes a soldier’s wife, anxious for her husband’s fate, but confident in his fortunes.” The slaves, moreover, faithfully assist their “Cavalier” masters by their labor and even serve at times as military auxiliaries “in case of need.” The Partisan Leader was therefore “dedicated to the whole people of Virginia, in all ranks and classes,” forever preserving and romanticizing the memory of the “glorious struggle” which had summoned their “best feelings into action....” But it especially singled out those Virginians “whose names will sink into the tomb, of whose unpretending devotion to their native country I am proud to testify,” namely, the poor white men “who will die” in battle without the “fame” garnered by their “gallant” leaders, for “[t]hey belong to that class,” The Partisan Leader declared, “peculiar to a society whose institutions are based on domestic slavery; the honest, brave, hardy, and high-spirited peasantry of Virginia.” And Tucker’s enthusiastic students would ultimately put their beloved teacher’s predictions to the test from 1861 to 1865.

---

224 Tucker, The Partisan Leader, 102, 277.
225 Ibid., 202.