St George Tucker's "Old Bachelor" Essay on Patriots and Demagogues: A Critical Edition

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ST. GEORGE TUCKER'S "OLD BACHELOR" ESSAY
ON PATRIOTS AND DEMAGOGUES
A Critical Edition

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of English
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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Daniel Saver Harvey
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This paper seeks to provide a literary and historical approach to an essay written in 1811 by the Williamsburg lawyer, St. George Tucker. Composed as a contribution for "The Old Bachelor," a column which appeared in the Richmond Enquirer from 1811 to 1813, Tucker's essay was never published. Nevertheless, this study indicates that the essay, numbered by Tucker as Essay IX, is a valuable key to the understanding of the fervent patriotism inspired by the Revolutionary War and the events leading up to the War of 1812, and the literature which expressed that patriotism.

Essay IX can be examined as a prism refracting Tucker's numerous interests, convictions and influences. Quoting extensively from Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke's "A Letter on the Spirit of Patriotism," Tucker not only evinces admiration and respect for that British politician but also lends historical depth to his essay in matters of factionalism and party spirit. The presence of an unfinished essay in the Tucker manuscripts entitled "On Patriotism" reveals the progression of Tucker's thinking on the subject and magnifies the important contribution of Bolingbroke to Essay IX. In matters of style and rhetoric, Hugh Blair, who frequently used Bolingbroke's writing as reference material in his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, appears also to have influenced the phrasing of Tucker's excerpts from that British statesman.

In Essay IX, Tucker embellished the words of Bolingbroke with his own list of illustrative heroes and demagogues—names which illuminate the reading and intellectual background of the essayist. Definitive notes provided in this paper for "On Patriotism" and Essay IX illustrate Tucker's interest in history and great men. George Washington is placed at the summit of the list of heroes, indicating not only Tucker's admiration for this outstanding American but also his eagerness to contribute to the mounting praise of the man. A dedicated citizen of Thomas Jefferson's Virginia and a firm believer in the greatness of his country, Tucker felt a responsibility to encourage a new generation of Americans with the inspirational qualities of men such as Washington. Essay IX is a testimony to Tucker's sense of mission and serves as a means of interpreting the man, his times and his heritage.
In early August, 1811, St. George Tucker, the eminent Williamsburg jurist, received a letter from his friend and professional colleague, William Wirt, of Richmond. Keenly interested not only in matters of the bar, but also in the promotion and creation of belles-lettres in their state, the two men frequently corresponded or met to discuss their current literary projects. It is not surprising, therefore, that Wirt's letter contained the idea for a short story which he wished to share with Tucker. The germ of Wirt's idea had grown out of his concern over "rancor in politics" and he wished, above all, to "expose the mischiefs of party spirit." As Wirt had not found time to begin work on this topic, he suggested that Tucker might like to develop the theme, musing that perhaps the story could be constructed around the factional disputes of two families such as the Capulets and Montagues.

The colonial counterparts of Shakespeare's feuding families were never to be fictionalized by either Wirt or Tucker. Nevertheless, Tucker completely agreed with his friend over the need to direct public attention towards the evils of faction and corruption in government. Along with other interested and talented Virginians, Tucker had been writing essays for several months as intended contributions to
Wirt's collaborative newspaper column, "The Old Bachelor," essays which extolled the heroes, traditions and issues of America. On August 12, 1811, just five days after Wirt had first written to him proposing a literary attack on factionalism, Tucker mailed three essays as offerings for "The Old Bachelor." Although one of the essays was definitely identified by Tucker at the time as an allegory on liberty and faction, future correspondence proves that a second essay in the packet also expressed at length the two lawyers' concern over the danger of rampant partisanship. This latter epistolary essay, numbered by Tucker as his ninth contribution "to the Old Bachelor," had as its source not the fluent pen of the Bard of Avon, but the marvellous oratory of one of England's greatest statesmen. Essay IX thus offers a thought-provoking footnote to early American literature, history and political science, and is a further indication of the rare genius and passionate concerns of St. George Tucker.

Whatever literary talent and whatever passionate interests Tucker had were not accidental. He was born in Bermuda in 1752 and came to Virginia in 1771 to study law at the College of William and Mary under George Wythe. Although he returned to Bermuda following the completion of his studies, Tucker's college years had instilled in him an undeniable loyalty toward Virginia and his new friends on the American mainland. He sailed back to Virginia in the winter of 1777 and the following year married the mistress of "Matoax" plantation, Frances (Bland) Randolph, widow of John Randolph. Through this union, Tucker acquired not only a wealthy wife and three
stepsons, but also the valuable social position which attended the Randolph and Bland names. This happy and prudent marriage, along with a display of natural charm, wit and intelligence, soon led Tucker to full acceptance among the Virginia planter oligarchy.

During the Revolutionary War, Tucker served in the colonial Virginia militia, rising to the rank of lieutenant-colonel during the Yorktown campaign. A diary of several months in 1781 shows young Tucker's fascination with the activity and action of the war and presents a vivid account of the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. "The sight was too pleasing to an American to admit of description," writes Tucker, indicating his patriotic fervor and his total dedication to the new nation. Thus, within ten years, St. George Tucker had been educated in America, had married into one of the nation's oldest families, and had fought in the Revolution against Britain to bring independence to his adopted country. Throughout his remaining days, Tucker maintained the spirit and inspiration of the Revolution and re-echoed its sentiments in his teaching and writing. In one sense, everything that subsequently happened in Tucker's illustrious life seemed anti-climactic compared with this gloriously active period.

After his wife's death in 1788, Tucker moved his family from "Matoax" to Williamsburg, where he continued to pursue the practice of law. In 1790 he succeeded his former teacher, George Wythe, as professor of law at William and Mary, a position which he maintained for fourteen years. A year later
(in 1791) he married Mrs. Lelia Carter, the widowed daughter of Sir Peyton Skipwith and mother of two children. Tucker and his second wife reared ten children: three Randolph's, five Tucker's and two Carter's.

Unlike his friend, Thomas Jefferson, Tucker had no great political aspirations; his legal profession afforded him all the satisfaction of achievement that he desired. He served as a judge on the Virginia Court of Appeals from 1804 to 1811; and, in 1813, he was appointed Federal Judge of the Virginia District, a position which he held until his death in 1827. As a legal scholar, Tucker established his reputation in the South with his annotated five-volume edition of Blackstone's Commentaries (Philadelphia, 1803). While still Professor of Law at William and Mary, Tucker also published a portion of his college lectures on Law and Police entitled A Dissertation on Slavery: With a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition of It, in the State of Virginia (Philadelphia, 1796). This significant tract, which contains not only a clarification of the threat posed by slavery to the moral, domestic and political health of the country, but also a plan for its systematic abolition in the United States, indicates that Tucker was a conscientious teacher, anxious to regenerate his own liberal ideas and beliefs in the minds of his young students. It is a rare, early treatise written by a Southerner against the principles of slavery and stands in marked contrast to the later defense of the institution by his son, Beverley Tucker (1784-1851).
While Tucker limited his public life to a career as teacher and jurist, his versatility, as evidenced in his private life, rivaled that of Jefferson. A fellow member with Jefferson of the American Philosophical Society, Tucker was interested in astronomy and constructed numerous homemade machines and conveniences for his Williamsburg home. As a poet, he composed nearly two hundred poems, most of which were privately circulated to family and friends. Others, such as Liberty, a Poem: On the Independence of America (Richmond, 1788) and The Probationary Odes of Jonathan Pindar, Esq. A Cousin of Peter's, and Candidate for the Poet Laureate to the C. U. S. (Philadelphia, 1796), were publicly successful as verses with patriotic and political appeal. Tucker's extant papers also include manuscripts for five plays, the most ambitious being The Patriot rous'd, a musical melodrama with nine of the playwright's patriotic poems included as songs. These songs recall the revolutionary enthusiasm that Tucker had developed during the war and demonstrate his continual interest in reviving the patriotic fervor of that historic time. In a poem written in 1810 and included as a song in The Patriot rous'd, Tucker manifests his own patriotism and recreates the excitement of the young officer at Yorktown, twenty-nine years earlier:

Remember the days, when fair Liberty's Call
Rous'd the sons of Columbia to arms,
When we swore, one and all, at her altars to fall,
Ere a Tyrant should rifle her Charms:
When Montgomery, Warren, and Mercer the brave,
Seal'd the thrice-solemn oath with their blood;
And Washington, destin'd his Country to save,
Swept off all her Foes, like a Flood.
The essays of Tucker are similar to many of his poems and plays in their Republican inclination and expressions of intense national loyalty, love of liberty, and hatred of the forces of tyranny. As in the *Dissertation on Slavery*, Tucker fused his sentiments as a responsible and concerned citizen with his sharp intellect and creditable writing ability to create essays which he hoped would stir the minds of his readers. In each volume of Tucker's edition of Blackstone there is an "Editor's Appendix" containing essays which extend beyond law-oriented subjects. Manifesting a concern for the welfare of society at large, these writings cover such areas as abolition, the sale of western lands, and the cession of Louisiana, and indicate Tucker's firm Republican principles. By including such essays in a work edited for the lawyers of the country, Tucker demonstrates his desire to transmit his convictions to an intellectually active and politically oriented segment of society. These essays reveal that Tucker may have been ahead of his time in his comprehensive view of the affairs and directions of the United States; literary historian Richard Beale Davis suggests that their publication may have influenced the thinking of both Jefferson and Madison.  

The literature produced in America during the half-century after the Revolution was characterized by a growing feeling of nationalism which manifested itself in an emphasis on defining American ideals. This half-century includes not only the years in which St. George Tucker was active in his profession in Virginia but also the time of his literary productivity. As a result of the *Zeitgeist* in which he lived,
his own political disposition, his numerous public and private interests, and his overriding dedication to the mission of his country gained during the Revolutionary War, Tucker's literary works offer us virtual models of the growth of literary nationalism and idealism.

This emphasis on American ideals, this dedication to what Jefferson called "the creed of our political faith," found a fertile place for literary expression in the country's newspapers. With resident essayists such as Joseph Dennie, Washington Irving, Philip Freneau and James Paulding as contributors, newspapers had become the principal outlet for the many writers who wished to comment on the political, social and moral climate of the new nation. Foremost among the essayists in Virginia during the first two decades of the nineteenth century was Tucker's friend William Wirt. A resident of Richmond, Wirt was not only a lawyer and successful essayist but also the biographer of Patrick Henry and Attorney General under Monroe and John Quincey Adams. Wirt's first essays of note were published anonymously in 1803 by the Richmond Virginia Argus and printed in book form as The Letters of the British Spy (Richmond, 1803). Written in the form of the familiar essay and modeled on the style of the Spectator, The Letters of the British Spy reflect a mixture of "early Romanticism and of Neoclassicism, of sensibility, sentiment and piety..." With a mildly critical eye, the essayist considers the future of Virginia, and the state's lack of young leaders to replace the glorious old ones. In offering suggestions to the new generations of Virginians, Wirt makes constant
reference to the state's history and provides portraits of such prominent figures as James Monroe, John Marshall and Edmund Randolph.

In The Letters of the British Spy, Wirt presented the prototype of the Virginia essay which he would develop more fully in "The Old Bachelor." Appearing in the Richmond Enquirer between 1810 and 1811, and again in 1813, this series of essays was devised by Wirt "virtuously to instruct or innocently to amuse" his fellow Virginians. Following this goal, Wirt and his contributor-friends fashioned essays which were "patriotically American, particularly Virginian and Southern." Wirt himself appeared in the series in the pseudonymous guise of Dr. Robert Cecil, "The Old Bachelor," and along with the Doctor's observations were interspersed those of his correspondents. His circle of friends who contributed letters and segments to the column included Charlottesville attorney Dabney Carr, Louisa County gentleman David Watson, and the peripatetic George Tucker, a cousin of St. George who later became Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Virginia. While none of these men were professional writers, the essays which they produced under the banner of "The Old Bachelor" are noteworthy in their moral or didactic tone, their burlesque of Virginia manners and customs, and the masculine and utilitarian style of expression which they profess. Taken together, the sketches appearing under the rubric, "The Old Bachelor," have been considered "the high watermark of the familiar essay in the early nineteenth century in Virginia and in some respects in the whole nation."
A series of newspaper essays of the scope, inclination and audience of "The Old Bachelor" would naturally have appealed to St. George Tucker. For this reason, several otherwise careful literary historians have assumed without investigating that Tucker was one of Wirt's published contributors. Evidence of Tucker's contribution appeared to be present not only in the correspondence between Wirt and his friend in Williamsburg which mentioned the receipt of essays or the state of works in progress but also in the existence of twenty-two essays in Tucker's hand, a number of which are addressed "Dear Sir" and headed "For the Old Batchellor." Recent scholarship, however, has established that even though Tucker composed numerous essays for "The Old Bachelor," and Wirt apparently intended to include some of them in his series, none of these works appeared within the pages of the Enquirer. Nor were they included when, in 1814, the Enquirer's editor, Thomas Ritchie, gathered the thirty newspaper essays into book form. Although Wirt intended to revive the column and eventually publish a second volume of "Old Bachelor" essays, this hope was never realized.

The Tucker "Old Bachelor" essays, which are now deposited in the Earl Gregg Swem Library's Tucker-Coleman Collection, embrace a variety of subjects, including the virtues of generosity and economy, the joys of friendship and brotherhood, the state of oratory, and the allegorical account of the progress of Avarice from Europe to America. While the
topics vary considerably, the general direction of the essays follows the pattern utilized by Wirt and his colleagues: to provide Virginians with informative and entertaining reading which would direct their minds toward moral and intellectual self-improvement and provide the impetus by which young and old alike might be inspired by the deeds of the past and the prospects of the future. Often the essayist with Revolutionary passions merges with the essayist with anxieties for the well-being of the United States in the early 1800's to create works of historical breadth and contemporary relevance.

An examination of the "Old Bachelor" essays written by Tucker is rewarding, for these works reveal much about the man, his beliefs and interests, and his times. Yet one of the essays, in particular, invites closer scrutiny than the others. This essay, numbered by Tucker in the upper left-hand corner as ninth in his series of contributions, appears to be more polished and eloquent than most of the author's other work. Following the high public style of the English Augustans, the essay is a wholehearted endorsement of patriotism as the cure for the ills of society. The evils of political parties, the heinous manipulations of demagogues, and the blind acceptance and assistance given to "false patriots" by the masses are all decried by the essayist. Heroes and demagogues from American and European history are used as historical evidence of the serious issues being discussed.

In style and content this unpublished essay is a sparkling gem in the midst of the fading Tucker manuscripts.
Replete with indignation over the cancerous factions in society and the individuals whose love of liberty is mere pretense, the essay demands to be read aloud, to be spoken eloquently before an audience. The tone of the piece often borders on vehemence well-suited to an orator. Tucker appears to be writing with unusual force and skill, and perhaps with more alarm than the political situation of the time might have merited. Indeed, careful study of Essay IX reveals more than one passionate pen in its composition, more than one political situation in its background, more than one era in its history. Over two-thirds of this essay, signed pseudonymously by Tucker with "Benevolus," are quoted largely from "A Letter on the Spirit of Patriotism" written in 1736 by Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke (1678-1751). Although no reference to Bolingbroke exists in the Tucker manuscript, a comparison of the texts of the two essays proves the judge's great debt to this Englishman who was called by Alexander Pope "the greatest man in the world, either in his own time, or with posterity."20

The fact that Tucker relied heavily on Bolingbroke in the creation of this essay is easily proved; the steps which led to the production of the work are more difficult to establish and confirm. Sufficient evidence remains, however, to serve as guides to Tucker's thoughts, motives and inspirations during the time this essay was written. The first clue appears in the form of a short, unfinished and unnumbered essay written by Tucker on a single leaf and contained within the Old Bachelor
manuscripts. Bearing the title "On Patriotism," this essay is a catalog of the traits which distinguish the "real patriot" from the demagogue. British and European heroes are used as illustrations of men possessing the supreme characteristic, virtue, while demagogues such as Philip of Macedonia, Alexander the Great and Caesar are prostrated before such goodness. Washington is lauded as the "Father of his Country" and Benedict Arnold is singled out in a footnote as the most despicable of all Americans. In a line reminiscent of the demonic tones of Milton's Paradise Lost, Tucker writes: "Ten thousand times ten thousand Fathom deep, in Infamy, did the Traitor Arnold fall, the moment he became corrupt."21 Elsewhere in this essay, Tucker utilizes two lines from Thomas Grey's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" to illustrate the heroic qualities of men—in this case, of John Hampden.

The essay "On Patriotism" was left unfinished by Tucker. Perhaps, realizing that the completed product would be little more than an outline of good and evil actions and characteristics, he evidently decided to allow a greater talent (namely, Bolingbroke) to express his sentiments. On August 12, 1811, Tucker sent three essays to William Wirt, indicating in an accompanying letter that "the subject of the first of the enclosed letters is one I feel much at heart, and having made the discovery mentioned in the second, candor obliged me to send it to you."22 Tucker identifies the third essay as an allegory on liberty and faction, noting that he fears Wirt "will be sick of allegories and of Liberty Faction too." Obviously, this work is neither the first
allegory nor the first essay on the subjects of liberty and faction sent by Tucker to Wirt, although the Old Bachelor manuscripts contain no prior essays on this subject. It is important to note Tucker's statement in this letter that he writes "currente Calamo, keep no Copy." This admission may also serve to explain the absence of numerous essays from Tucker's Old Bachelor file.

One of the two essays first mentioned in this note to Wirt may have been an epistolary essay very similar to the one which appears in manuscript form as Essay IX. On August 13, 1811, Wirt wrote to Tucker advising him to give proper credit to Bolingbroke, apparently a source of quotation for one of the essays just received. Wirt's comments serve as an indication of his ability as a man of letters, a critic and an editor:

I thank you for your communications of to-day: I must set you right, tho', in one respect: Bolingbroke is much more read than you are aware of--especially his letters on the spirit. The passage which you have interwoven in the first letter, has been rendered the more familiar by having been quoted and criticized in Blairs [sic] lectures: and it is not long since another beautiful passage from his letters on party spirit was quoted in the Argus. . . .--Under the circumstances would it not be better to avow the quotation by inverted commas, and superadd your own remarks--as it is, I am afraid the reviewers will crack their whips at us, and accuse us, in their way, of being guilty of high treason, in debasing the current coin of the kingdom, or some such impertinence. You have put the subject in a strong light we must not lose sight of it--23

On the following day, Wirt wrote again to Tucker, advising him "to acknowledge in a note the excerpta from Bolingbroke" rather than "recast the piece."24 Wirt's enthusiasm
over the message and style of the essay is evident when he again remarks favorably upon "the strong light in which the subject is now presented" and expresses "fear that it may suffer by an attempt to alter it." His advice to Tucker suggests that the essay referred to in both letters was based on the writings of Bolingbroke and contained no quotation marks or footnotes to give credit to this source.

Assuming that Tucker took Wirt's advice to heart and revised his essay, it can be conjectured that Essay IX is the fruit of this revision. This essay, written on one page of a folio sheet on both recto and verso, is annotated across the left-hand side of the first page with a hand symbol frequently used by Tucker pointing to the note "Thrown into a somewhat different form." This note may have been a signal to indicate to Wirt that the text of the revised essay incorporated his recent suggestions, although it perhaps may point to still another revision. A letter from Wirt to Tucker dated August 25, 1811, indicates that the two gentlemen had recently visited together "at Yancys," referring probably to Charles Yancy, a prominent citizen of Buckingham County. It is possible that Tucker showed Essay IX to Wirt during their visit at Charles Yancy's since Wirt's letter praises the essays which Tucker gave him at this meeting. The two men may have agreed that further changes were necessary in Essay IX or that the work was in some way not suitable for publication at that time. No further mention of this essay
is contained in the extant Tucker-Wirt correspondence nor is there any evidence of future revision by Tucker.

When one compares the editorial advice made by Wirt in his letters to Tucker with the actual text of Essay IX, it becomes evident that those suggestions were heeded in spirit, if not in substance. A cautiously worded explanation of the use of source material is included in which Tucker not only acknowledges his gratitude to an unnamed "great and enlightened author" but also admits that he will transcribe without hesitation from this source. Tucker apparently feels that it is unnecessary to identify Bolingbroke precisely as his author since he declares that while quotations from dead writers will go unacknowledged in this essay, gleanings from the living will be properly credited. The explanation which Tucker gives for keeping all but living sources anonymous lends an ironic twist to Wirt's concern over the accusations of reviewers. Tucker writes that it has become "an article of Faith" in America that the present generation is "wiser than any of our predecessors." Thus, to quote a writer of another period of history or any other country would be an act of "Retrogression," for thoughts capable of bringing advancement can only be found in the writings of contemporary American writers. Tucker seems to be poking gentle fun at Wirt's "reviewers" and preparing the way for a heavy dose of eighteenth century British political writing. Without further explanation he encloses the first sentence from Bolingbroke within quotation marks and continues
his excerpts from "A Letter on the Spirit of Patriotism" without editorial comment or interpolations.

By calling upon Lord Bolingbroke as a primary source for an essay on faction, Tucker summoned the skill of one who has been called "the most perceptive political analyst of the early Hanoverian period;" a man who served England as Secretary of War and Secretary of State, formulated the Treaty of Utrecht, and distinguished himself as the greatest opponent of Sir Robert Walpole. Bolingbroke's beliefs and principles were closely allied to those of the Tories despite the fact that he frequently disagreed with many of the attitudes which brought division within that party. His keen political sense and shrewd statesmanship were singular in an age marked by the genius and talent of such Englishmen as Swift, Pope, Gay, Marlboro and Walpole. With remarkably clear insight, Bolingbroke observed the important political and constitutional changes taking place in England. The old party lines were gradually being replaced by the opposing forces of the court and country, expanding bureaucracy was threatening the freedom and independence of parliament and the nation, and placemen and royal ministers were growing in number and strength.

As the governing faction led by Walpole became increasingly powerful, Bolingbroke's opposition and discontent was frequently voiced in published essays and pamphlets. In works such as "A Dissertation Upon Parties" (1733-34) and "The Idea of a Patriot King" (1738), Bolingbroke renounces the
concept of party, emphasizes the necessity of a unified people behind a wise minister, and advances the concept of the benign ruler, or "Patriot King." Following many of the guidelines of Machiavelli's *The Prince* and More's *Utopia*, Bolingbroke imagines a factionless society where unity reigns, traditions and morals are carefully guarded, and all men are judged equally by the Patriot King. "Great principles" and "great virtues" are the basis of every act and word of the Patriot King, and his existence is sanctioned by a kind of divine approval.29

The groundwork for the conception of the Patriot King was laid in 1736 when Bolingbroke wrote a letter from France to his friend in England, Lord Cornbury. Entitled "A Letter on the Spirit of Patriotism" and published for general readers in 1749, this essay is a wholesale attack by a philosopher of patriotism on corruption in government and embodies the seeds of Bolingbroke's program for a system of conduct to be implemented by the opposition. Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., who recently examined the text of "A Letter" in his political study of Bolingbroke and Edmund Burke, underlines the fact that the strict patriotism of the essay can easily be converted into the boldest opposition.30 Mansfield not only traces the progression of Bolingbroke's thinking from "A Letter" to the more complex "Idea of a Patriot King," but he also illuminates the innate worth of the former work. Of particular importance in Mansfield's discussion is his clarification of the key words used by Bolingbroke and their
meaning within the context of eighteenth century British politics. "Corruption," the vice specifically attributed to the Court, meant not only depravity and decay, but technically also indicated hired support or patronage. Noting Bolingbroke's implied meaning that corruption was allied to the influence of the crown, Tucker must have felt it unnecessary to use the word per se in his essay, although he excerpts Bolingbroke's references to deeds and motives which could be called corrupt in the literal sense.

Mansfield also delineates Bolingbroke's use of "spirit" and "patriotism." "Spirit" in Bolingbroke's terms refers to "constant application," "animation," "exertion" and "industry." If the spirit of opposition could be combined with genius, the threat against the court would be formidable. The application of this double threat of genius and spirit results in patriotism, a duty which has moral dimensions for Bolingbroke:

The service of our country is no chimerical, but a real duty. He who admits the proofs of any other moral duty, drawn from the constitution of human nature, or from the moral fitness and unfitness of things, must admit them in favor of this duty, or be reduced to the most absurd inconsistency. When he has once admitted the duty on these proofs, it will be no difficult matter to demonstrate to him, that his obligation to the performance of it is in proportion to the means and the opportunities he has of performing it; and that nothing can discharge him from this obligation as long as he has these means and these opportunities in his power, and as long as his country continues in the same want of his services.

According to Bolingbroke, those who possess the spirit of patriotism are endowed with a binding obligation. If this
obligation is honestly met, the results will be a well organized and deeply rooted program of government, powerful enough to wipe out court corruption and unify the nation. Bolingbroke looks to ancient Rome for examples of men who recognized this "obligation" and served the cause of liberty as well as those whose lives were characterized by treachery and corruption. As illustrations of the former type (the patriot), he cites Cato and Tully; of the latter, Caesar and Crassus, whom he identifies as "the worst citizens of Rome." Tucker's textual additions to "A Letter" are primarily a matter of substituting fresh names for Bolingbroke's ancient Romans. His changes establish a broad base of reference ranging from George Washington and Benjamin Franklin to Cleon of Athens.

Bolingbroke's indignation at the continued success of the Whigs and his disgust at the pretended patriotism which he believed characterized the British government provide conviction and a sense of urgency to "A Letter." Undoubtedly, much of this tone is created by Bolingbroke's awareness of his past failures and his eagerness to bring about change. Yet real enthusiasm and strength also emerge from the rhetorical style of the essay. It is perhaps through the study of Bolingbroke's style, as well as through an interest in his political thinking, that St. George Tucker was inspired to quote this British statesman so extensively.

The clue to Tucker's critical awareness of Bolingbroke's style is found in William Wirt's letter of August 18, 1811. "The passage which you have interwoven in the first
letter," Wirt wrote to Tucker, "has been rendered the more familiar by having been quoted and criticized in Blair's [sic] lectures..." Wirt here refers to Hugh Blair (1718-1800), Scottish minister and rhetorician, whose published lectures are regarded as the prototype of the "rhetoric of belles lettres." First published in the United States in 1784, Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (Philadelphia, 1784) served generations of American students as the guide to excellence in both written and spoken style. Yale adopted Blair's book as a text in 1785, Harvard in 1788, and William and Mary students were being examined on the Lectures at least as early as 1799. Tucker, teaching at the College during this time, certainly had the opportunity to read Blair's book and must have believed the work to be scholarly, sound and particularly valuable to his young law students.

One of Blair's most common techniques in illustrating a point of rhetoric is to point a critical finger at particular passages from English writers such as Addison, Swift and Lord Shaftesbury. Lines from Bolingbroke are frequently summoned as illustrations, most commonly, of bad aspects of writing. In many instances, Bolingbroke is Blair's whipping boy. Despite the fact that he praises the statesman's "lively and eloquent style," Blair aims harsh criticism at the content of Bolingbroke's essays and dismisses them as "the mere temporary productions of faction and party; no better, indeed, than pamphlets written for the day." With Demosthenes,
Bolingbroke is categorized as a vehement writer— one who writes as if he were speaking. Yet Bolingbroke is vehement to a fault, according to Blair: "He abounds in rhetorical figures; and pours himself forth with great impetuosity. . . . He is bold rather than correct; a torrent that flows strong, but often muddy."38

Blair's criticism is not limited to comments on Bolingbroke's vehement rhetoric. According to Blair, Bolingbroke is the perfect example of a writer with the unfortunate penchant for creating terribly structured sentences. In Lecture XI, an essay on sentence structure, Blair decries the use of parentheses, or "wheels within wheels," and proceeds to quote a lengthy sentence from Bolingbroke's "Letter on the Spirit of Patriotism." Containing a parenthetical expression and replete with numerous phrases and clauses, the passage quoted more than adequately illustrates Blair's point:

I shall produce one example from Lord Bolingbroke; the rapidity of whose genius, and manner of writing, betrays him frequently into inaccuracies of this sort. It is in the introduction to his idea of a patriot king, where he writes thus: 'It seems to me, that, in order to maintain the system of the world, at a certain point, far below that of ideal perfection, (for we are made capable of conceiving what we are incapable of attaining) but, however, sufficient, upon the whole, to constitute a state easy and happy, or, at the worst, tolerable; I say, it seems to me, that the Author of Nature has thought fit to mingle, from time to time, among the societies of men, a few, and but a few, of those on whom he is graciously pleased to bestow a larger portion of the ethereal spirit, than is given, in the ordinary course of his government, to the sons of men.' A very bad sentence this; into which, by the help of a parenthesis, and other interjected circumstances, his lordship had contrived to thrust so many things,
that he is forced to begin the construction again with the phrase, I say: which, whenever it occurs, may be always assumed as a mark of a clumsy, ill-constructed sentence; excusable in speaking, where the greatest accuracy is not expected, but in polished writing, unpardonable.39

As this is the only reference by Blair to Bolingbroke's "Letter," it must also be the line referred to by Wirt in his letter. It is interesting to note that Tucker utilizes part of this line in Essay IX and abridges the sentence according to much of Blair's criticism. He does not rid the sentence of parentheses; rather, he relocates the parenthetical phrase, shifts commas, strikes out segments, and adds a word of his own:

It seems, that in order to maintain the moral world at a certain point, (far below that of ideal perfection) the Author of nature has thought fit to mingle, from time to time, among the societies of men, a few, and but a few of those on whom he is graciously pleased to bestow a larger portion of the ethereal spirit, than is given in the ordinary course of his providence to the sons of men.40

Whether Tucker revised Bolingbroke at this point according to his own sense of style and correctness or according to Blair's criticism is impossible to ascertain. It is interesting, however, to compare Bolingbroke and Tucker with Blair as a critical intermediary. Throughout Essay IX, Tucker makes small changes in Bolingbroke's style and phrasing to clear up ambiguities and to suit his own purposes. No full paragraph from Bolingbroke's essay is ever quoted; instead, Tucker extracts lines piecemeal from his source and combines them to make his own paragraphs. Tucker's treatment of Bolingbroke is certainly understandable; for, although he
obviously admired the message contained in the Englishman's writing, he must have felt compelled to conform his excerpts to the utilitarian style which was fashionable among the Virginian essayists. While Tucker's debt to Blair in matters of style is implicit, he probably would have shared the sentiments expressed over fifty years later by Oliver Wendell Holmes in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*. Commenting on the stiffness and correctness of a paragraph which had been copied from actual speech, Holmes expresses his amazement at such stilted language. "I don't believe I talked just so;" he writes, "but the fact is, in reporting one's conversation, one cannot help Blair-ing it up more or less, ironing out crumpled paragraphs, starching limp ones, and crimping and plaiting a little sometimes; it is as natural as prinking at the looking-glass." 41

If Tucker is guilty of "Blair-ing up" Bolingbroke's style he does not share Blair's opinion on the content of the statesman's essays. "In his reasonings for the most part, he is flimsy and false;" Blair writes of Bolingbroke, "in his political writings, factious; in what he calls his philosophical ones, irreligious and sophistical in the highest degree." 42 Failing to agree with Bolingbroke's viewpoints and perhaps living too close in time and place to gain historical perspective on that Englishman's works, Blair failed to realize the full talent of this vehement and passionate writer. Bolingbroke's diagnosis of the disease of corruption that threatened his country, his appeal for balanced government, and his dedication to the spirit of liberty and
the idea of a patriot king proved stimulating and inspirational to men in other countries and later generations. In France, for instance, Bolingbroke's concern for liberty and stability in government was echoed by many of the French *philosophes*. Reading Bolingbroke's accounts of the campaign against Walpole and administrative corruption, Montesquieu may have been inspired by the compelling sense of patriotism which motivated this Englishman.

Wirt's advice to Tucker that "Bolingbroke is much more read than you are aware of" is verified not only through the critical comments of Hugh Blair and occasional American newspaper quotations but also through the testimony of numerous leaders of the new nation. Both conservatives and radicals in America read and admired Bolingbroke and were impressed by his style and thinking. Adams, writing to Jefferson in 1813, enthusiastically endorses Bolingbroke and proudly states that he has read the statesman's works many times. "I have read him through, more than fifty Years ago, and more than five times in my Life, and once within five Years past," Adams declares. Jefferson's recommendation of Bolingbroke's works is unqualified for he praises not only the style recognized by Blair, but also the message behind the flourish:

Lord Bolingbroke's, on the other hand, is a style of the highest order. The lofty, rhythmical, full-flowing eloquence of Cicero. Periods of just measure, their members proportioned, their close full and round. His conceptions, too, are bold and strong, his diction copious, polished and commanding as his subject. His writings are certainly the finest examples in the English language, of the
eloquence proper for the Senate. His political tracts are safe reading for the most timid religious, his philosophical, for those who are not afraid to trust their reason with discussions of right and wrong.

While it is not possible to draw a direct correlation between Bolingbroke and Washington, Madison and Hamilton, all of these American leaders express views in their writings which are reminiscent of the Englishman's political thinking. In particular, both Washington's "Farewell Address" and "Federalist X" by Madison speak out strongly against the evil of faction and issue cautious advice on the control and limitation of political parties. The overwhelming hatred of tyranny, the search for unity in government, and the passionate belief in the spirit of liberty and patriotism bind Bolingbroke and the first great leaders of the American nation. Bolingbroke's recent biographer, H. T. Dickinson, suggests that the inclination of this political propagandist and pamphleteer to express himself in generalities and to emphasize the essential principles of government enabled future generations of leaders on both sides of the Atlantic to learn and profit from his writing.

It is evident, therefore, that St. George Tucker shared good company in his admiration of and debt to Bolingbroke. As a patriot of the Revolution, Tucker's conception of liberty was easily adapted to the thinking of Bolingbroke. As a jurist and writer who could appreciate enthusiastic rhetoric, Tucker might freely excerpt from Bolingbroke with very few stylistic alterations. As an American citizen, aware of the
growing strength of factions in his country and concerned about the dearth of young, patriotic leaders, Tucker must have felt a unique kinship with Bolingbroke in their joint literary venture. Undoubtedly he hoped to inspire readers with an old tale told in a new way. Despite the critical death knell of Hugh Blair which rang over the works of Bolingbroke for decades, the productions of this fervent pamphleteer remained for Tucker and his contemporaries alive, fresh and inspirational.
NOTES ON THE INTRODUCTION


2. Tucker MSS, Swem Library.


4. Ibid., p. 194.

5. The poetic works of Tucker have been examined by William S. Prince in an unpublished dissertation, "St. George Tucker as a Poet of the Early Republic," Diss., Yale University, 1954.


7. Tucker MSS, Swem Library.


Ibid., p. 284.

Kennedy, in his biography of Wirt, identified Tucker as a published "Old Bachelor" contributor (I, 266). Hubbell and Davis have both echoed Kennedy's assumption.


Tucker MSS, Swem Library.

Tucker to Wirt, August 12, 1811, William Wirt Papers, Maryland Historical Society.

Wirt to Tucker, August 18, 1811, Tucker MSS, Swem Library.

Wirt to Tucker, August 19, 1811, Tucker MSS, Swem Library.

Wirt to Tucker, August 25, 1811, William Wirt Papers, Maryland Historical Society. Tucker and Wirt often retreated during the summer months to homes of friends and relatives in Nelson County, Virginia. Wirt's letters of August 18, 19 and 25 are written from Montivideo, while a letter from Tucker to Wirt dated August 23, 1811, indicates that he was visiting at Warminster, the home of Joseph C. Cabell.

Only John Marshall's *Life of Washington* (Philadelphia: C. P. Wayne, 1804-07) is noted by Tucker as a source for the essay. Marshall was a living author.


Ibid., p. 304.


31 Ibid., p. 67.


33 Ibid., pp. 358-59.

34 Ibid., p. 361.


38 Ibid., p. 211.

39 Ibid., pp. 121-22.

40 Tucker MSS, Swem Library.

41 Oliver Wendell Holmes, The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866), p. 44.

42 Blair, p. 211.

43 Dickinson, pp. 304-05.

44 Ibid., pp. 305-06.


47 Dickinson, p. 304.
The real patriot is indebted to nature, and to natures God, for those distinguished qualities, and Endowments, which constitute the Essence of his Character; to his own indefatigable Labour, Application, Perserverance, and Study, for the ripening, and Improvement of them; and to Circumstances and Events for their Evolution, and Exhibition, to the honor of the human race, his own immortal glory, and the Salvation of his Country. That pure, and pre-eminent virtue, that spotless integrity, that immaculate Fidelity, that noble disinterestedness, that genuine self-denying preference of the best interests of his Country to his own; that Devotion, Zeal, Courage, Fortitude, Patience, Perserverance and Heroism; and those splendid and exalted Talents, Wisdom, Discernment, Penetration, Caution, and Foresight, which compose the fundamentals of his character, are inherent in his nature, and incorporated with his very existence. Some of these Talents, may, indeed be often found [in] others. Ambition may be allied to Wisdom, Foresight, Fortitude, Enterprise, Zeal, Courage, Patience, and Perserverance;
and this alliance may dazzle the Eyes of the multitude, and even of the wise-man, for a moment: it may produce an Hero, a Demagogue, or a Conquerer; but not a Patriot. Virtue, immaculate Virtue, and her faithful unpolluted, and inseparable associates and Companions incorruptible Integrity, Fidelity, Disinterestedness, Zeal and perennial Devotion to the best Interests of his Country, are the discriminative attributes, of the real patriot. Whosoe'er wants these, or any of them, if ever he were a Patriot, degenerates into a Party-tool, a Selfish Sycophant, a Traitor, an Usurper, or a Tyrant, immediately. +1 --Confin'd to no particular Country, or Race, or Rank, or Station; the eastern and western Hemispheres, the Cottage, the Palace, and the middle-walks of Life, have in their turn asserted their claims as the Birth-place of the Patriot, and have produced an Epaminondas, a Cincinnatus, an Alfred, a Gustavus, a Wallace, and a Washington, to evince them: 3

The Village Hampden, who with dauntless Breast, The little Tyrants of his Fields withstood, 4 might, under different Circumstances have hurld a Philip, or an Alexander, from his Throne, or laid a Caesar prostrate at his Feet; or, like another Washington, been hail'd as the Father of his Country. 5

Destin'd by providence for the happiness of his Country, the real Patriot, in prosperity, is her Ornament, Instructer, and Guide; in Adversity her Guardian Genius, her champion, and protector. --The public calamity is the signal that rouses him to Reflection, and Exertion in her Cause, and
brings him acquainted with Himself. The Horrors of Despotism, the Terrors of persecution and oppression, the Rage of Animosity, and the Malignity of Vengeance appal him not: the Thunders of Tyranny, and the Tempests of war serve but to awaken him to his duty, to shew him his Course, and to conduct him to his Enemy.
NOTES TO "ON PATRIOTISM"

1Tucker apparently had second thoughts about this footnote, for the dramatic condemnation of Benedict Arnold is lined out in the manuscript.

2and ] designated by the symbol "♫"

3Epaminondas (c. 418-362 B.C.) was a brilliant Theban general, known for his eloquence and purity as well as his tactical genius.

Cincinnatus, Lucius Quinctius (b.c. 519 B.C.) served Rome as a ruler and early hero of the people.

Gustavus Adolphus (1594-1632), king of Saxony and a military hero, is discussed at length in Pierre Bayle's General Dictionary (London, 1734-41), a work owned by Tucker.

 Sir William Wallace (1272?-1305), a Scottish patriot, was executed for his resistance against the throne of Edward I.

4Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," (1750).  John Hampden (1594-1632) resisted Charles I as a private citizen and soldier, and died in a skirmish near Oxford. Tucker may have been quoting the poem from memory; the lines as written by Gray read:

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little Tyrant of his fields withstood; (11. 57-58.)

5Philip II of Macedonia (382-336 B.C.) implemented successful expansionist policies during his reign which enabled his son, Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.), to lay the foundation for the Hellenistic world of territorial kingdoms. Along with Caesar, these two conquerors are made subservient to the patriotism of men such as Washington.
For the Old Batchellor

Sir,

The attention which you have been so obliging as to pay to my former Letters, encourages me to renew my Correspondence with you, on a subject somewhat connected with that of party-spirit; I mean, the spirit of Patriotism.

This, like Liberty, and Faction, in the Allegory with which you have favoured us, are sometimes mistakenly, but oftener, wilfully, confounded with each other. The Enemies of Liberty are ever the most jealous Enemies of the spirit of Patriotism, which they represent, as rebellious, and endeavour to suppress, as the most formidable Barrier, against their own wicked machinations. In a republican government it is equally proper to display the character of the real patriot, in its genuine Lustre, as to pluck off the mask from the monster Faction, or the wily Demagogue; who whilst he is in strict league, and confederacy with her, to destroy Liberty, and annihilate Patriotism, proclaims himself to be, like another Hercules, their most favoured and redoubted Champion.
In treating this subject I shall not scruple to avail
myself, not only of the observations and opinions of a great
and enlightened author, who has written on it, but I shall
not hesitate to transcribe what I find to my purpose; pro-
mising only not to borrow from the living without due acknowl-
edgement [sic], though I may venture to do so from the dead.
One of my reasons for this proceeding is, that it has grown
almost into an article of Faith among us, that we are wiser
than any of our predecessors; consequently, were I to quote,
an author who had written in any other Age, or Country, I
might be reproach'd with Retrogression, instead of Advance-
ment, in the subject, of which I am writing. I may say,
with the distinguish'd writer of whose observations I shall
avail myself, "That it is a subject I have very much at heart:
and that I shall, therefore, explain myself fully, nor blush
to reason on principles that are out of Fashion among men,
who intend nothing, by serving the public, but to feed their
avarice, their Vanity, and their Luxury, without the Sense
of any Duty which they owe to God, or their Country." 3

It seems, that in order to maintain the moral world at
a certain point, (far below that of ideal perfection) the
Author of nature has thought fit to mingle, from time to time,
among the societies of men, a few, and but a few of those
on whom he is graciously pleased to bestow a larger portion
of the ethereal spirit, than is given in the ordinary course
of his providence to the sons of men. These are they who
engross almost the whole Reason of the human species; who
are born to instruct, to guide, and to preserve; who are de­
signed to be the Tutors, and guardians of human kind. When
they prove such, they exhibit to us examples of the highest
virtue, and the truest piety. Many of them have emerg'd from
the most profound Obscurity, and, like the sun chasing away
the Horrors of a dark tempestuous night, have illuminated, and
blessed their Country. These deserve Immortality, even on
Earth. Their festivals should be kept, their virtues celebrated,
their noble actions duly commemorated, and their Examples
held up as patterns of Imitation, and Emulation. But when
such men apply their talents to other purposes, when they
strive to be great, and despise being good, they commit a most
sacrilegious breach of trust; they pervert the means; they
defeat, as far as in them lies, the designs, of providence,
and disturb, in some sort, the system of infinite wisdom.
To misapply these Talents is the most diffused, and, there­
fore, the greatest of crimes, in its nature and consequences;
but, to keep them unexerted, and unemploy'd, (if occasion
require it) is scarcely less a crime. Let any man look about
him, and he will find that there are superior spirits, men
who shew, even from their Infancy, though it be not always
perceived by others, perhaps not always felt by themselves,
("Thou village Hampdens, who with dauntless Breast,
The little Tyrants of their Fields withstood,")4

that they were born for something more, and better. These
are the men to whom the part I mentioned is assigned. Their
Talents denote their general designation: and the opportunities
of conforming themselves to it, that arise in the Course of things, or that are presented to them by any circumstances of fortune, or situation in the Society to which they belong denote the particular vocation, which it is not lawful for them to resist, nor even to neglect. The duration of the lives of such men as these, is to be determined by the length and importance of the parts they act, not by the number of years that pass between their coming into the world, and their going out. An Alfred, a Gustavus, a Penn, a Franklyn, or a Washington, have lived more centuries, according to this estimate of their lives, than the ephemerons of Sloth, Idle­ness, Avarice and groveling self-love, live days. — Such men can not pass unperceived through a Country; if they retire from the world, their splendor accompanies them, and enlightens even the obscurity of their retreat. If they take a part in public life, the effect is never indifferent: if real patriots, they are the guardian angels of the Country they inhabit, busy to avert even the most distant evil, and to maintain, or to procure peace, plenty, and, the greatest of human blessings, Liberty: If false, they appear like the ministers of divine Vengeance, and their Course through the world is marked by Desolation and oppression, by poverty, and by servitude. Our own Country happily affords us the prototype of the former of their Characters; let us pity the nations where that of the latter may be found.

An ambitious Demagogue, or false patriot, could not do all the mischief that he does by the misapplication of
his own Talents, alone, if it were not, frequently, for the misapplication of much better Talents than his, who join with him, and the non-application, or the faint and unsteady exercise of their Talents by some who oppose him, as well as the general remissness of mankind in acquiring knowledge, and improving the parts which God has given them for the service of the public. These are the great springs of national misfortunes: the more genius, industry, and spirit are employ'd to destroy, the harder the task of saving our Country becomes; but the Duty encreases with difficulty. They who go about to destroy, are animated from the first by Ambition, and Avarice, the love of power, and the love of money: they must be opposed, therefore, (or they will be opposed in vain,) by Talents, and fortitude, able to cope with ambition, avarice, and despair itself; and by a spirit able to cope with these passions, when fortified by the intrigues, or menaces, of external, as well as internal, enemies. In such exigencies there is little difference, as to the merit, or effect, between opposing faintly, and unsteadily, and not opposing at all: nay the former may be of worse consequence, in certain circumstances, than the latter. --The Service of our Country is not a chimerical, but a real duty; and the obligation to the performance of it, is in proportion to the means, and opportunities a man has of performing it; and nothing can discharge him from the obligation as long as he has these means, and these opportunities in his power, and as long
as his Country continues in the same want of his Services. So thought our illustrious Washington! and so he acted, when called from his happy retirement to take the Helm of that Government, to the establishment of which he had devoted a large, a splendid, portion of his Life; and so he thought, and so he was prepared to act, again, after his second retirement, when it was thought that his beloved Country was likely to be once more exposed to the Ravages of an invading Enemy!

The real patriot, bends all the force of his understanding, and directs all his thoughts and actions to the good of his Country; he speculates in order to act, and persists in Labors, until he has happily accomplish'd their only object, the good of his Country. If his Labours encrease, so does his Satisfaction, at every obstacle that he surmounts, and so does his zeal in surmounting them. If the Execution of his wishes be travers'd by unforeseen, and untoward circumstances, by the perverseness, indolence, or treachery of friends, or by the power, or malice of his Enemies; the first and last of these animate, and the fidelity and support of some friends, make amends for the falling off, of others. Whilst a great event is in suspense, the action warms, and the very suspense, made up of hope and fear, while it agitates, also fortifies, his mind. [If the Event be successfully decided, he enjoys pleasure proportionable to the good he has done; a pleasure like to that which is attributed to the Supreme Being, on a survey of his works: if the Event be unfortunate, he has still the Testimony of his own Conscience,
and a sense of the honor he has acquired, to soothe his mind, and support his Courage. And if, like a Wallace, or a Sidney, he is ignominiously dragged to the Scaffold, his last thought and his last prayer, will be for his beloved Country.]

A real patriot, can have no mean, groveling, selfish views. He looks up to Heaven for his reward, in the Happiness he is endeavouring to procure for his Country. He asks not Honors; he seeks not power; he stipulates not for rewards, for himself, or his family. His integrity, like that of Fabricius, is incorruptible; and like pure gold, is neither chang'd, or diminish'd, by any trials to which it may be exposed. He is without artifice, or disguise, and perfectly free from those selfish and unworthy suspicions which find their nourishment in the conflicts of party. In a word, he is either the Father of his Country, or to be reckoned among the best, and most distinguish'd of her Sons.

As different as a Beast of prey from the generous Steed, is the character of the Demagogue, from the real patriot. Like the animal to which I have compared him, he is perpetually prowling after plunder, or lurking in secret to surprise his victims, and feast upon their blood. In pursuit of them, his roaring is like unto the roaring of a Lion, and the blood-hounds of Faction follow his steps, and echo his roarings in full cry. --Yet, like the Hyena, he whines, and counterfeits gentleness, disinterestedness, and patriotism, amongst those whom he wishes to cajole, and enlist in his party. To these he is a servile flatterer, until he has no
longer need of their services: till then, he courts, and
commands; supports, and is supported, by them, as the throne
of the Caliphs by the Janissaries. He finally throws off
the mask, and becomes a Tyrant.

Cleon," says my author, was a man of no family, nor
possess'd of any real Talents, but vain, daring, and violent,
and on that account, acceptable to the multitudes. He was
the most greedy and unjust of men. Cleon excited the people
(of Athens) by his Declamation, his noise, and his furious
gestures. They entrusted him with the command of an army
they were sending into Thrace: he there drew upon himself
the contempt of both armies, and approaching the Enemy with­
out Caution, suffered his army to be surprised, was one of
the first to fly, and lost his Life. --Such is the character
of one of the most popular Demagogues of Greece!!! Compare
it with that of the immortal Washington!!!

I shall add but one more observation. A Demagogue
differs from a real Patriot, as much as an ordinary brass
counterfeit from an highly finish'd medal of the purest gold,
from the hands of a capital artist.

I am Sir, your sincere welwisher

Benevolus

Life of Washington -- vol: 5. [Tucker's note.]

Cleon succeeded Pericles in his Authority, at Athens.
[Tucker's note.]
NOTES TO ESSAY IX

1Tucker's reference to his previous epistolary contributions to "The Old Bachelor" indicates that his essays were written to complement each other. Since no published "Old Bachelor" essay is dedicated entirely to an allegory on liberty and faction, Tucker's reference to an essay on this subject may designate one of his own works. That such a topic was a common theme for Tucker is verified by his August 12, 1811 letter in which he apologizes to Wirt for sending so many allegories and so many essays on liberty and faction.

2and ] designated by the symbol "±"

3Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, "A Letter on the Spirit of Patriotism," in Works (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1841), II, 352. This sentence marks the beginning of the excerpts from Bolingbroke and is the only quote from that source acknowledged with quotation marks. The single and double underlinings here and elsewhere in the essay are Tucker's. The concluding part of the sentence has also been altered; Bolingbroke's words are: "... without the sense of duty they owe to God or man."

4These lines from Gray's "Elegy" seem to be a carry-over from Tucker's earlier essay "On Patriotism." Again, small changes have been made in the lines.

5Alfred (849-901), king of the West Saxons, was responsible for a significant revival of letters in the west of England.

William Penn (1644-1716), the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania, is examined in a biographical discourse in Jeremy Belknap's American Biography (Boston, 1794-98), a work which was included in Tucker's library.

Tucker refers to Gustavus in his essay "On Patriotism" as an example of heroism and leadership.

6and ] designated by the symbol "±"

7In 1798, during a period of increasing French-American hostilities, Washington was appointed Lieutenant-General and Commander in Chief of the American Army.

8and ] designated by the symbol "±"
9This point marks the end of Tucker's reliance on Bolingbroke.

10Algernon Sidney (1622-83), opponent of Charles II, was executed for his participation in the Rye House Plot.
    Sir William Wallace, who was also executed for his opposition to the British throne, was used as an example of heroism in Tucker's essay "On Patriotism."

11Gaius Fabricius Luscinus, Roman consul in 282 and 278 B.C., embodied the virtues of honesty, simplicity and frugality.

12Tucker's footnote refers to John Marshall's concluding volume of The Life of George Washington (Philadelphia: C. P. Wayne, 1807). In the final chapters of the biography, Marshall discusses the factional difficulties of Washington's second administration and emphasizes the first President's condemnation of the "conflicts of party."

13and ] designated by the symbol "="

14Janissaries, a body of infantrymen, constituted the guard of the caliphs of Turkey.

15This reference to Cleon is little more than a biographical account and affords no clues which would establish the identity of Tucker's "author." Both Aristophanes and Thucydides expressed low opinions in their writings of this lamentable demagogue and may have been the source of Tucker's information.

16Tucker's "Benevolus" signature is consistent with the various pen names assumed by the contributors to "The Old Bachelor." Among these pen names are "Obadiah Squaretoes," "Galen" and "Alfred."
On March 4, 1801, Thomas Jefferson was inaugurated third President of the United States. Despite the maneuverings of the Federalists and the bitter party feelings which the presidential campaign had surfaced and magnified, Jefferson's Republicans were clearly in power and his fellow Virginians were to maintain that power through their possession of the presidency for nearly a quarter of a century. The dominant note in Jefferson's first Inaugural Address was the need for a return to a simpler form of government, indicating the Republican hope that their party would reverse the bureaucratic trend which had gathered momentum under the Federalist-oriented leadership of Washington and John Adams. Speaking to those assembled for his inauguration, Jefferson carefully enumerated the principles of American government which he believed should shape its administration—principles which had been established in the Declaration of Independence and confirmed in the Constitution—and emphasized anew their importance to the success of the Republic:

—these principles form the bright constellation which has gone before us, and guided our steps through an age of revolution and reformation. The wisdom of our sages and the blood of our heroes have been devoted to their attainment. They should be the creed of our political faith—the text of civil instruction—the touchstone by which to try the services of those we
trust; and should we wander from them in moments of error or alarm, let us hasten to retrace our steps and to regain the road which alone leads to peace, liberty, and safety.¹

A reverence for the past, an understanding of the needs of the present, and a cautious optimism for the future were expressed in Jefferson's first words as President. His sentiments are part of the heritage of American thinking and writing which grew around the goal of strengthening the moral and political fiber of the new nation. With contemporaries such as St. George Tucker, Jefferson had cried for freedom from British tyranny, fought a war to secure that goal, and worked to establish a government through which the ideals of equality, justice and liberty might be realized. Although the dawn of the nineteenth century brought with it the external threats of a warring Europe and the internal dissension of sections, parties and factions, Jefferson could confidently point to the inherent greatness of his fledgling nation and declare that "a just and solid republican government maintained here, will be a standing monument & example for the aim & imitation of the people of other countries...."²

Following the death of Benjamin Franklin in 1790, Thomas Jefferson emerged as the leading mind of the nation, the molder of the country's intellectual character, and the foremost American philosopher.³ In his later life, his circle of intellectual companions was national in origin, and this group provided breadth to his philosophy of man and society. Daniel J. Boorstin, examining the philosophy of Jefferson in
The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson, designates the leaders of the great American's intellectual circle as a versatile, Philadelphia-oriented group, interested in science, art and letters. These men, all fellow-members of the American Philosophical Society, provided the native intellectual background and stimulation from which Jefferson formulated his social philosophy.

Complementing the influence of this intellectual circle, the basis of Jefferson's philosophy emerged from his home state of Virginia. Like Tucker's predecessor and teacher at William and Mary, George Wythe, Jefferson matured in Virginia with an understanding of the problems of the common man that gave him a keen perception of the freedoms and rights that all men deserve to demand and receive. As a result, the young Jefferson joined with leaders of such diverse liberal persuasion as Patrick Henry, Edmund Randolph, Richard Henry Lee and George Washington to resist British domination. After the Revolution, Jefferson grew in prominence within Virginia, not only as a political figure, but also as the most important contributor to the cultural, scientific, literary and philosophical life of the state. The period of forty-one years between 1788 and 1829 can correctly be designated the era of "Jefferson's Virginia."

St. George Tucker shared fully the spirit and enthusiasm of this Jeffersonian epoch and made his convictions public through teaching, writing, and the practice of law. While he refrained from active participation in Jefferson's political
arena, Tucker manifested a concern for the future of his country which equalled Jefferson's. Like his friend from Monticello, Tucker saw the greatness of America as a serious moral question involving the duties and responsibilities of all men to the nation. Jefferson's praise of "the wisdom of our sages and the blood of our heroes" indicates a deep veneration for the past and a reverence for those ideas and beliefs which had been proven by the long history of human experience. Tucker's "Old Bachelor" Essay IX is a genuine part of this humanist tradition for not only does it rely heavily on Bolingbroke as a source, but it is also supplemented by the author with his own set of historical patriots and demagogues. Concerned as he must have been in 1811 over the voices of faction, fear and discontent within the United States and the impending war with England which generated these voices, Tucker evinces in Essay IX a sincere and un-partisan concern for the problems of his country.

Most obviously, Tucker's addition to Bolingbroke's essay is a catalog of patriots and demagogues. Referring to figures in British and European history, Tucker singles out John Hampden, Sir William Wallace and Algernon Sidney as martyrs in the cause of freedom, and places Alfred the Great and Gustavus Adolphus next to William Penn, Franklin and Washington in a series of benefactors of mankind. Tucker also draws upon the ancient history of Greece and Rome by presenting Cleon of Athens as the prototypical demagogue and Fabricius as the classic patriot.
Bolingbroke's definition of Tucker's prototypes leaves little room for elaboration. A tyrant, demagogue or false patriot is one who puts the misguided talents of others to his own good use. Dedicated to the goal of bringing desolation, oppression, poverty and servitude to the masses, the tyrant receives nourishment from his own ambition. In an imaginative sequence of his own in the essay, Tucker pictures the demagogue as a series of wild beasts and relates the attitudes of the various animals to the manipulation of the tyrant in search of power. In his most startling analogy, Tucker compares the demagogue to the predatory beast who seeks "to surprise his victims, and feast upon their blood." Such an image recalls Tucker's Prologue to The Patriot rous'd in which England is compared to a "Vampire vile" which sucked the "vital spirits" of colonial America and which has returned again, according to the poet, to enchain the nation and wrap it "in her foul arms."7

The essay's discussion of demagogues encompasses not only those kings and warriors who dominate through fear and force, but also the political creatures who create howling dissention within republican societies. In 1811, the New England Federalists were friendly to their trading ally, England, and were bitter about the effects of the embargoes of Jefferson and Madison. They violently opposed the war efforts advanced by the Republicans in Congress who were themselves embroiled in long discussions and disagreements over a fit course of action. In the face of continued British naval harassments and territorial threats, Tucker's outcries against factionalism and tyranny are rational and timely.8
As a result of this concern, Tucker evokes the name of George Washington, whom he places at the pinnacle of his list of patriots. Despite the fact that Washington had been dead for only twelve years by 1811, the writers and orators of the nation had succeeded in elevating him to the position of patron hero of America. Responding to a desperate need for a dignified and worshipful national hero to provide a norm for patriotic achievement and unselfish sacrifice, in a few decades Americans elevated Washington to a position that might have required centuries to achieve in Europe.\(^9\) Not until Andrew Jackson did a national figure rise to such inspirational prominence, although Americans also recognized the array of great men in their history. Behind Washington, Tucker specifically singles out Penn and Franklin as contributors to America as well as to mankind, and Wirt, in the Independence Day "Old Bachelor" essay which appeared on July 5, 1811, similarly glorifies numerous figures from the nation's past:

I ask . . . who there is amongst us, that wields the acute, profound, all-searching pen of Farmer Dickinson? --Who is there that displays the force and power of thinking which distinguished Alexander Hamilton? --Who is there that equals Franklin in the vast stores of useful knowledge, and the boundless reach and comprehension of mind? --Who is there that pours the bold, majestic tide of Henry's eloquence? --Who is there, alas! --to compare with him--who was in war the mountain storm--in peace, the gale of spring? --Were not these men, giants in mind and heroism?\(^10\)

Wirt's placement of Washington at the summit of his list of great Americans, an unnamed "giant" without equal, corresponds to Tucker's emphasis on patriots in Essay IX.
Quoting Bolingbroke's discussion of the virtuous qualities of great men and their roles as instructors, guides, guardians and teachers for the nation, Tucker consistently refers back to Washington as the prime repository of this kind of greatness. The "real patriot," the essay insists, comprehends the needs of his country and persists until his talents are fully utilized in service to these needs. Out of respect for their service and sacrifice, patriots should be rewarded with immortality through the remembrance of their birthdays, the celebration of their virtues, and the commemoration of their noble deeds and actions. In comparison with the tyrannical beast of prey, the patriot is equated to a "generous Steed" who courageously leads the country "without artifice, or disguise, and perfectly free from those selfish and unworthy suspicions which find their nourishment in the conflicts of party." Clearly, for Tucker, Washington was the "Father of his Country;" a man whose service to the nation as a general and a president were equaled by his moral example and courage.

An investigation of Tucker's library reveals his interest in the life and character of Washington. Included in his collection were at least two biographical accounts of the Revolutionary general and first president, several birthday eulogies delivered in honor of the great man, and a copy of Washington's "Farewell Address." The more substantial biography was John Marshall's *Life of Washington* which was published in five volumes by C. P. Wayne of Philadelphia.
between 1804 and 1807. Written with the encouragement of Washington's literary executor and nephew, Bushrod Washington, Marshall's *Life* is characterized by a heavy and diffuse style, as well as by a careless handling of sources and a Federalist bias. The biography begins with the explorations of John Cabot and contains numerous historical accounts and digressions which make it more a history of America than a reconstruction of the life of its greatest hero.

Unsuccessful from the very moment of publication, Marshall's *Life* nevertheless contained elements which enshrined Washington in a manner which was to be enlarged upon by later writers. In the final summary chapter of Volume V, Marshall portrays Washington as a man dedicated to duty and devoted to the Constitution of his country. "No man," wrote Marshall of Washington, "has ever appeared upon the theatre of public action whose integrity was more incorruptible, or whose principles were more perfectly free from the contamination of those selfish and unworthy passions which find their nourishment in the conflicts of party." Washington, according to Marshall, had a keen understanding of the forces which opposed liberty and was convinced that society presented no two characters who resembled each other less than a patriot and a demagogue.

The other biography of Washington in Tucker's library was written by Dr. David Ramsay, a South Carolina physician and historian. Containing information derived from histories of the Revolution and Marshall's *Life*, Ramsay's biography
was first published in 1807 and was subject to several editions, the third being owned by Tucker. While much of the biography tends to paraphrase Marshall, Ramsay's comments on the singular patriotism of Washington parallel the sentiments found in Tucker's essay:

The patriotism of Washington was of the most ardent kind, and without alloy. He was very different from those noisy patriots, who, with love of country in their mouths, and hell in their hearts, lay their schemes for aggrandizing themselves at every hazard; but he was one of those who love their country in sincerity, and who hold themselves bound to consecrate all their talents to its service.

The most popular biography of Washington in Tucker's day was not popular with Tucker. This book was Mason Locke Weems' Life of George Washington which was frequently revised during the first decade of the nineteenth century and has been republished and read ever since. Weems' biography contained a number of invented episodes from Washington's life which succeeded in fabricating a personal and private side of the man which has become a part of patriotic American mythology. In a letter to Wirt in April, 1813, Tucker comments on the state of American biography, noting that even Marshall ("the biographer of Washington") had presented the history of the nation, rather than the life of an individual. Nevertheless, the faults of Marshall's style are not improved upon by the novelty and variety of Weems' Life, according to Tucker:

Parson Weems has, indeed, tried to supply the defect; but I never got further than the first paragraph: --"George Washington, (says that most renowned biographer,) the illustrious founder of the American Nation, was the first son of _______
Washington, by a second marriage: a circumstance, (says this profound divine, moralist and biographer,) of itself sufficient to reconcile the scruples of tender consciences, upon that subject." I do not pretend that I have given you a literal transcript of the passage; but, I believe the substance is correct. I shut the book as soon as I had read it, and have no desire to see any more of it.17

An inventory of Tucker's library does not include a copy of Weems' biography.

Along with biographies, the funeral eulogies which were delivered in 1799 and during the first decade of the nineteenth century helped to formulate and crystallize popular conceptions about Washington.18 In these sermons, the virtue, intellect, piety and patriotism of Washington were presented as faultless examples; and the aspect of the man was submerged in the concept of the ideal. Particularly in the election year of 1800, Federalist ministers and politicians transformed Washington into a symbol for the party in their orations, while Jeffersonians remained unpolitical in their orations.

Tucker owned two printed copies of funeral orations which had been delivered in honor of Washington and published in 1800. Both discourses were presented on the occasion of Washington's birthday; one in Frederick, Maryland, by Reverend John V. Wylie, and the other in Williamsburg by Bishop James Madison. Madison's "A Discourse on the Death of General Washington" (Richmond, 1800), in particular, draws upon the public aspects of the life of Washington and dwells on the leader's noble character and upright behavior. As Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia and
president of William and Mary, Madison was writing to impress the ideal of Washington on a wide audience. Comparing the integrity of Washington to an immovable rock in the middle of the ocean, Madison confirms the steadfast quality of his subject by declaring that "his patriotism was as firm as the continent he had saved."\(^19\)

As an historical tract, Madison's address shows the writer's Jeffersonian bias in its absence of political emphasis, creating the illusion that Washington had been in no way allied to either Federalists or Republicans. Rather, according to Madison, Washington's party was that of the "public good:"

He was the chief magistrate of a whole nation, and not a part of that nation. Onward he bent his steady course, inflexible in the pursuit of what he deemed just and proper, conscious of his own integrity, relying upon the favour of Heaven, and affording an example of that rare assemblage, or rather, constellation of virtues, which will and must be the admiration of the ages.\(^20\)

The fame of Washington and the acquisition of "the admiration of ages" were aided significantly by the delivery of orations such as Madison's. In death, the image of Washington rose in the minds of Americans as the standard and the ideal most worthy of emulation. Tucker, in writing of America's greatest patriot, was not immune to or unaffected by the lofty sentiments of the eulogists of Washington.

Perhaps the document which best reveals the true character and thoughts of Washington as a public servant and national figure, and which subsequently was most influential
on Tucker, was written by Washington himself. The "Farewell
Address," first published in 1796, was not only Washington's
final testament to his countrymen, but also a gathering place
of goals, ideals and theories which have continued to influence
American thinking to the present day. Highly comprehensive,
the "Address" covers such areas as national unity, the avoid­
ance of "entangling" foreign alliances, and the development
of a distinct national character. Religion, morality,
education and the maintenance of public credit are included
by Washington in his farewell message and stressed as items
meriting national concern. Clearly, Washington's overriding
concern was foreign policy, a point which reflects the
experiences confronted and the lessons learned during his
second administration. 21

Washington's emphasis on foreign policy is integrated
with his realization of the need of the country to overcome
party spirit and factionalism. Foreshadowing the sentiments
expressed in Tucker's essay, Washington recognizes party
spirit as an aspect which "is inseparable from our nature,"
rooted "in the strongest passions of the human Mind." Yet
Washington also realizes, with Bolingbroke, that the free
rein given to faction in a popular government can lead to
disaster:

The alternate domination of one faction over
another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge
natural to party dissention, which in dif­
ferent ages and countries has perpetrated
the most horrid enormities, is itself a fright­
ful despotism. But this leads at length to a
more formal and permanent despotism. The dis­
orders and miseries, which result, gradually in­
cline the minds of men to seek security and repose
in the absolute power of an Individual: and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty. 22

Drawing his discussion of faction down to a level readily identifiable with the situation in America, Washington warns the nation that "the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of Party are sufficient to make it the interest and the duty of a wise People to discourage and restrain it." 23

During the final years of Washington's administration, the President had witnessed widespread discontent and bitter factionalism in all parts of the country, feelings which climaxed with the publication of Jay's Treaty in 1795. This British-American agreement aimed to resolve differences which had been left unsettled at the conclusion of the Revolution, as well as problems which had risen since the cessation of active hostilities. The terms of the treaty angered many segments of American society, including Northern shipping companies which opposed the meagre concessions made by the British with regard to American trade with the West Indies, and Southerners who discovered that their obligation to pay pre-Revolutionary debts was to be negotiated by an arbitrary commission. 24

The heated debate which preceded the ratification of Jay's Treaty manifested the strength of partisan divisions in America, particularly in the area of foreign policy. Washington, rather than Jay, received the brunt of the critical outcries and found himself cast into the Federalist camp by
his support of the Treaty. Fearing the recurrence of the kind of passion which was aroused by this controversy, Washington included in his "Farewell Address" not a condemnation of party spirit but a sincere wish that such a spirit would be contained and watched in the future. "It demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into flame," he wrote, "lest instead of warming, it should consume."25

St. George Tucker, writing to the Old Bachelor in 1811, was an American patriot of the spirit and conviction of Washington. A soldier of the Revolution, a Virginia liberal, a skilled jurist, and a dedicated teacher, Tucker utilized his talents to provide the "vigilance" demanded by Washington. Following the advice of Jefferson and the words of Bolingbroke, Tucker saw the need to arrest the errors of the present, errors which were replete with dangerous factional disputes, and to retrace the steps of America. By thoughtfully examining the heroes, demagogues, patriots and traitors of the past, the lawyer of Williamsburg hoped to inspire the quality of young leaders for Virginia who might one day lead the nation. Classical antiquity, European history, English politics, and the American national experience merge in Tucker's essay to lend it a scope and direction which is as valuable today as it would have been to the readers of "The Old Bachelor" some hundred and sixty years ago.
NOTES ON THE COMMENTARY


6. Ibid., p. 21.


11. Although only the 1807 Atlas to Marshall's *Life* is extant in the Tucker library today at William and Mary, Beverley Tucker's inventory of his father's estate indicates that St. George Tucker owned the complete set of the biography.


14 Ibid.


16 Ibid., p. 238.


18 Bryan discusses the Washington funeral eulogies, pp. 55-64.


20 Ibid., p. 21.


23 Ibid., p. 636.


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