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“Drapetomania”

Rebellion, Defiance and Free Black Insanity
In the Antebellum United States

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in History

by

Bob Eberly Myers II

2014

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2014

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“Drapetomania”

Rebellion, Defiance and Free Black Insanity

In the Antebellum United States

by

Bob Eberly Myers II

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Theodore M. Porter (Co-chair)

Professor Robin D.G. Kelley (Co-chair)

This dissertation investigates how Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright used science to manufacture consent among slave laborers in the antebellum South. I hope to contribute to debates on black health by addressing the issue of mental health and the role of race in the history of psychiatry. Cartwright’s early essays and anonymous publications, heretofore addressed, provide unique insight into what led the physician to articulate blacks’ acts of defiance and rebellion as instances of mental instability. Instead of viewing black people’s vigilance for freedom as earnest, Cartwright was well known for having delineated a variety of mental disorders to which he claimed all Africans were prone, including shirking work related responsibilities (*Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*), and the practice of running away to freedom (*Drapetomania*). This dissertation demonstrates how Cartwright mobilized statistics and diagnostic categories in hopes to convince others to limit black mobility and to eliminate power-sharing.

Whether in the form of whites negotiating with slaves, providing incentives for them to work harder, or by rejecting the “Free Negro” category altogether, Cartwright saw his duty as twofold: to correct what he argued was the misguided notion that some blacks held the capacity to endure freedom whereas others did not, and to put forth a therapeutic regimen by which to

curb blacks' enthusiasm for freedom — he repudiated gradual and immediate abolition altogether and advocated instead that whites worldwide reduce all blacks to slavery. Following the lead of the Founding generation Cartwright reasoned that there were structurally-based, mental and physiological differences between blacks and whites which led blacks to be governed differently and through coercion. So, in addition to being innovative in his diagnostic claims, on par with Jefferson's accomplishment in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Cartwright consolidated existing scientific opinion and then gave it powerful and influential articulation. He motivated a trans-Atlantic debate about "Free Negro Insanity" which reflected widespread 19th century scientific thinking about race, slave management and stimulating correct conduct in laborers. An inquiry into "Free Negro Insanity" enables a conversation about how trans-Atlantic science and medicine served the requirements of slavery as an institution; How science is used to determine what constituted a slave's status, what was meant by a slave "running away" and why slaves' "mental competence" was necessarily an issue. By examining the genealogy of Cartwright's concepts, one can see better his process of concept-creation and inquire into how 'objects' in science get created or set aside for study.

Cartwright wrote extensively on the need for Southerners to pursue independent medical education as a way to explore diseases particular to the Southern climate and "its Negroes." But despite the fact that Cartwright's early work (published before his tenure as "Professor of Negro Diseases" at the University of Louisiana) established his career and achieved him status, scholars address it rarely. I argue that charting how he achieves, loses and then regains his status provides a unique window into the thinking of the emerging plantation aristocracy on how to regulate "Free Negro" activity in the Mississippi and Louisiana territories as well as in the English, Spanish and French West Indies. This inquiry into conduct disorder and defiance diagnoses helps readers to see both medicines' curative and productive values. The implications of such a focus stretch from the applied science of 19th century "Negro Management" handbooks and "Plantation Manuals" to the 20th century presence of medical diagnoses like "Attention Deficit Disorder" (A.D.D.), "Hyperactivity Disorder" (A.D.H.D.), and "Oppositional Defiance Disorders" (O.D.D.) which are aimed at curbing the behavior of disobedient, defiant and rebellious youth through pharmaceutical treatments.

The dissertation of Bob Eberly Myers II is approved.

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2014

This dissertation is dedicated to the two loves of my life:

Mrs. Carol Ann Myers

&

Mrs. Willie Rosetta “Tiny” Franklin

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Preface: How Defiance becomes “Disease”

We have arranged a global civilization whose most crucial elements profoundly depend on science and technology. We have also arranged things so that almost no one understands science and technology. We might get away with it for a while, but sooner or later this combustible mixture of ignorance and power will blow up in our faces.

— Carl Sagan

*

Far from abnegating man’s emotional needs, science is grounded in them: science matures as it recognizes the role that fantasy plays in all its work...Science is a very human thing...it springs from a need, is directed by curiosity to choose an interesting field of study, and in that field seeks results that concern men.

— Walter Lippmann, *Drift and Mastery*

*

Some people never go crazy. What truly horrible lives they must lead.

— Charles Bukowski

*

When a person has *great* insight—the intelligence which brings him out of suffering and darkness—let’s call that awakened person “X.” The question we often ask is, “What does ‘X,’ who is awakened have to offer ‘Y,’ who is still in darkness? What kind of ‘Enlightenment’ and all of that pitiable nonsense. However, we do not care about that now. We only want to ask, “What will ‘Y,’ who remains in darkness, do to ‘X’ who acts with *great* insight?” What man will do is to praise him, negate him or kill him.

— Dialog between J. Krishnamurti and Physicist David Bohm¹

*

My first night on the job I didn’t know what to expect: The entire campus was in a state of disarray as emergency units went from cottage to cottage collecting official head-counts to determine which kids had escaped. Other counselors explained to me that it was a “lock-down.” The cottages were small bunkers where roughly 300 children, mostly orphans aged 10-18, had been court-mandated to 24-hour care. The heavy black walkie-talkie in my hand barked out “OK we got three runaways, they eloped from Cottage 4 and 5 in what appears to be a coordinated effort.” I learned later that such dizzying scenes were common at the ‘youth treatment facility’ where I elected to work. With the energized, amped-up adult staff struggling to seize kids and the youth as defiant and as excited as I would ever see them, it looked more like a scene from the television show *Cops* than psychiatric therapy. The rebel leaders — a select few, usually older,

¹ Carl Sagan, *Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*, (2011); Walter Lippmann is cited in David A. Hollinger, *In the American Province: Studies in the History and Historiography of Ideas*, (Johns Hopkins Press, 1985), 49; Jean-Francois Duval and Charles Bukowski, *Bukowski and the Beats*, (Sun Dog Press, 2002), 12; Jiddu Krishnamurti, David Bohm, *Limits of Thought*, and Krishnamurti, *J. Living in an Insane World* (1989), 69-73

stronger, deceptively intelligent and to whom everyone paid deference, no matter what — heard the walkie-talkie announcement too and began orchestrating a crisis immediately. Some of their communication was verbal, but some of it just seemed to be understood. With impressive speed and before anyone knew what happened the facility experienced a full on, difficult to contain riot wherein twenty or thirty children of all ages escaped their cottages and took to the streets, the woods, the lake, anywhere outside their court-mandated confinement.²

As an historian, it was difficult for me to experience events like these and not see correlations to local Memphis history. Searching for escaped, young black men in the heavily wooded outskirts of Memphis, Tennessee made me feel incredibly uneasy. The woods I trampled through are officially recognized landmarks from the Underground Railroad and the trees in our searchlights once sheltered frightened, fugitive slaves seeking freedom. My unease also came from knowing that once we obtained the runaways, the boys would be taken back to the facility, strip-searched, disciplined, isolated and medicated. Should they still show signs of defiance they would continue isolation, be placed one-on-one with a staff member and have their medication dosages increased.

Working with “at risk” youth over the past several years inspired me to return to graduate school and write this dissertation.³ The dynamism of the kids I worked with encouraged me to stay engaged in the field, but the system in which they were institutionalized made me pull away. Most disturbing is the number of adolescent youth I witnessed whose lives are being over-

² The above scene, in which I participated personally in 2006, erupted again and made international headlines on September 4, 2014, when a violent disturbance broke out involving more than 20 teens at the same Tennessee juvenile detention center where [more than 30 teens had escaped the](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/disturbance-at-nashville-youth-detention-center-where-33-teens-escaped/) day before. For CBS News coverage of the teens’ uprising, click: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/disturbance-at-nashville-youth-detention-center-where-33-teens-escaped/> and for BBC coverage, click <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-29034677>

³ This term is used often to identify non-privileged children and under-served members of our population, including poor, black, Latino, gay, lesbian, transgendered, and immigrant and abused youth. However, when the youth are at risk, we are all at risk. On the role of “intersectionality” in determining actual freedom, see Kimberle Crenshaw, *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings* (New York: The New Press, 2014)

determined by the medical and judicial community’s opinion about their mental health, specifically the way in which psychiatrists, counselors and court officials are quick to label defiance as “mental disease.”

Particularly shocking is the frequent practice to label disobedient kids with either Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or a more recent diagnosis, Opposition Defiance Disorder (ODD).⁴ At the facility where I worked, children who might present objectionable or defiant behavior were diagnosed with having ODD and received a heavy regimen of anti-psychotic medication to “cool them out.” A November 20, 2011 *New York Times* article cited that “Powerful drugs intended for people with severe mental illnesses are prescribed for children in foster care at a disturbingly high rate.”⁵ Over 85 percent of the kids I worked with were scheduled a regular regimen of medication — three times a day, every day — from vitamins and diabetic treatments to anti-psychotic or psychotropic medication. The most often prescribed pills were Risperdal, Ritalin, Seroquel, Zoloft, Xanax, Ambien, Adderall, Trileptal and Depakote, each of which renders the child into various day-dream states, taking the edge off of potentially aggressive behavior.⁶

The unease I felt crouched in the swampy woods of Memphis (also known as “The Cotton Capital of the South”) was born from instinct but supported by historical fact. Medical

⁴ “The vast majority of kids ‘with ADHD’ are capable of paying attention and being cooperative in environments that they are comfortable in. Studies show that they will pay attention to activities that they have chosen, that they find stimulating, or for which they are getting paid. They routinely pay attention to what interests them but tend to blow off school, especially homework. In 1992 the then APA medical director proudly described the relationship between the APA and pharmaceutical corporations as a ‘responsible, ethical partnership,’ and, in 2001, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* estimated that four to six million ADHD-labeled U.S. kids were taking Ritalin and Ritalin-like drugs.” Bruce Levine explores this theme in “De-pathologizing the Spirit of Resistance,” *Z Magazine* 18:10 (October 2005); see also Levine, *Commonsense Rebellion: Taking Back Your Life from Drugs, Shrinks, Corporations, and a World Gone Crazy* (Continuum, 2003).

⁵ Benedict Carey, “Drugs Used for Psychotics Go to Youths in Foster Care,” *New York Times*, November 20, 2011

⁶ Carey’s *The New York Times* article addresses the “disturbing” number of anti-psychotic medications being distributed in the American Foster Care system. Since many of these foster relationships involve Medicaid or state-sponsored forms of treatment, the article brings to attention the link between public spending and medicating targeted groups of defiant youth.

and legal discussions of rebellious behavior as mental disease have a genealogical heritage dating back to the antebellum American South and beyond. Medical discussions involving issues of morality, competence, virtue and agency long pre-dated discussions by psychiatrists, asylum superintendents and “alienists” who professed treatments to ease mental and physical imbalance.⁷ Modern defiance disorders and their controversial treatment techniques find historical corner-stones in nineteenth century theories of “moral insanity,” “moral treatment” and “*Drapetomania*.” Historical sensitivity to the role of psychological individualism⁸ in the pursuits and theories of men practicing plantation medicine may provide additional insight into how it is possible for the modern psychiatric enterprise to continue to wield social authority and public acceptance despite cogent and radical critiques of its methods.⁹

When I worked in conjunction with Clayborne Carson as a researcher for the National Civil Rights Museum’s expansion project I came across a little-known theme that reoccurred in the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. where he called specifically for people to cultivate “creative mal-adjustment.” Addressing the rebellion and defiance of the late 1960’s, King challenged the technical nomenclature of psychology and its growing tendency to medicalize allegedly truant behavior. At the Temple of Israel of Hollywood on February 26, 1965 Dr. King advocated emulating the “mal-adjusted.” King returned to this theme and advocated “creative

⁷ The term “alienist” was used during the early 19th century to refer to physicians who specialized in diseases of the mind. The term originated in physicians’ claim to have the ability to re-integrate portions of the patient’s personality that had become alienated from one another. Alienists often became asylum superintendents and the group of physicians that went on to comprise the American Psychiatric Association was composed of alienists. It is a precursor to the term “psychiatrist.”

⁸ Haney argues that the nineteenth century was the formative period both for American law and for human sciences and was dominated by a single overarching conception of human behavior. This article explores insightfully the implications and consequences of that domination by examining the general conditions under which individualism flourished in the United States and then focusing on specific criminal justice policies that were premised on this individualistic paradigm. See Craig Haney, “Criminal Justice and the Nineteenth-Century Paradigm: The Triumph of Psychological Individualism in the ‘Formative Era,’” *Law and Human Behavior* 6:3-4 (1982): 191-235.

⁹ Michel Foucault’s groundbreaking work *Madness and Civilization* explores images of madness from the Italian renaissance through the French Revolution. Attention to the American scene may provide valuable insight into why psychiatric treatments have thrived in the midst of such radical critiques.

mal-adjustment” on twelve different occasions. King argued — half rhetorically — that “Modern psychology has a word that is probably used more than any other word in psychology. It is the word ‘*maladjusted*.’ Certainly we all want to live the well-adjusted life in order to avoid neurotic and schizophrenic personalities. But I must honestly say to you tonight my friends that there are some things in our world, there are some things in our nation to which I’m proud to be maladjusted, to which I call upon all men of Good Will to be maladjusted until the Good Society is realized.” Dr. King continued:

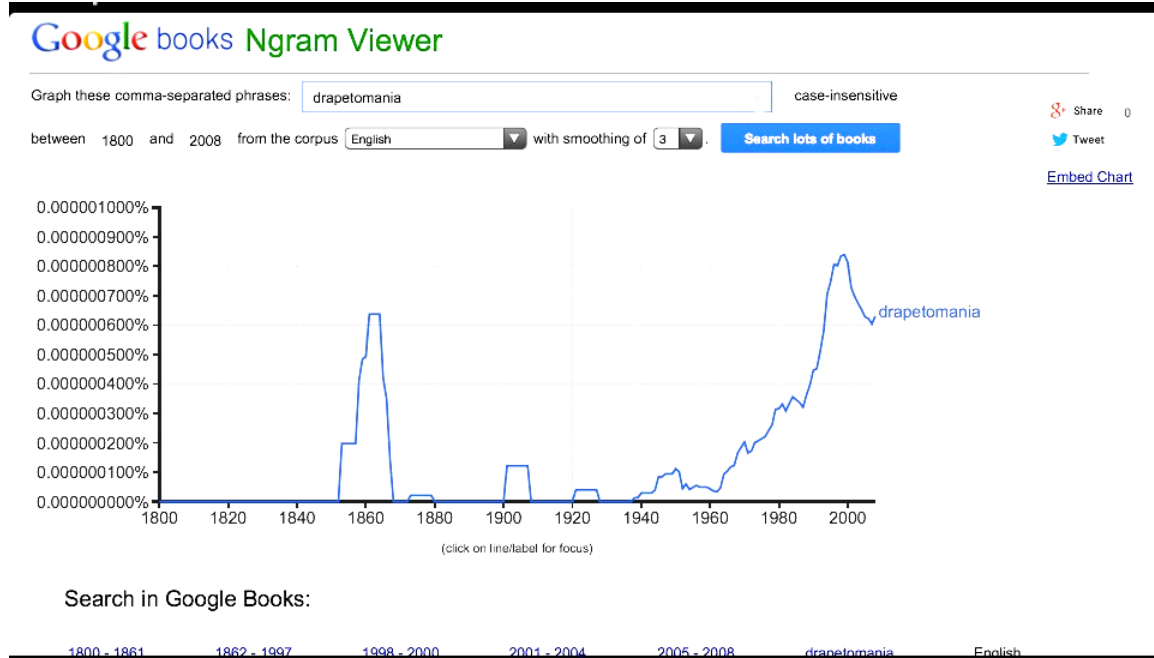
I must honestly say to you that I never intend to adjust myself to segregation and discrimination. I never intend to become adjusted to religious bigotry. I never intend to adjust myself to economic conditions that will take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few. I never intend to adjust myself to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating effects of physical violence. And I say to you that I am absolutely convinced that maybe the world is in need of the formation of a new organization: “The International Association for the Advancement of Creative Maladjustment,” men and women who will be as maladjusted as the prophet Amos who in the midst of the injustices of his day would cry out in words that echo across the centuries: “Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream;” as maladjusted as Abraham Lincoln who had the vision to see that this nation could not survive half slave and half free; as maladjusted as Thomas Jefferson who in the midst of an age amazingly adjusted to slavery would etch across the pages of history words lifted to cosmic proportions: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...” as maladjusted as Jesus of Nazareth who said to the men and women of his day: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for those that spitefully mis-use you.”

King stressed that society itself is what is truly maladjusted, and that people fighting for justice are bringing a vision of re-adjustment. It is impossible to separate his use of this word from his other constant accusation, that America is “sick.”¹⁰

Although *Drapetomania* and *Dysaesthesia Aethiopica* may be “discarded diagnoses” in modern psychiatry these concepts, particularly *Drapetomania*, have taken on quite a career in the 20th and 21st centuries. According to the algorithm which powers Google’s “Ngram” service, it illustrates that, out of all the books scanned by Google dated from 1800 to 2010, the frequency with which the term “drapetomania” appears in its vast archive has increased substantially in the

¹⁰ I want to thank Robin Kelley for his insight to draw a parallel between these terms “maladjustment” and “sick.”

modern era:



In addition to Google’s survey, six years ago I taught a seminar at UCLA entitled “Madness and Freedom in U.S. History,” and although I covered a wide range of arguments that conflated creativity, rebellion and madness, my own students found Cartwright’s diagnosis “*Drapetomania*” particularly fascinating. Mental diseases like “*Anarchia*”¹¹ and “*Hysteria*”¹² proved to be strong seconds for the most captivating manias among students, but *Drapetomania* won them over. Instead of being repelled by the term the students were compelled toward it.

On May 24, 2013 historian Katherine Bankole-Medina, who wrote about Cartwright’s

¹¹ Cartwright’s mentor Dr. Benjamin Rush invented the mental disease “*Anarchia*,” explaining that it was due to “The excess of the passion for liberty.” He elaborated that passions, “inflamed by the successful issue of the [Revolutionary] war, produced in many people, opinions and conduct which could not be removed by reason nor restrained by government... The extensive influence which these opinions had upon the ... passion and morals of many of the citizens of the United States, constituted a species of insanity, which I shall take the liberty of distinguishing by the name of *Anarchia*.” See Rush, *Medical Inquiries and Observations Upon the Diseases of the Mind*, Vol. 1, (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1794), 277

¹² See Mark S. Micale, “On the ‘Disappearance’ of Hysteria: A Study in the Clinical Deconstruction of a Diagnosis,” *Isis* 84:3 (September, 1993): 496-526

disease concepts twenty years ago in her *Slavery and Medicine*,¹³ added a video to Youtube.com detailing Cartwright's work, stating that she felt compelled to do so because of the sharp rise in students' interest in Cartwright's disease concepts since she published her book in 1998.¹⁴ On May 31, 2013 the Virginia Foundation of the Humanities-sponsored National Public Radio show entitled *Backstory: With the American History Guys*, featured a discussion of Cartwright's "Drapetomania" which included Professors Peter Onuf, Katherine Bankole, Jonathan Metzel, and Brian Balogh.¹⁵

Even more recently Cartwright's concepts have been featured on nationwide news media, including Melissa Harris Perry from MSNBC, who recommended reading Cartwright's work as a way for teachers to address the citizens' rebellion in Ferguson, Missouri following the murder of the teenager Michael Brown this past summer. In her "open letter" to teachers, the MSNBC host suggested "Science teachers may want to consider sharing this historical document with their students. In his 1851 article, Dr. Samuel Cartwright, at the time a widely published and well respected doctor, discusses the discovery of 'drapetomania,' a mental disease he claimed caused slaves to run away." She adds that, "After reading the article, students can explore the history of scientific racism, and how it continues to influence our thinking even today."¹⁶ Before the widespread public outrage following the Michael Brown murder, Melissa Harris-Perry had featured Cartwright's work on her nightly television show, *Race-Talk*, where she presented a brief profile of the physician and cited the definition of "drapetomania" from his 1851 article as

¹³ Katherine Kemi Bankole, *Slavery and Medicine: Enslavement and Medical Practices in Antebellum Louisiana*, (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 1998)

¹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0m359QKFww&noredirect=1>

¹⁵ Historians Brian Balogh & Peter Onuf interviewed Prof. Katherine Bankole-Medina and Dr. Jonathan Metzel on the meaning of *Drapetomania*; see "States of Mind: Mental Illness in America," on the NPR show *Backstory, With the American History Guys*, (May 31, 2013); see also Jonathan Metzel, *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*, (New York: Beacon Press, 2009); and Katherine Kemi Bankole, *Slavery and Medicine: Enslavement and Medical Practices in Antebellum Louisiana*, (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 1998)

¹⁶ Melissa Harris-Perry, "Open Letter: How to teach Students about Ferguson," on MSNBC.com, (August 30, 2014)

a lead-in to round-table discussion on race and depression.¹⁷

Therefore, there is a clear tension between historians' dismissal of Cartwright and his continued public appeal. Because the general scholarly attitude toward his work has lacked analytic engagement — even within the discussions mentioned above — a recent panel at this year's 128th annual meeting of the *American Historical Association* featured a presentation that provoked why it is historians avoid Cartwright as a viable subject of study, with the paper “Running Away from *Drapetomania*: Rethinking Samuel Cartwright and Racial Medicine in the Antebellum South.”¹⁸ The need for such a panel discussion shows the fact that Cartwright is rarely taken seriously because modern readers view his diagnoses as offensive. Indeed, the frequent admonishment that his theories are absurd was what piqued my interest six years ago in pursuing a genealogy of “*Drapetomania*.”

I have been challenged often to answer the question, why write a history of *Drapetomania* and why should others give such a close reading to Cartwright's ideas?¹⁹ Some scholars have criticized that it is more important to make historical subjects relevant to the concerns of contemporary readers than to make the contemporary reader fully aware of the historical subject's intended meanings.²⁰ My goal in this dissertation is to bring critique to bear on current medical practices that label resistance as mental illness and I imagine that historical

¹⁷ See round-table discussion with Ra-Neshi Coates (*The Atlantic* magazine's national correspondent), Brittney Cooper (Prof. of Women's and Gender Studies and Africana Studies at Rutgers University), author Tanner Colby, Christina Beltran and Melissa Harris-Perry in the MSNBC show, *Race-Talk*, “Breaking Down the Narratives of Racial Discourse,” (April 6, 2014): <http://on.msnbc.com/1e38Alu>

¹⁸ Christopher Willoughby, “Running Away from *Drapetomania*: Rethinking Samuel Cartwright and Racial Medicine in the Antebellum South,” from Tulane University; paper delivered at the American Historical Association 128th Annual Meeting, (January 4, 2014)

¹⁹ This is a challenge that I appreciated, as it was made right up front when I embarked on my research. I am indebted to Prof. Margaret Humphreys, MD PhD, for criticisms and suggestions that she gave me early on as I embarked on this dissertation. Humphreys is the Josiah Charles Trent Professor in the History of Medicine at Duke University and the Editor, *Journal of the History of Medicine*.

²⁰ William Outhwaite, *Understanding Social Life: The Method Called Verstehen*, (London, 1975), 13; see also Berel Dov Lerner, *Rules, Magic and Instrumental Reason: A Critical Interpretation of Peter Winch's Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), 32

inquiry is a solid method of accomplishing this. If human life is “structured and carried out through meaningful action and symbolic expressions,” the concept of history provokes the possibility of learning from history; it raises the possibility that one can contribute to changing the present through awareness gained from historical investigation. Now that I have addressed how contemporary concerns pulled me into the study of resistance and rebellion, I shall proceed in the Introduction to build my own approach to investigating Cartwright’s work and ideally make some contribution to the wide-ranging scholarship on “*Drapetomania*.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I want to give thanks for the professional encouragement and moral support of Prof. Robert A. Hill. Prof. Hill introduced me to the term “moral insanity” while I developed my prospectus in 2009; both he and Prof. Joyce Appleby were unflinching in their criticism and impervious in their trust. Both Hill and Appleby listened to my ideas and helped me shape a research question that led me to the findings in the current dissertation. Working with Prof. Michael Meranze has also brought welcome clarifications and his input has strengthened my writing and helped sharpen my arguments. I want to thank Prof. Ted Porter for his earnest enjoyment of scientific ideas, not to mention his sense of intellectual irony and true enthusiasm for both clarity and distinction. I thank Prof. Robin D.G. Kelley for his admirable intellectual energy and for providing keen insight and long-time support. I thank also Prof. Brenda Stevenson for her continued encouragement and mentorship over the years and Prof. Richard Yarborough for his wisdom and patience. I also want to say a special thanks to Dept. Chair David Myers for his bureaucratic wizardry, and to Profs. Valerie Matsumoto, Muriel McClendon, Lisa Lowe and Prof. Kimberle Crenshaw for their encouraging words over the years. Finally Perry Anderson’s seminar on “17th and 18th Century Intellectual History” and an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation funded study of “Knowledge and Postmodernism”²¹ with Joyce were both essential to my development in Intellectual History. Of course all errors and misunderstandings are entirely my own.

In addition to wanting to thank personally Dwight A. Mc Bride, Dean of the Graduate School at Northwestern University, for his encouragement, I also owe a tremendous intellectual debt to the *American Culture* program at Northwestern University, which taught me the value of independent thought and action; specifically to Carl Smith, Henry Binford and Timothy Breen with whom I cut my teeth on hermeneutics, and to Prof. Kenneth Warren who taught me the value of Boston, The

²¹ The results of the Mellon seminar were published as an edited volume: *Knowledge and Postmodernism in Historical Perspective*, ed. Joyce Appleby, (New York: Routledge Press, 1996)

James' and pragmatism. Northwestern is also where I had the profound privilege to study cultural history with Prof. Sterling Stuckey (a fellow Memphian) and to be exposed to the Philosophy Department where I owe great debt to Profs. John McCumber, who introduced me to Classical Philosophy and Ethics, as well as to Stephen Toulmin and Thomas McCarthy who introduced me to the Philosophy of Science, specifically the work of Richard Dawkins and Thomas Kuhn. Finally — and perhaps overwhelmingly — I want to thank the *Medill School of Journalism* at Northwestern where Profs. John Reque, Pat Clinton and Abe Peck taught me everything I know about writing and editing. I want to thank also Charles M. Payne who not only mentored me well back at Northwestern, but also put me in contact with his colleague Margaret Humphreys, MD PhD, at the very beginning of my research. I am indebted to Prof. Humphreys for challenges and suggestions that she gave me early on in my research on Cartwright.

Last and certainly not least: I am made from and powered by God's Divine Prosperity... And for that understanding I am in debt to my Mother, Mrs. Carol Ann Myers and Grandmother, Mrs. Rosetta "Tiny" Franklin, who *always* kept me in the Church. I want to thank also my brother Dr. Lee Myers and finally my uncle, Keith L. Franklin, for being my right-hand man and first reader. Being raised in a religious environment in Memphis, Tennessee meant a ritual of thorough reading and re-reading of the Bible. I will never forget the sermons: first, the Rev. Benjamin Hooks, then later the Rev. Joseph McGhee who — after stating the "thesis" of his sermon to the congregation and wiping his forehead — always proclaimed, "Now let us turn to the text." For all of this, I give Thanks.

Bob E. Myers II

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- University of California Humanities Research Institute Fellowship, 1997
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- UCLA Center for African-American Studies Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, 1997
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Participated in a year-long seminar, *Knowledge and Post Modernism in Historical Perspective*, and then in publishing a book by the same name, Joyce Appleby, ed. (New York: Routledge Press, 1996)
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- Teaching Fellow, UCLA, Cluster Program, 2007–2008
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- Teaching Assistant, UCLA, 2006–2007, Fall, with Prof. William Clark

“Nuclear Weapons & Nuclear Fear: America in the Atomic Age”

- Teaching Assistant, UCLA, 2006–2007, Winter with Prof. Michael Meranze
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- Adjunct Professor, Audrey Cohen College, Manhattan, NY, 2003
Adjunct Professor in the Department of Human Services where I taught a course entitled,
“The Problem of Social Science and the Origins of ‘Race’”
- Adjunct Professor, La Guardia College (CUNY) Queens, NY, 2002
“Race, Immigration and Ethnicity in the 20th Century,” Dept. of Urban Studies
- Adjunct Professor, California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA, 1997
“Race and Gender in 20th Century Visual Culture,” in the Critical Studies Dept.
- Lecturer, UCLA & Mellon Foundation Initiative with Joyce Appleby, Spring 1996
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Publications and Presentations:

- B. E. Myers, “Apples and Cloves,” in Pentti Monkkonen, ed., *The Kite* 1:4 (Friday, September 14, 2012) [fiction]
- —“The Cultural Roots of the Dismissive Argument that Obama Supporters Are ‘Obamamaniacs,’” *History News Network*, (George Mason University, March, 24, 2008); Stable URL: <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/48687>
- —“Fixing the Faggot: Black Subjectivity as ‘Autocartography’ in the Photography of Lyle Ashton Harris,” in Devon W. Carbado, *Black Men Writing on Race, Gender, and Sexuality: A Critical Reader*, (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 338-346
- —“Transient Consciousness and the ‘Fixed’ Subject in the Photography of Rene Cox,” in Salah M. Hassan, ed., *Gendered Visions: The Art of Contemporary Africana Women Artists*, (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1998)
- B. E. Myers’ text/image collaboration with Lyle Ashton Harris, in Jennifer Blessing and Judith Halberstam, eds., *Rose is a rose is a rose: Gender Performance in Photography*, (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1997)
- Bob Myers, “ ‘What are you doing?’ Pragmatism, Thomas Eakins and the Act of Art,” Presented the paper at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Independent Studies Program (ISP) Symposium*, (Spring, 1997)
- —Delivered the paper, “What is a Black Body? Phenomenology Vision and the Problem of Historicism,” during the “*Civil Rights and Justice*” exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1997

Introduction: “Discarded Diagnoses”¹

In the preface I described the genesis and purpose of my project and provided some sense of how it was this topic chose me; here in the introduction I clarify my intellectual approach to the evidence I discovered and indicate my own point of view. This introduction is divided into three sections and has three main goals: 1) I define and establish the relevance of Cartwright’s “*Drapetomania*” and “*Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*.” 2) In an attempt to characterize why other historians have analyzed Cartwright’s concepts in a foreshortened way, I present a historiographical account of his work that is sensitive to the hermeneutic orientation of his chroniclers. 3) In order to explain my own interpretive style and indicate what I do differently I provide a chapter outline that details my approach to Cartwright, summarizes each chapter’s arguments and details the scope of this investigation.

1:

Definitions

What is “*Drapetomania*”?

Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright defined “*Drapetomania*” as the madness of black slaves running away from their white captors.² He advised that, “with the advantage of proper medical advice, strictly followed, this troublesome practice of running away, that many negroes have, can be almost entirely prevented.”³ Cartwright specialized in what his contemporaries called “mental alienation,” the antebellum expression that described a break with reality or a schism in the mind.⁴ Using his

¹ Taken from William F. Bynum’s description of Cartwright’s work. Bynum is Director of the Wellcome Center for history of medicine at Cambridge University. Bynum, “Discarded Diagnoses,” *Lancet* 356:9241, (Nov., 2000): 1615

² He derived this from the Greek words *drapeto* meaning “runaway slave” and *mania*, meaning “mad or crazy.”

³ Cartwright, “Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” *De Bow’s Review* 11:3 (September 1851): 331

⁴ Term “psychiatry” has roots in 19th century Germany and France but did not become used in American asylums until the 20th century. Like many medical concepts, the term is taken from Medieval Latin *psychiatria*, literally “a healing of the soul,” which is a Latinized form of the Greek terms *psykhe*-“mind” + *iatreia* “healing, care.” In the U.S. profession organized itself first when group of 13 “alienists” and asylum superintendents formed the “Association of Medical

observational skills as a physician he stressed that well-trained whites could predict black defiance in advance: “Before negroes run away, unless they are frightened or panic-struck, they become sulky and dissatisfied. The cause of this sulkiness and dissatisfaction should be inquired into and removed, or they are apt to run away or fall into the negro consumption.” Cartwright claimed that blacks’ absconding from service was “as much a disease of the mind as any other species of mental alienation.”⁵ But what persuaded white physicians and legal experts to label rebellious blacks as “unsound” or mentally ill? This dissertation examines what led Cartwright to hone in on widespread observations of black “*rascality*” and accusations of abolitionist “fanaticism” before the Civil War. On the whole I investigate what compelled him to invent the disease categories “*Drapetomania*” and “*Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*” as scientific explanations of black defiance.

New York Times correspondent Frank Law Olmsted wrote extensively on outbreaks of “rascality” among slaves during the 1850s, indicating the preponderance of disobedient and radicalized behavior of blacks throughout the south, and providing some insight into what motivated Cartwright to concertize this widespread behavior in diagnostic terms.⁶ Olmsted took nearly seven years to interview a wide range of southern men — whites and blacks from different states — and then published two books on the subject. He declared that there was a spirit of “general insubordination” among blacks in the slave states.⁷ The northerner observed that this diffuse concept of slave misbehavior and “rascality”

Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane” in October 1844. In 1894 the organization changed its name to the “American Medico-Psychological Association” and it became the “American Psychiatric Association” in July, 1921. Cartwright’s mentor, Dr. Benjamin Rush’s image adorns the official seal of the “American Psychiatric Association.”

⁵ Cartwright, “Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” *De Bow’s Review* 11:3 (1851): 331-33

⁶ Given the extant nexus between statistics and diagnostics in mental illness, it is important, even at this point, to clarify that the category indicating the number and extent of “runaway slaves” appeared first in the U.S. Census of 1850; following that appearance, Cartwright coined the term “*Drapetomania*” in 1851. For a fascinating look at how statistics and categories affect the creation and preponderance of the entity described, Ian Hacking offers his theory of “dynamic nominalism,” in which the categories used to describe people influence the forms of experience that are possible for them to have. See Ian Hacking, “Making Up People,” in Thomas C. Heller, Morton Sosna and David E. Wellbery, eds., *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, (San Jose: Stanford Univ. Press, 1986), 222-236

⁷ For Olmsted’s continued characterization of the ubiquity of work stoppages, indolence, insubordination among slaves see also his *Journey in the Back Country* (1860), 475

took on myriad forms of disgruntled and indignant behavior.⁸ Olmsted spent several chapters identifying how slave disobedience, indolence and resistance affected slaves' value, discipline, organization of labor, and even speculated on the prospects of paying wages to slaves to appease them.⁹ He then sought out Cartwright who, by 1851, held the title of "Professor of Diseases of the Negro" at the University of Louisiana and was considered an expert on black behavior.¹⁰

By the time Cartwright coined the term "*Drapetomania*" in 1851 Southern courts had already recorded instances of the behavior he summed up in diagnostic form. The argument that slaves' running away was caused by "mental illness" dates back to the 1820s in the upper and lower south.¹¹ Court records confirm the intellectual leap from describing the "habit" of running away to diagnosing "mental alienation" and "fits of insanity" among slaves. In 1821 Henry Dickerson of Kentucky put down a partial payment for "a negro woman named Rody" for \$300 and agreed that an additional "three hundred thereof [was] to be paid in six months" from the time of purchase. However Dickerson claimed that the slave trader, John Butler of Adair County "practiced a shameful fraud" by "making sale of said negro to him." The court deposition goes on to state that Dickerson was "altogether unacquainted" with the defendant and "disposed to confide in Defts statements relative to said negroe's qualities at the time of purchase." He trusted the trader's verification "that upon interrogating the said Deft [defendant, John Butler] as to the qualities of said negro he said Deft represented to your Orator

⁸ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 480

⁹ Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 155, on "rascality's" relationship to the loss of profit to the employer "from the illness or disability real or counterfeited, of the laborer to work," see 187-192 with "rascality" cited on 192, with regard to slave discipline 197, on its expression as discontent or laziness 200, on its effect on the practice of "driving" slaves 208, & on the organization of labor 436; for an extensive footnote detailing these citations, see Ch. 10, note # 12 below.

¹⁰ Ariela Gross, *Double Character: Slavery & Mastery in the Antebellum Southern Courtroom* (Princeton, 2000), 87

¹¹ For the upper south see Testimony of William Butler, ca. 1821, in Records of the Circuit Court, Barren County, Kentucky, Equity Judgment, Henry Dickerson vs. John Butler, (July 9, 1821), Case # 192, reel# 209,794, Kentucky; and for the lower south, see Division for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, Kentucky; Records of the First Judicial District Court, Orleans Parish Louisiana, Case Records, Adelaide Duvigneau vs. Louis Lanoix, (January 20, 1820), # 2,839, reel 5, Louisiana Collection, New Orleans Public Library.

[Dickerson] that he said Deft had never whip[p]ed said negro & that she was no eye-servant,¹² but was industrious & attentive to business & required no looking after & upon your Orator asking the Deft if said negro ever was in the habit or given to run away he said Deft answered that he never knew of her running away, but one time in his life & that could hardly be called running away for he was about to sell her to some Natchez men & that she got wind of it & laid out until they were gone & then come home.”¹³ The charge that Rody was only an “eye-servant” indicated both her disobedience and the extra effort required in monitoring her. Since whipping or the use of force generally proved to restrain blacks from running away, the litigant inquired whether or not physical abuse had been the cause of Rody’s discontent.

What is unique about this case and others like it is that legal experts began to link mental illness to slave disobedience, and in this case the litigants themselves charged that radicalized slaves had become mad. The Kentucky testimony stated that “your Orator charges that since the said purchase he has discovered that said Defts said statements & representations relative to said negro were altogether false & fraudulent and that said negro required a great deal of looking after & watching & with all the attention that could be bestowed in that way she was neglectful of her business, deceitful & a most abominable liar, that she was in the habit of running away & staying out as a runaway for weeks & months at a time without any provocation whatever & that her conduct in going off without any apparent cause & staying out indicated a state of mind so different from what is usual that your Orator doubts whether she was capable of proper reflection & judgment.”¹⁴ Importantly, the allegation that Rody is mad, or of a “mind so different from what is usual” erupts out of the white “Orator’s” distorted worldview which was in turn emboldened by the ruling interests of the U.S. *Constitution*. The

¹² An “eye-servant” is a servant who is faithful to his or her duty only when watched.

¹³ See the testimony of William Butler, ca. 1821, in Records of the Circuit Court, Barren County, Kentucky, Equity Judgment, Henry Dickerson vs. John Butler, (July 9, 1821), Case # 192, reel# 209,794, Kentucky

¹⁴ Henry Dickerson vs. John Butler, (July 9, 1821), Case # 192, reel# 209,794, Kentucky

statement that she ran “without provocation” betrays the speaker’s blindness to the oppressive nature of the slave system as it bears on the slave — he could not imagine a reason Rody could be discontent because he himself was cognitively blind to the possibility of full-black personhood.

In addition to Rody being disobedient and keen to run away, the litigant described that she returned at her own will, another of the several symptoms of Cartwright’s *Drapetomania*. Cartwright compared runaway slaves to runaway cats who fled only in fits of enthusiasm from their owners, and then returned. This court case demonstrates the kind of behavior Cartwright attempted to isolate and pin down by creating his diagnosis. As a diagnostic physician he wanted to get to the heart of the matter and sought to secure such behavior by coining a neologism and introducing a new term.

The case exhibits also how difficult it was to disaggregate behavior from punishment as the court considered the method of management and the extent to which either owner had used violent force. Rody resisted persistently despite her new owner’s punishments. According to Dickerson, Butler had interrogated his neighbors in order to inquire about the slaves possible bad treatment: “And your Orator is informed & believes that said Deft since said contract asked one of your Orators neighbours how said negro came on & whether your orator whip[p]ed her when said Deft was told that she was often out as a runaway & the Deft replied that if she was whip[p]ed she would run away & if she was not whip[p]ed she would run away, & damn her she would run away anyhow.”¹⁵ The defendant refused to take Rody back and Dickerson brought the matter to court.¹⁶

Slave advertisements and contracts declared often that slaves were “sound in body and mind and a slave for life,” and the geographical expanse of court cases across the states indicates how widespread the phenomena had become, even by the mid-1820s. In addition to Kentucky, South

¹⁵ Henry Dickerson vs. John Butler, (July 9, 1821), Case # 192, reel# 209,794, Kentucky

¹⁶ “Your Orator charges that upon discovering the worthlessness of said negro & her bad qualities aforesaid & that he had been greatly imposed on by the Deft he tendered said negro back to the Deft in Tompkinsville & demanded a rescission of the contract.” Henry Dickerson vs. John Butler, (July 9, 1821), Case # 192, reel# 209,794, Kentucky

Carolina abided by a long established rule, “a sound price implies a sound article.” Other states opted to endorse the rule of “caveat emptor” (or “buyer beware”).¹⁷ Cartwright lived in Louisiana when he coined the term *Drapetomania*, and the Louisiana Civil Code cited specific “redhibitory” protections against slave “defects” like illness, “madness” “addiction to theft” and the “habit of running away.”¹⁸ For a similar case involving the “habit of running away,” see *Adelaide Duvigneau vs. Louis Lanoix*, from January 20, 1820.¹⁹ Kentucky law differed from Louisiana law because Louisiana slave-owners could call on special provisions that promised explicit warranties to purchasers of slaves, or any item. Louisiana law derived this principle of “guarantee” from the Latin roots of the French and Spanish languages that were imported into the Louisiana colony as the right of “*redhibitio*.”²⁰ In civil law “redhibition” is an annulment of the sale of an article and return of it to the seller because of some material defect.²¹ If one could prove a slave was mentally ill and that the previous owner knew of his or her propensity to run away, to drink or steal, the buyer could get his or her money back.

What is “*Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*?”

Cartwright’s neologism “*Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*” was the mental disease “peculiar to Negroes” and “affecting both mind and body” that also caused the phenomena “called by overseers as

¹⁷ *Timrod v. Shoolbred*, 1 S.C.L. (1 Bay) 324 (1793); cited in Ariela Gross, “Pandora’s Box: Slave Character on Trial in the Antebellum Deep South,” *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities* 7: 2, Article 2. (1995): 268, footnote #2; Also see Andrew Fede, Legal Protection for Slave Buyers in the U.S. South. A Caveat Concerning Caveat Emptor,” *American Journal of Legal History* 31 (1987): 322

¹⁸ LA. CIV. CODE, Bk. III, Tit. 7, Chap. 6, § 3, “Of the Vices of Things Sold,” arts. 2496-505 (1824) (codified as amended in LA. CIV. CODE ANN. arts. 2520-527 (West 1992); cited in Gross, “Pandora’s Box,” 268, footnote #2

¹⁹ Records of the First Judicial District Court, Orleans Parish Louisiana, Case Records, *Adelaide Duvigneau vs. Louis Lanoix*, (January 20, 1820), # 2,839, reel 5, Louisiana Collection, New Orleans Public Library

²⁰ See Judith Kelleher Schafer, “Roman Roots of the Louisiana Law of Slavery: Emancipation in American Louisiana, 1803-1957,” *Louisiana Law Review, The Romanticist Tradition in Louisiana: Legislation, Jurisprudence, and Doctrine: A Symposium* 56:2 (Winter 1996): 409-422; on the right to “redhibition” specifically, see Judith Schafer, “Guaranteed Against the Vices and Maladies Prescribed by Law: Consumer Protection, the Law of Slave Sales, and the Supreme Court in Antebellum Louisiana,” *American Journal of Legal History* 31 (1987):306-21; and on Spanish and French slave codes, see Thomas N. Ingersoll, *Slave Codes and Judicial Practice in New Orleans, 1718-1807*,” *Law and History Review* 13 (1995):23-62; and finally the definitive work on Roman slave law is William W. Buckland, *The Roman Law of Slavery* (1908)

²¹ French *rédhibition*, from Latin *redhibition-*, *redhibitio*, from *redhibitus* (past participle of *redhibere* to take back, give back, from red- re- + -hibere, from habere to hold, have) + -ion-, -io -ion

‘*rascality*.’” This disease differed from the aforementioned *Drapetomania* in the precise ways that slave laborers rejected the work put to them: they broke their tools, held work strikes and executed troublesome acts of resistance like “cracking corn” to make harvested items unfit to sale.²² Cartwright alleged that slaves suffering from this disease took their frustrations out on the machines and machinery of market capitalism, ruining crops and interrupting production, but staying around to demand better conditions. Perhaps they even engaged in joyful acts of sabotage. But Cartwright viewed blacks as “machines” and determined that black people use their “machine muscles” to produce foodstuffs and textiles that enabled Southerners and Northerners to participate in an expanding capitalist marketplace where goods like sugar and cotton fetched high values in international trade.²³ In his analysis of Cartwright’s work, Charles Dickens picked up on the physician’s metaphor and posed the question: *What happens when your machines go wrong?*

Dickens recognized that Cartwright’s diagnoses served as the window into a much deeper, flagrant flaw embedded in the *United States Constitution*. Having read and absorbed Olmsted and Cartwright, Dickens argued, “By denying the Negro the imprescriptible rights of humanity, the slave-owner has but increased his own anxiety and losses. Instead of intelligent, self-reliant men, he has wished for ignorant machines; instead of servants he has asked for slaves, and now he finds that his machines go wrong without such incessant overlooking as makes life one long day of toil, and that his slaves do not in very truth, serve him.”²⁴ One example of the kind of slave defiance that Dickens indicated and which Cartwright described as “*Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*” occurred when the slave named Samuel defied his masters’ commands.

²² The term *Dysaesthesia* is derived from the Greek term *dys*, or “not normal” and the term *aesthesia*, which means “sensation,” and is still used by medical professionals and refers to a strong burning sensation or insensitivity to pain. Cartwright determined that “*Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*” caused “partial insensibility to the skin and so great a *hebetude* of the intellectual faculties, as to be like a person half asleep...” See Cartwright, “Report on Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” *De Bow’s Review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources* 11:3 (Sept., 1851): 333, 335

²³ Cartwright. “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” *De Bow’s Review* 25:1 (1858): 48-9

²⁴ Charles Dickens, “Slaves and their Masters,” *Household Words: Conducted by Charles Dickens*, (August 23, 1856): 137

At Forest Home Plantation in Concordia Parish, Louisiana, a white overseer provided the official rationale for why he decided to kill Samuel, a defiant black slave. The Coroner's Court Report recorded the following testimony from the overseer's disposition: "On Tuesday morning the [black] driver Bill came to me and stated that Samuel had become unmanageable, was destroying cotton, that he had ordered Samuel down to be whipped, that Samuel then swore he would not be whipped. Bill then told him he would get the overseer." Both of these offenses — Samuel's willful destruction of the cotton crop as well as his unwillingness to submit to a whipping — were symptoms of what Cartwright called "*Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*." Rather than cram such behavior into the already familiar category of slave "rascality," Cartwright recognized that the willful destruction of property and refusal of white commands represented a deeper issue that warranted classification. The overseer continued:

I then asked Samuel if he had refused to get down for punishment when the [black] driver ordered him, he answered at once, "Yes, by God, I did and I am not going to be whipped by anybody, either black or white." I told him to stop, as I allowed no Negro to talk in that way, and that he knew that. I then ordered him to throw down his hoe and get down, he swore "God damn you if I would!" I repeated the order, and then he again swore that he would not. I moved my horse nearer to him when he turned and ran off.²⁵

The principal reason that "*Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*" presented a regional risk, not merely a personal challenge, is that any such defiance ruined valuable harvests, halted labor and threatened to embolden other slaves. Embarrassed but determined, the overseer narrated his tense encounter with the thickening bulk of blacks who gathered to witness Samuel's opposition:

I kept my horse standing and called to the rest of the hands to catch that boy; not one of them paid the least attention to me but kept on at their work. I then started after Samuel myself and overtook him and turned him. I ordered him to throw down his hoe and stand, he swore "God damn him if he would!" and again ran off. I ran at him again and again turned him, and repeated my order for the same answer. He started again, and I after him, I got within four or five yards when he wheeled around, with his raised hoe in both hands and struck at me with his full force... his hoe descending I think within one or two feet of my head. [I] pulled my horse up, and drew my pistol. Samuel was then standing with his hoe raised. I fired across my bridle arm when he fell.²⁶

²⁵ "Inquest Record, Concordia Parish," undated, copy by Doris V. Casper, Department of Archives Louisiana State University; cited in Joe Gray Taylor, *Negro Slavery in Louisiana*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), 202-03; One historian contrasted Samuel's defiance to the then prevalent theories of Stanley Elkins; Melvin Drimmer, "Thoughts on the Study of Slavery in the Americas and Writing of Black History," *Phylon*, 1975, p. 131

²⁶ "Inquest Record, Concordia Parish," *Negro Slavery in Louisiana*, 202-03.

What is most telling — and upon reflection most threatening to whites — is that Samuel solicited an act of black solidarity: the other slaves stood with him and defied the white overseer’s commands also. Cartwright sought to isolate such behavior and extinguish it.

Why describe resistance as insanity?

Cartwright diagnosed blacks’ resistance to slavery as illness because, as Dickens indicated, he took for granted the Founding generation’s belief that blacks were inferior, differently constituted and deserved no consideration or protection under the nation’s laws. Cartwright was born in Fairfax, Virginia in 1793 and grew up in a Christian household under his father, Reverend John S. Cartwright. Virginia was the first American colony to legalize and codify race-based slavery and Virginia’s state constitution went on to influence heavily the drafting of the U.S. *Constitution*. The “Virginia Plan” provided the legal template for keeping slavery alive in the new nation. For these reasons Cartwright grew up thinking that slavery was a normal institution that blacks were inferior and whites superior naturally:

It is not the whip, as many suppose, which calls forth those muscular exertions, the result of which is sugar, cotton, breadstuffs, rice, and tobacco. These are products of the white man’s will, acting through the muscles of the prognathous race in our Southern States. If that will were withdrawn, and the plantations handed over as a gracious gift to the laborers, agricultural labor would cease for the want of that spiritual power called the will, to move those machines — the muscles. They would cease to move here, as they have in Hayti.²⁷

Since Cartwright thought of slaves as “machines” and his interest was in blacks’ muscular exertions, he concerned himself with why slaves might resist what he saw as their natural functions. He viewed blacks as objects; as unconscious things that did not perceive but existed to be perceived and manipulated. As a first generation American born four years after the ratification of the U.S. *Constitution*, a racial contract that excluded blacks except as property, Cartwright bore what Kwame

²⁷ Cartwright. “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” *De Bow’s Review* 25:1 (1858): 48-9

Anthony Appiah calls a “cognitive incapacity” to view blacks’ aggressive demands for freedom as earnest. It is this incapacity that led him to misperceive black vigilance as madness.²⁸

In creating the neologisms *Drapetomania* and *Dysaesthesia Aethiopica* Cartwright argued that blacks’ desire to belong was a symptom of illness, and he also offered diagnostic categories by which other physicians and overseers could categorize and contain black rebellion. He motivated a medical discussion of political claims. Physicians like Charles Caldwell (Nashville, Tennessee), Richard H. Colfax (New York), Josiah Nott (South Carolina), A.P. Merrill (Memphis, Tennessee) and Cartwright (Natchez, Mississippi) maligned medically blacks’ efforts at independent action and leadership, their drive to be recognized as equals with whites, and their refusal to submit to being enslaved.²⁹ Along with other Southerners and many Northerners of his generation Cartwright inherited the cognitive incapacity to comprehend black people as equal to whites; even the most vociferous abolitionists still held onto a belief in white supremacy.³⁰ Despite slaves’ resistance to the plantation system and rejection of the category forced upon them, blacks’ vigilance to exercise their own greatness appeared preposterous to men like Cartwright.

Since Cartwright disbelieved in Africans’ ability to enjoy liberty and prosper independently, his medical training with Dr. Benjamin Rush encouraged him to isolate black resistance to slavery and defiance to white power as forms of mental illness. Proud of having apprenticed directly with Rush, the “American Hippocrates” and the man who would become the titular “Father of American

²⁸ On the argument that the U.S. *Constitution* is essentially a “racial contract,” see Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); see also Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Racisms,” in David Theo Goldberg, ed., *Anatomy of Racism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 8

²⁹ Caldwell, Cartwright and Nott each attended the University of Pennsylvania. Caldwell earned his M.D. under Benjamin Rush in 1796, Cartwright attended in 1812 and studied directly with Rush, but did not graduate from Penn, and Nott graduated from Penn in 1827.

³⁰ When famed abolitionist William Wilberforce chaired a public dinner in 1816 for the African and Asiatic Society he required that the Africans and Asians who were present eat at the opposite end of the room behind a screen. Wilberforce also condoned whipping slaves, provided it was done only “at night after the day’s work.” Wilberforce argued also in 1823 that, once freed, slaves would “sustain with patience the sufferings of their actual lot . . . [and] will soon be regarded as a grateful peasantry.” Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire’s Slaves*, (London: Pan Macmillian Publishers, 2005, 2012), 314

Psychiatry,” Cartwright (a Southerner) focused also on black diseases as a specialty, just as Rush (a Northerner) had done. Both Rush and Cartwright believed that black people were born “diseased,” and although Rush speculated that their black skin was an effect of disease, Cartwright argued that the differences between the races went much further, beyond skin color and manifested at the level of physiological structure and blood.³¹ The critical difference between these two physicians is that Rush held out that being diseased did *not* warrant enslavement, a belief that led him to become an ardent abolitionist and defender of black rights. Rush died in 1813, but certainly to what would have been his chagrin, his most famous students rejected his political liberalism and took up the pro-slavery cause instead.³² Caldwell and Cartwright agreed with Rush that blacks were born into disease but they went on to argue that because of blacks’ alleged inferiority, they should be governed differently — i.e. managed and held as slaves.

As much as modern scholars may wish to reject Cartwright and his medical diagnoses out of hand as peculiar to him alone, it is important to view his thinking more comprehensively and accurately as a product of the founding generation which held similar pessimistic views of blacks’ abilities.³³ Additionally, as Robin Blackburn insists, scholars must re-position the Haitian Revolution as pivotal to understanding the Age of Revolutions.³⁴ Cartwright repeated his charge that, if freed, blacks “muscles”

³¹ In 1787 Dr. Stanhope Smith, an American physician, argued that when whites had lived in the North American climate for long enough, that they would become darker skinned like the American Indian and that blacks would soon become indistinguishable from Native Americans as well. In 1792 Dr. Benjamin Rush rejected Smith’s conclusions in a special address before the American Philosophical Society in which he argued that black skin color was a result of a disease like leprosy. Rush called this “curable” skin disease “*Negroidism*.” see Benjamin Rush “Observations Intended to Favour a Supposition That the Black Color (As It Is Called) of the Negroes Is Derived from the Leprosy,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 4, (1799); see also Bill Bynum, “Black Skin,” *The Lancet* 360:9329, (July, 2002): 346

³² Both Charles Caldwell and Samuel Cartwright studied directly with Benjamin Rush at the University of Pennsylvania and both rejected Rush’s sympathetic view of blacks and instead viewed blacks as perpetually inferior.

³³ Bruce Dain explores racial thinking in the early republic in, Bruce Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind: American Race Theory in the Early Republic*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002)

³⁴ Robin Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights*, (London: Verso Press, 2011), Blackburn makes this point about the importance of the Haitian experience to comprehending the Age of Revolutions in his “Introduction” on 5 and 25 but see specifically “Part III: The Haitian Pivot” on 171-274

“would cease to move here, as they have in Hayti.”³⁵ Indeed, Haiti surfaced as a signpost to blacks and whites alike throughout the long nineteenth century and it would have been difficult for any contemporaries, Native, Mexican, French, whites or blacks to ignore the Haitian Revolution.

Nonetheless Cartwright made rejecting the success of the Haitian revolt a cornerstone to his medical theories. Cartwright argued extensively that no Africans could tolerate freedom because blacks and whites held different mental and physical capacities that bound them to lower forms of government.

James DeBow, Cartwright’s long-time friend and founder of *De Bow’s Review* published that:

The liberty of the uncivilized and barbarous man, is that of a wild beast. In the delirious excesses of unrestrained, unlimited liberty, men have proved themselves monsters and shocked high heaven with their atrocities. Demagogues, fanatics, those upon whom all government, however regular, sits like fetters of steel, are loudest in their vociferations for liberty, which is to them a license for every bad passion. Its meaning with these is very different from what the true patriot and lover of country claims.
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For him all black people, slave and free, still occupied what Enlightenment philosophers called the ‘state of nature.’ To his thinking the “Negro” existed as a “wild beast” that bore an inverse relationship to the “true patriot” who he imagined to be white automatically. In this passage where he equated black freedom to “fanatic[ism],” the writer referred to the events surrounding the Haitian Revolution and castigated the rebellious Haitians as “monsters” and derided their accomplishments as “atrocities.” Modern scholars argue that it is difficult to evaluate the success of the Haitian Revolution, with one historian characterizing the typical view of the Haitian Revolution as “a horror show.”³⁷ Cartwright rejected the notion that Haitians or African Americans could comprehend actual freedom. He argued

³⁵ Cartwright. “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” *De Bow’s Review* 25:1 (1858): 48-9

³⁶ “The West India Islands,” *De Bow’s Review* 5:6 (June, 1848): 486; this article is unsigned but given its statistical analyses and repetitive interests, I believe it to be either by either Cartwright or James De Bow. Both men had been writing together at this point for six years, since their time writing anonymously for the *Southern Quarterly Review*.

³⁷ Robin Blackburn uses this phrase to summarize Seymour Drescher’s and João Marques’ interpretation that the Haitian Revolution made a largely “negative contribution” while British abolition was the “real saviour of the enslaved.” See Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights*, (London: Verso Press, 2011), 5; see also João Pedro Marques, “Slave Revolts and the Abolition of Slavery,” in Seymour Drescher and Pieter Emmer, eds., *Who Abolished Slavery? Slave Revolts and Abolitionism, a debate with João Pedro Marques*, (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 3-92. Blackburn responds to Drescher and Marques in the same volume; see Blackburn “The Role of Slave Resistance in Slave Emancipation,” 169-168

that American Founders responded to this limit by introducing slavery as *black* slavery; Cartwright then worked to justify this belief

Why take antebellum science seriously?

Cartwright's theories of *Drapetomania*, or "Free Negro Insanity," suggest a medical diagnosis that many of today's scholars and intellectuals dismiss as antiquated and unrealistic. The older historiography viewed that to study practices of the American physician before the 1870s would prove unrewarding because, "lacking a scientific base, his therapy for the more serious maladies was founded upon false hypotheses and fanciful systems and was for the most part ineffective."³⁸ However to say that therapy was inefficacious because it was not scientific does not make sense.³⁹ Charles Rosenberg approached nineteenth century "orthodox therapeutics" by proposing that their diagnoses made sense to *them* and that their therapies actually worked. Rosenberg maintains that, although perhaps not when judged by modern pharmacologists' standards, the therapies offered by practitioners of alternative and allopathic medicine alike worked to meet the needs of nineteenth century patients who shared these physicians' worldview.⁴⁰

In this dissertation I focus deliberately on "what was bugging" Cartwright, rather than on how Cartwright's concepts err, or bug us.⁴¹ I forced myself to purge the modern view and agree with John Harley Warner's argument that, just as we believe or trust in what is called 'science' today, people in the nineteenth century evaluated science as "one component of a belief system that practitioners and

³⁸ James Bordley III and A. McGehee Harvey, *Two Centuries of American Medicine, 1776-1976*, (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1976), vii

³⁹ John Warner, "Science in Medicine," *Osiris* 1, 2nd Series, Historical Writing on American Science, (1985): 48

⁴⁰ Charles E. Rosenberg, "The Therapeutic Revolution: Medicine, Meaning and Social Change in Nineteenth Century America," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 20 (1977): 485-506; see also Warner, "Science in Medicine," 48

⁴¹ George Stocking champions this point: "I am inclined to feel that because I am less concerned with scratching my own theoretical itches, I may be better able to approach what seems to me the central question of intellectual history: What was bugging them?" See George W. Stocking, *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, 1982), xvi

their patients largely shared.”⁴² The historian’s task is to explain how meaning developed in medicine and to interrogate how “various forms of dependence” and “claims to legitimacy” were established in an era unfamiliar to us. As Paul Starr suggests, historians should establish the critical distance from which to perceive how medical claims took institutional form, how the profession expanded the boundaries of medical authority and to discern how that authority became translated into economic power and political influence.⁴³ When Cartwright’s science is viewed in its historical context one discovers that his thinking reflected the standard legal and medical theories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

One of the fundamental challenges to writing about science in general and medicine in particular is the tendency to judge the relevance and importance of ‘old science.’ This study views scientific theory and medical theory alike as shifts in paradigms rather than advances in knowledge. One excavates information about how physicians acted and thought in the past in order to increase awareness about how it is people view and understand science and medicine today.⁴⁴ Although moderns often refer to science in an oracular fashion, suggesting a monolithic objectivity when they say, “Sciences argues...” or “Science says...” one must force the point that science is not monolithic and is just as fallible as the humans who practice it. Like any mode of inquiry, science is a practice done by humans; it is ideological and never value-free. Whereas Cartwright’s medical diagnoses seem absurd or out-dated to many moderns, when one breaks down his claims to its simplest terms one sees that the racial regime that led him to invent *Drapetomania* and *Dysaesthesia Aethiopica* is the same racial regime that leads moderns to diagnose defiance, hyperactivity and attention deficit disorders among inmates, students and laborers.⁴⁵

⁴² Warner, “Science in Medicine,” 48

⁴³ Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 16

⁴⁴ Warner, “Science in Medicine,” 48

⁴⁵ For a discussion of how these modern concerns motivated my interest in *Drapetomania*, see the Preface above.

Any ideology of appropriate behavior is tied to laws in the U.S. *Constitution* that establish our society's values and govern our behavior. The central tension in the constitution is to quiet the threat of excess by creating a balance between the will to power and the will to liberty. Cartwright inherited these tensions and as much as his diagnoses betray core republican principles like Liberty and Freedom, they also hold firm roots in the Founding Fathers' skepticism about full equality and their legislation of inequality. I direct attention in this dissertation to the scientific content and internal logic of Cartwright's medicine while at the same time focusing on how the cultural and spiritual ethos of the physician emerged from the racial regime ratified by signatories of the *US Constitution*.

2:

Historiography and Hermeneutics

When scholars discount diagnoses like Cartwright's as "bizarre" or ridicule his interpretations of empirical evidence as "quirky" it reflects a less than comprehensive awareness of the widely-shared intellectual bases for his beliefs.⁴⁶ Dismissal also disables one's ability to address the pervasive iterations of his arguments that occur in current medical thinking. Historian James Denny Guillory summarizes Cartwright's "peculiar" and "ridiculous" assertions the following way:

Cartwright found, at least to his own satisfaction, that the difference existing between the white and Negro races were much greater than most Americans thought. The differences in color, previously considered the major disparity, was far from being the only one. The following are among some of the other differences that Cartwright described: The darkness of the Negro's skin pervaded his membranes, muscles, tendons, fluids, and secretions, including his blood and bile. Even the brain of the Negro was darker than that of the white man. The Negro's head was hung differently on the atlas, his bones were harder, and his neck shorter and more oblique, his spine more inward, his pelvis more obliquely

⁴⁶ Steven Stowe chides Eugene Genovese and Walter Johnson for not questioning Cartwright's representativeness, whereas he praises Ariela Gross for taking his "similar, balanced view of Cartwright." For Gross' appraisal of Cartwright, see Gross, *Double Character*, 87-88; see also Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, (New York: Vintage, 1974), 302, 308; and Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 136, 146; and for Stowe's critique of all three, see Steven M. Stowe, *Doctoring the South: Southern Physicians and Everyday Medicine in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 316-317 note #25; on Stowe describing Cartwright's work as "bizarre," see Stowe, "Seeing Themselves at Work," *American Historical Review*, (February 1996): 57; and on accusations that his empirical interpretations were "quirky," see Stowe, *Doctoring the South*, 316-317 note #25

outward, and his feet flatter. His gait was “*hopper-hipped*,”⁴⁷ his nose flatter, but his sense of smell keener. His sense of hearing was better, and his sight superior; however, his field of vision was narrower because of a special anatomical peculiarity which contracted to protect his eyes from the rays of the sun. The Negro’s skin was thicker but more sensitive...The Negro’s lungs were smaller than the white man’s. The Negro’s small lungs prevented him from inhaling enough air. Indeed the Negro had an innate antipathy for fresh air.⁴⁸

Recently William F. Bynum of the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine addressed Cartwright’s medical theories in an article entitled “Discarded Diagnoses.” In *The Lancet* Bynum argues, “There is nothing like the decent obscurity of an ancient language to make a new disease category sound respectable. In 1851, Samuel Cartwright...a Southern American physician, used both his Greek and his Hebrew to create a disease that, he insisted, had never been properly delineated in the medical literature.”⁴⁹

Beyond perceiving physiological differences between blacks and whites, Cartwright is well known for having delineated a variety of other mental disorders to which he claimed blacks were prone, manifestations of which included “Negro Consumption,” the practice of “Dirt Eating,” black “voodoo rituals,” the practice of shirking work-related responsibilities and “*dancing all over*.” Bynum argues that, “within his own value system” Dr. Cartwright’s new diagnostic category made “perfect sense” — which is to suggest that Cartwright operated under a value system that is disconnected from and different than the one under which we in the twenty-first century operate. My own inquiry into Cartwright’s disease types addresses the context in which he wrote and the political battles in which he saw himself enmeshed and reveals the intellectual scaffolding that connects his view to the current moment.

Cartwright’s “own value system,” as Bynum put it, indicated that he framed his ideas about

⁴⁷ The proximity of this phrase to the contemporary African American characterization of “Hip Hop” intrigues the writer and warrants further study.

⁴⁸ James Denny Guillory, “The Pro-Slavery Arguments of Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright,” *Louisiana History* 9 (1968): 209-27; for citation see 213

⁴⁹ Bill Bynum, “Discarded Diagnosis: Drapetomania,” *The Lancet* 356: 9241 (November 4, 2000): 1615

black insanity through the ideology of white supremacy. The fact that Cartwright conceived of black freedom as a physiological impossibility and a mental pathology indicates how much he valued knowledge based in the culture of medical science. The arrows in his quiver were medical statistics, disease diagnoses, extensive medical training and fluency in Latin, German, French, Hebrew and Greek.⁵⁰ “After all,” Bynum argues, “[Cartwright] was writing at a time when alienists were creating a whole new series of diagnoses that highlighted single, impulsive behaviors: kleptomania, dipsomania, pyromania, nymphomania. He was also part of an active movement that argued that the diseases of the American south were particular to that region.”⁵¹ A newspaper editor and proficient writer, Cartwright worked tirelessly to rivet the rigging in the white mind that held that “the Negro” was physiologically and psychologically “unfit for Freedom.”⁵² I would like to reflect now on how historians have characterized him and suggest some reasons why.

Optimism: The Supportive View

Historians of medicine have been calling for a thorough analysis and contextualization of Cartwright and his scientific ideas from as early as 1873, ten years after his death. In the 1873 *Transactions of the American Medical Association*, the “Mississippi” entry featuring Cartwright beckoned for historians to recognize the southern physician. The entry was written in the collective voice, “we” and speaking on behalf of the A.M.A. offered: “Samuel Adolphous Cartwright. Of this distinguished physician and scientific writer, there has been no complete or extended biography written.”⁵³ Giving some sense of why Cartwright’s work struck a chord, the AMA indicated that:

He soon became an eminent and leading physician and scientific investigator; his articles were published and copied by most of the medical journals in the period, attracting much attention both in this country

⁵⁰ James D. Guillory, “Southern Nationalism and the Louisiana Medical Profession, 1840-1860,” M.A. Thesis at Louisiana State University, (Baton Rouge, 1965), 40-41

⁵¹ Bynum, “Discarded Diagnosis: Drapetomania,” 1615

⁵² Samuel Cartwright, “Negro Freedom an Impossibility under Nature’s Laws,” *De Bow’s Review* 30 (1860): 651

⁵³ American Medical Association, “American Medical Necrology; On Mississippi,” *Transactions of the American Medical Association* 24:23 (1873): 345-48

and in Europe. Dr. Cartwright sought new and unfrequented fields of research; he was not satisfied to follow at all times in the old beaten tracks of the profession, but boldly laid out new routes for himself and others to pursue, advancing new theories, and, defending them with scientific facts, his reasoning was clear, forcible, and logical.”⁵⁴

Writing the history of science demands an ongoing critique of knowledge formation and it is the historian’s duty to inquire how what stood out as “new theories” and “scientific facts” in 1873 generate near-universal ridicule today. In this research I maintain an interdisciplinary approach and fuse the history of medicine into the history of American slavery; while at the same time uncovering the history of slavery that lay at the heart of American science. In order to interpret Cartwright’s work this dissertation investigates how science operated a human activity. I spend the bulk of the dissertation building a way to the 1850s, beginning with how the insights Cartwright inherited from the eighteenth century shaped the overwhelming questions that riddled him in the 1830s and bequeathed to him firm concepts by the 1840s. By investigating the genealogy of the disease concepts “*Drapetomania*” and “*Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*,” I demonstrate why the American Medical Association described Cartwright as venturing into “new and unfrequented fields of research” which “boldly laid out new routes for him and others to pursue.” This description from his peers suggested Cartwright’s camaraderie and reflected his success at crafting his own personal identity as a physician; a man bound by duty to build meaning for his perceived community. By focusing on Cartwright’s interest in and use of science I shall uncover his methods. Attention to methodology as well as personality demonstrates how scientific ideas get formulated; it also points up how research aims and research questions reflect the real human need to make contributions and build esteem.

In order to perceive how Cartwright’s use of multiple scientific methods worked to enlarge his personal and professional esteem one has to shoulder through and distill meaning from other historians’ dismissive analyses of him. The best way to do this is to consider the role hermeneutics plays in the

⁵⁴ After a brief summation of Cartwright’s career, the AMA entry then quotes considerably from a brief memoir of Cartwright published in the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 19:3 (November, 1866).

historiography of his work. Hermeneutics refers to the process of historical reasoning, a tradition of interpretation popularized by the writings of Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer, and most important to my project, the analysis of Paul Ricoeur.⁵⁵ Following the phenomenological arguments of these thinkers, Yvonne Sherratt argues that historians should probe historical events and projects in order to discover the interconnections of meaning and symbolic interaction that human actions have created.⁵⁶

Throughout this dissertation I refer to this series of interconnecting meanings as the “intellectual scaffolding” which tethers the present to the past. New knowledge is made possible by pre-existing knowledge. I see my role as one who inspects the scaffolding Founders like Washington and Jefferson raised, and which Cartwright inherited: to detect what makes it strong, to determine what it is comprised of, and finally how Cartwright riveted and then added to it. I found this a helpful metaphor for charting the many directions or “career” Cartwright’s own ideas took over time.⁵⁷ It is through mindful examination of that scaffolding that one can begin to discern how Cartwright’s ideas still have effect in the present.

I suspect that I also want to say something new, which is to say that I want to contribute to an

⁵⁵ On the initial critiques of historical reason, see Wilhelm Dilthey, *Hermeneutics and the Study of History*, eds., Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); on the “ontological turn” in the thinking on hermeneutics, or the shift away from considerations of philology and towards ontology and a focus on existential meaning in human life, see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans., John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. (San Francisco: Harper Press, 1962); Ernst Tugendhat, “Heidegger’s Idea of Truth,” trans. Christopher Macann in Macann, Christopher (ed.). *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments*. 4 vols. (London: Routledge Press, 1992), 3:227-239; and on humanistic hermeneutics see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. David E. Linge, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); and on hermeneutics and the writing of history, see Paul Ricoeur, *The Conflicts of Interpretation: Essays in Hermeneutics*, trans. Willis Domingo et al. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974); Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, trans. John B. Thompson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

⁵⁶ Yvonne Sherratt, *Continental Philosophy of Social Science: Hermeneutics, Genealogy, Critical Theory*, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); cited in Daniel Little, “Philosophy of History,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Winter, 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/history/>>.

⁵⁷ On the notion of “intellectual scaffolding,” particularly Jefferson’s having raised one, see Joyce Appleby’s “Jefferson and His Complex Legacies,” the Introduction to *Jeffersonian Legacies*, ed., Peter S. Onuf, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993), 3; On the perception that ideas have careers, or various iterations and meanings in different contexts, see Daniel T. Rodgers, “Republicanism: The Career of a Concept,” in *Journal of American History* 79:1 (1992): 11-38; also on the power of keywords generally, see Daniel T. Rodgers, *Contested Truth: Keywords in American Politics Since Independence*, (New York: Basic Books, 1987)

ongoing conversation about not only the meaning of “*Drapetomania*” and the genealogy of that term, but add also to the discussion of madness generally. I want to probe the consequences to one’s choice to surpass, deny, or reject what is reasonable. Was it reasonable to remain a slave? It may surprise some that scholarship is divided on that question, and the historiography that follows merely investigates how division is possible.

I encountered three main approaches that scholars take when writing about Cartwright: *Optimism, Externalization, and Distanciation*.⁵⁸ It is clear from the 1873 description of Cartwright’s life and contributions that other physicians held him in great regard and saw him as courageous: “bold,” “logical” and well-reasoned. Unlike twentieth century scholars, rather than focus on one single diagnosis, his colleagues at the AMA implored that he be remembered for his character and scientific aptitude. This is the *optimistic* view.

Some seventy years later a historian of southern medicine recognized too that Cartwright’s work had been overlooked. Mary Louise Marshall proved to be Cartwright’s earnest and earliest chronicler; she thought it odd that, given his importance, he had not been studied more widely. Marshall remarked, “As one of the most colorful figures of Southern medicine in the first half of the last century, it is surprising that so little present-day recognition has been accorded Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright, of Natchez and New Orleans.” She noted that, “In a day when medical journals were few, he published more than eighty articles before his death in 1863.” She pointed out that Cartwright’s physiological experiments “attracted attention and controversy,” that his therapeutic innovations were “marked by originality” and stressed that his opinions were “noted as befitted his reputation for

⁵⁸ I would argue that there is a fourth common approach, “vindication,” but given space limitations have limited my discussion to the above three, which have the most bearing here. The categories of “externalization” and “distanciation” I have taken from Paul Ricoeur’s writings on the philosophy of the hermeneutics of history. See Paul Ricoeur, “History and Hermeneutics,” presented at the American Philosophical Association Symposium on Hermeneutics, December 29, 1976, pre-printed in *The Journal of Philosophy* 73:4 (November 4, 1976): 683-695

medical learning and experience.”⁵⁹

Certainly few scholars today view Cartwright’s writing affirmatively or support his ideas, as did the AMA and Marshall, however the optimistic or supportive view continues.⁶⁰ When *Drapetomania* comes up in conversation today, it surprises me how often people immediately begin to believe its actuality and perceive its reasonableness; which is to say even some moderns see no problem conflating free black behavior with inability and insanity. To anyone hearing a brief explanation of *Drapetomania* who then confirms immediately that they see how it could be a valid diagnosis, I have developed an extended consideration. I consider those who hold an *optimistic* view of Cartwright’s work — his supporters — to be readers as well.

Historian of medicine John Duffy was perhaps the first to step outside of the supportive view and offer opinion of Cartwright’s work that did not reflect the original tenor of the optimist camp of historians who had taken up his ideas. Duffy remained convinced, however, of the degree to which Cartwright’s fellow physicians respected his intrepid nature: “Led by men such as Samuel A. Cartwright, a man of somewhat peculiar and unstable genius, a group of Southern physicians had devoted themselves to proving the thesis that the basic anatomical and physiological differences between whites and Negroes precluded them from ever living together on an equal basis...if one granted these basic differences, Negroes needed a separate and distinct form of medical treatment.”

Duffy indicated first the central tension in Cartwright’s work: how the assumption of automatic

⁵⁹ As the former Librarian of the Rudolph Matas Medical Library of Tulane University, Marshall published one of the very few historical articles on Cartwright’s work. See Mary Louise Marshall, “Samuel A. Cartwright and States Rights Medicine,” read before the Orleans Parish Medical Society, (March 11, 1940); reprinted in *New Orleans Med. & Surgical Journal* 93:2 (August 1940): 74-78; for citation Marshall’s Medical Society lecture, 1

⁶⁰ Citing Gunnar Myrdal, Kenneth M. Stampf observed that “No historian of the institution can be taken seriously any longer unless he begins with the knowledge that there is no valid evidence that the negro race is innately inferior to the white, and that there is growing evidence that both races have approximately the same potentialities.” see Stampf, “The Historian and Southern Negro Slavery,” *The American Historical Review* 57:3 (April, 1952): 620; see also Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), esp. Chapter 6; see also Stanford M. Lyman, “Gunnar Myrdal’s *An American Dilemma* After a Half a Century: Critics and Anticritics,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 12:2 (Winter, 1988): 327-389; Steven Pressman, *Journal of Economic Issues* 28:2 (June, 1994): 577-585

inferiority led to whites' perceived need to manage blacks and govern their behavior rather than enter into equal fraternity with them. Duffy also viewed Cartwright as a leader, not a minor. Duffy went on to coin the phrase "the Cartwright thesis" as a summary approach to discussions of scientific endorsements of pro-slavery thought.⁶¹

Externalization: "Taking Cheap Shots"

After the supporters, most of the scholars who have approached Cartwright's work do so through *externalizing*: marking him for rejection up front. Their thinking goes something like this: *We do not accept his work. Others did, so he is believed to be emblematic and that is why we must include him in this volume.* To historians writing in this vein Cartwright is viewed as too important to exclude and then at the same time claim comprehensiveness. I have found that, depending upon one's disposition to Cartwright, in this externalized view he could be maligned as a quack extremist or called upon to represent the epitome of the pro-slavery viewpoint.

Whereas optimism is the supportive view, conversely *externalization* is putting the historical subject at a distance. It generally happens swiftly, up front and once only. The result is an attack on the character of the subject that marks him or her as beyond consideration. William Stanton's 1960 publication *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes toward Race in America, 1815-1859* stands as a shining example of this style of *ad hominem* externalization of Cartwright. Stanton ridiculed Cartwright on the first page of his "Preface" where he characterized him as "the brutal Louisiana physician and publicist" who had a "banana-skin humor" and enjoyed only "the periphery of the controversy" over slavery and the common origins of the species. Stanton specified that he "appeared"

⁶¹ See John Duffy, "Sectional Conflict and Medical Education in Louisiana," *The Journal of Southern History* 23:3 (August, 1957): 292; in this essay, Duffy did not cite a specific work by Cartwright. Then with no mention of Cartwright at all, two years later he published his John Duffy, "Medical Practice in the Ante Bellum South," *The Journal of Southern History* 25:1 (Feb., 1959): 53-72; However at the 59th meeting of the *Organization for American Historians* (formerly the *Mississippi Valley Historical Association*) held in April of 1966 Duffy put Cartwright's work on center stage, see Robert E. Burke, "The Fifty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians," *Journal of American History* 53:2 (1966): for full report, 315-340

only to “cheer, or make impolite noises of disapproval.” He stated that, because men like Cartwright “did not influence the tide of battle,” he “thought it best to leave them where they lie.” Despite his claim “to leave” him “where he lie,” Stanton began and ended his book with commentary on the doctor’s findings.⁶²

Stanton’s characterizations present three challenges to interpreting Cartwright. First, Stanton used the physician’s concepts for contrast — Cartwright’s work expressed a dimension of the gravity of accusations of black insanity so starkly that a record of southern thinking on black behavior and culture would be inadequate without including it. Second, Stanton directed future historians to consult Cartwright’s “Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” published in 1851, which is the single document that continues to achieve most if not singular historiographical interest. Third, Stanton described the “Report” as one of many of Cartwright’s publications “written in his usual strain of brutal facetiousness.”⁶³ Positioning Cartwright as a ‘paper-tiger’ to prop up in the preface only to tear down toward then end, Stanton’s very mastery of the topic of race and science has led other insightful historians to reject Cartwright’s ideas *prima facie* without investigating further. Stanton’s externalization licensed later scholars reading only a few sources to lampoon Cartwright and mark him for ridicule.

The next most notable case of externalizing Cartwright’s work appeared in historian of science Stephen Jay Gould’s *The Mismeasure of Man*. Gould’s work is the most cited authority on the subject of how early anthropology and ethnology focused on measuring bodies and ranking humans according to race. Given his thorough revisiting of race-based science and his adeptness at rejecting and discrediting such investigations, from efforts to measure the cranial capacity of the brain to the failed

⁶² William Stanton, *The Leopard’s Spots: Scientific Attitudes toward Race in America, 1815-1859* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1960), vii, 160

⁶³ Stanton, *The Leopard’s Spots*, 160; Cartwright’s “Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” *New Orleans Medical And Surgical Journal* 8 (1851): 691-715

attempts to calculate intelligence quotients, in 1996 Gould reprinted and expanded his book to include a definitive refutation of arguments put forth in *The Bell Curve*, published in 1994.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Gould began his important book with sweeping generalizations about Cartwright's work that he culled from reading narrowly and possibly only, Stanton's *Leopard's Spots*.

Gould took the same approach toward Cartwright as Stanton did: he externalized him up front only to confirm his ridiculousness toward the end of the book. In the "Introduction" to *Mismeasure of Man* Gould writes openly of taking "cheap shots" at Cartwright: "Since many of the cases presented here are so patent, even risible by today's standards, I wish to emphasize that I have not taken cheap shots at marginal figures..." Then Gould added in parentheses: "... (with the possible exceptions of Mr. Bean in Chapter 3 and Mr. Cartwright in Chapter 2, whose statements are too precious to exclude.)" Gould reasons that "cheap shots come in thick catalogues" and that they "are also gossip, not history." Nonetheless, despite warning that "cheap shots" "are ephemeral and uninfluential, however amusing," just like Stanton, Gould goes on to take a few more at Cartwright.⁶⁵ Gould writes, "Among nonpolygenist, 'scientific' defenses of slavery, no arguments ever matched in absurdity the doctrines of S.A. Cartwright, a prominent Southern physician." He qualifies parenthetically that "(I do not cite these as typical and I doubt that many intelligent Southerners paid them much attention; I merely wish to illustrate an extreme within the range of 'scientific' argument.)"⁶⁶

Since the center of gravity for studies on race and science compel scholars toward Gould's book, his historiographical impact requires that I offer a few points on his glib treatment of Cartwright. First in Gould's zeal to externalize Cartwright he misinterprets him as a "nonpolygenist," whereas the exact opposite is true. Cartwright spent the bulk of his career arguing *for* polygenesis. Second,

⁶⁴ Stephen Jay Gould's *The Mismeasure of Man*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1981, 1996); Richard Herrnstein Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*, (New York: Free Press, 1994)

⁶⁵ Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, 59

⁶⁶ Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, 102-3

historiographically Gould drew all of his interpretation of Cartwright from Stanton's *Leopard Spots* and from the single article Stanton referenced, Cartwright's 1851 "Report on the Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro." These two points affect thinking about Cartwright because, isolated together, they warp one's sense of the temporal and substantive scope of Cartwright's writing and ignore his international impact.

It is likely these two scholars' presentations licensed others to gloss over the content of Cartwright's work in order to attack his character. When modern inquirers want to dismiss Cartwright or indicate the incorrectness of similar physicians, like Samuel Morton and the evidence summarized in his *Crania Americana*, they reference generally *Leopard's Spots* and the *Mismeasure of Man*. Given the popularity and comprehensiveness of Stanton's and Gould's work, some critics looking for official sanction to dismiss antebellum scientists fall prey to a practice David Theo Goldberg described as "academic indexing," wherein one cites authorities without engaging directly the scholarship which made their works profound.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, late twentieth century historians deduced from these classics that Cartwright's work was dismissible.

I argue that it is an error to present Cartwright as a man to put down quickly and easily. Whereas his conclusions are certainly unreasonable to *me*, in the now, the historian of science's task is to observe what was bugging the scientists themselves; to interpret the problem that stared our subjects in the face and to do so through analyzing their methods of problem-solving.

What Gould missed were the intervening years of historical research into Cartwright. Since the publication of Stanton's *Leopard's Spots* in 1960, Eric McKittrick included Cartwright's writings on

⁶⁷ Goldberg's frustration: "It has struck me increasingly how through the 1990s and into the first decade of the twenty-first century so much of what gets produced is indexed simply: you identify a thinker with a concept. You know, Bauman is about pastoralism, or Stuart Hall is about articulation, etc. etc. and you completely forego an engagement, a broader engagement with the depth of the argument... and elide an engagement with how the argument is positioning one with the object of analysis." See Susan Searls Giroux, "On the State of Race Theory: A Conversation with David Theo Goldberg," *Journal of Advanced Composition, A Journal of Rhetoric, Culture and Politics* 26:1-2 (2006): 30

“Negro Disease” in his 1963 book, *Slavery Defended: The Views of the Old South*.⁶⁸ Here one sees formation of what historian Drew Faust would later term the South’s “Sacred Circle” of elite, professional men who fostered public opinion and propagated southern values.⁶⁹ In fact, with the notable exception of Cartwright, Faust made the cadre of southern protagonists McKittrick assembled in 1963 the subject of her book *A Sacred Circle: U.S. Vice President John C. Calhoun (1782-1850), President of William and Mary College, Thomas R. Dew (1802-1846), Dr. Josiah Clark Nott (1804-1873), Lawyer George Fitzhugh (1806-1881) and U.S. Senator James Henry Hammond (1807-1864)*.⁷⁰ Paul Finkelman’s 2003 *Defending Slavery: Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* covered the same “circle” with Finkelman choosing to re-introduce Cartwright into its circumference.⁷¹

McKittrick’s treatment provided examples from key pro-slavery texts and emphasized the economic, spiritual, legal and medical rationales for slavery. However his book received mixed reviews, and there was still the tendency to dismiss Cartwright out of hand, without analysis. For example, Louisiana historian Joe Gray Taylor wrote in his review of the collection that “the pseudo-scientific theories of Josiah Nott and Cartwright add variety and, from a modern point of view, some humor to the volume.”⁷²

Two years later Cartwright and his ideas were introduced during the 59th meeting of the *Organization for American Historians* (formerly the *Mississippi Valley Historical Association*) held in April of 1966. At that conference Richard Shryock, an innovator in approaches to medical history,

⁶⁸ Eric L. McKittrick, *Slavery Defended: The Views of the Old South*, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1963)

⁶⁹ It is notable that of Cartwright’s cohort, John C. Calhoun, James Henry Hammond and Josiah C. Nott were born and raised in South Carolina, while Thomas Roderick Dew, George Fitzhugh and Cartwright were each born and raised in Virginia. The best scholarship on Hammond is Drew Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); See also Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: and Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989)

⁷⁰ Drew Faust, *A Sacred Circle: the Dilemma of the Intellectual in the Old South, 1840-1860*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977)

⁷¹ Paul Finkelman, *Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2003)

⁷² See Joe Gray Taylor, Review, “Slavery Defended: The Views of the Old South, Edited by Eric L. McKittrick, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 5:2 (Spring, 1964): 215

chaired a morning session wherein he and discussant John Duffy, central figure in the study of Southern medicine, laid out the broad strokes for how historians might approach the topic of “Negro Disease” and its “most vocal proponent, Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright.”⁷³ After Duffy had written about Cartwright in 1957 and suggested his significance at the 1966 conference, James Denny Guillory took up the charge to write a full article on Cartwright’s ideas in 1968.⁷⁴ Following Marshall’s 1940 essay, Guillory’s brief biography, “The Pro-Slavery Arguments of Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright” is the only other article dedicated solely to Cartwright’s work. Guillory’s writing then acted as additional source material for Eugene Genovese, Kenneth Stampp and George M. Fredrickson who each cite Cartwright in their works quite liberally.⁷⁵

Genovese’s Uniqueness:

Although Eugene Genovese wrote of Cartwright’s work in the early 1960s, I delayed a discussion of his historiographical contribution until after bringing awareness to the hermeneutic approaches of *optimism* and *externalization* because I believe his interpretation to be a combination of both strategies. Genovese’s first mention of Cartwright occurred in his first book where he identified him as “an outspoken and socially minded Southern physician.” One gets the sense that Genovese at this point looked upon Cartwright optimistically: he served as an earnest informant on the southern view. Genovese commented on Cartwright’s scorn for white people “who make negroes of themselves” by working in the cotton and sugar fields.⁷⁶ As a devout Marxist, Genovese did not focus on Cartwright’s role as a physician, but honed-in instead on how Cartwright characterized labor

⁷³ Robert E. Burke, “The Fifty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians,” *Journal of American History* 53:2 (1966): for full report, see 315-340, for quotation see 337-338

⁷⁴ John Duffy, “Sectional Conflict and Medical Education in Louisiana,” *The Journal of Southern History* 23:3 (August, 1957): 292; James Denny Guillory, “The Pro-Slavery Arguments of Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright,” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 9:3 (Summer, 1968): 209-227

⁷⁵ Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956); George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971)

⁷⁶ Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South*, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961, 1964, 1965, 1989), 47

relations in his writing. Over Genovese's long career of writing about black slavery, his 1961 introduction to Cartwright evolved into a fond admiration for the physician's contribution.

In Genovese's *The World the Slaveholders Made* he took the ideological defense of slavery seriously and saw in their rhetoric a critique of American capitalism — as abolitionists increased their attacks on slavery during the 1830s and 1840s by advocating free industrial labor, the Southerners, in their zeal to defend slavery, also crafted credible critiques of the emerging capitalist system. This is good news to a Marxist, but less interesting to slaves or even to descendants of slaves and critics of slavery. One of Genovese's most persistent critics — and there are many — isolated the central deficiency in his view of black slavery:

He was clearer about the flaws of the capitalist system the slaveholders were attacking than the flaws of the slave system they were defending. On the basis of the relative economic backwardness of Southern society he made an unwarranted leap to the conclusion that slaveholders disdained material ambition.⁷⁷

These points are crucial to comprehending Genovese. Loren Schweninger agrees that one should absolutely consider the plantation as a business and that challenges like runaway slaves had a direct impact to plantation balance sheets. Oakes continued his critique of Genovese, arguing that:

He posited an artificial distinction between slavery as a class system and its racial component, arguing implausibly that racism was an alien element that had infected slavery. He made inflated claims for slavery's apologists. He was unwilling to pay more than lip service to the horrors of slavery itself.⁷⁸

Therefore instead of viewing the South as a “non-capitalist society increasingly antagonistic to, but separate from, the bourgeois world that sired it,” as Genovese and Genovese argued, one cannot ignore the determination of the vast majority of planters and investors to purchase more land and slaves in order to compete in the increasingly diverse international marketplace, as well as to exploit the 3/5 clause to increase their standing in the House of Representatives and in the Electoral College —

⁷⁷ James Oakes, “Best of All Worlds, Review of *Slavery in White and Black: Class and Race in the Southern Slaveholders' New World Order*, by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese, (Cambridge, 2008),” *The London Review of Books* 32:5 (March, 2010): 30

⁷⁸ Oakes, “Best of All Worlds, 30

owning more blacks secured more power and profit.⁷⁹

By 1974, in *Roll Jordan Roll*, Genovese viewed Cartwright as a “... leader and “ideologically motivated physician” who, along with Josiah Nott and John Stainback Wilson, held arguments about black inferiority; theories which many slaveholders took seriously. Genovese did propose that slaveholders indulged in “various pseudoscientific speculations about black psychological traits.”⁸⁰ However part of the challenge to interpreting Genovese’s work is that one must tease out the degree to which he viewed slavery as a truly benevolent arrangement which often worked out to everyone’s advantage. Genovese argues essentially that slavery reflected a particular hierarchy of social arrangements in a developing capitalist system. He held that within that system personal relationships between masters and slaves depended on masters owning slaves as property and feeling duty-bound to protect slaves’ livelihoods, despite the slaves’ personal interests. This paternalistic view held that slave-owners reaped the fruits of slaves’ labor but also cared actually for the personal needs and well-being of the black slaves themselves.

Given his refusal to characterize the bond between slaves and masters as uniquely personal and as merely part of the South’s distinctiveness from the free-labor North, I agree with Oakes’ assessment that Genovese seems to see slavery but not identify with the slaves.⁸¹ Oakes characterized Genovese as arguing “The class conflict that might have driven the history of the South was stifled...by the slave owners’ paternalism towards their slaves and by their hegemony over farmers who did not own slaves.”

⁷⁹ Elizabeth Fox Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *Fruits of Merchant Capital: Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 5

Loren Schwener, “Counting the Costs: Southern Planters and the Problem of Runaway Slaves, 1790-1860,” *Business and Economic History* 28:2, (Winter, 1999): 267

⁸⁰ Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, (New York: Vintage, 1974, 1976), 637

⁸¹ For Oakes’ principal attempt to discredit Genovese’s interpretation of slavery, see James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982); see also Joseph P. Reidy, “Review of *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* by James Oakes,” *The Journal of Negro History* 68:1 (Winter, 1983): 95-97; for Oakes’ more recent review of Genovese’s work, see James Oakes, “Best of All Worlds, Review of *Slavery in White and Black: Class and Race in the Sothern Slaveholders’ New World Order*, by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese, (Cambridge, 2008),” *The London Review of Books* 32:5 (March, 2010): 30-31

With class analysis as his focus Genovese's economic determinism led him to view slavery abstractly and in terms of specific kinds of relations — as in the institution's effect on Southern economic development and in creating a ruling class that was “intrinsically and increasingly hostile to the emerging bourgeoisie of the North.”⁸² Genovese's ultimate point was that blacks, as essentially Africans, had not yet manifested an ability to exert themselves at a rate demanded by industrialized labor forces. Since Genovese's work is both subtle and vast, I will comment only briefly at present on how this notion of paternalism, or the belief in a consistent, proper treatment of slaves, generated what he viewed as enthusiasm between whites and blacks and even served as evidence of preference among slaves for slave labor. It is in this sense that he adopts an optimistic attitude toward Cartwright.

Genovese was unable to divorce himself from the slave-holder's view of the slave — as a labor mechanism — and to realize slaves as fully cognitive persons. As an example of the beneficence of moral treatment Genovese offered the case of Harold Anderson, a West Tennessee planter known for his abuse of slaves with the whip. The white master noted in his plantation diary, “Having given the servants a Dinner on Saturday in commemoration of their faithful working & expectation of a good crop of cotton...” and Genovese interprets this as mutuality, agreement and reciprocity.⁸³ But how is meting out nutrition based on labor productivity benevolent? In these writings on slave management Genovese characterized Cartwright: “In the 1850s Samuel A. Cartwright, one of the South's leading racist ideologues in the medical profession, insisted that blacks yielded naturally to white command; he tried, with some charming dance steps, to use this extreme racist theory to encourage more humane treatment.” Here, despite having sympathies for slaveholders' claims to treat blacks benevolently, Genovese *externalized* Cartwright. Instead of thinking through Cartwright's logic he sought to vilify him by calling him “racist,” or “charming” and by depicting his science as “dance steps.”

⁸² Oakes, “Best of All Worlds,” 30

⁸³ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 308

It is the litany of such descriptors: “banana-skin humor,” “brutal facetiousness,” “too precious to exclude,” “risible,” and “dance steps” that have lead many 21st century historians to continue to dismiss Cartwright’s work *prima facie*. Genovese is different from Stanton and Gould, not only because he is a specialist in the American South, but also because he externalized Cartwright while also embracing the anti-capitalist verve of the slave-holding class. Stanton and Gould introduced Cartwright to reject him whereas Genovese saw Cartwright’s logic and identified why he might be compelling to the master-class. My view is that it is not so much that Cartwright’s ideas are so extreme; it is that the *entire* slave system was extreme. Cartwright’s views reflected natural conclusions from a slave-based constitution that held blacks as non-citizens and non-persons. It would be difficult for me not to see this as risible as well, so what insight could be gained by isolating Cartwright — or the South — as absurd? The answer is that if modern historians can isolate Cartwright as a quack, neither the medical profession nor its chroniclers bear the responsibility to identify with or claim his work. Also scholars outside of the history of medicine who castigate Cartwright as the extremist thereby avoid looking deeply into the racial and sexual contracts expressed implicitly and explicitly in the U.S. *Constitution*.⁸⁴ Instead externalizing Cartwright’s work as an aberration from the prevailing system, scholars should see his project as an elaboration of the extant American system.

On Charges of “Pseudo Science” and “Scientific Racism”

The primary way externalists achieve distance from Cartwright’s ideas is to accuse him of being disingenuous or “bizarre” and the typical way historians have done this is through ridicule or defamation by calling him a “racist” and degrading his science as “pseudo.” Presumably the terms “pseudoscience” and “racism” work to externalize Cartwright as bad and his process as poor, and thereby eliminating him from serious study. In addition to the fact that ridiculing Cartwright deflects

⁸⁴ In addition to the works of philosophers Mills and Pateman, see also legal scholar and critical race theorist john a. powell, *Racing to Justice: transforming Our Conceptions of Self and Other to Build an Inclusive Society*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012)

scholars' attention from the U.S. *Constitution*, in a naive way it confines the problem of slavery to the South, despite the fact that northerners and southerners both benefited heavily from the slave hierarchy. Nevertheless, nearly uniformly, twentieth century scholars externalize scientific information that degrades blacks and other groups as “pseudo-science” and “scientific racism.” It is necessary to investigate and sharpen this analysis.

Many scholars, albeit perhaps unintentionally, use these terms as a kind of shield from engaging the actual scientific content of antebellum racial arguments — why engage them if they are absurd? For example, in her otherwise adroit historiographical coverage of abolitionism, when it came time to discuss the role of science Manisha Sinha used the term “pseudoscience” eight times on just two pages; and then deployed the term “racism” thirteen times and the term “racist” four times, all on those same two pages.⁸⁵ In one discussion of race and class bias regarding the yellow fever epidemic of 1853, historian Henry M. McKiven unashamedly used the term “playing the race card” as a way to characterize official responses to natural disasters in New Orleans. He introduced his analysis of the yellow fever epidemic by comparing it to Hurricane Katrina and posturing with the question, who are the “*real* racists,” the conservatives or the liberals? Such statements add up to contempt rather than scholarship. I agree with historian Harriet A. Washington that these terms are tangled and have led recently to “semantic confusion,” wherein “a once-useful term [racism] has been rendered worthless by its many contradictory meanings.” She suggests that the term “race-based” is the closest thing we have now to a neutral adjective.⁸⁶ Philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, whose essay “Racisms,” introduced David Theo Goldberg’s much heralded volume *Anatomy of Racism*, made the sensible suggestion and proposed “to use the old-fashioned term ‘racial prejudice’ . . . to refer to the deformation

⁸⁵ Manisha Sinha, “Coming of Age: The Historiography of Black Abolitionism,” in Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Stauffer, *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, (London: The New Press, 2006), 27-8

⁸⁶ Harriet A. Washington, *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present*, (New York: Random House, First Anchor Books, 2006), 35

of rationality in judgment that characterizes those whose racism is more than a theoretical attachment to certain propositions about race.”⁸⁷ Appiah is calling for refinement: a reflexive and ongoing awareness of how scholars of race use language and rhetoric.

In addition to philosophers, historians have written also about their relationships to the subjects they study. Most notably the field of Anthropology influenced significantly historians’ approach to knowledge formation. The challenges faced by anthropologists between 1960-1980s was similar to the perception of challenge that professional historians experienced during the 1990s when the discipline seemed threatened by abstractions from deconstruction and post-modernism.⁸⁸ Scholars questioned the viability of anthropological inquiry in a post-colonial world, a question that challenged the discipline methodologically, theoretically, ethically and politically.⁸⁹ Such hermeneutic thinking is needed also among historians of African Americans, and Kenneth Stamp pioneered this effort early on, in his essay “The Historian and Southern Negro Slavery.”⁹⁰

Much more recently, in his critique of historians’ fondness for the term “agency” in their analyses of black people, Walter Johnson used hermeneutic strategies to denounce the use of catch-phrases. Although he does not speak of historical analysis in terms of hermeneutics, he goes to great

⁸⁷ Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Racisms,” in David Theo Goldberg, ed., *Anatomy of Racism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 8

⁸⁸ The Mellon Foundation sponsored a year-long seminar program in which I partook entitled “Knowledge and Postmodernism in Historical Perspective,” directed by Joyce Appleby, which culminated in the publication, Joyce Oldham Appleby, ed., *Knowledge and Postmodernism in Historical Perspective*, (London: Routledge Press, 1996)

⁸⁹ The best exegesis on this professional challenge is still George W. Stocking, *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, 1982); Important approaches to anthropological thinking in addition to Stocking include James Clifford, *Person and Myth: Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian World*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); Curtis Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology, 1846-1910*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1981); Ian Langham, *The Building of British Social Anthropology: W. H. R. Rivers and His Cambridge Disciples in the Development of Kinship Studies, 1898-1931*, D. Reidel Studies in the History of Modern Science, (Dordrecht, 1982); David Lipset, *Gregory Bateson: The Legacy of a Scientist*, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1980); John Mark, *Four Anthropologists: An American Science in Its Early Years*, (New York: Neale Watson Academic Publications, 1981)

⁹⁰ Kenneth Stamp, “The Historian and Southern Negro Slavery,” *The American Historical Review* 57:3 (April, 1952): 613-624

lengths to challenge other historians to re-examine our relationships to the subjects we study.⁹¹ When scholars deploy the terms “racist” and “pseudoscience” to refer to historical activity the feedback-loop of accusation and denial becomes impenetrable; the question it leaves open is what is being charged or refused? Whereas Goldberg’s aim (in 1990) was to replace the term “racism” with its plural form “racism(s),” my aim here is to use other terminology altogether.⁹² Frankly, I do not know many non-academic black people who use the term “racism” to describe the inequality forced upon us. Instead of calling a person a “racist,” if my mother ever wanted to talk about racially motivated incidents, she would say, “That man was just low-down.” My grandmother might cast it in a religious light, and say “That ain’t nothing but the devil.” Nor do I use the term personally — in fact white people use the term more often to describe *me* when I point out instances of structural and generational inequality.

What was bugging Cartwright?

Turning away from the issue of abhorrence, we can get back to, “What was bugging Cartwright?” Why did the twin concerns of work stoppages and runaway slaves consume him and what heuristics did he use to disentangle this consumption? In addition to providing the best definition for what “racism” actually is, Ruth Gilmore outlines also the main intellectual reason for engaging an earnest analysis of the distasteful conclusions of someone like Cartwright.⁹³ She argues that institutions are sets of hierarchical relationships or structures that persist across time that undergo periodic reform.⁹⁴ Given that this is the case, in order to recognize how structures operate presently, one must trace their intellectual scaffolding back to reveal its historical iterations, and do so with a

⁹¹ Walter Johnson, “On Agency,” *Journal of Social History* 37:1, Special Issue, (Autumn, 2003): 113-124

⁹² Goldberg’s project is to shift from synchronic descriptions of surface expressions about “race relations” to more a more critical look at diachronic transformations between successive racist standpoints assumed and discarded over time. See David Theo Goldberg, ed., *Anatomy of Racism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), xiii

⁹³ Gilmore argues most coherently the core definition of racism: it is “the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death.” Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, (University of California Press, 2007), 28

⁹⁴ Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, 28; see also Steve Martinot, *The Rule of Racialization: Class, Identity, Governance*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003)

dynamic relationship to one's own biases.⁹⁵

Whereas I certainly want to encourage opposing racist expressions and resisting various forms of racism, I also pursue a study of Cartwright on *his* own terms, which did not include abstract references to race, racism or racists. I take this route not to have a race-less dialog, but to uncover the heuristics that led to racial concepts in the first place. Cartwright used terms that suggested his own preoccupations with nationhood, whiteness, natural laws, the will and Divine damnation. He also deployed scientific instruments ranging from medical statistics to anatomical research and historicism to build his case for black inferiority. I am not confident that collapsing this pantheon of governing interests into the summation that his work was “racist” is at all helpful in understanding how people *become* racists. Recall that Cartwright saw himself as a benefactor, the “only true friend to the Negro,” much like moderns who may lead with their intentions that obscure the lived reality of others.

Distanciation: From Abhorrence to Analysis

As an African American man, I recognize the patent non-correctness of Cartwright's most fundamental views, however that does not bar me from separating my own fundamental project from that of Cartwright's and recognizing him instead of interpellating him; taking critical distance from his pronouncements and how I might feel about them in order to ascertain the worldview that created context and provided shape to his scientific ideas. I believe that the best way to undermine any current manifestations of Cartwright's science is to understand his earnest commitment to scientific methods. Only by getting at his attempt to explain the world around him can we discern how institutions from psychiatry to criminology, labor management and education are all fields that may have been affected by his work.

⁹⁵ Kenneth Stampp discusses the role of bias in historical investigation, and in so doing exhibits his own biases, sometimes in striking assertions that make it plain that he wrote from within his own context sixty years ago. Among other things, Stampp holds out that the plantation school of the plantation might possibly have been an appropriate institution for blacks. See Kenneth Stampp, “The Historian and Southern Negro Slavery,” *The American Historical Review* 57:3 (April, 1952): 620

To put this in the language of hermeneutics, accusations of racism are moments of externalization without *distanciation*; actual distanciation requires jettisoning the need to express abhorrence by requiring ongoing appreciation and appraisal of any bias one might have as an enworlded observer. Aiming for distanciation — the continual awareness of putting-at-a-distance — solicits better understanding. William Outhwaite writes about how a quest for *verstehen* (understanding) makes a methodology of this search for meaning as it invites one to engage in an active construction of the meanings and intentions of the historical actors in an effort to determine what it meant to them from their own points of view.⁹⁶ Outhwaite argues that in order to get to understanding, one must recognize first that the meaning that comes from human actions can be classified as “psychological” and “hermeneutic.” Whereas the psychological dimension of meaning involves the historical subject’s own beliefs, intentions and emotions, the hermeneutic meaning of behavior is attributed to the action or artifact itself.⁹⁷ *Drapetomania* has force as a word, and that word acts on moderns in different ways than it would have acted on Cartwright’s contemporaries in the nineteenth century. The illocutionary force of this term causes moderns to abhor it and externalize its creator.⁹⁸

Paul Ricoeur describes *distanciation* as a forced, perpetual and self-conscious process. It is a continuing awareness of the process of putting the historical subject at a distance. This requires the historian to generate an ongoing regulation of his or her distaste.⁹⁹ Such hyper-self-consciousness also means bracketing-off men like Cartwright from present judgment, an intellectual disposition that enables one to take them and their efforts seriously.

⁹⁶ William Outhwaite, *Understanding Social Life: The Method Called Verstehen*, (London, 1975)

⁹⁷ Berel Dov Lerner and Peter Winch, *Rules, Magic and Instrumental Reason: A Critical Interpretation of Peter Winch’s Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, (New York: Routledge Press, 2002), 31

⁹⁸ Illocutionary force is the combination of the illocutionary point of an utterance, and particular presuppositions and attitudes that must accompany that point, including the strength of the illocutionary point, preparatory conditions, propositional content conditions, mode of achievement, sincerity conditions and strength of sincerity conditions. See John Searle and Daniel Vanderveken, *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic*, Vol.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 7–9, 20–21

⁹⁹ See Paul Ricoeur, “History and Hermeneutics,” presented at the American Philosophical Association Symposium on Hermeneutics, December 29, 1976, pre-printed in *The Journal of Philosophy* 73:4 (November 4, 1976): 683-695

Despite Cartwright's dismal reputation in the modern era, many scholars practice actively keeping in mind his significance, despite abhorrence. This distancing with consideration enables scholars to glean from his work why contemporaries praised it. Since I draw on these historians' writings throughout the dissertation, for space concerns I can say that in addition to James Guilloroy's essay, the work of Loren Schweniger, John Hope Franklin, Katherine Bankole, James Cassedy, David Roediger and Elizabeth Esch, Walter Johnson, Ariela Gross, Stephen Kenney and others have been able to look beyond any distaste toward Cartwright and engage his ideas.¹⁰⁰ Collectively these scholars' work is woven into my own; they have informed my thinking throughout and I am indebted to them.

James Cassedy's scholarship deserves particular notice because it is understudied. Other historians who take up Cartwright do not cite Cassedy often, but his subtle analysis of Cartwright's "statistical medicine" enables other historians to place the physician's full importance to the profession. "Statistical medicine" was Cartwright's innovation, which he imported from France, and then used to wage wars against his adversaries. Cassedy's writing on medical history represents a critical intervention in interpreting Cartwright in that he approaches the physician's work through statistics, not

¹⁰⁰ James Denny Guilloroy, "The Pro-Slavery Arguments of Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright," *Louisiana History* 9 (1968): 209-27; George M. Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind: the Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971); James O. Breeden, ed., *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980); Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free negro in the Antebellum South*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); Katherine Kemi Bankole, *Slavery and Medicine: Enslavement and Medical Practices in Antebellum Louisiana*, (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 1998); Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Ariela Gross, *Double Character: Slavery and Mastery in the Antebellum Southern Courtroom*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Loren Schweniger, "Counting the Costs: Southern Planters and the Problem of Runaway Slaves, 1790-1860," *Business and Economic History* 28:2, (Winter, 1999): 267-75; John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweniger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse: the Biblical Justification for African Slavery*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Paul Finkelman, *Defending Slavery: Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South*, (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2003); Kenneth F. Kiple and Virginia Himmelsteib King, *Another Dimension to the Black Diaspora: Diet, Disease and Racism*, (Cambridge, 2003); Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 2005); Manisha Sinha, "Coming of Age: The Historiography of Black Abolitionism," in Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Stauffer, *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, (London: The New Press, 2006), 23-41; Patrick Rael, "A Common Nature, A United Destiny: African American Responses to Racial Science from the Revolution to the Civil War," in McCarthy and Stauffer, eds., *Prophets of Protest*, 183-200; Stephen C. Kenney, "A Dictate of Both Interest and Mercy"? Slave Hospitals in the Antebellum South," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 65:1, (2010): 1-47

through an interest in pro-slavery theory. Whatever Cartwright thought about slavery, his contributions to statistical analysis in the 1830s and 1840s proved to be substantial. Like the authors cited in the last paragraph, Cassedy practices what philosopher Paul Ricoeur calls *distanciation* and was able to stifle any distaste and perceive instead Cartwright's steady contribution to the history of how medicine incorporated the science of quantitative analysis. Cassedy's distanciation from Cartwright's politics enabled him to perceive him as a physician contributing to his changing field.¹⁰¹

David Roediger and Elizabeth Esch also investigated Cartwright recently and focused on how his theories related to labor regulation in southern and northern factory systems in the antebellum era. Walter Johnson showed initial interest in Cartwright in his 1999 *Soul by Soul*, and has followed up that interest in his new *River of Dark Dreams*, published in 2013. Most recently, in 2014 Brown University's Lundy Braun just published a book dedicated to the continued use of Cartwright's "spirometer." In her *Breathing Race into the Machine: the Surprising Career of the Spirometer from Plantation to Genetics*, she cites Cartwright as the first physician to use the "spirometer" to measure lung capacity and pays particular attention to the ominous fact that this machine is still factory-calibrated based on race.¹⁰²

3: **Chapter Outlines**

What do I do differently?

A hermeneutic approach to historical inquiry attempts to draw motive out of the historian at the outset. Walter Benjamin concluded, "To articulate the past historically means to seize hold of a

¹⁰¹ James Cassedy, *American Medicine and Statistical Thinking, 1800-1860*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984); Cassedy, *Medicine and American Growth, 1800-1860*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986)

¹⁰² David Roediger and Elizabeth D. Esch, *The Production of Difference: Race and the Management of Labor in U.S. History*, (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Lundy Braun, *Breathing Race into a Machine: The Surprising Career of the Spirometer from Plantation to Genetics*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014)

memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger.”¹⁰³ This passage is so striking that it inspired my own disposition toward Cartwright’s work as well as the organization of the dissertation, which I divide into three parts: Cartwright’s memory, Cartwright’s reason and Cartwright’s imagination. The terms are shamelessly Baconian, however since these intellectual divisions went on to shape the thinking of my protagonists — especially Jefferson and Cartwright — they serve also as ideal road maps to organizing this dissertation.

Part I: Cartwright’s Memory

My thesis is premised on an awareness that I gained while conducting research into Cartwright’s early writings, which is that during the first two decades of his career Cartwright did not write about color or difference. When he moved to Natchez, Mississippi in 1822 he published highly regarded medical essays that had one thing in common — a total disregard for race. At least in his published essays he indicated no interest in phenotypical or physiological distinctions between blacks and whites, and wrote about plantation housing and slave accommodations casually. When he did mention the plantation system, it was a matter of fact, not subject to dispute.

Why did a man who wrote exclusively about “Negro Diseases” in the 1850s view slavery as unremarkable in the 1820s? In order to understand the context in which he wrote and the world-view he inherited which rendered slavery normative, I begin with Cartwright’s memory and sense of duty to the Revolutionary period of the late eighteenth century. Here I examine the pre-scientific aspects of Cartwright’s being in the world. As a First-generation American, he understood that the landscape of pro-slavery theory (as well as abolitionists’ responses to it) had been surveyed and parceled out by the

¹⁰³ See Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed., Hannah Arendt, (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 255; see also Michael Meranze, “Even the Dead Will Not Be Safe: An Ethics of Early American History,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 1:2 (April, 1993): 367; also Michael P. Steinberg, “Introduction: Benjamin and the Critique of Allegorical Reason,” in Steinberg, ed., *Walter Benjamin and the Demands of History*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 1-23; and Renée Rebecca Trilling, *The Aesthetics of Nostalgia: Historical Representation in Old English Verse*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2009), 42

Founding generation who mortared the cornerstone of slavery into the U.S. *Constitution*. After ratifying the constitution by pacifying the South and securing whites' legal right to hold blacks as slaves, the need to establish slavery had ended. This newly modeled social contract had racial and sexual features that made it unique, in part because it kept alive hierarchies while at the same time standing as a monument to egalitarianism.¹⁰⁴

Cartwright inherited an unchallenged slave system and he did not appear to make medical distinctions between blacks and whites until after his return from Europe in 1837.¹⁰⁵ Perceiving this shift in reasoning led me to analyze the forms of argumentation in his earliest essays as well as to investigate the fruits of his eighteen month European voyage. In order to determine when and why race took hold of his perceptions, Part 1 contains three chapters that address how Cartwright's exposure to Parisian medicine inspired both his interest in medical statistics and his focus on Free Black behavior. Taken together these chapters contextualize Cartwright's pivot from non-racial to racially specific thinking.

Chapter 1:

Early Essays and "the French School"

After providing some biographical background on Cartwright, chapter one articulates features of the racial contract and offers some sense as to why Cartwright understood slavery as normative and blacks as unremarkable during his first two decades in Natchez, Mississippi. Cartwright's lack of interest in race prior to the mid-1830s reflects the fact that it was not until abolitionists questioned the racial nature of the social contract in the late 1820s that First generation scientists like Cartwright began to counter black abolitionists' claims with new scientific evidence imported from around the

¹⁰⁴ Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Mills' conceptualization of race is inspired by Carole Pateman's work on the role of gender in the US Constitution. See Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1988); see also Carole Pateman and Charles Mills, *The Contract and Domination*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007)

¹⁰⁵ I say, "Appears" because the reprints of his Harvard award winning essays from 1822 and 1826 are abbreviated.

globe. Cartwright's diagnostic skill, his dedication to performing autopsies and interest in human anatomy led him to learn French and move to Paris in 1836, a route many intrepid American physicians pursued in an effort to attain medical excellence by studying in the expansive Parisian hospital system. In Paris he began to take seriously the idea that blacks and whites were created as separate species.

Chapter 2:

Quackery: "A Great & Glowing Evil"

Chapter two traces Cartwright's forced return home from Paris following the financial Panic of 1837, wherein he lost everything and fell into bankruptcy. In addition to poverty, upon his return to Natchez he faced new challenges on two fronts: from the alternative medical practitioners who called themselves "Thomsonians," a group whose ranks had swollen since the loosening of Mississippi's medical licensing laws in 1833, as well as the increasing status and number of the Free Black caste in Adams County, Mississippi. Chapter two focuses on Cartwright's battle against the Thomsonians and his vying for medical authority over a youthful population which was, at the same time, excited to exercise their own medical choices, independent of traditional orthodox physicians. Cartwright rejected Mississippians' demands for "medical democracy." He viewed personal freedom as a burden to the individual and as a source of chaos and danger.¹⁰⁶ Cartwright aimed his wide reaching and well heralded anti-Quackery campaign against the practitioners of alternative medicines like Thomsonianism, Vegetarianism, Homeopathy and Grahamism. Although Cartwright focused on white medical practitioners, this chapter explores also the close links between white demands for medical independence, women's roles as medical practitioners and whites' reliance on Native American and

¹⁰⁶ Citing Peter Wagner, Ted Porter argued that early to mid-nineteenth century social sciences sought not to express liberty so much as to rein it in; "freedom, while a blessing, had to be held within bounds." See Peter Wagner, "Certainty and Order, Liberty and Contingency: The Birth of Social Science as Empirical Political Philosophy," in *Rise of the Social Sciences*, ed., Heilbron, Magnusson, and Wittrock, 241-63; cited in Theodore M. Porter, "Genres and Objects of Social Inquiry, From the Enlightenment to 1890," in Porter and Dorothy Ross, eds., *The Cambridge History of Science: The Modern Social Sciences*, vol. 7, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 24

African medical knowledge, interstices that built a broad coalition among differently oppressed groups.

Chapter 3:

Mississippi's "Free Negro Pandemonium"

Chapter three demonstrates that while Cartwright fought to regain his financial standing and professional status after the Crash of 1837, he did so in an environment that now included numerous free black men and women, some of whom fared much better than many whites in Natchez, including Cartwright. Just as he had identified 1833 as the year in which relaxed medical regulations had weakened Natchez's republican infrastructure, so too his friends and colleagues described that the 1831 slave codes which the Mississippi legislature had tightened following Nat Turner's rebellion, had proved to be absolutely ineffective at stemming the tide of free blacks integrating Natchez. One "Free Negro," William Johnson, even rented offices to local "druggests," the very pharmacists and "patent medicine" operatives who now competed with Cartwright's orthodox medical tradition. Chapter three gives some sense of how a man who never wrote about race at all until after his trip to Europe in 1836 came to make physiologically and mentally based racial distinctions the core principles which framed his entire theoretical outlook. Following the rise of demands for "immediate abolition," the problem Cartwright stared directly in the face during the late 1830s was how to use his erudition and expertise to serve his pro-slavery social vision — and he treaded the thin line between science and politics in order to do so. Cartwright mined the gap between the scientific elite and the lay public, acting as a self-relegated servant of the public good. He understood himself as a mediator and popularizer: one whose duty it was to translate to the lay public information only he, as a scholar and scientist, could arrive at alone in the mental chambers of his expertise.

Part 2: Cartwright's Reason

Cartwright concerned himself with how the ideology of "immediate abolition" traveled from

Britain to France, then to Haiti, and then to the northern United States. Histories of science and medicine have begun to emphasize trans-national and trans-imperial perspectives, focusing specifically on how natural knowledge circulated across political, cultural and social boundaries.¹⁰⁷ Part 2 of this dissertation expands Cartwright's interest in the "French School's" approach to medicine introduced in chapter one to analyze the deep political impressions both England and France made on the young physician. Cartwright expressed his research vividly in an essay he published anonymously entitled "East India Cotton." He made impressionistic assertions in that essay that he turned into full-on scientific arguments in his follow-up article, "Canaan Identified as the Ethiopian," which he published anonymously five months later. In these less-studied articles, Cartwright demonstrates the intersecting fields of Atlantic history and the history of science. In this section I move beyond Cartwright's history and what he inherited to how he used his inheritance to reason out how it was he, as a Southerner, fit into the current world-view. This section begins with his importation of "statistical medicine" from France and how he used statistics to fight against the increase of both Thomsonians and Free Blacks in Natchez. This section explores Cartwright's reflections on how the South fit into the international political campaigns to end black slavery.

Chapter 4:

Medical Statistics: "A Reason for Her Faith"

Chapter four describes the weapon Cartwright brought to bear on the unregulated Thomsonians in Natchez in the form of "medical statistics," a discerning blade that he called his "Spear of Ithuriel." Cartwright referenced English poet John Milton's *Paradise Lost* wherein the archangel Gabriel sends Ithuriel, a lesser angel, to locate Satan. When Ithuriel came across Satan lurking in the Garden of Eden

¹⁰⁷ See the 2009 Atlantic History Seminar, "The Americas in the Advancement of European Science and Technology, 1500-1830," Bernard Bailyn, Director, Harvard University; click here: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~atlantic/Seminar%20Programs/semprog09.html> ; see also Special Issue: Itineraries of Atlantic Science — New Questions, New Approaches, New Directions," Neil Safier, ed., *Atlantic Studies* 7:4 (December 2010)

he was in disguise and “squat like a toad close at the ear of Eve.” Upon recognizing him Ithuriel touched the toad with his spear to reveal its true shape and nature, as Satan.¹⁰⁸ In a double-edged way, by calling statistics his “Spear of Ithuriel” Cartwright took pride in his own medical innovation while comparing the Thomsonians to Satan at the same time. Cartwright compared that just as the “Spear of Ithuriel” revealed the true nature of Satan “statistical medicine” worked to “undeceive” the public and expose as impostors the alternative medical practitioners doing harm in their midst.¹⁰⁹ The same “spear” Cartwright wielded against alternative medical practitioners, he thrust against abolitionists and the “Free Negro,” and it was a weapon he picked up while traveling abroad.

It is significant that in his statistical analyses of mortality tables from around the world, Cartwright focused specifically on juxtaposing the health of Natchez while under the popularity of the Thomsonians with the health of the free black caste of Philadelphia. The rub was that he aimed to prove statistically that the health of Natchez’ white population under the Thomsonians’ reign produced *exactly* the same mortality rate as unprotected and excised free blacks in the North. In other words, he argued statistically that the influx of Thomsonian medicine into Natchez meant that white southerners were experiencing neglect reserved for “Negroes.” These statistical considerations dominate Cartwright’s writings in 1840, 1842 and in 1844, even luring him to write about how blacks fared in the troubled 1840 U.S. Census.¹¹⁰ Chapter four contrasts Cartwright’s statistical writing with the essays of

¹⁰⁸ John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 4, (1668), 778, 788

¹⁰⁹ Cartwright, “Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez,” 4

¹¹⁰ For Cartwright’s statistical writing aimed against the Thomsonians, see Cartwright, “Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez,” 1-21; and also Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright’s lecture on Statistical Medicine,” *The Missouri Medical & Surgical Journal* 3-4 (1848): 211; and Cartwright, “Statistical Medicine or Numerical Analysis applied in the investigation of Morbid Actions: A Lecture, delivered by request, to the Medical Class of the University of Louisville, January 17th, 1848,” *Western Journal of Medicine and Surgery* 1:3 (March 1848): 182-208; For Cartwright’s statistical writing which focused on “Free Negroes” in Philadelphia see Cartwright, “Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez,” 5; For Cartwright’s statistical writing wherein he extrapolated slaves’ runaway rates by comparing slave and free populations from 1790 to those from 1840, see [Cartwright], “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 2:4 (October 1842): 376-379; and for an instance of Cartwright citing “Mr. Quetelet” during an extensive statistical argument over allegations of blacks “idiocy,” “deafness” and accusations of increased insanity at the North, Cartwright compared Senators “Mr. Walker,” “Mr. Calhoun,” and “Mr. Packenham” and included statistical comparisons of penitentiary conditions in

African-American physician Dr. James McCune Smith, who was an abolitionist and able contributor to the debates surrounding the 1840 Census. This chapter concludes with a focus on scientific contributions by black abolitionists and I demonstrate that even before McCune Smith joined forces with Edward Jarvis to contest the 1840 Census, the editors of *Freedom's Journal* had deployed statistical analyses as early as 1827 in an effort to refute anti-black claims.

Chapter 5:

“East India Cotton”

Chapter five demonstrates that Cartwright was the author of a number of anonymously published articles wherein he commented widely on international political issues and began making his suggestions for proper free black and slave management. This chapter unpacks Cartwright’s “East India Cotton” essay and focuses specifically on his suspicions of a British conspiracy against the South. Cartwright claimed to have discovered not only evidence of British interference in local Natchez agriculture, including spies collecting seed samples to “submit to chemical analysis” back in London, but he also conducted personal trips to England’s industrial centers, like Manchester, and conducted extensive research in the British Archives. There he claimed to uncover a plot by the British to free disingenuously its black slaves in the West Indies only as a way to increase its hegemonic control over the East Indies. He charged that England simply exchanged slaves for free-laborers who they treated like slaves. Cartwright sought to prove the vagrancies of free labor by visiting the manufacturing towns and conducting ethnographic research into the bone fractures and diseases caused by intense factory labor, which he compared to slave labor in the south. Here Cartwright announced first his theme that white men laboring outside of their nature led to disease, and that blacks’ labor led to health.

Pennsylvania with those of slaves held in the South, see [Cartwright] “Annexation of Texas,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 6:12 (October 1844): 509-15; for a full treatment of Cartwright’s statistical writing on blacks see Chapter 4 below. Alternately for his use of statistics to prove what he called the “unnatural condition” of white workers in Manchester, London and Liverpool, see [Cartwright], “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” 340

Chapter 6:

Haiti and the “False Issue” of Skin Color

Chapter six begins with the radiating threat of the Haitian Revolution and its influence on Cartwright’s thinking about the interconnected nature of international events. In recent years the history of science and medicine has broadened its interest in the Atlantic world, focusing specifically on the scale and centrality of different actors and agents in their local, national and imperial contexts. Chapter six reveals Cartwright’s reflection on the transoceanic origins of the Haitian Revolution, a theme to which he returned throughout the rest of his career. The term ‘science’ refers to systems of explanation and in this chapter I show how Cartwright used historicism as a way of rationalizing his increasingly threatened Southern worldview. In an exceptional moment Cartwright wrote a detailed biography of Jacques Vincent Ogé, the only free black person I have ever seen him mention by name. Cartwright viewed Ogé and the rebellion he fomented against the white colonial authorities in Saint-Domingue in October of 1790 as a precursor to the broader Haitian Revolution. Ogé amassed an army of 300 “mulattos” and free blacks in what he self-described as a “common front of *gens de couleur* against the forces of white supremacy.” White colonists managed to outnumber and overwhelm Ogé, however general slave resistance gained momentum in April of 1791 and a full-on slave revolt broke out in August of 1791 when maroon leader “Boukman” officiated the “Bois Caïman ceremony” where the vigilant slaves solemnized their pact in a voodoo ritual. Cartwright critiqued Ogé and rejected the French Revolution’s radical egalitarianism, accusing that Robespierre based his radical call for the equality of races on a “false issue” of skin color

Deploying tactics his own historians would use on him, Cartwright introduced Ogé only to dismiss him. Cartwright declared that it was actually Thomas Clarkson, the British abolitionist, who met with Ogé, provided him with arms and stimulated Ogé’s rebellion back in Haiti. Cartwright argued

that blacks could not revolt independently. After attempting to discredit Ogé he went on to argue that the Haitian Revolution was inspired by neither the Haitians themselves nor the French, but by the British.

At the end of this argument Cartwright reasoned black degradation through a startling aesthetic analysis of an alabaster monument that he encountered while in London, a statue that he said offered proof of blacks' physical inferiority. The statute of abolitionist Charles James Fox at Westminster Abbey astonished Cartwright because he imagined that he saw racial difference depicted there in structure, *not* in color. As Ian Hacking or John Stuart Mill might put it, Cartwright argued here, and for possibly the first, time that blacks were not superficially different kinds of people, but real and naturally distinct kinds of organisms. In a vivid exegesis on the British statue, Cartwright concluded that Robespierre and the abolitionists got it wrong — he declared that skin color was a “false issue” and that the races differed anatomically at the level of structure and organization.

Chapter 7:

“Canaan Identified as the Ethiopian”

Chapter seven shows that Cartwright had found his voice and a new vehicle for delivering his decidedly political view of physiology. Themes he had only breached in his “East India Cotton” essay in the April, 1842 issue of the new *Southern Quarterly Review*, he delved into earnestly in the October issue with his “Canaan Identified as the Ethiopian,” which he also published anonymously. The very title of his article suggests the role of classification and taxonomy to Cartwright's thinking and, like Auguste Comte wrote in the 1820s, Cartwright asserted the indispensable role of religion in scientific order. Cartwright then walked out onto a ledge by claiming the Book of *Genesis*, a naturally monogenesist text, as the basis for polygenesis. “Canaan Identified” should be seen as Cartwright's attempt to corroborate religion and science by revealing a fundamental compatibility. Drew Faust

argues that defenders of slavery sought to minimize philosophical contradictions in order to foster strength through proslavery unity.¹¹¹ In a letter to a colleague Cartwright declared that “There is no forked tongue in the language of learned men — whether physician or divine.” Like Comte he sought a unity of truth. Cartwright wrote: “Truth is the same whether uttered by one or the other — the phraseology may differ but truth is a unit.”¹¹²

“Canaan Identified” began as a series of letters that Cartwright wrote between December, 1841 and April of 1842 to William Winans, the president of the newly formed Mississippi Colonization Society. In those letters Cartwright argued that it made no sense to export free blacks from the U.S. and colonize them elsewhere because black freedom itself was a alleged farce. Cartwright sought out several systems of scientific explanation, from comparative anatomy to taxonomy and etymology, as well as history and religion to prove what had now become his crowning argument: that blacks were created as a separate species and deserved a different form of government than whites. Believing that he had united successfully the dictates of the *Holy Bible*, the intent of the Founders and the revelations of Science, Cartwright demanded, “The mission of Ethnology is to vindicate the great truths on which the institutions of the South are founded.”¹¹³ By uniting these “great truths,” he operated as Whewell described: as a “scientist.”

Part 3: Cartwright's Imagination

Part 3 addresses how Cartwright's history and reason led him to use his imagination to create therapeutics, diagnoses and experiments based on his arguments of black inferiority. The period between 1840 and 1860 intensified into a more systematic and self-conscious pro-slavery movement and Drew Faust argues that this period erupted in a pragmatic tone through an inductive mode, both

¹¹¹ Drew Gilpin Faust, ed., *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830-1860*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 14

¹¹² Samuel Cartwright to William S. Forwood, March 24, 1858, in William S. Forwood Papers, Trent Collection, Duke Medical Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

¹¹³ See letter from Samuel Cartwright to William S. Forwood, February 13, 1861, in *ibid.*

critical tenets of Cartwright's work.¹¹⁴ Faust argued that "The Revolutionary concepts of natural law were thus transmuted into the tenets of social organicism; the prestige of modern science served to legitimate tradition and conservatism."¹¹⁵ To Cartwright's imagination, slavery enabled various people to occupy their proper place — a status that had become proper only through artifice during the seventeenth century and rationalized secularly during the eighteenth century got passed on to descendants in the nineteenth century as natural law. Ironically, it was the benevolent institutionalization of principles of inherent equality. It structured an interdependence that was as natural as it was Christian. From this vantage point, Southerners viewed their institution as humanitarian: it kept slaves clothed and fed and regulated and made them useful, enabling them to make their contribution to society as Founders had declared. Cartwright propagated this bio-medical belief to a world audience.

Chapter 8:

"Empire of the White Man's Will"

Chapter eight begins with one of the most interesting medical treatments in Cartwright's *oeuvre*, the "Tam Tam cure," wherein the physician makes an ethnographic investigation into African dance rituals and worshiping ceremonies. To uncover power hierarchies among slaves he studied blacks' behavior and developed a way to coerce the majority of black slaves by subjecting the "Negro conjurers," those blacks who were in power, to a combined regimen of psychological ridicule and physical punishment. Keeping in mind the hermeneutic of distanciation, it is important to bracket off from one's own current view to attempt to get at what it was Cartwright believed he had accomplished. This bracketing-off enabled me to see, for instance, the connection between his 1822 and 1826 essays

¹¹⁴ Again, Faust does not address Cartwright's work in this volume, except in a footnote, but this point is made in her "Introduction," to Drew Gilpin Faust, ed., *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830-1860*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981)

¹¹⁵ Faust, "A Southern Stewardship," 73

wherein he referred to the “magic charm” of blisters being made across the back to have a positive effect on the lungs of fever victims by easing their breathing and breaking their fever. This same “magic charm” he recommended to cure yellow fever provided him rationale for whipping the backs of recalcitrant or inattentive black slaves: to his thinking lacerations close to the lungs increased respiratory power. He concluded that if one accelerated their physiological systems, slaves would function more efficiently.

Historian Stephen Stowe struggled with how to classify Cartwright’s work and determined that Cartwright’s medical contribution was minimal; in this chapter I re-evaluate that assertion. If one takes Genovese’s focus on milder forms of slave management and how milder treatment led to greater worker productivity, Genovese is describing the exact kind of “moral treatment” that Cartwright advocated. Cartwright understood his treatments as benevolent. He argued that the iron-masks slaves were forced to wear to prevent them from “dirt-eating” were a barbaric way to monitor what was actually a disease, *Cachexia Africana*. He advocated planters cease such barbarity and better approach disobedient slaves through medical treatment rather than harsh punishment. Physicians like Cartwright wrote widely read tracts on the management of slaves, essays and plantation account books that demonstrate their popularity and utility.

Chapter 9:

Comparing American Asylums and Plantations

Chapter nine picks up on the theme of power introduced earlier in the dissertation in the discussion of medical authority. Chapter two relayed the actual components of the authority that Cartwright struggled to regain after losing his professional standing in Natchez in the 1830s: the pillars of legitimacy and dependence. Following Paul Starr and Hannah Arendt, I offered that such authority is upheld typically by the reserve powers of force and reason. Chapter nine is about the fusing of force

and reason to create consent among black laborers.

I analyze now the extent to which Cartwright understood himself (and whites generally) to use mental force in order to control blacks' physical actions. I consider Cartwright's view of the use of physical force *vis-à-vis* psychological coercion to manipulate what he called "the machine muscles of Negroes." Here I interrogate the different modalities of Cartwright's concept of "the will," specifically his notion that black slaves operated at the behest of what he called "the empire of the white man's will."

I argue that given historians' hyper-focus on the absurdity of Cartwright's novel medical diagnoses, scholars have overlooked the strong parallels between the "psychological medicine" practiced in contemporary mental asylums and Cartwright's suggestion to use "Moral Treatment" to conduct better "Negro Management." The innovative and more humane moral treatment techniques that emerged in the early to mid-nineteenth century mental health boom held similar if not identical features to the process and structure of slave management techniques prevalent during the same era. In chapter nine I identify four specific parallels between the asylum and plantation regimes.

Chapter 10:

"Drapetomania" and "Dysaesthesia Aethiopica"

To Cartwright's thinking the Southern physician's responsibility included determining how climate, geography and race affected disease concepts and he sought to use this knowledge as an instrument of Southern politics.¹¹⁶ He believed it was an honor and duty to increase Southerners' understanding of diseases particular to the Southern region and by 1850 Cartwright had crafted a specialty in "Negro Diseases" and slave labor management. Chapter ten introduces, finally, Cartwright's flagship disease categories, *Drapetomania* and *Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*, and it does so by

¹¹⁶ John Harley Warner, "The Idea of Southern Medical Distinctiveness: Medical Knowledge and Practice in the Old South," in *Science and Medicine in the Old South*, ed., Savitt and Numbers, (Baton Rouge, 1989)

allowing Cartwright's vectors to address his ideas: *New York Times* correspondent Frederick Law Olmsted read Cartwright, and then novelist Charles Dickens read Olmsted, which in turn led Dickens to source out and read Cartwright. Here one sees what cultural critic Stuart Hall called the "articulation" of an idea as well as how different literary genres operated as vehicles to circulate these diagnoses in a trans-Atlantic context.¹¹⁷

After Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 Charles Dickens expressed deep interest in how Americans rationalized their treatment of black runaway slaves. The new Act enforced an existing constitutional law obligating northern police to capture any "Free Blacks" suspected to be runaway slaves and return them to southern slavery. The liberal north was outraged and by 1856 Dickens recognized that what seemed to be a local American issue was having international ramifications.¹¹⁸ Dickens traced the issue of runaway slaves through the "vector" of Frederick Law Olmsted back to the expertise of Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright.¹¹⁹ Cartwright's 1851 "Report on the Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race" had been reprinted and cited widely as a scientific effort to justify black slavery and condemn black rebellion as acts of insanity. Cartwright now held the title of "Professor of Diseases of the Negro" and served on the medical faculty at the University of Louisiana, the only such title in medical history. Dickens' exploration of Cartwright's disease categories reflects the trans-Atlantic significance of Cartwright's writing and provides what I believe to be a unique opportunity to consider how his disease categories moved local knowledge to an international audience.

¹¹⁷ Stuart Hall adopts Althusser's notion of social formation into a theory of how identity is "articulated" in "racially-structured social formations." See Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance," *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism*, (Paris: UNESCO, 1980), 305-345

¹¹⁸ When Dickens visited the U.S. in 1842 his Boston reception committee who received him included Edward G. Loring, who in 1854 served as the U. S. Commissioner and gained much notoriety for over-seeing the return of fugitive slave Anthony Burns back to his master, Virginia slave-holder Charles F. Suttle. The decision caused a riot and an attack on the courthouse, but without result, as Burns was conveyed back to Virginia in a U.S. revenue cutter. See William Clyde Wilkins, *Charles Dickens in America*, (London, 1911), 21-22

¹¹⁹ For Dickens on Cartwright, see Charles Dickens, "Slaves and Their Masters," *Household Words—A Weekly Journal Conducted by Charles Dickens* 330 (August 23 1856): 133-138

Cartwright's consistent focus on black breathing and lung capacity led him to argue that black people suffered from an "incorrect atmospherization of the blood," a concept which he took from Washington's observations on the sluggishness of black movement and Jefferson's writings on black breathing. Cartwright followed Jefferson's writings on blacks' "pulmonary apparatus," charted how black breathing differed and proved, to his standards, to be less efficient than whites' breathing.

Cartwright's disease concepts reflected elements of the U.S. *Constitution*; particularly his argument that blacks worked at a slower rate, 2/3 the rate of white workers performing the same tasks. I demonstrate here how the 3/5 clause from the constitution operated as a measure of labor productivity in addition to operating as a method to determine taxation and representation. Chapter ten concludes with how Cartwright's imagination led him to experiment widely on black cadavers, experiments that led him to test his theories of blood circulation out on local marine and swamp life in Louisiana. These experiments on the circulation of blood—which stemmed from his vivisection and dissection of blacks—won Cartwright worldwide attention and invited further interrogations from England.

When British physicians questioned how he determined differences in lung capacity existed between blacks and whites, Cartwright relayed that he had invented a device called a "*spirometer*" to measure and compare lung volume. Chapter ten comes to terms with the fact that Cartwright had great allies in his scientific endeavors; physicians like Josiah Nott, at the South as well as renowned scientists like Louis Agassiz, Samuel Morton and George Gliddon at the North. Whereas Morton and Gliddon measured cranial capacity, Cartwright measured lung capacity, and each used these measurements to argue black inferiority. In Europe decidedly great men like Marshall Hall, the founder of the field of neurology took great interest in Cartwright's imaginative and esoteric work and made a special trip from England to visit New Orleans and witness his experiments first-hand.

Part I: Cartwright's History

Chapter 1: Early essays and “the French School”

Cartwright’s Background

Samuel Adolphus Cartwright was born in Fairfax County, Virginia on November 30, 1793 and his career is emblematic of an antebellum southern physician bringing intellectual, moral and professional concerns to the forefront of his work. Samuel was the son of Rev. John S. Cartwright and “came from a family of poets, scholars and inventors.”¹ Cartwright studied medicine initially under the auspices of Dr. John Brewer in Fairfax County, Virginia, after which he traveled north to Philadelphia where he studied “in the office and under the direct supervision of Dr. Benjamin Rush” until Rush’s death in 1813. Cartwright enlisted The War of 1812 against England and while serving in Tanson’s artillery the British injured him badly at the Battle of North Point.² That war injury caused him to suffer a slight deafness that quickened with age and accelerated his life-long hatred for the British. Since Cartwright left the University of Pennsylvania before completing his degree he continued his studies in Baltimore and then went on to practice medicine in Huntsville, Alabama.³

Cartwright moved to Natchez, Mississippi in 1822 and within a year or two contracted Yellow Fever. Rev. Mr. Burruss acted as his care-taker during the illness and allowed the physician to stay in his laundry shed just outside Natchez where Cartwright directed his own treatment.⁴ Cartwright married Mary Wren in 1825 and inherited at that time eight female slaves. Cartwright’s inheritance increased his social status and as a new member of the slave-holder aristocracy he began to share the esteem of his prominent father-in-law Dr. Woodson Wren. Cartwright also began to consider more

¹ Mary Louise Marshall, “Samuel A. Cartwright and States Rights Medicine,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal*, 93: 2 (August 1940): 1

² Although Marshall indicated Cartwright’s involvement in Baltimore’s Battle of North Point and his subsequent injury as occurring before he went to U. Penn, there is reason to suspect the accuracy of her chronology because the Battle of North Point occurred in 1814, after Rush’s death in 1813. It is possible that Cartwright studied first with John Brewer, and then attended U. Penn sometime before Rush died in 1813, and then studied in Baltimore where his studies were interrupted in 1814. More evidence is necessary to clarify.

³ Marshall, “Samuel A. Cartwright and States Rights Medicine,” 2

⁴ Marshall, “Samuel A. Cartwright and States Rights Medicine,” 2

pragmatically the challenges of slave management. Later that year he gained distinction as a medical doctor when Mississippi suffered another bout with Yellow Fever. According to *De Bow's Review* the epidemic provided Cartwright and “his life-long friend, Dr. John Monette, their first opportunity to acquire distinction in their profession...They soon placed their reputations among the best contributors to the medical literature of the day, secured for them both a practice always lucrative, which it is believed never waned while they chose to attend it.”⁵

Whereas the outrageousness of his findings tend to bar him from serious study the fortitude of Cartwright's research and scientific methods make him a central figure in American medicine. A natural and ardent writer, Cartwright published several award-winning essays in the mid-1820s after his move to Natchez. He received two awards from Harvard University (in 1824 and 1826) for essays that sharpened descriptions of the specific stages of cholera and yellow fever. Harvard praised him for his diagnostic and therapeutic clarity. In 1824 the Harvard Medical Committee awarded Cartwright its coveted Boylston Award for his response to the essay topic “How long may the human body remain immersed in water, without extinction of life; and at what period after immersion would it be useless to employ restorative means?” Harvard's Boylston Medical Library awarded Cartwright his second gold medal in 1826, this time for his dissertation on “Whether the Veins Perform the Function of Absorption.” In 1826 Cartwright also published an essay on “*Cholera Infantum*” and received yet a third prize of one hundred dollars from the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland. The Medical Faculty of Maryland credited Cartwright as the first observer who noted the frequent appearance of a cough when the disease had passed to an inflammation of the intestine. The Medical Faculty characterized Cartwright's philosophy “on the Pathology” as “novel and purely theoretical.” Of particular importance was Cartwright's inherited focus on the enumeration and description of the

⁵ Ibid, 4

progress of disease in the body.⁶ His 84-page study of the “morbid anatomy and treatment of some of the principal diseases of the Southern states” led to the eventual articulation of what his adversaries in the 1840’s called “States Rights Medicine.” Marshall observes that, “Dr. Cartwright believed that in a climate so different, the aspect of many diseases varied from the normal; in addition, there were many diseases encountered in the South, which physicians in the North were never called upon to treat.” For this reason, “he sponsored the education of Southern medical students by Southern physicians in their own locale, and became known throughout the medical world of his day as a specialist in the diseases of the South.”⁷

Given Cartwright’s great success in the 1820s, why did he focus on African freedom in the 1830s? In part because on his trip to France he confirmed something he had only been suspicious of, which was the suggestion of blacks’ structural inferiority. Also, in part because after enjoying financial prosperity during the Cotton Boom Cartwright went bankrupt in 1837 and suffered great losses during a time in Mississippi when the local Free Black community enjoyed unheard-of gains. In the Financial Panic of 1837 wealthy planters perched along the Mississippi River lost political and economic power to the “piney woods counties” of eastern and northern Mississippi — a testament to this regional struggle is that the state capital moved back and forth from Natchez to Washington twice, and then to Jackson, indicating political realignments in the region.⁸ In addition to intra-racial class antagonisms within Mississippi’s white community Cartwright stared down empirical evidence from the 1840 Census reports that verified black advance at the North and the South during the 1830s.

⁶ Cartwright divided “*Cholera Infantum*” according to what he determined to be seven different pathological states of the system. For Harvard citations see Marshall, “Samuel A. Cartwright and States Rights Medicine,” 4-5; for the citation on Cartwright’s contribution as a diagnostician and pathologist, see Eugene Fauntleroy Cordell, “The Medical annals of Maryland, prepared for the centennial of 1799-1899,” *Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of the State of Maryland* (Baltimore, 1903), 82; see also A.M.A., “American Medical Necrology; On Miss.,” 345-348

⁷ Marshall, “Samuel A. Cartwright and States Rights Medicine,” 4

⁸ Ariela Gross, *Double Character: Slavery and Mastery in the Antebellum Southern Courtroom*, (Princeton University Press, 2000, University of Georgia Press, 2006), 27

Cartwright's concern for managing Free Blacks' behavior coincided with a local fear of black delinquency in Natchez. After Nat Turner's Revolt in August of 1831, that December Mississippi passed a state law that declared that in order to maintain their freedom Free Blacks must prove their integrity and "good character."⁹ Cartwright's concern for black mental stability and Mississippi's legislative interest in blacks' "good character" evolved from a common matrix of assumptions and anxieties about the risk of black people, slave and free, thinking and acting independently of white rule. Cartwright hoped that his scientific theories about "Negro Peculiarities" and "diseases" of freedom would make direct impressions on local law and custom that he believed to be buckling beneath the weight of white ignorance. Cartwright believed that most whites misunderstood the basic nature of "the Negro"—instead of negotiating with slave laborers or compromising with "mulattoes" and Free Blacks about their character, Cartwright urged that Southerners should reassert their actual authority over blacks as "machines."¹⁰

Two tributaries fed Cartwright's stream of consciousness on black destiny, one liberal the other conservative. The notion that blacks were inferior to whites carried the imprimatur of Thomas Jefferson and his colleague Benjamin Rush. Although their politics differed widely — Rush was an avowed abolitionist whereas Jefferson was a notorious slaveholder — both men influenced Cartwright with their attempts to blend Enlightenment principles of the 'rights of man' with the nascent science of race; both Founders placed tentative strictures on black physiology and psychology. By the 1830s Cartwright began to perceive that what Jefferson and Rush had taken to be an anomaly in Africans'

⁹ Anderson Hutchinson, comp. *Code of Mississippi, 1798-1848*, (Jackson: State Printers, 1848), 514; This law was cited ten years later in the *Natchez Free Trader*: "Agreeably to the provisions of the act of December, 20 1831, still in full force, no Negro or slave is permitted to be manumitted or set free, and still remain in the State, without the special action of the legislature of this State;" see *Natchez, Mississippi Free Trader*, May 13, 1841

¹⁰ Cartwright, "Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans," *De Bow's Review* 25:1 (1858): 48

physiology had become a problem in the “Free Negro’s” behavior.¹¹

New data from the 1840 Census exhibited the phenomenon of black freedom as a vivid statistical picture. It revealed that Mississippi’s Free Black population had swelled by 163 percent since 1830. In 1840 the number of Free Blacks in Mississippi totaled 1,366 and the majority lived in the urban area of Natchez.¹² Reflecting on the period Cartwright reasoned that “The white population of the southern states have no other alternative but to keep them [black people] in slavery, or to drive them out, wage a war of extermination against them, or go out themselves and leave their fair land to be converted into a free negro pandemonium.”¹³ Cartwright did not make a mere observation — by the late 1830s he pruned observations into arguments.

Cartwright’s Trip Abroad: The Turning Point

Cartwright expressed disappointment in Mississippi legislators’ unwillingness to re-institute the pre-1834 medical licensing system and limit alternative medical practitioners’ ability to operate in Natchez; but once his adopted state embraced “gradual abolition” and formed its own chapter of the American Colonization Society, Cartwright shifted his focus away from the composition and authority

¹¹ Both Rush and Jefferson shared the notion that Africans originated in disease and Jefferson sneered that because of physiological and mental deficiencies blacks had never proven their worth in literature, science nor art. See Benjamin Rush, “Observations Intended to Favour a Supposition that the Black Color (as it is called) of Negroes is derived from the Leprosy,” read to the American Philosophical Society in July, 1797 and published in the *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Old Series, 4 (1799): 289-297; see also Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia by Thomas Jefferson, with Related Documents*, ed. David Waldstreicher (Boston and New York: Bedford, St. Martin’s 2002), 175-181

¹² 84 percent of all Free Blacks in Mississippi lived in the two counties adjacent to Natchez. Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South*, (New York: The New Press, 1974), on the concentration of Free Blacks in Natchez, 251, and on the increase in the number of Free Blacks, 136

¹³ Cartwright, “The South’s Position in the Union—Emancipation, Abolition, Natural Law of Slavery, Physical Characteristic of Negroes, Fatal Results of Substituting White Labor for Black at the South,” an essay in Vol. 3 of “J. D. B. De Bow, Professor of Political Economy, Etc, in the University of Louisiana,” *The Industrial Resources, Etc. of the Southern and Western States: Historical and Statistical Sketches of the Different States and Cities of The Union—Statistics of the United States Commerce and Manufactures, From the Earliest Periods, Compared with other Leading Powers—The results of the Different Census Returns since 1790, and the Returns of the Census of 1850, On Population, Agriculture and General Industry, Etc, Embracing a View of Their Commerce, Agriculture, Manufactures, Internal Improvements, Slave and Free Labor, Slavery Institutions, Products, Etc. of the South. In Three volumes*, (New York and Charleston, 1853). For above citation, see Vol. 3:57

of his profession and onto the regulation and physiology of Free Blacks. Cartwright worked as an assistant editor to Colonel Andrew Marschalk during the time that Mississippi's famed printer involved himself in an imbroglio with Prince Ibrahima in 1828.¹⁴ This means that Cartwright had been aware of the *national* colonization society's efforts to export Free Blacks from their American homes. But then he watched during the 1830s as "gradual emancipation" turned from a feasible and expeditious quest that his hero Jefferson had admired into an embarrassing and anxiety-ridden local issue involving John Quincy Adams, who Cartwright did not admire. When the now *local* branch of the Mississippi Colonization Society waged a decade-long legal campaign, the "Mississippi in Africa" project that threatened to deport hundreds of recently manumitted slaves, these home-grown abolitionists wrecked finally the stability Cartwright experienced when he first moved to Natchez in 1822. The 1831 Mississippi law which intended to curb the enthusiasm of local Free Blacks by deporting them from the state had proved just as ineffective as the local physician's legal attempts to regulate the enthusiasm of and for the alternative medical practitioners. I propose that Cartwright's motivation for thinking about Free Black activity in relationship to mental illness began when he considered the role of blacks in Natchez and the gradual emancipation of Mississippi's slaves.¹⁵

I demonstrate here in chapter one that Dr. Cartwright's eighteen-month journey overseas during 1836 - 1837 should be seen as the turning point in his thinking on black physiology and freedom. Before this time Cartwright wrote about biology and disease concepts in race-neutral terms.

¹⁴ Marschalk consulted with the Sultan of Morocco and delivered to him a letter Ibrahima had written; shortly thereafter the Adams Administration authorized Marschalk to purchase "Prince" and arrange his exportation. See Terry Alford, *Prince Among Slaves*, 30th Anniversary Ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Allan D. Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spiritual Struggles*, (New York: Routledge Press, 1997); for evidence that Cartwright worked alongside Marschalk at the time of this debacle see a bound manuscript volume containing "cash accounts of James Burke, early Natchez publisher and agent of the *Mississippi Statesman*, under contract with Samuel A. Cartwright and Andrew Marschalk, 1826-1831," in the Montgomery (Joseph Addison and Family) Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries, MF 6061, Series B, Part 4, Reel 10

¹⁵ In chapter 3 I show how Cartwright's situation as a bankrupt physician contrasted with the Free Black caste in Natchez that increased steadily during the 1830s.

However while in London and Paris he conducted research that led him to consider biomedical differences as the basis for race-based slavery. By the end of his time in Europe Cartwright dismissed any impulse to differentiate between individual blacks. He went on to argue that seeing black people as individuals with varying capacities misled whites to declare erroneously that some Africans were fit to be free. This alleged lapse in judgment then forced whites to elaborate reasons to exempt certain blacks from the rule of black slavery. Cartwright understood that if one admitted the premise of 'black freedom' by suggesting, as colonization did, that some blacks could thrive in freedom elsewhere, it would then require slave-holders to elaborate an argument that would justify holding blacks as slaves here. Glimpsing what he perceived to be a blind spot in southern thinking, Cartwright worked fastidiously to share the horror he imagined in black freedom. After the financial panic of 1837 forced his return to the United States, instead of succumbing to the growing call for "immediate abolition" Cartwright launched into a lifelong campaign to classify all blacks as subhuman and therefore inferior automatically. Cartwright warned his constituents that "All observation proves" that "these people's pleasures are not so much those of reflection, as of sense."¹⁶ He cited Edmund Burke and used Burke's distinction between the capacity for intellectual reflection and the capacity for physical sensation to etch a line of demarcation between blacks and whites.

Fresh from France, Cartwright concluded "the differences in organization, on which these particulars depend, are so evident to the anatomist, that in Paris, we found the *savants* denying the common origins of man."¹⁷ Cartwright had now inculcated the teachings of Voltaire and began to take seriously the philosopher's assertions that blacks were created as a separate species. Voltaire wrote that "Leurs yeux ronds, leur nez épaté, leurs lèvres toujours grosses, leurs oreilles différemment figurées, la laine de leur tête, la mesure même de leur intelligence, mettent entre eux et les autres espèces

¹⁶ [Cartwright], "Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian," *Southern Quarterly Review* 2: 4 (Oct., 1842): 328

¹⁷ Ibid.

d’hommes des différences prodigieuses.” (“Their round eyes, their flattened nose, their lips which are always large, their differently shaped ears, the wool of their head, that very measure of their intelligence, place prodigious differences between them and the other species of men.”)¹⁸ Voltaire argued more than once that blacks and whites were vastly different and not even the same species.¹⁹

He argued for instance, that

[E]t on peut dire que si leur intelligence n’est pas d’une autre espèce que notre entendement, elle est fort inférieure. Ils ne sont pas capables d’une grande attention; ils combinent peu, et ne paraissent faits ni pour les avantages ni pour les abus de notre philosophie. (And one could say that if their intelligence is not of another species than ours, then it is greatly inferior. They are not capable of paying much attention; they mingle very little, and they do not appear to be made either for the advantages or the abuses of our philosophy.)²⁰

Cartwright followed Voltaire's lead and set out to isolate all black people under the category “subhuman.” Unlike Voltaire, who disagreed with enslaving blacks, Cartwright fought against the legal notion of granting privileges to a single class of black people based on caste or color and claimed that his European research vindicated this belief.

Speaking professionally Cartwright revealed that a “team of medical men” had made the trip to Europe with him in order to investigate human evolution. He wrote with humble affect that, “Conscious of our deficiencies, we have not come up to this subject trusting to our own feeble powers, but have taken the trouble to visit London, Rome and Paris, and gather from the store-houses of science, everything we could find to assist us.”²¹ Cartwright wrote that he and the other medical men became impressed particularly with the writings of “Professor Broc.” He claimed “The Royal

¹⁸ Voltaire, *Essai sur les moeurs*, Intro.; see William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter With Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530-1880*, (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press 2003), on Voltaire 63, 67, 73, 84-86 on polygenism 12-13, 84-86

¹⁹ In addition to Cohen, For a helpful discussion, of the French view of polygenism, see Madeleine Dobie, *Trading Places: Colonization and Slavery in Eighteenth Century French Culture*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 298

²⁰ Voltaire, *Essai sur les moeurs*, κκφ. CXLI; Cohen, *The French Encounter With Africans*, 84

²¹ W.F. Bynum provides insight into this expressed insecurity by arguing that “European travel and education were partial remedies for the cultural inferiority experienced by many American intellectuals and professional people, particularly those living on the Eastern seaboard.” See W.F. Bynum, *Science and The Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 8th printing, 2006), 114; for Cartwright citation, see [Cartwright], “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 2:4 (Oct., 1842): 321

Academy of Paris awarded a premium to Professor Broc for his anatomical and physiological researches touching the question of the common origin of man.”²² It is possible that Cartwright refers here to Pierre Paul Broca (1824-1880). Although “Broca” became noted for his contribution to cranial anthropometry and was a specialist in physical anthropology Paul Broca did not enter medical school until shortly after the period for which I have evidence that Cartwright was in Paris in 1836.²³ On the other hand since Cartwright published the editorial in 1842 and utilized the collective voice, “we,” it is possible that he incorporated more recent sources of Broca’s contribution to anthropology and evolutionary theory in order to enrich his article. Like Cartwright, the “French School” stressed intensive observation and a meticulous analysis of the facts of the disease. It was the hands-on orientation of “French Medicine” that led Cartwright to relocate to Europe for such an extended period.²⁴

By the time Cartwright visited Paris in 1836 France had become the Mecca of medical knowledge. During the 1830s over a thousand medical students went to Paris and remained at length to take advantage of the opportunity to study internal medicine and surgery. John Harley Warner elaborates best the case that Parisian medical ideas influenced heavily the thinking of physicians in antebellum America.²⁵ Spending time in Paris helped medical students and practicing physicians alike

²² For Cartwright on “Professor Broc,” see [Cartwright], “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” 328

²³ Broca entered medical school in Paris in 1841 at the age of 17.

²⁴ John Harley Warner, *Against the Spirit of System: The French Impulse in Nineteenth-Century American Medicine*, (Princeton, 1998)

²⁵ For a detailed examination of the American physicians’ experiences studying in the French Hospitals, see Warner, *Against the Spirit of System*; and Warner, “Paradigm Lost or Paradise Declining? American Physicians and the ‘Dead End’ of the Paris Clinical School,” in Caroline Hannawat and Ann La Berge, eds., *Constructing Paris Medicine*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), 337-383; and Warner, “American Physicians in London during the Age of Paris Medicine,” in Roy Porter and Vivian Nutton, eds., *The History of Medical Education in Britain*, (Rudopoi, 1995), 341-365; and also Warner “Remembering Paris: Memory and the American Disciples of French Medicine in the Nineteenth Century,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 55 (1991): 301-325; For authors whose work range from philosophy and medical ethics to sociology and history who share concern for the influence of French medicine during the period and the long-lasting effects of accepting the Parisian methods, see Michel Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception*, (Routledge, 1989) and Erwin H. Ackerknecht, *A Short History of Medicine*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1982)

to forge an identity of being modern and up-to-date in their medical training.²⁶ Given the French School's focus on empiricism in medical training and hands-on investigation, American physicians appreciated their scientific approach. Warner offers that the Parisian experience provided Americans with incomparable access to practical clinical learning at the bedside and the dissection table.²⁷ He puts forth that "the most valued core of their studies in Paris" was to engage in private study as it provided access to living and dead bodies for experimentation and analysis—a practice frowned upon in Britain and the United States. Traveling abroad provided physicians also with an opportunity to utilize the latest medical equipment like the stethoscope and the microscope.²⁸

Autopsy-based evidence led Broca to a foundation for his belief in the localization of articulated language in certain regions of the brain.²⁹ Broca's methodology reflected Cartwright and the "French School's" shared focus on the importance of autopsy and vivisection to medical discovery. Since the Parisian physicians believed that vivisection (cutting into or dissecting a live body) and autopsy (cutting into a dead body) were primary sources of medical knowledge it made sense that the French would seek out Cartwright — and Cartwright the French — as a validating source. While in Paris, the French awarded Cartwright on his treatment of Yellow Fever in Mississippi and adopted his recommendations.³⁰ The *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* remarked that when Cartwright visited Europe in 1836-1837, "having acquired an ample competence," that he "was cordially received by the medical faculty of the principal cities." Cartwright received the greatest attention in France where "his works had gone before him, and had been adopted in practice." The *NOMSJ* added, "his

²⁶ John Harley Warner "Science, Healing and the Physician's Identity: A Problem of Professorial Character in Nineteenth Century America, *Clio Medica* 22 (1991); and Warner, "Science, Healing and the Character of the Physician, 1820-1860," in Warner and Janet A. Tighe, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Medicine and Public Health*, (Boston, 2011), 143-149

²⁷ Warner, *Against the Spirit of System*, 25

²⁸ Warner, *Against the Spirit of System*, 101

²⁹ Paul Broca, "Remarks on the Seat of the Faculty of Articulated Language, Following an Observation of Amphemia (Loss of Speech)" *Bulletin de Société Anatomique* 6 (1861): 330-357

³⁰ Mary Louise Marshall, "Samuel A. Cartwright and States Rights Medicine," *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 93:2 (August 1940): 6

writings had always attracted much attention from their peculiar style and originality.”³¹ The French shared Cartwright’s investment in obtaining medical knowledge from observations of actual physical bodies and since the autopsy remained illegal in the United States, the French government recognized and rewarded him. From Cartwright’s willingness to conduct autopsies as well as his medical vision in the treatment of yellow fever, the French exhibited their appreciation for his courage to deploy unconventional methods in his descriptions of and treatment for diseases.

The Value of Dissection

At age 44 Cartwright set out to re-define what it meant to be a physician. His writings tackled the shift from old forms of rational, systematic medicine to a science inspired by Francis Bacon’s call for observation and experimentation as a means of rational explanation.³² Instead of being satisfied with medical models that regurgitated Hippocrates’ and later Galen’s notion of the ‘four bodily humors,’ Cartwright combined Andreas Vesalius’ influential work on anatomy, William Harvey’s findings on the circulation of the blood and Benjamin Rush’s inculcation of Newtonian dynamics and sought out to become a medical pioneer in his own right.³³ Cartwright used the postmortem examination as a means to establish the evolution and workings of disease processes, to observe the physical effects of disease or to determine the cause of death. There is significance in the fact that the

³¹ “Dr. Cartwright,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 19:3 (Nov. 1866); cited in “American Medical Necrology: Report on Mississippi,” *Publications of the American Medical Association*, (1873), 347

³² For an exploration of Francis Bacon’s great influence in the South and on the development of Southern attitudes toward science, see Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Ante-bellum American Religious Thought*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1977)

³³ Southern publications heralded the achievements of the ancients as well as those of the Old World and physicians cited men like Galen, Vesalius and Harvey often in works ranging from medicine to anthropology to physiology, approaches to knowledge which they viewed as anchored in the classic texts. Cartwright published alongside and shared interest in this trans-temporal network of ideas. See Henry Renshaw, “Physic and Physicians,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 4:7 (July 1843): Galen is mentioned on 196, twice on 197 and on 204, Vesalius on 197, and Harvey on 107 and 205; Also see “On the Unity of the Human Race,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 10:20 (Oct 1854): 273-304, Harvey cited on 280; see also W.E.B., “The Motive Power of the Blood,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 20:10 (Oct. 1854): 631-635, Harvey cited 631-632; see also [“A South Carolinian”], “Slavery and Political Economy, Part 1,” *De Bow’s Review* 21:4 (Oct. 1856):331-349, citing Harvey as a kind of a litmus test or Ockham’s razor, a metaphor for reason 333

term autopsy is derived from the Greek word “*autopsia*” (autos opso = “self-seen”) which means “the act of seeing for oneself.” Cartwright placed great value in Francis Bacon’s call for the need to distinguish between idols of the mind and actual knowledge derived from first-hand observations of actual things.³⁴

After Vesalius published his *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* in 1543 it made it possible for physicians to distinguish “abnormal anatomy” from normal anatomy. When medicine was still studied in Art Departments Renaissance artists like Michelangelo conducted autopsies in order to inform the field of medicine. Leonardo da Vinci dissected thirty corpses in his quest to determine truths about the human body. Eighteenth and nineteenth century attitudes toward the autopsy have its origin in this period, as it was Frederick II of Italy who made provisions that the bodies of two executed criminals be made available to medical school at Salerno to be used in instructing physicians.³⁵

Just as Vesalius’ anatomy textbook shifted attention into the deeper structures within the body cavity, Giovanni Morgagni took the practice of dissection a step further and encouraged the study of actual patients over learning from images in books. When Morgagni published *On the Seats and Causes of Diseases as Investigated by Anatomy* in 1761 he demonstrated anatomical findings that he had culled from first-hand observations of over seven hundred patients. Bynum argues that Morgagni’s *Seats and Causes of Disease* (1761) revolutionized the study of the organ in the same way that Marie Bichat’s *Treatises on the Membranes* (1800) focused medical practitioners’ attention on the tissues — both established a new and essential unit for thinking about “normal” bodily function and disease.³⁶

³⁴ Cartwright cited Bacon as an avatar in the title of his only published monograph assembled from his writings on “Canaan Identified as Ethiopian,” see Cartwright, *Essays, Being Inductions Drawn from the Baconian Philosophy Proving the Truth of the Bible and the Justice and Benevolence of the Decree Dooming Canaan to be Servant of Servants: And answering the Question of Voltaire: “On demande quell droit des estrangers tells que les Juifs avaiant sur le pays de Canaan?”*, a Series of Letters to the Rev. William Winans (Vidalia, Louisiana, 1843), 12

³⁵ Stanley Finger, *Minds Behind the Brain: A History of the Pioneers and Their Discoveries*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 56

³⁶ Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, on Morgagni, 99-100; and on Marie François Xavier Bichat, 32

An internationally awarded medical pioneer, Cartwright dedicated himself to explanatory schemes that acknowledged but then went beyond the traditional humoral system. Although he advocated the then-popular practices of ‘blood-letting,’ ‘blistering’ and ‘cupping’ which were based in part on Galen’s identification of blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm, Cartwright’s medical thinking reflected Rush’s attempts to update Greek thought with concepts of in-take and out-go from Newtonian physics.³⁷ This integrative spirit enabled Cartwright — who honed in on mental techniques— to modulate his medical therapies from one that shocked the system to one that stimulated it.³⁸ A characteristic part of Cartwright’s rhetorical strategy was to claim the capacity to identify abstract laws and then the prescience to visualize those laws operating in human hosts. Motivating concepts through aesthetics became a manifest component of Cartwright’s scientific approach. His conception of science shifted from natural history, description and classification to natural philosophy “as causal analysis.”³⁹

The value of dissection should be seen against the backdrop of the evolving science of anatomy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By Cartwright’s time the authority of the ancients had dwindled and Rush’s embrace of Newtonian principles gave newer physicians the perspective that they were involved in a practice built up upon natural laws. Cartwright’s own proclivity for dissections and his innovative spirit led him to challenge prevailing beliefs about how the blood circulated in the human body. During the 1840s he put forth that it was the lungs and not the heart that circulated the blood. He spent the early 1850s elaborating Emma Willard’s theory on the “motive power of blood”

³⁷ See note #36 in Chapter 1 above; also Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, 17

³⁸ By 1853 Cartwright surmised that “the erroneous theory, that the nervous system is the fountain of life, has caused the old practice of bleeding, vomiting and purging for concussions of the brain and severe shocks of the body, to be abandoned, and the stimulating of the nervous system, to produce reaction, to be substituted for it.” See Cartwright, “Decisive Experiment,” *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 48 (1853): 477

³⁹ For a discussion of the effect of visual and artistic thinking on Cartwright, see Chapter 6 of this dissertation. On the shift in description and classification to causal analysis, see M. Norton Wise, “Making Visible,” *FOCUS on Science and Visual Culture*, *Isis* 97:1 (2006): 75-79

and during this period he performed vivisections to prove his theory, even claiming to revive dead animals after having severed their spinal cords. To her great credit as a female physician working in a noticeably male profession, Willard gained great fame for her biomedical theories of the circulation of blood.⁴⁰

Cartwright's own experiments on blood circulation with alligators came after his 1851-1852 experiments on the lung capacities of slaves and gained him international acclaim.⁴¹ The fact that Cartwright severed the spinal cords of alligators in his experiments earned him a visit from the prestigious English physician Marshall Hall. Cartwright's work is rarely discussed in concert with neurology, but it was Dr. Hall's discovery of the "reflex arc" that advanced neurophysiology and made him one of the founders of neuroscience.⁴² The "reflex-arc" is described as "the integrated, functional unity of a sensory and motor nerve, with connections in the spinal cord." The notion was that by testing various reflex functions, such as the knee-jerk response, a physician could gain insight into neurological diseases if indeed the reflexes were diminished or overactive.⁴³ When Cartwright claimed that after cutting the spinal cord of the animal that he was able to sustain life in his subjects Dr. Hall traveled to Natchez in 1853-1854 to witness Cartwright's unusual results personally.⁴⁴ Hall was drawn

⁴⁰ For a contemporary review see Emma Willard, "Treatise on the Motive Powers Which Produce the Circulation of Blood" *Southern Literary Messenger* 12 (July 1846): 453-465; for a contemporary biography of Willard which includes correspondence from Cartwright complimenting the "madam" on her medical innovation and sharing at length his findings, see John Lord, *The Life of Emma Willard*, (Applewood's Education Series, 1873), 331-337

⁴¹ For Cartwright's use of the "Spirometer" see Cartwright, "Dr. Cartwright on the Philosophy of the Negro Constitution," *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 8 (1852): 198-199; for a recent discussion of Cartwright's use of the "Spirometer," see Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 201-204; also Dea H. Boster, *African American Slavery and Disability: Bodies, Property and Power in the Antebellum South, 1800-1860*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 21-22

⁴² Marshall Hall attended medical school at Edinburgh University and later became elected to the Royal Society where he used his research in neurophysiology and the spinal reflex to "set himself up as a kind of specialist in nervous diseases, particularly of women." Bynum, *Science and The Practice of Medicine*, 110

⁴³ Sir William Gowers, *A Manual of Diseases of the Nervous System*, 3rd ed., Vol. 1, (London, 1899), 21, figure 2

⁴⁴ On an early (1826) instance in which Marshall Hall and Cartwright published essays in the same journal, both of which reflected studies of autopsies and the circulation of blood, see S.A. Cartwright, MD. "James Annesley on the Effects of Calomel in Indian Diseases, and on the Mucous Membrane of the Stomach and Bowels, Essay on Mercury, & c.," *The Medico-Chirurgical Review and Journal of Practical Medicine* 4:8 new series, (April 1826): 328-340; and following Cartwright's article in that same issue, Marshall Hall, "Practical Essays, *The Medico-Chirurgical Review and Journal of*

to Cartwright's work on the blood system and to Cartwright's partner, Dr. Dower's interest in the nervous system; the two physicians combined their efforts and published their remarkable results.⁴⁵

Detailing her analysis of Hall's interest in Cartwright, Diana Manuel writes "Cartwright appealed for a rejection of the prevailing Greek doctrine which supposed that life with all its attributes was located in the brain and nerves. He wanted this to be replaced with the Hebrew doctrine of Moses which held that life with its attributes of sensation, volition, mobility and intelligence, existed in the blood."⁴⁶ She argues perceptively that Cartwright held the nervous system subordinate to the blood system that was powered by air without assistance from the heart.⁴⁷ Manuel attributes Marshall Hall's late interest in learning Hebrew to Cartwright's focus on the language as a basis for physiological knowledge. She posits "It could have been Cartwright's Mosaic interpretation of physiology together with his own religious interests which re-kindled Hall's motivation to take up the study of Hebrew while in Rome from 1854 – 1855."⁴⁸ Cartwright had discerned something glowing in the Hebrew language that related to physiology, and he hoped to appeal to physicians to re-think the philosophical basis of their subjects.⁴⁹

The demonstrated scientific value of dissection increased also the perceived need to acquire human bodies for experimentation—dead and alive. Daniel Garrison argues that, "By demonstrating the errors of Galen in public anatomies, and insisting that medical students test the facts of human

Practical Medicine 4:8 new series, (April 1826): 341, "Essay on Intestinal Irritation," 342; "On the Effects of Loss of Blood," 351; "On Exhaustion," 356; On a discussion comparing posthumously Halls work to Cartwright, see "Diseases of the Nervous Function," *The Homeopathic Theory and Practice of Medicine* 2, edited by Erastus Edgerton Marcy, Franklin W. Lunt, (1868): 622; On Hall's work on the nervous system and his interest in Cartwright which prompted Hall's trip to the U.S., see Diana E. Manuel, *Marshall Hall, (1790 – 1857): Science and Medicine in Early Victorian Society*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 275-78, 304

⁴⁵ For Cartwright's cumulative statement on his results from alligator experiments, see S.A. Cartwright, "Motive Power of the Blood Proved by Experiments on Four Crocodiles — one Brought to Life," *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 48 (1853): 433 and in that same issue, "Decisive Experiment," 474-479; again in the same issue editors re-printed an article from the New Orleans *Delta* detailing Cartwright and another physician, Dr. Dowler's experimental work, "More Alligator Experiments," *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, *ibid.*, 423

⁴⁶ Manuel, *Marshall Hall, (1790 – 1857)*, 278

⁴⁷ On the movement from shocking to stimulating the nervous system, see Cartwright, "Decisive Experiment," 477

⁴⁸ On his Hebrew-inspired view of human physiology, see Cartwright, "The Motive Power of Blood," 436-37

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; Manuel, *Marshall Hall, (1790 – 1857)*, 278

anatomy with their own hands and eyes, Vesalius put the study of science and medicine on a new course that led to the discovery of the circulation of blood by William Harvey in 1628.”⁵⁰ However the public had always frowned upon dissections, and the theme of doctors performing autopsies suggested notorious ends. Having exhibited the value of exploring the body cavity of human cadavers, Vesalius’ *On the Fabric of the Human Body* also stimulated a high-priced market for dissectible bodies.

This new need created a great conflict between physicians and the public. Doctors argued that knowledge of anatomy was necessary “to understand the functions of the body in health and disease,” but the public rebuked the practice of dissection as “unsavory, associated with the fates of condemned criminals and encouraging ribaldry and loose morals among medical students.”⁵¹ The medical writer Galen lived in the 2nd century AD and his culture forbade the dissection of human cadavers. This meant that the ‘humoral system’ which held sway for so long in the Western medical imagination — for nearly two thousand years — based itself primarily on dissections of common quadrupeds like pigs, dogs or cattle, as well as the Barbary ape.⁵² W.F. Bynum indicates that in nineteenth century England “Persistent difficulties in supply [of cadavers] led to the lucrative business of body-snatching and grave-robbing, linking anatomy teachers directly to the underworld.” The poor feared such practices the most but the working class “solid citizens” felt that “no fresh grave was inviolate” from “ruffians” who could “sell the valuables to pawn brokers and the bodies to anatomists.”⁵³ In the United States the state of Massachusetts issued autopsy as punishment in the 1805 case of James Halligan and Dominic

⁵⁰ Daniel Garrison, translation and commentary to Andreas Vesalius’ *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, [*On the Fabric of the Human Body*], Northwestern University

⁵¹ Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, 12

⁵² For the History of the autopsy and its reliance on non-humans like goats, foxes, sheep, monkeys, etc., see, Stanley Finger, *Minds Behind the Brain: A History of the Pioneers and Their Discoveries*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 88; Daniel Garrison, translation and commentary to Andreas Vesalius’ *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, [*On the Fabric of the Human Body*], Northwestern University

⁵³ Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, 12

Dale — in addition to their public hanging they were ordered to “Anatomization.”⁵⁴ The autopsy involved disassembling parts and then observing those parts, separate and together, in order to determine consistent or inconsistent internal structures. The interior view aided physicians to discern the functions and relationships of separate components.

The viewpoint toward autopsies in France differed categorically from that of other nations. Although France had a history of scientific conservatism the Paris School’s advocacy of exploratory postmortem examinations came from a rejection of that conservatism during the French Revolution.⁵⁵ Things shifted as the Bastille was stormed and in 1790 Pierre-Joseph Desault (1738-1795) made anatomical studies routine at the Hospice of the College of Surgery and in the Hotel Dieu in Paris. Desault stressed the importance of direct observation of actual entities, not speculation from abstract concepts. In 1789 the hospital authorities backed Desault’s practices against formal protests from the nurses and religious groups who lobbied that experimentation, autopsy and “the indignity of disrobing for an examination” offended medical ethics. Desault’s insistence on clinical practices and Philippe Pinel’s focus on the hospital as the source of medical knowledge created a turning point in the history of the teaching hospital.⁵⁶ Whereas the French had arranged for the availability of bodies for autopsy by law, Britain and the United States still frowned upon the custom.

In addition to finding vindication in the French “*savants*” testimony on African origins, Cartwright used his European journey to make ethnographic comparisons between the diseases and conditions of the white British poor and those of black slaves.⁵⁷ Cartwright focused specifically on the treatment of British paupers. When Parliament passed the “Anatomy Act” of 1832 which legislated

⁵⁴ The term “anatomization” was derived from Greek *anatomiā*, from ana- “up” and temnein “to cut,” just as the term “dissection” is taken from the Latin *dissecare*, “to cut to pieces.”

⁵⁵ The Paris Faculty stood in opposition to Vesalius in the sixteenth century and also opposed Harvey in the 17th century and remained one of the “bastions of Galenism.” See Bynum, *Science and The Practice of Medicine*, 6

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 9

⁵⁷ [Cartwright], “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 2:4 (October 1842): 351

that paupers' bodies would be used for experimentation it incited public terror and Cartwright seized on that vulnerability.⁵⁸ The outbreak of cholera in 1832 is what led British officials to pass the "Anatomy Act" requiring the state to hand over dead paupers for anatomical dissection by medical students. The Act ruptured public trust and incited rebellion against the physicians, as citizens now feared that hospitals and doctors viewed them as raw material. This outraged the British public, and for good reason. Statistics from seven cities show that the mortality rate among those receiving treatment at hospitals ran twice as high as cholera victims who elected to be treated from home.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, in the French and British cases the state legitimized provisions to supply bodies for autopsy by medical practitioners, but no such provisions existed in the United States.

British Accusation of "Body-Snatching" Free Blacks into the Slave South

Despite the apparent truth of the matter a writer at the *Southern Quarterly Review* launched an attack on the British accusation that American medical schools — and particularly the port of Charleston — benefited from an illegal trade in cadavers. The belief that southern life and culture was being reported improperly abroad led this scientific-minded reviewer to criticize the recent publication of J.S. Buckingham, *America, Historical, Statistic and Descriptive*. Buckingham, an abolitionist, had visited the South in 1841 and returned to London to share his view. Buckingham anticipated the probability that his work might create controversy:

My apology for these quotations, if any indeed be necessary, it is apprehension that, if such statements were made by me of the condition of society here, without an exhibition of the authorities for the facts, it

⁵⁸ Michael Durey and Ruth Richardson focus on the importance of the fact that the British Anatomy Act of 1832 made corpses readily available for dissection during the same time that the Asiatic cholera became prominent that same year. On this issue specifically, see Ruth Richardson, "Trading Assassins' and the Licensing of Anatomy," in French and Wear, *British Medicine*, 74-91; also Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*, (Harmondsworth, 1989); see also Michael Durey, *The Return of the Plague*, (Dublin, 1979)

⁵⁹ Bynum, *Science and The Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, 75

would be thought an exaggerated picture, and I should be open to the imputation of having overcharged the colouring.⁶⁰

In contrast to southerners' accusation of his prejudice, Buckingham expressed interest in an objective demonstration of the facts of black slavery. Buckingham also informed that this was squarely an American problem:

But it is only necessary to consult American authorities, and not English ones, to show that recklessness and fraud are far more prevalent in this community than in most others of a mercantile character in Europe, and that an inordinate thirst after gain, and a determination to acquire it by any means that are practicable, is one of the chief causes of this evil.⁶¹

Buckingham critiqued what the New America had degraded into — a place where only successful white men could claim the entire triad of personal, civic and political Freedom. Joyce Appleby describes that for the first generation that grew to maturity after independence, “a kind of closure about collective meaning had taken place.” Appleby offers that during the first third of the nineteenth century a “portentous development” took place where “the connection between prosperity and democracy sealed the American imagination against a critical stance towards either...” Since slave labor produced much higher profits than free labor and farm proprietors, Americans had developed blindness to their own gluttony.⁶² Buckingham felt that it took an Englishman to point out enslaving others meant one's sense of prosperity had outstripped the interest in democracy.

The anonymous reviewer for the *SQR* demurred. In doing so he revealed a reverence for what counted as good science and condescended that “The title of Mr. Buckingham's book is more sonorous than apt.” He critiqued that “We may concede, that it is ‘statistic and descriptive,’—since the author is anxious to have it so regarded—but it certainly can lay little or no claim to the dignity of history.” The reviewer focused on what he felt was Buckingham's pretension: “We cannot award him the praise of

⁶⁰ “Review: *America, Historical, Statistic and Descriptive*,” By J.S. Buckingham, Esq., in 2 Volumes, New York: Harper and Brothers, 82 Cliff Street, 1841” *Southern Quarterly Review* 1:1 (January 1842): 116

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 5-6

having been a very philosophical observer; and his remarks are, upon the whole, trite and commonplace.” Instead “his egotism and self-esteem—qualities which he shares largely, in common with other British travelers in America—are everywhere apparent.” More critically he wrote that “We hear the words of a master enunciating the law, but we do not find his title to authority, in the power of a superior mind, grappling with new subjects, and findings, in the elements of a new social organization, grounds of sympathy and hope, and topics of bold and original speculations.” As a devout Southerner the reviewer kept alive the view that Britain was the enemy of the United States and quipped that “It is certainly necessary that Mr. Buckingham, having visited the United States, should write a book upon the country, because every British traveler who comes among us does so, and because it would not have answered for Mr. Buckingham to be singular.” After assaulting the British author for his “pecuniary point of view,” the reviewer accused him — and by extension other British abolitionists — of not pursuing moral correctness but instead abiding by the “maxim,” “Put money in thy purse.”⁶³

Nations carry the capacity to judge other nations and Buckingham’s most punitive claim against the South was that its intelligentsia engaged in the practice of body-snatching. Americans had opted to abort all moral and intellectual consideration in order to support an economically driven racial regime that negated and destroyed black people for profit. Buckingham wrote, “Another instance...of the habit of treating with levity incidents which, in any other country, would excite feelings of indignation and horror may be given. It has been discovered that of late it was a common practice in New York to ship off the bodies of dead Negroes, male and female, for various ports, but especially to the South, to the medical students, for dissection.”⁶⁴ Buckingham’s criticism provoked empathy from the British

⁶³ “Review: *America, Historical, Statistic and Descriptive*,” 220

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 229

public recently subjected to the “Anatomy Act” of 1832.⁶⁵ In the American context Buckingham charged that, “to elude suspicion, these dead [“Negro”] bodies were put up in salt and brine, and packed in the same kinds of casks as those in which salted provisions are exported from hence.” The case was not singular: “A third or fourth discovery of this description was made during the month of January; and the following is the manner in which it is headed and described in the papers of the day.”

With an eye to objectivity Buckingham reprinted his source:⁶⁶

“MORE PORK FOR THE SOUTH.

Yesterday morning it was discovered that a barrel, which had been put into the office of the Charleston packet line—store of George Buckley, No. 88 South Street—for purposes of being shipped to Charleston, contained the bodies of two dead negroes. The cask and content were sent to the police office, and placed in the dead house for the coroner’s inspection but as he had no opportunity to hold an inquest on them yesterday, the particulars of the affair have not yet transpired.”

“The verdict of the inquest, subsequently given, was, that the negroes had died of disease; but no farther inquiry appears to have been made into the matter, as it were altogether beneath the notice of the white men to trace out these traders in the dead bodies of the blacks.”⁶⁷

The Charleston-based *Southern Quarterly Review* took particular offense that the Englishman focused on business transacted in its own South Carolina seaports. The reviewer retorted that, “Our author does not give us any paper from which he borrowed his ‘authority’ for this ‘fact’ probably owing to the circumstance, that he had no authority for it, or, which is more likely, because the fact, affirmed to have existed, was not a fact, but only an imagination of the author. Drawing his authorities from such sources, or manufacturing the facts to suit his purpose, when the authorities failed to furnish him with suitable subjects, it is not surprising that his views of the American institutions and manners, are not always of the most favorable kind.”⁶⁸ The reviewer—who may have been Cartwright — surmised that, “Mr. Buckingham never advances striking or original views on any subject. The highest reach of

⁶⁵ Ruth Richardson, “‘Trading Assassins’ and the Licensing of Anatomy,” in French and Wear, *British Medicine*, 74-91; see also Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*, (Harmondsworth, 1989); see also Michael Durey, *The Return of the Plague*, (Dublin, 1979)

⁶⁶ “Review: *America, Historical, Statistic and Descriptive*,” 229

⁶⁷ *Ibid*; see also Buckingham, *America, Historical, Statistic and Descriptive*, 1:112-113

⁶⁸ “Review: *America, Historical, Statistic and Descriptive*,” 229

genius to which he ever attained, or seems capable of attaining, is to express common-place truths in an intelligible style.”⁶⁹

The concern that “authorities” should supersede mere style echoed throughout Cartwright’s writing. The reviewer wrote with intent to alert readers to the thinness of Buckingham’s rhetoric. He criticized Buckingham: “His veneration for newspapers is, under the circumstances, somewhat singular. We can assure him, that the facts connected with our history, at least, are to be drawn from more authentic sources, than such very ephemeral authority.” The science-minded reviewer made a distinction between the trade of journalism and the emerging science of history; between the display of facts and the thorough sourcing out and establishing of facts.⁷⁰

Beyond possessing the rhetorical capacity to dismiss Buckingham’s charges against Southern medical schools engaging in notoriously illegal activities, Cartwright held a deep investment in the importance of the availability of bodies for autopsy and medical discovery. Cartwright revealed that, “*Almost every year of my professional life, except a few years when abroad, I have made post mortem examinations of negroes, who have died of various diseases, and I have invariably found the darker color pervading the flesh and the membranes to be very evident in all those who died of acute diseases.*”⁷¹ From his earliest biomedical essay in 1822 Cartwright heralded having performed numerous dissections on blacks and yellow fever victims as the bases for his capacity to track the advance of diseases in the body and develop therapies for its cures. Cartwright also relied on autopsies

⁶⁹ Ibid; The author of the review suggested themes that Cartwright took up directly in his subsequent writings for the *SQR*. The present review included anecdotes on the blacks 232, mixed marriages, 233, misery and crime amongst the lower classes, 228 and establishing principles of “well-regulated liberty” 223-224

⁷⁰ “Review: *America, Historical, Statistic and Descriptive*,” 223-224

⁷¹ Cartwright, “Philosophy of the Negro Constitution,” *New Orleans Medical & Surgical Journal* 8 (September 1852): 196

for his dissertation on “Whether the Veins Perform the Function of Absorption,” the paper for which he received Harvard’s Boylston Medical Library gold medal award in 1826.⁷²

The available literature demonstrates that from the 1820s onward Cartwright based his medical knowledge on autopsies performed on black slaves. It was not until the very early 1840s that he began to differentiate black bodies from white bodies. Detailing the earlier experiments he wrote, “The cessation of urine, it appeared, by examinations after death, preceded from inflammation in the cellular tissue that envelope the kidneys.”⁷³ Cartwright elaborated his biomedical opinion based on post-mortem examinations:

By placing the hand on the abdomen, there was felt a pulsation equal to that which the heart produces in the thorax, and synchronous with that organ in its pulsations. This abdominal pulsation was, no doubt, produced in consequence of the heart being overloaded with a mass of fluids too great to be moved readily on through the great blood-vessels. This labouring motion of the heart imparted to the diaphragm successive shocks, which that muscle communicated to those of the abdomen. Examinations, after death, of those who have died having this pulsation, led me to the above conclusion, for the heart was found, in these cases, filled with an unusual quantity of blood, and considerably enlarged.⁷⁴

Cartwright reflected here on autopsies performed before 1824. Unlike the British Anatomy Act of 1832 that provided dead paupers to medical schools for dissection the United States had no official, state-sponsored provision to make bodies available for experimentation; nor did Americans have any provision similar to the French government’s legislation that made bodies available for dissection.⁷⁵ Nevertheless Cartwright championed performing multiple autopsies of blacks.

The “French School” of Medicine

In Paris the law crafted medicine. During the French Revolution a law passed in 1794 integrated physicians and surgeons as “branches of the same science.” The French School taught medicine and surgery to all students and encouraged its medical students to conceptualize disease as

⁷² Harvard citations see Mary Louise Marshall, “Samuel A. Cartwright and States Rights Medicine,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 93:2 (August 1940): 4-5

⁷³ Cartwright, “An Essay on the Epidemic Fever of Monroe County, Mississippi, in the Summer and Autumn of 1822,” *American Medical Recorder* 7:4 (October 1824): 83

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 83-84

⁷⁵ Bynum, *Science and The Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, 28

surgeons: in terms of “anatomic structures,” solid parts” and “local lesions.”⁷⁶ The 1794 law also facilitated the legal acquisition of bodies for anatomy teaching from those patients already dying within the hospital. This proved very much in line with Cartwright’s thinking that held practical observation of actual bodies, living and dead, over theoretical reasoning from abstract principles. As Bynum argues, “The old medicine had been too much concerned with theory; the new medicine, like the old surgery, would be devoted to practice. Behind this empiricism stood the figures of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and John Locke (1632-1704), particularly as the latter’s writings had been modified in France by the Abbé de Condillac (1714-1780).”⁷⁷ These writers shifted scientific thinking away from fruitless speculation of the hidden causes of things to careful observation, classification and analysis of things that the senses could observe. This is the rigor of scientific thinking that Cartwright claimed, “separated the ore from the dross.”⁷⁸

Therefore whereas British physicians suffered public loathing from fear of dissection and the possibility that a physician might withhold treatment in the interests of following a disease’s “natural history,” the opposite was the case in France which, by the 1830s, had experienced nearly forty years of its official policy for providing cadavers.⁷⁹ Foreign medical students flocked to Paris precisely for instruction in chemistry, microscopy and first-hand experience in the wards and morgues of Paris’ hospitals.⁸⁰ Although the epicenter for science in medicine would move to Germany during the 1840s, in the 1830s when Cartwright visited, French hospital-based medicine reigned supreme.⁸¹ Cartwright would have felt particular affinity to the French experimental physiologists like Marie Jean Pierre

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 29

⁷⁸ He declared, “Statistical medicine or political arithmetic, as it is sometimes called, is that searching department of our science which separates the ore from the dross.” See Cartwright, “Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez—a comparison of its mortality while medicine was protected, and since the introduction of the ‘Reformed Practices,’” *The Western Journal of Medicine and Surgery* 2, edited by Daniel Drake, MD and Lunsford Yandell, MD, (July 1840): 1-2

⁷⁹ Bynum, *Science and The Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, 93

⁸⁰ Ibid, 103

⁸¹ Ibid.

Flourens and Francios Achille Longet and Francios Magendie, who struggled to have physiology studied as a practice separate from mere anatomy. Magendie remained the chair of medicine at the Collège de France where his lectures expounded “the experimental method and discussed the physical phenomena of life as revealed through experimental physiology and pathology.”⁸²

Magendie chaired the French medical school from 1826-1851, during the time Cartwright visited and studied in Paris.⁸³ Despite having no legislative permission to study blacks or white cadavers Cartwright proceeded to make the autopsy and experimentation central components of his diagnostic program.⁸⁴ In a brief memoir on Cartwright the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* recalled that “Dr. Cartwright sought new and unfrequented fields of research.” His notoriety came from his ingenuity: “He was not satisfied to follow at all times in the old beaten tracks of the profession, but boldly laid out new routes for himself and others to pursue, advancing new theories, and, defending them with scientific facts, his reasoning was clear, forcible and logical.”⁸⁵ The notice in the *NOMSJ* declared Cartwright’s international appeal, describing that “His extraordinary success in the treatment of Asiatic cholera attracted the attention of the scientific, both in America and Europe, and his opinions regarding its treatment were most eagerly sought for at the next approach of that dreadful scourge.”⁸⁶ When Mary Louise Marshall indicates that the French “received” Cartwright “most cordially,” that he “studied and attended clinics throughout his trips,” and that his “treatise on yellow fever was adopted by the French Government” in 1836, it was an openness to autopsy,

⁸² Bynum argues further that Paris-based medicine was better: “French medical education acquired a structure that, with minor modifications, remained intact throughout the nineteenth century and whose essential features are still visible today” Ibid. 29; For quote above, see 103

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ In his essay on Monroe County Cartwright referred to “repeated examinations, after death.” see Cartwright, “An Essay on the Epidemic Fever of Monroe County, Mississippi, in the Summer and Autumn of 1822,” *American Medical Recorder* 7:4 (October 1824): 83-85

⁸⁵ “Dr. Cartwright,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 19:3 (Nov. 1866); cited in “American Medical Necrology: Report on Mississippi,” *Publications of the American Medical Association*, (1873), 346

⁸⁶ Ibid.

vivisection and medical experimentation that made Cartwright's medical philosophy compelling to the French.⁸⁷

American medical students flocked to France during the 1830s for an opportunity to experience Parisians' rare combination of internal medicine and surgery. The students appreciated particularly the Parisians' fundamental intellectual antipathy toward rational and hypothetical cosmologies that they held as being remnants from ancient times.⁸⁸ They wanted to avoid the "falsehood of rationalistic medical systems, orthodox and unorthodox alike."⁸⁹ It is likely that Cartwright's experience of "French Medicine" strengthened his home-grown detestation of Thomsonians and the alternative medicine movement that had taken over Natchez and threatened the identity of regular physicians like him. French thought gave lift to his claim for the superiority of regular traditional physicians over speculative alternative practitioners; it added a silver arrow to his thickening quiver, strengthening his ability to attack Thomsonians' concepts. Intellectually, rejecting previous "rationalistic" and "orthodox" medical beliefs gave him empirical ammunition to use in his own "battle against the pervasive humbuggery" he saw taking over Natchez in the 1830s.⁹⁰

Along with the French, Cartwright believed that detailed observation and classification of recorded symptoms constituted the best approach to medical knowledge and that this approach required the hospital setting.⁹¹ The hospital provided the laboratory space and opportunity for Cartwright's own vivisections and dissections. Charting the progress of yellow fever in the human body Cartwright observed that "In all those who died, after a sudden subsistence of pain, the pia mater and the

⁸⁷ Marshall, "Samuel A. Cartwright and States Rights Medicine," 6

⁸⁸ For an account on the impact of the "French" or "Paris Clinical School" on the thinking of antebellum American physicians, see Warner, *Against the Spirit of System: The French Impulse in Nineteenth-Century American Medicine*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998)

⁸⁹ Warner, *Against the Spirit of System*, 7

⁹⁰ Warner, *Against the Spirit of System*, 239; for a discussion of Cartwright's and the local physicians' fight against the Thomsonians in Natchez, see Freeman Walter Johnson's account of the "Druggists" quarrel provided in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

⁹¹ Bynum, *Science and The Practice of Medicine*, 104-105

membranes investing the ganglionic nerves were found in a high state of inflammation;” he consented that it was “Extensive examinations” which “convinced me of this fact,” and which “were made in the hospital at Natchez during the prevalence of the Yellow Fever at that place.”⁹² Cartwright was resourceful and adventurous which was why following the 1833 epidemic his fellow citizens awarded him.

Conversely, when the Asiatic cholera struck Britain in 1832 the physicians’ inability to counter it led to great anti-medical hostility within the population. The hospitals suffered vitriolic criticisms because they refused to admit the growing number of patients; and even when they could admit them physicians proved helpless in dealing with the new and virulent disease.⁹³ The Asiatic Cholera killed “quickly and nastily,” leaving most victims who were healthy in the morning dead by evening after a few hours of intense vomiting and diarrhea, a death-grip contemporaries dubbed “rice and water” since the “stools were mostly liquid with a few solid particles.”⁹⁴ Other symptoms of the Asiatic cholera included intense cramps, a clamminess of the skin and shrunken features. Added to that, the extreme dehydration caused by the disease gave its victims’ skin a bluish tint and the amassing corpses decomposed more quickly than normal. These features gave the cholera ominous and surreal qualities that made it appear even more foreboding in the public mind.⁹⁵ This fear combined with outrage from the recent passing of the Anatomy Act in 1832 — which provided for the use of dead paupers as cadavers for medical students — led to rioting against hospitals, individual doctors and attendants in a dozen British cities. The poor and working classes felt that the physicians could have done more but that same population remained wary of hospital treatment for fear of being experimented on and

⁹² Cartwright, “An Essay on the Epidemic Fever of Monroe County, Mississippi, in the Summer and Autumn of 1822,” *American Medical Recorder* 7:4 (October 1824): 83-84

⁹³ Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

⁹⁴ Bynum, *Science and The Practice of Medicine*, 74-75

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

dissected.⁹⁶ Although public fear led to violence against medical practitioners in London, in 1833 the citizens of Pine Ridge, Adams County Mississippi presented Cartwright with a “splendid vase with suitable inscription” along with one thousand dollars as “a testimonial for their sense of his eminent services in the year 1832 during the prevalence of the cholera” in that region.⁹⁷

Cartwright continued to experiment on black bodies — alive and dead — and use observations born of autopsy for the duration of his career. While performing experiments on black female fertility in 1854 Cartwright presented an “open query” to the short-lived, pro-slavery journal, the *Georgia Blister and Critic* in which he asked its readers: “In the cross of the white and negress, do the Ovary Cells diminish with each cross, until the fourth, and then nearly disappear entirely?” The Editors printed their pre-emptive answer to Cartwright: “We think it quite probable that the Ovary Cells in the cross of the negress and white, may diminish, until sterility would be the result. Our dissections are not ample enough to determine the point precisely, but we see a cross in the horse and mule, produce sterility and why not in the white and black biped race? We see no reason to question.”⁹⁸ Both Cartwright and his colleague wrote enthusiastically about experimenting on and dissecting black slaves.

⁹⁶ Statistics from seven different cities in Britain suggest that hospital mortality was nearly twice as high for cholera victims treated at hospitals as it was for cholera victims treated at home. See Bynum, *Ibid.*, 75

⁹⁷ Marshall, “Samuel A. Cartwright and States Rights Medicine,” 6; for detail of the inscription on the vase, see “American Medical Necrology: Report on Mississippi,” *Publications of the American Medical Association*, (1873), 347

⁹⁸ Drs. H.A. Ramsey and W.T. Grant, “The Negro—Ovary Cells—Dr. Cartwright,” *Georgia Blister and Critic* 1:2 (April 1854): 38-39

Chapter 2: Quackery: “A Great & Glowing Evil”

Medical Democracy in Natchez

Whereas the role of medical doctor gained prestige during the latter part of the nineteenth century and holds high esteem today, this was not the case in Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright’s Natchez. Medical censors almost abandoned the “Medical Degree” in the 1830s and a bevy of health care practitioners in Mississippi who had no formal college training challenged Cartwright and other medical doctors’ authority and claims to expertise.¹ In the first decades of the nineteenth century physicians — who had advanced in standing during the eighteenth century — suffered a sharp rebuff of their mounting professional prestige, a threat posed largely by the inadequacies and poor reputation of their own medical treatments. These physicians and healers worked in an era that was pre-germ theory, pre-anesthesia, pre-antiseptic and struggled to validate their medical therapies and justify their health remedies to a skeptical public. The medical outlook of the time and its “heroic” principles of treatment included bleeding, blistering, purging and administering large doses of medicines that may have worked to kill rather than heal the patients. Martin Pernick encourages moderns to re-think the landscape of pain before the introduction of anesthesia in 1846 and he put forth that “the emotional ability to inflict vast suffering was perhaps the most basic of all professional prerequisites” to be a doctor. Professional values in the West emphasized the preservation of life over avoiding suffering. Therefore not only did the cutting, burning, blood-letting and purging bring great pain to patients but those doctors who could not learn to inflict great pain had to leave the profession.²

Charles Peirce referred to the nineteenth century as the “Age of Pain” and since university-

¹ W. F. Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 2006), 11

² For a discussion of physicians’ evolving attitudes toward inflicting pain and their professional attempts to overcome their revulsion to it, see Martin S. Pernick, “The Calculus of Suffering in 19th Century Surgery,” in Judith Walzer Leavitt & Ronald L. Numbers, *Sickness & Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 98-99

trained physicians' techniques caused so much agony, free-thinking Americans sought out alternative cures and avoided medical doctors when they could.³ Cartwright's medical practices faced rivalry from a stalwart group of "Thomsonians" — followers of Dr. Samuel Thomson who practiced a modified form of *Hydrotherapy* that combined the curative powers of heat and water. Also known as "Steamers," the Thomsonians took root in Natchez during the mid 1830s. Driven by the powerful charisma and business acumen of Samuel Thomson, they took their methods a step further than other hydropaths and recommended botanical medicines like "*lobelia*" to induce vomiting and red pepper to raise the body temperature artificially as ways to cure illness.⁴ Cartwright charged that since the Mississippi legislature annulled its medical licensing laws in 1834 Natchez' citizens had been "sacrificed" unnecessarily on "the smoking altars of steam."⁵ The Thomsonians held the same classical view of the body, as did the regular physicians but preferred botanical, plant-based medicines to what they perceived to be the regular physicians' harsher mineral and earth-based ones.⁶

In the 1830s the public began to reject Cartwright and other university-trained physicians' legitimacy. In particular the Thomsonians derided the elite doctors and argued that each man or woman could be his or her own physician. In 1834 one of the Thomsonian practitioners wrote: "In the science of medicine, I assure you, there is no mystery. There is nothing incomprehensible about it."⁷ Traditional physicians were required to learn Latin and Greek in order to attend medical school and common citizens viewed that medical knowledge should not be held secret or imprisoned in erudite

³ Charles S. Peirce is quoted in James Crewdson Turner, "Kindness to Animals: the animal protection movement in England and America during the nineteenth century," (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1975)

⁴ Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 51

⁵ Cartwright, "Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez—a comparison of its mortality while medicine was protected, and since the introduction of the 'Reformed Practices,'" *The Western Journal of Medicine and Surgery*, edited by Daniel Drake, MD and Lunsford Yandell, MD., 2 (July 1840): 13

⁶ John S. Haller, Jr., *The People's Doctor: Samuel Thomson and the American Botanical Movement, 1790-1860*, (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000)

⁷ Daniel H. Whitney, *The Family Physician, or Every Man His Own Doctor*, (New York, 1834), iv

tongues and kept exclusive.⁸ “Botanics” argued that simple truths should replace the “unfathomable arcane of medicine.” Furthermore the Thomsonians resisted the notion that healthcare could ever be complicated — they rejected the regular doctors’ methods and concepts altogether. Paul Starr observes, “Many Americans who already had a rationalist, activist orientation to disease refused to accept physicians as authoritative.”⁹ Men and women alike held the belief that self-reliance; common sense and deploying native intellect would work to alleviate most illnesses. One Thomsonian editor implored: “We wish to see the healing art brought home to our own firesides, and rendered so plain and simple, that it can be understood by all.” He advised readers that “It is as easy to cure disease, as it is to make a pudding,” and that in medical care there should be “no mysticism — no bombast — no monopoly.”¹⁰

Thomsonians utilized the anti-slavery, anti-monarchical rhetoric of the American Revolution to promote their own demand for personal control over one’s own health. In 1841 one Thomsonian practitioner wrote, “The medical monopoly deserves to be abolished.” He opined that, “The law which deprives one class of men of their rights and gives special privileges to another, is not just.” This writer along with a host of others invoked founding principles as well as Jacksonian ones when charging, “It violates the first principles of democracy.”¹¹ Another Thomsonian demanded “There is not a greater aristocratic monopoly in existence, than that of regular medicine — neither is there greater humbug.” He emphasized that “false and dangerous must be that science which exists — not from any truth or utility in itself, but from legislative enactments, cunning, and deception, which strictly speaking

⁸ As was common among men who wished to enter legal and medical professions Cartwright had learned Latin and studied Greek in order to pursue his medical studies. Teaching in the vernacular was part of the general enlightenment quest to democratize knowledge.

⁹ Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 17

¹⁰ Samuel North, *The Family Physician and Guide to Health*, (Waterloo, NY: William Child, 1830), iii; John Harley Warner, *Against the Spirit of System: The French Impulse in Nineteenth-Century American Medicine*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 232

¹¹ “Medical Monopoly,” *Botanico-Medical Recorder* 9 (1841): 309

enslave people to all its votaries.”¹² Wooster Beach, a botanical physician, scoffed at the university-trained doctors’ attempt to secure power and called it “King-craft, Priest-craft, Lawyer-craft, and Doctor-craft.”¹³ These alternative healers’ language appealed to newly energized and recently enfranchised young voters who swarmed to the southwest territories, in part, to be free from the restraints of tradition. Instead of hiding obscure truths in ancient Greek and Latin names, these medical democrats vowed that “Our science is not buried in technicalities nor our practice veiled in mystery.”¹⁴

After Mississippi rescinded its medical licensing laws in 1834 Cartwright found it difficult to contend with the increased presence of “the Steamers” in Natchez; as the alternative medical practitioners’ popularity increased the social authority he held as an educated member of the elite decreased. No longer were complicated explanations and group affiliations enough to reason down sects of eager young practitioners or dissuade the newly liberated communities who were hungry to consult them. The Thomsonians’ divergent methods challenged Cartwright’s claim to intellectual superiority and their great public appeal put at risk the professional esteem that he had come to enjoy as a university-trained and board-certified elite “Medical Doctor.” Cartwright referred to himself and to other university-trained physicians as the “regular physicians” and did not use the term “orthodox,” although it is clear that he believed his view to be the correct one.¹⁵

After Cartwright left the University of Pennsylvania in 1813 he studied and received

¹² [Original emphasis] “Memorial of the American Eclectic Medical Convention,” *Eclectic Medical Journal* 2 (1849): 50-61; see also “The Monster Threatened,” *Boston Thomsonian Manual and Lady’s Companion* 5 (1838-1839): 153; “Address,” *Western Medical Reformer* 4 (1844): 1-2; and “The Two Systems,” *Water Cure Journal, and Herald of Reforms* 17 (1854): 98-99

¹³ This phrase appeared originally in a radical religious and political journal called *Telescope*. Wooster Beach the founder of the “Eclectic” medical movement edited the journal. The phrase is quoted in Joseph F. Kett, *The Formation of the American Medical Profession, The Role of Institutions, 1780-1860*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), 105; the phrase is cited also in Warner, *Against the Spirit of System*, 204

¹⁴ Warner, *Against the Spirit of System*, 232

¹⁵ I avoid here the use of the term “orthodox” because in addition to suggesting that orthodox practitioners followed or conformed to the traditional or generally accepted rules and beliefs, the term also suggests correctness. Throughout this dissertation I use the term “allopathic” to refer to Cartwright and other physicians who attended medical schools and then apprenticed with a trained physician in order to earn a medical degree. This word isolates the specific disagreement that Cartwright held with the Thomsonians — the issue of training — and throws their divergent opinions on the role of medical education into high relief.

certification in Baltimore, practiced medicine in Alabama and then elected to move to Natchez in 1822 to enjoy his new status as a young doctor. He proved his mettle and earned community-wide support by 1833. Cartwright attributed Natchez' low mortality rate during the cholera epidemic that visited in May and June of 1833 to the "good effects of confidence in the medical profession."¹⁶ He glorified that in other parts of the country and in Britain and France the cholera epidemic desolated whole communities. He offered that Natchez' salubrity demonstrated the "benefits to be derived from timely application for medical advice." To his thinking the "blessings of the science of medicine" led directly to improve public health.¹⁷ Cartwright wrote:

Leaning with confidence on the arm of science, the citizens of Natchez passed through two yellow fevers, an epidemic cholera, whooping-cough, measles, scarlet fever and small pox, besides the other diseases incident to the climate, and in ten years a fewer number of them perished, in proportion to the population, than in any other town or city from which we have any authentic results.¹⁸

Having been offered professorships in Boston, Philadelphia, St Louis and Baltimore, Cartwright chose to remain and practice medicine in the South.¹⁹ One glowing sign of Cartwright's appreciation presented itself when the citizens of Pine Ridge in Adams County, Mississippi, awarded him with "a splendid vase with suitable inscription" and one thousand dollars as "a testimonial of their sense of his eminent services in the year 1833 during the prevalence of cholera."²⁰ Upon further investigation the "suitable inscription" I discovered that it read in full: "Presented to Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright, of Natchez Mississippi, by the Planters of Adams County, as a testimonial of their friendship and gratefulness of his medical talent, especially as evidenced in his successful treatment of the cholera, which so recently and to such an alarming extent existed amongst them. July, 1833." On the reverse

¹⁶ Nicholas E. Bonneau argues that local physicians obscured the numbers of deaths reported from the 1833 Cholera outbreak in order to make Natchez appear more salubrious. See Bonneau, "Blue Death on the Devil's Backbone: Fear, Control, and Cholera in 1833 Adams County, Mississippi," a paper presented at the American Historical Association, January 4, 2014

¹⁷ Cartwright, "Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez," 9

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Mary Louise Marshall, "Samuel A. Cartwright and States' Rights Medicine," *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 90 (1940-1941): 4-5

²⁰ Ibid.

side of the vase, in bass-relief, is the story of “The Good Samaritan.”²¹

The same year Cartwright received this public show of support from Mississippi’s citizens, the state legislature moved to annul the medical licensing law that provided him authority and leverage as a medical doctor. Cartwright and other white men in his cohort of enterprising young physicians were threatened that they might lose their status as “practical physicians” to the rising status and increased presence of alternative medical practitioners in the area. He wrote that, “Before the termination of 1833, the laws of Mississippi, which protected the science of medicine and guarded the people against ignorant presumers and pretend reformers, were virtually annulled. By the first of January 1834 a host of empirics had made their way into our city, and commenced in good earnest, what they called a reformation in medicine.”²²

Cartwright critiqued first the Thomsonians’ great popularity. If Cartwright and his colleagues were indeed smarter and more distinguished than he had to explain why common men and women flocked to the “Steamers” and embraced their alternative cures? He surmised that the Thomsonians “deceived” and wooed the public by smearing the regular doctors’ reputation. He observed that “They first began their operations by using every artifice to destroy the confidence of the public, in the virtue of those remedies and means, which the accumulated experience of ages, has found to be the most effectual in the treatment of a large class of diseases— particularly such as occur in warm climates.”²³ Cartwright walked a fine line between correcting what he thought to be public misconceptions and taking the care not to offend his customer base. He almost clarified that, “So great was their zeal, they succeeded in weakening public confidence in the medical profession in a greater degree than could have been expected in so intelligent a community.”²⁴ He oscillated between calling the public gullible

²¹ “American Medical Necrology,” *American Medical Association*, (1873), 347

²² Cartwright, “Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez,” 10

²³ *Ibid*, 2, 9

²⁴ *Ibid*, 11

to reassuring them of their warmth and intellect. Since he wanted to win patients, not alienate them, he pressed that the Thomsonians alone should be blamed for confusing a well-intentioned public:

They used great and unwearied exertions, not only to prejudice the public against most of the medicines which physicians employed, calling them poisons, but they endeavored to destroy public confidence in the physicians themselves and to bring contempt and disrepute upon the regular exercise of the medical art.²⁵

Cartwright indicated that in some instances the Thomsonians had so adulterated the reasoning of “some good citizens of Natchez and its vicinity” to where they even succeeded in “turning those, who owed their lives to the scientific practice of medicine altogether against it.”²⁶ He concluded that Thomsonians misrepresented regular physicians, beguiled the public and posed a threat to public health by inspiring an enthusiasm that proved difficult to contain.

William Johnson, a free black man of great wealth who owned real-estate in Natchez, rented a variety of offices, some of them to men he called “the drugests” and at least one of them proved to be a Thomsonian.²⁷ Freeman Johnson recalled the day that the allopathic physicians met with “the Drugests” and he recorded the regular physicians’ public outrage at the alternative medical groups’ accumulation in the city. By 1840 medical competition in Natchez pushed the regular physicians into decisive action — their elite status challenged and authority rebuked, the doctors took to the streets in protest. When the warring sects of physicians met publicly, Freeman Johnson wrote: “The Drs. Turned out today for the perpose of Getting The Drugests to Sign an article Promising not to prescribe [medicines] for Sick Persons.”²⁸ In 1840 Cartwright and other regular physicians organized the “Medical Faculty of the City of Natchez” in an attempt to regulate the Thomsonians as well as the druggists, Vegetarians & other practitioners of alternative medicine who flooded the southwest at mid-

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Edwin Adams Davis, William Ransom Hogan, *The Barber of Natchez, Wherein a Slave is Freed and Rises to a Very High Standing: Wherein the Former Slave Writes a Two-thousand-page Journal about His Town and Himself; Wherein the Free Negro Diarist is Appraised in Terms of His Friends, His Code, and His Community’s Reaction to His Wanton Murder*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1954), 179

²⁸ Ibid.

century.²⁹ Cartwright recalled that “For some time our strict laws against empiricism kept the reformers out of Natchez,” however with the repeal of the 1834 medical licensing law the local environment changed radically.³⁰

Cartwright skirted any explanation of why citizens shifted toward pharmacists and away from allopathic physicians and why that shift occurred so rapidly. He did not acknowledge, publicly at least, that patients turned away from allopaths to avoid blood-curdling pain.³¹ Conversely Cartwright understood pain to be part of the process of revelation, functional and integral to healing. He stated merely “At length, from causes not necessary here to mention, our laws against empiricism were virtually annulled.”³² Signaling the weakened law to be the principal cause, he wrote that “Very soon afterwards no less than half a dozen reformers, full of zeal, made their way into this city and chose it as the place of their permanent residence to carry out a reformation in medicine.” Continuing to call them “ignorant,” he charged that “They had never studied the science they came to reform, nor had they ever acquired the elementary education necessary to enable them to begin the study. But their lack of knowledge only made them the louder in denouncing physicians and their remedies.”³³ Cartwright wanted to persuade readers and not insult them, so throughout his essay he attempted to show sympathy in understanding how a well-meaning public might have allowed themselves to become duped by notorious men and women. He reasoned that, “They excited the hopes of the afflicted and prevailed on the credulity of the weak, by puffing the many miraculous cures, which, the ‘reformed

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Cartwright, “Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez,” 3

³¹ Martin S. Pernick, *A Calculus of Suffering: Pain, Professionalism, and Anesthesia in Nineteenth Century America*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987)

³² By 1848 Cartwright expanded his view of the reasons behind the Thomsonians’ popularity in his lectures on “Statistical Medicine” he delivered in Ohio and Missouri. See Cartwright, “Lecture of Dr. Cartwright, of Natchez Delivered before the students of the Medical Department of the University of Missouri—On Numerical Analysis Applied to the Investigation of Morbid Actions,” *Missouri Medical & Surgical Journal* 3:9 (January 1848): 241

³³ Cartwright, “Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez,” 3

system' was said to have affected."³⁴

Crisis, Perfectibility and Choice

Since most people in the West based their therapeutic goals in the same worldview, the Thomsonians gained popular acceptance quickly. The regular physicians and the Thomsonians held an identical understanding of the body and shared similar intentions — to restore health by purging or depleting the body through a variety of methods like laxatives and perspiration. They held similar aims but their methods differed. Both groups culled medical therapies from the two thousand years old Hippocratic and Galenic system of the “Four Humors.”³⁵ Part of the reason both Thomsonians and the regular doctors continued to share this classical view of the body — and partly why such a system prevailed in Western civilization for nearly two millennia — was that the classical texts provided far more than a medical theory. The doctrine of the “four humors” described a holistic epistemology into which Westerners could fit. It “encompassed not only an approach to medicine and disease but a theory of the world and the body.”³⁶ In his essay, “The Nature of Man,” Hippocrates summarized his enduring image of the human body:

The human body contains blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. These are the things that make up its constitution and cause its pains and health. Health is primarily that state in which these constituent substances are in the correct proportion to each other, both in strength and quantity are well mixed. Pain occurs when one of the substances presents either a deficiency or an excess, or is separated in the body and not mixed with the others. It is inevitable that when one of these is separated from the rest and stands by itself, not only the part from which it has come, but also that were it collects and is present in excess, should become diseased, and because it contains too much of the particular substance, cause pain and distress.³⁷

Any imbalance in the humors caused physical and mental derangement and medical treatment meant

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Aristotle distinguished the specific qualities Hot, Cold, Wet and Dry and following Aristotle's lead later Greek scholars evolved the notion of the Four Elements, the Four Humors, and the Four Temperaments. These four basic qualities are the foundations for all notions of balance and homeostasis in Greek Medicine.

³⁶ David J. Rothman, Steven Marcus, and Stephanie A. Kiceluk, eds., *Medicine and Western Civilization* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 43

³⁷ Hippocrates, *The Medical Works of Hippocrates*, trans. John Chadwick and W. N. Mann, (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1950); reprinted in Rothman, Marcus and Kiceluk, *Medicine and Western Civilization*, 43

restoring balance to the patient's bodily fluids. The allopaths learned that an imbalanced body required the aid of a trained physician to return it to equilibrium by implementing harsh and violent procedures like blood-letting with a lancet, "cupping" or burning blisters into the skin with glass cups, vomiting and purging, using emetics to induce diarrhea and opiates to reduce pain. Also popular with the allopaths were mercury-derived calomel, cinchona bark, and other oral remedies used often in conjunction with the aggressive physical treatments.

The Thomsonians claimed that botanical and herbal cures achieved these same goals but differed in that their mild affect eliminated the harmful side effects of medicines like calomel that were derived from earth-based minerals.³⁸ Cartwright isolated that out of the entire medical arsenal, "They were particularly hostile to calomel and the lancet." "The one," Cartwright wrote, "they accused of being in all cases a poison, and the other of being at all times unnecessary and pernicious."³⁹ However the Thomsonians were certainly not alone in their disdain for "heroic" methods that had, by the 1830s, become notorious in the public mind.

In the 1840s "heroic medicine" began to lose favor and within the regular profession as well. Quite differently than Cartwright, in an essay on Louisiana diseases one contemporary physician, Edward Barton wrote that "It makes me shudder when I hear of heroic practice; 'heroism' in war is built upon the slaughter of our fellow creatures; it is little less in physic."⁴⁰ Moreover, dangerous doses of popular drugs such as calomel "failed miserably" in confronting epidemics like yellow fever, cholera and typhoid fever that ravaged the South during the nineteenth century. In his *History and Geography of the Mississippi Valley*, Timothy Hint hoped that "the great quantities of calomel that are administered equally by quacks and regular physicians, in adherence to a system, that has grown into fashion, and which levels all skill to the mechanical application of a certain number of grains of those

³⁸ Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 47-59

³⁹ Cartwright, "Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez," 3

⁴⁰ Edward Barton, *The Application of Physiological Medicine to the Diseases of Louisiana*, (Philadelphia, 1832), 38

medicines, will eventually yield to a more discriminating mode of practice.”⁴¹ The need for “discriminating” medical practices was precisely the gap Cartwright hoped to fill with his heroic fight for medical regulation.

It is remarkable that despite their great disagreements over method both the regular and the alternative groups shared the goal to purge patient’s bodies, increase perspiration, and otherwise restore the balance of the “four humors” in order to cure disease.⁴² Since the prevailing Greek view held that illness had no local origin from within the body cavity physicians attacked the body’s exterior in hopes to modulate and provoke what was inside in order to alleviate it from the general disturbance caused by outside forces. Therefore the allopaths’ and Thomsonians’ two approaches shared a “theory of crisis” which encouraged using various means to instigate a crisis in the physical body and force it to eject the harmful substances, liquid or solid, thought to cause disease.⁴³

In order for western medicine to result in cures, practitioners and patients had to share a particular way of looking at the body and of explaining both health and disease. Charles Rosenberg argues that the key to understanding therapeutics at the beginning of the nineteenth century lies in “seeing it as part of a system of belief and behavior participated in by physicians and laymen alike.”⁴⁴ It makes little sense to ask did their cures work, because moderns are alienated from the systems of belief that were in place at the time. Rosenberg stresses the power of belief in therapy and posits that since belief plays a role in healing, and we cannot account for the extent of contemporaries’ beliefs, we cannot determine what worked. Central to the logic of this “social sub-system” was a “deeply assumed metaphor.” Rosenberg observes that in the first decades of the nineteenth century “The body was seen

⁴¹ Timothy Hint, *History and Geography of the Mississippi Valley* 1, (Cincinnati, 1833), 39

⁴² Norman Dain, *Concepts of Insanity in the United States, 1789-1865*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1964), 10, 15-17; Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 38

⁴³ Dain, *Concepts of Insanity*, 10

⁴⁴ Rosenberg, “Belief and Ritual in Antebellum Medical Therapeutics, in Michael Warner and Janet A. Tighe, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Medicine and Public Health*, (Boston, 2001), 109

metaphorically as a system of dynamic interactions with its environment...One could not live well without food, air and water, one had to live in a particular climate, subject one's body to a particular style of life and world. Each of these factors implied a necessary and continuing physiological adjustment. The body was always in a state of becoming — and thus always in jeopardy.”⁴⁵ Healers deployed a theory of crisis to regulate the jeopardy of becoming.

Rosenberg suggests that the body remained at risk because environment, climate and populations shifted the frequency and type of disease; it also meant that for reasons beyond anyone's control the general population subjected itself to sickness at any given time. A sense of perpetual health risk put the public at the mercy of regular physicians who sought to bleed or possibly poison them. But after the upsurge of democratic spirit during the 1820s and 1830s citizens demanded freedom to choose domestic, allopathic or alternative means to effect cures. Deference to the opinions of 'medical doctors' who held dubious expertise but promised excruciating methods appeared hostile to the percolating spirits of independence and wellness.

An alternate view is that citizens took matters into their own hands — patients became agents. Seeking one's own remedy meant identifying with the cure, even if that meant merely altering one's diet, exercising, temperance from alcohol — or indulging “patent medicines” made primarily *from* alcohol. Spurred on by a second wave of religious revivalism citizens of all stripes engaged a doctrine of perfectibility that ranged from eating Christian minister Sylvester Graham's crackers, curtailing tobacco consumption, exercising abstinence, avoiding masturbation or adding red pepper to a meal, each act meant exercising one's own private judgment and then taking direct action over the quality of one's own life instead of surrendering judgment to an elite physician.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ruth Clifford Engs, *Clean Living Movements: American Cycles of Health Reform*, (London: Praeger Press, 2000); Jayme A. Sokolow, *Eros and Modernization: Sylvester Graham, Reform, and the Origins of Victorian Sexuality in America*, (Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983)

The impetus to regulate one's own relationship with the body originated from the same Protestant impulse to demand a direct and personal relationship with God. The notion that 'cleanliness is next to Godliness' bears out in the medical literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as ministers like John Wesley and later Samuel Graham among others encouraged personal control over hygiene, sexuality and health. A greater emphasis on autonomy and self-direction helped to cause the American shift to English Methodism. One can attribute this shift in part to the fact that in 1747 its founder, Reverend John Wesley, published a book on medical advice called *Primitive Physic*, a compilation of remedies which argued for increased self-reliance through personal health care.⁴⁷ During the colonial era other medical care books were published to great popularity, but unlike those texts Wesley's book provided no explanations of symptoms or speculations on what caused disease, only a solid inventory of traditional and ancient cures that he hoped to make popular.⁴⁸ In Wesley one finds one of Thomson's progenitors, politically and conceptually, as he paved the way for Thomson's egalitarianism and clinical skepticism.

During the colonial era most of the information on healing ailments was communicated through oral traditions but the written texts that did appear appealed to the domestic tradition and ushered in Thomsonianism's reliance on print culture in the nineteenth century. No other text dominated medical thinking in the public during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries like William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine: an attempt to render the Medical Art more generally useful, by showing people what is in their own power both with respect to the Prevention and Cure of Diseases*. As a member of the Royal College of Physicians Dr. Buchan carried the prestige of the old guard that granted him enormous authority; printed first in 1769, his *Domestic Medicine* sold over thirty editions and became

⁴⁷ Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 33-34; Bernard Semmel, *The Methodist Revolution*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973)

⁴⁸ Certainly the most popular colonial era textbook on American medicine was William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine: an attempt to render the Medical Art more generally useful, by showing people what is in their own power both with respect to the Prevention and Cure of Diseases*, (Edinburgh, Philadelphia, 1769, 1771)

the most influential text of its kind in the United States. Despite his status — or perhaps confident in it — Buchan advocated medical democracy. He wrote “No discovery can ever be of general utility while the practice of it is kept in the hands of a few.” He even scolded that smallpox inoculation would not have worked until it had been taken up by “men not bred to physic.” Buchan warned “everything valuable in the practical part of medicine is within reach of common sense, and that the Art would lose nothing by being stripped of all that any person imbued with ordinary abilities cannot comprehend.”⁴⁹

When it came to treating most cases of disease Buchan held the view that professional knowledge proved unnecessary. Buchan warned that most people “trusted too little in their own endeavours.”⁵⁰ His voice was part of a growing chorus of voices that demanded personal freedom. As a member of the Royal College, Buchan held prestige but also saw its limitations as a legitimizing factor. The new Americans agreed and, as Starr speculates, “The esoteric learning, knowledge of Latin, and high culture and status of traditional English physicians were more compelling grounds for a belief in a hierarchically ordered society than in a democratic one.”⁵¹

The Thomsonians were the most organized sect that took its politics, patents and publishing seriously, an egoism that led ironically to Thomson establishing his own medical monopoly. Thomsonianism was an oral tradition becoming a literary one where he assembled “root doctors’ ” knowledge about emetics, purgatives and botanicals and then published them in journals. Thomson’s urge to secure his medical schema in the form of patents, official agents, subscriptions to updates on the patents as well as through publishing his own text and associative journals demonstrates a similar move to literacy that was being championed by the regular physicians at the same time. Mimicking the regular physicians institutionalism led eventually to Thomson’s undoing as his thirst to control information and be the oracular source of knowledge caused his own movement to splinter into the

⁴⁹ Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, 171

⁵⁰ Buchan, *Domestic Medicine*, vii, x

⁵¹ Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 17

“Eclectic” medical tradition that combined traditional and Thomsonian approaches.⁵²

Like Thomson and Buchan, Wesley’s book was reprinted widely and in it he rejected the allopathic tradition altogether for its arrogance.⁵³ Wesley charged “Physicians now began to be held in admiration as persons who were something more than human.” Wesley criticized that what had once been a noble art that anyone could learn to master had now been hustled into a pecuniary corner by notorious men. He accused that “profit attended their employ as well as honour: so that they had now two weighty reasons for keeping the bulk of mankind at a distance, which they might not pry into the mysteries of the profession.” Wesley focused on the same twin demons that Thomson identified in the physicians: dishonor and greed. The Reverend upheld an emerging view that medical doctors used technical complexity to hold on to undeserved authority: “To this end...they filled their writings with abundance of technical terms, utterly unintelligible to plain men.”⁵⁴ During the 1830s and 1840s allopaths like Cartwright sought to legitimate that complexity by importing science into medicine. It was not that the Thomsonians caused the spirit of medical democracy but rather that the growing public distrust for elite means and languages made citizens and non-citizens alike open to a wide range of cures, which included the Thomsonians.⁵⁵

Domestic guides since the colonial era had recommended that medical knowledge should be simplified and now Buchan, Wesley, along with other physicians who penned medical guides directed

⁵² Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, Ibid, 32

⁵³ For Thomson’s own guide, see Samuel Thomson, *Narrative of the Life and Medical Discoveries of Samuel Thomson... to which is added An Introduction to his New Guide to Health*, second edition, (Boston, 1825)

⁵⁴ John Wesley, *Primitive Physic: Or an Early and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases*, (1791; reprinted., London: The Epworth Press, 1960), 6-27

⁵⁵ The term “medical democracy” is used by historian James Harvey Young to indicate the pressure from voters who “wanted no discrimination against graduates of mushroom medical schools or strange sectarian institutions,” as a response to the “licensing laws that had been enacted by the various states between 1760 and 1830 as a result of pressure from early medical societies.” See James Harvey Young, “Medical Quackery and the Common Man,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, (1960):581

toward southern plantation owners, became American novelties.⁵⁶ John C. Gunn wrote his *Domestic Medicine* in 1830 and by 1850 it replaced Buchan's text as the American standard. Reflecting the current popular push toward medical democracy, its title page assured readers that Gunn wrote it "In Plain Language, Free from Doctor's Terms...Intended Expressly for the Benefit of Families Arranged on a New Simple Plan, By Which the Practice of Medicine is Reduced to Principles of Common Sense."⁵⁷ It was democratic and reflected revolutionary era thinking that rejected a monarchical view of knowledge or power being held by a few and used to regulate the many.

Perceptively using the current philosophical reasoning, Gunn charged that obscure Latin names were meant, "to astonish the people" and that elitism and pedantry worked to increase fraud among the regular class of physicians. The charge that using dead languages like Greek and Latin "astonished" the people invigorated Edmund Burke's widely popular notion of the passion caused by the sublime.⁵⁸ What each of these popular medical writers held in common across the stretch of the long nineteenth century was summed up in the effect of this term.

These esteemed physicians wrestled directly with the veracity of their own well-earned status. Buchan, Gunn and other advocates of medical democracy revealed that their own intellectual scaffolding was sublime. By the early national period earnest physicians began to suggest that merit and efficacy did not produce the great social authority medical doctors enjoyed. Covetous stewards of their own personal freedoms, these wild colonials demanded that elite doctors could only hold such power over public thinking through trickery; by anticipating the public's reasoning and hurrying them

⁵⁶ For a medical advisor from the colonial era who focused on southern planters, see John Tennant, *Every Man His Own Physician, or the Poor Planter's Physician*, (Williamsburg, 1734); and for a similar plantation health guide for the early nineteenth century, see *The Planter's and Mariner's Medical Companion*, (Baltimore, 1813); for a text that held great popularity after Buchan, see Alexander Thomson, *The Family Physician; or Domestic Medical Friend*, (New York, 1802)

⁵⁷ John C. Gunn. *Domestic Medicine: In Plain Language, Free from Doctor's Terms...Intended Expressly for the Benefit of Families Arranged on a New Simple Plan, By Which the Practice of Medicine is Reduced to Principles of Common Sense*, (1830)

⁵⁸ Edmund Burke, *An Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime & Beautiful*, Pt. 2, Sec. 1, (1756)

on by the irresistible force of astonishment. This did not engender admiration, reverence or respect for physicians — instead it created an immobilized terror. Burke called astonishment “the effect of the sublime in its highest degree.”⁵⁹ Still pulling upon rhetoric from the Revolution, Gunn advised skeptical young Americans that “The more early we can place men on a level in point of *knowledge*, the happier we would become in society with each other, and the less danger here would be of *tyranny*...” Gunn’s use of italics indicated the implicit link and inverse relationship between knowledge and tyranny.

Sylvester Graham and “Grahamism” stood alongside Samuel Thomson’s health care system as the primary alternative sects to threaten the allopaths during the 1830s. Graham rejected American’s meat-laden diet and proposed a lighter dietary regimen instead. The Minister also advised that people should avoid coffee and liquor but indulge regular bathing and abstinence.⁶⁰ Gerder Lerner asserts that following the American Revolution the new democracy — which excluded women specifically — forced women’s roles to narrow.⁶¹ Graham’s medical approaches held a clear domestic foundation and women who were being excluded from private medical colleges gained acceptance among the alternatives, particularly the Grahamites. Women performed most of the medical care in colonial America and worked as highly regarded lay practitioners in the early to mid-nineteenth century as well.⁶² One historian alleges that up until 1818 medical practice in New Jersey belonged almost entirely to women.⁶³ Therefore women retained their power and prestige by championing the domestically based medicine just at the time when a more specifically domestic role took shape. Paul

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Richard H. Shryock, “Sylvester Graham and the Popular Health Movement, 1830-1870,” in *Medicine in America: Historical Essays*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), 111-125

⁶¹ The general decline of women as lay practitioners paralleled the reduction of women in other fields as well following the Revolution; see Gerder Lerner, “The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson,” in *The Majority Finds its Past: Placing Women in History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 15-30

⁶² Mary R. Walsh, “Doctors Wanted: No Women Need Apply,” (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), xiv, 3-6, 14-16; John B. Blake, “Women and Medicine in Ante-Bellum America,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 39, (March - April, 1965): 99-123

⁶³ Kett, *The Formation of the American Medical Profession*, 108

Starr argues that Graham erected a “broad alliance linking women’s rights and protests against the regular profession and its stringent remedies.”⁶⁴ Women found acceptance and gained prestige among the alternative medical practitioners who used openly roots and herbs for healing and opposed themselves to technically laden esoteric cures.

Hygiene and sexuality were twin concerns for Graham. Graham created his vegetarian-based diet in order to suppress Americans’ sexual appetites that he argued had gotten out of hand. Graham’s attention to regulating sexuality brings to the foreground the distinctions among age groups in the population. The history of American youth begins with the men and women who came of age in the 1790s who caused what may be called America’s first ‘baby-boom.’ In 1820 58 percent of Americans were under the age of twenty. This reflects a high fertility rate when you compare that figure to 44 percent in 1899 and 18 percent in 1940.⁶⁵ On the one hand, for Christian reformers like Graham the high number of youth and increased fertility meant that he wanted to dissuade young Americans from masturbation. He claimed that masturbation increased sexual desires, “inflames the brain more than natural arousal” and therefore resulted in insanity. Graham viewed that having sex more than once a month led to disease and he developed his whole-wheat cracker and vegetarian diet in order to inspire abstinence. Less prohibitive, Thomson gained wider acceptance as a popular medical trend because he put forth the view that each could be his own physician, a sentiment of self-reliance and self-direction that appealed to young Americans in the age of Jackson.

On the other hand the youth data shows that for Cartwright’s generation born in 1790, by the 1830s their juniors had become adults and outnumbered them. The American Revolution weakened reverence for authority that created a break between young men and fathers while the lure of cheap

⁶⁴ Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 50-51

⁶⁵ Warren S. Thompson, “The Demographic Revolution in the United States,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 262 (1949): 62-69; see also Andrew R.L. Cayton, “The Early National Period,” in Mary Kupiec Cayton et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of American Social History* 1, (New York, 1993): 88

land meant many young men and women moved west — and at that time “west” meant frontier towns like Natchez. With the newly appropriated land from the Louisiana Purchase, these young people had more opportunity than any other generation. This created a “Charter Generation” of first Americans who experienced their society becoming more liberal through democratization and increased religious enthusiasm. Joyce Appleby offers that, “The attachment to one’s age group weakened traditional loyalties, but it held out the promise of creating a fresh political will.”⁶⁶ The “self-made” man became the new avatar as America underwent an attack on hierarchies of all sorts. This was the era in which the traditionally disenfranchised — boys, girls, and women, Germans, Irish, Blacks and Indians — could grasp at opportunities from which common people had been restricted: to act publicly, independently and autonomously.

The *botanical* healers held an appeal to whites, Free Blacks, slaves and Native Americans alike who depended traditionally on plant-based cures.⁶⁷ The *Hydropaths* had particular appeal to women who already practiced domestic healing and saw in the hydropaths and Thomsonians alike a path to independence and authority.⁶⁸ In addition to Hydropathy the early 19th century *Mesmerism* touted the belief in using the “animal magnetism” of the physician to influence the sick or mentally weak and *Homeopathy* promised that “like cures like” and suggested taking small interim doses of the disease itself in order to alleviate it.⁶⁹ “Bone-setters” specialized in the structural art of treating fractures,

⁶⁶ Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 3

⁶⁷ On the botanical movement, see Alex Berman, “The Impact of the Nineteenth Century Botanico-Medical Movement on American Pharmacy and Medicine” (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1954); John S. Haller, *Medical Protestants: The Eclectics in American Medicine, 1825-1939*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994); Joseph F. Kett, *Formation of the American Medical Profession: The role of institutions, 1780-1860*, (Greenwood Press, 1980), 97-131; William G. Rothstein, *American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century: From Sects to Science*, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 125-151

⁶⁸ On the prominence of women in hydropathy, see Susan E. Cayleff, *Wash and Be Healed: The Water Cure and Women’s Health*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); and Jane B. Donegan, “*Hydropathic Highway to Health*”: *Women and Water-Cure in Antebellum America*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986)

⁶⁹ On Mesmerism, see Franz Mesmer, *Mesmerism or the System of Inter-relations: The Theory and Applications of Animal Magnetism*, (Germany, 1814); On homeopathy, see Regina Morantz Sanchez, *Conduct Unbecoming a Woman: Medicine on*

dislocations and setting broken bones while Herbalists who worked with medicinal shrubberies, berries, spices and cinchona bark held close proximity to traditional medicines whose concoctions were based largely in oral traditions.⁷⁰ In turn, allopathic physicians borrowed heavily from native and traditional medicinal cures like extracting quinine from the cinchona bark, a Native American cure.⁷¹

As much as the many medical sects may have differed in their medicines, whether domestic, allopathic or alternative, these three types shared the fundamental claim that American plants existed which cured regional diseases. One scholar suggests also that the belief in plant-based regional distinctions in American medicine appealed to southerners' "conceptions of medical topography and merged comfortably with domestic botanical medicine already practiced by women and enslaved people."⁷² The fact that all medicines were based in plant life and rooted literally in the land meant that those who knew the land best harvested the best cures, a fact recognized by allopaths and alternatives alike. It is clear that traditional "Root Doctors" sparked Samuel Thomson's initial fascination with the *lobelia* plant, an interest that inflamed his enthusiasm to pursue medical healing.

Thomson extended the colonial reliance whites had on Native American medicines into the nineteenth century by heralding *lobelia* or "Indian tobacco" as the main ingredient in his patented system. John Wesley himself noted that Native Americans had "exceedingly few" diseases and how they cured without suffering the ones that they did encounter by using medicines that were "quick, as

Trial in Turn-of-the Century Brooklyn, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Marshall Scott Legan, "Hydropath in America: a nineteenth century panacea," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 45 (May-June 1971): 267-280; Joseph F. Kett, *Formation of the American Medical Profession: The role of institutions, 1780-1860*, (Greenwood Press, 1980), 132-164; Martin Kaufman, *Homeopathy in America: The Rise and Fall of a Medical Heresy*, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971); Harris L. Coulter, *Divided Legacy: A History of the Schism in Medical Thought*, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C.: McGrath, 1973,) vol. 3 *Science and Ethics in American Medicine, 1800-1914*

⁷⁰ On the fascinating success of the "bonesetters," see Robert J. T. Joy, "The Natural Bonesetters with Special Reference to the Sweet Family of Rhode Island," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 28 (September-October 1954): 416-41; Starr, *Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 49; On the "herbalists," see Starr, *Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 32, 52, 96

⁷¹ W.A. Strickland, Jr., "Quinine Pills Manufactured on the Missouri Frontier (1832-1862)," *Pharmacy in History* 25 (1983): 60-68

⁷² Lauren E. LaFauci, *Peculiar Nature: Slavery, Environment, and Nationalism in the Antebellum South*, PhD. Dissertation, (English Language and Literature Department, University of Michigan, 2009), 18

well as generally infallible.⁷³ Whites were so taken by Indian healers that whites and “mulattoes” alike tried to pass themselves off as “Indian Doctors” and claimed to have been educated by apprenticing with actual Native Americans.⁷⁴

Thomson’s main medicines worked to create heat — to him *restoring* heat — to the body. Earth and water were solids, and air, fire or heat the cause of all life. Under this view, natural hot springs, hot baths and steam baths were used to engineer heat. The poetic idea was that herbs grew toward the life-giving, hot sun, whereas minerals reflected the death-like cold qualities of the earth. One cleared the body’s system of obstructions so that the stomach could digest properly and generate heat; or alternately one could cause heat indirectly by digesting red pepper or the “*lobelia inflata*” emetic. With the Thomsonians’ success, the gender-equality of the Grahamites and notoriety of Native American “Root Doctors” throughout the new southwest white, black and red alike availed themselves readily to each other and to each other’s cures.

Joining the ranks of branded and highly political “alternative” medical practitioners like the Thomsonians and Grahamites were the dwindling community of midwives and an unaccountable numbers of African “conjurers” and herbsmen who serviced slave communities. When women became pregnant they called generally upon more experienced women to guide them through gestation and relied on female relatives and friends. The midwife played a dual role of offering emotional support as well as practical advice on how to manage both pregnancy and childbirth.⁷⁵ Whereas the decline of midwives began with the introduction of forceps in the late 1700s Catherine Scholten demonstrates that

⁷³ Wesley, *Primitive Physic*, 2-4

⁷⁴ The Native Americans appeared extraordinarily healthy to their colonial European counterparts who conversely seemed chronically stricken with illnesses. A contemporary historian of the colonial period assessed in 1714 that the Indians’ cures were “too many to repeat” and advocated intermarrying with Indians in order to have greater access to their bounty of botanical healing secrets. In his opinion, this would achieve “a true Knowledge of all the Indian’s Sill in Medicine and Surgery.” See Virgil J. Vogel, *American Indian Medicine*, (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 52-54; Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 49

⁷⁵ Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 49-50

the shift from midwives to physicians began in the middle class and completely transformed the medical profession by 1820. Startlingly, in 1815 the Philadelphia city directory listed 21 women and 23 men as practicing midwifery, but only four years later the numbers had changed to only 13 women and 42 men.”⁷⁶

Just as women who held traditional healing roles found themselves boxed out of the growing medical profession but went on to find acceptance in the alternative medical movements, so too did slaves find kinship. Sharla Fett demonstrates that “two views of health operated on antebellum plantations.”⁷⁷ Building on work by Todd Savitt, Fett explores a wide range of healing practices across the American South that included black midwives, herbalists, African “Root Doctors” and Black “Conjurers,” each reflecting their own complicated cosmological orientations and beliefs.⁷⁸ Fett also shows that the deployment of medical information among health care providers did not limit itself to the process of “cultural sedimentation” that Starr describes, wherein knowledge trickles down from the elite classes to settle into and affect the thinking of the masses, but also like oxygen trapped among the sediment, knowledge bubbled up.⁷⁹ Therefore the Thomsonians’ openness to traditional and alternative approaches to healing put them in intellectual proximity to Native and African thinking which made it easier to form relationships with Free Blacks and slaves.⁸⁰ In addition to adopting the traditional

⁷⁶ See Catherine M. Scholten, “On the Importance of the Obstetric Art’: Changing Customs of Childbirth in American, 1760-1825,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, (Summer, 1977): 427-45; Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 49-50

⁷⁷ Sharla M. Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health and Power on Southern Slave Plantations*, (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 34

⁷⁸ Todd Lee Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1978; reprint 2002)

⁷⁹ Starr’s thinking reflects the work of Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), 200; For Starr on “cultural sedimentation” in American Medicine, see Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 47

⁸⁰ On Indian Doctors being in high regard, and higher than white doctors because they could actually affect good health with their greater knowledge of local healing herbs and plants and how to apply them: see Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health and Power on Southern Slave Plantations*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 62, 64, 98-99, 218; Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 48-49; Importantly, Cotton Mather Cotton Mather also believed Indians to be sacred healers who understood natively how to interpret the natural plants that abounded in America,

healing virtues of Indian and African root doctors, the Thomsonians' pursuit of plantation health care as an enterprise put them in close physical proximity with blacks — and in competition with Cartwright. This percussively throbbing community of domestic, alternative and regular physicians crowded the field of influence on which Cartwright waged his war for medical authority. Cartwright engaged in a tripartite effort: to thwart medical democracy, assert Southern medical authority and confirm planter superiority.

Conversely Thomsonians built a confederacy with groups who stood normally outside of traditional fortresses of power. Those alliances amassed an egalitarian juggernaut that threatened Cartwright's dwindling sense of authority. Freeman Johnson, who rented offices to the alternative medical practitioners, also took their medicine. On one occasion Johnson indicated that he had fallen "Sick with a Cold and had Taken some Thomsonian Medicine Last night. Business was dull, Quite so, in the Shop. Nothing new that I know of."⁸¹ Johnson believed that the vegetable remedies provided a great secret to good health, so he took note in having taken the medicine in a matter of fact way, without any of the reprobation with which he reacted to the possibility of having to take the harsher calomel.⁸² Thomsonians claimed that their vapor baths and vegetable-based medicines were "simple and consistent" and in fact were the "AMERICAN SYSTEM" for preserving health and life. Thomsonians implored, "Life is Heat; every abstraction from heat is Disease; and the entire absence of heat, or cold, is—DEATH." In addition Samuel Thomson and his followers could actually verify at least the originality of his medical system because they held a federally issued patent for it, the first

their land; see Richard H. Shryock and Otto T. Beall, Jr., *Cotton Mather: First Significant Figure in American Medicine*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1954), 28,46;

⁸¹ William Johnson, *William Johnson's Natchez: The ante-bellum diary of a free Negro* 1, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 363

⁸² See the "Medical Notice" of Doctors Harden and Lawrence in the *Natchez, Free Trader*, June 3, 1836; see also Thomas L. Nichols, *Forty Years of American Life, 1821-1861*, (New York, 1937; reprint of 1874 edition of volume first published in 1864)

patent issued for medication in the United States.⁸³ The allure of being attended to by a physician whose work had been guaranteed by the Federal government lent legitimacy and great popularity to the Thomsonians' system. The stamp of federal approval meant something to the public mind: by 1822 he had published his *New Guide to Health* and by 1839 Thomson's son accounted that he and his father had sold over 100,000 family rights to Thomson's system. It was likely to Cartwright's chagrin that Thomson acquired his patent from President-turned-abolitionist John Quincy Adams himself. Lurking in the rear sections of a rapidly increasing number of city newspapers, these and other "patent medicine" cures often heightened common readers' sense of independence and choice in health care.⁸⁴

In 1844 another Free Black man, James Still wrote that he purchased a book on "medical botany" from which he learned to prepare medicines for his family. Given that he achieved some success and gained a local reputation as a knowledgeable healer, an initial exchange of "sassafras roots" for his hemorrhoid cure put him in business. To make his mixture to cure "the piles" he recorded carving a mortar from wood and using it with a stone to grind the herbs and, "having prepared the remedy, I took it to him, and it had the desired effect." Still recorded that, "In a few days he was well. I was pleased, and so was he." The lay-healer reflected also on his new-found role: "It did not occur to me at this time however, that I was practicing medicine. I thought I was but doing a friendly service to a fellow-being." Thereby, Dr. Still began his benevolence and established himself as a viable medical practitioner.⁸⁵

Cartwright Rejects the Thomsonians

The very system that brought Freeman Johnson in closer proximity to alternative medicines,

⁸³ After very public trial brought him fame in 1809 Thomson patented his system in 1813 which enabled him to sell rights in order to use his approach. See Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 49

⁸⁴ James Harvey Young, "American Medical Quackery in the age of the Common Man," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47:4 (March 1961): 579-593; see also Neil Harris, *Humbug: The Art of T. Barnum*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981)

⁸⁵ Dr. James Still, *Early Recollections and life of Dr. James Still*, (1877; reprint ed., New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 77

druggists and Thomsonians revealed a rude awakening to Cartwright and other university-trained doctors who had lost both legitimacy and any claims to efficacy. The old guard “regular physicians” validity had been established but not yet secured. What Cartwright attempted to do was to establish some sense of the legitimacy and transparency, and to that end he deployed the sciences of anatomy and what he called “medical statistics.” After warning young medical school students of the importance of studying anatomy over other life sciences Cartwright lectured that “Besides the other valuable uses of numerical analysis applied to the investigation of morbid actions I look upon it as one of the most effectual weapons which physicians can use to overthrow quackery of all kinds.”⁸⁶ Since he and Thomson believed in the same Hippocratic physiological system, Cartwright chose to expose what he determined to be Thomson’s short-sighted methodology by using a new science to which Thomson had not been exposed—statistics. He shared with the medical class in Missouri the threat the Thomsonians posed back home in Natchez:

Of late years, empiricism has increased to so alarming an extent, and the consumption of patented medicines, and other quack nostrums, has become so great in the Mississippi Valley, that unless something be done to arrest its progress, it threatens to drive men of learning and talent out of the regular practice of medicine, to other pursuits for a livelihood.⁸⁷

The term “*nostrum medicinus*” means “our medicine” and Cartwright’s fervent push against medical democracy exhibits how, although he prided himself as a Jacksonian dedicated to a “herrenvolk” democracy of white male rule, he stratified that hierarchy even further by insisting that the learned shepherd the unlearned.⁸⁸ Threatened by the popular medicines Cartwright rejected Thomson’s attempt to link his steamy cures back to the ancient Greeks. He charged, “Hippocrates refuted the theory that

⁸⁶ Cartwright, “Lecture of Dr. Cartwright, of Natchez Delivered before the students of the Medical Department of the University of Missouri—On Numerical Analysis Applied to the Investigation of Morbid Actions,” *Missouri Medical & Surgical Journal* 3:9 (January 1848): 241

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ “Nostrum” is a term that means our medicine; it is early 17th century: from Latin, used in the sense ‘(something) of our own making,’ neuter of *noster* ‘our,’ *Oxford English Dictionary*

cold is death and heat life, on which Thompson built his steam system.”⁸⁹ After 1840 Cartwright lectured widely on the Thomsonian threat to the regular system.

In St. Louis Dr. J. N. McDowell of the University of the State of Missouri invited Cartwright to deliver a lecture “before the Medical Class, in the anatomical amphitheatre.” Cartwright called out his competitors as “hordes of imposters” and “makers of patent medicines” and degraded them as “ignorant of all medical knowledge.” After declaring that “Empiricism and empirical nostrums have greatly tended to shorten the term of human existence in the Valley of the Mississippi,” he determined that one only had to “turn to the United States *census*, and apply the numerical method on the data there afforded us, to perceive that the term of human life is much shorter west, than it is east, of the Allegheny mountains.” Cartwright heralded his lecture as “Statistical Medicine, or Numerical Analysis applied to the Investigation of Morbid Actions.”⁹⁰ The editors of the *Missouri Medical & Surgical Journal* reflected, “We had the pleasure, a week or two since, of listening to an able and instructive lecture by Dr. Cartwright, of Natchez, Mississippi on Statistical Medicine.” The editors acted as a vector for Cartwright to proselytize further his efforts against the Thomsonians and to spread the virtues of a novel approach to medical light that he had imported from France: statistical analysis.⁹¹ The editors noted: “The author stated that *Statistical Medicine* is the most powerful weapon in the hands of the regular profession, to put down quackery.” His editors went on to summarize Cartwright’s findings by “giving one striking example, (of many,) which be brought forward to prove his position.”

⁸⁹ Cartwright, “Lecture of Dr. Cartwright, of Natchez Delivered before the students of the Medical Department of the University of Missouri—On Numerical Analysis Applied to the Investigation of Morbid Actions,” *Missouri Medical & Surgical Journal* 3:9 (January 1848): 241-246, for citation see 241; see also Cartwright, *Statistical Medicine On Numerical Analysis Applied to the Investigation of Morbid Actions*, (Louisville, Kentucky, 1848), 16

⁹⁰ Cartwright, “Lecture of Dr. Cartwright, of Natchez Delivered before the students of the Medical Department of the University of Missouri—On Numerical Analysis Applied to the Investigation of Morbid Actions,” *Missouri Medical & Surgical Journal* 3:9 (January 1848): 241-246; and continued in Cartwright, “Lecture of Dr. Cartwright of Natchez,” *Missouri Medical & Surgical Journal* 3:11 (March 1848); and then concluded in Cartwright, “Lecture of Dr. Cartwright of Natchez,” *Missouri Medical & Surgical Journal* 3:12 (April 1848): 265-271

⁹¹ Cartwright and his family spent eighteen months in Europe from 1836-1837. On statistical analysis as a French innovation in the attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of therapeutic techniques, see Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 55

The article recounted Cartwright's effort to go to the register's office and compare the sexton's bills of mortality for the ten preceding years (1824-1834) and then compared that with the five years since the "reformers" began their practice (1835-1840). Cartwright warned his St Louis audience that, "The pretend reformation, as I said before, began in Natchez in the year 1834, and before the close of 1840, the unerring truths of statistical medicine proved, that under its influence the mortality had nearly, if not quite, doubled."⁹²

In addition to rejecting the Thomsonians' view that heat served as the basis for all medical cures Cartwright scolded the apothecaries themselves for selling the patent medicines and nostrums merely to make a profit. He remarked to his St. Louis audience that "an extensive market has been opened up in this great Valley, and that it has become so extensive a consumer of patent medicines, as already to have enriched a host of imposters at the expense of so many valuable lives."⁹³ Cartwright adduced that "A single individual pill vender boasts that he has sold in the West, a million and a half boxes of patent pills, at a dollar and a half a box." Dr. Daniel Drake, founder of the Medical College of Ohio, published Cartwright's first essays on southern medical distinctiveness as well as his first writings on medical statistics in the *Western Journal of Medicine & Surgery*, which he edited.⁹⁴ In his St. Louis lecture Cartwright reflected on his mentor's assessment of the "patent medicine" deluge:

Never was I struck more forcibly with the extent of the consumption of patent medicines in the West, than from a remark by Professor Drake. I suggested to him the propriety of physicians patronizing no apothecary establishment which dealt in weak nostrums. He replied, that it would be impracticable, because the largest portion of the profits of the apothecaries is derived from the sale of nostrums and patent medicines.⁹⁵

Drake formed his solid response from the fact that most of the patent medicines produced during the

⁹² Cartwright, "Lecture of Dr. Cartwright, of Natchez," 3:12 (April 1848): 269

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ In addition to securing funding for the first state medical school Drake secured also from the state legislature funds for establishing Ohio's Commercial Hospital and Lunatic Asylum, which at its founding boasted to be the only hospital in the nation devoted exclusively to teaching. See Emmet Field Horine, ed., *Pioneer Life in Kentucky: 17785-1800*. (New York, 1948), xviii-xx; Harry D. Shapiro and Zane I Miller, eds., *Physician to the West: Selected Writings of Daniel Drake on Science and Society*, (Lexington, Kentucky, 1970), 159-160, xxxvi-xxxvii

⁹⁵ Cartwright, "Lecture of Dr. Cartwright, of Natchez," 270

1830s and 1840s came from the North and into the South; that meant that northerners were stimulating southern appetites, as well as regulating their minds and commerce. The number of medicinal patents issued by southern states were: Missouri, 31; Kentucky, 23; Georgia, 20; Virginia, 18; Louisiana, 17; Maryland, 13; Tennessee, 11; Alabama, North Carolina and Texas, 10; Mississippi, 7; South Carolina, 3; Florida, 2; and Arkansas, 1. By contrast the number of patents issued in Northern states were: New York, 165; Pennsylvania, 75, Ohio, 65; Illinois, 48; and Massachusetts, 40.⁹⁶ When one takes into account the number of medicinal patents issued in the South versus those at the North, with the exception of Georgia and Louisiana, the states in the Deep South produced the fewest nostrums.⁹⁷

Cartwright stressed a regional distinctiveness in the unidirectional nostrum trade that made Southerners the repositories of Northern ambition. Calling the consumption of patent medicines in “the West” “enormous,” Cartwright assessed that the apothecaries made only 20 percent on the sales of “nostrums and pills” and 100 percent on compounding medicines for physicians’ prescriptions.” He commented “More than five persons, therefore, use patent medicines for every one individual who uses the regular articles of the *Materia Medica*.” Then Cartwright proposed to his class of medical students “If apothecaries will not cease to pander to empiricism, it behooves physicians everywhere, in my opinion, to take medicine back into their own hands, and to cut all connection with apothecaries entirely.”⁹⁸

⁹⁶ U.S. Patent Office, Subject Matter from 1790 to 1873, Inclusive, com M.D. Leggett (Washington, D.C.: Patent Office, 1874), 863-64, 912-18, 975, 1046-47, 1240, and 1936-38. For commentary on medicinal patent granting before 1849, see House Report 52, 30th Cong., 2d sess. (1849); see also Lyman F. Kebler, “United States Patents Granted for Medicines during the Pioneer Years of the Patent Office,” *Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association* 24 (1035): 485-89; see also Todd L. Savitt and James Harvey Young, eds. *Disease and Distinctiveness in the American South*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 190, note # 42

⁹⁷ In a similar way the British patent medicine movement influenced the consumption of “nostrums” in America; see George B. Griffenhagen and James Harvey Young, “Old English Patent Medicines in America,” *Contributions from the Museum of Science and Technology*, United States National Museum Bulletin 218 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1959), 155-86; see also Roger A. Hambridge, “ ‘Empiricomany, or an Infatuation in Favour of Empiricism or Quackery’: The Socio-economics of Eighteenth Century Quackery,” in *Literature and Science and Medicine* (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, Univ. of Cal. at Los Angeles, 1982), 45-102

⁹⁸ Cartwright, “Lecture of Dr. Cartwright, of Natchez,” 270

Although the apothecaries technically practiced a trade in drug selling, since the early eighteenth century they held the right to prescribe medicine without consulting physicians. They had even more authority in that physicians' prescriptions were to be taken to the Apothecary to be compounded.⁹⁹ Cartwright suggested that breaking the Thomsonians' stronghold on the apothecaries might work, imploring in his lecture to young medical students that "this they can do by clubbing together, and importing their own medicines directly from first hands."¹⁰⁰ Here one has insight into the kinds of professional turbulences that led the regular allopathic doctors to ban together and create the American Medical Association in 1847.

⁹⁹ W. F. Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 2006), 6

¹⁰⁰ Cartwright, "Lecture of Dr. Cartwright, of Natchez," 270

Chapter 3: Mississippi’s “Free Negro Pandemonium”¹

Self-Help and Private Judgment

In Freeman William Johnson’s quest to exercise private judgment as a “mulatto” businessman in Natchez, he experienced an “intersectionality” similar to that of healers who sought to trade freely and exercise private judgment in health care.² Many things at once, Johnson was a local “mixed-race” land-owner and slave-holder who thrived in the 1830s at a time when his white counterparts struggled to recover from bankruptcy. Johnson worked as a healer too, and the tensions between medical school graduates versus non-graduates, members of medical societies versus non-members and licensed versus non-licensed practitioners all faded in comparison to the general quest for self-reliance. However any particular healer might identify him or herself in relationship to the allopath, the individual’s rights to act according to one’s own will became the central theme that galvanized alternatives. Given the presence and prominence of men and women like Freeman Johnson, in addition to the wide variety of alternative medical practitioners, the success of free blacks in Natchez challenged and re-defined traditional lines of authority centered on property, race and wealth. Johnson and the free black community embodied the main threat during the 1830s and went on to become a source of Cartwright’s obsession in the 1840s.

Since the Druggists often mixed together or compounded unpatented medicines and prescribed for the sick at their own will, they, along with the Thomsonians, provided local physicians with considerable competition; a situation that proved profitable for Johnson.³ Johnson also left a record of purchasing items from pharmacists regularly for his own use, from blister plasters, castor oil to “Sperrits of Nitre,” “Seidlitz powers” and “Liquorish Root.” Johnson’s biographers show that he also

¹ Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright, “The South’s Position in the Union,” *De Bow’s Review* 3 (1853): 57

² On the role of “intersectionality” in determining actual freedom, see Kimberle Crenshaw, *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings* (New York: The New Press, 2014)

³ Davis and Hogan, *Barber of Natchez*, 269

purchased “Wright’s Indian Vegetable Pills, Rowand’s Improved Tonic Mixture, Doctor Cannon’s Celebrated Fever and Ague Remedy, Doctor Hossack’s Medicated Lozenges, Compound Syrup of Sarsaparilla, and Beal’s Hair Restorative.”⁴

Johnson, as a “Free Negro” and the Thomsonians, as “alternative” practitioners both wanted reprieve from over-rule and micromanagement, so Johnson had sympathy with them and consulted them. But Johnson also demonstrated a clear record of fraternizing Dr. Hogg, Dr. Hubbard, Dr. Merrill, Dr, Ayers; each conducted business with him and each of whom served on a variety of prominent boards in Mississippi. Dr. Ayers, who lectured on the need for cleanliness was a regular customer at William Johnson’s bathhouse and when it came to needing signatures on his employees “certificates of good character,” these are some of the men to whom Johnson turned to sign those petitions. In addition to renting offices to local practitioners and indulging bathing physicians, William Johnson had some history with local medical institutions in that he owned a lot that had once served as a hospital when the Mississippi territory was still under Spanish rule.⁵ The Thomsonians who began to trickle into town increased considerably and by 1839 they sponsored a “Natchez Botanic Hospital.”

Despite the attempt by medical censoring boards to change the proliferation of alternative medical practitioners who produced home-brewed cures and trafficking in the trade of nostrums, “Druggists” continued to prescribe medicine generally without any prior authorization from physicians. Dentists and general practitioners sold a variety of patent medicines, paints, cold creams, fruit trees, white lead, grapevines and shrubbery thought to hold medicinal value.⁶ Leeches proved to be a popular remedy as well; practitioners would apply imported leeches to the nape of the neck and its purgative

⁴ Ibid., 186

⁵ Johnson’s lot had belonged at one time to Don Andres Gil who was a physician in the “Royal Hospital” during the Spanish Regime. However by the time Americans took over the land in 1798 the hospital had become inadequate. See Davis and Hogan, “Plasters, Pills and Purgatives,” in Davis and Hogan, *Barber of Natchez*, 178-187

⁶ Ibid, 180

power was believed to cure multiple ills.⁷ Leeches were big business and allopathic as well as alternative medical practitioners each used them respectively. One druggist, P.H. McGraw advertised in the Natchez *Free Trader* that he had just received shipment of “French Leeches. Two thousand French Leeches, warranted of the best quality, imported and for sale.” Similarly W.H. Fox announced that he had “Leeches. Three hundred real Hungary Leeches just received and for sale.” William Johnson’s accounts showed that he had purchased four leeches for \$2.00 along with “blood sucking” aquatic worms for \$1.00.⁸

Freeman Johnson recorded several instances wherein he hired Dr. Hogg for his medical services — a mutual friend he shared with Cartwright — and some wherein he administered medication without the aid of a physician. When yellow fever broke out in 1837 Johnson elected to move his family to the country for a few months while the disease passed. Yellow fever generally struck more victims during the fall, particularly in September and October when Johnson relocated. On September 24 Johnson wrote, “I am in the Country Sound as a Dollar.” Charles, one of Johnson’s slaves, fell ill to the fever late that month and in mid-October Johnson himself took ill. Freeman Johnson also appears to have administered his own medication. He wrote, “I have been too sick to Hunt or go about...Last night I took a Dose of Calomel — the first I have taken for years — thank be to God for it.” One of the harshest and most heavily criticized of “Heroic” medicinal treatments proved to be the dangerous effects of calomel; a “few grains” of calomel made patients salivate while heavier doses of the cathartic mercurous chloride could be deadly.⁹ Johnson seemed to be thanking God for not having to take the bitter dosage more often than necessary. Since calomel is a derivative of mercury, yet common among allopaths, the Thomsonians made it their number one target when assailing what critics called the “Heroic Treatment.” After Johnson took the initial dose he recorded that although the sickness had

⁷ Ibid, 269

⁸ Ibid, 186

⁹ Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 42

nearly driven him to take more, he did not.¹⁰ His recorded response to the allopathic cure proved severe and revolting, a sharp comparison to his casual record of having taken some Thomsonian medicine mentioned above. Ultimately healing proves to be an effect of belief. After analyzing Americans' responses to three different cholera epidemics in the nineteenth century Rosenberg suggests that a complex interplay of ideas is involved in any healing process and along with Starr acknowledges that in most cases patients' agreed that health came from God not from doctors.¹¹ The best that any healer can do is to assist the powers of nature. When Johnson recovered — and without a further dose of calomel — he thanked, finally, “The Giver of all Good.”¹²

On multiple accounts Freeman Johnson elected to take power over his own body and that of his slaves, servants and family. After one physician had “prescribed some Powders” Johnson purchased the prescription and indicated that “They wer in 3 separate papers—they were to be given in a Little Sugar or Molasses—To repeat One Every Third hour until they were all taken—continued takeing the Sperrits of Nitre until the Child makes Dilleau.” After detailing the prescription Johnson indicated, “— This medicine was not taken.”¹³ Alternately, in another instance he recorded: “I was quite sick today and took a dose of medicine, 6 pills.”¹⁴

In addition to doing things his way there were instances where Johnson opted clearly for allopathic physicians. There are fifteen entries in volume one of Johnson's diaries for business transactions of a medical nature where he consulted Cartwright's friend, “Dr. Hogg,” including an instance in which Johnson “sent for Dr Hogg to see the Baby.”¹⁵ After winning a settlement for what

¹⁰ Davis and Hogan, *Barber of Natchez*, 184

¹¹ Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866*, (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1962,1987); see also Rosenberg, “Belief and Ritual in Antebellum Medical Therapeutics, in Michael Warner and Janet A. Tighe, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Medicine and Public Health*, (Boston, 2001); Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 31, 36

¹² Davis and Hogan, *Barber of Natchez*, 184

¹³ Johnson, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 96

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 395

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 96

appeared to be unpaid rent Johnson wrote, “This Settlement is for five months up to the 9th of next month Leaving Out two weeks that He Lost, the amount of which is \$72.” With that settlement he recorded that “I Took Out \$52 for Doctors Bills that I paid out of the money--\$32 to Dr. Hogg & 20 Dollars to Dr. Hubbard” for medical care administered to him and his mother.¹⁶ In addition to Johnson’s relationship with Hogg he held an even more extensive financial relationship with Dr. Hubbard. There are eighteen references to Dr. Hubbard in Johnson’s journal, as Hubbard became one of Johnson’s principal debtors. In just over a nine month period during 1835 Dr. John M. Hubbard borrowed \$865 from Johnson and by March 11, 1837 had repaid a good deal of his debt through providing Johnson’s family with professional medical services.¹⁷ It was not until March 11, 1840 that Johnson recorded Dr. Hubbard squaring away the last of his accounts, which had included extensive shaving bills he had ongoing with the barber and moneylender.¹⁸ One record of Johnson’s indicated that Dr. Hubbard served as one of the esteemed “Selectmen” of Natchez.¹⁹ Given Freeman Johnson’s easy-going relationships with a variety of regular medical doctors as well as the druggists and Thomsonians it appears that, whatever medicines he and his family administered, he used his own private judgment to determine what he took, when he took it, who to consult about it and whether or not to reject that advice.

Struggles for Professional Legitimacy

Pushing against this tide of medical independence and free choice, Cartwright waged public and personal charges against the Thomsonians and dismissed them summarily as uneducated, unworthy men, tricksters who “deceived” the public and warped the image of regular doctors to ill effect. Cartwright demonstrated statistically the increased mortality rate in Natchez since the repeal of

¹⁶ Ibid, 185

¹⁷ Ibid, 68, note #12

¹⁸ See Ledger, 1835—39, 61-62; see also Ledger, 1837—41, 39, William Johnson Papers, University of Louisiana.

¹⁹ Johnson, *William Johnson’s Natchez*, 267

Mississippi's medical licensing law in 1834. He celebrated that statistics "undeceives the public" by substituting for the "caprices of the credulous," or the "partial and the prejudiced," the "unerring results of time and truth."²⁰ When the legislature rescinded that law, it granted the sect of Thomsonians legal standing to practice medicine and dispense medications in Natchez. He asserted that the primary problem was that the Thomsonians who had entered Natchez were unlearned men: "They prove that there is no short road to knowledge in medicine — no safety for the afflicted, but in the counsels of those who have patiently climbed the rugged hill of science — no reform to be found by descending lower, but by climbing higher."²¹ Cartwright envisioned his advocacy of regulation as a heroic fight, requiring bravery and steadfastness to thwart the ill effects of imposture and opportunism.²² He took pride in the profession to which he belonged and he wanted to convince the public that the waning profession still had relevance.

Cartwright was responding in part to the proliferation of profit-oriented medical schools which emerged after 1820, schools that he felt undervalued his "noble profession" and unleashed a whole host of quacks and impostors onto the public.²³ Starr shows that "Between 1810 and 1820 new schools were established in Baltimore, Lexington, and Cincinnati, and even in rural communities in Vermont and western New York." Additionally over the next three decades "the growth continued, until by 1850 there were forty-two schools in the United States at a time when there were three in all of France."²⁴ Daniel Drake, Cartwright's mentor and editor, complained as early as 1832 that:

²⁰ Cartwright, "Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez," 2

²¹ Ibid.

²² James Harvey Young, *Toadstool Millionaires: A Social History of Patent Medicines in America Before Federal Regulation*, (Princeton, 1961)

²³ On American medical education during the 1830s and 1840s, see John Duffy, *From Humors to Medical Science: A History of American Medicine*, 2nd ed., (Urbana, 1993), 130-150; William G. Rothstein, *American Medical Schools and the Practice of Medicine: A History* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1987); William G. Rothstein, *American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century*, (John Hopkins, 1972), 41-174; Kaufman, *American Medical Education: The Formative Years, 1765-1910*, (Greenwood Press, 1976), 36-108; for citation see Cartwright, "Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez," 2

²⁴ Starr, *Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 42

Laws which admit to the practice of medicine those who have not graduated, give man young men a passport to the confidence of the public, who do not deserve that confidence, and could not easily have acquired it without a license. Those, moreover, who rejected by boards of censors are, in most cases, sustained by the society on that very account.²⁵

Drake admitted the difficulty in establishing any authority at all “that society or even the profession will recognize.” Drake led the crusade for medical regulation and encouraged his mentee, Cartwright, to publish his long statistical analyses on how a failure to regulate the Thomsonians led to increased mortality in Natchez. Drake inspired in Cartwright the belief that the state alone should hold the capacity to license only graduates. William Rothstein argues, “Licensing boards also suffered from the same structural problems that plagued medical schools. Just as schools ere reluctant to flunk students and lose their graduation fees, so boards of censors hesitated to turn down applicants and lose their licensing fees.”²⁶ Medical schools in the first three decades of the nineteenth century were decidedly proprietary and usually owned by physicians who taught at the institution. It was customary for students to pay fees directly to their physician-instructors. Not only were tuition, standards of admission and graduation controlled by professors, states chartered the medical schools but often failed to oversee their operations or regulate the medical faculty. In summarizing the shaky state of medical regulation during the period, Starr concludes that, “In seeking to raise their status individually, physicians undermined it collectively.”²⁷

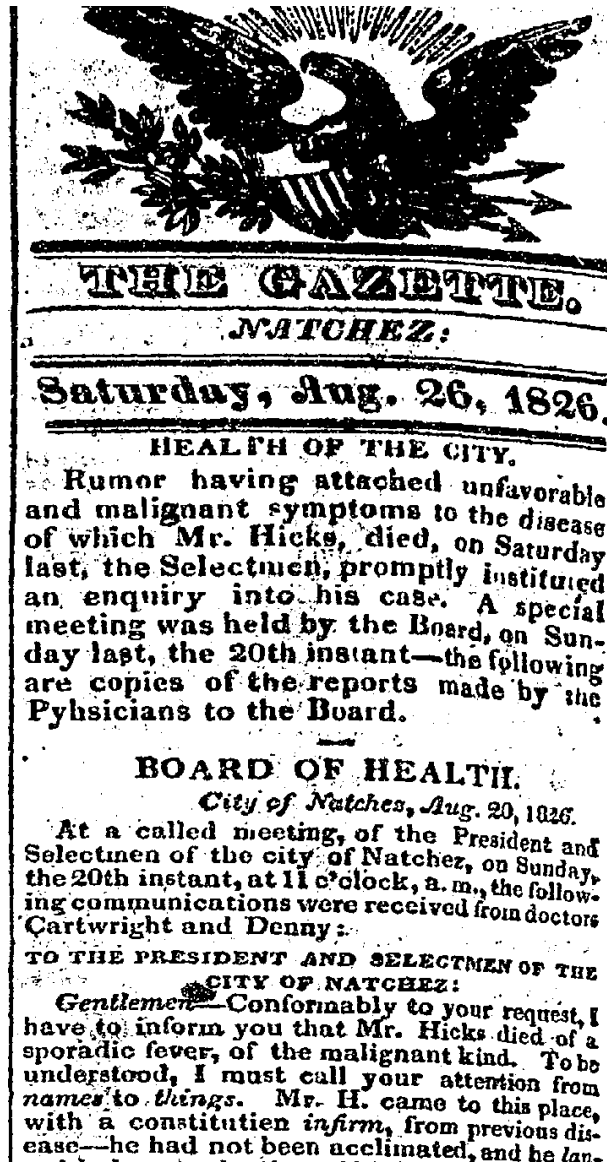
There are several indications that Cartwright enjoyed great medical authority in Natchez during the period that led up to the arrival of the Thomsonians in 1834. A public advisory which appeared in the August 26, 1826 issue of the *Natchez Gazette* shows that the group of city officials calling themselves the “Selectmen of the City of Natchez” consulted Cartwright in order to ward off a yellow

²⁵ Dr. Daniel Drake, *Practical Essays on Medical Education and the Medical Profession*, 1832; reprint edition, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1952), 91-93

²⁶ William Rothstein, *American Physicians of the Nineteenth Century*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 73, 75-9

²⁷ Starr, *Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 43-44

fever scare. Both Drs. J.A. Denny and Cartwright responded to the public concern over a sudden death from a “malignant fever,” a primary symptom typical among yellow fever victims. The notice read: “The case of disease which we visited yesterday under the care of Dr. Cartwright, has excited considerable alarm in the City:



“The Select Men” of Natchez determined that “It would be well to have a meeting of the Board tomorrow morning.”²⁸ I reprint the actual notice to give some sense of Cartwright’s prominence in the

²⁸ Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright and Dr. J.A. Denny, “Board of Health,” the Natchez Gazette, August 26, 1826

announcement and the severity of the situation. Cartwright stressed that readers must steady their senses in order to make fine distinctions between idols of the mind and actual, observation-based knowledge. He warned a wary and anxious public “To be understood, I must call your attention from *names to things*.” He also stressed that diseases differed “not only in *degree*, but in *kind*, from the prevailing disease” and therefore “cannot, with propriety be called by the names of such diseases.” [All original italics] Cartwright was explaining to citizens that although the disease from which Mr. Hicks suffered assumed the character of malignant or yellow fever, that he in fact “want[ed] some one or more of the leading features or symptoms of that disease.” Cartwright determined that the city was safe and that a non- “acclimated” Mr. Hicks brought the disease from which he perished with him when he arrived in Natchez.²⁹

During the 1830s regular physicians like Cartwright were threatened on two fronts: On the first front Cartwright fought from within his peer-group, combating medical reform and hopefully redirecting, what he called “new-comers” to the medical profession to enhance their regionally specific training. During these first decades of the nineteenth century most physicians possessed no bachelor's degree and most men practiced medicine without a medical degree; in 1817 nine schools granted degrees to 225 graduates.³⁰ The dilution of medical education was exasperated by the fact that medical school professors could earn eight times the average doctor's income by teaching, a fact that dissuaded raising standards for entrance requirements.³¹ The increased number of medical schools ripped away at the foundations of professional power that the older generation of physicians enjoyed. Students demanded shorter curriculum and were granted it. As these new schools gained prestige and state support they began to modify and sometimes overrule older medical licensing legislation formerly

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution*, 111

³¹ William Barlow and David O. Powell, “A Dedicated Medical Student: Solomon Mordecai, 1819-1822,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 7, (1987): 382-384

governed by state and regional committees. Regular physicians attempted to maintain their power by retrofitting medical licensing laws which determined who could or could not have a license to practice.

Another demonstration of Cartwright's respectability, this time at a national level, appeared in an 1826 issue of the Hartford's *Connecticut Courant* listed Cartwright's awards under an article entitled "Medical Literary Intelligence. The article mentioned that the proprietor of the *Medical Recorder* offered "two premiums, of one hundred dollars each, to the best essay on *pneumonia biliosa*" which went to "Dr. Cartwright of Natchez." It also cited from the "transactions of the Medical Society of Virginia" of which Cartwright became a member eventually, in 1843. The *Connecticut Courant* listed also Cartwright's affiliation with a Baltimore-based medical society, citing that "The prize offered by the Medical Society of the state of Maryland, for an essay on cholera infantum, has been awarded to Dr. Cartwright of Natchez, author of several prize essays published in the *Medical Recorder*."³²

Another indication that Cartwright had begun to publish widely his views on Southern medicine is reflected in his ongoing relationship with Dr. Daniel Drake. After moving to Natchez Mississippi in 1822 Cartwright's interest in climate-specific medicine caught Drake's attention and he reviewed Cartwright's article on "The use of iodine in certain infections occurring in the South" in the *Western Journal of Medical and Physical Sciences*. In the *Journal* Drake referred to Cartwright as "an ingenious and indefatigable physician."³³ In 1827 the *American Medical Recorder* commented on Cartwright's "valuable discovery respecting the diseased state of the *grangolina* and nerves from the

³² Hartford *Connecticut Courant*, July 24, 1826. For the award-winning essays cited, see "Samuel A. Cartwright, of Natchez, Miss.," "Essay on the Pathology and Treatment of Cholera Infantum," *American Medical Recorder* 10 (1826); (Awarded \$100 from the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland); and Cartwright, "Whether the Veins Perform the Function of Absorption," Awarded his second \$50 Gold Medal for the Harvard Boylston Prize on August, 7 1826, *American Medical Recorder* 41 (1826)

³³ Cartwright, "Use of Iodine in Certain Infections Occurring in the South," was reviewed by the *Western Journal of Medical and Physical Sciences*, edited by Dr. Daniel Drake, (1826)

spinal marrow.”³⁴ By 1830 Cartwright had already won high praise by a variety of medical societies at the North and at the South.

Cartwright sought out association and camaraderie with other physicians and they reciprocated by offering him honorary membership in their own medical societies and other college-based organizations. A Kentucky-based College wrote Cartwright and invited him to participate in its society and indicates another example of his high esteem.³⁵ The letter stated “Dear Sir, I have the pleasure of informing you that the “Deinologian Literary Society” of Centre College have been induced, from a consideration of your worth, to elect you to an Honorary Member of this body.”³⁶ A letter from 1843 demonstrated again Cartwright’s induction into what became a prominent medical governing agency. It read, “Dear Sir, I am interested to inform you that you were elected an Honorary Member of the Medical Society of Virginia At its annual meeting on the 19th of this month.”³⁷ The Medical Society of Virginia was founded in 1820 and incorporated in 1824. From it came the State Board of Health, the State Board of Medical Examiners and the Board of Medicine.

Membership in professional societies contributed to what it meant to have expertise in the first decades of the nineteenth century and the movement of bringing the light of science to undeceive the people peaked with the rise of democratic thinking that came to head in the decades between Jefferson and Jackson. Membership in societies proved to be part of Cartwright’s pitch for accreditation and legitimacy. Cartwright argued that he and his comrades were part of the expert class by asserting an intellectual hierarchy and drawing lines of demarcation between himself and “ignorant” practitioners — notions that swayed against the democratic momentum in Jackson’s era of the “Common Man.”

On the second front, in addition to trouble within the profession it has been demonstrated above

³⁴ Marshall, “Samuel A. Cartwright and States Rights Medicine,” 4-5

³⁵ Letter from the “Deinologian Society” of Centre College, Danville Kentucky to Dr. Cartwright offering honorary membership, December, 16 1833; Cartwright Family Papers, Louisiana State University

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Medical Society of Virginia to Dr. S. A. Cartwright, 1843; Cartwright Family Papers, Louisiana State University

that regular physicians like Cartwright also had to ground themselves against the attacks of the new alternative medical practitioners. Armed with seductive advertisements for patent medicines, these advocates of medical democracy attacked from outside the profession by convincing the public that their heady nostrums and seductive powders provided more effective cures. Combined with the internal tensions, rival medical practices threatened traditional ones and led to fierce competition between medical schools, a competition exacerbated by rising sectional conflicts that led to a combustible scenario.³⁸ Each of these factors merged to create a serious breach in public confidence in the medical profession, a loss of faith that disturbed Cartwright and led eventually to the formal professionalization of the medical community.

Cartwright saw himself as part of the orthodox or correct view and he determined that anyone who operated outside of his orthodox view as “fanatical” and dangerous. Cartwright countered Thomson’s conceit to call his medicine the “reformed school” because he argued that the unlearned practitioners stood on no solid ground. Thomsonians lacked the competence to recognize good scientific conclusions should they present themselves — and they would have to present themselves because the Thomsonians did not act in the comparative traditions of science and isolated themselves from the possibility of experimentation and discovery. Cartwright wrote, “The delusion lay in the assumption that the new or reformed school had any medical knowledge to protect.” He charged that even though the Thomsonians claimed a basis in the Hippocratic approach that “The reformed school, so called, being founded on old exploded theories, under new names.”³⁹ He elaborated:

The excitement, which of late years, has been kindled throughout the United States against the medical profession under the popular catch word "reform" not only struck at physicians, but at some of the most valuable medicines of the *materia medica*.

Physicians derived most medicines from natural sources, usually plants herbs and minerals. Since

³⁸ Ibid, 150

³⁹ Cartwright, “Lecture of Dr. Cartwright,” 269

Thomsonians viewed that only plants should be the source of medical cure Cartwright wrote that “The medicines, most commonly used by physicians, particularly all the mineral preparations, were denounced as poisons,” he fought against the view put forth by Thomsonians that the allopathic physicians were “a set of men who followed the avocation of poisoning their fellow citizens for mere gain.” Cartwright countered that instead of operating from a “species of infatuation,” the Thomsonians injured the public health; that “so far from being useful to the public were more mischievous than an equal number of assassins or highway robbers.”⁴⁰ He analyzed that “Cobblers left their blasts, blacksmiths their anvils, the barber threw aside his shaving-brush, and even grey headed tailors jumped down from the board to become reformers in physic.”⁴¹

Freeman Johnson’s reputation in the City of Natchez made him a high profile figure and it is possible that Cartwright referred here to Johnson, known widely as “The Barber of Natchez,” who after all did compound his own medicines. As a barber Johnson was no stranger to mixing a variety of botanical and medicinal substances for use in his multiple barbershops and bathhouses. He recorded notes for “recipes for colony water,” for use in his barbershop that included “Bergamot, lavender, rosemary, cloves, other spices etc. in 2 gallons alcohol,” as well as recipes for Shaving Soap,” which included:

5 pounds Opldoc Soap, Salisoda 1 Ounce.
2 tble Spoonful of Turpentine, 1 ditto
Hartshorn,
1 tea Spoonful Spirits of wine.
Add to 6 quarts of boiling water⁴²

One level of power reveals itself in the fact that Johnson earned money from whites. Renting property to whites reveals an entirely different order of authority. An item in the November 27, 1837 issue of

⁴⁰ Cartwright, “Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez,” 2-3

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² “Miscellaneous Manuscript notes and recipes,” in Box 1, folder 8 of the William T. Johnson and Family Memorial Papers, 1793-1937, Mss# 529, Louisiana State University

the Natchez *Courier* indicated that one of Johnson's clients, N.L. Williams opened a new "Book and Drug Store," in the building that Johnson owned.⁴³ Johnson records one physical altercation between the druggist and his carpenter: "They had a pretty sharp fight but was at Last Separated by the bystanders, I herd Mr. P. Gemmell walk past my shop door Cursing N. L. Williams. He was about to Flake him and did attempt to Jump the counter after him and was prevented by Mr. Neibut. He cursed him for a d—d scounderell and a greate many more things." The Natchez *Free Trader* carried details of the Affair.⁴⁴

Peter Gemmell moved from Scotland to Natchez in 1830 at the age of twenty-five and by 1837 he ran a construction business, "Neibert and Gemmell."⁴⁵ Apparently Williams contracted the builders for the completion of his drugstore on Johnson's property — an agreement about which he had become impatient. Johnson recorded that; "Today Mr. N.L. Williams Came To me To know if I had made any arrangement with Mr. Gemmell. I told him that I had not but was waiting for a title for the wall from Mr. Gemmell and he Said Mr. Gemmell Cannot give you a title for the wall, for he has treated me very shabbly Lately."⁴⁶ Johnson's tenant appeared in and out of Mississippi and Arkansas courts and one Superior Court case dated 1837 makes it clear that Williams' entered into business with other medicine-minded men who's store sold "a valuable assortment of books, drugs and store furniture." The case records "that Jackson D. Williams and William Ballantyne were partners with N.L. Williams in the ownership of the said goods, and that they had no visible property other than the said goods, and that Dawson relied solely on his lien on said goods as security for his rent."⁴⁷ N.L. Williams' rough approach and questionable respectability reflected some of the character traits that Cartwright assailed

⁴³ Natchez *Courier*, November 27, 1837; cited in Johnson, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 181

⁴⁴ Natchez *Free Trader*, June 3, 9, 1837

⁴⁵ Mills Lane, Van Jones Martin, *Architecture of the Old South: Miss. & Alabama*, (Abbeville Press, 1989), 62

⁴⁶ Johnson, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 181

⁴⁷ *Reports of Cases, decided in the Superior Court of Chancery of the State of Mississippi*, John D. Freeman, Superior Court of Chancery, State of Mississippi, (1844), 99-100

most in the Thomsonians.

Finally it is clear that part of Cartwright's national medical authority came from his early political prominence. Speaking to Cartwright's political prowess, an announcement from Baltimore dated May, 21 1835 listed Cartwright as one of two delegates from the state of Mississippi elected to attend the National Democratic Convention. The article was entitled "Proceedings of a Convention of Delegates appointed by the Democratic Republicans in the several states of the Union, assembled in the City of Baltimore, May, 1835, for the purpose of nominating candidates for the offices of President and Vice President of the United States" and listed Cartwright along with the other Mississippi delegate "John B. Nevitt"⁴⁸ In addition to earning local acclaim in Mississippi, the Richmond, Virginia's *Gazette* announced on Friday, June 5, 1835 that "The following gentlemen have been invited to attend the general examination of the Cadets of the Military Academy: Gen. Samuel Milrey, of Indiana and Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright, of Mississippi."⁴⁹ The John Nevitt who accompanied Cartwright to represent Mississippi was the same "Mr. Neibut" William Johnson referred to who had broken up the scuffle between the druggist and the carpenter in Johnson's shop.⁵⁰

When Cartwright made the comment about barbers "throwing aside their shaving brush" and becoming "reformers in physic," he invoked the tension surrounding a long-held distinction between surgeons and barbers.⁵¹ The professional challenges Cartwright faced during the 1830s reached as far back as fourteenth century England when the "Barber's Company" competed with the more exclusive "Guild of Surgeons." The Barbers considered themselves general craftsmen who practiced blood-letting, dentistry and minor surgery in addition to haircutting and shaving. At that time there were far

⁴⁸ Richmond, Virginia *Gazette*, Tuesday, May, 21, 1835

⁴⁹ Richmond, Virginia *Gazette*, Friday, June 5, 1835

⁵⁰ Natchez *Free Trader*, June 3, 9 (1837)

⁵¹ The term "barber" originated from the "Worshipful Company of Barbers of London" who elected (in 1308) Richard le Barber as its first known master. The organization is over 700 years old and "although having lost close links with the barbering profession, the company continues to thrive as a livery company active in educational and health-related charitable work." Barry Jackson, "Barber-Surgeons," *Journal of Medical Biography* 16 (2008): 65

fewer medical operations, and those mostly included amputations, lithotomy and bone-setting.⁵² The Surgeons viewed themselves as better trained and resented the overlap between barbering and surgery.⁵³ From 1540 – 1745 the “United Company of Barbers and Surgeons” governed over the activities of both professions. The British Crown separated formally Barbers from Surgeons when it created the “London Company of Surgeons” in 1745.

Cartwright’s interests in education and professional training reflected the same scientific spirit that produced the Royal College, an institution that stood as the model for American medical societies. By 1790 the most famous surgeon of the century, John Hunter, began to encourage other surgeons in Britain to think of themselves not only as different from Barbers, but as scientific professionals instead of mere craftsmen.⁵⁴ Following Hunter’s death Parliament purchased the Surgeon’s considerable collection and in 1800 the Crown granted the Surgeons a royal charter to establish the Royal College of Surgeons. The transition from mere barber to Surgeon to the Royal College of Surgeons in London brought about the “tangible embodiment of upward mobility” that their class desired in the form of political influence and social authority.⁵⁵ Therefore even at its beginnings in the eighteenth century the professions came to prominence as an outcome of a struggle for cultural authority as well as for social mobility.⁵⁶

Cartwright’s great professional confidence came from the certitude and prestige of his own training. Not only had he studied directly with Dr. Benjamin Rush — who he called the “American Hippocrates”— but also by opting to go north from Virginia and attend the University of Pennsylvania

⁵² The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “lithotomy” as the “surgical removal of a calculus (stone) from the kidney or urinary tract.” With the introduction of stirrups on obstetrics, physicians referred to the lithotomy position as “a supine position of the body with the legs separated and flexed, and supported in raised stirrups.”

⁵³ Barry Jackson, “Barber-Surgeons,” *Journal of Medical Biography* 16 (2008): 65

⁵⁴ W. F. Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 2006), 5

⁵⁵ In 1843 this group would become the “Royal College of Surgeons of England”; *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 17

he subjected himself to the most rigorous medical training available in the United States at the time.⁵⁷ However during the first three decades of the nineteenth century the proliferation of for-profit medical schools' cheap, quick doctorates diluted considerably the value of the medical degree as well as the public's trust in the regular profession.⁵⁸ Cartwright argued that he respected the scientific method because he had been trained in a medical college, received certification from a medical board of censors and operated as a functioning member of a number of medical societies who had legislative influence.

It is for these assorted reasons — status, cultural authority, honor, livelihood — that Cartwright led the local charge against the eager contingent of Thomsonians who arrived in Natchez in the 1830s to take advantage of the recent change in law. In his “Remarks on Statistical Medicine, contrasting the result of the empirical with the regular practice of medicine in Natchez,” he wrote, “I Have witnessed two very different eras in the practice of Medicine in Natchez. In the first, the practice was confined to physicians, who had been regularly educated for that purpose, and the doors closed against all species of empiricism.” Cartwright charged that the “syren voice of the empiric” “is not to be trusted.” He called the alternative medical practitioners “empiricists” because he viewed that they based their cures on sense experience alone, which made their view simple, compelling and deadly. He held this in contradistinction to “regular” physicians, active scientists who combined sense experience with other forms of rationality like observation, classification, experimentation and diagnostic theory. Cartwright argued that this first phase of public health in Natchez proved salubrious because it abided by a law that restricted medical licenses to university-trained and guild-approved physicians. However after 1834 he

⁵⁷ The American Medical Schools based themselves in the Edinburgh and other English systems, but the University of Pennsylvania founded its own school in 1765 followed by “King’s College, New York in 1767 (Columbia University); for the citation, see Cartwright, “[Art. I.—Extension of the Sugar Region of the United States](#): SOME REMARKS ON THE QUESTION, ‘HOW FAR NORTH THE CULTURE FO THE SUGAR CANE CAN BE PROFITABLY EXTENDED IN THE UNITE3D STATES?’,” *De Bow’s Review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources* 14:3 (March 1853): 203

⁵⁸ W. F. Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine*, 4, 11

reiterated that: “In the second [phase], the practice has not been confined to physicians properly so called, but fully and freely laid open to all kinds of quacks and ignorant pretenders.”

When Cartwright described how quickly the public took interest in the Thomsonians new vegetable cures and water and steam cures he wrote about the fervor in Natchez as if a contagious disease had spread. He detailed that “The excitement was fanned into a flame, with so much zeal, by the manufacturers of nostrums and patent medicines, that many ignorant, but in some instances good meaning persons, were stricken with a species of *fanaticism*, believing themselves called on to go out into the world to bring about a reform in medicine.” Decidedly anti-reform, Cartwright fought to stop the medical democracy movement that was quickly disintegrating his profession into competition with patent medicine operatives. Because the Thomsonians’ system of medicine fell outside of Cartwright’s reasoning, he labeled them “stricken with a species of fanaticism.” This was the same descriptor Cartwright used when he spoke of abolitionist doctrines antithetical to his own beliefs. The accusation of “fanaticism” is one element that linked for Cartwright religious freedom, medical care and political freedom.

There are a number of indices that connect increased medical democracy with increased slave independence. One edict that botanical practitioners, the regulars and domestic healers held in common was that they used common plant life that proved accessible to all. Each practitioner — according to his or her beliefs — used similar plants and wild shrubberies whether herbalists, homeopaths, vegetarians, “Indian doctors” or “Negro Conjurers.”⁵⁹ Each drew from similar plant life in the same regions. In addition to widespread availability of plants and herbs, slaves who used botanical therapeutics did so as a way to exercise control over their own bodies instead of surrendering that control to an overseer or plantation physician. Culturally, medical practices inspired by African

⁵⁹ Sharla Fett, *Working Cures*, 62, 64, 98-99, 218

world-views enabled blacks to align their experiences as slaves and freedmen with each other and informed blacks' relationship to their current natural environment.⁶⁰ Strategically, some of the worst scenarios occurred when enslaved blacks used herbal abortifacients in the United States and in the Caribbean to avoid unwanted pregnancies from coming to term.⁶¹

Another connection between increased slave and medical independence lie in the great impression John Wesley's 1747 publication of *Primitive Psychic* made on Americans' conception of slave autonomy. In order to understand the claim that there were broad alliances between Free Blacks, slaves, and non-elite whites one might examine the philosophy of the Methodist Church. Wesley held an "unalterable" opposition to slavery and the Methodist church that he founded did not accept initially membership from slave-holders. In fact the anti-slavery impulse appeared first in the Great Awakening. Certainly if all souls were worth saving and blacks had souls, it appeared wrong to hold black people as slaves. Religious revivalism spawned the pre-revolutionary age of abolitionists — men like Quakers John Woolman and Anthony Benezet — who agitated to end slavery but whose influence was circumscribed geographically in the northeast.⁶² This abolitionist thrust caused eventually the Methodist church to split into Northern and Southern denominations. It was Wesley and his disciples who organized the first "abolitionist societies" which agitated for an end to the African slave trade; passage of gradual abolition acts, and increased rights for blacks throughout the North and Upper

⁶⁰ Peter McCandless, *Slavery Disease and Suffering in the Southern Low Country*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Stephen M. Stowe, *Doctoring the South: Southern Physicians and Everyday Medicine in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Sharla M. Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health and Power on Southern Slave Plantations*, (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, 2007), 45, 71-78; Theophus H. Smith, *Conjuring Culture: Biblical Formations of Black America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, 2004); Yvonne Patricia Chireau, *Black Magic Religion and the African American Conjuring Tradition*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Wilbur Watson, ed., *Black Folk Medicine: The Therapeutic Significance of Faith and Trust*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transactions Publishers, 1998); Todd L. Savitt and James Harvey Young, eds. *Disease and Distinctiveness in the American South*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988)

⁶¹ Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire*, 129-49; W. Rucker, "Conjure, Magic and Power: The Influence of Afro-Atlantic Religious Practices on Slave Resistance and Rebellion," *Journal of Black Studies* 32:1 (2001): 84-103

⁶² Finkelman, *Defending Slavery*, 18

South. To Wesley's thinking, the right to exercise private judgment, free will and individual health were one in the same and cut across racial boundaries.⁶³

What the Free Blacks, domestic medical practitioners, midwives and alternative medical practitioners had in common — which Cartwright resented — was that they demonstrated self-reliance, exercised authority in making their own diagnoses and managed their own cures. Those in authority often sought to regulate, discipline and restrict those who they deemed were too incompetent either to think on their own terms or act wisely guided by their own will. Many states instituted “Black Laws” against the Thomsonians, a lexical designation that put anti nostrum laws on par with the anti-black codes that curbed the movement of blacks, slave and free.⁶⁴ Some of Natchez' more aggressive stewards — with Cartwright signaling ahead — worried that, left to themselves, both the Thomsonians and the Free Blacks would be deleterious to the local community health and hierarchy. Rather than risk that, Cartwright sought to restrict both classes as he viewed them each as monsters that threatened the established hierarchy.

Cartwright disagreed with the intellectual arm of the liberal push. He viewed that society required a well-trained cadre of elites to guide them toward proper perspectives. Cartwright was a Democrat but also an elitist who believed in the limited many—citizens required guardians. To his thinking, if people entrusted themselves to the likes of the Thomsonians they would unknowingly, and in a fit of enthusiasm, fall sway to an incorrect view. Holding an incorrect view led, he claimed, to undue suffering, social disorder and death. In the main this view differed only slightly from the principles behind the Electoral College; assurances against the enthusiasm of the public over-taking the enthusiasm of the elites. The argument that it takes a class of guardians to regulate the public will into

⁶³ Finkelman, *Defending Slavery*, 17

⁶⁴ Although it would be wrong to equate the anti-slavery movement with populist democracy, the linguistic similarity between “slave codes” and “black laws” cannot be denied. On the “Black Laws” against Thomsonians, see Young, *Toadstool Millionaires*, Chapter 4, “The Old Wizard”

correct thinking and behavior becomes the intellectual scaffolding for Cartwright's charge against the American Colonization Society. He held that they misunderstood blacks fundamentally and therefore proceeded to injure society by promoting gradual emancipation. He argued that Free Blacks required *more* regulation than any class of whites because their existence, where they were and what they did, gave lie to the entire Slave system grounded in racial hierarchy; they too required proper guardians. Cartwright spent his career arguing that, in both cases, if the public knew better they would make more logical decisions on how to manage blacks' behavior.

Free Black Increase in Natchez

Cartwright envisioned his "Empire of the white man's will" as a continuum of uninterrupted power, but in reality that power was threatened routinely.⁶⁵ This image of a continuum of power suffered from the lived reality of inter-racial and class conflicts that reflected Mississippians' own political and geographic interests. Cartwright's antagonistic continuum suffered also from a reality of interracial camaraderie that rejected the notion of an over-riding, exclusionary and violent will. By 1840 the intersection of two legal customs perturbed Cartwright: the repeal of medical regulation laws that regulated Thomsonians and the change in laws that regulated black manumission on a new basis of "good character." Cartwright opposed both.

Thus far I have presented Johnson as a man and neutrally; but to gauge the astonishment he and his class of wealthy blacks caused local poorer whites, one must recognize race as the base of the hierarchy that southerners like Cartwright began to defend. Writing on Free Blacks Cartwright warned that:

The results of emancipation to the blacks in this country, and to those in Jamaica, furnish no sort of encouragement to the precipitation and haste with which the abolitionists of Great Britain and the United States pursue their plans. On the contrary, they are melancholy dissuasives against these fatal errors.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Cartwright, "Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans," *De Bow's Review* 25:1 (1858): 48

⁶⁶ [Cartwright] "Annexation of Texas," *Southern Quarterly Review* 6:12 (October 1844): 509

Cartwright declared that “an index” was set up for humankind, effectively fixing Blacks in a Biblical state of nature that made it a “fatal error” for them to seek any other status.⁶⁷ The 1831 Mississippi law that declared any person who held one-fourth or more of “Negro blood” was a mulatto reflected Cartwright’s thinking of race as an “index.”⁶⁸ The law as an index also tied blacks’ freedom or slavery to the United States census reports which kept record of lineage. Despite myriad subtleties all blacks or “colored people” were assumed to be slaves in the state of Mississippi unless they could prove otherwise. In *Randall vs. the State*, the Mississippi Supreme Court upheld that “the laws of this state presume a Negro *prima facie* to be a slave,” and in a later lower court decision that held that “if the jury believed that the plaintiff was a Negro, it was *prima facie* evidence that he was a slave.”⁶⁹ Form determined function and the physical implied the moral.⁷⁰

The central concern in a frontier society like Natchez was determining who everyone was, what their status was and who was responsible for whose behavior. By 1840 Cartwright began to focus on what constituted a “Negro” why he held this status and how to identify him by his behavior. Mississippi had strict guidelines on what constituted a “Negro” or “colored” by law as well as what constituted a slave. According to a Mississippi state law passed on June 18, 1822, slaves who were manumitted by will or by a “properly witnessed and recorded document,” or those who had done a meritorious act for the owner or for the state, needed a special act of the legislature to validate their emancipation⁷¹ In 1823 only three Blacks were granted emancipation through this act and twice that many had applied. In 1826 twelve petitions were put forth and none of those passed, nor did any of the

⁶⁷ For an interesting analysis of the role of “fixing” a concept, see Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the College De France, 1974-1975*, (Picador, 1999), 46

⁶⁸ Hutchinson, *Code of Mississippi (1798-1848)*, 514

⁶⁹ *prima facie* means literally “at first sight;” see *Talbott v. Norager*, 23, Miss, 572. the same principle is also in *Heirn v. Bridault* and wife, 37 Miss. 209, and in *Coon v. the State*, 20 Miss. 249

⁷⁰ On reading slaves’ bodies, see Ariela Gross, *Double Character*, 123

⁷¹ C. S. Syndor, “The Free Negro in Mississippi,” *The American Historical Review* 32 (July 1929): 773

ten Blacks who applied in 1831.⁷² The *Natchez Free Trader* announced the new “Negro” ordinances:

Agreeably to the provisions of the act of December 20 1831, still in full force, no Negro or slave is permitted to be manumitted or set free, and still remain in the State, without the special action of the legislature of this State. All manumissions made otherwise are null and void, unless the slave so manumitted leave the State, never to return: and soon as he returns, by that very act, he forfeits his freedom and becomes again liable as a slave, to the creditors of the last owner, by whom, it is pretended, he is manumitted.⁷³

This statement was written in 1841, ten years after the initial “provisions.” Despite these tightened restrictions on black manumissions Cartwright’s own Natchez experienced a deluge of Free Black immigrants during the decade of 1830 to 1840.

The 1840 Census revealed that between 1820 and 1830 the state’s Free Black community had grown modestly from 458 to 519 and during the 1830s Mississippi’s Free Black populace jumped from 519 to 1,366. Whereas the white population increased between 1830 and 1840 from 70,443 to 179,074, the majority of Free Blacks in Mississippi lived in Cartwright’s own Adams County.⁷⁴ Given the increase in the local number of Free Blacks it became evident to Cartwright and other locals that the “Prince” debacle from 1828 and the indignity of the Mississippi Colonization Society’s (MCS) ongoing attempt to export such a large number of former-laborers—nearly 600 before the Civil War—had veered out of control.⁷⁵ What began as a local scandal with a “Free Negro” who claimed that he was an African “Prince” had solidified by 1844 into an imminent threat to the entire plantation system.⁷⁶ These new blacks threatened whites’ already-punctured sense of exclusivity and privilege. The *Natchez Free Trader* argued that:

In this condition we believe are at least fifty Negroes and mulattoes now in Adams County, who affect

⁷² Journal of the *General Assembly of Mississippi*, (1823)

⁷³ *Natchez, Mississippi Free Trader*, May 13, 1841

⁷⁴ Johnson, *William Johnson’s Natchez*, 11; Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South*, (New York: The new Press, 1974), on the concentration of Free Blacks in Adams County, see 251, on the Free Black population increase, see 136, and on the white population increase, see 398-399

⁷⁵ The MCS organized in Natchez in 1831 as an auxiliary of the American Colonization Society

⁷⁶ From 1826-1830 Cartwright worked as an apprentice to Colonel Andrew Marschalk, which put Cartwright in close proximity to the imbroglio that occurred when Marschalk sponsored “Prince Ibrahima’s” emancipation to Africa only to be duped by the young African who traveled north and became an abolitionist instead.

to be free. It is a matter of notoriety that within the last five years, a large number of slaves in this county have been this illegally manumitted; and after having gone up the river, set foot upon the soil of Ohio or some other free or abolition State, received from them certain certificates, which are “free papers” forthwith they return to Mississippi, to reside as “free people of color.”⁷⁷

However questionable obtaining and maintaining the status of “Freedman” was in Mississippi,

Northern papers were less impeachable. The writer continued:

In many instances, we believe, the Probate Courts disregarding or misapprehending the spirit and intention as well as the plain letter of the law, in such cases, have granted to them certificates as required by the act of December 20, 1831, after having taken bonds and security as prescribed by that act. In this they have defeated the very object of the law. Viz: the non-accumulation of free Negroes in the State. Such as do return, are liable under the law, to be taken up and sold by the sheriff as slaves.⁷⁸

The writer declared that the clearly stated goal of the law was “the non-accumulations of free negroes in the state.” But the new statistics proved that “the very object of the law” had failed miserably.

Instead locals feared that Natchez had become a breeding ground for insurrection.⁷⁹ The number of “Free Colored” experienced its first increase between the years of 1810-1820 where it jumped from roughly 32 to 91 percent. This first abrupt change brought about the legal prohibitions in 1822 to Blacks moving into Mississippi and limited emancipation except by a special legislative act, effectively decreasing the rate of increase back down to roughly 13 percent from 1820 - 1830. The following chart illustrates why white southerners felt such a proactive stance against Free Blacks to be justified:⁸⁰

Year	No. of free colored.	Percent. of change.
1800	182	—
1810	240	+ 31.86
1820	458	+ 90.83
1830	519	+ 13.31
1840	1,366	+ 163.19
1850	930	— 31.91
1860	773	— 16.87

⁷⁷ Natchez, Mississippi *Free Trader*, May 13, 1841

⁷⁸ Natchez, Mississippi *Free Trader*, May 13, 1841

⁷⁹ Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 253

⁸⁰ C.S. Syndor, “The Free Negro in Mississippi,” *The American Historical Review* 32 (July 1929): 770

Adams County Mississippi, Cartwright's home county, experienced a 163 percent increase in its "Free Colored" population between 1830 and 1840.⁸² In fact this large number of Free Blacks and "mulattoes" inspired even more legislative responses to limit the number and activity of "Free Colored" in the State in 1842. For instance, if a free black person entered Mississippi from another state he was required by law to be whipped and ordered to depart within twenty days, or be sold as a slave.⁸³

When Cartwright reflected on the 1830s in Natchez, he referred to it as a period of "Free Negro Pandemonium." He described

The few that were emancipated in the northern states have been a nuisance, a tax, and a burden to the white inhabitants, half filling the northern prisons, penitentiaries, and alms-houses. The white population of the southern states have no other alternative but to keep them in slavery, or to drive them out, wage a war of extermination against them, or go out themselves, and leave their fair land to be converted into a free negro pandemonium. *But why not keep them in slavery?*⁸⁴

After 1840 few blacks were freed legally in the State of Mississippi and the effort to root out suspicious, "bad" characters in Natchez continued for over the next two decades.⁸⁵ Nearly a hundred emancipation papers were officially recorded in the Adams County deeds recordings during the 1830s yet fewer than ten were recorded between 1840 and 1850.⁸⁶

The legal attempt to ban blacks preceded the legal attempts to ban Thomsonians. In June of 1831 Dr. John Ker of Natchez wrote to his friend Major Isaac Thomas in Louisiana that "the free

⁸¹ The U. S. Census data used for this table is from the, *Population of the United States in 1860*, (Washington, D.C., 1864), 598-604; also Tables 6-8 in Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 135-138

⁸² Buckner argues that, "If the free black population's growth was slow, its ability to establish independent households was not. The percentage of free black families living with whites declined each decade between Mississippi's admittance to statehood and the determination to leave the union. Given the low numbers of free blacks being introduced via personal manumission, the increase in numbers can only be attributed to children being born free in Natchez and what that means is that free men of color, like Johnson, sought free women to be their wives." See Timothy Ryan Buckner, *Constructing Identities*, (Austin, 2005), 145

⁸³ Hutchinson, *Code of Mississippi (1798-1848)*, 524; Charles S. Syndor, "The Free Negro in Mississippi Before the Civil War," *The American Historical Review* 32 (July 1929): 780

⁸⁴ For this phrase, see Cartwright, "How to Save the Republic, and the Position of the South in the Union," *De Bow's Review* 11:2 (1851): 189; it was re-printed with a less inflammatory title: Cartwright, "The South's Position in the Union," *De Bow's Review* 3 (1853): 53-62, and see the citation for "Free Negro Pandemonium" on 57

⁸⁵ On the "mutability" of "black character" and an argument on its dependence on the influence of white men in Natchez, see Ariela Gross, *Double Character*, 8

⁸⁶ Davis and Hogan, *The Barber of Natchez*, 153

colored people are more injurious to society than the same number of slaves, and their removal must therefore confer a greater benefit. The number of free colored people must inevitably increase [in] a progressive ratio.”⁸⁷ Ker judged a high probability that the local black community would increase in “a progressive ratio,” a ratio that suggested to him increased severity of risk.⁸⁸ What Ker indicated gently in June came to fruition in the firestorm that followed Nat Turner’s revolt in August, just two months after Ker warned of what he perceived to be Natchez own excessive Free Black population.

After Nat Turner’s rebellion white Mississippians gathered quickly to strengthen their already conservative statutes on the status of Free Blacks who lived in the state. In the 1831 session white men “Presented a petition from sundry citizens of Adams County, praying that a law may pass for the absolute and unconditional removal of free Negroes from this state.”⁸⁹ One unsigned letter from a Wilkinson County paper stated: “There can be no doubt but that the sable African who has acquired his freedom in the mode sanctioned by the laws of a sovereign state, has rights which belongs not to the slave, and that they exert a most pernicious influence on the slave population wherever it can be felt, it is a fact which cannot be controverted.”⁹⁰ The writer admitted his fear of the very presence of a Free Black “caste” and how obvious displays of black freedom might harm whites’ faith in the peculiar institution. He also worried that the “Free Negro” or “Free Colored” classes acted as vivid symbols to ambitious slaves and may potentially inspire slave-uprisings.

1831 proved a complicated year for Johnson as distant politics threatened his capacity to remain

⁸⁷ Franklin L. Riley, “A Contribution to the History of the Colonization Movement in Mississippi,” in *Publications*, Mississippi Historical Society 9:348. In a letter dated June 35, 1831

⁸⁸ Dr. John Ker (1789-1850) was a local physician who studied medicine in Philadelphia, as did Cartwright. He was a cotton planter and went on in the 1830s to serve on the Louisiana State Senate and as Vice President of the American Colonization Society and the Mississippi Colonization Society. See Letters of Dr. John Ker, Natchez, to R.R. Gurley, April, 13, 1831, *Mississippi Historical Society* 9 (2009): 33; Dr. John Ker wrote multiple letters to Major Isaac Thomas in July of 1831, (some went unanswered), urging Major Thomas’ assistance with his Colonization efforts to remove free blacks from the state. See Letters of Dr. John Ker, Natchez, to Isaac Thomas, July 25, 1831, *Mississippi Historical Society* 9 (2009): 349-354

⁸⁹ *Journal of General Assembly of Mississippi*, 1831, House Journal, 7

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

black and free in Mississippi. Johnson moved to Natchez in 1830 but following Turner's revolt in August, 1831 Mississippi passed legislature intended to restrict the states extant Free Black population. By December of 1831 a petition to the legislature of Mississippi answered the strong anti-Free Black sentiment in Cartwright's Natchez. The "Act's" cumbersome title bears out its entangled heuristic: "AN ACT, to amend an act entitled 'an act to reduce into one the several acts concerning slaves, free negroes and mulattoes,' passed June 18, 1822."⁹¹ Mississippi's 1822 law gave the legislature authority to approve or reject all slave emancipations in the state. Whereas before this time it was customary for slaves to be able to purchase their freedom or enjoy a master's emancipation, the 1822 law bound the state legislature to a direct involvement in all slave emancipations in order to limit the state's increasing free black population.⁹² The new and even more severe 1831 "Act" promised to devastate

Mississippi's black community:

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the state of Mississippi, in General Assembly convened, That all and every free negro or mulatto in this state, under the age of fifty years, and over the age of sixteen years, shall, within ninety days after the passage of this act, remove and quit the state, and shall not return within the limits of the same, under any pretence whatsoever."⁹³

Rather uniquely, in 1832 the state of Mississippi granted William Johnson permission to stay. That year the "Adams County Court and the Police Board" licensed him to remain in the state as he had "satisfied the Court of his Good Character."⁹⁴ The Mississippi legislature put faith in Johnson in part

⁹¹ State of Mississippi, *Laws of the State of Mississippi: Embracing All Acts of a Public Nature*, 349-353

⁹² Charles S. Sydnor, "The Free Negro in Mississippi Before the Civil War," *American Historical Review* 32 (July 1927): 771-779; Terry Alford, "Some Manumissions Recorded in the Adams County Deed Books in Chancery Clerk's Office, Natchez, Mississippi, 1795-1835," *The Journal of Mississippi History* 33 (February 1971): 39-50

⁹³ The specifics of the law include that "And if any such free negro or mulatto, as foresaid, shall not so remove and quit the state within the time wherein prescribed, or having removed shall return within the limits of the same, all and every such free negro or mulatto, so offending, shall be considered taken, and committed to jail in the same manner as runaway slaves now are, but the act to which this is an amendment; and all and every such free negro or mulatto, so taken and committed to jail, as aforesaid, shall be sold, for the term of five years, within thirty days after such commitment by the sheriff or jailor of the proper county, upon giving fifteen days public notice, by advertisement, in the manner of other sales, by the sheriff of the proper county, under an execution. And by the money arising from any such sale or sales, after paying all charges and expenses, shall be paid by the said sheriff." See State of Mississippi, *Laws of the State of Mississippi*, 349-353

⁹⁴ Davis and Hogan, *The Barber of Natchez*, 21; on the phrase "moral contagion" see Michael A. Schoepfner, "Status across Borders: Roger Taney, Black British Subjects, and a Diplomatic Antecedent to the Dred Scott Decision," *Journal of American History*, (June 2013):46-68

because it understood that Johnson inherited the esteem of his mentor and brother-in-law. In 1827 Mississippi passed a special law enabling William Johnson's benefactor and father-figure, James Miller, to remain in the state and it repeated this gesture again in 1832 when it granted Johnson his certificate of good character.⁹⁵

“The Horrors of the Inquisition”

How to manage Free Blacks had merely piqued Cartwright's interest in 1828 when his good friend and co-editor Andrew Marschalk manumitted Prince Ibrahim; but that local colonizationists who sought to emancipate the “Ross Negroes” back to Africa in the late 1830s soon compounded the issue of gradual abolition.⁹⁶ The new statistical evidence of Free Black debauchery and increased mortality in the north combined with the Ross case to act as Cartwright's tipping point and awakened in him the idea of free black insanity. Natchez had long held a liberal view regarding manumissions of blacks but by the late 1830s citizens felt endangered by a mounting number of Free Blacks in the state and an increasingly diffuse distinction between slaves and free.

When local Planter Captain Isaac Ross died in 1836 he willed his slaves to freedom in Liberia. Following a decade-long court battle 300 of Ross's slaves were colonized successfully. The case raged on for a decade because the deceased Ross stipulated in his will that it would be up to each slave to

⁹⁵ The special law—written for just one man—evolved out of the legislature deciding to refuse a petition put before them which would have given Miller more latitude than any “Negro” in the history of the state. The 1827 petition, signed by forty-four prominent men of Natchez petitioned the state to “remove all his civil disabilities as a free man of color, except those which excluded him from voting and from jury and militia duty.” The petition determined that after having proven himself as a resident of good standing in Natchez for nine years, that he “affords and has invariably afforded a good example to his brethren & that his conduct & demeanor are highly praiseworthy.” The legislature refused but passed a special act that permitted Miller to remain in the state of Mississippi, “any law to the contrary notwithstanding.” Davis and Hogan, *The Barber of Natchez*, 19-20

⁹⁶ Cartwright's close friend and co-editor Andrew Marschalk was actually a supporter of Colonization in Liberia and worked actively to advance the efforts of local Free Blacks in their efforts to return to Africa, the most famous case being that of Prince Ibrahim. Cartwright's good friend and publishing-mentor helped to arrange and finance the Prince's emancipation. As Colonel Marschalk was Cartwright's active business partner at the time, it would have been impossible for Cartwright to have been unaware of “Prince Ibrahim.” In fact, it may have been the Prince controversy, which had taken on international ramifications that drove Cartwright finally over the theoretical edge. For a general but excellent approach to the narrative of “Prince,” see Terry Alford, *Prince Among Thieves*, (Oxford, 2007) for detail on Marschalk's shifting opinion on “Prince” as he came to feel misled, to his attack on Henry Clay, the ACS and its support of “Prince,” 146-148

decide whether or not he or she wanted to emigrate after emancipation or remain in the state. Since Mississippi law held that blacks had no voice in court and made only provisions for *masters* to manumit slaves, the state refused to hear the case (or the blacks) and argued that the slaves retained their condition prior to Ross' death. In the midst of this debate Cartwright wrote to persuade William Winans, the President of the Mississippi Colonization Society, that slavery was justified medically, Biblically and economically.

Tellingly, Freeman Johnson and white supremacist Cartwright both disagreed with the American Colonization Society's effort in Mississippi. Cartwright penned his series of letters to the President of the MCS, Rev. William Winans in 1841-1842⁹⁷ in order to convince him that the ACS and MCS policies of banishing blacks to Liberia was wrong-headed because they proceeded from basic misunderstandings about blacks' capacities.⁹⁸ Cartwright thought that the colonizationists were misdirected and warned his constituents that the ACS acted in a spirit of imposture; he accused that they used the theory of gradual emancipation as a smokescreen to rob the South of its resources in black slaves. From 1820 – 1860 the total number of slaves removed from Mississippi and sent to Liberia was from 550-600.⁹⁹ The local effort to emancipate blacks took on enough notoriety to be dubbed the “Mississippi in Africa Project.”¹⁰⁰

What to do with “Free Negroes” and colonization had solidified into an imminent threat to the entire plantation system. Slaveholders expected blacks to act as a “mud-sill” for white identity; to

⁹⁷ Cartwright re-fashioned these letters and published them anonymously in 1842 as “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” in the *Southern Quarterly Review* 1:2 (October 1842) and again as a single volume, Cartwright, *Essays, Being Inductions Drawn from the Baconian Philosophy Proving the Truth of the Bible and of the Decree Dooming Canaan to Be the Servants of Servants: And answering the Question of Voltaire: “On demande quell droit des estrangers tells que les Juifs avaiant sur le pays de Canaan?”* (Vidalia, Louisiana, 1843)

⁹⁸ The American Colonization Society was the subject of Cartwright's 1842 letters to William Winans.

⁹⁹ Most of these men and women were manumitted with the specific goal of colonization in mind. see National Humanities Center, *Diary of William T. Johnson*, Jan. 1, 1838 – Jan. 1, 1844, selections, 2, footnote #3

¹⁰⁰ Alan Huffman, *Mississippi in Africa: The Saga of the Slaves of Prospect Hill Plantation and Their Legacy in Liberia Today*, (University Press of Mississippi, 2010)

provide a visceral consistency to their status as “superiors” over space and time.¹⁰¹ As Walter Johnson put it, “[slaves-owners] oriented themselves around the expectation that they would have the same things and the same rights *over* those things when they woke up as they had when they went to bed.”¹⁰² To meet that need medical doctors exercised their role as social regulators.¹⁰³ As Steven Stowe put it, white physicians held “an essentially ideological power to re-inscribe and naturalize fundamental social relations.”¹⁰⁴

Quite differently, Freeman Johnson objected to the colonizationists because they were breaking up his circle of friends. To force blacks to “quit the state” ruptured further already torn-apart lives by shipping blacks off to an even stranger existence in Africa than the one they were born into in America. Just as Cartwright took to his pen and wrote to the President of their MCS chapter of colonizationists, Johnson took to his pen and recorded privately his reflections on the colonization society local meetings.¹⁰⁵ As plaintively as Freeman Johnson wrote about expanding his new bathhouse business, he mourned also the activities of the colonizationists:

April 5, 1838 Business Quite dull. I got my Barrells to give Baths to day for the First time and Mr Ayres Called and took a Bath —The First this Season and paid the Cash for it I to day Saw a Man up at the auction Room and he wanted to buy my Girl Sarah. I told him he could have her for twelve Hundred Dollars in cash. I intend to see about it To morrow and if I can find out about him I will do something Peter Boisaw Open to day in the new Coffee House and to day was the day of the Collinizationest had a Large meeting and here is the names of some of the Leading Parties or Head Dogs in the Bone Yard —

¹⁰¹ James Henry Hammond, *The Mudsill Speech*, in Paul Finkelman, ed., *Defending Slavery: Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South*, (Boston: Bedford/St.Martin’s Press, 2003), 80-89; also see Margaret Jane Radin, “Property and Personhood,” *Stanford Law Review* 34 (1982): 957-1015

¹⁰² Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, (Harvard, 1999), 204

¹⁰³ Starr indicates a principal role of physician is that he/she provides information to manage better society: “In their capacity as cultural authorities, doctors make authoritative judgments of what constitutes illness or insanity, evaluate the fitness of persons for jobs, pronounce death...” see Starr, *Transformation of American Medicine*, 14-15

¹⁰⁴ Stephen Stowe, *Doctoring the South*, 104

¹⁰⁵ Cartwright published a series of 8 letters to William Winans, the Mississippi President of the Mississippi branch of the ACS. This was the first instance that Cartwright combined biblical, scientific rationales for the superiority of whites over blacks and declared the destiny of blacks as slaves. These essays became the substance of all of his future writings, on science and religion, and were collected into his one and only monograph, Cartwright, *Essays, Being Inductions Drawn from the Baconian Philosophy Proving the Truth of the Bible and of the Decree Dooming Canaan to Be the Servants of Servants: And answering the Question of Voltaire: “On demande quell droit des estrangers tells que les Juifs avaiant sur le pays de Canaan?”* (Vidalia, Louisiana, 1843)

Tis a pity that they [are] not doing something Else better for there Country!¹⁰⁶

Note that Johnson called it “there country,” indicating his acute awareness of not being granted full personal, civic and political freedom. Note also that Johnson regretted the colonizationists’ efforts to remove his friends forcibly from the state but appeared unaffected by the buying and selling of slaves in the “auction Room” where the man offered to buy “his girl Sarah.” The diarist chose to omit the list of names of the “Leading Parties or Head Dogs in the Bone Yard.”

Johnson disdained the Colonization Society because he believed that free people, like himself, should have the right to reside wherever they pleased. Nonetheless the effort to root out and “deport” “Free Negroes” of “bad character” in Natchez was an extensive one. The *Free Trader* wrote that the people of Natchez had to act promptly, “to strike a severe blow” against the abolitionists and to do this by better regulating the conduct of Free Blacks which might affect or inspire dissident slave behavior. The *Free Trader* article demanded “the immediate removal of every Free Negro, who has intruded upon our society.”¹⁰⁷

After news reached Natchez that several black men had brutally murdered an entire family up in St. Louis, 1841 proved to be a tough year in particular as whites felt even more at risk. Local residents called for public meetings as “white working-men” used the scare as an opportunity to castigate the practice of hiring slaves for “over-time” work that competed with their wages and urged whites to restrain the practice.¹⁰⁸ Whites also used the hysteria to castigate the Free Black caste, equating them with “the rogue, the incendiary and the abolitionist.”¹⁰⁹ One anonymous local writer, “Civis,” wrote in the *Natchez Courier* that the increased number of illegal manumissions and Free Black migrants who moved to Natchez were the primary source of local danger. “Civis” and others formed a “vigilance

¹⁰⁶ National Humanities Center, *Diary of William T. Johnson*, Jan. 1, 1838 – Jan. 1, 1844, selections, 2

¹⁰⁷ Davis and Hogan, *The Barber of Natchez*, 152

¹⁰⁸ Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 332

¹⁰⁹ Davis and Hogan, *The Barber of Natchez*, 152

committee” in order “to rid the country of free Negro and ‘free slave’ population.” At that time the “Board of Police” convened a meeting for “the recalling free Negro licenses.”¹¹⁰

William Johnson called this anti-black impulse the “*Horrows of the Inquisition.*” On August 17 he wrote that “All Sorts of Tryals going on. The different Offices has been full all day and they Continue to arrest still—The Lord Knows how things will terminate for I have no Conception myself.” Just a few days later Johnson wrote, “the meetings are Still Going on in the Inquisitions Court, The Lord Only Knows the result.”¹¹¹ On one case Freeman Johnson noted that “Yesterday Ann Perkins that was committed to jail some 3 days ago was tryed under Habeyus Corpus and proved that She was of Indian descend—and came off clear.” Johnson wrote that, “Lots of Free People of Color are running around Town with Petitions to have the Privilege of remaining in the state, tis laughable almost.”¹¹² Irrespective of laws banning blacks from courtroom proceedings, Johnson participated in court and kept abreast of the present goings on at the “Inquisition” against Free Blacks. The Barber recalled his friend’s — and Cartwright’s father-in-law — Dr. Wren’s commentary at the meeting:

There were a greate many Petitions handed in today and some of them was I understand rejected by the board—Old Dr. Wren addressed the Board at Length and Dr. H. Conner Got tireed of the old Fellow and Ordered him to Hush and if, seys He, you say another word, I have you put in Jail—and the old fellow stopped off. I have been a Great many that was very Glad of the old Fellows defeat. His remarks was that Old Nancy Kyle and Caroline kept a House of ill fame, a House of asination, a whore House &c— but he could not Shine.”¹¹³

At this “Inquisition” several Free Blacks were deported and Johnson wrote in lament: “Poor Andrew Leeper was, I understand, ordered off today, and so was Dembo and Maryan Gibson. They are as far as I know innocent and Harmless people And Have never done a Crime since they have been in the

¹¹⁰ See *Trials and Confessions of Madison Henderson, Alias Blanchard, Alfred Amos Warrick and Others, Murderers of Isaac Baker and Jacob Weaver*, (St. Louis, 1841); *Mississippi Free Trader*, 13, 20 May, 1841, 7, 10, 12, 14 August, 1841; see also *Natchez Courier*, Vol. 4 August, 28, 1841; and also the *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, August, 22, 1841; and Johnson, *William Johnson’s Natchez*, 338-350; and finally *Mississippi Laws*, 1842, c. 4

¹¹¹ Davis and Hogan, *The Barber of Natchez*, 152

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 153

State that I have Herd of...what a Country we live in!”¹¹⁴

Johnson deemed himself untouchable — he had a state law just for him and was one of the “*nabobs*” of Natchez. He had already secured certificates for the Free Black boys who worked in his numerous establishments. Johnson felt like his family and workers were safe from any prosecution: he extended his reputation and respectability to them. Johnson wrote of holding the boys in mutual esteem and listed the names on their certificates: “Bringaman, Duncan, Wilkins, Nevitt,” and others, adding that: “Those Names are Enough to make any Common man Proud—Those are Gentlemen of the 1st Order of Talents and Standing.”¹¹⁵ Johnson had been in Mississippi since before Mississippi had become a state and his heritage in the region far exceeded that of most locals. So did his extreme wealth. Of the men Johnson named, Dr. Stephen Duncan was a leading member of the Mississippi Colonization Society, as were Dr. John Ker and Rev. William Winans. The fact that Dr.’s Duncan and Ker could vouch for Johnson’s free black boys while at the same time, work actively to transport other free blacks from the state was more than ironic as it indicated deep divisions in the ACS’s stated principles as well as the power of human contact and personal relationships.¹¹⁶

Whether or not Cartwright wrote about it, it is clear that black entrepreneurs like Johnson had become more successful financially than he himself had become. When Cartwright departed Natchez in 1836 for his eighteen-month family excursion to Europe he left as a wealthy entrepreneur but he returned in 1837 to a devastating financial scene. Andrew Jackson’s closure of the Second National Bank caused the brokerage company that handled Cartwright’s investments to go out of business in 1837. Bankruptcy forced his abrupt return from Paris where he had been seeking medical treatment for his deafness, which had begun to quicken with age. When Cartwright came back from Europe he

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Davis and Hogan, *The Barber of Natchez*, 152

¹¹⁶ See Antuan Rivarius Bradford, “The Mississippi State Colonization Society and the Key Leaders in the Mississippi Colonization Scheme,” M.A. Thesis, (Morgan State University, 2010)

returned, impoverished, to William Johnson's Natchez.

Whereas I have no evidence that Cartwright ever wrote about Johnson it is clear that Freeman Johnson thought and wrote about Cartwright.¹¹⁷ Johnson *was* a good friend with Dr. Woodson Wren, Cartwright's prestigious father-in-Law.¹¹⁸ Freeman Johnson wrote: "I bot \$10 worth of newspapers from Dr. Wren at the Post Office. Post Office just moving Down to Mr. Darts property." Freeman Johnson held newspaper subscriptions as well as subscriptions to northern journals and wrote repeatedly about his practice of picking up newspapers from Dr. Wren, a custom about which Cartwright was probably aware.¹¹⁹

It is impossible for Cartwright to have been unaware of Johnson, who was one of the wealthiest men in the state of Mississippi, black or white. Johnson had enough money to where Dr. Wren, also the local Postmaster, insisted almost gratuitously that Johnson rent and keep a postal box, a regular charge that Johnson found to be a nuisance but appeared to pay out of courtesy. In one entry where Johnson reflected on the sore state of the economy he relayed an interaction with Dr. Wren's son conveying that he wanted to cancel his P.O. Box: "I told young Mr. Wren today that I could not keep my box in the Post office any Longer—business wasn't good."¹²⁰ An annoyed and practical businessman, Johnson wrote later:

Business of Every Kind Dull. I was at the [post] office to day and paid old Dr. Wren for Box rent, 3 dollars, up to the 1st of April, 1842. Also paid him for Postage up to the 1st of July, 1842. I told the old man Long since that I did not want the Box.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Freeman Johnson mentioned Cartwright five times in his diary. Johnson commented on Cartwright's psychiatric ideas, his political activity and either attended or heard detail about his speech on the tariff: "Dr. Cartwright made today a speech on the Tariff and declared himself in favor of Mr. Clay and that he insisted to vote for him." Henry Clay wrote Cartwright to thank him for his oratory. On Ms. Sarah H. Cartwright's marriage to "Mr. Doniphan"... "They got married up at Dr. Wrens." on Cartwright's speech on the Tariff, 504, on slapping his slave, "Will Buck" 200, and deriding Cartwright on 392; all in Johnson, *William Johnson's Natchez*

¹¹⁸ After moving to Natchez in 1822 Cartwright married Mary Wren in 1826. See Marshall, "Samuel A. Cartwright & States Rights Medicine," *New Orleans Medical & Surgical Journal* 93:2 (August 1940): 4

¹¹⁹ Johnson, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 110

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 350

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 379

But Dr. Wren continued to rent and charge Johnson for the box anyway. The Wrens' relationship with Johnson went beyond mere business, as it is clear that the men grew to know one another on a personal basis at and around the barbershop. In another entry Freeman Johnson admired the character of the "Young Mr. Wren," Cartwright's brother-in-law:

Several Bets with Winston today, on the Race of today—Young Mr. Wren Came in tonight, got his hair Cut and then paid me \$2.50 that he said he won from me Several years ago on An Election and he Said that he thought that it was wrong to withhold even such a minor debt.¹²²

The "Young Mr. Wren" held Johnson in esteem and repaid his debt honorably. Cartwright's theories could not explain the great financial success of his neighbor, Freeman Johnson.

Johnson was born on a plantation near Natchez, Mississippi in 1809 to a "mulatto" slave mother and a white father, William Johnson, Sr. The slave William Johnson won emancipation eleven years later on the strength of his white master's—and father's—petition directly to the Mississippi state legislature.¹²³ The young Johnson worked as a barber's apprentice to his brother-in-law, James Miller. The eager freedman learned his trade quickly, proved himself an adroit businessman and established a shop in Port Gibson, Mississippi in 1828 at the age of nineteen. Johnson realized after running that shop for two years that "the amount taken in During my Stay in Port Gibson which was twenty two months was one thousand and ninety four Dollars and fifty cents, This was by Hair Cutting and Shaving alone."¹²⁴

Emboldened, Johnson moved to Natchez in 1830 and then financed an extensive trip to find a suitable bride, travelling north to Philadelphia (his brother-in-law James Miller had roots there) and New York, then to Lexington, Kentucky and further South to New Orleans. Johnson decided finally to marry a local Free Black woman, Ann Battles. Together they invested in a three-story brick home at the center of the Natchez business district, a prominent address only a block and a half away from the

¹²² Johnson, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 765

¹²³ Johnson's sister, Adelia, and his mother, Amy Johnson, were emancipated by the white William Johnson as well.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

local Adams County Courthouse. Six months after Johnson married he began a diary that he kept until he was murdered in a land dispute in 1851.¹²⁵

In the late 1830s Freeman Johnson remained wealthy, enjoyed great esteem and increased his prosperity despite white anxiety after President Jackson's bank crisis and the nation's subsequent financial depression. Johnson's initial \$300 investment in his first barbershop in 1830 had grown to \$3,000 by 1835. Johnson held enough wealth in real estate that in 1833 he purchased an additional building on Main Street, which he paid off in only two years by converting it into a bathhouse. Johnson's image-consulting industry accommodated all of the latest grooming needs and styles as he offered shaving, gave haircuts, fitted wigs, and sold soaps and oils to his clients. Freeman Johnson also ran an array of rental properties, leasing both retail offices and private rooms. As mentioned he rented business offices also to local pharmacists, including the Thomsonians, to whom Cartwright objected.

Cartwright certainly saw the Thomsonians' presence in Natchez as a direct threat to his own status as a university-trained physician, but the fact that these men—who he thought to be notorious and beneath contempt—rented property from a “Free Negro” perhaps pulled Cartwright's attention. Johnson also owned a total of 15 slaves; there is record that Cartwright held 8 before the Panic. Not to be undone Johnson owned a toy shop, rented space to a coffee-shop, sold wall-paper, ran a cart-renting business and operated an extensive money-lending operation.¹²⁶ Just as Johnson's diary indicates that he loaned money to whites, it also indicated his joy in not giving it to them sometimes.¹²⁷ On September 18, 1837, Johnson recorded one white man's attempt to borrow money:

Mr. W.H. Perkins sent for me today stating that he wanted to see me in the afternoon, and if I would be

¹²⁵ Nick Salvatore, review of “William Johnson's Natchez; The Antebellum Diary of Free Negro,” *African American Review*, (Winter, 1995); See also, Edwin Adams Davis, William Ransom Hogan, *The Barber of Natchez, Wherein a Slave is Freed and Rises to a Very High Standing: Wherein the Former Slave Writes a Two-thousand-page Journal about His Town and Himself; Wherein the Free Negro Diarist is Appraised in Terms of His Friends, His Code, and His Community's Reaction to His Wanton Murder*, (Baton Rouge, 1954)

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ See entry for September 18, 1837, Johnson, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 39

kind enough to come up, saying he was unwell or he would come down. I promised him I would come up... [Then Johnson, in no rush, noted that he went to see another man in the afternoon to get his house insured]. After dinner I walked up to see Mr. Perkins, I knocked at the door, it was opened by his Mrs., she showed me in to his bedroom where he lay asleep. She commenced him by saying, Willy, Willy. He at length awoke and she told him that a gentleman had come to see him. He saw me, shook hands together, he then got up, invited to take a seat, I did so, wanted me to drink, I refused. We then talked about one thing or other. In the mean time the Mrs. Walked up stairs. He after awhile came to point - wanted to borrow a hundred and fifty dollars from me. I told him that I had not the surplus about me and that I could not.¹²⁸

The detail of Johnson's entry suggests some pleasure in refusing the white man a loan. During a time when blacks had no voice in Mississippi courts, Johnson held enough community standing to sue one of his white tenants, Joe Meshio, and win a financial judgment against Meshino in April 1843.

Perhaps because of the insolvency of local banks, Johnson recorded hundreds of transactions per year of lending money to whites. Nearly each of the entries I read mentioned either collecting money, loaning out money or some sort of detail on money owed to him. One 1836 entry read: "Today I made a dollar by changing two hundred Dollars Bankable money, at ½ percent." Those brokerage fees combined with the interest he charged on regular loans, which varied from 5 per cent per month to 6 per cent per year. In 1840 Johnson wrote that "To Day Silver, Silver, is Demanded by Our Profession or two for one in Paper." Johnson deemed himself to be part of (not ancillary to) the banking profession; he used the money-market and various exchange rates of the different banks in order to make a profit from interest.¹²⁹ His money-market interests proved to be international in scope and the following comment is characteristic of Johnson:

April 20, 1842 Nothing new that I Know of. Business Dull, Quite so indeed Mr. T Rose Came in the shop to night and we began and talked until After ten O'clock. The Subjects, Banks & Banking, prospects of war, money Loaning, insolvent people, England and the English, Slavery, Texas & Mexico.¹³⁰

The variety of the names and titles of Johnson's borrowers is remarkable and the transactions ranged from short-term loans or something as simple as settling a barber's tab, to weekly loans and loans that

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Johnson, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 39

¹³⁰ National Humanities Center, *Diary of William T. Johnson*, Jan. 1, 1838 – Jan. 1, 1844, selections, 13

had been extended over years. Johnson even kept up with the money that his own *mother* owed to him. He was not ungrateful—Freeman Johnson paid his mother’s medical bills too and helped monitor her slaves’ needs.¹³¹

What I mean to suggest by claiming that Cartwright returned home from Europe to Freeman Johnson’s Natchez is that Johnson’s presence, high-esteem and great wealth gave lie to the fundamental assumption that licensed American slavery. Johnson’s unparalleled success nullified the conceit that blacks were inferior. From as early as the American Revolution figures like Benjamin Banneker and Phyllis Wheatley stood out as real-life, “living-proof refutations” of black inferiority. The accomplishments of such free people of color worked as a strategy of engagement for abolitionists.¹³² In an article critiquing Cartwright’s disease concepts Charles Dickens commented that “It is strange how, with such examples [of successful Free Blacks] before their eyes—and others yet more striking of emancipated Negroes amassing large fortunes and obtaining high social positions—the partisans of slavery dare to persist in declaring that a Negro, left to himself, would starve for very laziness.”¹³³ The deeply obvious irony in Freeman Johnson’s case was that he loaned out money to white men so that *they* could survive.

To Cartwright such a stark reversal of fortune stood as a challenge to his social authority; meanwhile infractions from the Thomsonians thrashed against his professional authority and both assaults occurred at the same time that he suffered the loss of his economic capital. Cartwright’s status

¹³¹ See entry for January 10, 1838 Johnson, *William Johnson’s Natchez*

¹³² Patrick Rael provides analysis of the role of “living proof refutations” in articulating the case for black freedom. He indicates that “the literature of the antebellum black protest tradition is replete with examples of such illustrious blacks” like Frederick Douglass, Banneker, James McCune Smith, David Ruggles, George B. Vashon, Samuel Ringgold Ward, Charles B. Ray, Samuel Cornish, J.W.C. Pennington, Theodore S. Wright and a “host of others” whose names were invoked regularly as “examples of individual merit outdistancing the designs of slavery and prejudice,” see Patrick Rael, “A Common Nature, A United Destiny: African American Responses to Racial Science from the Revolution to the Civil War,” in McCarthy and Stauffer, (eds.), *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, (New York: The New Press, 2006), 189

¹³³ Charles Dickens, “Slaves and Their Masters,” *Household Words—A Weekly Journal Conducted by Charles Dickens* 330 (August 23, 1856): 133

and identity were both at risk. Freeman Johnson reflected often on banks going bankrupt over the years 1838-1842.¹³⁴ A few of Johnson's earlier diary entries referenced the specifics of the Bankruptcy Law in Mississippi and in one description he listed some of the men affected by the bank closures: "Today was a great day among the Bank Rupt cases, and oh what a Rascally law this Bankruptcy Law is— Here is a list of the cases: Brown Cozens, Cooper, Gaultney, L. Robalite and Several others which the sale will be continued tomorrow at 11."¹³⁵ The list included a wide range of Natchez' finest, including doctors and lawyers filing for bankruptcy. Johnson called the law "RASCALLY." Whether Johnson felt indignant that men could get out of their sworn debts through a legal mechanism or whether he was referring to the performance of an individual bank is unclear. What is clear is that through his money-lending operation he stood to profit from the wide-spread panic among whites. Banking practices that once excluded Johnson now shielded him from the effects of insolvency. After the bank closures in May, 1837 Johnson's own business suffered only in that he could not take aboard new grooming clients, his renters could not pay their rents and debtors sought more time to pay their debts. Johnson earned more at the time of the crash than he had in any other year.¹³⁶

Johnson took his own land-based investments in "real-estate" and turned white men's misfortunes into a money-lending business where he extended loans at an interest to local businessmen. Whatever other event he might discuss in his diary entries — hunting, attending a concert, a land sale, gossip on a duel, etc. — each chronicle mentioned collecting money. Many of these debtors were Dr. Cartwright's colleagues, friends and business associates. For instance, Johnson wrote of Cartwright's colleague Dr. Samuel Hogg:

January 10, 1838 Auctions to day at Sprague & Howells and at Dolbeares1 and at Sorias To day, the things belonging to the Estate of Mr. Sml Mason — I bot a pair [of] and Irons, tongs and poker, One

¹³⁴ On bankruptcy, insolvency and "honor" in Natchez, see Ariela Gross, *Double Character*, 52

¹³⁵ Johnson, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 372

¹³⁶ Johnson, *William Johnson's Natchez*, 38

spider¹³⁷ and one Oven The Concern only cost \$1.50. Very Cheap — Dr. Samuel Hogg paid me to day \$19.50 for his shaving bill up to this date and I paid him Eleven dollars that I owed him for Medical Services up to this date — \$7 of the amount was for Mother.¹³⁸

Freeman Johnson kept tedious track of Dr. Hogg's ongoing debt and the two men seemed to be friendly enough to where they extended loans to each other regularly. Dr. Hogg worked as Johnson's family physician but he also published alongside Cartwright in the *Western Medical and Surgical Journal*, edited by Dr. Daniel Drake.¹³⁹

One diary entry very characteristic of Johnson mentioned banking along with other pertinent business and personal issues:

October 19, 1838 I gave Mr. Tweksburg an order to Vancampen & Jones for Some Lumber and to Sislocs for some also. He then went to work Plaining of Planks and made about 3 qrts. of a Days work. The Rain of yesterday Caused my new House to crack very considerable, that is from the top to the Botom on the Lower Side. Lawyer Baker and Lawyer Armat has a small fight to Day at Dinner at the Mansion House, To day a number of the *Free Trader* Containd the Seveerest piece against the Banks that I have Ever Seen From the pen of Mr. John Hagan the article Emanated.¹⁴⁰

The article to which Freeman Johnson referred focused on “wildcat banking practices.”¹⁴¹ On another occasion Freeman Johnson won money at the local race track, but only one of the notes bore any actual value because the bank that issued the script went bankrupt:

February 16, 1839 Business has been very Good to Day. I went Out to the Race tract to Day and stayed nearly the whole afternoon out there. I made a greate many Bets of Different Kinds, and won in all forty One Dollars, twenty one of which was good, the other \$20 of Aaberdeen Planters Bank.¹⁴²

Outside the influence of a National Bank, state banks issued their own paper money and those bank notes became worthless if the bank failed. The instability of local currency led eventually to a run on

¹³⁷ A “spider” is a small iron stove; presumably it earned the name because it was structured like a spider.

¹³⁸ National Humanities Center, *Diary of William T. Johnson*, Jan. 1, 1838 – Jan. 1, 1844, selections, 1

¹³⁹ Dr. Samuel Hogg was cited in John W. Monette's (Cartwright's best friend's) book on Yellow Fever: “In this [assertion] I am sustained by the testimony of all southern experience untrammelled by theory. The Venerable Dr. Samuel Hogg of Nashville, who practiced several years in Natchez, has assured me repeatedly of his firm conviction, that yellow fever is a more specific disease, and partakes no more of the character of builious fever, than of any other form of disease;” Dr. Samuel Hogg, “On the Epidemic Fevers of Natchez, *Western Journal of Medicine and Surgery*, (Jun, 1840); also See John W. Monette, MD., *Observations on the Epidemic Yellow Fever of Natchez, and of the South-West*, (Louisville, 1842), 71 for Dr. Hogg citation

¹⁴⁰ National Humanities Center, *Diary of William T. Johnson*, Jan. 1, 1838 – Jan. 1, 1844, selections, 1

¹⁴¹ Natchez *Free Trader*, October, 19, 1838

¹⁴² *Diary of William T. Johnson*, Jan. 1, 1838 – Jan. 1, 1844, selections, 5

the banks. Eight months later Johnson wrote:

September 19, 1839 No buisness a Doing of Any Account — All sorts of a run on the Rail Road Bank both to day and Yesterday for specie. The People are Leaving town very fast to Day for fear of Yellow Fever *No Deaths* in the City to Day — Yesterday Dr Lyle was appointed Health officer, in the absence of Dr Hubbard, by the Selectmen.¹⁴³

When Johnson mentioned the high demand for “specie” he provides some insight into the widespread effects of President Jackson’s banking policies. Through executive order Jackson issued the “Specie Circular” in 1836 demanding that all federal land must be paid for in gold or silver. Going further in his effort to sever the United States from any dependency on Northern “pet banks” or the British reserve currency, Jackson issued the “Deposit and Distribution Act of 1836” that redistributed federal money throughout the states. Since Jackson focused on placing deposits in banks located in the Western states he effectively gutted the North Eastern financial sector and drained New England’s reserves. In May of 1837 New York banks refused to redeem their banknotes in specie and the effect radiated outward.¹⁴⁴ This particular run on the bank occurred concurrently with panic over an outbreak of Yellow Fever. Although he survived the Yellow Fever by moving to the country until December, Johnson continued to write about local bank failures over the next three years.

Following the Crash, Cartwright wanted economic authority but lost it; conversely Johnson idealized social authority but was refused it despite his economic status. Free Black men like Johnson caused astonishment in local circles because his status combined with his color seemed to be an incommensurable truth. Racial prejudice became more virulent in the 1830s and 1840s because of southern opposition to abolition but also because of the rise of egalitarianism and competitive individualism among whites during the Jacksonian era.¹⁴⁵ In 1831 Alexis de Tocqueville observed that

¹⁴³ Ibid., 8

¹⁴⁴ Peter L. Rousseau, “Jacksonian Monetary Policy, Specie Flows, and the Panic of 1837,” *Journal of Economic History* 62:2 (2002): 457-488

¹⁴⁵ Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny*, (New York, 1971), 41

an increase in status anxieties among whites worked largely to encourage cultural stewards to strengthen lines of demarcation dividing blacks and whites in the community.¹⁴⁶ Comparing the Northern and Southern attitudes toward blacks, Tocqueville reasoned: “Not that the inhabitants of the South regard slavery as necessary to the wealth of the planter; on this point many of them agree with their Northern countrymen, in freely admitting that slavery is prejudicial to their interests; but they are convinced that the removal of this evil would imperil their own existence.”¹⁴⁷

Men like Johnson did not work to remove the “evil” of slavery but by the very nature of their social relations challenged core tenets of the institution. One of Johnson’s closest friends, wealthy planter and prominent Whig politician Adam Bingaman, lived with a “Negro mistress.” Moreover a tender relationship between Mrs. Johnson and “M. E. Bingaman” often brought their families together for social occasions. Ira Berlin offers that “Bingaman no doubt felt a special closeness to Johnson, for he understood it was Johnson’s status, not his own, that his children would inherit.”¹⁴⁸ Bingaman knew that his boys and girls would inherit the status of their slave mother and bear the burden of being “black.” Beyond race Bingaman and Johnson shared camaraderie, hunted and fished together and the families continued their correspondence after William Johnson’s murder in 1851. Bingaman helped Johnson’s widow to manage the family estate. The Johnsons enjoyed the Bingamans as actual friends.¹⁴⁹

The Johnsons, the Bingamans and their caste stood as clear exemplars for all blacks slave and free, indicating just what a “Negro” could achieve, even in the suffocating confines of antebellum Mississippi slavery. Their complex lives and relationships also exhibit a Mississippi that was much

¹⁴⁶ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* 1, (Vintage Edition, 1990), 379; cited in Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny*, (New York, 1971), 40-41

¹⁴⁷ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* 1, 379

¹⁴⁸ Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 264

¹⁴⁹ William Johnson Papers, LSU, especially M.E. Bingaman to Mrs. Johnson, 21, April 1860; see also Hogan and Davis, eds., *William Johnson’s Natchez*, 267

more porous than in the 1830s under slavery than it had been during the 1930s under Jim Crow. The close proximity of Free Blacks and whites in Cartwright's home town was remarkable. As discussed, the majority of Mississippi's Free Black population lived within the bounds of Cartwright's own Adams County and census reports show that 1 in 4 free blacks in Natchez lived within the white households of the homes in which they worked. This high number of Free Blacks in his home county led Cartwright to consider the extent to which the Free Black population had been managed properly. During the 1830s and 1840s Cartwright operated as an elitist losing legitimacy and when others exercised their own self-reliance and judgment, he spotted in their choices an eyesore of ignorance.

Whether Thomsonian or abolitionist, Cartwright stressed that his political and professional foes operated with scales over their eyes—they suffered from delusions, fanaticism, misunderstandings, deceptions, quackery, debauchery and dishonor. When he remembered the 1830s and 1840s in Natchez as a period of “Free Negro Pandemonium,” his description reflected his own sense of amazement at the movements of powerful blacks in his hometown. Whatever artifice allowed blacks' free movement he determined to arrest and destroy because he believed emancipation reflected whites' fundamental misunderstandings of the “Negro” nature that perverted automatically their ideas of how to manage him properly. In the crucible of astonishment Cartwright perceived that Black Freedom led down the dark road to fanaticism and delusion that he called “Free Negro Pandemonium.”¹⁵⁰ The term “Pandemonium” is from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* where it was the name given to the palace built in the middle of Hell. As Milton put it, it was “the high capital of Satan and all his peers.”¹⁵¹ In viewing Free Black activity as an ultimate, coordinated evil, Cartwright propagated the notion that bargaining

¹⁵⁰ For this phrase, see S.A. Cartwright, MD, “How to Save the Republic, and the Position of the South in the Union,” *De Bow's Review* 11:2:189; also re-printed two years later as “The South's Position in the Union,” a less inflammatory title. See Cartwright, “The South's Position in the Union,” *De Bow's Review* 3 (1853): 53-62, see the citation for “Free Negro Pandemonium” on 57

¹⁵¹ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, “Introduction to the “First Book,” (Harvard, 1909-1914)

with blacks was synonymous with dealing in the region of Hell that is ruled by the “lesser demons.”¹⁵²

From his effort to write to the president of the Mississippi Colonization Society Cartwright made clear his chagrin at gradual abolition and rising status of Free Blacks. Following the Panic of 1837 Cartwright viewed society as the patient in need of an agent to guide the people toward a correct view of themselves as disciplined members of a system that worked according to natural laws which he himself had only begun to discover. It is clear that in his frustrations with the Thomsonians Cartwright cut his teeth on the notion that, instead of denouncing the effort to learn one must combine observation with theory and climb the “rugged hill of science” to discern truth from confusion. Rightfully so, Cartwright claimed that between himself and the Thomsonians he was the better scientist. One of the reasons he felt so confident was because he had just returned from an eighteen month long stay in Europe where he probed the newest medical knowledge. In Chapter one I addressed Cartwright’s European trip; there I demonstrated why he held an affinity for the “Paris School” and embraced France’s medical advancements just as they welcomed and feted him. The French vindicated Cartwright’s own long-held devotion to the study of anatomy and the practice of performing medical autopsies on humans. In addition to experiencing consensual validation of his domestic medical innovations, Cartwright also learned from the French the art of what he called “medical statistics,” what he called his “Spear of Ithuriel.” Next, in Chapter four, one discovers that the same “spear” Cartwright wielded against Thomsonians, abolitionists and the “Free Negro” was a weapon he picked up while traveling abroad.

¹⁵² The term “Pandemonium” is taken from the Latin *daemonium*, “evil spirit,” and from the Greek *daimonion* “inferior divine power,” from *daimon* “lesser god.”

Part II: Cartwright's Reason

Chapter 4: Medical Statistics: “A Reason for Her Faith”¹

“Statistical Medicine” -- the “Spear of Ithuriel”

The Free Black editors of *Freedom’s Journal* used statistics to fight against racial claims before Cartwright began using them to make racially charged claims. John Brown Russwurm and Samuel Cornish used statistical analysis in 1827 to fight against charges made by a white minister from New Jersey who argued that the condition of the emancipated Free Blacks showed that three-fourths of the “Free Coloured population” was “idle, ignorant, and depraved.”² These were the reasons the minister argued blacks should be colonized back to Africa; in other words, this was a gradual emancipationist speaking on behalf of black people, despite his clear prejudice against them. To refute the claim the editors of *Freedom’s Journal* printed an assessment of the “numbers of paupers” by using numbers from “the annual census of our city’s [New York] almshouse.”³ They published that:

Number of Paupers:

White Men, 468; Coloured Men, 17
White Women, 482; Coloured Women, 43
White Boys, 308; Coloured Boys, 14
White Girls, 153; Coloured Girls, 7
Total Whites, 1391; Total Coloureds, 81

In their analysis of these numbers Russwurm and Cornish determined that when one considered the percentage of paupers to the total population that blacks still held an advantage over whites. They adduced a ratio of “one coloured pauper to every 185, and one white pauper to every 115.”⁴ The Free Blacks in the North used statistics to claim that whites were more likely to be poor than blacks, despite northern prejudices and despite the confused good will of the colonizationists.

¹ De Bow, “The Statistical Bureaus in the States,” *De Bow’s Review* 8:5 (May 1850): 443

² John Brown Russwurm and Samuel Cornish, eds., *Freedom’s Journal*, March 30, 1827

³ Ibid; see Timothy McCarthy, “To Plead Our Own Cause: Black Print Culture and the Origins of American Abolitionism,” in Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Stauffer, eds., *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, (New York: The New Press, 2006), 126-127

⁴ *Freedom’s Journal*, March 30, 1827; McCarthy, “To Plead Our Own Cause,” 126

Blacks' challenge to natural rights theory altered whites' conception of slavery, putting southern intellectuals on the defensive to re-configure the slavery enterprise in morally serviceable terms. John Quincy Adams wrote in 1838 to a young Massachusetts abolitionist: "The youthful Champions of the rights of Human Nature have buckled and are buckling on their armour, and the Scourging Overseer, and the Lynching Lawyer, and the Servile Sophist, and Faithless Scribe, and the Priestly Parasite will vanish before them like Satan, touched by the Spear of Thuriol."⁵ Cartwright struggled with how to bring his skills as a physician to bear on a unique southern situation bound to plantation slavery. In the early 1830s pro-slavery physicians, judges and public intellectuals began to proselytize actively slavery's moral, religious and scientific justifications.⁶ Cartwright joined them in seeking out not just a systematic theory of the universe, but a universal system into which he and his perceived community could fit.

Cartwright did not begin to argue with numbers until he returned from France in 1837, armed with what he now lauded as "statistical medicine." He then went on to use statistics for two purposes in the 1840s: He used numbers in his 1840 article "Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez" in order to expose increases in Natchez' mortality rate since the arrival of the "Thomsonians." Similarly, in articles published from 1840 – 1844 he used statistics to launch his medical case against Free Black advance.⁷ Cartwright wielded the most recent of scientific tools — statistical analysis — in order to

⁵ John Quincy Adams to Edmund Quincy, July 28, 1838, Quitman Papers, University of Mississippi Archives

⁶ See Lawrence J. Friedman, *Gregarious Saints: Self and Community in American Abolitionism, 1830-1870* (1982); Paul Goodman, *Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Origins of Racial Equality* (Berkeley & London: University of California Press, 1998); Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Peter C. Ripley, ed., *The Black Abolitionist Papers: The United States, 1830-1846*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Ronald G. Walters, *The Antislavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984)

⁷ For Cartwright's statistical writing aimed against the Thomsonians, see Cartwright, "Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez," 1-21; and also Cartwright, "Dr. Cartwright's lecture on Statistical Medicine," *The Missouri Medical & Surgical Journal* 3-4 (1848): 211; and Cartwright, "Statistical Medicine or Numerical Analysis applied in the investigation of Morbid Actions: A Lecture, delivered by request, to the Medical Class of the University of Louisville, January 17th, 1848," *Western Journal of Medicine and Surgery* 1:3 (March 1848): 185-208; For Cartwright's statistical writing which focused on "Free Negroes" in Philadelphia see Cartwright, "Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez," 5; For Cartwright's

distinguish himself as a more capable scientist and to strengthen his arguments for a pro-slavery south. As James Harvey Young put it, “both broad and narrow factors prodded the southern doctors on.”⁸ Southern doctors across the board shared a sense of the region’s distinctiveness from the North and the most insightful physicians glimpsed the region’s transition from a western frontier into a Southern racial aristocracy. Young described that the South had to contend with its “agrarian economy, slavery, colonial economic status, shrinking political power and sensitivity to expanding northern criticism of its backwardness and immorality.” But at the same time the vanguard of southern physicians who took on the role of cultural steward agonized over problems within their own region. Young describes that “the lack of adequate training, and skill of the majority of the doctors, the low regard in which the public held the profession,” and the “rising tide of sectarianism” worked collectively to threaten the income of doctors who were “already barely able to survive.”⁹ Each of these forces propelled men like Cartwright to see political dreams come to fruition in statistical pictures.

Cartwright brandished what he called “statistical medicine” to discredit alternative medical practices and “Negroes,” a biomedical approach to the body politic. As early as 1840 he published his “Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez — a comparison of its mortality while medicine was protected, and since the introduction of the ‘Reformed Practices’ in *The Western Journal of Medicine and Surgery*, edited by Dr. Daniel Drake.¹⁰ Cartwright announced that “I am now about to test the

statistical writing wherein he extrapolated slaves’ runaway rates by comparing slave and free populations from 1790 to those from 1840, see [Cartwright], “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 2:4, (October 1842): 376-379; and for an instance of Cartwright citing “Mr. Quetelet” during an extensive statistical argument over allegations of blacks “idiocy,” “deafness” and accusations of increased insanity at the North, Cartwright compared Senators “Mr. Walker,” Mr. Calhoun,” and “Mr. Packenham” and included statistical comparisons of penitentiary conditions in Pennsylvania with those of slaves held in the South, see [Cartwright], “Annexation of Texas,” *Southern Quarterly Review*, 6:12 (October 1844): 509-15; Alternately for his use of statistics to prove what he called the “unnatural condition” of white workers in Manchester, London and Liverpool, see [Cartwright], “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” 340

⁸ James Harvey Young, “Patent Medicines: An Element in Southern Distinctiveness?,” in Todd Savitt and James Harvey Young, eds., *Disease and Distinctiveness in the American South*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 154-193, for quote see 160

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Cartwright, “Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez,” 1-21

results of the practice of medicine in these two eras” and he did so by using statistics.¹¹ He declared, “Statistical medicine or political arithmetic, as it is sometimes called, is that searching department of our science which separates the ore from the dross.” The term “ore” describes the naturally occurring solid material from which a metal or valuable mineral can be extracted profitably. By contrast, “dross” refers to the foreign matter, dregs or mineral waste; it is the scum formed on the surface of molten metal.¹² Cartwright wanted to educate the public and demonstrate how statistics enabled one to distinguish worthless rubbish from valuable insight. Suggesting the purifying power of “statistical medicine” he wrote, “It melts down and consumes the scaffolding which elevates empiricism, ephemeral success and accidental popularity, into high places.” Cartwright claimed that statistics “undeceives the public” by substituting for the “caprices of the credulous,” or the “partial and the prejudiced,” the “unerring results of time and truth.” He announced that he would use the new science of “statistical medicine” to “furnish the key which opens to public view in a manner the most convincing, simple and summary, the actual results of the regular and empirical practice.”¹³ Cartwright wrote with certitude because he rode the wave of anti-empiricism that had powered the Enlightenment. Beginning in the early national period and continuing into the antebellum period “Natural Law” played a cognitive and a heuristic role for Americans basing their radical new concepts in Newtonian reasoning. Joyce Appleby argues that, “Rejecting the tactile and the palpable, they used theories about natural simplicity to promote dissatisfaction with the ornate and byzantine arrangements of traditional society. They dwelt upon abstractions like the social contract, free trade, future progress, and autonomous man, which following Newtonian cosmology, pointed to a reality hidden behind

¹¹ Ibid., 1

¹² An 1839 edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* cites the meaning of “dross:” n. “The *dross* of the puddling furnace is the fluid glass floating upon the iron produced by the vitrification of the oxides and earths which are present.”

¹³ Cartwright, “Remarks on Statistical Medicine,” 2

appearances.”¹⁴ Cartwright vowed to “undeceive the public” by using the weapon of analytical reasoning to help common people see beyond appearances and he insisted on universal norms and relied upon abstract models to do so.

Cartwright showed his mettle as a scientist by honing in on statistics as the juggernaut of a new scientific culture. Numbers held an indisputable quality, mesmerized the unfamiliar and provided a back-door approach to arguments whose vestibules had been gagged. His dense numerical presentations forced word-weary readers to wrap their minds around unthinkable quantities and distant populations instead of individual patients. He used enumeration in order to establish disease and then exhibited disease-patterns as a world-picture of political health and illness. He clarified first that “I have thus attempted to show Natchez trusting in and wisely protecting science during the long period of ten years— through all this long lapse of years science being triumphant, amidst circumstances calculated to desolate and depopulate any other city.” That was the obedient and trusting phase of Natchez medicine wherein Cartwright’s brand of “regular” medicine felt orthodox. Then he wrote, “But it is now my task to review the picture and to exhibit Natchez during a period of four years and nine months...”¹⁵ He spoke in visual terms, exhibiting, revealing and reviewing the statistical “picture” and demonstrating it to the public.

By comparing the mortality tables from 1823-1834 with the brief five-year period since the annulment of the medical laws (1834-1839) Cartwright was able to demonstrate a statistical decline in public health. During this period Cartwright described a less obedient Natchez, which he spoke about in the feminine: “I will present her [Natchez] to the reader—not leaning upon the arm of science—not confiding exclusively to it—not trusting in it—not protecting it by wise legislation, but letting it go, to follow after ignorant, presuming and fanatical empirics, and seeking safety in the patent nostrums of

¹⁴ Joyce Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination*, (Cambridge: Harvard, 1992), 7

¹⁵ Cartwright, “Remarks on Statistical Medicine,” 11-12

ignorance and fraud.” In a near bride and groom configuration Cartwright envisioned Natchez “leaning on the arm of science” or being mistrustful and running astray.¹⁶

In addition to making charges against the Thomsonians’ education and honor, Cartwright established statistically that the popularity of their “reform” practices had increased the mortality rate of the city. He touted that “I am now about to turn statistical medicine upon the reformers. It is the spear of Ithuriel.” Cartwright realized that the arrows in his quiver — erudition, specialization, certification, and instrumentation — failed to hold the arc and hit their target. He understood that he needed another weapon and he found it in numbers. In a double edged way, by calling statistics his “Spear of Ithuriel” he took pride in his own medical innovation while comparing the Thomsonians to Satan at the same time.¹⁷ Statistics may have been his means but his resolve was to demolish the public’s elevated opinion of the Thomsonians. Rather than write about the new *appeal* of the Thomsonians or its cognitive effect on the regular physicians’ sense of communal standing, he turned the regular doctors’ lack of popularity into the Thomsonians fault. Cartwright argued that “the empirics” set out “to prove the imperfections and uncertainties of the healing art,” and that they “endeavored to shake the confidence of the public in the physicians and their remedies.” He conceded that he understood why so many good-natured people fell to the Thomsonians tactics. He sympathized that he knew “They excited the hopes of the afflicted and prevailed on the credulity of the weak, by puffing the many miraculous cures, which, the ‘reformed system’ was said to have affected.” He argued that the “empirics” had ruined many of the drugs that were available, worsening an “overweening reliance of the people on empirical remedies,” with “the gross adulteration of many of

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, 4

the more important medicines, sold to our physicians and retail apothecaries.”¹⁸ Cartwright claimed that the Thomsonians affected regular practice because when “the medicine chests are sent into the southwest, containing the medicines of the shops, and certain preparations of them, under various empirical names;” that the former he had “ascertained to be often adulterated or effete, while the latter were composed of genuine and active articles.”¹⁹

Cartwright could detect the inferior medicines whereas the public, dizzied by the idols of fanaticism, could not because they had been swept up into a near-religious enthusiasm for unwarranted independence. Cartwright believed that in order to remain sober and perceive things as they actually were that instead of denouncing the effort to learn one must combine observation with theory and climb the “rugged hill of science.”²⁰

Cartwright understood science differently than did Thomson. He had learned Latin and studied Greek in order to pursue his medical studies, as was common among men who wished to enter legal and medical professions. Teaching in the vernacular was part of the general enlightenment quest to democratize knowledge, but Cartwright resisted radical democratization and preferred elite stewardship. Whereas Cartwright became known as a stalwart Democrat and endorsed egalitarian *political* power-sharing through instruments like increasing the suffrage, he did not respect ordinary intelligence nor did he believe in common people’s capacity for correct judgment. This skepticism shows his dedication to Bacon who wrote warning of the various “idols” that distracted men and women into holding mere beliefs that obstructed them from obtaining true knowledge. Bacon’s *Advancement of Learning* professed the need to reconsider approaches to knowledge by demanding that one acquire information in a more refined, systematic way through direct observation and

¹⁸ Cartwright, “Statistical Medicine or Numerical Analysis applied in the investigation of Morbid Actions: A Lecture, delivered by request, to the Medical Class of the University of Louisville, January 17th, 1848,” *Western Journal of Medicine and Surgery* 1:3 (March 1848): 183

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Cartwright, “Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez,” 2

classification and avoid speculative, impressionistic thought. Bacon's work enjoyed great popularity in the American South and helped to keep secular skepticism alive in rural regions embroiled in a Great Awakening.²¹ Like others in the sacred circle of lawyers, physicians and military leaders, Cartwright saw himself as a cultural steward and conduit of the correct view.

It is clear that Cartwright read and absorbed the English poet John Milton as much Milton imagery surfaces throughout his writing. "Ithuriel" appears in Milton's *Paradise Lost* when the archangel Gabriel sends Ithuriel, a lesser angel, to find Satan. When Ithuriel came across Satan lurking in the Garden of Eden he was in disguise and "squat like a toad close at the ear of Eve." Upon recognizing him Ithuriel touched the toad with his spear to reveal his true shape and nature, as Satan.²² Cartwright compared that just as the "Spear of Ithuriel" revealed the true nature of Satan "statistical medicine" worked to "undeceive" the public and expose as impostors the alternative medical practitioners doing harm in their midst. He accused the Thomsonians of being capable tricksters and proposed that even persons who had not become "converts to the reformed system," were nevertheless "so far influenced by the sophisms, dogmas, and misrepresentations of the empirics, as to lose a large share of their confidence in the regular physicians." This led to public health risks because citizens "failed to make application in due time, for fear of being bled, or having to take calomel or some other drug which the reformers had so repeatedly denounced as poisonous."²³

Cartwright accused that the moment citizens refrained from seeking "regular" medical treatment that choice led to a grave increase in the rate of deaths for whites in Natchez. He brandished his "Spear of Ithuriel" to show how a qualitative lack of faith led to a quantitatively demonstrable increase in the local death rate. He analyzed that:

²¹ see Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Ante-bellum American Religious Thought*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1977)

²² John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 4, (1668), 778, 788

²³ Cartwright, "Remarks on Statistical Medicine," 4

The physicians of Natchez in ten years, from the 31st of December, 1823, to the 1st of January, 1834, have lost in all the population, including strangers, 641 patients. In the meantime 337 deaths are recorded not certified by any physician. The whole number of deaths in ten years being 998. This is less than 98 deaths per annum. Estimating the population at an average of 3,000, which falls short, rather than exceeds the true amount, the average mortality in the ten years would be only one in every 30.6-10 per annum.²⁴

He began his analysis with the ten-year period preceding the annulment of the medical licensing law, 1823-1834, as a way to establish a base from which to perceive later changes. After establishing the mortality rate in Natchez as 1 in every 30, he cited further statistics of major cities worldwide in order to provide comparisons. He adduced that “it is known that the average annual mortality of some of the principal cities of the world is much greater than this.” When Cartwright announced that he consulted the “Royal College of Physicians” his citation signaled that he had sourced out the best data while also revealing his admiration for and identification with the elite British group. Traditionally men from Cambridge and Oxford dominated the membership in the Royal College of Physicians — technically and “barring exceptional circumstances,” membership in the College was only open to Oxford graduates.²⁵ In an effort to mimic the British Royal College of Physicians American “boards of censors” and medical licensing societies attempted to restrict also their numbers.

Citing The Englishman Bisset Hawkins' book on medical statistics, published in 1829, Cartwright utilized statistics from “Dr. Hawkins of the Royal College of physicians” which demonstrated that Natchez was on par with some of the most prominent cities in Europe.²⁶ He cited that the annual mortality of Naples was 1 in 28; Vienna 1 in 26; Madrid 1 in 29; Rome 1 in 25; Amsterdam 1 in 24. Cartwright concluded that the mortality in each of these cities was greater than that of Natchez.²⁷ Moreover the way he used statistics shows efforts to juxtapose regional and national

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine*, 2-3

²⁶ Bisset Hawkins, *Elements of Medical Statistics*, (London, 1829); For a discussion of Hawkins' impact on early statistical analysis, see Theodore M. Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking, 1820-1900*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press,), 24

²⁷ Cartwright, “Remarks on Statistical Medicine,” 5

identities against each another:

According to the same authority the mortality of Paris, Lyons, Strasburg, Barcelona and Nice is from 1 in 31 to 1 in 32, very little less than that of Natchez. In Philadelphia in the year 1832, there were 6699 deaths reported out of a population of 188,397, making the average mortality of that city about 1 in 29.3-10 greater than the average mortality of Natchez.²⁸

He demonstrated that Natchez fared better than most European cities but also better than Philadelphia in the North. Cartwright proposed also that more than half the deaths in the Natchez bills of mortality occurred among strangers who were not enumerated in the census.

If “strangers” were subtracted the average mortality of the citizens of Natchez during the whole period of ten years would not exceed 1 in 61 per year, “a less degree of mortality for so long a period than any other town or city in the United States can boast of.”²⁹ Cartwright provided the following details to his readers:

I have computed the population of Natchez from 1823 to 1834 at an average of 3000—I believe it however to be more. In 1830 when the population had got to its lowest point, and at a season of the year when the town contained the fewest inhabitants, an actual enumeration, by the officers of the United States government, gave 2789 resident citizens. The bills of mortality in 1830 in a population of 2789 make the average mortality for that year only 1 in 34.8-10. Those acquainted with the history of Natchez know that it gradually decreased from 1823 to 1830, when it slowly increased until 1833, and then in less than twelve months nearly doubled its former population. But to make the lowest enumeration the basis of this calculation, the average mortality, during ten years, would be only 1 in 28.5-10, including the whole of the deaths among strangers, including all still born children, and also including the deaths among from five hundred to a thousand negroes annually brought to this city for sale, prior to the total interdiction of the trade by the legislature of Mississippi in 1836.

Including an analysis of Free Blacks in his prognosis of disease, Cartwright claimed that Natchez enjoyed “less mortality than that of Naples, Vienna, Rome, Amsterdam, Edinburg, Dublin, and at least three fourths of London and Paris, and considerably less than that part of Philadelphia inhabited by Negroes.”³⁰ After establishing a lower rate of mortality among whites at home, he honed in on his point and asked rhetorically, “But how happens it, that the average mortality of Natchez, during a period of ten years, has been so small? How happens it, that while in all other places from 1 to 21 to 1

²⁸ Ibid., 4

²⁹ Cartwright, “Remarks on Statistical Medicine,” 6

³⁰ Ibid.

in 53 of the inhabitants have died annually, in Natchez only 1 in 61 of her citizens, for ten years in succession, has perished annually, and only 1 in 30.6 including strangers and boatmen of which she has always had such great numbers?”³¹ He sought to convince readers that “These astonishing results are not owing to any mistake” because the individuals collecting the data were bound by law to report it accurately. He wrote confidently “All the deaths which occur are faithfully registered by the sexton and reported to the city council. The sexton is bound, under a penalty of fifty dollars for every case of omission, to register and report every death.”³²

Cartwright wrote that other towns and cities may have had as good physicians as Natchez did, but “the influence of empirics, the ignorance of the people, and their want of confidence in the healing art, besides the great numbers, in Europe, who perish *for the want of bread* and the comforts and necessaries of life, have co-operated to make the healing power and beneficial influences of the medical profession less diffused, felt, and appreciated.”³³ Cartwright wrote with a single consciousness which held politics and disease as the same entity, so when he wrote to southerners about the “great numbers in Europe” who begged for food, clothing and shelter he intended it as a statistical window into what happened when white men and women worked against their nature as laborers. He wrote in 1840, three years after having traveled extensively in Europe and conducting ethnographic reports on the British poor.

But in Natchez, situated in the most favored spot of the most favored land, where plenty and abundance abound, where every inhabitant, bond or free, rich or poor, young or old, has all the solid comforts and necessaries of life at all times at command, the benefits and *blessings of the science of medicine* were dispersed and diffused throughout her whole population, until the subtle wiles of crafty and designing empirics and pretended reformers, impaired the confidence of the public in the regular medical profession.³⁴

³¹ Ibid, 7

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, 8

³⁴ Ibid.

The criticisms of British free labor practices that are implicit here he makes explicit by 1842.³⁵

Cartwright located that “science of medicine” in what he considered to be orthodox training in credible medical institutions and who then obtained certification through one of many district medical boards. Once trained and following an apprenticeship he deemed that these advanced physicians should seek the course that he took in order to learn how to heal properly.

In his defense of the sexton’s objectivity and the reputation of regular allopathic medical practitioners one hears also a defense of the general image and honor of Natchez as a healthy city. Cartwright boasted “The people at a distance, hearing of so many epidemics in Natchez, naturally supposed that the mortality must be very great, and that human life was less secure than in almost any other place.” He deflected any suspicion that his hometown suffered from an unusually high death rate: “But facts of the most indisputable kind prove that Natchez, in ten years, under the most discouraging and disadvantageous circumstances, lost a fewer number of her citizens by death, in proportion to her population, than almost any other town or city in the civilized world.” Why had Natchez fared so well and maintained such high rates of salubrity? Cartwright declared, “The reason of so gratifying a result is as plain as the noonday sun.”³⁶ To Cartwright that law had protected health in Mississippi. He wrote that, “Natchez, during the ten years mentioned, *protected and encouraged science, and science protected and guarded her citizens.*” Law had isolated provisions for science that stimulated increased public health. Cartwright concluded that, “The citizens of Natchez, during these ten years, were protected by strict laws against murderous quacks and empiricism of all kinds. The whole population had confidence in the medical profession, and owing to this confidence, *made timely*

³⁵ Cartwright, “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” 321-383

³⁶ Cartwright, “Remarks on Statistical Medicine,” 8

application for medical assistance, whenever they found themselves afflicted with any malady whatever.”³⁷

The 1840 U.S. Census and “Free Black Insanity”

In order to make his argument Cartwright pulled from the new 1840 US Census, a document that provided Southerners with a stunning confirmation of Calhoun’s argument that slavery improved blacks. The political divisions between 1830 and 1840 were reflected in the attempts to enumerate the nation. As Roger C. Davis puts it, the “appetite” within Congress for “more and better statistics” increased greatly between the publishing of the 1830 and 1840 Census Reports.³⁸ As Ian Hacking’s argument about empire and science suggests, Andrew Jackson’s involvement in the Tariff Debate and his efforts to expand the American empire compelled the growing sovereign power to manifest a better ‘picture’ of the expanding body politic.³⁹ The 1830 census reformed the kinds of questions asked by abandoning the manufacturing-based census in preference for a population census; similarly, shifts in the 1840 census reflected national interests.⁴⁰ That year Congress requested basic information that revealed the racial makeup of the population as well as the extent to which the population suffered disease. Congress requested numbers on the deaf, blind and “dumb” or mute persons in each family. But despite the Secretary of State’s involvement for the first time, securing a team of forty three office staff or attempts at standardization, Census superintendent Francis Walker called the 1830 Census

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Robert C. Davis, “The Beginnings of American Social Research,” in George H. Daniels ed., *Nineteenth-Century American Science: A Reappraisal* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 152-178; see also “Statistical View of the Population of the United States from 1790 to 1830, Inclusive,” *Senate Executive Document No. 505*, 23d Congress, 2d Session, 1835, Serial 252; “Documents Relating to the Manufactures in the United States,” *House Document No. 308*, 22d Congress, 1st Session, 1833, Serials 222 and 223; and Frank Freidel, *Francis Lieber: Nineteenth-Century Liberal* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947), 172-174

³⁹ Ian Hacking, “Why Race Still Matters,” *Daedalus*, Winter, (2005): 102-116

⁴⁰ On the flowering interest in social statistics, see Margo J. Anderson, *The American Census: A Social History*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 29

“absolutely valueless. Anderson describes “the clerks missed mistakes or made new ones in their efforts at correction.”⁴¹

In legislating for the Census of 1840 Congress, an enthusiastic President Martin Van Buren led the initiative to pass a bill which would extend census enumeration to classify individuals by their economic pursuits and to obtain “all such information in relation to mines, agriculture, commerce, manufactures, and schools, as will exhibit a full view of the pursuits, industry, education and resources of the country.”⁴² However given the suspicion Americans had about centralized Federal powers, skeptical Congressmen raised the issue of confidentiality. Instructions to enumerators warned, “The figures stand opposite no man’s name; and therefore objection cannot apply,” indicating that the government’s guarantee of anonymity prohibited any breach of confidence. In addition to promising that enumerators would preserve the confidentiality of each household’s financial information they also vowed to keep private the mental and health data of each home.⁴³ In an effort to improve things Congress enlarged the census during 1840 requesting new information on revolutionary war pensioners, occupations commerce, industry, schools and colleges, literacy as well as ‘idiocy’ and “insanity.” Secretary of State John Forsyth appointed a Southerner, Virginian William Weaver who had “a rather spotty record in government service” and no experience in statistics to act as clerk and to oversee the census.⁴⁴

Upon analysis the new statistics showed that in the north, 1 in 162 blacks was insane, whereas in the south the ratio was 1 in 1, 558, while the rates for whites was 1 in 970. Pro-slavery Southerners in congress, eager to push the claim that Texas should be admitted into the union as a slave state, reflected the emerging view that “The free negroes of the northern states are the most vicious persons

⁴¹ Anderson, *The American Census*, 28-32

⁴² Davis, “The Beginnings of American Social Research,” 152-178; Wright and Hunt, *op. cit.*, 36.

⁴³ Davis, “The Beginnings of American Social Research,” 145

⁴⁴ Margo J. Anderson, *The American Census*, 26; see also Patricia Cline Cohen, *A Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982, Routledge Press reprint, 1999), 85

on this continent, perhaps on the earth.”⁴⁵ Edward Jarvis argues that, although the errors in the 1840 Census returns were plentiful, perhaps the most egregious error — the claim of a high rate of “Free Negro Insanity” in the North — inspired the intervention of the American Statistical Association, recently founded in 1839.⁴⁶

Leon Litwack was perhaps the first historian of American History to take seriously the implications of the 1840 Census on federal constitutional law regarding the free blacks. Litwack’s 1958 article, “The Federal Government and the Free Negro,” frames statistical analyses drawn from the 1840 Census as the first important conduit where medical science influenced federal law. Litwack pointed out that after the 1840 Census southern Congressmen could assert that the federal government had achieved “authoritative proof” of the “benign influence of slavery on Negroes.” The 1840 numbers verified statistically Calhoun’s 1837 assertion of slavery as a “positive good.”⁴⁷ In fact the frequency of these afflictions among blacks decreased from Maine to Louisiana with virtual “mathematical precision.”⁴⁸

Among various branches of government and in the popular press there was general agreement that the Census of 1840 had been, as John Gorham Palfrey called it, “a mortifying failure.”⁴⁹ The Proceedings of the *New York Historical Society* for the Year 1848 argued that “The defective statistics supplied by careless enumerators and evasive citizens could not be adequately detected, much less fully

⁴⁵ “Reflections on the Census of 1840,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 9 (June 1843): 340

⁴⁶ Davis, “The Beginnings of American Social Research,” 145

⁴⁷ John C. Calhoun, “Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions, Delivered in the Senate, February 6th, 1837,” in Richard R. Cralle, ed., *Speeches of John C. Calhoun, Delivered in the House of Representatives and in the Senate of the United States* (New York: Appleton, 1853), 625

⁴⁸ In Maine every 14th Negro was either a lunatic or an idiot; in New Hampshire every 28th; in Massachusetts every 43rd; in Connecticut every 184th; in New York every 257th; and in New Jersey every 297th. This was in sharp contrast with the South where the proportion ranged from one in 1,299 in Virginia and one in 2,477 in South Carolina to one in 4,310 in Louisiana. See “Table of Lunacy in the United States,” *Hunt’s Merchants’ Magazine and Commercial Review* 8 (1843): 460-461; see also Leon Litwack, “The Federal Government and the Free Negro,” *Journal of Negro History* 43:4 (Oct. 1958): 264; see also Edward Jarvis, “Insanity among the Coloured Population of the Free States,” *American Journal of the Medical Sciences* 7 (1844): 71-83

⁴⁹ *Congressional Globe*, 30th Congress, 2d Session, 18:638

corrected, by the census system. William A. Weaver, who supervised the State Department clerks checking the census returns, stated that upwards of 20,000 errors were discovered in the returns from Massachusetts alone.⁵⁰ By 1852 Dr. Edward Jarvis commented, “the deductions drawn from the statements of the census of 1840... seem to be irresistible facts.”⁵¹ He reflected that:

When this report first appeared in 1841, it attracted the attention of a great many naturalists, physicians, political economists and others... Although the deductions were strange and unexpected, and incredible, still they seemed undeniable, and tables, similar to that which your writer published in *The Observer*, were published in the several journals and newspapers, and in some of the lunatic hospital reports. Soon however, they appeared to be contrary to all previous experiences and observations, that some were led to examine into the character of the authority on which the tables were founded, and discovered that the whole of the statements in reference to the disorders of the colored race were a mere mass of error, and totally unworthy of credit.⁵²

Upon first hearing of the incredible numbers Jarvis himself had *justified* them. In fact for nearly three years after the census publication the emerging community of social statisticians — including government officials, pro-slavery advocates, abolitionists and the newly formed American Statistical Association — pored over the results on black insanity, finding them remarkable if unbelievable.⁵³ Jarvis panned the Census for mistakes and then Senator John Q. Adams attempted to create an investigative committee in Congress but Calhoun countered and appointed William Weaver, who was the census clerk, to report to congress; Weaver defended his census. In the September issue of the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* Jarvis, both a statistician and a physician first reported that the increase in black insanity came from the burden of a rapidly commercializing economy to which northern blacks had to adapt. He wrote that slavery, “refusing man of the hopes and responsibilities which the free, self-thinking and self-acting enjoy and sustain, of course... saves him from some of the liabilities and dangers of active

⁵⁰ *Proceedings of the New York Historical Society for the Year 1848* (New York: The Society, 1848), 45

⁵¹ E. Jarvis, M.D., “Insanity Among the Colored Population of the Free States,” *American Journal of Insanity*, (January 1952): 268

⁵² Jarvis, “Insanity Among the Coloured Races,” 269

⁵³ Cohen’s account does not mention Jarvis’ work as the result of an interracial effort from both he and Dr. James McCune Smith, the nation’s first black physician. Nonetheless, Cohen has written the “definitive explanation of how the errors crept into the reports” and my account of the 1840 Census is taken largely from Cohen, *A Calculating People*, 175-201

self-direction.”⁵⁴ Soon, as enumerators faced the obvious errors, the sixth U.S. Census prompted a national discussion of its shortcomings. The glaring omission was that the 1840 Census went virtually uncontested from 1840 - 1845. Patricia Cohen indicates that, “In the absence of any revision, the Census of 1840 continued to serve the purposes of anti-abolition orators and editors.”⁵⁵

Two months later Jarvis published an additional article in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* in which he retracted his first article. Having been familiar with the lunatic asylum in Worcester Massachusetts Jarvis noticed and corrected an error with that facilities reportage. He knew that the inmates at that asylum were all white but the Census reported that the facility held 133 black lunatics.⁵⁶ This error led to more as he turned to interrogate the census reports for Maine, which had recorded the highest number of insane blacks. After reviewing the printed tables carefully he found further errors, but of a different kind. Cohen determines that, “The Worcester error had been easy to spot, since it was a large number transposed into the wrong column by one simple error and easily verified as untrue. But in Maine there were no large concentrations of insane persons. The insane and idiot blacks were scattered throughout the state, one in one town and two or three in another, for a grand total of ninety four.”⁵⁷

Jarvis’ refutation of the 1840 census should be seen as contributing to a movement begun by African Americans in the 1820’s to use science as a tool to reason down slavery. Cohen suggests, “By marshaling additional quantitative arguments to allay suspicions about the accuracy of the census, [Jarvis’] article marked a new stage in the slavery debate.” Her analysis is that, “In the 1830s abolitionists and their opponents for the most part stood on moral and emotional grounds in their

⁵⁴ Edward Jarvis, “Statistics of Insanity in the United States,” *Boston Medical & Surgical Journal* 27 (Sept. 1842): 116-21; Cohen, *A Calculating People*, 192

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Edward Jarvis, “Statistics of Insanity in the United States,” *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 27 (November 1842): 281-282

⁵⁷ Ibid.

arguments, with personal testimony about slavery the back bone of their proof,” but that “after the early 1840s, verbal duelers increasingly chose as their weapons quantitative facts taken from the public record or from institutional records.”⁵⁸

While I agree with Cohen that “hard-nosed statistics” joined the fray during the 1840s, I argue that using numbers to fight the abolitionist cause began in the late 1820s and then took a turn with medical doctors like Nott and Caldwell and Colfax, who responded to those writers in the early 1830s.⁵⁹ One cannot understate the significance of John Brown Russwurm’s and Samuel Cornish’s publishing of *Freedom’s Journal* as a precedent for the social scientific view as this view helps to inform the history of science and the history of statistics. When these two Free Black men joined forces to write their first editorial on March 16, 1827, they fashioned a new voice: “We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us, too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentations, in things which concern us dearly.” They intoned “in the spirit of candor and humility we intend by a simple representation of facts to lay our case before the public, with a view to arrest the progress of prejudice, and to shield ourselves against the consequent evils.”⁶⁰ The editors did not speak in hyperbole about objectivity: just two weeks later they printed a statistical comparison of white and black poverty rates in order to rebuff racist colonizationist claims.⁶¹ Therefore I agree with Cohen that “the growing use of statistics to defend or attack slavery paralleled the emergence of slavery as a central and acknowledged political issue,” but Cornish and Russwurm’s cool approach preceded the 1840 period.

Remarkably Jarvis worked in collaboration with an African-American physician in the dogged effort to fight the dubious numbers. It is instructive that Jarvis, noted president of the American

⁵⁸ Cohen, *A Calculating People*, 195

⁵⁹ Cohen, *A Calculating People*, 195

⁶⁰ John Brown Russwurm and Samuel Cornish, eds., *Freedom’s Journal*, March 16, 1827

⁶¹ *Freedom’s Journal*, March 30, 1827; for a discussion of these statistics, see above in this chapter.

Statistical Association, joined the University of Glasgow-trained black physician, Dr. James McCune Smith to be the first to challenge the 1840 Census reports.⁶² Jarvis took fellow physicians to task for what he viewed as their collective failure to perceive that the census results were riddled with error. Writing in 1852 while he sifted through the results of the newly-modeled 1850 Census, Jarvis reflected on the long life of what were, to him, clear falsehoods:

It has seemed somewhat remarkable that statements so glaringly false in themselves, so palpably contradictory to each other, so contrary to all common observations and experience, so unsupported by any analogies or even theories, should have been so passively acquiesced in by the people of this country, and especially by the naturalists, the physicians and the statisticians of America.⁶³

Jarvis specified with some surprise that:

The Massachusetts Medical Society is the only association of physicians or naturalists that is known to us to have been so disturbed by these assertions as to pursue the inquiry into the same families and ascertain them to be false. The American Statistical Association is the only philosophical, historical or statistical society that has inquired into it, and endeavored to set the matter right before the people.”⁶⁴

Although Jarvis may have been unaware of it, McCune Smith published his skepticism over the 1840 census first in 1841 in his “The Destiny of the People of Color.” McCune Smith then drew on Jarvis’ more elaborate 1844 analysis for his own 1844 publication of “Freedom and Slavery for African-Americans,” as well as for the much more elaborate article, “The Influence of Climate on Longevity, with Special Reference to Life Insurance,” which he published in *Hunt’s Merchant Magazine* two years later in 1846.⁶⁵ In his 1841 critique McCune Smith wrote that “We live free from apprehensions which would turn life into a curse; nay more, confiding in the same proposition, the same reason for the

⁶²For fascinating coverage of America’s first black physician, and a details on his rebuttals of the 1840 United States Census errors, see John Stauffer, *The Works of James McCune Smith*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 42-50, 58, 63-64

⁶³ Jarvis, “Insanity Among the Colored Population of the Free States,” *American Jour. of Insanity*, (Jan. 1852): 281

⁶⁴ Additionally, Jarvis contends “The matter was brought to the attention of the Secretary of State, in 1845, by one of the oldest and ablest statesmen in the country [John Q. Adams]. The Secretary admitted the errors pointed out to him, and yet he thought it not worthwhile to take any public action to remedy it. Still, the deductions drawn from these errors were adopted as grounds to sustain, to their extent, some measures of public nature. The subject was brought before both houses of Congress by able and influential members, and referred to committees in each body. But no further public action was taken, except that the Senate printed the memorial of the Statistics Association.” Ibid.

⁶⁵ Dr. James McCune Smith, “The Destiny of the People of Color,” (1841) and “Freedom and Slavery for African-Americans,” (1844), both in Stauffer, *The Works of James McCune Smith*, 49-50 and 61-65; see also McCune Smith, “The Influence of Climate on Longevity, with Special Reference to Life Insurance,” *Hunt’s Merchant Magazine* (1846): 319-329 and 403-471

stability of things, the mariner boldly launches forth into the deep; and the man of science with the same rule questions nature in her minute recesses and carries his enquiries to the very barriers of creation.” McCune Smith believed in the power of numbers: “That we are overcoming these barriers is proven by the evidence of figures, which cannot lie.”⁶⁶ As pioneering scientist McCune Smith appreciated the objective quality of numbers just as much as Cartwright did. Both physicians — pro-slavery and abolitionist — swooned at the possibilities of analyzing census reports. McCune Smith added that, “It is said by political economists that the best evidence of improvement in the social condition of a people is furnished by their bills of mortality. That is to say, the fewer the proportion of deaths, the higher the standard of social comforts.”⁶⁷ McCune Smith referred also to the 1840 Census, which he compared to the 1830 Census: “this fact [that blacks had ‘improved nearly 18 percent during the last ten years’] is a sufficient answer to those calumniators who have asserted that the free colored inhabitants of the northern cities are plunged into hopeless degradation; that their constitutions cannot endure the rigors of a northern climate; and that their competition with the superior energies of white laborers, they ‘will of necessity be driven to the wall.’ ”⁶⁸ McCune Smith wrote unequivocally as an advocate for scientific medicine and statistical analysis as preferable to violence: “This will lead to an effort to obtain these rights, and as physical force is out of the question, the effort must be purely intellectual, and in order to maintain the struggle we must qualify ourselves to reason down the prejudices which bar us from rights.”⁶⁹

It is remarkable that the history of science in the United States demonstrates that two

⁶⁶ In this report Dr. McCune Smith uses comparative analysis from the 1790 and 1840 Census reports to show that “the whites are increasing more rapidly, relatively, than the colored people.” See, James McCune Smith, MD, “The Destiny of the People of Color,” original title page reads: *The Destiny of the People of Color. A Lecture Delivered before the Philomathean Society and Hamilton Lyceum in January, 1841, by James McCune Smith, M.D., New York, Published by Request, 1843*, in John Stauffer, *The Works of James McCune Smith*, 48-50

⁶⁷ McCune Smith cited Emerson’s “medical statistics” from 1830 just as Cartwright did in his statistical analysis of the Philadelphia Negro; see McCune Smith, “The Destiny of the People of Color,” 58

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

physicians, McCune Smith and Jarvis, made a bi-racial effort to use science to correct misconceptions unleashed by science.⁷⁰ Jarvis was so taken by McCune Smith's exposition on the 1840 Census (where he argued that blacks lived healthier and longer lives in freedom) that he presented McCune Smith's essay to the Boylston Medical Committee at Harvard.⁷¹ Jarvis went to Louisville, Kentucky to practice medicine in 1837 but his "antipathy to slavery" prompted a return to Massachusetts six years later, where he became a leading statistician. Jarvis founded the American Statistical Association and went on to serve thirty-one years as its president.⁷² James McCune Smith (1813-1865) was the nation's first African American physician, not to mention the "foremost black intellectual" in nineteenth century America. McCune Smith was celebrated internationally and extremely well regarded — he attended the University of Glasgow at a time when it was among the best in the world.⁷³ His stature as a renaissance black man combined with his superior training as a physician and led to him to join Harvard-educated Jarvis in poring over the 1840 Census returns.⁷⁴ Their work ultimately provided President-turned-Senator, John Quincy Adams with ammunition to lead the charge finally against the political fallout caused by what they demonstrated to be widespread errors.

⁷⁰ Forbes and Sinha both highlight the need for what McCarthy calls "an interracial historiography: an understanding of how blacks and whites influenced each other's views of history and progress," See Robert P. Forbes, "Truth Systematized: The Changing Debate Over Slavery and Abolition, 1761-1916" and Manisha Sinha, "Coming of Age: The Historiography of Black Abolitionism," both in McCarthy and Stauffer, *Prophets of Protest*, for McCarthy-Stauffer citation, xxiv, for Forbes 3-22, and for Sinha, 23-40; see also McCune Smith, "Freedom and Slavery for Afric-Americans," (1844), in Stauffer, *The Works of James McCune Smith*, 61-65; and his 1846 publication, McCune Smith, "The Influence of Climate on Longevity, with Special Reference to Life Insurance," *Hunt's Merchant Magazine* (1846): 319-329 and 403-471; and also Jarvis, "Insanity among the Colored Population of the Free States," *American Journal of the Medical Sciences* 7:13 (January 1844): 71-83

⁷¹ Jarvis, "The Influence of Climate on Longevity, with Special Reference to Life Insurance," *Hunt's Merchant Magazine* (1846): 319-329 and 403-471

⁷² Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 40-46; see also William R. Leonard, "Edward Jarvis," in Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., *Dictionary of American Biography*, 22 vols., (New York, 1928-1944):9

⁷³ By 1750 the Scottish universities in Glasgow and Edinburgh had surpassed the Dutch as the "favorite destination for aspiring students without the desire, money, religion, or connections to get into Oxbridge." See W.F. Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4

⁷⁴ Edward Jarvis, "Insanity among the Colored Population of the Free States," *American Journal of the Medical Sciences* 7:13 (January 1844): 71-83; James McCune Smith, "From the N.Y. Tribune: Freedom and Slavery for Afric-Americans," *Liberator*, February 23, 1844

McCune Smith spoke Latin and Greek fluently but his deep training in enumeration and statistics surpassed his penchant for languages.⁷⁵ His special position as a première black intellectual meant that he brought his own capable voice into the fray over Black Freedom. He wrote that, “in overcoming the Institution of Slavery, we must by our conduct confute the doctrines on which it is based.” McCune Smith elaborated that Blacks would only be able to repel white assumptions by exhibiting proper behavior. He suggested that what we did, how we moved in real time held deep ramifications for our public perception. McCune Smith wrote:

One of these doctrines [that must be confuted] is, that “*Might makes Right*”: because men have the power, therefore, they have the *right* to keep other men enslaved. This doctrine has also been the basis of several modern revolutions. For when the dogma of the Divine Right of Kings, and when the reign of superstition lost their influence upon the minds of the masses, these masses arose in their *might*, and relying upon their (physical) might, endeavored to obtain those rights which had been so long withheld from them. Their success has been only partial because perchance their efforts were based upon an unstable foundation—mere might.⁷⁶

McCune Smith contrasted physical superiority with moral superiority. He wrote that American and European revolutionaries embarked on a campaign of brutality and reason to achieve their experiment in Freedom. He argued that mere reason did not secure a higher justice. Functioning as a black intellectual powerhouse in antebellum America despite being born a slave, he understood something about what it meant to be dispossessed and then to thrive in Freedom.

In an adroit critique the black physician wrote that we must “overturn” the doctrine of “might makes right” by demonstrating that “*right makes right*,” a sentiment he discerned was “contained in the *American Declaration of Independence*, which declares ‘all men to have certain inalienable rights.’ But the *Constitution* of these United States, professedly constructed on the above principles, hold that there are some ‘other persons’—besides all men—who are not entitled to these rights. We are those

⁷⁵ McCune Smith was influenced by the writings of Adolphe Quetelet, William Farr and Luis Villerme. See John Stauffer, *The Works of James McCune Smith*, xv

⁷⁶ McCune Smith, “The Destiny of the People of Color,” (1843), in Stauffer, *The Works of James McCune Smith*, 52-53

‘other persons’—we are the exception. It is our destiny to prove that this exception is wrong.”⁷⁷ Smith referenced the monstrous “3/5 all other persons” clause in the *US Constitution*. He often cited Latin literature in his work to punctuate a thought and wanted “to impress upon the pages of history” a doctrine “which like some other sublime truths sprang from the very bitterness of slavery, and for which the world is indebted to an African slave: ‘*Homo sum humani nil a me alienum puto.*’” [“I am a man and I deem nothing human alien from me.”]⁷⁸

McCune Smith, Jarvis and Adams concluded that the 1840 Sixth Census had been infected by an ideological component of pro-slavery interests who manipulated the variables in order to alter its outcome. Working with Jarvis, McCune Smith reasoned that there were “greater mental and physical differences *within* a race than *between* the races.”⁷⁹ In the recently founded *American Journal of Insanity* Jarvis noted that:⁸⁰

The American Statistical Society, in 1845, first analyzed the census of 1840, and then prepared a long memorial to Congress. In their petition they set forth the errors, inconsistencies, contradictions and falsehoods of that document, and asked congress to disavow the whole, and cause another and correct one to be prepared and published. This memorial was presented to both houses of Congress, and referred to separate committees in each. The Senate printed the petition, and it is now to be found in the Senate documents of that session. It was also printed in *Hunt's Merchant's Magazine*, of New York, in February, 1845.”⁸¹

Despite professional rebuff and the litany of errors that lead to pleas for official censure, Congressional leaders still used the specious scientific knowledge gained from the 1840 Census reports to buttress their pro-slavery political agenda.

This raises the question as to whether science can correct scientific projects once they have

⁷⁷ Ibid., 52

⁷⁸ From Terence, the Roman playwright.

⁷⁹ Edward Jarvis, “Insanity among the Colored Population of the Free States,” *American Journal of the Medical Sciences* 7:13 (January, 1844): 71-83; James McCune Smith, “From the N.Y. Tribune: Freedom and Slavery for Afric-Americans,” *Liberator*, February 23, 1844

⁸⁰ Later re-named the *American Journal of Psychiatry*

⁸¹ For the best approach to Jarvis, see Gerald N. Grob’s *Edward Jarvis and the Medical World of Nineteenth Century America*, (Knoxville, 1978); and also see J.H. Cassedy, “Medical World of Madness, Morality and Number,” in *Reviews in American History* 7: 2 (June 1979): 219-223; for quotation see, E. Jarvis, M.D., “Insanity Among the Colored Population of the Free States,” *American Journal of Insanity*, (January 1952):269

been launched and circulated as pure, objective information into the public mind. Is the aura of objectivity stronger than the shadow of interest? Jarvis asserted, “The scientific world rested much of its hopes upon the sixth census, and anticipated great advantages and light from the investigations and discoveries in this hitherto untrodden field... But all such hopes were disappointed by a thorough examination of the document itself...its statements of some facts were so false, and its deductions so groundless, that, so far from advancing the cause of truth and knowledge and science, it has put a stumbling block in their way and retarded their progress.” Despite Jarvis’ hope that the seventh census of 1850 would not “fail as it did its predecessor” the 1850 report proved similar claims. Remarkably the 1850 census reflected a growing prejudice against the increased rate of Irish immigration to the United States and demonstrated a statistically meaningful propensity for the *Irish* to go insane.⁸²

One Georgia Congressman agreed with Jarvis and the American Statistical Association that the Census contained errors, but he added, “It is *too good a thing for our politicians to give up*. They had prepared speeches based on it, which they could not afford to lose.”⁸³ In response to a House resolution, Calhoun argued forcefully that the allegedly “gross and glaring errors” had been given a “full and thorough examination” and “the result would seem fully to sustain the correctness of the census.” Calhoun reasoned that errors could be expected in any such undertaking, but “they did not,” he declared, “alter the conclusion that a far greater prevalence of the diseases of insanity, blindness, deafness, and dumbness existed among northern Negroes.” This fact, Calhoun demanded, “stands unimpeachable.”⁸⁴ Despite widespread agreement that it contained vast errors, pro-slavery advocates had prepared addresses grounded in the “insanity” allegations that “they could not afford to lose.”⁸⁵

⁸² Ibid, 282

⁸³ Robert Wood, *Memorial of Edward Jarvis*, (TR Marvin & Son, 1885); also see Albert Deutsch, “The First U.S. Census of the Insane and its Use as Pro-Slavery Propaganda,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 15 (1944): 478

⁸⁴ Niles’ *Weekly Register* 68 (June 7 1845): 219

⁸⁵ Robert W. Wood, *Memorial of Edward Jarvis, M.D.*, (Boston, 1885); also Albert Deutsch, “The First U.S. Census of the Insane (1840) and its Use as Pro-Slavery Propaganda,” *Bulletin of the Hist. of Med.* 15 (1944): 478

The idea that census statistics were “too good a thing to give up” demonstrates an important instance in how scientific knowledge and open ignorance were constructed and deployed for political gain.⁸⁶

Southern lawmakers used the flawed census reports to their advantage by citing the returns as evidence that slavery improved blacks. A congressional representative from Mississippi argued that “the happy, well-fed, healthy and moral condition of the southern slaves” benefited clearly from the plantation school of slavery when compared to “the condition of the miserable victims and degraded free black of the North.” He spoke in certain terms because the statistical picture emanating from the 1840 Census allowed him to believe in what he dreamed. He argued that it must be so since “idiocy and lunacy... in the lower classes, had been shown by medical men to be invariably caused by vice and misery.”⁸⁷

Articles alleging an increased rate of black insanity in the Northern states were reprinted widely. The Census results received the greatest boon from a long article published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* that detailed the statistical evidence of black depravity at the north.⁸⁸ The anonymous author of the fifty page review — sounding a lot like Cartwright — warned fellow-Virginians: “Let us then suppose a half of a million of free negroes suddenly turned loose in Virginia, whose propensity it is, constantly to grow more vicious in a state of freedom. Where should we find Penitentiaries for the thousands of felons? Where, lunatic asylums for the tens of thousands of maniacs? Would it be possible to live in a country where maniacs and felons met the traveler at every cross-road?”⁸⁹

Cohen indicates that the view expressed in the *Southern Literary Messenger* was on the

⁸⁶ For a discussion of the role of “nescience” or “ignorance” in scientific pursuits, see the work of Sociologist M. Gross, “The Unknown in Process: Dynamic Connections of Ignorance, Non-knowledge and Related Concepts,” *Journal of Current Sociology* 55 (2001): 1-20

⁸⁷ *Congressional Globe*, 28 Cong., 1 Seas., 239

⁸⁸ “Reflections on the Census of 1840,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 9 (1843): 342

⁸⁹ “Reflections on the Census of 1840,” 342, 344, 346-347

uniformity of the results which fit well with other statistical analyses of free blacks at the North — statistics which claimed to show blacks high rates of incarceration in local jails and state prisons, high mortality rates and chronic pauperism.⁹⁰ The inflammatory review in the *Messenger* proclaimed, “The free negroes of the northern states are the most vicious persons on this continent, perhaps on the earth.”⁹¹ The anonymous reviewer proved relentless. He alleged that the New England states had the “most vicious and crazed blacks” because these areas were “hotbeds of abolitionism and the refuges of runaway slaves. Southern slaves were happy and carefree — their rates of mental stability attested to that — and fugitives had to be somewhat crazed to want to leave.”⁹²

When the British Foreign Secretary wrote to Secretary of State Abel Upshur in 1844 that the British favored emancipation in Texas and around the world, Usher’s successor, John C. Calhoun responded that slavery was a matter of states’ rights, not a subject of national or international debate. Calhoun reasoned that:

The census and other authentic documents show that, in all instances in which the States have changed the former relation between the two races, the condition of the African, instead of being improved, has become worse. They have been invariably sunk into vice and pauperism, accompanied by the bodily and mental inflictions incident thereto—deafness, blindness, insanity, and idiocy—to a degree without example.⁹³

Calhoun cited eagerly the recent 1840 Census results “and other authentic documents” as evidence for the benevolent effect of slavery on blacks. In a subsequent letter Calhoun denied that he had defended slavery in his previous letter and intervened that his intention had been to demonstrate from “unquestionable sources” the “depraved condition of Negroes in those states which had abolished the

⁹⁰ Cohen, *A Calculating People*, 194

⁹¹ “Reflections on the Census of 1840,” 340-52; for another contemporary pro-slavery view, see also the anonymously published “Statistics of Population. Table of Lunacy in the United States,” *Hunts Merchants’ Magazine* 9 (1843): 290, 460-61; possibly authored by George Tucker who included it in his book in 1855, see Cohen, *A Calculating People*, 262 note #49; see also Tucker, “The Progress of Population and Wealth in the United States in Fifty Years as Exhibited y the Decennial Census taken in the Period”

⁹² “Reflections on the Census of 1840,” 340

⁹³ C. Calhoun to Lord Richard Pakenham, April 18, 1844, “Proceedings of the Senate and Documents Relative to Texas,” Senate Document, 28 Congress, no. 341 (1844), 50-53. This letter also appears in Richard K. Cralle, ed., *The Works of John C. Calhoun* 6 vols., (New York, 1853-1855): 5: 333-339

institution” of slavery.⁹⁴

As demonstrated, Cartwright cited the 1840 Census in many of his writings published from 1840-1844. In 1840 Cartwright claimed to use “medical statistics” as his own “Spear of Ithuriel” in order to expose the quackery of “Thomsonians” who had gained medical authority in Natchez.⁹⁵ In that same article Cartwright used the 1840 Census to comment on the state of Free Blacks in Philadelphia. Cartwright compared black and white mortality rates during the period for which he had evidence. He tabulated that “During a period of ten years from 1820 to 1831, the mortality of Philadelphia has varied from 1 in 30.5 to 1 in 42.9. During the same period, the average mortality among fifteen or sixteen thousand negroes in Philadelphia has been 1 in 21.7.”⁹⁶ There is a theme in Cartwright’s work wherein he investigated the smallest structures to reveal larger patterns or to make larger patterns come into appearance.

Cartwright wielded “medical statistics” as his primary weapon of choice because he believed that understanding something was synonymous with being able to measure it and to him the organic appeal of statistical data appeared self-evident. Statistics permitted observations of phenomena to be expressed in a mathematical language. Louis Menand observes, “It was a way of cataloguing the universe and creating models for manipulating it.” Statistics offered the promise of order beneath apparent randomness. “Individuals—molecules or humans—might act unpredictably, but statistics seemed to show that in the aggregate their behavior conformed to stable laws.”⁹⁷ What Ernst Mayr called “population thinking” licensed not only a way of thinking but also a dynamic process of object-creation. The drive toward predicting outcomes, classifying phenomena and manipulating variables were forces that propelled the modernization process of a pre-industrial South, and both the North and

⁹⁴ Calhoun to Pakenham, April 27, 1844, “Proceedings of the Senate and Documents Relative to Texas,” 65-67, and Cralle, ed., *The Works of John C. Calhoun*, 5:343-347

⁹⁵ Cartwright, “Remarks on the Medical Statistics of Natchez,” 5

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 194

the South relied increasingly on science, statistics, medicine and technology to create and sustain the nation's shared wealth.

Since the politics of the antebellum era were infused with contemporary understandings of mathematics and science it is useful to ask to what extent scientific ideas lay an intellectual grid against which contemporaries rationalized and justified social behavior. In "The Statistical Bureaus in the States," *De Bow's Review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources*, James De Bow argued, "We are strikingly deficient in knowledge of the black and colored population, although living among us for nearly three hundred years."⁹⁸ As a dutiful scientist and statistician, De Bow groomed and encouraged Cartwright's expressed duty to fill this void. He argued that there can be no question either, that "the white, black and other races, present peculiar moral and physical characters, which should not be overlooked by the statesman, whose legitimate aim can only be the prosperity and happiness of all nations."⁹⁹ Ever with his watchful eye on issues pertaining to medical pedagogy and medical reform, he claimed that, according to Jefferson, scientific investigation into "the Negro" was a recondite area and that "Investigations, notwithstanding their importance, have never been made in this field, until very lately."¹⁰⁰ Among the list of accomplished Southern medical men dedicated to the scientific inquiry into "Negroes" De Bow listed "Dr. Cartwright" as "one of the most acute observers of the day." He along with "Dr. Nott" had demonstrated that "the Negro attains his greatest perfection, physical and moral, and also his greatest longevity, in a sate of slavery." De Bow remarked "Dr. Ginor, physician in charge of the Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania" had observed statistically "the most striking disproportion is between the white and colored deaths."¹⁰¹ De Bow often compared penitentiary conditions with slave conditions, and that theme foreshadows my thesis put forth in

⁹⁸ James De Bow, "The Statistical Bureaus in the States," *De Bow's Review* 8:5 (May 1850): 433

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Chapter, nine that the plantation had systemic connections to other inmate management facilities.¹⁰²

Pushing for the collection of minute data on blacks' every aspect of existence, De Bow asked, "Is not the real merit of the slave question involved in the physical characteristics of the races, and in discussing it, are not the facts of births, average lives, diseases, longevity, deaths, increase, vital force and etc. respectively at the North and the South, in freedom or in slavery, equally if not more important and decisive than the admonitions of St. Paul or the laws of Moses?"¹⁰³ A fascinating article in the *Southern Literary Messenger* entitled "Observations on a Passage in the Politics of Aristotle Relative to Slavery"¹⁰⁴ cited Cartwright three times in support of just such a convergence of Biblical and Natural Law.¹⁰⁵

The first point then to be decided is whether Slavery is condemned by the Law of Revelation. We shall not dwell upon this, because we conceive it to have been clearly and exclusively settled in the negative by the writings of Bishop England, Dr. Cartwright Gen. Jamison, and Dr. Fuller. But we will only allude to the fact that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the rest of the Patriarch's were large slave-owners; and that the text of the Mosaic Law both recognizes Slavery, and defines' the circumstances, conditions and preliminary formulas of perpetual bondage. And we will further affirm that no prohibition, direct or indirect, expressed or implied, is contained either in the language or tenor of the Christian dispensation.¹⁰⁶

Making comparisons between statistical authorities, the authority of the Holy Bible and the "Law of Moses" expressed the extreme faith in science that Cartwright and his cohort claimed and upon which they staked their careers and lives. De Bow asked a rhetorical question that he claimed was answerable only with an effort to collect the relevant data: he asked, "Is it true that the Negro is long lived at the

¹⁰² De Bow wrote, "And, finally-though we know not on what principle to recommend it, unless on that of Dr. Cartwright, that crime is disease (at least he says, perhaps facetiously, that rascality, in negroes, may be cured by medicine)-could not the editor furnish the digested returns of public prisons, penitentiaries, pauper houses, as well as hospitals, that they may be compared with those of other communities?" See "SOUTHERN MEDICAL REPORTS. GENERAL AND SPECIAL REPORTS ON THE MEDICAL TOPOGRAPHY, METEOROLOGY AND PREVALENT DISEASES, OF THE SOUTHERN STATES," *De Bow's Review* 9:3 (September 1850): 296; See also, De Bow, "Miscellaneous Notes" *De Bow's Review* 15:5 (November 1853): 538

¹⁰³ De Bow, "The Statistical Bureaus in the States," *De Bow's Review* 8:5 (May 1850):443

¹⁰⁴ "Observations on a Passage in the Politics of Aristotle Relative to Slavery" *Southern literary messenger; devoted to every department of literature and the fine arts* 16: 4 (April 1850): 193-205

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Cartwright cited on 193, 196 and 200

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 196

South, and the reverse at the North, whilst the mulatto is always short lived, and never prolific?”¹⁰⁷ In the spirit of Quetelet, De Bow argued vigorously “We want facts, full, minute, and reliable, upon every feature of this subject. In these exciting times, when *fanaticism* runs riot, endangering the existence of the Union, *it becomes of the South to be furnished with a reason for her faith.*”¹⁰⁸ Faith stands alone as an article of belief that requires no reason, yet De Bow argued faith to be less persuasive than science.

¹⁰⁷ De Bow, “The Statistical Bureaus in the States,” 443-4

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 433

Chapter 5: “East India Cotton”

Cartwright the Public Intellectual

While concepts culled from his European voyage stirred Cartwright’s imagination, the Financial Panic of 1837 devastated him financially and weakened his social standing. However gratifying his Parisian trip might have been intellectually, bankruptcy forced his return from France to Natchez in 1837. At that time he had been undergoing advanced medical treatments in Paris for his increasing deafness. In the midst of financial ruin Cartwright weighed the intellectual esteem gained from his trip to Europe against challenges by local, non-academic ‘Thomsonians’ peddling ‘patent medicines’ as an alternative to regular physicians’ ‘heroic treatment’ techniques which were often painful if not deadly. While Cartwright fought professional frustrations on the one hand, his time in Europe convinced him that he now possessed strong evidence of an international conspiracy against the slave south. Cartwright’s own economic ruin motivated him, and his tenure in France had strengthened his thinking. At the same time the shifting social conditions back home in Natchez and the rise of the Free Black caste quickened his dedication to publishing and regulating the public mind.

After serving as Andrew Marschalk’s apprentice and co-editor for five years (1826-1831) Cartwright learned the importance of print culture and the need to establish literacy about political and social issues in Mississippi. Now suspicious of an impending British coup against Southern agricultural interests, Cartwright wrote that when he and other medical men dispatched themselves to Europe in 1836 they did so to collect hard information on any attempt to foment American disunion.¹ Between 1836 and 1842 Cartwright struggled with how to combine his political vision of the white race as a master-race with his medical insight as a physician. Since he could not restrain putting his

¹ [Cartwright], “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 2:4 (October 1842): 321-323

opinions into print he struggled with which face to show to the public—that of the physician or that of the politician?

During the 1830s and early 1840s Cartwright gained notoriety in Mississippi for his politics, a reputation he managed capably by writing anonymously and under pen names. Perhaps in an attempt to separate politics from his emerging sense of medical professionalism and scientific objectivity, he published under the pseudonym “Chickasaw Monroe,” an amalgamation of the names of two neighboring Mississippi counties. By 1843 the editors of the Mississippi *Statesman* revealed that we “suppose it as well to acknowledge that ‘Chickasaw Monroe,’ is no other than the able and veteran Democrat, Dr. Cartwright.” Describing his unique rhetorical delivery the editors celebrated that “His light cannot be hid under a bushel.” Indicating that Cartwright had written also under the pseudonym “An Old Democrat,” they lauded that “No man at all familiar with the best political essays which have appeared in the *democratic journals* of Mississippi for the last ten years, but knows Dr. Cartwright’s nervous and polished style. No man doubts his sterling and uncompromising democracy—no man doubts his ability—no man doubts his worth and virtue as a citizen.”² Cartwright’s co-editorships with Andrew Marschalk at the Mississippi *Statesman and Gazette* and with John Claiborne at the Natchez *Free Trader* as well as his editorial contributions to the *Southern Quarterly Review* showed his great dedication to influencing the public sphere through print.

Cartwright wrote as an economist and social scientist as much as he did a medical doctor. His mentor, Benjamin Rush, lectured that term “physician” implied an inherently social role. Cartwright’s scientific objects were the social and the personal bodies—indeed since he sought out destiny in biology, he focused his sights on the terrain between the two. Part of what is fascinating about

² Cartwright Editorial, Mississippi *Statesman* 1:10 (September 16 1843)

Cartwright is how he used politically driven knowledge to shape his biomedical vision while being informed by his maturing scientific discipline.

These early 1840s writings reveal that Cartwright had enough professional awareness to protect his medical identity in print. Substantively however it is clear that his concern for politics and medicine became inseparable. In the 1820s his award-winning essays were race-neutral and he used black bodies as sources to determine how diseases progressed in all bodies. But by the early 1840s Cartwright showed inability to think of biomedical concepts outside of their political implications. From that time forward the two spheres of the ‘body politic’ fused in his opinions. He saw no great distinction between being a politician and a physician because he had studied with the great statesman Rush who he felt blended the two perfectly.

Over ensuing years Cartwright identified himself more brazenly with sectional views and his colleagues accused him outright of adulterating science with politics. In 1853 he reflected: “Unfortunately, however, for the South, if members of the medical profession interest themselves in matters of public utility, whether it be political economy, agriculture, manufactures, or internal improvements of any description, the ignorant, indolent, envious and jealous, are always ready to injure and curtail their usefulness by sneering at them as dangerous experimenters, crack-brained theorizers, too learned for the practical duties of their profession...”³ Cartwright felt that the physician was a political force inherently:

The usefulness of the celebrated Dr. Rush was so much curtailed by his being sneered at as a politician and jack-of-all-trades, that nothing but his most consummate skill as a practical physician prevented his entire practice from being swept away from him. Those, with medicable wounds, who listened to the outcry of the illiberal and selfish against the American Hippocrates, often paid dearly for their folly in not finding the balm of Gilead of which he was the great dispenser.⁴

³ Cartwright, “Art. I.—Extension of the Sugar Region of the United States: SOME REMARKS ON THE QUESTION, ‘HOW FAR NORTH THE CULTURE FO THE SUGAR CANE CAN BE PROFITABLY EXTENDED IN THE UNITE3D STATES?’,” *De Bow’s Review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources* 14:3 (March 1853): 203

⁴ Ibid.

Cartwright justified this belief in blending science and politics by referencing his mentor, the “American Hippocrates.”⁵ The notion that science is broken up into disciplines and separate from politics is more of a modern convention than an early nineteenth century belief. To Rush’s generation it was logical that a man of science, a physician, involved himself in politics—Rush signed the *Declaration of Independence*. However as Rush’s generation grew older and Cartwright’s cohort matured, this younger generation shaped what counted as science in a modernizing world. For the cohort born between 1776 and 1800 the study of law and medicine required aptitude in Latin and Greek.⁶ So at a very basic level the two disciplines began in the same place. On another level both disciplines shared the Enlightenment based principles of rational argument and human uplift. On an anthropological level, it made sense that men and women were involved in politics because science is a human activity. Science is an essentially human enterprise involved intricately or entangled with personal knowledge.⁷ Cartwright demonstrated in his citations of Rush that tension existed between an increasingly literate public and the traditionally learned elite.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century techniques of observation and rational explanation of research findings defined rather than excluded the politician.⁸ What it meant to be a scientist took

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ On the distinct vision of this “First Generation” of Americans and on their importance to shaping what their nation could become, see Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2000)

⁷ In 1958 Michael Polanyi challenged that, given the view of science as a fully human activity, can science be truly objective? See Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Toward a Post-Critical Philosophy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1958); See also Polanyi, *Science Faith and Society*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964)

⁸ Anthropologists have gone further to challenge any separation of political ideals from scientific production. James Clifford writes of the “dialogic” nature of scientific knowledge, particularly the interpersonal and inter-subjective character of anthropological knowledge. Similarly Clifford Geertz writes of “the oddity of constructing texts ostensibly scientific out of experiences broadly biographical. See James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); For the Geertz citation see Clifford Geertz, *In Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*, (San Jose: Stanford University Press, 1988), 10; also see Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, (Basic Books, 1973, 2000); For an overview of the notion of subjectivity in science, see Michael Carrithers, Andrew Barry, Ivan Brady, Clifford Geertz, Roger M. Keesing, Paul A. Roth, Robert A. Rubinstein and Elvi Whittaker, “Is Anthropology Art or Science,” *Current Anthropology* 31:3 (Jun. 1990): 263-282

on myriad forms as different researchers indulged dissimilar strategies of proof.⁹ The push to professionalize medical science did not occur in the United States until 1843 when American mental asylum superintendents called for the establishment of the first medical association. These early psychiatrists founded their union in 1844 and the regular physicians united to establish the American Medical Association in 1847. To Cartwright's generation and those junior to him any absence of objectivity was becoming less understandable as medical doctors professionalized and began to agree on orthodox standards of education and objective methods of proof. Cartwright believed himself to be especially empowered to blend political and medical concepts because he could boast that Dr. Rush mentored him directly; and few would deny Rush's efficacy as both a statesman and a physician.

“East India Cotton”: The British Conspiracy against the South

In the late 1830s Cartwright proved to be an indefatigable ethnographer and researcher, and the more information he gathered, the more a politician he became. He sailed to Europe out of suspicion and upon return from his travels abroad he claimed to possess evidence of a pan-European plot to destroy Southern economic interests based in slavery, and he determined to publish his research findings. In a letter to William Newton Mercer Cartwright confided that the British were utilizing books, pamphlets and “incendiary” abolitionist materials in order to cause chaos in the United States.¹⁰ In 1837 Cartwright wrote to his friend that the London-based abolitionists were plotting to “stir up the Christians of the Northern states” against the planter class and attack the general culture of the South.¹¹

⁹ For the ways in which medical practitioners incorporated the various forms of science, from chemistry to bacteriology, into their clinical concepts and practices, Bynum, *Science and The Practice of Medicine*, 118-141

¹⁰ Among other texts he claimed to have discovered in the British archives, Cartwright cited the following source as “incendiary” material aimed at ruining Northern and Southern relations, James Cropper, *Letters to the Liverpool Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, on the injurious effects of high prices of produce, and the beneficial prospects of low prices on the condition of Slaves.*, (London: Piccadilly, Hatchard & Son, 1823)

¹¹ Samuel A. Cartwright to William Newton Mercer, January 3, 1837, William New-ton Mercer Papers, 1832-1854, Department of Archives, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

Cartwright took advantage of the expanding media in the Lower South and wrote to the editors of the recently founded *Southern Quarterly Review* about the possibility of sharing his findings of British conspiracy.¹² He then published a long editorial in the second issue of the *Southern Quarterly Review* that revealed the depth of what he determined to be a British-backed abolitionist plot.¹³

Although the editors of the *SQR* published the article “East India Cotton” without attribution I demonstrate in this that Cartwright penned the long editorial. The anonymously written article featured several elements characteristic of Cartwright’s scientific thinking and rhetorical style: 1) Detail of Britain’s abolition conspiracy to break up the United States; 2) A focus on how the East India Company’s trade in staple goods would displace West Indian slave-based labor; 3) The claims that Africans’ physical organization was more important than mere skin color in determining their suitability for slavery, and that skin color was a “false issue;” 4) Expressed fear of a British take-over of the South’s booming cotton market; 5) The merits of slave labor over free labor; 6) The claim that forcing whites to work as laborers and against their true nature as rulers generated physical diseases artificially among the British poor; 7) Criticism of the poor conditions of British work-houses; 8) The ethnographic claim that Africans were “Ethiopians” and that their destiny was to serve perpetually as slaves; 9) The argument that slavery was a benevolent improvement over African barbarism; 10) The portrayal of slavery as an extension of Christian missionary activities; 11) The promotion of Haitian Independence as an exemplar of Black “fanaticism.”

In 1841 the founding editors of the *Southern Quarterly Review* — with Cartwright in their midst — set out to reveal Europeans’ interests in destroying the South’s current monopoly on the cotton and sugar trade:

¹² The *Southern Quarterly Review* was founded in New Orleans and moved its offices to Charleston in 1842 within a year of its founding. See Edward Reinhold Rogers, *Four Southern Magazines*, unpublished dissertation, (University of Virginia: June, 1902), 66

¹³ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 1:2 (April 1842): 446-493

It is not...from New-England alone, that we have reason to apprehend assaults upon us and our institutions. We have quite as much cause to regard, with deep interest, the designs entertained by Old England, the doctrines she promulgates through her leading *Reviews* and *Periodicals*, and the position she assumes in respect to questions in which the Southern States of this country are more particularly concerned, than any other portions of it.”¹⁴

The editors of the new *Southern Quarterly Review* sought to awaken its readers to the fact that England was an old enemy, “bound by no ties of allegiance to the American Union, either of a primary or secondary character, such as is due it by its own citizens.” The reviewer alleged that, “On the contrary, she regards our Constitutions of government, as wild and impracticable theories, that are destined, ere long, to accomplish their own destruction.”¹⁵ He built up the notion that just as British and American ideologies of governing bore an inverse relationship to each other, so too did their economic interests. The reviewer quipped that, “Yet, without waiting for a catastrophe so remote, she would, we believe, if she had the power and the opportunity, destroy these glorious fabrics of our liberty tomorrow, in order to resume her authority over us, and establish, upon the ruin of our institutions, her own darling monarchy.”¹⁶ Then in what would become classic Cartwright formation the editors supported the argument against England by sharing evidence of the East India Company’s machinations in West Indian emancipation:

Ever since the discussion of the West India question, and the abolition of slavery in her Colonies there, she [England] has had her eye especially upon New-England, as proper soil upon which to operate, and although she has groaned, as she admits, under the incubus of slavery for centuries, and has regarded herself, all the while, as quite a moral people, she seems suddenly to have acquired a new conscience, to have discovered that she has been awfully wicked, through the lapse of many generations, and that penitence and a wide-reaching philanthropy, such as never before crossed her fancy, are now to be her legitimate vocation.¹⁷

Continuing in a sarcastic attack on British values — and narrating England’s own history and profit from the slave trade as a way of putting their current call for international abolition into perspective — the editors opined: “She [Old England] therefore, by way of atonement, as it would seem, for her own

¹⁴ “The Periodical Press,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 1:1 (January 1842): 54

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 55

offences, or because her love of humankind must have an outlet somewhere, calls upon New England, who for the last thirty or forty years, has been free from the sin which has disturbed her own slumbers with frightful dreams, to come forward with a noble generosity, and do as she has done, to put her hand in her pocket, and, from the funds she finds there, purchase of their owners all the slaves of the Southern States of our country and set them at liberty.”¹⁸

The editorial commentary focused on the fact that since the writing of the U.S. *Constitution*, the nation witnessed a gradual abolition of slavery in the North and its rapid extension in the South. Richard Newman indicates that during the early nineteenth century blacks witnessed “two of the most stunning demographic developments during the early republic: on the one hand, the massive growth of slavery in the South and Southwest; on the other hand, the incredible growth and maturation of free black communities, mostly in Northern and Midwestern locales.” Newman criticizes that while scholars have focused at length on the doubling of slaves from 1790 and 1830 (from 700,000 to two million), they have neglected to focus on the *quadrupling* of the free black population during the same years (from 70,000 persons to a quarter million).¹⁹ The paradoxical development of a pro-slavery south and an anti-slavery north was among the most important features of the early republic and the *SQR* editors focused on New England, “who for the last thirty or forty years” had cleansed itself “free from the sin.”²⁰ The editors hoped that their rhetoric and irony would reveal abolitionists’ hypocrisy.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Richard Newman, “A Chosen Generation: Black Founders and Early America,” in *Prophets of Protest*, (New York: The New Press, 2006), 61; on the development of the Free Black society in the North, see James Horton and Lois Horton, *In Hope of Liberty*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); and Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002)

²⁰ On the asymmetry of interests between the gradual abolition of slavery in the North and its rapid extension in the South, see McCarthy & Stauffer, eds. *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, (New York: The New Press, 2006), xviii; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of American Slavery in North America*, (Cambridge, 1998); Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and “Race” in New England, 1780-1860*, (Ithaca, 1998); Arthur Zilversmit, *The First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North*, (Chicago, 1967); and Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860*, (Chicago, 1961); and on the constitutional asymmetry between the U.S. and Great Britain, see Michael A. Schoeppner, “Status across Borders: Roger Taney, Black British Subjects, and a Diplomatic Antecedent to the Dred Scott Decision,” *Journal of American*

After castigating England for its architecture of the West Indian Trade and denouncing further “her experiment of emancipation,” the author claimed that “The African race are not, never were, and never will be fit for freedom, in the West Indies or anywhere.” As one continues to read this article, it reads more and more like Cartwright’s “polished rhetorical style” about which his Mississippi editors commented. The reviewer questioned, “Does [England] make the proposition, because she is satisfied, that the people of New England love philanthropy so much, and money so little, that they will readily sacrifice their estates on the occasion, in order to gratify their philanthropic tendencies?” He admonished that, “She knows them better, and as for relieving our Northern brethren from the guilt of Southern slavery by inducing them to follow her example we apprehend the idea never to occur to her, and that she is equally indifferent, both as to their temporal and their spiritual salvation.”²¹ Here, in miniature, one can see the core of Cartwright’s political vision based in a suspicion of England and the beginnings of his medical thinking on the differences between blacks and whites. The editors characterized the “Northern portion” of the country as having “timid consciences” and “jealous apprehensions” that could not see clearly the British threat: “Does England, haughty, domineering, crafty, ambitious, far-reaching England ever sleep upon her opportunities? Has she not her eye always open, and her arm always ready, to strike a deep and deadly blow for her own interests, quite regardless of whom it is she wounds and of whom she crushes?”²² The editors were demanding that their southern readership practice a spirit of discernment: “When she [England] comes to us in loving guise, and prates about her sympathy for the slave, and tells us that she is deeply moved by the cause of liberty, and the cause of humanity, and would rescue her American friends, over the seas, from the deep and damning guilt of a great moral evil, is she to be believed? Trust not her tale. It is false!”²³

History, (June 2013): 47

²¹ “The Periodical Press,” 56

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

Cartwright's Summary Arguments

Aside from a personal hatred of the British for his war-time wound and eventual deafness, Cartwright had three issues with England: intellectual, political, and moral, and each of them conspiratorial. Intellectually Cartwright focused on what he saw as intrusions into Mississippi's agricultural knowledge base and he wanted to provoke his audience and awaken the South to the conspiracy he had detected during his travels to Europe in 1836:

What is the East India Company now doing in the United States? Not content with enlisting men for five years in Louisiana and Mississippi to go to India to teach its overseer to plant cotton on the improved system, it has been endeavoring, for ten years, to break up the culture of cotton and sugar altogether in the United States, by setting the North against the South by means of its abolition societies. It has regular professors of abolition in London, who are as much under the guidance and control of the company, as its armies in India."²⁴

For the third time in this essay Cartwright rallied against specific efforts of men whose "incendiary" arguments led him to call them "Professors" of abolition. He claimed first-hand evidence of their scheme and relayed that in his native Natchez he witnessed British operatives seeking to advance their knowledge of local agriculture. He wrote "His employers, the East India Company, have theretofore sent to the United States an agent to procure men to go to India to teach their overseer the art of making cotton on the improved method of Louisiana and Mississippi."²⁵ Cartwright informed "Eight or nine men, two years ago, left Natchez, to proceed to India, for this purpose. They took with them our improved description of cotton-seed. The seed heretofore planted in India, was like that formerly used in Mississippi, the bolls or pods not opening, but apt to rot in rainy weather."²⁶ He testified that "a number of our improved cotton-gin stands have also been sent to India, with models of our gin-houses." Cartwright had discovered British-based threats on all sides and felt it his duty to communicate this danger to a wider public. Cartwright and the editors of the *SQR* intended their

²⁴ [Cartwright], "East India Cotton," 459-460

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 458

journal to “assume an attitude of defence and defiance” against this evolving world-picture of Free Labor practices:²⁷

The South... will take its ground against the world, and employing God’s law, which is not of the world, and the everlasting principles of right, justice and equity, which are not always uppermost in it, will obtain the victory in the contest! This “world’s voice” and “world’s opinion” so hostile to us, and which are used, on all occasions, as hobgoblins, to frighten weak minds and alarm timid consciences, will turn out in the end, however, we apprehend, to be very much like that *brutum fulmem*²⁸, that great bubble, “The World’s convention,” when the world begged to be excused from any participation in the wild schemes, in which a few mad-cap fanatics would involve it.”²⁹

The world of “mad-cap fanatics” was putting pressure on the South to end slavery and Cartwright understood his duty as a Southern steward was to respond to these international pressures. Speaking as a scientist he advised other Southerners that “Experiments are in extensive progress throughout all India, and even in New Holland, with every variety of cotton, native and American, with a view to improve the quality, and extend the culture sufficiently to supply the British factories with every needful quality and quantity.” Cartwright detailed that, “Numerous samples of cotton grown in India, have been lately sent to the factory masters of Great Britain, for examination. The result is, that some of the samples are said to be superior to the American. Specimens of Cotton fabrics, spun and woven in India, by the Hindoos, have been exhibited in London.”³⁰

Cartwright spoke specifically of how British merchants used scientific laboratories to examine the cotton and soil samples that emissaries were sent out to retrieve. He wrote that when the American samples were compared “They were much finer than the highest numbers of any of the British factories. Many samples of the different soils were also brought from India, to the chemical laboratories of London, to be compared, by analysis, with specimens of the soil of the cotton States of

²⁷ “The Periodical Press,” 53

²⁸ *Brutum Fulmen*: Latin, “A harmless thunderbolt; a vain and empty threat.”

²⁹ “The Periodical Press,” 53-54

³⁰ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 474

America.”³¹ Writing as a self-conscious physician, his language —“experiments,” “specimens” and “exhibitions,” “samples,” “by analysis” — and his reference to chemical samples of soils revealed his understanding that science should serve agriculture. To his thinking, black slaves were merely to be managed as part of the same machinery; as items to be governed by the same science that governed by augmentation the condition of the soil. Cartwright argued that science served the state and by parity, just as one could use science to improve soil conditions, one could also use scientific knowledge to improve slave management.

Cartwright’s focus on using chemistry to enhance agriculture disproves the argument that Southerners had no interest in applying basic sciences to agricultural improvement.³² Cartwright wrote specifically of such experiments in his home state of Mississippi, that local “specimens of the soils of Concordia, Louisiana and Adams County, Miss., were sent to London” for inspection. He warned fellow Southerners, “Let ignorance laugh at science pressed into the service of agriculture; it is her privilege; but it is the province of science to triumph.”³³

Inspired by the light chemistry might bring to Southern agriculture, Cartwright reached for an obscure source, printed in Calcutta, India, as an effort to prove further the legitimacy of his claims of British conspiracy. As he put it, nothing in Calcutta was printed except by “Royal decree.” In his own footnote, he wrote that the Calcutta source, *Treatise on Indigo*, was published in 1832, “being a part of a series of treatises on the principal products of Bengal—the culture of indigo, sugar, cotton, hemp, silk and opium, by John Phipps.” He noted that “this work is to be found in Natchez, Miss. — it belongs to a distinguished counselor at law.”³⁴ Citing sources proved critical to Cartwright as he was building a belief system on intellectual scaffolding of historical fact—well-researched objective opinion.

³¹ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 474

³² For an elaboration of this view, see William K. Scarborough, “Science on the Plantation,” in Numbers and Savitt, *Science and Medicine in the Old South*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 79-106

³³ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 474

³⁴ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 465

Referring to the Indian source, on “the 74th page of the Calcutta Work on Indigo” Cartwright cited “on soils, which yielded by analysis certain products, ‘the addition of a very minute portion of lime, increased the produce of indigo upwards of 50 per cent.’”³⁵ Edging toward his point Cartwright offered another source: “By turning to the London *Athenaeum* of November, 23, 1839, we there find a ‘report on the cotton trade of India,’ and an abstract of a paper read by General Briggs, one of the East India Company’s servants.”³⁶ The paper tries to prove that “the people of Hindostan are as capable of furnishing Europe with cotton, as the inhabitants of North America, and that, under proper arrangements, [such as Mississippi overseers know so well how to make,] both the quantity and quality of their produce would suffice for all the requirements of our (British) manufactures, without the necessity of relying on the slave labor of America.”[Cartwright’s bracketed notes]³⁷ Cartwright summoned these citations—which he had seen first-hand, both in Mississippi and in London—to build rhetorical weight and lead the reading public to see the British as he saw them: as conspiring to erase the economic dominance of the American South by using Southern knowledge to establish superiority in East India, a territory they controlled through Royal decree.

Morally Cartwright accused the British of being pure hypocrites: “Have the British emissaries kindled a thirst in the North for the liberation of bondmen, which must be quenched? There are more than one hundred millions of bondmen in India.”³⁸ Cartwright hoped to expose to well-meaning Americans who might be misguided that all abolitionists — the immediatists as well as the much more conservative ACS —operated from false premises about blacks’ potential to enjoy true liberty. He intoned sympathy when he opined: “The misfortune is, that the great mass of the British abolitionists are hoodwinked by that selfish and designing few, who are aiming at the destruction of the commercial,

³⁵ *Treatise on Indigo*, (Calcutta, 1832), 74; see *op. cit.* re John Phipps.

³⁶ London *Athenaeum* of November, 23, 1839

³⁷ London *Athenaeum* of November, 23, 1839; cited in [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 474

³⁸ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 459

agricultural and manufacturing competition of the United States, regardless of the misery they would entail on the negro race, in accomplishing their object.” Deploying specifically ethnographic terms, Cartwright elaborated that, “Any man, conversant with the character of the Ethiopian, has only to read attentively the interrogatories put to the witnesses, by the Chairmen of the Committees of the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and the Privy Council, on the West India question of emancipation, to be convinced, that the pretend ignorance of that character is all a sham, in regard to the great dignitaries of England; however real it may be in regard to the great mass of the British public.” Cartwright held that since British overseer’s understood blacks’ true character even if their Lords in British Parliament denied it. To his thinking the public operated in good faith by pledging support to a “sham” system its Parliament had put forth in bad faith. David Brion Davis argues a perspective similar to Cartwright’s critique: “For two centuries the British had enslaved countless Africans but had now resolved...to force, cajole, persuade and prevent other people from slavery. Having imposed their slaving systems on vast tracts of Africa and the New World, the British with an almost evangelical zeal hawked their abolitionist conscience around the world and, in a no less imperious manner, obliged others to accept their revulsion and reject slavery.”³⁹

Cartwright contended that England’s 1833 Abolition Act was merely a smoke-screen put up by the East Indian interests in Parliament and that it enabled slavery under a different name. Furthermore he admonished that free labor practices in India kept Indians so destitute that their sanitary and health condition was worse than the black American slaves. Cartwright argued that just as white British laborers suffered because they worked outside of their nature, so too under British despotism East Indians and Asians labored outside of the way Providence had ordained. Cartwright participated in the increased tendency for Southern slave-holders to compare British and Asian labor exploitation to

³⁹ David Brion Davis, “Slavery & Progress,” in Bolt and Drescher, eds., *Anti-Slavery, Religion, and Reform*, 363-4

African slavery. Writing in 1835, before Cartwright, William Hobby of Georgia argued that black slaves in the south were better off than the European poor and that the slaves' standard of living was immeasurably better than the laboring classes of China and Turkey.⁴⁰ Continuing into the 1840s Southerners increased their comparisons of slave-based southern labor with the free-labor practices in Asia and the Near East. A "barrage of criticism" that focused on conditions in India specifically erupted in the 1840s and 1850s.⁴¹

In 1843 Cartwright wrote against the brutal quasi-slavery and "iron despotism" imposed on India's "sons of Shem" and Presbyterian Reverend T. C. Thornton supported his remarks.⁴² Following his travels to the Near East William Pinckney Starke wrote to John C. Calhoun from Paris and labeled the Egyptians as an "ignorant and cowardly" race that lived in mud huts he claimed were much inferior to southern slave cabins.⁴³ William Boulware of Virginia took a more even-handed view of labor relations. Writing as the Charg'e d'Affaires at the Court of the Two Sicilies, he disagreed with Hobby and asserted that slaves in the Islamic Near East lived under a patriarchal regime similar to biblical times. He found the slaves' conditions to be agreeable and offered that they were not held in contempt and seemed to be treated kindly. Genovese argues, "Boulware thought the laborers of Egypt more oppressed than in other parts of the Near East, and he pointedly added that poor peasants there as well as in Syria and elsewhere were worse off than southern slaves."⁴⁴

Cartwright spoke specifically of the more radical abolitionist call for "immediatism" as being the final, intolerable call. The older, ACS-supported notion of gradualism had been endorsed since

⁴⁰ [William Hobby], *Remarks upon Slavery, Occasioned by Attempts Made to Circulate Improper Publications in the Southern States. By a Citizen of Georgia*, 2nd ed. (Augusta, Ga., 1835), 31

⁴¹ Genovese, *Slavery in Black and White*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 141

⁴² Cartwright, *Essays*, (Vidalia, 1843), 6, 8, 45, quote on 6; see also T. C. Thornton, *An Inquiry into the History of Slavery* (Washington, D.C., 1841), 125–129, 213–214

⁴³ William Pinckney Starke to John C. Calhoun, Jan. 23, 1846, in *John C. Calhoun Papers*, 22:498

⁴⁴ William Boulware, "Extracts from a voyage in the East in 1843," *Southern and Western Literary Monthly Magazine and Review* 12 (1846): 169, 172–174; see also Eugene Genovese, *Slavery in Blacks and White*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 141

Jefferson's 1777 proposed revision of the Virginia *Constitution* and at a time when slave-holders nationwide saw slavery as Jefferson did — as an “evil” — and could look forward to emancipating their slaves eventually.⁴⁵ Although Cartwright disapproved of even limited allowances for black freedom the growing call for “immediate” abolition drove him and his southern comrades into action. Cartwright wrote, “The few are too wise to expect immediate abolition in the Southern States, or, in fact, any abolition at all. But they hope, by agitating the question in its most offensive forms, to cause disunion between the North and the South.”⁴⁶ In a word, Cartwright was telling Britain to mind its own colonies and not the American South's “associated labor” practices.

Politically, Cartwright understood that if abolitionism were to spread in the United States as it had in Britain and France, it might begin first as an ideology but then go on to manifest successful political reforms. In his long article entitled “East India Cotton,” Cartwright's summarized his argument: “The whole object and intent of the London Anti-Slavery Society” was “for no other purpose than to inflame the people of the Northern states” by “false representations and other means, against the system of slavery.”⁴⁷ He argued that their purpose was “to induce them, by some rash act, to drive the South to disunion and non-intercourse with the North.” Cartwright warned the obviousness of the fact that, “Indeed, the East India Company no longer makes it a secret of its machinations against

⁴⁵ Jefferson's attitudes and proposals regarding slavery were more progressive than his commitment was to own actual slaves. Despite this hypocrisy, Jefferson's record on anti-slavery legislation is quite liberal. Before June 13, 1776 Jefferson wrote in his *Draft of the Virginia Constitution* “No person hereafter coming into this country shall be held within the same in slavery under any pretext whatever.” He also introduced a “Bill against the Importation of Slaves” in that same *Draft* and submitted in 1777-1779 the nation's first detailed plan for gradual emancipation in his *Revisal of Virginia's Laws*. But Jefferson's courage was fickle and in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781) he called slavery an “evil” while at the same time penning the imprimatur for pro-slavery and anti-black thought. (He wrote “In the very first session held under the republican government, the assembly passed a law for the perpetual prohibition of the importation of slaves. This will in some measure stop the increase of this *great political and moral evil*, while the minds of our citizens may be ripening for a complete emancipation of human nature.”). See *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 1, on his *Draft of the Virginia Constitution* see 1:363; for his *Bill against the Importation of Slaves* see 2:22-23; for his *Revisal of Virginia's Laws* see *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Peden, ed., 163, and for the above citation from *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 87

⁴⁶ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 459

⁴⁷ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 492-493

the Southern institutions of America.”⁴⁸ Cartwright referred implicitly here to Britain’s mounting attack on the practice of African slavery, the peculiar “institution.” Since the British had abolished slavery in 1834 and since a similarly motivated anti-slavery petition movement took over Congress for nearly a decade, Cartwright saw the increasing worldwide embrace of free-labor practices as a direct threat to the Southern way of life.⁴⁹ Cartwright put forth that:

If the world be too small to afford a market for the products of the East, and similar products of our Southern States; if British power in India must fall, or our glorious Union be dissolved, (since Great Britain is forcing upon us the question of disunion or abolition,) the sooner the issue is brought on the better. The question of abolition we will never discuss or entertain; but the question which shall stand or fall, the ill-got power of Britain in India, or our holy Union, cemented by the blood of our fathers, is the one which America should always be ready to debate, either at home or on the Ganges, with sword and with cannon.⁵⁰

Cartwright intoned that one “must be very dull of comprehension, who has paid any attention to the subject at all, not to perceive that the design of Great Britain is, to break up, if she can, negro slavery everywhere else, except in her own islands,” where Cartwright claimed they intended “to maintain it to a greater extent than it has hertefore existed.” How were they to accomplish this? “By merely making an alteration in a few names—calling slavery ‘*apprenticeship*,’ the odious kidnapper, a ‘*missionary*,’ and the money to purchase slaves a ‘*manumission fund*.’” [Original emphases]⁵¹

As much as Lord Mansfield’s claim alleged a rejection of the concept of human bondage it was in fact not a universal dismissal of slavery. The *Somerset* ruling confirmed that slavery could not be based in the common law. If slavery was to exist, it had to be rooted in statutory law, which did not extend to England. This technicality meant that the British were able to reject slavery for occupants of England, where common law applied, making it *ipso facto*, and a validation of slavery elsewhere where it occurred. It is in this sense that the Southern critics of British abolitionists were correct: the interests

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Peter P. Hinks, John R. McKivigan, R. Owen Williams, eds., *Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition* vol. 1, (Greenwood Press, 2006)

⁵⁰ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 492-493

⁵¹ Ibid., 452

of the British proved to be machinations for the promotion of the British people to the exclusion of others.

In an attempt to deflect and diminish their agency Cartwright did not name American abolitionists. To mention American anti-slavery publications like *Freedom's Journal* or the *Liberator* by name could be perceived as an “incendiary” act that may inform enslaved blacks and inflame them to rebel. Continuing to compare the conditions of American slaves with the free laborers of Britain Cartwright wrote, “Learning that the slaves of Georgia, unlike their factory laborers, or their East India *ryots*, could read, the [anti-slavery] societies established in the North, loaded the mails, in the summer of 1835, with abolition documents for the South.”⁵² He chided that the British poor were uneducated. Remarkably, despite his expressed doubts about Africans’ capacities for intelligence or actual freedom, Cartwright put forth that in any given black community *some* portion of the enslaved could read and write. Furthermore he pushed his readers to acknowledge inhumanity in the British free labor systems which he claimed neglected workers’ education and welfare. Cartwright’s argument was that African-Americans improved themselves under slavery, learning and thriving in what he regarded as less-harsh conditions.

In 1835 Southerners still reeled from the David Walker “affair” and states tightened restrictions against the distribution of anti-slavery literature.⁵³ After initiating the raucous 1833 petition drive in Congress the American Anti-Slavery Society sought to circumvent these new laws by flooding the south with “immediatist tracts.”⁵⁴ The mail campaign to which Cartwright referred began in the north and entered Charleston by July of 1835 and then flowed throughout the Upper and into the Lower South on tributaries and back roads; through official and unofficial networks of information.

Charleston postmaster Alfred Huger wrote to the newly appointed Postmaster General Amos Kendall

⁵² [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 455

⁵³ Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy*, 410-411

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

to beg that he prohibit such tracts from entering his state. Amos Kendall was a slave-owner himself and identified with the Charlestonian's concern to keep the slaves ignorant. However it was illegal to interfere with federal mail deposits and Huger sought instruction on what to do since the pamphlets qualified under South Carolina's ban on the spread of anti-slavery materials that might incite insurrection.⁵⁵

The 1835 mail ban had legal precedent. Leon Litwack indicates that, reflecting the popular conception of the United States as a "white man's country," early Congressional legislation "frequently excluded Negroes from federal rights and privileges." He acknowledges that in 1790, Congress limited naturalization to "any alien, being a white person;" in 1792 it organized the militia and restricted enrollment to "each and every free, able-bodied white." In "a private representation" to Senator James Jackson of Georgia, Postmaster General Gideon Granger declared in 1802 that the existing objections to "Negroes" handling the mail were "of a nature too delicate to engraft into a report, which may become public, yet too important to be omitted or passed over without full consideration." Granger feared that blacks would use the postal service to coordinate insurrectionary activities, particularly in the southern states. "Everything which tends to increase their knowledge of natural rights," he warned, "of men and things, or that affords them an opportunity of associating, acquiring, and communicating sentiments, and of *establishing a chain or line of intelligence*" must excite alarm. As post riders, "Negroes" would mix with other people, acquire information, and "learn that a man's rights do not depend on his color."⁵⁶

In 1810 Congress responded dramatically by providing "that no other than a free white person shall be employed in conveying Federal Mail, and Postmaster General John McLean instructed his

⁵⁵ After Postmaster Huger stored the anti-slavery publications in a safe a local "small band of prominent Charlestonians" known as the "Lynch Men" seized the pamphlets and proceeded in mob-fashion to burn the literature on Charleston's public parade grounds. See Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy*, 410-411

⁵⁶ Leon Litwack, "The Federal Government and the Free Negro," in *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 263-264

deputies in 1828 to adhere strictly to this regulation. If “Negro labor” was required “to lift the mail from the stage into the post office,” it must be “performed in the presence and under the immediate direction of the white person who has it in custody.”⁵⁷ It was Alexander Stephens, The Confederacy’s future vice president, who argued that the founding “Framers” established “the first principles of self-government by the governing race.” Cartwright even noted in a medical journal that “Our *Declaration of Independence*...was drawn up at a time when Negroes were scarcely considered as human beings, ‘That all men are by nature free and equal,’...[was] only intended to apply to white men.” And cannot, therefore, be quoted “in support of the false dogma that all mankind possess the same mental, physiological and anatomical organization, and that the liberty, free institutions, and whatever else would be a blessing to one portion, would, under the same external circumstance, be a blessing to all.”⁵⁸

Kendall’s and Huger’s 1835 exchange is significant as an exemplar of South Carolinian John C. Calhoun’s articulation of a states right to “nullification.” Alfred Huger wanted to put South Carolinians’ states rights’ over and above any federal law—to nullify any law that threatened to nullify the state. Cartwright contended that if disunion were to begin, it would begin here, in the aggressive statesmanship of South Carolina. The purpose of Cartwright’s 1851 letter to Senator Daniel Webster was to stave off the threat of South Carolina’s immanent secession. Cartwright presented himself as a reasonable moderate because he was not a South Carolina extremist.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 264

⁵⁸ Andrew Taslitz, *Reconstructing The Fourth Amendment: A History of search and seizure, 1789-1868*, (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 139, see also James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders*, (1998), 143 Appendix, *Cong. Globe* April 10, 1848, 524, 526 (on the Virginia Congressman), p. 4 Proceedings of the Virginia State Convention of 1861, 385-387, (ed. George H. Reese, 1965) (on Alexander Stephens); Samuel A. Cartwright, “Report on the Diseases of and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 7 (May 1851): 691-715

⁵⁹ S.A. Cartwright, MD, “How to Save the Republic,” *De Bows Review* 11:2 (1851): 191

Cartwright was writing for *The Southern Quarterly Review* and Calhoun held influence in that journal — the *SQR* relocated its offices to South Carolina by the beginning of its second volume, in 1842 when Cartwright began writing for it. Calhoun claimed that he could exert the right of “nullification” and have his home state ignore federal rule on the basis that under certain circumstances it was against tenets in the South Carolina state constitution. When Calhoun, Jackson’s Attorney General from South Carolina, demanded the right to secede from the Union, Jackson refused. The South Carolina Nullification Crisis of 1828 continued until President Jackson threatened to gather an army and seize Calhoun. This action inspired the “Abominable Tariffs” and led to a constitutional crisis over slavery. The crisis introduced the idea of “State Interposition,” wherein if a state deemed a federal law to be against its own state constitution it had the right to “nullify it.” Postmaster Kendall consulted Jackson on the issue of South Carolina’s nullification of the federal mandate to deliver all mail. Kendall decided, independent of Jackson’s sanction, to order the Washington D.C. postmaster *not* to deliver the anti-slavery tracts, encouraged several states to pass resolutions outlawing abolitionist material and *then* established formally a policy to obey state laws. Jackson convinced Congress to call for a southern ban on “incendiary publications intended to instigate the slaves to insurrection.”⁶⁰ Jackson encouraged the federal law banning abolitionist pamphlets in order to retain his executive authority and avoid disunion.

Cartwright did speak in great detail about the more radical sect of “disunionists” and the work of abolitionists who were not in proximity to the Southern states. He characterized the mail and petition campaigns as the work of England and stressed that the British struggle against slavery was decidedly more academic, since England lacked a resident black population. Cartwright charged that the British anti-slavery faction — led by Thomas Clarkson — had been the prime movers behind the

⁶⁰ Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy*, 410-411

1835 mail campaign in the American north. He wrote, “Their agents are instructed to preach abolition, or its alternative, disunion, to make the abolitionists and disunionists synonymous terms.” Cartwright’s seeking to distinguish between the “abolitionists” and “disunionists” indicated that, early on at least, he was tolerant of the divided conversation over slave emancipation.⁶¹

Cartwright resisted directly the shift from gradual to “immediate” abolition. In the late 1820s the older contingent of whites that preferred a policy of gradual emancipation gave way to the newest generation of more radical abolitionists — black and white — who threatened by the late 1820s to disrupt the Union with their fiery pamphlets and aggressive petitioning tactics. Most notably the 1829 publication of David Walker’s *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* demanded violent retribution against white slave-holders. Not long after Nat Turner’s bloody rebellion in South Hampton, Virginia rocked the American South in August 1831, blacks in Jamaica incited the largest slave rebellion in Jamaican history in December of 1831. The Jamaican revolt shocked Great Britain and instigated the newly radicalized immediatists to launch aggressive mail campaigns to end slavery in the United States and in Britain. The shift from gradual to immediate abolition had begun.

When Cartwright challenged directly the Mississippi Colonization Society it was during the early 1840s when he began writing for the *Southern Quarterly Review*. He used both the local Natchez *Free Trader* and the more widely distributed *SQR* to broadcast his letters which refuted William Winans’ local attempts to export hundreds of slaves from Captain Isaac Ross’ plantation to their freedom in Liberia. The ACS was decidedly in favor of gradual abolition and Cartwright felt compelled to bridge the thought of gradualist slave-holders with a new understanding that slave-holding was the “White Man’s Will” and natural prerogative.⁶² As early as 1842 he began to rally that

⁶¹ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 455

⁶² Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” *De Bow’s Review* 25:1 (1858): 47-48

whites should either ferret out the sinister sect of immediatists as fanatics, or simply abandon the idea of abolition altogether.

In the inaugural issue of the *Southern Quarterly Review* the editors detailed the shades of difference between what they saw as four camps dividing the American abolitionist movement: 1) the radical abolitionists, 2) the anti-slavery men, 3) the political impostors who bought their way into popularity by feigning interest in anti-slavery policies and 4) the Europeans seeking to break up Southern prosperity and with it the American Union:

It is only because one party, the abolitionists, express their views in coarse, offensive and inflammatory language, without caution, without reason, without forethought, without decency; it is only because they misstate facts, and conceal, exaggerate, and misrepresent the truth, declaring that to be a great physical evil, a great moral wrong, an offence against religion and humanity, which is a great physical good, and a great moral and political right, and because, in attempting to maintain the right, or what they conceive to be such, they confound the right and the wrong together, — it is only on these accounts that they are to be regarded as dangerous and odious members of society.⁶³

Men and women engaged in “coarse inflammatory language,” because they were black or sympathized with blacks and demanded the realization of their rights — to them, caution meant nothing. In the 1820s it was Jefferson and the pro-slavery camps in America who demonstrated need for caution. Jefferson admitted dramatically that living amid a domestic community of blacks thriving for freedom threatened whites and he chose the conservative view of eventually freeing slaves. Whereas Jefferson envisioned an end to the slavery enterprise and favored gradual emancipation and colonization Cartwright now glimpsed an un-interrupted terrain of white influence over all blacks *as* slaves.

Jefferson lamented:

I can say, with conscious truth, that there is not a man on earth who would sacrifice more than I would to relieve us from this heavy reproach, in any *practicable* way. The cession of that kind of property, for so it is misnamed, is a bagatelle which would not cost me a second thought, if, in that way, a general emancipation and *expatriation* could be effected; and gradually, and with due sacrifices, I think it might be. But as it is, we have the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other.⁶⁴

⁶³ “The Periodical Press,” 54

⁶⁴ Thomas Jefferson to John Holmes, April 22, 1820

The late 1820s shows a concerted effort among black publishers to correct any characterization of abolitionists as “misstating facts,” or alleged attempts to “conceal, exaggerate, and misrepresent the truth.” Blacks had come to counter the defensive stature that immediatists were “declaring that to be a great physical evil, a great moral wrong, an offence against religion and humanity, which is a great physical good.”⁶⁵

In the midst of this national debate over censure, the *Southern Quarterly Review* editors queried, “Shall we be prevented from speaking out our thoughts freely on the subject of slavery or any other subject? Not at all, Gentlemen!” Instead, the editors heralded:

Speak out your minds freely; absolve your consciences; discharge your duty, if you have a duty to discharge, like men; be not timid or backward in a matter which you seem to have so deeply at heart; the Press is free, free as the winds of heaven; you know it is; use it freely; write, print and publish what you please; it is your Constitutional privilege; but while you do so, remember that the whole South, with the Constitution of the Union spread out before us, as a broad banner, reads your writings, and compares them with that great charter of its rights, and see to it, as you would when taking a solemn oath in a court of justice, that you utter *the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth*; that you ‘extenuate nothing, nor set down aught in malice;’⁶⁶

To print the truth was tantamount to doing one’s duty and fulfilling one’s manhood. They viewed themselves as executing a kind of masculine duty by standing their ground. In addition to fielding threats from radical abolitionists the *SQR* reasoned that “It is because another party, the anti-slavery men, among whom are to be placed the Northern Reviewers, are timid, through apprehension of being denounced as abolitionists, and, accordingly, express their opposition by remarks, hints and inuendos, [sic] thrown out occasionally in the course of their speculations, striking deeply at the roots of our Southern policy.” Southern gentlemen were accusing Northern gentlemen of acting out of honor by being cunning instead of forthright.⁶⁷

The editors imagined that launching the *SQR* exercised their masculine duty to protect the

⁶⁵ “The Periodical Press,” 54

⁶⁶ “The Periodical Press,” 52-53

⁶⁷ Ibid.

southern way of life. Writing as early social scientists the editors' own sharpness, expertise and boldness of industry would act as the Spear of Ithuriel and reveal the devil in the details. They charged that the abolitionists "by their silent and imperceptible operation, produce more extensive injury than would or could be effected by a bold, open, manly discussion, on its own merits, of the entire question, that they are even still more dangerous enemies to the South, than the abolition party, and are to be viewed with greater distrust." One distrusted abolitionists but it took experts to discern the imposter.⁶⁸

It is clear abolitionists' activism motivated Southerners to take up their "duty" and defend the south on new grounds of white supremacy, but what is less evident is that African American publishers led the call first for an objective presentation of facts. The black abolitionist editors who started *Freedom's Journal* in 1827 stated in their inaugural issue that "In the spirit of candor and humility...we intend by a simple representation of facts to lay our case before the public." They asserted reliance on facts and objective analysis "with a view to arrest the progress of prejudice, and to shield ourselves against the consequent evils." Free Black editors Russwurm and Cornish opened their editorial with these words because they felt that "Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentations, in things which concern us dearly." Timothy McCarthy writes that these black editors created "a new print medium designed to galvanize the black community by representing a more unified political voice based on black interests and opinions." This was the first organized attempt by blacks to use a serialized publication in order to, as its editors put it, "lay [their] case before the public."⁶⁹

After Black abolitionists threw down the gauntlet and called for objectivity in the late 1820s pro-slavery writers picked it up again during the early 1830s. When Free Blacks Russwurm and

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ John Brown Russwurm & Samuel Cornish, *Freedom's Journal*, (March, 16 1827); see Timothy Patrick McCarthy, "To Plead Our Own Cause": Black Print Culture and the Writings of American Abolitionism," in McCarthy and Stauffer, eds., *Prophets of Protest*, (New York: The New Press, 2006), 115

Cornish wrote, “We wish to plead our own cause” they claimed the very same sense of will power, self-reliance, judgment and national identity that stirred the editors of the *SQR* fifteen years later. Just like *Freedom’s Journal* offered a “simple representation of facts,” the *SQR* called for a “bold, openly, manly discussion” of the slavery issue. The *SQR* editors clarified that, “It is because the third party, who are neither abolitionists nor anti-slavery men, but simply office-seekers, place-hunters, would convert slavery into a political question, and break up the Union by their ambition, provided they may avail themselves of the disaster and ruin which ensure, to ride over the necks of Southern citizens to some post of honor or profit which tempts their aspirations and their efforts, that *their* course is to be cautiously and constantly watched by the whole South, and their designs detected and baffled.”⁷⁰ As the issue of slavery became divisive and contentious in the years between the launching of *Freedom’s Journal* (1827) and the *Southern Quarterly Review* (1842), both Free white and Free black editors understood that the bridge between truth and imposture lie in an objective presentation of the facts.

Collectively, both the abolitionists and the pro-slavery contingents engaged an active print revolution. Cartwright and his white editors claimed that it was abolitionist tracts that quickened them into action to publish their own *Southern Review*. They provoked, “It is time that we should make a vigorous movement in behalf of Southern literature, and when we say *Southern*, we mean nothing invidious.” The editors italicized but emphasized that they did not intend to be sectional and divisive, but instead to explore topics that Northern presses suppressed: “There is to be, if there be not already, a Southern, as well as a Northern literature, in our country...Shall the South be deprived of her portion of this inheritance of glory, merely because she is the South and glories in its title?... Is she destitute of patriotism? Does she not love the Union, which our fathers purchased and established at such fearful costs? She does love it, and he who denies that she does, is a traitor to the truth, and belies her real

⁷⁰ “The Periodical Press,” 54

character.”⁷¹ These stewards engaged the asymmetry of interests in black freedom which increased in the North as white supremacy increased at the South. Men like Russwurm saw Andrew Jackson’s election to the presidency as a signal for the Herrenvolk Democracy to come. Having grown up free and privileged, after Jackson’s election he elected to move to Liberia. Although he had written fierce editorials *against* the colonization society in the two-years run of *Freedom’s Journal*, Jackson’s election signaled to him that it was time to go.

Samuel Cornish stepping down from his co-editorship at the journal combined with Russwurm’s about-face decision to immigrate to Liberia led to the demise of *Freedom’s Journal* by 1829. William Lloyd Garrison continued the cross-fertilization of white and black abolitionist content in his *Liberator*. Whereas Cartwright and his cohort at the *SQR* turned a blind eye to American abolitionists they could not afford to turn a deaf ear to these men, the domestic faction of radical immediatism. Driven by fellow South Carolinian John C. Calhoun’s evolving political theory of minority, states’ rights, the editors of the *SQR* attacked the increasing pressure from Northern printers. They charged:

Does ‘The *North American Review*,’ by the mere force of its comprehensive title, represent and maintain the interests, social, civil and literary of all North America? Does it represent and sustain with good will, in good faith, or at all, the agricultural and slave-holding interests of the Southern States of this Union, guaranteed to them by the *Constitution*? Will any one pretend that it does? Is it not,—we will not say, extreme and violent in the opinions it expresses upon the latter topic, —but is it not anti-slavery in its feelings, its sentiments, its whole position, and in all the language it employs in reference to it? Is not this the case with ‘the *Boston Review*,’ ‘the *New-York Review*,’ and most of the Northern Periodicals? It is.⁷²

An increase in literacy meant that citizens once limited to private expressions of judgment could now amplify their opinions into a wider public sphere. This “mobilization of popular will” led to increased radicalism of the press through print campaigns that “overpowered the tactical advantages that had long

⁷¹ “The Periodical Press,” 51-52

⁷² “The Periodical Press,” 52

ago accrued to a small, literate upper class.”⁷³ Southern intellectuals realized that they were in the midst of a print revolution that had galvanized anti-slavery opinion effectively in an international public sphere.

The editors at the *SQR* wanted to rally readership around what it meant to be a proud Southerner, clarifying “But the South is still the South, if we have not mistaken the points on the compass, and in promoting the great cause of our country’s literature, she must move towards her high calling, *as* the South, because she owes it to her own dignity to do so, and because the North, for similar reasons, has acted, *as* the North, in promoting with all her ability, the same object.”⁷⁴ Their claim however was that the North acted to suppress real debate on the slavery issue, an act which threatened to warp the memory and stunt the growth of the South.

Then in a turn of political phrase, the southern slave-holders accused Northern presses of instituting a ‘gag-rule’ onto *them*. They demanded, “Shall we be asked, in return, is the Freedom of Speech and of the Press to be trammelled? Shall we not be permitted to write and publish what we think proper?”⁷⁵ Calhoun’s 1837 senate speech shows that the ability to discuss issues openly and without threat had roused Congress over the last decade. Contention over freedom to petition had turned the then elder John Quincy Adams into a stout and eloquent abolitionist as he fought tirelessly the notion that slavery could not be discussed on the Congressional floor. Adams’ fight to get anti-slavery petitions heard by Congress proved to be a battle bounded both by information and the manipulation of information.

Creating Ignorance: the “Gag Rule” and “Mail Ban”

Ignorance operated socially and perhaps more detrimentally at the level of the law. In his critique of “a certain D. Cartwright,” Charles Dickens indicated that the American’s central legislative

⁷³ Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution*, 7

⁷⁴ “The Periodical Press,” 52

⁷⁵ “The Periodical Press,” 52

inconsistency lie in Senators' refusal to hear blacks' petitions in Congress, as well as whites' refusal to admit black testimony in court.⁷⁶ Ironically, it was physicians' guardianship over black patient's subjective experiences that made physician-slave interviews one of the rare instances wherein a slave's testimony could appear in any open court.⁷⁷ As guardians of subjective realities physicians took up the role of regulating what should occur to the bodies that claimed those subjective realities. This is what is meant when one says, "What have I got doc?" Physicians tell us what we are experiencing and we submit to their judgments.⁷⁸

An additional example of *nescience* is Congress' refusal to rescind the flawed results from the 1840 U. S. Census despite ample disproof of its numerous errors.⁷⁹ Such acts of *nescience*, or the creation of false information, is a telling example of how scientific knowledge travels and to what end it may be deployed; even in the face of available and far better information, law-makers exerted the right to ignore the more accurate reports because the better information painted a statistical picture they did not want to see, and dared not admit to public consciousness. But what 'right' is this? Upon what principles does one encourage *nescience*? Cornel West offered some insight on the effects of such willful ignorance when he argues "This act of discursive exclusion, of relegating [an] idea to silence, does not simply correspond to (or is not only reflexive of) the relative powerlessness of black people at

⁷⁶ Charles Dickens, "Slaves and Their Masters," *Household Words— A Weekly Journal Conducted by Charles Dickens* 330 (August 23 1856): 136

⁷⁷ Paul Starr observes that oftentimes patients have no choice but to submit to professional examination: "In their capacity as cultural authorities, doctors make authoritative judgments of what constitutes illness or insanity, evaluate the fitness of persons for jobs, the disability of the injured, pronounce death, and even assess, after people have died, whether they were competent at the time that they wrote their wills." See Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, (New York, 1982), 14-15

⁷⁸ On physicians as regulators of their patients' subjective experiences, see Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 13

⁷⁹ The Proceedings of the *New York Historical Society* for the Year 1848 argued, "The defective statistics supplied by careless enumerators and evasive citizens could not be adequately detected, much less fully corrected, by the census system. William A. Weaver, who supervised the State Department clerks checking the census returns, stated that upwards of 20,000 errors were discovered in the returns from Massachusetts alone; see *Proceedings of the New York Historical Society* for the Year 1848 (New York: The Society), 45; Also see Edward Jarvis, "Insanity among the Coloured Population of the Free States," *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*, 7 (1844): 71-83; The fallout from the 1840 Census is discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, "A Reason for her Faith."

the time. It also reveals the evolving internal dynamics of the structure of modern discourse in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century Western Europe — or during the Enlightenment.”⁸⁰

The intellectual traces of white silence surrounding black advancement — by omitting any mention of black rebellion in print, through imposing the “gag rule” to bar discussion of slavery petitions in Congress and breaking federal law by refusing to deliver any mail that may contain abolitionist tracts which Southern states found objectionable — represent collectively the purposeful spread of ignorance. Charles Mills offers that, “Ignorance is usually thought of as the passive obverse to knowledge, the darkness retreating before the spread of Enlightenment. But... imagine an ignorance that resists. Imagine an ignorance that fights back. Imagine an ignorance that is active, dynamic, that refuses to go quietly — not at all confined to the illiterate and uneducated but propagated at the highest levels of the land, indeed presenting itself unblushingly as *knowledge*.”⁸¹ Scholarly interest in practices of misinformation has formed under the rubric of “*agnotology*” or the purposeful creation of ignorance. Tantamount to fulfilling James Secord’s mandate that Historians of Science take seriously how information “circulates” is the task of discovering when and analyzing why knowledge is held back.⁸²

In his critique of Cartwright, Charles Dickens wrote disapprovingly on what he called the “monstrous” legal code that enabled the “gag rule,” mail bans and other information-suppression campaigns surrounding Northern and Southern states’ disputes over whether or not it was legal to interrupt federal mail in order to halt the spread of abolitionist tracts throughout the South. Dickens observed that “When Mr. Adams brought before the House of Representatives a petition signed by a certain number of slaves, Mr. Wise declared that the right of petition belonged only to the *people* of the

⁸⁰ West also elaborates on how it is promoting intellectual silence works at the “discursive level, in methodological assumptions in the discipline of the humanities.” See Cornel West, “A Genealogy of Modern Racism,” in *Prophecy Deliverance*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 71-72

⁸¹ Charles W. Mills, “White Ignorance,” in Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tauna eds., *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, published in the series, “Philosophy and Race,” (State University of New York, 2007), 13

⁸² Secord, “Knowledge in Transit,” Halifax Keynote Addr. for the Hist. of Science Soc., *Isis* 95:4 (2004): 661

Union. *Slaves* are not people in the eye of the law, he added. They have no legal personality. [Dickens' emphases]"⁸³ Dickens described the intellectual violence that had been done to blacks; violence sustained through the legal tenet that "blacks" were corrupted, perpetual criminals who were *attainted*, or "stained" and unprotected by the law.⁸⁴ Having no "legal personality" was as much a physical claim as it was a psychological claim. As Cartwright put it, blacks were to be considered property, "literally and metaphorically."⁸⁵ Dickens' critique went to the root of the matter:

Another gentleman declared that slaves had no more right to be heard than so many horses and dogs. The result was, that, over-borne by southern slave-holding votes, the supreme representatives of the great republic passed by a large majority (on the eleventh of February, eighteen hundred and thirty-seven) this resolution—Resolved, that *slaves* do not possess the right of petitioning secured to the *people* of the United States by the Constitution. [Dickens' emphases]⁸⁶

Dickens referred to Senator Henry Wise, a congressman from Cartwright's home state of Virginia and a man Cartwright came to glorify. Wise conferred that the abolitionist paper strategies of "petitions and literature" had the South gagging at the tip of the Negro Sphere. Wise dramatized: "The South lies low and bleeding. Oh God! For energy for the occasion!"⁸⁷

The debate on whether or not to abridge freedom of speech on the senate floor was a thorny one. In this debate John Calhoun argued that freedom to petition, much like freedom of speech, had its

⁸³ Dickens, "Slaves and Their Masters," 133

⁸⁴ Darrell A. H. Miller, "The Stain of Slavery: Notes toward an Attainder Theory of the Thirteenth Amendment," *University of Toledo Law Review* 38 (2006-2007): 1011; Susanna L Blumenthal, "The Default Legal Person," *UCA Law Review* 54 (2007): 1135; Joan Dayan, "Legal Slaves and Civil Bodies," *Neplantla: Views from South* 2 (2001):6-7; Craig Haney, "Criminal Justice and the Nineteenth Century Paradigm: The Triumph of Psychological Individualism in the 'Formative Era,'" *Law and Human Behavior* 6 (1982):314; see also Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 45

⁸⁵ Cartwright wrote: "They have all got their heads thrown back on the atlas. They are all knee-benders, literally and metaphorically, knee-benders in mind and body. None of them can straighten their knees. When at work in the fields, they do not stoop like white people; their heads being thrown back, their knees bent, their legs bowed out, their feet flat, hips thrown upward, their abdomens are brought parallel with the earth, as if moving over its surface on their bellies. "Upon thy belly shalt thou go," said Elohim to the *Nachash*." see, Cartwright, "The Unity of the Human Race," *De Bow's Review* (August 1860): 135

⁸⁶ Dickens, "Slaves and Their Masters," 133

⁸⁷ see Henry Wise to a friend in Gloucester County Virginia (name torn from the letter), March 12, 1836, Henry A. Wise MSS., Library of Congress

limits.⁸⁸ Calhoun's close friend, House member James Hammond, believed that the petitions in 1833 and 1835 stood the risk of being more damaging than the threat of incendiary publications spreading through the federal mail. His first year in congress, Hammond proposed a House resolution in December of 1835 that banned any discussion of anti-slavery petitions from congressional consideration.⁸⁹ On May 26, 1836 Congress passed the "gag-rule" which, as Van Buren put it, gave "the abolition question...its quietus," and preserved "the harmony of our happy Union."⁹⁰

John Q. Adams countered with one motion after another until Congress repealed the "gag rule" finally in 1844.⁹¹ Acts of nescience like Postmaster Kendall's 1835 mail-ban against abolitionist tracts circulating in the south, Congress' petition-ban in 1836, ignoring the corrections to the 1840 U.S. Census⁹² and refusing to hear black testimony in court,⁹³ denying blacks what Dickens called a "legal personality," the need becomes clear to think more critically about the "Galileo Effect" in American leadership wherein one refuses to look through the telescope in order to avoid seeing the world for what it is truly. Uniquely the works of modern scholars investigating the role of agnotology, "closed ignorance" and nescience in knowledge production about *science* complements applications of the epistemology of ignorance in the studies of knowledge production about *race*.⁹⁴

Southerners' own private and highly personal obsessions over whiteness and frustrations over blackness led them to insist on violating the universal category of "mankind" and creating law to render

⁸⁸ David P. Currie, *The Constitution in Congress: Descent into the Maelstrom, 1829-1891*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 21

⁸⁹ Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy*, 452-453

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Currie, *The Constitution in Congress*, 22

⁹² See Chapter 4 of this dissertation

⁹³ Dwight A. McBride, *Impossible Witnesses: Truth, Abolitionism, and Slave Testimony*, (New York: New York University, 2001)

⁹⁴ for Dickens citation of Wise, see Dickens, "Slaves and Their Masters," 133; Influenced by Robert Proctor's work on how political factors influenced negatively cancer research (1996), and Nancy Tuana's examination of the role of ignorance in how sexism informed the science of sexuality (2004), Londa Schiebinger invoked the word "agnotology," or the study of what is unknown, as a way to examine the creation of ignorance of abortifacients in Europe (2004). See Shannon Sullivan & Nancy Tuana eds., *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, (New York, 2007), 2; see also Robert N. Proctor and Londa Schiebinger's edited volume, *Agnotology: The Making and Unmaking of Ignorance*, (San Jose: Stanford University Press, 2008); see also Ted Porter's review of this volume in *ISIS*, 100:2 (2009): 445

specific types of men and women into “non-persons.” West argues that, “The creative fusion of scientific investigation, Cartesian epistemology and classical ideals produced forms of rationality, scientificity, and objectivity” and that although such ideals proved somewhat “efficacious in the quest for truth and knowledge,” they at the same time tainted that knowledge and “prohibited the intelligibility and legitimacy of the idea of black equality in beauty, culture and intellectual capacity. In fact, to ‘think’ such an idea was to be deemed irrational, barbaric or mad.”⁹⁵ This stark mental apparatus led physicians like Cartwright to operate with an obscured somatic concept when it came to generating biomedical information about African Americans.

⁹⁵ Cornel West, “A Genealogy of Modern Racism,” in *Prophesy Deliverance*, 71-72

Chapter 6: Haiti and the “False Issue” of Skin Color

Cartwright on Clarkson, Vincent Ogé & the Haitian Revolution

As a slave-holder and white supremacist Cartwright viewed Haitian slavery nostalgically. He argued that before Haitian slaves revolted in 1789 “Hayti was a happy, peaceful and prosperous colony;” that “It enriched France, as the South now enriches the North.”¹ Thinking as a social scientist Cartwright also provoked fellow Southerners to compare Haiti’s economic profile with that of the South: “It not only exported more indigo, but it exported more sugar and coffee than any other island, country, colony or kingdom in the world...” He saw it as his duty to share the information he had collected while abroad in Europe; information that proved a British conspiracy through the East India Company’s monopoly over what he believed were rightfully southern goods. He wrote comparatively and urgently in order to awaken local people to the international situation so that they might avert collectively the conspiracy brewing against the South. He pressed that “There is no hope of peace to the South, while this company thirsting for gold and universal dominion, with all the wealth of India at its feet and all the power of the British empire at its back, is permitted to pursue its machinations unseen, unnoticed and unmolested.” Cartwright thickened his language with accusations of madness: “The fanatics of that island [England] favor the scheme, because they are so far deluded as to believe, that if, by encouraging the culture of cotton in India, they succeed in making slave labor valueless in America, immediate abolition would be the consequence.”² Cartwright equated the growing, anarchical call for immediate abolition to an unreasonable state of insanity and continued to refer to abolition as “madness” and the urgent call for immediatism as “fanaticism.”

To heighten readers’ sense of alertness to the power of British “machinations,” Cartwright

¹ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 1:2 (April 1842): 473

² *Ibid.*

insisted that the British fomented the Haitian Revolution. He argued that, “During this climax of Haytien [*sic*] prosperity, there *was a stir in London*.” [Original emphasis]³ Cartwright described “Swarms of abolition emissaries” who he alleged “went over from London to Paris, to teach the French principles of liberty.”⁴ As recently as 1837 Cartwright’s “Treatise on Yellow Fever” had been “adopted by the French Government,” and out of reverence to France, Cartwright signified that “France was then struggling hard to establish a republican form of government.”⁵ Instead of blaming the government for losing Haiti during the French Revolution he blamed the church. Cartwright viewed the French’s inability to control its slave population in Haiti as a result of the ineffective “machinations” of Catholicism. In the *Mind of the Master Class*, Eugene Genovese points out that James Henry Hammond, Edward Bryan, Daniel Hundley and James Warley Miles repeated tirelessly the refrain that “French revolutionary folly” brought on the Haitian Revolution; “French abolitionists” (the *Amis des Noirs*), and “not the slaves,” made the Haitian Revolution a success; “blacks cannot prevail on their own;” and that history “exhibits no successful black revolt against white masters.”⁶ Uniquely, Cartwright blamed the British.

Cartwright suggested that French concepts of republicanism would have been more correct if French leaders had not allowed their ideologies to be adulterated by radical notions of liberty cooked up by the abolitionists to their north. Furthermore he reasoned that if Africans had no ability to operate on their own accord that, absent British influence, France would have won what should have been a skirmish against the Haitian slaves. Cartwright viewed blacks as patients and the British as the true agents in the Haitian Revolution as well as the source of the present rift between the North and South.

³ Ibid, 473 and 467

⁴ Cartwright cited: “See a work on Hayti, written by the British Consul General, Charles Mackenzie, F.R.S. 1,42;” see [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 1:2 (April 1842): 467

⁵ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 467

⁶ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Slaveholder’s Worldview*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 38

He concluded, “The principles of liberty, which the English emissaries then inculcated in France, were precisely the same wild and spurious principles, which they are now inculcating in the United States, known as abolition principles.”⁷

To Cartwright London-based abolitionists served as the catalysts for France’s own calls for radical egalitarianism. He surmised, “France was told, that her republicanism would prove a failure, unless she passed an emancipation act.” Cartwright deduced that, “To impress the English doctrines more fully upon revolutionary France, an abolition society was got up in London, headed by Clarkson, Wilberforce, Price, Priestly, and many others of less-note.”⁸ He imparted that this society “sent a deputation to Paris,” that was “headed by Clarkson,” and “established a similar society in that city. Robespierre, Gregoire, Mirabeau, Condorcet and Brissot, were at the head of the French abolition society. These societies were as active in sending out incendiary publications throughout France and her colonies, as similar societies have been in disturbing the peace of the Southern States, by publications almost verbatim in language.”⁹ Cartwright weaved historical analysis into political critique. For nearly a century historians assumed that history was becoming more accurate and more knowable — it was becoming more scientific and Cartwright seized history as the angle from which to view black physiology.¹⁰

Writing as a medical practitioner Cartwright used his diagnostic insight to isolate radical and defiant behavior in the population and labeled it as expressions of mental disease. The Haitian Revolution acted as Cartwright’s prime metaphor for the impossibility of black self-rule and he argued now that any black rebellion had its origin from outside interference. To illustrate further British

⁷ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 467

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 467-468

¹⁰ Robert P. Forbes, “Truth Systematized: The Changing Debate Over Slavery and Abolition, 1761-1916,” in Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Stauffer, eds., *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, (New York: The New Press, 2006), xxix, 3-22

abolitionism's infiltration into France during the period of their Revolution, Cartwright detailed a history of how those same abolitionists were responsible for the simultaneous slave rebellion in Haiti. Cartwright claimed that Thomas Clarkson went to Paris in 1789 to urge the French government to "break up the authority of the domestic government" in the West Indian colonies. He argued that when Clarkson arrived in Paris he met with "the mulatto fellow Ogé, from Hayti" whom he "persuaded" to go with him to back to England."¹¹

Cartwright's historical insight connected Clarkson to the Haitian Revolution correctly. After graduating from Cambridge University, Clarkson traveled to France in 1789 in an effort to encourage the French to end their trade in African slaves. Clarkson's reputation as an abolitionist preceded him and Ogé sought Clarkson out at his hotel in Paris. Clarkson made the acquaintance of "the mulatto Ogé," as Cartwright put it, who was visiting France at the time and lobbying the French government to secure the rights of Free Blacks in Haiti.¹² Whether or not Cartwright knew this fact is unclear; I have seen no evidence that Cartwright ever mentioned a black person by name and treated him or her as an individual besides Ogé. If he had made the connection that Ogé was a Free Black man agitating for his rights on an international trip to the colonial empire in France, he would not have stated this in print as it might provide lift to domestic Free Blacks' claim to equal rights. Much like the great success of "The Barber of Natchez," William Johnson, who Cartwright never mentioned, Vincent Ogé represented what abolitionist scholars call a "real-life refutation" of pro-slavery claims.¹³

Vincent Ogé (1750-1791) was born wealthy and free. His status made him the prime candidate as ambassador to France where he would demand "the concession of civil rights to free men of colour

¹¹ [Cartwright], "East India Cotton," 470

¹² Ibid.

¹³ For elaboration on how "real-life refutations" blasted notions of blacks' natural inferiority, and for "examples of individual merit outdistancing the designs of slavery and prejudice," see Patrick Rael, "A Common Nature, A United Destiny: African American Responses to Racial Science from the Revolution to the Civil War," in McCarthy and Stauffer, *Prophets of Protest*, 189

and eventually for the emancipation of enslaved people in Haiti.”¹⁴ Ogé along with other “free people of colour” in Saint Dominique familiarized themselves with the French “Declaration of the Rights of Man” and like their counterpart in the United States, these Free Blacks demanded that their rights be respected. Backed by a group of supportive white planters called the *Societe de Amis des Noirs* (Friends of the Blacks) Julien Raimond (also wealthy, free and of mixed-race ancestry) joined Ogé in their petition to the *Grand Blancs*, the European delegates from the French plantations, for equal representation for light-skinned, mixed-race Free Blacks in the slave colony.¹⁵

Whereas in March of 1790 the National Assembly granted full rights to anyone over twenty-five years of age above a certain income level, they left the fate of the blacks up to the local colonial assemblies. Ogé wrote to the president of the colonial assembly on behalf of the mixed-race and decidedly more wealthy population of blacks:

Gentlemen:—A prejudice, too long maintained, is about to fall. I am charged with a commission doubtless very honorable to myself. I require you to promulgate throughout the colony the instructions of the National Assembly of the 8th of March, which gives without distinction, to all free citizens, the right of admission to all offices and functions.¹⁶

Ogé did not address the French Assembly in the humble or conciliatory language of his African American counterparts attempting to gain full freedom in the United States.¹⁷ Instead he dictated coolly to the assembly what was about to occur. Part of Ogé’s intrigue and the benefit of an

¹⁴ Vincent Ogé was born on a coffee plantation in Dondon. Reportedly a “quadroon” of one-quarter African ancestry and three quarter French ancestry Ogé’s mother was Jacqueline Ossé, a free “woman of colour” and a white Frenchman Jacques Ogé. See Stewart King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig: Free People of Color in a Pre-Revolutionary Saint-Domingue*, (Athens: University of Georgia, 2001), 208

¹⁵ This group was headed by a white lawyer named Érienne Dejoy and founded in 1788 by Jacques Pierre Brissot. See Vincent Ogé, “Motion Made by Vincent Ogé the Younger to the Assembly of Colonists, 1789” Center for History and New Media, George Mason University

¹⁶ “Vincent Ogé to the Members Composing the Provincial Assembly of the Cape,” reprinted in Rev. John Rely Beard, (1800-1876), *Toussaint L’Ouverture: A Biography and Autobiography*, (Boston, 1853), This source contains two distinct works, both a biography, published first in London as “The Life of Toussaint L’Ouverture, The Negro Patriot of Hayti,” by the Rev. John R. Beard, and an autobiography. Archived by the Academic Affairs Library (University of North Carolina, 2001), 57

¹⁷ On the shift in rhetorical strategy from the Revolutionary generation of “Black Founders” to the first generation of Free Blacks, see the insightful work of Richard S. Newman, “‘A Chosen Generation’: Black Founders and Early America,” as well as Julie Winch, “Onward, Onward, Is Indeed the Watchword’: James Forten’s Reflections on Revolution and Liberty,” in McCarthy and Stauffer, *Prophets of Protest*, for Newman, 59-79; for Winch, 80-89

international context is that his sense of distinction drove him to distance himself from slaves. Ogé threatened a class-based revolution and persuaded fellow white slave-holders that, “My pretensions are just, and I hope you will pay due regard to them. I shall not call the plantations to rise; that means would be unworthy of me.”¹⁸ Unlike his counterpart in the African American free community Ogé did *not* lobby for both the equal status for Free Blacks and the general emancipation of all slaves. He offered white planters a middle way around the threat of general black revolt — to accept that when free, mixed-race men were offered full citizenship they would in turn help whites maintain the balance of power against the enslaved. Ira Berlin offers that, “By drawing a color line between free and slave, whites made it impossible for themselves to believe that free blacks could side with white *free* people over enslaved *black* people, a circumstance familiar in Latin America, where free men of color served as soldiers and slave catchers.” Berlin reveals how the mixed-race class offered a critical buffer between white and enslaved blacks, who might rebel: “If a white in the black man’s ranks was a traitor, what else could a black in the white man’s ranks be?”¹⁹

Characteristic of a man of Ogé’s wealth, experience and stature he took it upon himself to inform the Colonial Assembly, first, that he just returned from high consult in Paris, and then he proceeded to school the local assembly on how to deal with honorable men. Ogé implored that they “Learn to appreciate the merit of a man whose intentions are pure. When I solicited from the National Assembly a decree that I obtained in favour of the American colonists, formerly known under the injurious epithet of *mulattos*, I did not include in my claims the condition of the Negroes who live in servitude. You and our adversaries have misrepresented my steps in order to bring me into discredit

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ On the role of the Haitian Revolution in determining the contours of American “freedom,” see Robin Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights*, (Brooklyn: Verso Press, 2011), 171-220; Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South*, (New York: The New Press, 1974); 5-6; See also Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 3-265, especially 122-128

with honorable men. No! No gentlemen, we have put forth a claim only on behalf of a class of freemen, who, for two centuries, have been under the yoke of oppression.” Whereas Cartwright used the word “mulatto” to refer to Ogé, Ogé himself cited the term as an “injurious epithet.” Degrading Ogé as a pauper when in fact he was quite wealthy, Cartwright wrote that after Ogé arrived in London “without a shilling in his pocket” he had no problem making comrades there who would aid his abolitionist cause.²⁰

Cartwright focused on the fact that the British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson had accelerated Ogé’s interest in general emancipation. However Ogé did not argue for a pan-African rebellion, but opted instead to appeal to wealthy planters by suggesting that wealthy black planters shared their distinction. “We require the execution of the decree of the 8th of March. We insist on its promulgation, and we shall not cease to repeat to our friends that our adversaries are unjust, and that they know not how to make their interests compatible with ours.” Ogé and his plan not to cease communicating his demands for immediate equality reflected the “immediatists” position and passion. Ogé remained tempered. He warned the Colonial Assembly that, “Before employing my means, I make use of mildness; but if, contrary to my expectation, you do not satisfy my demand, I am not answerable for the disorder into which my just vengeance may carry me.”²¹ Ogé’s distinction between means (violence) and mildness (persuasion) precipitated his own rumination on the “disorder” that might strike should men of his fellow class and rank decide to rebuff the young advocate of what he perceived was his right equal freedom. He radicalized his interests and warned whites of the “disorder into which” his “vengeance [might] carry him.” Ogé owned slaves and appealed to the National Assembly that securing rights for mixed-race Freemen would work to *strengthen* the slave system. Having failed at persuasion Ogé returned to Saint Dominique and fomented a rebellion among the mixed-race or

²⁰ Ibid.; and for Cartwright, [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 470

²¹ Beard, *The Life of Toussaint L’Ouverture*, 57

“mulatto” population of the island against the whites.²²

What Cartwright considered — and no doubt debated the telling of — was that initially Ogé and other free black “mulattoes” revolted against the government in an immediate demand for equal status and representation. In October of 1790 and just three months after meeting with Clarkson Ogé led an uprising in Saint Dominique that neither involved nor included slaves. Ogé’s revolt lasted for three months. Cartwright intended to obscure the issue of class, invalidate the interracial nature of the effort to abolish slavery and perhaps most importantly argue to southern readers that the impetus for Ogé’s militancy came from his association with Clarkson. Cartwright stressed that Ogé would have been impotent or inactive had it not been for the fact that Clarkson had vitalized him. Describing Ogé’s willingness to use violence Cartwright emphasized that, “In a few months, *he sailed from London to the famous indigo island, with arms, ammunition and stores in abundance.*” [Original emphasis] Cartwright relayed that “Immediately on his arrival in the island, he put the arms and ammunition he had brought with him from London, in the hands of some two or three hundred assassins, and forthwith commenced the work of death.”²³ Cartwright mended his transnational political theory with medical claims about blacks’ organizational distinctiveness and suggested that because of African’s natural susceptibility to whites’ influence it was really the British who inspired the blacks in Haiti to rebel.

As a consequence for his efforts the French arrested Ogé in Port au Prince on February of 1791 where they carried out their revenge on him and his comrade “Chavannes.” After taking the two men to church they escorted them to *La Place d’Armes* where they subjected the revolutionaries to middle age torture techniques and had them “broken over the wheel.”²⁴ Execution by being bludgeoned to

²² For a full account of Ogé’s role in fomenting the Haitian Rev., see John D. Garrigus, “Thy Coming Fame, Ogé! Is Sure’: New Evidence on Ogé’s 1790 Revolt and the Beginnings of the Haitian Revolution,” in John D. Garrigus and Chris Morris, ed., *Assumed Identities: The Meanings of Race in the Atlantic World*, (Texas A&M Press, 2010), 19-45

²³ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 470

²⁴ For a detailed account of Ogé’s and his comrades’ torture, see C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins. Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, (New York, 1989), 73-74; See also Roger G. Kennedy, *Orders from France: The*

death meant that Frenchmen broke the black rebels' arms, legs, hips and thighs with hammers.

Before the bludgeoning could begin and in order to subject the men to such punishment they tied the rebels to a wheel by stretching their limbs out along the spokes of wooden beams. Once secured, they rotated the wheel and broke methodically the men's bones. After this vicious round of torture the men were left face upwards in the sun to die.²⁵ Not to be outdone nor run the risk that their message might go unheard the Frenchmen beheaded Ogé and his men and then mounted their heads on poles along the main road. Perhaps Ogé's torturers undid themselves unwittingly because due to their acts of barbarity and the public outrage surrounding the details of Ogé's torture, the French Assembly eventually freed the slaves in their colonies. By February of 1794 the National Convention in France abolished slavery throughout all territories of the French Republic. Ogé's defeat quickened other "Free People of Colour," among them Toussaint L'Ouverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henry Christophe who collectively won Haiti's independence by 1804.

Though crushed — literally — Ogé's vigilant campaign marked the start of the Haitian Revolution. Cartwright triumphed that "Near Grand River, Ogé was met and routed by De Vincent, and was subsequently caught and hung." Cartwright made it a great point to clarify that "This was the first insurrection which occurred on the Island. The abolitionists of London were accused of furnishing Ogé with the means. They boldly denied the accusation, and reaffirmed, that their only weapon was

Americans and the French in a Revolutionary World, 1780-1820, (New York: Random House, 1989), 136; For a contemporary account of the Haitian Revolution's origins, see Marcus Rainsford, *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti: Comprehending a View of the Principal Transactions in the Revolution of Saint Domingo; with its Ancient and Modern State*, (London, 1802)

²⁵ "Breaking on the wheel" is a torture method with French history. Reportedly the last case before Ogé of a man being "drawn and quartered" and broken on the wheel publicly was in 1757. In French they called this process "*coups de grace*" or the "blows of mercy." In addition to the excruciating pain the process caused trauma, shock and dehydration that led to eventual death from over-exposure to the sun. Revolutionary measures prompted use of the guillotine that was perceived to have offered a more merciful method of execution by beheading an individual with one strike of the blade; this innovation did not occur until March, 1792. For a detailed discussion of the 1757 case of Robert-Francois Damiens, see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Translated by Alan Sheridan, (Vintage, 1979), "Introduction," and "the Spectacle of the Scaffold," 32, and on the innovation of the guillotine, 13-15, 58, 260; see also Julius R. Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 102

peaceful argument.”²⁶ Cartwright remained persistent that blacks in Santo Domingo exercised no private judgment and had not caused their own revolution, “That Ogé was furnished with arms in London, history leaves no doubt.” Cartwright cited Clarkson as acknowledging in his old age “he had brought Ogé from Paris, and introduced him to his friends in London after which he lost sight of him.” However, “As to who furnished Ogé with arms, ammunition and a ship to transport them to Hayti, there is a blank page in history.”²⁷ The driving force in Cartwright’s writing was against black self-reliance. When Africans thought for themselves and acted on their own accord it indicated, for him, a violation of fundamental principles. He viewed madness as pushing against and then stepping beyond the limits of reason. Shared agreement to consent to law established the reasonable; to step outside of that required deeper reason, not a rejection of reason.

The principal reason Cartwright expressed a deep interest in black physiology and trumpeted fierce advocacy of the study of blacks was the boom in the black population in the South West during the 1830s and 1840s. Despite impressions that the society of men and women at the South had been formed fully by the nineteenth century, the newly created states of Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana had only been admitted into the union during the second decade of the nineteenth century. Blacks comprised the majority of this expanding population: from 1830 to 1840 Alabama increased its white population by 76 percent, whereas its black population increased by 114 percent and Mississippi increased its white population by 154 percent and its black population by 197 percent. This meant that these formerly frontier regions turned quickly into black-dominant regions, even though the area retained much of its pioneer characteristics and mentality.²⁸ The years leading up to 1830 were particularly potent for energetic young black men and women: after Rev. Samuel Cornish and John

²⁶ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 470

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 471

²⁸ Martha Carolyn Mitchell, “Health and the Medical Profession in the Lower South, 1845-1860,” *Journal of Southern History* 10 (1944): 425

Brown Russwurm published the nation's first black-run abolitionist newspaper *Freedom's Journal*, David Walker followed with his fiery *Appeal* and William Garrison published the nation's second anti-slavery publication, the *Liberator* in 1831, the same year that Nat Turner's Rebellion took the lives of over a white hundred men. Their bold actions made it clear to all whites that blacks were becoming an increasing threat as slaves inculcated Revolutionary doctrines of natural and equal rights. Following all three Revolutions slaves had inherited revolutionary mental structures too.

"Fanaticism" and Abolition

Cartwright detailed what he saw as the continued repercussion of Thomas Clarkson's influence on French concepts of Freedom. After the National Assembly passed a law that all "coloured persons" in French colonies born of free parents now held citizenship, Cartwright wrote of the elder Clarkson's abolitionists current activities: "In 1824 we find that that notable *fanatic*, Thomas Clarkson, (the same who brought the mulatto Ogé from Paris to London, whence he sailed about the year 1790, with arms and ammunition to Hayti, and the same who lately wrote an insulting fanatical letter to President Tyler,) we find the same Thomas Clarkson, upwards of eighty years of age, the fire of *fanaticism* still unextinguished in his bosom, and still the dupe of the East India Company, leaving his home, in London, and going to Durham, there organizing a society to get up petitions for the abolition of slavery in the West Indies."²⁹ Cartwright argued that, "Four years afterwards, in 1828, we find him still engaged in the work, opening and organizing a society at Ipswich, which he called the anti-slavery society. The object of this society was not to petition, but to get up petitions, for the abolition of slavery in the West Indies.*"³⁰ Cartwright's objection to the possibility of Black freedom and self-government in Haiti went on to become the spinal cord to his body of work on "Negro Diseases" and in his analysis of the Haitian Revolution he shifted the form of his argument from historical explanation

²⁹ [Cartwright], "East India Cotton," 481

³⁰ Cartwright's footnote: "See New Monthly Magazine, published in London, vol. 24, page 277" see [Cartwright], "East India Cotton," 480-481

and political rhetoric to explaining black “fanaticism” through the sciences of physiology and anatomy.

Cartwright specified that “natural distinctions” banned all Africans — and by extension Haitians — from the bounds of freedom and in his breakthrough 1842 essay he laid down principles from which he never strayed. He proposed that:

Hayti is at this moment a monument of the evils of *fanatical* principles. More than half a million of ignorant and deluded negroes have been murdered, and nothing obtained, but to change the *mild patriarchal government* of the white man, for the *odious military despotism* of a mulatto. Such is and ever has been the nature of the Negro, that if emancipated to-day he will be a slave to-morrow; and if he cannot find a master to take care of him, he relapses into barbarism.³¹

This is the same point Cartwright made earlier about how a poor white British laborer required a master to watch over him, and once found, whom he would never abandon. Whereas Cartwright alleged that the British “poor” lapsed into physical disease and poverty outside of an industrialist to provide for them, he now put forth that blacks outside of white mastery “relapsed into barbarism.”³²

John C. Calhoun influenced Cartwright’s thinking on Haiti and the editorial leadership of the Charleston-based *Southern Quarterly Review* and it is clear that Cartwright remained influenced deeply by Calhoun’s economic theory of labor. Calhoun wrote that in the British West Indies “the mother country is interested in sustaining the supremacy of the European race. It is true that the authority of the former master is destroyed, but the African will there still be a slave, not to individuals but to the community — forced to labor, not by the authority of the overseer, but by the bayonet of the soldiery and the rod of the civil magistrate.” They viewed West Indian independence as failed republicanism; what Cartwright called the “despotism of the mulatto” and the “mild patriarchal government” Calhoun defined as rule under “the bayonet of the soldiery and the rod of the civil magistrate.”³³

Cartwright understood that the international movement toward the abolition of slavery put his

³¹ Ibid, 469 Emphasis added.

³² He wrote, “In England, a poor man’s misfortune is the want of a master. As soon as he finds a master, he is happy, and strains every nerve to prevent being turned off, to suffer cold and hunger.” [Cartwright], “East India Cott.,” 462

³³ John C. Calhoun, “Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions, Delivered in the Senate, February 6th, 1837,” in Richard R. Cralle, ed., *Speeches of John C. Calhoun, Delivered in the House of Representatives and in the Senate of the United States* (New York: Appleton, 1853), 633

own Southern “principles” at stake. To his thinking the act of black self-reliance and direct action through revolution represented “a monument of the evils of fanatical principles.” He exhibited that “The Negroes in our northern cities, who are not domesticated in white families, are retrograding into barbarism, at the side of the church and school-house doors. It is this natural difference in the character and nature of the negro, and not the abstract difference of color, which subjects the race to servitude.”³⁴ Cartwright was arguing that “natural differences” kept black children outside of houses of learning and black adults outside of spiritual guidance, not artificial segregation laws based on skin-color. Cartwright delineated both the “abstract” visible difference of color and, he argued, a “natural difference” in character. To violate this nature meant madness. As he had done in his case against the Thomsonians, Cartwright lobbied that his rational readers should recognize essences and not be distracted by mere appearances.

One should see Calhoun’s articulation of slavery as a “positive good” as a response to the onslaught by abolitionists, both in Congress and in print.³⁵ Timothy McCarthy demonstrates that the Revolutionary-era and antebellum-era anti-slavery thought “got telescoped” into the last few years of the 1820s, particularly with the publication of *Freedom’s Journal* in 1827-1828.³⁶ Much of this escalation after 1831 is due to the threat that slaves and free men and women might become radicalized by Walker’s *Appeal*, and then the uprising in Turner’s revolt that frightened whites to intensify colonizationist efforts. Increased colonization meant the first step to deporting Free Blacks and instilling a white-only society. McCarthy and John Stauffer write that “Just as Northern blacks were enjoying their first taste of freedom, their white compatriots — among them many of the ‘Founding Fathers’ — were developing plans for a ‘*Herrenvolk* republic,’ a white supremacist national ideal

³⁴ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 469

³⁵ John C. Calhoun, “Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions,” 625

³⁶ McCarthy and Stauffer, *Prophets of Protest*, xxix

enacted through the removal of emancipated blacks from the United States.”³⁷

Black abolitionists in the North launched scientific claims against slavery during 1827 and David Walker amplified those claims in his 1829 *Appeal*, with which he aimed specifically to throttle Jefferson’s scientific claims about race put forth in his *Notes*. Walker used the pamphlet and Russwurm and Cornish used statistical analysis to push against the negative perception of blacks by demonstrating objectively, scientifically that blacks were equal in diversity to whites. Richard H. Colfax emerged as a prominent and early pro-slavery writer who vowed to fire a shot back across the bow and address the abolitionists directly. He published his *Evidence against the Views of the Abolitionists, Consisting of Physical and Moral Proofs, of the Natural Inferiority of the Negroes* in 1833 and grounded his claims in the available science. In his writing on the “Negro Brain” Colfax argued that all other typical evidence regarding “polygenesis” and “monogenesis” are “rendered totally useless”:

The lengthy arguments concerning the intellect of the negroe drawn from history, and the numerous explanations of his mental inferiority, which have at various times been given, (without supposing him of a distinct species,) are rendered totally useless, if it can be shown, that *the portion of his brain, which presides over the animal functions, exceeds, to any great extent, that from which the mental endowments arise*. Furthermore, although we are not believers in *physiognomy*, (as a science,) yet we cannot avoid making a remark upon the negro's face, which may not be entirely overlooked—although we may thereby risk the commission of a tautology.³⁸

“Physiognomy” emerged out of “Phrenology,” the then popular notion that personality could be determined by a person’s outward appearance, particularly ones facial expressions.³⁹

Cartwright expressed an interest early on in phrenology and cited Charles Caldwell as an inspiration. A young doctor at the time, Cartwright wrote from Lexington, Kentucky to a friend in Alabama in 1822: “If you recollect upwards of 12 months ago I advanced a hypothesis that the mind

³⁷ Ibid., xvii

³⁸ Richard H. Colfax, *Evidence Against the Views of the Abolitionists, Consisting of Physical and Moral Proofs, of the Natural Inferiority of the Negroes* (New York: James T. M. Bleakley Publishers, 1833), 25

³⁹ Physiognomy is literally from the Greek “*physis*” meaning ‘nature’ and “*gnomon*” meaning ‘judge’ or ‘interpreter’ is the assessment of a person’s character or personality. See Walter W. Skeat, *A Concise Dictionary of English Etymology: The Pioneering work on the Roots and Origins of Languages*, (Hertfordshire, Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1993)

cannot in any circumstances be diseased.” He continued that, “Caldwell has taken up this idea also and has given several lectures on his new doctrine, calls it *Phrenology*,” and then he proceed to detail Caldwell's argument.⁴⁰ Cartwright's early interest in Phrenology intersects with his later interests in 1836 in French anatomy, Paul Broca and the French savants, discussed in Chapter one. In fact, Caldwell himself had just returned from a voyage to France in 1821, from which he brought back a substantial book collection for the medical library at Kentucky's Transylvania University, where he lectured.

Phrenology gained great popularity during the first decades of the 19th century and abided by deeply materialist understandings of the way that the brain and the morphology of the human skull related to the character or destiny of individuals.⁴¹ To that end, Colfax elaborated his analysis of “Negro Character” and cited Johann Kaspar Lavater⁴² when he offered that:

His lips are thick, his zygomatic muscles, large and full. “These muscles are always in action during laughter and the extreme enlargement of them indicates a low mind.” Lavater) —his jaws large and projecting,—his chin retreating, —his forehead low, flat and slanting, and (as a consequence of this latter character, his eyeballs are very prominent, —apparently larger than those of white men; —all of these peculiarities at the same time contributing to reduce his facial angle almost to a level with that of the brute—Can any such man become great or elevated?⁴³

Physiognomy as well as phrenology were well debated internationally, however despite Phrenology's disavowal abroad it evidenced wide acceptance in here in America, and especially among pro-slavery theorists like Cartwright. Largely due to the wide popularity of the two Scottish brothers George Combe (1788-1858) and Andrew Combe (1797-1847) men like Cartwright, Josiah Nott and James Henry Hammond (1807-1864) made skillful use of the general population's great enthusiasm for phrenological science.

⁴⁰ Samuel A. Cartwright to Francis John Levert, December 13, 1966, Levert Family Papers, SHC; cited in Michael O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860, Volume 2*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 448

⁴¹ “Phrenology” is the (from Greek: φρήν, *phrēn*, “mind”; and λόγος, *logos*, “knowledge”) was a popular craze from about 1810 until 1840.; Ibid

⁴² Lavater (1741-1801) was the Swiss Pastor responsible for the development and elaboration of Physiognomy.

⁴³ Colfax, *Evidence Against the Views of the Abolitionists*, 25

Colfax continued the work of Dutch anatomist Pieter Camper (1722-1789) who introduced the concept of the “facial angle” into the lexicon of western taxonomy in 1770. In addition to being a scientist Camper was also an artist and art patron, reflecting the traditional relationship between art and medical science.⁴⁴ Camper developed his “facial angle” to measure the human skull horizontally and vertically as a way to determine and to quantify an individual’s level of intelligence. Camper went on to use these measurements as a justification for racial differences, ushering in the scientific fields of “*craniometry*” and eventually “physical anthropology.”⁴⁵ Using data from Camper’s infamous cranial measurements Colfax argued:

Even the ancients were fully aware of this kind of mutual coincidence, between the facial angle, and the powers of the mind: consequently, in their statues of heroes and philosophers, they usually extended the angle to 90 degrees,--making that of the Gods to be 100: beyond which, it cannot be enlarged without deformity. Modern anatomists have fixed the average facial angle of the European at 80--negro 70,--*ourang outang* 58--all brutes below 70, the average angle of quadrupeds being about 20.⁴⁶

Colfax then applied his rationalized science to his pro-slavery politics, arguing emphatically, “If then it is consistent with science, to believe that the mind will be great in proportion to the size and figure of the brain: it is equally reasonable to suppose, that the acknowledged meanness of the Negro’s intellect, only coincides with the shape of his head; or in other words, that *his want of capability to receive a complicated education renders it improper and impolitic, that he should be allowed the privileges of citizenship in an enlightened country!*”⁴⁷ Much like Cartwright’s reflection on Thomas Jefferson’s use of the phrase “We” in the Declaration of Independence Colfax argued for the impossibility of blacks’ capacity to hold the “privileges of citizenship.”

The scientific view against the Negro became so virulent that it spread into the heart of abolitionist England where the British scientist Robert Knox would publish his *Races of Man*. Knox

⁴⁴ Until the second quarter of the nineteenth century, most medical schools in American and Europe were located within Art Departments at universities. For Colfax on the “facial angle” of blacks, see *Ibid*.

⁴⁵ William R. Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes Toward Race in America, 1815-59*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1960), 24

⁴⁶ Colfax, *Evidence Against the Views of the Abolitionists*, 25

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 26

wrote: “Look at the Negro, so well-known to you, and say, need I describe him? Is he shaped like any white person? Is the anatomy of his frame, of his muscles, or organs like ours? Does he talk like us, think like us, act like us? Not in the least...”⁴⁸ Then Knox went on to claim that “the Negro” has no history that is relevant to speak of, and that the events in the Haitian Revolution were episodic and ill-inspired. Knox argued, “The past history of the Negro, of the Caffre, or the Hottentot, and of the Bosjeman, is simply a *blank* — St. Domingo forming but *an episode*. Can the black races become civilized? I should say not; *their future history, then, must resemble the past*. The Saxon race will never tolerate them — never amalgamate — never be at peace...”⁴⁹ Again, Knox referenced his imagined affiliation with the Anglo Saxon race and posited in a manifestly hostile tone against all “Negroes,” whatever the place of origin. Knox’s suggestion that the history of Africans is “simply a blank” and the Haitian Revolution represents merely “an episode” reflected both white nationalism and both Scottish and German idealism’s notion of a teleological vision of historical progress. The assertion that the African’s future must “resemble its past” suggests the scientist’s concern with cultural stasis and mental inertia.

During the 1830s and the 1840s the local press in Cartwright’s Natchez, Mississippi swelled increasingly with sectional politics, driven particularly by the South’s increased interest in cotton and perceived-need to defend plantation slavery. Dr. Charles Caldwell filled four columns in the Natchez *Free Trader* with his medical arguments for “Negro inferiority,” emphasizing the role of phrenology as evidence. Caldwell attended the University of Pennsylvania and studied directly with Benjamin Rush, as did Cartwright. In his focus on race Rush was one of the earliest medical professors in America to expound the ideas and doctrines of Franz Joseph Gall, the German anatomist, physiologist and founder

⁴⁸ Robert Knox, M.D., *The Races of Men: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Influence of Race over the Destinies of Nations*, (London, 1850), 243

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 244

of what was later called the phrenology movement.⁵⁰ When Colfax published his 1833 writings on the “black brain,” it was Caldwell whom he cited for evidence.⁵¹ Caldwell alleged that the “black brain” proved to be “worse balanced, its animal component being much more preponderant over its intellectual and moral [components.]” He added that “the Negro race has never produced a truly great man, either in the capacity of a moralist, an artist, a lawgiver or a sage,” and calling Central and West Africa “as barbarous and uncultivated now as they were 500 years ago,” except where influenced by whites who “have revolutionized the face of a large portion of the globe...the cause is plain...The Caucasians...have within themselves an *ever-living and exhaustless fountain of improvement*, which is denied to the other races.”⁵² This is an 1835 designation that came quite close to what Cartwright came to call the “Empire of the White man’s will.”⁵³ What is interesting is the extent to which the political structure and social mechanisms expanded and contracted to accommodate vastly different imaginings or images of what it meant to be an American. By investigating those intellectual and conceptual limits one can discern better contemporary Americans’ understandings about American national identity.

As a slave-owning physician Cartwright saw the perfect opportunity to be of service by extending pro-slavery founders’ mere propositions about black inferiority into arguments which he then researched himself and backed up with better science. 1840s as he partook in his own efforts to enter the public sphere and penetrate the public mind and believed himself especially suited to do so. But the challenge faced by the first generation of Americans born after 1789 was what vision of citizenship to bring into fruition? That slavery was evil was an assumption that no longer held sway over young southerners thriving off of new lands opening up, energizing capacities of the suffrage and the cotton

⁵⁰ Haakonssen Lisbeth, *Medicine and Morals in the Enlightenment*, (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997), 205

⁵¹ Colfax wrote that “Dr. Caldwell, of Philadelphia” ingeniously refuted “Dr. Pritchard.” see Colfax, *Evidence*, 20

⁵² Mississippi *Free Trader*, December, 4 1835; for a characterization of the Natchez antebellum Press see also “The Natchez Slavery Press and the Road to Disunion” unpublished Masters Thesis by Tony Seybert, California State University, Northridge. March 31, 2006

⁵³ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” *De Bow’s Review* 25:1 (1858): 48

and sugar boom. This was Cartwright's generation, and as he moved to Natchez and became a Slave-owner himself in 1826, this disposition began to affect his scientific thinking about ideal types, physiological distinctions among the races and the duty to steward the new nation into what he understood young Americans had inherited: a white supremacist state. His duty was to detail why whites were in fact allegedly superior.

Cartwright — like Caldwell, Knox, Colfax, Rush and Jefferson — assumed that Africans and the “American Negroes” originated in disease. But Cartwright wanted to push further: to historicize more deeply and to probe more literally the meaning racial difference. Cartwright argued now that white Europeans and Americans alike misunderstood blacks because they focused only on their phenotype. He moved the conversation from discussing surfaces to probing into the depths of the body cavity in order to substantiate the claims of racial difference offered by the 1830s era of scientific discussions of race in the South. Cartwright's medical theory involved a visual and an aesthetic dimension wherein he made judgments about ‘whiteness’ as normative and beautiful — aesthetic judgments he then used to craft his own standard of physiological excellence.

The “False Issue” of Skin Color

At this point in his essay Cartwright began to shift his argument from historical analysis to an aesthetic consideration of the physiological differences between the races. Now he elaborated as a physician that blacks’ and whites’ differences ran more than skin-deep: “They [London-based abolitionists] introduced the same angry discussion, in regard to slavery, in the National Assembly of France, that they have since done in the American Congress. The abolitionists of that day had imported from London a false issue, in regard to the question of slavery, the very same which has since been imported from London into the United States, *viz*: that the color and the prejudices of color, and not the natural differences between the Caucasian and Ethiopian races, constituted the subject-matter of the

question at issue.”⁵⁴

Cartwright argued aggressively about this point; that a “false issue” had been introduced in regard to slavery. To his thinking, if he could reveal the actual issue he could settle the slavery debate and make abolition moot. Building on his historical reconstruction of Clarkson’s influence on Ogé, he elaborated his own historical account of what happened when the French National Assembly met: “Filled with this idea [radical abolition], Grégoire rose in the National Assembly and said that ‘to estimate man by the color of his skin is to stifle the voice of humanity, and to break the ties of paternity.’”⁵⁵ Here Cartwright referred to Abbé Grégoire’s *Memoir in Favor of the People of Color or Mixed-Race of Saint Domingue*. In that same document Grégoire claimed that “The people of color” were “equal in everything to the whites.”⁵⁶ To Cartwright the focus on color alone represented a “false issue.” He also disagreed fundamentally that estimating blacks’ as inferior creatures worked to “break the ties of paternity,” but he held off presently from engaging any debate on polygenesis — he saved that for his October contribution to the *Southern Quarterly Review*, “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian.”⁵⁷ In the present historical account Cartwright wrote that upon hearing Gregoire’s words “Robespierre instantly sprang to his feet, and cried out, in the true spirit of a fanatic: ‘Perish all the colonies sooner than that principle.’ The original words, “*Perissent les colonies plutot qu’un de nos principes. Qu’il valait mieux sacrifier les colonies que les principes.*”⁵⁸

Twinning egalitarianism with fanaticism Cartwright dismissed the French embrace of radical equality as madness. He wrote “Robespierre had neither cruelty nor ferocity in his countenance, but

⁵⁴ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 468

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Abbé Grégoire’s “Memoir in Favor of the People of Color or Mixed-Race of Saint Domingue,” (1789)

⁵⁷ In addition to historicism and ethnography, in his October essay Cartwright used different facets of science—physiology, anatomy, natural history and philology—to argue that blacks differed at the level of the tissues and blood. “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian” provided increasingly scientific arguments for the inferiority of blacks that built upon the mere propositions Cartwright breached here in “East India Cotton.” See [Cartwright], “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 2 (October 1842): 321-83

⁵⁸ Cartwright provided the original citation, “*Perissent les colonies plutot qu’un de nos principes. Qu’il valait mieux sacrifier les colonies que les principes.*”

was rather mild and pensive in his appearance.” Thinking as a physician of the mind, Cartwright searched out clues in Robespierre’s physiognomy and “countenance” in an attempt to account physically for his political thinking. Cartwright concluded that since “neither cruelty nor ferocity” intruded upon his thought process, that “It must have been false and fanatical principles, and not malignant feelings, which impelled him to the commission of so many atrocities.”⁵⁹ Cartwright concluded that abolishing slavery meant abandoning the helpless slave into a regressive barbarism and that the French Assembly had acted on a false premise.

Whether to be consistent logically or because he believed it personally, Cartwright accused the French of cruelty and argued that French leaders held no real consideration for African slaves. Cartwright wrote “Robespierre, like the abolitionists of the present day, did not ask if the slaves were happy or unhappy? If emancipation would be useless or profitable? If it would remedy or poison their morals! If it would make their condition better or worse? But cried out “*Les principes soient sauves et la logique satisfaite.*” “*Save the principle, satisfy the logic.*” To conclude his claim Cartwright declared, “The principle for which Robespierre was for sacrificing the colonies, and *did sacrifice them*, and the very principle, at whose shrine the abolitionists would sacrifice the American Union, is a fallacious principle, founded upon a false assumption.” [Original emphases]⁶⁰ But the notion of radical egalitarianism raged again in the words of its famed British proponent, Lord Henry Brougham. Echoing sentiments from his 1828 agitation against slavery, in 1838 Brougham delivered a speech before the “aristocratic and prideful” House of Lords, stating that “The slave . . . is as fit for his freedom as any English peasant, ay, or any Lord whom I now address. I demand his rights; I demand his liberty without stint. . . . *I demand that your brother be no longer trampled upon as your slave!*”⁶¹

⁵⁹ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 468

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Henry Lord Brougham, speech on “Emancipation of Negro Apprentices,” *Works Of Henry Lord Brougham*, (1873); see also Monroe H. Freedman, “Henry Lord Brougham: Advocating at the Edge of Human Rights,” *Hofstra Law Review* 36

Cartwright sought out to prove the British abolitionists and their French interpolators wrong.

In a fascinating intellectual move Cartwright laid out his principal argument in visual terms before elaborating any biomedical claims. He asserted that abolitionists worldwide had been derailed by the “false assumption” that suggested skin-color as the only relevant distinction between the races.⁶² He stressed that color proved to be only one of many facets of blacks’ entirely different physiological organization. He hoped that appealing to reasonable readers through the logic of aesthetics would pave the best route to this claim. Emmanuel Eze argues that the concept of aesthetics emerged as a central to the creation of racial hierarchies in Enlightenment thought.⁶³ Laura Callanan suggests, “there is a sense of prescriptiveness as well as judgment implied in the aesthetic that speaks to the relationship between aesthetic issues and structures of social stratification.” Therefore aesthetic ideologies and racial categories underpinned the Victorian social plan. In Cartwright’s consideration of the Westminster Abbey statue, one sees how standards of form, genre and systems of social evaluation contribute to producing concepts of beauty and issues of social compatibility.⁶⁴ As Toni Morrison put it, it is “equally valuable” to engage “a serious intellectual effort to see what racial ideology does to the mind, imagination, and behavior of masters.”⁶⁵ To that end, Cartwright wrote, “Let the abolitionists go into Westminster Abbey, and look at the statue of the Right Hon. Mr. Fox, and the negro kneeling at his feet, and they will see, at a glance, that the principle is false.”⁶⁶ By “Mr. Fox,” Cartwright referred to Charles James Fox (1749-1806) was the son of Henry Fox, First Baron of Holland, who is buried at Westminster Abbey. Since “Mr. Fox” advocated abolition of slavery the artist sculpted a mourning

(2007): 311

⁶² For a very curious and recent approach from a veteran scholar of vision and visuality, see W.J.T. Mitchell, *Seeing Through Race*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012)

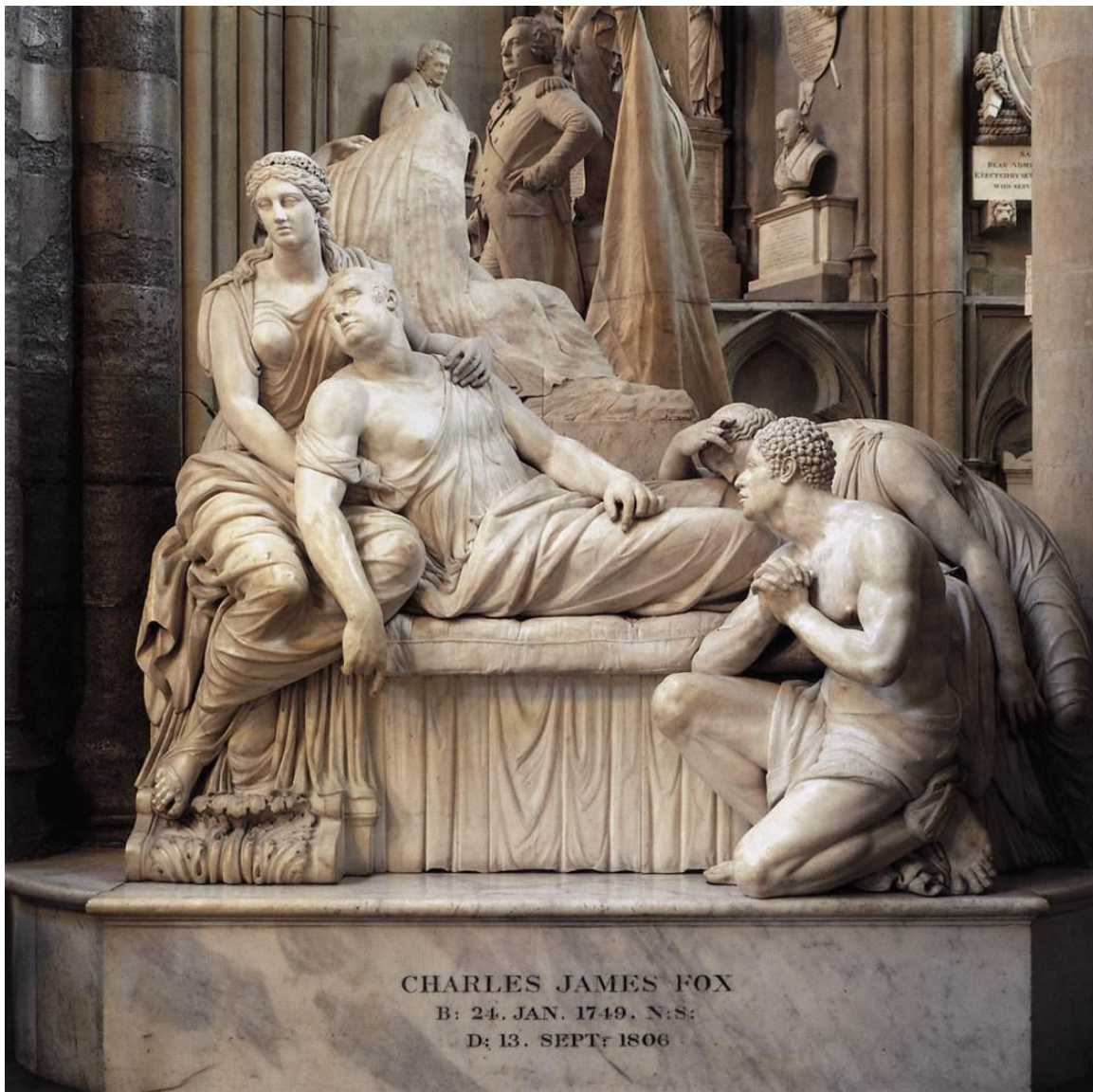
⁶³ Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, ed., *Race and the Enlightenment*, (Cambridge: Blackwell Press, 1997), Introduction; on the flexibility of aesthetic criteria and how its mercurial quality enhances its ability to function within, conceive and shape social conflicts and structures of power, Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, (Oxford, 1990)

⁶⁴ Laura Callanan, *Deciphering Race: White Anxiety, Racial Conflict, and the Turn to Fiction in Mid Victorian English Prose*, (Ohio University Press, 2006), 5

⁶⁵ Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, 12

⁶⁶ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 468

African, kneeling at Fox's feet.⁶⁷



Cartwright reasoned, “The statue of the negro is cut of the same white marble as that of Fox, yet it truly represents the negro — and is altogether unlike any other statue in the whole Abbey.”⁶⁸ Cartwright used this visual example as an intellectual argument: that the sculptor made implicit truths explicit.⁶⁹ Whatever one may think about color is trumped by what the stone can replicate in form. Cartwright’s

⁶⁷ Madge Dresser, “Set in Stone? Statues and Slavery in London,” *Oxford History Workshop Journal* 64:1: 162-199

⁶⁸ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 468-469

⁶⁹ On the need to understand images as “arguments,” see M. Norton Wise, “Making Visible,” *Isis* 97 (2006):75-82

point was that organizational differences — what he called “natural distinctions” — were self-evident in the statue because even when cut from the same stone Africans could be distinguished or interpolated. Curiously, English physician Robert Knox made very similar connections between race, objectification and art; Knox wrote in detail about the racial epiphany he had in front of a statue at the British Museum.⁷⁰ Cartwright was not alone in his position that one recognized “Negroes” by their physical structure requires. His stance warrants some consideration of how distinctions were rendered in the statue he referenced.

What caused the statue of the Westminster “Negro” involved the material out of which it was made, the form that it was made into, the end or ritual of display it served and he who brought about the effect it was to bear. For Cartwright the marble statue was caused by an imprint of nature channeled through the instrument of the chiseler in order to memorialize and declare publicly, in stone, the order of things. As a physician Cartwright saw himself as the chiseler, obeying organizational structure that “concealed” deeper truths than skin color alone indicated. He saw these truths directly. But despite the fact that they were open and public truths, they remained veiled to the French, British and Northern abolitionists. By using the example of the “Negro” statue Cartwright attempted to bring what was present into appearance.⁷¹

The term “cause” suggests ways of being indebted to or responsible for something else.⁷² The sculpted “Negro” is indebted not only to the marble, but also to the aspect or *edios* of Africaness, of

⁷⁰ Callanan, *Deciphering Race*, 5

⁷¹ Cartwright spoke often in this essay of attempts to “conceal” a greater truth, see [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” specifically “so long as the instigator of the angry feelings between the North and South lies concealed,” 465; also that “the agents of the company have taken great pains to disguise, conceal and whittle away by excuses and sophistral arguments,” 490. Additionally the mission statement in the inaugural issue of the *SQR* stated “and let us have no concealments, no vacillation in expressing your views with a down-right honesty of purpose, no skulking behind hedges, no lying in ambush and aiming your arrows at us from a dark corner, when we would meet the enemies of our institutions upon the broad and open field of controversy, man to man, and face to face, and test our respective strength by an appeal to God and to the right!” in “The Periodic Press,” *SQR* 1:1 (January 1842): 52-53; and summarily, “it is only because they misstate facts, and conceal, exaggerate, and misrepresent the truth, declaring that to be a great physical evil, a great moral wrong, an offence against religion and humanity, which is a great physical good, and a great moral and political right,” 54

⁷² Cause, Greek: *aition*, Roman: *causa* can be translated as “that to which something else is indebted.”

what it meant to be a “Negro.” Both the marble into which the aspect is admitted as statue and the aspect in which the statue appears are co-responsible for the chiseled figure. But what made it appear as a “Negro” was what came before and enabled the chiseler and viewers like Cartwright to invest the monument with meaning. Cartwright viewed the statue through distorted heuristics inherited from the U.S. *Constitution* where blacks are written in as non-persons.

What circumscribed the mere man depicted as a “Negro;” and furthermore how did Cartwright turn a praise-statue into a degrading one? Because viewers determined what they saw when they looked at him; viewers ‘made sense.’ Cartwright stressed that, “Though made of *white* marble, without paint or varnish, everyone will see that it belongs to an entirely different race of people from the Anglo Saxons around.”⁷³ In advance, the worldview that confined a woman or man as “a Negro” over-determined him or her with a degraded anthropology and freighted perceptions of “natural distinctions” into the realm of justifiable evidence through artifice. Typically when historians consider the role of ‘looking’ or ‘seeing’ they do so as an adjunct responsibility to add variety, humor or intrigue to published accounts. Jennifer Tucker points out that, “While there are now more illustrated publications in the history of science than ever before, visual images are still added after articles and books are written (often, it seems, at the prompting of editors and publishers) rather than being incorporated as integral to the historical investigation from the outset.” Tucker argues perceptively that:

Today the history, theoretical frameworks, methodology, and pedagogy of the history of art and visual studies have much in common with those of science studies, including a shared interest in the historical relationship between technology and visibility and an understanding of perception as a product of experience and acculturation. Studies of images and meaning in history, meanwhile, point to some assumptions and burdens that the disciplines of history and art history share, as well as to areas where their interaction may be especially fruitful.⁷⁴

Cartwright culled his medical knowledge from dissection and experimentation. Autopsy, or ‘seeing for one’s self,’ led him to determine the facts of black physiology and to announce the “false issue” of skin

⁷³ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 469

⁷⁴ Jennifer Tucker, “The Historian, The Picture and the Archive,” in *Focus, Isis* 97:1 (2006): 111

color. Then he used anatomy to pass judgment on blacks' character. In his article "Making Visible," M. Norton Wise clarifies that many historians have undervalued the role of visualization in scientific arguments. Wise clarifies that "making images of natural objects and processes" in the History of Science leads to two important conclusions: "First, the dichotomies that have traditionally distinguished, for example, art from science, and museums from laboratories and geometrical from algebraic methods have produced a poverty of understanding of visualization." In addition to Historians' failure to consider deeply the role of visualization in concept creation, the second point Wise offers is that "we need to understand images as arguments." He argues, "We need to develop a 'materialized epistemology' that reunites sensual with ideational knowing."⁷⁵ Wise contends that, "Once the subject of making visible in science leaves the domain of mere illustration or mere technology and becomes a matter of making knowledge, then the making acquires much higher status." He concludes that "These two problems of images, trust and depth, have long infected science and its history with a series of unfortunate dichotomies."⁷⁶

The intriguing though unfortunate dichotomy here is that Cartwright used a popular image or public artwork as justification for fundamental differences between the races. In her analysis of the role of visual imagery in scientific thinking Tucker explains that scientists' dependency on images is germane to object creation: "Visual culture is tapped — and created — by scientists, and visual representations help construct social ideas of nature, of scientific truth and falsehood, and of the institutional relations of science."⁷⁷ Rather than focusing on a single feature of "visualization" in science, Tucker calls for historians to recognize the "heterogeneity" of scientific images. In order to

⁷⁵ M. Norton Wise, "Making Visible," *Isis* 97 (2006):75-82

⁷⁶ Wise elaborates that, "Makers of images, along with their materials and techniques, must then appear in the same space with writers and readers of verbal ideas. The dichotomies of doing versus thinking, craftsperson versus creator of ideas, and body versus mind (or the senses versus the intellect) must then be transformed into overlapping actions, or intersections, where the "and" of collaboration replaces the "either/or" of intellectual conceit." Wise, "Making Visible," 79

⁷⁷ Jennifer Tucker, "The Historian, The Picture and the Archive," 111

understand antebellum medicine in the American context, one must recognize that the visual elements involved in discussions of ‘race’ were constitutive to Enlightenment as well as nineteenth century concepts of ‘Natural History’ and ‘Natural Philosophy.’

In addition to punctuating his political and biomedical claims with visual images, another artifice presently at work for Cartwright was that he printed his dissent—he engaged a “republic of letters” and circulated his ideas widely during a “reading revolution.”⁷⁸ Cartwright communicated his image of “the Negro” through multiple media forms and attempted to gird that image with historical and anthropological facts. Cartwright stressed to his international audience “Color, therefore, does not constitute the substance of the difference between the two races. Every assumption that it does so, and every principle founded on such assumption, is fallacious.”⁷⁹ This train of thought circumscribed African-Americans into an inglorious spot. It also ambushed all Africans; because giving a black man or woman bounds as “a Negro” did not limn in any specific “black” or “Ethiopian,” but circumscribed instead what all blacks could be and do in perpetuity.

Cartwright claimed that abolitionists proceeded from inconsistent logic based in mere surface observations that actually indicated deeper differences in structure. He advanced a logical tenet of his own: “If there had not been other broad differences besides color, the artist could not have made a block of white marble a good representative of the negro race.”⁸⁰ As a physician Cartwright saw himself thinking and operating as the chiseler: within natural bounds limited by organization of matter. But the chiseler and the white supremacist differed in what they took away from the visual encounter: the chiseler/abolitionist could see praise of a noble statesman, “Mr. Fox,” advancing the cause of

⁷⁸ McCarthy and Stauffer note that, “What Michael Warner has characterized as a ‘republic of letters,’ coincided with what Cathy Davidson has called a ‘reading revolution.’” See McCarthy and Stauffer, *Prophets of Protest*, xxi; also see Michael Warner, *Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth Century America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); and Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)

⁷⁹ Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 469

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Africans; or the Southerner visiting England could envision, as Cartwright did during his 1836 trip to London, that the kneeling figure depicted a “perpetual knee-bender.”⁸¹

Cartwright alleged that physiologically “The history of Africa is portrayed in every lineament” of the “Negro” statue. He described Africans’ physicality and argued that “The kneeling negro has more bulk of muscle than many of those around him, but he has nothing of that intellectuality which lights the countenances of the other marble tenants of Westminster Abbey.”⁸² Cartwright’s argument that “The history of Africa” had not changed over time and was present in the blacks man “lineaments” reflected a teleological theme that ran throughout his philosophy of racial progress. Since he viewed that the epitome of a culture’s bounds was its *teleos* Cartwright used History to establish that the circumscribed bounds of the African were timeless. To help make this point he compared the chiseler’s rendition of whites’ physical features: “In regard to the surrounding statues, the magic power of the chisel tells of mind, energy, care, industry and perseverance.” Here the chisel took on “magical” properties in its capacity to amplify the Europeans’ “industrious” qualities vis-à-vis the Africans’ inferior ones.⁸³ Cartwright witnessed the African statue and determined that the “artist” depicted African flaws the same way a “scientist” would—earnestly. William Whewell had just coined the term “scientist” in 1833 on analogy with the term “artist.”⁸⁴ Cartwright argued that the artist revealed a bio-medical essence: he brought what was clearly present to him into appearance for others.

Cartwright repeated his observations of the Westminster Abbey statue throughout his career and argued that the artist’s chisel relied on essential forms put here by the Creator that had no relationship to color. Cartwright offered this image to his readers in order to clarify the more obscure ethnographic

⁸¹ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 469

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ W.F. Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 94

point that ‘form determined function.’⁸⁵ Cartwright extended this visual taxonomy over the next two decades and as his own theories shifted he thickened his description of the merit of the artists’ chisel. Nearly a decade later, in an 1851 letter to Daniel Webster, Cartwright wrote “The statue of the negro in Westminster Abbey, kneeling before that of Mr. Fox, is at once recognized as a veritable son of Africa, although made of the same white marble — thus disproving, by the artist’s chisel, the mischievous sophism, which makes color the only difference.”⁸⁶ The African’s bent-knee proved for Cartwright the Biblical curse that the “Sons of Ham” should serve as the “perpetual knee-benders,” and the black man’s folded arms indicated a “reverence” for and almost wonder at those who were chiseled above his level. In his 1851 letter to Webster he now claimed that that “the hypothesis which is undermining our Union, ‘that the negro is a white man only painted black,’ has no foundation in Truth or Nature.” He argued that “All history disproves it” and to his satisfaction that “The science of comparative anatomy bears positive testimony against it; the dark color not being confined to the skin, but pervading, to a certain extent, every membrane and muscle, tinging all the humors, and even the brain itself, with a shade of darkness.”⁸⁷

Cartwright maintained this claim to the end and in 1860 he wrote, “In whatever nook or corner of the world he may be found, he can be, with as much certainty, identified by his original Hebrew name, as a botanist can identify a plant by its botanical name.” He expanded his 1842 and 1851 expositions on the Westminster Negro by emphasizing the sculptor’s intuition of form:

Color is not essential for identifying the servant of servants called Canaan. Some of the most degenerate of Canaanites or negroes are white, instead of black, being what are called *Albinos*—a degeneration of the black. There is a pure white marble negro, of full size, in Westminster Abbey, kneeling before the

⁸⁵ The suggestion that form determines function, see Johann Gaspar Spurzheim, *The Physiognomical System of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim: Founded on Anatomical and Physiological Examination of the Nervous System in General and of the Brain in Particular and Indicating the Dispositions and Manifestations of the Mind*, illustrated with nineteen copper-plates, second edition, (London, 1815), 204-208

⁸⁶ S.A. Cartwright, MD, “How to Save the Republic, and the Position of the South in the Union,” *De Bow’s Review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources* 11:2 (1851): 185

⁸⁷ On the question whether through comparative anatomy, the physical structure determines the functions of the brain, see Spurzheim, *The Physiognomical System*, 204-208; for citation see Cartwright, “How to Save the Republic,” 185

statue of the Right Hon. Mr. Fox. The chisel of the artist has given an admirable translation of the word from which the negro derived his Hebrew name. *Slave in mind* is chiseled in every lineament of his physiognomy. In bold contrast stands Mr. Fox, the marble speaking out "Freeman by nature," in a voice as distinct, but not more so, than the marble of the other statue proclaims, "slave by nature."⁸⁸

The fact that Cartwright returned to this visual argument again and again further establishes that he authored the anonymously published article, "East India Cotton" where it was introduced. Once Cartwright proposed primordial physical differences between the races in 1842 he never relented on arguing an equally stifling mental difference and spent his career attempting to substantiate these preliminary claims. For that he resorted to a thorough review of the Bible and offered Scripture as a source of cultural authority from which Science and Politics should draw.

It appears that anticipation for Cartwright's treatise summarizing his view on blacks had been building in the North, and in the South. In the April 8, 1842 issue of the Worcester County Massachusetts *Barre Gazette*, one eager writer wrote:

Dr Cartwright of Natchez, is publishing a series of letters on the origin, nature, and appropriate spheres of the black race. According to his theory, which pretends to be drawn from the old Testament the negro was created to be a 'servant of servants:' and we sin against the will of God, when we endeavor to make him any thing else!

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Cartwright was not as politically extreme as Calhoun on the issue of nullification because he envisioned South Carolina extremism as the crack of the whip and he positioned South Carolina as the threat, the natural outcome if men of reason did not prevail.⁹⁰ But Calhoun was a political theorist and Cartwright a scientist. Cartwright yearned to relate theory to observation through demonstration and

⁸⁸ Cartwright, SA MD, "Nachash Canaan and the Negro Identical," *De Bow's Review* 29:4 (October 1860): 51-60

⁸⁹ *Barre Gazette* 7:48 (April 8, 1842)

⁹⁰ Cartwright challenged the concept of nullification in a local Mississippi case wherein shareholders debated whether or not to honor original promises to banks that had been organized under a now-corrupt federal system. This highly charged political article was published anonymously under the pseudonym, "Chickasaw Monroe." See, [Cartwright] "Chickasaw Monroe," *The Mississippi Statesman* 1, August 5, 1843

then to synthesize and diffuse its meaning. In order to do this he drew from the varieties of scientific explanations available to him ranging from historical analysis, to first-hand investigation of empirical evidence, statistical analysis and ethnography. Cartwright improved his scientific approach again and by using etymology he expanded its purview into Scripture. He sought out even steadier bases for his innovative and wide-reaching medical claims about Blacks' physical differences from whites that he had introduced in April of 1842 when he published "East India Cotton." What he suggested provocatively in April, he aimed to substantiate demonstratively in October when he published "Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian," followed by the "Annexation of Texas" published in 1844.

Chapter 7: “Canaan Identified as the Ethiopian”

Cartwright used Etymology to Reconcile Religion and Science

Cartwright insisted that despite British schemes to convince the world otherwise, “it stands more durable than brass or granite” that Africans were created separately. Cartwright “invites us” to enact the spirit of scientific observation, “to look at the Negro and the Indian;” that merely “to look at” them, and “we will understand it.”¹ Speaking against the clergy in England and Europe generally he argued that “Neither the Catholic nor Protestant translators of the Bible seem to have had the Negroes *in their mind’s eye* when they were looking at the words *naphesh chaiyah*, or if they had, they took for granted that they were white men whose skins a tropical sun had blacked, and hence omitted to translate the words which embraced them.”² But how does one interpret what happens in the “minds eye”? He argued that:

We are told, in the 19th verse of the second chapter [of *Genesis*], that all the creatures were brought before Adam to receive names, and that what he called every living creature, that was the name thereof. What these names were, appears afterward. The names he gave very often contained an abridged history of the thing itself *shut up* in the name—a *sealed book* to those who did not know the thing, and intended so to be, until, perhaps, thousands of years’ experience had enabled man to acquire the key of knowledge to unlock and read the book.³

Cartwright gave great prominence to the act of naming as well as to extracting the hidden meanings that he alleged were “shut up” in Hebrew names. In a regretful tone Cartwright added his white supremacist views that, “Mississippi and Louisiana are half full of Negroes, and so is the Hebrew Bible, but our English version has not got a Negro in it.”⁴

Perhaps the most unique feature of Cartwright’s polygenesist approach was that he made an earnest attempt to reconcile modern science and classical religion in areas where they tended to

¹ On overseers’ and buyers’ skill at discerning the look of certain “Likely” slaves at auction see Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 138

² Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Race Disproved by the Hebrew Bible,” *De Bow’s Review* 29:2 (August 1860): 130

³ *Ibid.*, 131

⁴ *Ibid.*, 130

conflict. Cartwright satisfied his contemporaries' desire for a literal interpretation of the Bible and its account of creation. In doing so he challenged the notion that polygenesis was heresy. Cartwright understood that the Christian belief in the common origins of humankind threatened white supremacist notions of racial purity. Conversely, the theory of multiple human origins threatened to contradict accounts of the origins of humanity put forth in *Genesis*. With the origins of humanity coming from a single pair, *Genesis* is an inherently monogenesist text. Cartwright and fellow pro-slavery stewards faced an uphill fight as monogenesis or "Unilinealism," the belief in shared human ancestry, reflected the more traditional viewpoint in nineteenth century social thought and philosophical idealism.⁵ Unilinealism, (later called monogenesis) enjoyed greater acceptance than Pluralism (later called polygenesis) because Unilinealism kept alive the Christian belief in common human descent from Adam and Eve. Cartwright contested this and took up the challenge to craft "slave medicine" and plantation management as forms of legitimate authority by attempting to make polygenesis compatible with Christianity.

Most ministers in the Old South believed that scientific discoveries should confirm traditional Christian beliefs.⁶ Ministers like John Holt Rice held special interest in "raising up" a generation of science-minded theologians and argued that the "objections of infidels have been more readily answered as *natural science* has been enlarged," and claimed that science should "form a part of that fund of information which every minister of the Gospel should possess." In addition to theologians endorsing science, early nineteenth century naturalists, astronomers, geologists, and the *American*

⁵ The concept that there is a progression from primitive human societies toward industrialized civilizations influenced the progressive *philosophes* of the Enlightenment and also influenced the German idealism of Kant, Hegel and Comte.

⁶ On the attempts by theologians to reconcile science and theology, see E. Brooks Holifield, "Science and Theology in the Old South," in Ronald L. Numbers and Todd Savitt, *Science and Medicine in the Old South*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 127-143; see also Holifield, *The Gentlemen Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795-1860*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1978); and also James Hanley Thornwell, "The Philosophy of Religion," *Southern Presbyterian Review* 3 (1849-1850); and John Rice, *An Inaugural Discourse, Delivered on the First of January 1824*, (Richmond, 1824)

Journal of Science urged that “the supreme intelligence and harmony and beneficence of design in the Creator.”⁷

Prominent Americans from the North and the South guarded specifically the theological implications of their work.⁸ To that end intellectuals like Cartwright showed an enthusiasm for emerging fields of science and self-consciously contributed to religious knowledge. Cartwright, like famed Harvard Ethnologist Louis Agassiz, propagated the idea that “God is mirrored in his works.” Agassiz argued, “We must acknowledge that the diversity among animals is a fact determined by the will of the Creator, and their geographical distribution part of the general plan which unites all organized beings into one great organic conception.”⁹ Scientists like Agassiz and Cartwright had to walk the contemporary tightrope between revealing scientific “truths” and threatening orthodox certitudes.¹⁰ What Cartwright crafted was a unity of Truth.¹¹

Cartwright’s current project was to convince the masses of literate whites that blacks suffered from physical and mental deficiencies that made them especially suited for slavery. Cartwright used science to justify and elaborate the practice of slavery but he viewed some elements of scientific knowledge as too complex and refined for common people to grasp. To his thinking there was a relationship between Revelation and Reason. Cartwright’s interest in “Negro Diseases”¹² emerged

⁷ On the “God-given” order of the universe and its relationship to Enlightenment concepts of “race,” see Carl von Linne, “The God-given Order of Nature,” in *Race and the Enlightenment*, Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, ed., (Cambridge: Blackwell Press, 1997); and on the relationship of this theocratic thinking on scientific concepts, see “Introductory Remarks,” *American Journal of Science* 1 (1818): 8; see also Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science*, (Chapel Hill, 1977): 39-43

⁸ Holifield, “Science and Theology in the Old South,” 128

⁹ Agassiz, “Plan of Creation in the Animal Kingdom,” (1846) Lowell Lecture; See also Agassiz, “Sketch of the Natural Provinces of the Animal World and Their Relation to the Different Types of Man,” quoted in Edward Lurie, “Louis Agassiz and the Races of Man,” *Isis* 45 (1954): 227-242

¹⁰ Holifield, “Science and Theology in the Old South,” 127

¹¹ The search for a “unity of truth” between science and religion extends back at least to the Apostle Paul informing the Christians in Rome that God is “clearly perceived in things that have been made” (Romans, 1:20) as well as by the Christian Hellenic tradition of “Christian evidences,” a doctrine that suggested that religious “truth-claims” were subject to extrinsic verifications. See Holifield, “Science and Theology in the Old South,” 128

¹² Cartwright, “Report on the Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race: Part I,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 7:6 (May 1851): 691-715

from his use of the erudite discipline of natural science. He saw his work as politically purposeful: if he could legitimate his claims scientifically, and then popularize negative images of blacks he could strengthen and increase the pro-slavery cause. However, he ultimately did not believe in the competency of common men and fashioned himself as a cultural steward; a translator of obscure and powerful information. He believed it was his duty to excavate knowledge once “shut up” in language and shuttle it to the masses.¹³ Cartwright operated from the belief that most people merely used language instead of mustering the intellectual ability and moral courage to unpack its dense meaning.

Taking in John C. Calhoun’s notion that slavery operated as a benevolent “positive good,” Cartwright used science to demonstrate that racial hierarchy existed as a function of nature and reflected fixed physiological distinctions decreed by God.¹⁴ He distinguished himself among contemporaries by combining science with religion to argue that there was a Biblical distinction between humans and sub-humans that justified whites enslaving blacks. Cartwright believed that revealing the knowledge hidden in the trenches of the Hebrew language and translating that knowledge into the Southern vernacular would enable him to erase what he believed to be the sacrilege of prior British interpretations of Christian scripture. He argued that since the British advocated abolition, they maliciously refused to acknowledge or translate properly key passages in the Bible that actually established distinctions among the races.

Cartwright sought evidence to prove that blacks — when left to themselves, in a state of freedom — had no capacity for self-reliance. Demonstrative action through works appeared as a theme in Cartwright’s writing. Cartwright's father was a Reverend and a deeply Calvinistic theme ran through Cartwright's own writing. He argued one should live a demonstrated life of action rather an abstract

¹³ Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Race,” 131

¹⁴ John C. Calhoun, “Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions, Delivered in the Senate, February 6th, 1837,” in Richard R. Cralle, ed., *Speeches of John C. Calhoun, Delivered in the House of Representatives and in the Senate of the United States* (New York: Appleton, 1853), 625

one of dubious origin; one should avoid having all affect and no effect. He imported Calvinistic thinking into racial terms and held Blacks to a theory of being stained perpetually without the possibility of redemption. Whereas a dominant text like Morton's *Crania Americana* skirted the issue of whether or not blacks were created separately, Cartwright shifted the abstract debate about race back to a debate about physical origins specifically.

A Biblical Template for Political Freedom

Cartwright understood that to engage the current science meant venturing into what he saw as the much larger debate over the origins of the man.¹⁵ To do this he “abandoned well-trodden paths” and turned to the Hebrew Bible as an authoritative source on what he alleged were blacks’ separate origins from whites. He saw in the native Hebrew translation a new ‘Body Politic.’ This aspect of Cartwright’s thought fascinated Englishman Marshall Hall, the founder of modern neuroscience: that he abandoned the Greek view of human physiology and proposed a Hebrew view instead.¹⁶ Using his language skills, Cartwright launched a linguistic triumvirate into the Southern mind: Three Hebrew words prevented blacks from participating in the “We” in the Declaration of Independence. Each word represented a subsequent failure of blacks’ humanity. First, he argued that blacks were born separate and long before Adam, as mere living creatures (*Nephesh Chaiyah*); this meant that blacks were non-human. Second, he argued that even after Adam was created, that it was a “Negro,” and not a serpent (*Nachash*), who beguiled Eve in the Garden of Eden; It was not a “snake” but instead a “negro gardener” who tricked Eve to disobey God and eat from the Tree of Life. To him this meant that

¹⁵ Cartwright wrote of “researches touching the question of the common origin of man.” as early as 1842, seventeen years before Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species* in 1859. For Cartwright citation, see [Cartwright], “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” 328

¹⁶ Diana Manuel addresses Cartwright’s influence on Hall and calls Cartwright’s Hebrew-based vision of the human body a “Mosaic interpretation of physiology.” She suggests that it was visiting Cartwright in 1854 that re-kindled Hall’s motivation to take up the study of Hebrew while in Rome from 1854 – 1855. see Diana E. Manuel, *Marshall Hall, (1790 – 1857): Science and Medicine in Early Victorian Society*, (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996), 275-78, 304

blacks were synonymous with Satan. Third, Cartwright secured an argument for blacks' alleged inferiority even after the Great Flood by identifying Ham's cursed son (*Canaan*) by what he argued that name actually meant in Hebrew, the "self-submissive knee-bender." He used the first term to explain Africans' origins, the second to explain blacks' degradation and the third to explain their organization.

Cartwright claimed to inherit the prime duty that the Holy Bible itself placed on the act of naming. This was a charge that God gave to Adam, who Cartwright contended was not merely a "living creature," (a *naphesh*) but specifically a white man endowed with a "living soul" (a *naphesh chayah*) and charged with a mandate to lead and direct all other "living creatures." Cartwright gets right to the point when he challenged that the "We" in "We the People," as well as the "MEN" in Jefferson's "all MEN are created equal [Cartwright's emphasis]" referred to white men only, not to blacks and ostensibly not to women or children of any race. Cartwright contended that the "unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" only applied to the Godly lineage of humankind that came from the progeny of Adam through his third son Seth:

The hybrids were so exceedingly wicked that the Lord determined to destroy them by a flood. For fifteen hundred years, the Adamic race had appropriated the term man and mankind exclusively to itself. During these fifteen hundred years, whenever we see the term man in our English translation, we will find Adam in Hebrew. Mr. Jefferson used the term MEN, in the *Declaration of Independence*, in its original Hebrew sense.¹⁷

Cartwright went on to refer to the "delusions" of Northerners in their mis-interpretation of what was, for him, a clear fact about the muddy "hybrid" versus the "pure-blooded white man" blessed through "the breath of life" with the "living soul":

The abolition delusion is founded upon the error of using the word "man" in a generic sense, instead of restricting it to its primary specific sense. But after a large part of the Adamic race had been corrupted by amalgamation with the inferior races, the term "man" was used to designate the hybrids, and the term god to designate the pure-blooded white man.¹⁸

Making a distinction here, Cartwright drew a firm line between the mere "living creatures," the inferior

¹⁷ Cartwright, "The Unity of the Human Race," 153

¹⁸ Ibid.

races of man and the Adamic races of men who were blessed as “living souls” who enjoyed “the breath of life.” The first mention of the term “living creature” occurs in the Bible in the first chapter of *Genesis*.¹⁹ However the term “living creature” is not applied the same way in the first chapter as it is in the second. This is where Cartwright sees wide room for interpretation about the separate origins of man. It is clear that in *Genesis 2:7* that man becomes a living soul: “And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” *Genesis 2:7* signifies that God brought life to the material elements in man and then in *Genesis 2:19* God brought life to animals as well.²⁰ In the King James Version the original Hebrew words “*nepesh chayah*” are translated “living soul” or “living being.” But Cartwright was correct to point out that in the original Hebrew the phrase is exactly the same that was used in *Genesis 1:20, 21, 24, 30*, and also in *Genesis 9:12*, and *15*.²¹ Therefore Cartwright morphed his biblical proclamations that blacks were mere living creatures and not sons of Adam into a rationale as to why Jefferson’s *Declaration* that “all men” were created equal did not include blacks — Africans were not men.

Cartwright followed Biblical logic when he asserted that the “Negroes” from the Land of Nod corrupted the white lineage of Seth, and that this “amalgamation” with the “inferior races” produced ungodly hybrids destined to be destroyed by the Great Flood:

It [the Great Flood] was not intended to destroy the typical species of the *nepesh chayah*. They were saved, in the ark, under the designation of living creatures. The term man or mankind was not applied to them.²²

¹⁹ *Genesis 1:20-1*, “And God said, ‘Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. 21. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good;’” and again in *Genesis 1:24*, “And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.’”

²⁰ When in *Genesis 9:19* God brought the beasts and birds to Adam to name them, it reads: “And whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof.” Furthermore the covenant not to destroy life that God makes with Noah is made “with every living creature.” The covenant is with specific parties and not worked out by mutual bargaining. In verse 10 the term “every living creature” includes man, birds, cattle and other beasts of the earth.

²¹ For a discussion of the modulations of this term see A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible: A Book for Basic Principles for Understanding the Scriptures*, (William B. Edermans Publishing, 1972), 316; See also Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Race,” 130

²² *Ibid.*

Cartwright used Jefferson as a vehicle to banish blacks outside the circle of the “We” who enjoy the rights and protections of government. He then used the theory of pre-Adamism to assert that the “MEN” in Jefferson’s *Declaration* only meant white men and finally he used the biblical relationships between Noah, Ham and his “sons” (“domesticated Negro” slaves) in order to assign definitive roles to each in society.²³

When God instructed Adam to have “dominion” over the “animal kingdom,” it mattered a great deal for the post-American Revolutionary tradition who “Adam” (mankind) was and exactly what constituted the biblical “animal kingdom.” Cartwright operated a generation later than Jefferson and he felt that it was his responsibility as a first generation American to use such thinking as the fundamental way to determine who was an heir to the liberal tradition and who would become the disinherited.²⁴ For those who misunderstood the “real and hidden” meanings of the Hebrew language, Cartwright saw himself as the source of clarity and provided interpretation.

In addition to claiming that blacks were not actually human, created among the lesser creatures and before Adam, Cartwright approached the issue of black origins outside of polygenesis and in evil itself. Cartwright argued that:

The first one of these names, enclosing within the name a history of the thing named, occurs in the 1st verse of the 3d chapter of *Genesis*. It is *Nachash*. That is the name of the creature which beguiled Eve. The history of the creature is enclosed in the name, under cover of a bundle of ideas, so incongruous and disconnected as not to be understood until, in the revolutions of ages, sufficient knowledge of the thing named had been acquired by experience to furnish the key to unlock the book.²⁵

Cartwright argued that since the Jews first translated the Bible from Hebrew and into Greek in Alexandria in 323 BC that the Hebrew text deciphered best the original intent. He claimed that his contemporaries had forsaken these original translations that actually depicted the creature who tricked

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See Joyce Appleby, “The American Heritage—The Heirs and the Disinherited,” in *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 210-232

²⁵ Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Race,” 153-5

Eve as a cunning black worker:

The seventy-two [Hebrew biblical scholars] who translated the Bible into Greek, rendered the word *Nachash* by Ophiz, a serpent. There were so many meanings to the word; they were puzzled to tell which to choose. Dr. Clarke thought that *orang-outang* would have been a better choice than serpent, for the name of a black creature, formed like a man, with the gift of speech and reason, a great deal of cunning, yet playful and good natured, walking erect, a sorcerer, and a slave to something that charmed it.²⁶

Cartwright claimed that Americans had been misled by improper British translations of this original Hebrew text. Referring now directly to the seventy-two Jewish scribes of the *Septuagint*, Cartwright claimed that had they lived in his day, “they would have rendered the word *Nachash*, as the great Hebrew scholar of the East, but now of the West, C. Blanchard Thompson, has rendered it, by the word Negro.”²⁷

In a reference to New England scholar Charles Blanchard Thompson (1814-1895), Cartwright asserted that, “A star in the East has lately appeared, throwing much light on the first chapter of *Genesis*, by making plain to all observers a lot of inferior races, pure terrigene, including giants, created before Adam.”²⁸ Thompson was born a Quaker, and then converted to Mormonism in 1835. Cartwright was referring to Thompson’s theory of “pre-Adamism,” wherein scholars attempted to make sense of the fact that the Book of *Genesis* references several other entities which seem to be non-human, including the “Sons of God” who mated with the “Daughters of Men” (*Genesis* 6:1-8), the “Giants” who populated the Earth during the time of Adam (*Genesis* 6:1-4) as well as the beings who occupied the “Land of Nod,” from which Cain selected his wife after God cursed him for killing his brother Abel (*Genesis* 4:16-17). Cartwright believed that the separation between the “Sons of God” and the “Daughters of Men” was the separation between the Godly bloodline of Seth described in *Genesis* 5 and the ungodly bloodline of Cain described in *Genesis* 4. *Genesis* 6 detailed this separation

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid. 131-2

between the ungodly and the Godly and for Cartwright served two functions: it delineated the bloodline of Adam and Noah from which Christ was to be born and it became the rationale for the Great Flood which was supposed to rid the Earth of ungodly men. Such speculations worked to support Cartwright's own belief that other races of men or "living creatures" existed before Adam. Cartwright contended that these pre-Adamites were sub-humans who were not endowed with the "breath of life" that Adam received which blessed him and his descendants alone with "living souls."

Cartwright confronted Thomson for not recognizing "the Negro" among these pre-Adamites. Cartwright contended that, Thompson, "with all his learning," was "far behind the pensman of the book of *Genesis* in his knowledge of that [Negro] character." Cartwright was arguing that Moses, "The Great Pensman" of the *Pentateuch* had more original knowledge of black character than did subsequent translators like Thompson.²⁹ Cartwright contended that the scholar Thomson "did not know that the most stupid Negro is not only more subtle than any beast of the field, but has much more subtlety in many matters than the wisest white men generally have." Asserting his Southern nationalism, Cartwright added that, "He will find some overseers in Louisiana and Mississippi who are aware of the fact."³⁰ Cartwright expounded on this point:

For instance, a negro can read an overseer much better than his master can, and can instinctively tell whether he is a man of courage, or can be imposed on or not, or whether he can see through a negro as the negroes see through him. The writer of *Genesis* knew it, and expressed the fact in that bundle of ideas, or epitomized history of the negro character, shut up in the name he gave to the creature, which Eve met with in the garden of Paradise.³¹

Cartwright allotted to "the Negro" a slick, serpentine character capable of comprehending the true nature of the overseer. For Cartwright blacks judged and weighed the white man, tempting him in

²⁹ Cartwright, "The Unity of the Human Race," 131

³⁰ Cartwright contended that, "C. Blanchard Thompson, of New England, a Hebrew scholar of the first-class, after immigrating to Missouri, made the discovery, that if the 24th verse of the 1st chapter were literally and fully translated, it would save the necessity of torturing Scripture and scientific truth to procure a white father and mother for the Missouri negroes and the Missouri Indians." See Cartwright, "The Unity of the Human Race," 132

³¹ Cartwright, "The Unity of the Human Race," 132

order to determine the extent—if any—of his intellect. He alleged that blacks were perpetually engaged in a clandestine effort to test the will power of whites. For Cartwright, the “epitomized history of the negro character” was that he was a slick, serpentine trickster and that documentation of this truth lay dormant and closed off in the word “*Nachash*.” For Cartwright such distinctions denoted who was protected and in God’s favor and who was rejected and banished with a curse. Such differentiations came to him via the practice of etymology and he asserted that if one looked at the original Hebrew language one discovered not only great evidence of a race of sub-humans, but also permutations of “Negro Character” that could only be arrived at, cataloged and controlled through the study of “Negro Diseases and Peculiarities.”

Cartwright believed that similarities existed between the *nature* of the snake and the *character* of blacks. He wrote, “We have in the Northwest a tribe of Indians called Snakes. The name was intended to be significant of some peculiar trait in their character.” The “peculiar trait” that he felt blacks shared with the serpent was “dissimilitude.”³² Thinking as a physician interested in physiology and personality, Cartwright clarified that even when Indians used the term “snake” it was to describe a character defect. That the presence of a “Negro Gardener” in the Garden of Eden had been concealed “enclosed in [a] name” and shoved “under cover of a bundle of ideas” was Cartwright’s central claim. Cartwright viewed himself as an expert interpreter, a self-proclaimed translator and popularizer of the carefully hidden “truths” in words and that these truths had been purposely “shut up” and made to be “so incongruous and disconnected” so “as not to be understood.”³³ He saw himself as the man with the key to “unlock the book,” and he imagined that his “key” was forged in the hot fires of “sufficient knowledge” and rendered in “the revolution of ages.”³⁴

Cartwright found further vindication of his pro-slavery platform in the biblical rendition of the

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

“Curse of Ham.” Cartwright insisted that after Ham saw his father Noah drunk and in the nude his “Negro” son, Canaan, was cursed with the plight of eternal slavery:

The Hebrew name given to Caanan [sic] is more expressive than the common English appellation black man, of colored gentlemen of the Abolitionists, of the Latin Niger, or the Greek Ethiopian, as it not only expresses blackness in the patronymic Ham, but also the kind of climate most suitable to that race of people—Ham meaning hot and black; but moreover in the given name, Canaan, the slave by nature is expressed. Thus given name and patronymics taken together, declares Canaan to be “the black submissive Knee bender of hot climates,” which can by no possibility be any other kind of man than a Negro.³⁵

In Cartwright’s writing on blacks, color-consciousness abounds.³⁶ Cartwright’s focus on color and color stigmatization illuminates the role of “the visual” in shaping scientific knowledge.³⁷ In addition to being the cursed progeny of Ham, Cartwright argued that the Canaanites, the descendants of Ham, were marked with a “stain” of blackness—much like he argued that Cain suffered a “stain” of blackness for his sin in killing Abel. Cartwright wrote: “From history we learn that the descendants of Canaan settled in Africa, and are the present Ethiopians, or black race of men; that Shem occupied Asia, and Japheth the north of Europe.”³⁸

Cartwright’s focus on the “stain” or “mark” of blackness and his interpretation of dark skin color as a sign of physical pathology accentuated the role of visualization in the creation of scientific and political objects. Cartwright’s work demonstrates how antebellum writers used natural history, natural philosophy and religion in order to define Man as an object of study, and then used that new

³⁵ Ibid., 370; for Cartwright’s initial elaboration on these ideas nine years earlier, see also [Cartwright], “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 1 (April 1842): 321-83

³⁶ Historians of Science have given renewed attention to the role that visualization plays in the creation and elaboration of scientific concepts. See for instance M. Norton Wise, “Making Visible,” *Isis* 97 (2006): 75-82

³⁷ Lorraine Datson and Diana E. Long have written about how it is scientific objects “come into being” through processes of visualization and classification; Long indicates how what she calls “Hidden Persuaders,” shape our concepts of “indexing” certain attributes, such as “masculine” or “feminine” for the Library of Congress. Both historians interrogate the hidden meanings in familiar concepts. See Diana E. Long, “Hidden Persuaders: Medical Indexing and the Gendered Professionalism of American Medicine, 1880-1932,” *Osiris*, The History of Science Society 12 (1997): 100-120; also see Lorraine Datson, ed., *Biographies of Scientific Objects*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) a compilation of essays read at a 1995 conference entitled, “The Coming into Being and Passing Away of Scientific Objects.”

³⁸ Cartwright, “Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” 369

understanding as a template for forming a “republican” government.³⁹ Cartwright joined the long tradition of early American statesmen who used medical terminology to articulate political ideologies of Liberty and Freedom, delineating who could or could not participate in such a government. The challenge of the inquiry is to interrogate the intellectual assumptions, out of which the American “body politic” arose, the process by which these ideas became institutionalized, and how the ideas that constitute “body politic” are grounded in contemporary medical and racial theory. Determining what counted as science had an effect on concepts of medicine and disease, but Cartwright’s writings also reveal how medical theory served as a social regulator and delimited the concept of the “state” itself.

Cartwright took part in the emergence of a new visual culture that reinforced appeals to eyewitness and firsthand experiences.⁴⁰ For Cartwright, observing black slaves working in the field vindicated his theories about the status of blacks in the Hebrew Bible, a theory he held throughout his career. Cartwright saw in Francis Bacon a template for empirical scientific observation. The same year his path-breaking essay “Canaan Identified in the Ethiopian” appeared in 1842, Cartwright published his first and only book: *Essays, Being Inductions Drawn from the Baconian Philosophy Proving the Truth of the Bible and the Justice and Benevolence of the Decree Dooming Canaan to be Servant of Servants: And answering the Question of Voltaire: “On demande quell droit des estrangers tells que les Juifs avaient sur le pays de Canaan?”*⁴¹ The weighty title of his collection of essays

³⁹ Ted Porter offers that, “If we are not too shy about anachronism, the following might be identified as the defining objects of some important discourses concerning how early modern writers called “man”: populations, economies, states, bodies, minds, and customs. Each was closely related to one or several topics of natural philosophy and none was sharply marked off from politics, from religion, or from moral reasoning;” See Theodore M. Porter, “Genres and Objects of Social Inquiry: From the Enlightenment to 1890,” in the Theodore M. Porter, Dorothy Ross, eds., *The Cambridge History of Science, Volume 7, The Modern Social Sciences*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15

⁴⁰ In her criticism of “the relationship between art and science in terms of “making” and” knowing,” Pamela H. McCune Smith argues that “one result of the new naturalistic representation was the emergence of a new visual culture that reinforced appeals to eyewitness and firsthand experience and in some cases fostered a new examination of European culture.” Smith, “Art, Science and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe,” *Isis* 97:1 (2006): 83

⁴¹ Dr. Samuel Adolphus Cartwright, *Essays, Being Inductions Drawn from the Baconian Philosophy Proving the Truth of the Bible and of the Decree Dooming Canaan to Be the Servants of Servants: And answering the Question of Voltaire: “On demande quell droit des estrangers tells que les Juifs avaient sur le pays de Canaan?”* (Vidalia, Louisiana, 1843)

indicated the extent to which Cartwright believed that he followed Baconian induction and the great relevance he gave to his belief in the biblical justification for contemporary black-white relations in the Southern system of chattel slavery.

Cartwright confronted Voltaire directly, challenging, “We ask what right strangers, such as the Jew, had on the land of Canaan?” In order to answer this pressing question, Cartwright brought erudition to bear on scientific inquiry. Stressing the importance of first-hand, Baconian observation and visual markings evidenced in scriptures, Cartwright argued:

Twenty years ago, I published a paper entitled “Canaan identified in the Ethiopian.” The Negroes brought from the Gold Coast into America, and their descendants, I studied in the cotton and cane field, in sickness and in health, under good masters and bad, and at the dissecting table.⁴²

Cartwright wrote the above comment in 1860, and although he did not sign the 1842 “Canaan Identified” article, here he claimed it. He also claimed the wide breadth of his studies of blacks and clarified that his twenty-year quest to answer Voltaire’s question led him again and again to “the dissecting table,” as he made the autopsy (“*seeing for oneself*”) and experimentation the ongoing bases for his medical discoveries.

Cartwright volleyed rhetorically for a concordance between science and religion in order to service his perceived community of pro-slavery Southerners. He sought “structural corroboration” — themes and regularities that stretched across time.⁴³ Cartwright believed that the evidence of such concordances brought one closer to the truth: “What I thus learned in the book of Nature, I found, to my great surprise, had been revealed more than five thousand years previously, in the Hebrew Bible. All of which are plainly expressed in those Hebrew words that relate to the *Nachash*, to Canaan and his descendants. Thus we find one tribe of the Canaanites, the Gideonites, selling themselves into slavery, and even practising the deceptions of the *Nachash* to induce the Jews to buy them, as they still do, on

⁴² Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Race,” 134

⁴³ Elliot Eisner, *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 112-3

the Gold Coast.”⁴⁴ Based on evidence culled from the “Book of Nature,” or natural science, and the Book of God Cartwright determined the political limitations of black people.

Cartwright concluded that the submissive quality denoted in the term “Canaan” evidenced weakness and not humility. He clarified that, “In the time of Joshua, we find Canaan used as synonymous with the Promised Land and the Canaanites were conquered and reduced to slavery when the Jews took possession of their heritage.”⁴⁵ Cartwright was driven by his white supremacist orientation to interpret the Jews seeking deliverance into Canaan not as a call for the Jews to become prostrate and humble before God (the original meaning of the term *Canaan*) in order to receive God’s blessing, but as a moment wherein the Canaanites — who, to his thinking were “Negroes” — were conquered by Jews due to their alleged inferiority. Cartwright added, “The Canaanites were not only black, but slaves by nature, as their name is derived from a Hebrew word meaning “*to submit, to bend the knee.*”⁴⁶

When Cartwright first re-interpreted the Hebrew Scriptures in his “*Treatise*” of 1842 he parsed the meanings of the original Hebrew terms and naming the article “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian” suggested his astuteness. He asserted, “I have thus been particular in quoting the highest Hebrew authority owing to the fact that some of the British commentators and glossary makers, in rendering the word *Canaan* into English, have adopted a late or more recent meaning of the word, and altogether overlooked its ancient and original signification.” Taking his etymology further, Cartwright argued, “The words ‘*trader*’ and ‘*merchant*’ which they put as the English meaning of the word

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Cartwright then went on to cite *Joshua* 10:3 which says that the Canaanites on the west *Gen.* 12:6; *Levit.* 18:3; *Joshua* 5:1, 10:1, 14:1; *Judges* 3:5 and 6.” As was his custom, Cartwright added the flourish that he in fact “might add many more [citations] were it at all necessary to do so.” See the detailed review of Cartwright’s major articles on “Negro Peculiarities” in which the author criticizes heavily Cartwright’s biblical interpretations: in “Cartwright on Negroes,” from the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal*, (July 1852): 49-62; for the original citation, see Cartwright, “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 2 (October 1842): 321-83

⁴⁶ “Cartwright on Negroes,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal*, (July 1852): 59-62

‘Canaan,’ do not express its ancient Hebrew signification (when Moses wrote) at all.” According to Cartwright, “*Trader* and *merchant* were terms which heathen nations, a thousand years afterward, applied to the Jews, who dwelt in the land of Canaan.”⁴⁷

Biblical scholars have debated the origins of the term, but it is clear that “Canaan” was the name given to the fourth son of Ham (*Genesis* 9:18). Subsequently, Canaan inherited the curse of Ham which made him the “perpetual servant” of his two uncles, Shem and Japheth. Whether or not the term “Canaanites” denoted descendants of Ham, the original Hebrew term reflected the word *Kana’an*, and was a regionally based term signifying the Northwest Semitic lowland region. “Canaan” reflects the ancient area of land lying between the Jordan River, the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. The Semitic root of the term signifies “lowlands” or “to be low, humble, depressed” and is contrasted with the term “Aram” which signifies “highlands.” Cartwright extrapolated from this Semitic definition that the Hebrew word referred to the character traits of “Negroes,” as well as to the physical topography of the land.⁴⁸

Canaan’s brothers were Cush, Mizarim and Put, each of whom has come to be identified with people of African descent. Following this line of reasoning the “Curse of Ham” could be extended to all blacks, including the progeny of his brothers. Specifically, Cush or Kush became the biblical name for Ethiopia, and Mizraim the name for Egypt. The *Hebrew Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* states that the term “Canaan denoted bringing a proud and recalcitrant people or spirit into subjection.” It also indicates that the term occurs thirty-six times in the Bible and that half of these occurrences of the verb are as they are used in military campaigns (as in *Nehemiah* 9:24) and with a King’s submission to God (as in *1 Kings* 21:29). The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* also notes that “Canaan” is used as a verb indicating the kind of attitude that one must have (meekness,

⁴⁷ Cartwright, “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 2 (October 1842): 324

⁴⁸ R. Laird Harris, Bruce K. Waltke, Gleason Leonard Archer, *The Hebrew Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 Vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999)

humbleness) in order to receive a blessing from God. In both *Leviticus* 26:41 and in *2 Chronicles* 7:14, laying prostrate before God or showing humility became a primary condition to receive God's blessing. Therefore, the Old Testament fervor for Jews to enter into or be delivered into the "Land of Canaan" connoted entering into a blissful state of humility as indicated in *Isiah* 57:15 and *Matthew* 18:4.⁴⁹

But Cartwright did not interpret "Canaan" to be a tempering of one's pride in order to appreciate better ones' blessings; he viewed "Canaan" in a physiological, not in a metaphorical sense, as the "eternal knee-bender." For him "Canaan" was the perpetual servant, not the immanently blessed. Furthermore, since the land of Canaan shared proximity to three continents and major waterways the Canaanites enjoyed a rich trade culture that eventually generated additional meanings to the original denotation of the word. This was Cartwright's critique of British translations: that they focused on the later meanings attributed to the term ("*Merchant*" or "*Trader*") while ignoring the connotations of "submission" that the term carried originally.

As he unfolded and deepened his argument about the role each of Noah's sons was to take, Cartwright began to blend his white supremacy with his sense of Southern and American exceptionalism:

Japheth has been greatly enlarged by the discovery of a new world, the continent of America. He found in it the Indians, whom natural history declares to be of Asiatic origin, in other words, the descendants of Shem: he drove out Shem and occupied his tents: and now the remaining part of the prophecy is in the process of fulfillment, from the facts everywhere before us, of Canaan having become his servant.⁵⁰

Cartwright and other pro-slavery advocates used the "Curse of Ham" story as a rationale for their white supremacist assumptions.⁵¹ Noah's curse acted as a popular "proof text," a "divine patent"⁵² that

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ For Historians views on the influence of the "Curse of Ham" narrative as foundational to pro-slavery texts, see Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 3-44; George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 71-96; and Mia Bay, *The White Image in the Black Mind: African-American Ideas About White People, 1830-1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 26-55

enabled southerners to justify using blacks as slaves. White Americans could believe that their own present circumstance was validated by the sacred history evidenced in *Genesis 9*: Whites were the descendents of Japheth who had enslaved the black descendants of Ham. Additionally, through the colonial effort of England, whites occupied the tents of Native American Indians, the descendants of Shem. Moreover, many Southerners took the tripartite division of Noah's sons to be the three races that allegedly occupied the planet.

The tripartite division of races in the Curse of Ham story helped to make the segregation of red, black and white make sense for Southerners. This “medieval tripartite social division” reflected the division of the races and worked to justify the different fates of Noah's sons.⁵³ As Cartwright posed it:

The question arises: Is the Canaanite, or Ethiopian, qualified for the trying duties of servitude, and unfitted for the enjoyment of freedom? If he be, there is wisdom, mercy and justice in the decree dooming him to be servant of servants, as the decree is in conformity to his nature.⁵⁴

Cartwright encouraged contemporaries — even newer Christians, opposed to the Calvinistic doctrine of ‘original Sin’ — that there was indeed a relationship between virtue and damnation.

Seeing blacks as “perpetual knee-benders” paved the way for intellectuals to preserve the integrity of Christian scripture without having to jettison the contradictory conclusions of polygenesis. Cartwright embraced polygenesis and claimed its concordance with scripture, making his analysis more tenacious and his reasoning more circuitous. He fused religious with medical knowledge as a way of re-routing the national narrative, giving Southerners both a sense of coherence and manifest destiny, by reminding them of their Divine Authority.

In an effort to help focus his imagined community Cartwright used scripture and science to

⁵² This helpful phrase is from Dean A. Miller, in his Review of Goldenberg's “Curse of Ham,” *Journal of Social History* (Spring 2005): 831

⁵³ David M. Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and the Justifications for Slavery*, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 34

⁵⁴ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 1:2 (May 1851): 697-98

bring a diverse and still developing series of causes and effects into a coherent narrative — a national story. To establish what was for him, “the great, primary truth” that “the Negro” was a perpetual slave, Cartwright offered a summary of his three fields of inquiry:

Anatomy and physiology have been interrogated, and the response is, that the Ethiopian, or Canaanite, is unfitted, from his organization and the physiological laws predicated on that organization, for the responsible duties of a free man, but, like the child, is only fitted for a state of dependence and subordination.⁵⁵

Cartwright used the sanctity of religion as an instrument to shape science; he then used the authority and prestige of science to shape politics. Cartwright’s science was an elaborate and well-calculated effort to provoke thought about proper government. Cartwright’s 1842 *Treatise* and his 1851 *Report* sought to show that the best organization of society should be based on what we know about who *can* govern and who *should* serve:

When history is interrogated, the response is, that the only government under which the negro has made any improvement in mind, morals, religion, and the only government under which he has led a happy, quiet and contented life, is that under which he is subjected to the arbitrary power of Japheth, in obedience to the Divine decree.⁵⁶

Not only did Cartwright argue that blacks were destined to “perpetual servitude” here he made the additional argument that, by being “obedient to the Divine decree,” blacks were actually “improved” under slavery. White power improved blacks. Cartwright claimed that he was certain that “nothing but compulsion [sic] has ever made [the Ethiopian] lead a life of *industry, temperance* and *order*; and nothing but compulsion has ever converted him into a civilized being.”⁵⁷ Temperance, Industry and Order and working the land in a fruitful way were the prime directives of nineteenth century moral treatment and Cartwright was recommending this psychiatric approach to manage *all* blacks, slave or free, domestic or abroad.

Cartwright claimed that compulsion and coercion produced or restored reason to the otherwise

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” 697-98

⁵⁷ Cartwright, *Essays*, 12

disturbed black slave who thought she was free. For Cartwright, the exercise of whites' will-power — indeed, through exerting their “*arbitrary power*” — enabled blacks to move from barbarism into civilization through arduous labor.⁵⁸ But it was a dynamic movement that was subject to external forces. He imagined that blacks did not become civilized as independents (like whites), but achieved civilization (as slaves) and were kept at the threshold of that slavish civilization *artificially*. Cartwright wrote that “When the compulsive hand of arbitrary power is withdrawn, [the Ethiopian] invariably relapses into barbarism.”⁵⁹

Cartwright Updated Jefferson on Black Respiration

The American revolutionaries launched a scientific achievement while establishing the legal precedent of black slavery. Cartwright actualized the promise of that achievement by extending the knowledge of older facts in, what were to him, particularly revealing ways. He claimed to increase the extent of the observation-theory-match between those facts and the suspicions about what those facts might mean. This normative process of scientific investigation and fact gathering led Cartwright to think primarily at first in terms of Religious justifications of slavery. He was riddled by ontological questions that Founders like Jefferson and Rush had come to no real conclusions about. Primarily, they were shocked by what black slavery had come to mean in their midst and delayed their efforts at defining what a “Negro” was while nonetheless mandating what his or her subsequent function would be. Although fundamentally inconclusive, the Founding generation produced medical claims about and synthesized research interests in blacks that were bold enough to attract most of the next generation's practitioners. At this point, by 1840, Cartwright's First generation had taken over where the Founders left off. The fact that older ideas about the place of slavery in the nation were under threat of being

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

discarded was what drove Cartwright to bemoan that the older schools had gradually disappeared.

Cartwright believed that the Founding generation—specifically Jefferson, Washington and Rush—had left open-ended problems for future practitioners, governors and students to resolve. The Founding generation’s scientific research into the nature and destiny of “the Negro” resulted in political and medical proclamations that can be called paradigms.⁶⁰ In his influential *Notes on the State of Virginia* Jefferson reasoned that, “It would properly be asked, Why not retain and incorporate the blacks into the state, and thus save the expence of supplying, by importation of white settlers, the vacancies they will leave?”⁶¹ The fact that it was proper to ask such a question evidenced Jefferson’s own awareness of the contradictions of American policy toward blacks. Jefferson’s now notorious answer was that:

Deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions which shall probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race.—To these objections, which are political, may be added others, which are physical and moral.⁶²

This was a pro-slavery scientific preamble. Although he was not a trained physician, Jefferson wrote as a man trained in natural science. What he could not reason, he left to future generations of scientific investigators. Jefferson was trained in the aesthetic arguments of the European moralists Hume, Locke, Condillac, Kant, Smith and Burke and inspired by concepts of the Beautiful and the Sublime. Jefferson’s wider interest in the aesthetic categories of Imagination, Sentiment, Reason and Judgment powered his isolation of those attributes in his scientific investigation into blacks. If rationality and judgment originated in the five senses, what was the role of visual beauty in communicating scientific

⁶⁰ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 10

⁶¹ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query 14

⁶² Ibid.

knowledge?⁶³ It is because we receive information about the world through the senses that ideal types are under-girded by inherited conceptions of Beauty. White intellectuals like Jefferson, Rush, Caldwell and Cartwright—and later Josiah Nott and William James and Louis Agassiz—invariably located their attempts to rationalize blacks' existence and destiny in arguments about Beauty.⁶⁴ Given early medical practitioners' blending of comparative thinking and the taxonomic strategies that delineated distinction in natural history, phrenology and ethnology, white consciousness originated in and became wrapped invariably around a pure model of "the Negro" as a scientific type.⁶⁵

Jefferson challenged his contemporaries (and his heirs) that, if "The circumstance of superior beauty is thought worthy of attention in the propagation of our horses, dogs and other domestic animals; why not in that of man?"⁶⁶ Students confirm fundamentals, learn from and are mentored by an older or previous cohort of researchers who learned the bases of their field from the same concrete models. In Cartwright's case, he inherited his focus on vascular pathology from Benjamin Rush, his focus on black's respiratory and pulmonary systems from Jefferson and for his focus on conceiving a proper worker-to-productivity ratio in slave management he looked to both Jefferson and Washington as intellectual Fathers.

Jefferson's writing on blacks' "pulmonary apparatus" inspired Cartwright's entire conception that the black respiratory system was distinct from whites' respiratory systems. Cartwright exhibited a

⁶³ For advances in recent thinking on the role of "visualization" and the creation of scientific "objects," see specifically the *Isis* 97 (2006) "Focus" on "Science and Visual Culture," with M. Norton Wise, "Making Visible," 75-82; Pamela H. Smith, "Art, Science, and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe," 83-100; Jennifer Tucker, "The Historian, the Picture and the Archive," 111-120; and Iwan Rhys Morus, "Seeing and Believing Science," 101-110

⁶⁴ Similarly, if statistics acts as an extension of the powers of the senses, it follows that statistical inquiry and "statistical pictures" are also, to some extent, driven by ideal types and invested in inherited categories of ideal form and beauty—Beauty operated as an aesthetic and a quantitative ideal.

⁶⁵ On the power of "pure models" and on Jefferson's role as a great synthesizer of loose strands of liberal theory, Appleby argues that, despite Jefferson's "pronounced Environmentalism," he "chose Nature rather than nurture to explain the apparently different behavior of women, blacks, and native Americans; these differences placed them outside the liberal thrust of Jeffersonian theory with its naturalizing and systematizing of social experience." See Joyce Appleby, "Jefferson and his Complex Legacy," Introduction to Peter S. Onuf, ed., *Jeffersonian Legacies*, (Virginia, 1993), 10; See Cornel West, "A Genealogy of Modern Racism," in Joyce Appleby, ed., *Knowledge and Post Modernism in Historical Perspective*, (New York: Routledge Press, 1995)

⁶⁶ Ronald Takaki, *From Different Shores: Perspectives on Race & Ethnicity in America*, (Oxford, 1994), 31

career long interest in the “Motive Power of Blood” and sourced out its stimulus from the heart to the lungs.⁶⁷ Jefferson wrote that, “Besides those of colour, figure and hair, there are other physical distinctions proving a difference of race.” Detailing blacks’ physical differences, Jefferson’s rhetoric turned sharply from aesthetic description to medical evaluation. Jefferson wrote that: “They [black people] have less hair on the face and body. They secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour.”⁶⁸ The presence of hair on the human body is related physiologically to the *homo sapiens*’s ability to release or retain body heat and is thus considered to be part of the respiratory system. Focusing specifically on what he felt was the uniqueness of the black respiratory system, Jefferson wrote as a physician when he argued that:

This greater degree of transpiration renders them more tolerant of heat, and less so of cold, than the whites. Perhaps too a difference in the structure of the pulmonary apparatus, which a late ingenious experimenter has discovered to be the principal regulator of animal heat, may have disabled them from extricating, in the act of inspiration, so much of that fluid from the outer air, or obliged them in expiration, to part with more of it.⁶⁹

“Transpiration” is part of the water cycle, much like the process of evaporation, and it indicates the loss of water vapor in an organism, as in the presence of human sweat.⁷⁰ That Jefferson imagined blacks to emit a “strong and very disagreeable odour” also indicated the palpable differences white intellectuals crafted in order to isolate blacks from the pantheon of humanity when mere racial visibility did not suffice. Similarly the “Pulmonary apparatus” carried de-oxygenated blood from the heart to the lungs and, as Jefferson indicated, were related to the process of storing and releasing body heat. In his discussion of the differences between “black blood” and white blood” Cartwright referred to this “oxygenated blood” as “aerated blood.” Cartwright wrote: “In contrasting the typical white man,

⁶⁷Cartwright, “Circulation of Blood”; see also Cartwright, “On the Respiration of the Alligator,” *Western Journal of Medicine and Surgery* 10(1852):167

⁶⁸ Andrew Lipscomb and Albert Bergh, eds., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1903) 14:267

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ “Transpiration” is the technical term given to the process by which air is taken into the lungs and reflects the rate by which oxygen is converted into red blood cells in order to produce energy.

having an excess of red blood and a liability to inflammatory and tuberculosis complaints and disorders of the digestive system, with the typical negro, deficient in *aerated* blood, and abounding in mosquitoes, having an active liver and a strong digestion, and a proclivity strongly marked to fall into congestions.”⁷¹

Jefferson argued that the “Negro” “pulmonary apparatus” was different from that of whites and that blacks suffered a deficiency which “disabled them from extricating in the act of inspiration” “fluid from the outer air” or “obliged them in expiration to part with more of it.”⁷² “Inspiration” is also known as inhalation, or the removal of air from the external environment and into the body’s respiratory system. Jefferson was concerned with blacks’ alleged inability to harness what Cartwright eventually called “the motive power of blood.”⁷³

Cartwright took up Jefferson’s claims and expanded them with what he perceived to be more modern and up-to-date scientific knowledge about blacks. Following closely Jefferson’s own observations and citing Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), Cartwright argued “That the relations observed in the different animals, between the quantity of their respiration and the energy of their motive force is one of the finest demonstrations that Comparative Anatomy can furnish to Physiology, and at the same time one of the best applications of Comparative Anatomy in Natural History.”⁷⁴ Cartwright sought and found inter-disciplinary continuity. He corroborated his findings and achieved consensual validation across diverse frames of reference in order to substantiate his beliefs.⁷⁵ Cartwright

⁷¹ Cartwright, “On the Philosophy of the Negro Constitution,” 208

⁷² Lipscomb and Bergh, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 14:267

⁷³ Cartwright, on the “Circulation of Blood,” *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, January 14, 1852

⁷⁴ Cartwright, “Slavery in Light of Ethnology,” reprinted in Stringfellow, *Cotton Is King*, (1861), 698

⁷⁵ Writing on critical methodologies in education Elliot Eisner asserts that there are three types of evidence that indicate credibility in research endeavors: they are “structural corroboration”, “consensual validation” and “referential adequacy.” In seeking “*structural corroboration*,” one looks for “recurrent behaviors” and “theme-like features” in one’s findings. Eisner describes “*referential adequacy*” as the extent to which a study sheds light on its subject matter and brings into being a more complex and refined perception of the problems and their consequent resolutions brought about by the work. Elliot Eisner, *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 110; also Eisner, *The Educational Imagination*, (New York, 1979); and Eisner, *Cognition and*

concluded, “The slower motions of the owl prove to the natural historian that it consumes less oxygen than the eagle. By the same physiological principle he can tell that the herring is the most active among fish, and the flounder the slowest, by merely seeing the gills of each: those of the herring being very large, prove that it consumes much oxygen and is very active; while the flounder, with its small gills, consumes but little, and is very slow in its motions as a necessary consequence. Hence the habitual slower motions of the Negro than the white man, is a positive proof that he consumes less oxygen.” Cartwright wrote during an era in which professional concepts and standardization were just being formed and wrote as a self-conscious natural scientist.⁷⁶

Cartwright felt that he had discovered the unique cause of black respiratory problems when he argued that blacks professed a “habit” of “pulling sheets over their heads” while sleeping at night.⁷⁷ In articulating his disease category *Dysaesthesia Aethiopica* Cartwright claimed that this was the primary reason that blacks suffered “a defective atmospherization of the blood.” Again, aligning himself with Jefferson and the Revolutionary narrative, Cartwright claimed to have observed this “fact” first-hand from his “ancestral home East of the Blue Ridge [mountains] in Virginia.”⁷⁸ Cartwright felt that these “defects” in the black respiratory system that both he and Jefferson allegedly observed had dire psychological consequences in that they led to what he called “mental hebetude.”⁷⁹ This “Hebetude of Mind” also led to behavioral consequences that Jefferson claimed to observe. Jefferson wrote:

They seem to require less sleep. A black, after a hard labour through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusement to sit up till midnight, or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of the morning.⁸⁰

Similarly, Cartwright saw work-related, physical consequences to *Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*, claiming

Curriculum Reconsidered, Second edition, Teachers College Press, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

⁷⁶ In 1833 William Whewell coined the term “scientist” on par with “artist.” Bynum, *Science and Practice*, 94

⁷⁷ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 49

⁷⁸ See Austin Flint, MD, and S.B. Hunt, MD, eds., “Drapetomania, or the Disease causing Slaves to run away,” *Buffalo Medical Journal and Monthly Review* 10 (Buffalo, 1855): 439-440

⁷⁹ The term *Hebetude* meant dullness, mentally slow, or mental lethargy.

⁸⁰ Lipscomb and Bergh, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 14:267

that it led to “Obtuse sensibility of Body,” causing the black slaves he observed to enter into an automaton like stupor wherein they felt no pain when whipped and shirked their labor-related responsibilities. These “peculiarities” that Jefferson allegedly observed and that Cartwright felt compelled to elaborate, enlarged the spectrum of blacks’ physiological differences and grafted onto them specific mental and physical manifestations—manifestations which always culminated in effecting black productivity at labor, disturbing the sanctity of their role as human beings and reserving them as mere human resources for effective labor.

Cartwright believed it was his duty to extend Jefferson’s logic into a theory and eventually into a more precise technique for effective slave management. Cartwright argued, “That negroes consume less oxygen than the white race is proved by their motions being proverbially much slower, and their want of muscular and mental activity.” Suggesting treatment, he offered:

Blistering the nape of the neck, so irritating in nearly all of the diseases of the Saxon race, is almost a sovereign remedy or specific for a large proportion of the complaints that Negroes are subject to because most of them arise from defective respiratory action.⁸¹

Since Cartwright studied with Rush and was influenced by his concepts of vascular pathology and his argument that black skin was a symptom of a disease called “*Negroidism*,”⁸² it followed for Cartwright that the cure for black illness lie in regulating blacks’ respiratory systems. If blacks ceased to follow white commands Cartwright proscribed the following treatment to inspire proper black breathing:

Hence whipping the lungs to increased action by the application of blisters over the origin of the respiratory nerves, a remedy so inexpedient and contraindicated in most of the maladies of the white man, has a magic charm about it in the treatment of those of the negro.⁸³

⁸¹ Cartwright’s “magic charm” of blistering blacks was reprinted extensively; see “Dr. Cartwright on the Philosophy of the Negro Constitution,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 8 (1852): 207; see the *Kentucky Medical Recorder* (1852): 92; see also *The Stethoscope and Virginia Medical Gazette* 2 (1853): 700; *American Medical Gazette and Journal of Health* 4 (1853): 215; Thornton Stringfellow, *Cotton is King* (1861), 704

⁸² Benjamin Rush, “Observations Intended to Favour a Supposition That Black Color (As it is Called) of the Negroes is Derived from the Leprosy,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* (1799)

⁸³ “Dr. Cartwright on the Philosophy of the Negro Constitution,” 207

Cartwright referred to the “sovereign remedy” and “magic charm” like effect of a blister to the “Negro” in a time where such “Heroic” practices had gone out of use. He was arguing that what was good for whites had an inverse relationship to what was beneficial for blacks. Cartwright had already gained attention by the established medical community for his novelty in treatment when he was awarded two gold medals by Harvard University in 1824 and in 1826. In these early essays, which were race-neutral, he also indicated that blistering worked like a “magic charm” on the patient, but by the early 1840s he saw the antiquated method to be inversely beneficial to blacks.⁸⁴

Cartwright was recommending the advantages of the new psychological medicine Moral Treatment to eradicate the refractory behavior of radical and defiant black slaves. Cartwright held that the potential effects of Moral Treatment to be the “magic[al]” cure for what over-seers had been mistakenly calling “*rascality*.”⁸⁵ Cartwright bragged that he had discovered that “The magic effect of a blister to that part of the Ethiopian’s body, in a large class of his ailments, although well known to most of the planters and overseers of the Southern States, is scarcely known at all to the medical profession beyond those boundaries.”⁸⁶

Cartwright was merging medicine with management; or rather he transposed techniques for managing the physical body onto the interests of managing the Body Politic. To suggest that the remedy to defiance and “*rascality*” was to whip the slaves’ backs in order that they may blister made punishment synonymous with medical treatment. In this way Cartwright was recommending for blacks a therapy—whipping their backs in order that the skin may blister so that the lungs could transpire—in a time that that same “heroic” practice was being frowned upon for whites. The “magic charm” of beating a slave to the point of blistering required extreme rationalization in order to serve the interests

⁸⁴ In Cartwright’s award winning 1824 and 1826 essays wherein he introduced first the notion of blistering as a “magic charm” for victims of epidemic fever, he also introduced an interest in how blood transported oxygen to the brain and the effect that process had on governing mental states.

⁸⁵ “Dr. Cartwright on the Philosophy of the Negro Constitution,” 207

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*; also repeated in Elliot, Christy, Bledsoe, eds., *Cotton Is King*, (1860), 704

of whites who were determined to see their maliciousness toward blacks as beneficence. The practices of bleeding and blistering were falling out of favor by the 1840s and 1850s, particularly as a cure in Southern regions.⁸⁷ In Cartwright's rendition of the "*tam-tam*" scene, one can see the logic of blistering at work. By flogging the "Negro Conjurers and Prophets" with "broad leather straps" and "bacon fat" Cartwright intended to blister the area near the lungs in order to stimulate oxygen into the slave's blood stream—to aerate the blood. In the same way that his colleague, Dr. Carpenter, stressed the need to evolve a "counter-charm" in order to cure black behavior, Cartwright heralded the "magical charm" of blistering to manage blacks.

A "germ of rebellion"

The reason Cartwright wanted to isolate and identify the minor out-breaks of resistance among blacks like breaking tools or cutting up corn and cane was because he realized how a "germ of rebellion" could lead into a full outbreak of incalculable activity.⁸⁸ He understood that when slaves "cut up corn," they attacked the product slave-masters cared about because cracked corn wouldn't sell; it is significant because it operated as deliberate sabotage. Past events in Louisiana and in Natchez reminded both cotton and sugar planters of the threat of slave revolts and a unified slave consciousness. The "germ of revolt" presided over white masters' resort to compromise and negotiation. The Haitian Revolution had radicalized an entire nation of ex-slaves and their influence was feared throughout the antebellum era. The "germ of revolt" spread from radicalized Haitian Immigrant Charles Deslondes' 1811 Slave Insurrection—which involved at least two hundred armed black slaves—up to the Nat

⁸⁷ On Southern physicians' particular resistance to use bloodletting procedures in Southern regions, see Warner, "Southern Medical Distinctiveness," in Ronald Numbers and Todd L. Savitt, (ed.) *Science and Medicine in the Old South*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1989), 182-191

⁸⁸ On the frequency of slave uprisings, oftentimes along travel conduits, it should be remembered that attempted slave uprisings of all kinds occurred, some just off of dusty southern roads (Charleston in 1799, on the National Road in 1820, in rural Kentucky in 1829, in Virginia in 1834) on slave ships (on a Mississippi flatboat in 1826 and at sea on the Decatur in 1826 or aboard the Lafayette in 1830 and the Creole in 1841) the potentially combustible nature of unknown slaves meeting each other in transit was clear. See Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, (Harvard, 1999): 74-75

Turner's 1831 Rebellion and to the 1835 slave scare in Mississippi and actual slave rebellions during that year in Brazil.⁸⁹

In October of 1852 slave-holder William Pettigrew wrote that Joshua Collins' slaves were suspected of planning an insurrection because whites heard them performing work songs with potentially subversive intent:

The town has been much shocked...at the unbecoming manner in which Mr. C's Negroes Negroes [sic: *perhaps Pettigrew was feeling surrounded*] conducted themselves while there. Some of them were in prison while some were not: the former spent most of their time in singing and dancing until Hempton, the landlord threatened to confine them in the dungeon unless they were more silent; which they obeyed. One of their songs was "*James Crack Corn I don't Care*." Their object was said to set their master at defiance, and to show their willingness to leave him...The good people of the place were rejoiced with they left, feeling apprehension of the insubordinate influence such conduct might have on other Negroes.⁹⁰

A preponderance of "Negroes" in the population may have presented a continuous aura of potential danger to whites who were often outnumbered by blacks ten-to-one.⁹¹ But these *particular* slaves sang fear into the hearts and minds of the planter class who understood that the songs' content ignored masters' "performances" of mastery and "fantasies" of good treatment. The song "*James Crack Corn I don't Care*" is remarkable in that it refers specifically to the practice of "cutting up corn" that Cartwright listed as a side-effect of his mental disease *Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*. The potential danger of black collective resistance had been realized in the harmony of the black men, who creatively let slave-holders and any other whites within ear-shot know that what whites used to perceive as mere danger now stood as actual risk.⁹²

⁸⁹ Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 134-135

⁹⁰ William Pettigrew to James C. Johnson, December 23, 1852; in the William Pettigrew Papers, University of North Carolina; See also Pettigrew Papers: Josiah Collins to William Pettigrew requesting a secret meeting with the slave-holder because of his fear of the accumulation of black men. The italicized parenthetical notation is Johnsons, Cited in Johnson, *Soul By Soul*, 69-70

⁹¹ Taylor observes that "The fear of insurrection was never completely absent from the white population, and that fear was compounded by the fact that, in plantation parishes, blacks outnumbered whites, sometimes more than ten to one. There was no doubt that an insurrection could be put down, but that would be little comfort to white families in the area where it took place." See John Taylor, *Louisiana: A History*, (New York, 1976), 75

⁹² On slave subversion and conspiracy, see Johnson, *Soul By Soul*, 72-73

Olmsted re-printed Cartwright's ideas in order to understand the psychological underpinnings behind slaves' radicalism and to ferret out the reason behind workers' misbehavior. When Olmsted relayed his example of the seven-year-old boy who appeared "very sad, or homesick and sulky" it was to convey the young boy's defiance; he continued to behave in ways that expressed dissatisfaction with his new environment, even amidst what appeared to be the other boys' acquiescence to it.⁹³ Based on his disease categories "Drapetomania" and "DYSÆSTHESIA ÆTHIOPICA," Cartwright would have viewed the seven-year-old's "perfect frenzy of anger and grief," "sulkiness" and unwillingness to accept his new situation as a captive slave was evidence of medical symptoms, the "germ" of an expressed mental disease.⁹⁴ Cartwright elaborated a theory that white southerners controlled and manipulated the actions of blacks in their midst and he cited blacks' consciousness of and claims to Freedom as forms of mental illness. Cartwright's account of what he imagined was the interaction between the "Empire of the white man's will" and blacks' refusal to comply with white commands reflected his view that black bodies were uniquely limited. Cartwright wrote:

Hence, the primordial cell germ of the Nigerian has no more potency than what is sufficient to form a being with physical power; when its dynamism becomes exhausted, dropping the creature in the wilderness with the mental organization too imperfect to enable him to extricate himself from barbarism.⁹⁵

Cartwright located blacks' physiological difference at the level of the "primordial cell germ" in an attempt to explain what he perceived as the inadequate growth of blacks—blacks experienced change over time, but not sufficient enough development to make them fully human. What is highly suggestive was Cartwright's attempt to isolate and limit black "*dynamism*." That he did so at the level of the cell indicated that Cartwright was at the experimental, adventurous edge of his new profession,

⁹³ Ibid., 563

⁹⁴ When Cartwright spoke of a "primordial cell germ" in the 1850s he did so at a time when cellular theory was still in its infancy. It is clear that he performed clinical experiments on black subjects and that he held deep interest in autopsies and pathological anatomy. It is also clear from his earlier writings in 1822 and 1826 that Cartwright referred readily to "cellular tissue."

⁹⁵ Cartwright, "The Negro or Prognathous Race," *Atlanta Med. and Surg. Journal* 3 (April 1858): 470

seeking out contemporary explanations and using cutting-edge methods like chemistry and cellular theory to make his claims. Showing further innovation and intrepidity, in 1854 Cartwright presented an open query to Drs. H.A. Ramsey and W.T. Grant, the editors of the short-lived, pro-slavery *Georgia Blister and Critic* in which he asked its readers: “In the cross of the white and negress, do the Ovary Cells diminish with each cross, until the fourth, and then nearly disappear entirely?”⁹⁶ The Editors reprinted Cartwright’s research challenge: “The question is important, and we ask for it a candid and careful investigation.” Absent proper research, they could only “presume an answer, without the necessary data to confirm it.” In their preliminary answer to Cartwright they speculated: “We think it quite probable that the Ovary Cells in the cross of the negress and white, may diminish, until sterility would be the result. Our dissections are not ample enough to determine the point precisely, but we see a cross in the horse and mule, produce sterility and why not in the white and black biped race? We see no reason to question.”⁹⁷

These doctors’ framed a discussion of the diminishing capacities of legal “personhood” in a network of scientific concepts about the most basic units of life. The monitoring, dissecting and speculating on the outcome of experiments on blacks and “mulattoes” or bi-racial blacks indicates these scientists shared interest in cellular theory, reproductive theory, as well as experimental pathology.⁹⁸ It also indicates how Southern physicians operated with a *principle of superiority*, believing that blacks were mere objects, raw material ripe for experimentation: “We will here remark, we had a negro

⁹⁶ Cartwright enjoyed great camaraderie with the editors of the *Blister*; they wrote, “We wish we had more Cartwright’s in the Southern profession—had we, the slavery question would, long ago, have been settled.” The editors also adorned their masthead of their journal with a quote from Cartwright: “A Monthly Journal, devoted to the exposure of quackery, the development of Southern medicine, and the diseases and physical peculiarities of the negro race.” See Drs. H.A. Ramsey and W.T. Grant, “The Negro—Ovary Cells—Dr. Cartwright,” *Georgia Blister and Critic* 1:2 (April 1854): 38

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 38-39

⁹⁸ These innovations had always interested Cartwright and his investment in the “French School” of medical thought which embraced autopsies and promoted diagnostic clarity and experimentalism earlier than Americans, was revealed in Cartwright’s earlier writings in the 1820s that earned him Harvard accolades. For Cartwright’s 1820s essay see Cartwright, “An Essay on the Epidemic Fever of Monroe County, Mississippi, in the Summer and Autumn of 1822,” *American Medical Recorder* 7:4 (October 1824): 83-84; for Cartwright’s 1858 reference to a “primordial cell germ,” see Cartwright, “The Negro or Prognathous Race,” 470

man...with a wife, who is a fourth cross, as far as we can ascertain. She does not breed, although healthy, and her husband has been heretofore the father of children.”⁹⁹

These interests, methods and expectations indicate that Southern doctors with pro-slavery beliefs put their scientific investigations to the service of the slavery enterprise—they perceived blacks as property and that necessarily meant that physicians operated with a distorted somatic concept of black people. Cartwright’s 1854 fertility experiments with blacks as well as his use of a “*spirometer*” to gauge black and white lung capacity¹⁰⁰ indicate his dedication to the “science in medicine.”¹⁰¹ Although cellular theory did not mature until Rudolf Virchow discovered distinctions in cellular structures in 1858, Cartwright—writing in 1854 and again in 1858—contrived his image of a “primordial cell germ” as a way to offer diagnostic clarity in a developing field of psychiatry.¹⁰²

When one considers that Cartwright inherited a world-view or ‘paradigm’ that held blacks to be automatically inferior because they originated in disease (as both Jefferson and Rush argued), it makes sense that Cartwright saw it as his duty to seek out new terms and new approaches to describe what he felt was the original cause of black diseases. What his mentor Rush called “*Negroidism*,” a disease he

⁹⁹ Drs. H.A. Ramsey and W.T. Grant, “The Negro—Ovary Cells” 38-39; also for an interesting analysis of the role of gender-specific language in the American School of Ethnology, see Melissa Norelle Stein, *Embodying Race: Gender, Sex, and the Sciences of Difference, 1830-1934*, Rutgers University PhD Dissertation, (May, 2008), for a consideration of the exchange between the Cartwright and the *Georgia Blister and Critic*, see 51

¹⁰⁰ For Cartwright on the invention of a “*Spirometer*” he recalled that “I now come to the main and important question—[from his British correspondent “Dr. C. R. Hall of Torquay, England”] the last of the series, and on the most important of all, viz.: “How is it ascertained that Negroes consume less oxygen than white people?”...I answer, by the *spirometer*. [original emphasis] I have delayed my reply to make some further experiments on this branch of the subject. The result is that the expansibility of the lungs is considerably less in the black than the white race of similar size, age and habit.” see Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Philosophy of the Negro Constitution,” *The New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 9:2 (May 1852): 198-199

¹⁰¹ John Harley Warner criticized that “Richard H. Shryock, who wrote the canonical statement of the American indifference argument in 1948, overlooked most of the extensive basic science inquiry among American physicians by not casting his sights low enough.” Warner argues that the current challenge to History of Medicine is for historians to resolve the basic issue of the extent to which physicians used “science in medicine.” See John Harley Warner, “Science in Medicine,” *Osiris*, 2nd Series, Vol. 1, Historical Writing on American Science, (1985):. 56-57; see also Richard H. Shryock, “American Indifference to Basic Science during the Nineteenth Century,” reprinted in *Medicine in America: Historical Essays* (Johns Hopkins, 1966), 71-89

¹⁰² The term “psychiatry” was used at mid-19th century in Germany but did not come to characterize Americans interested in psychological medicine until the late 19th century.

claimed manifested itself at the level of black skin; Cartwright sought to locate at the level of the cell.¹⁰³ Cartwright's reductionist attempt to account for the origin of "blackness" in cells also reflected the cellular work of Theodor Schwann (1810-1882) who believed that "cells were the fundamental units of zoological and botanical activity."¹⁰⁴ Benjamin Rush and his most successful Southern students worked at cross-purposes, but Cartwright and Charles Caldwell were able to base their negative claims about black diseases in Rush's own belief that blacks originated *in* disease. Rush believed that black skin color was a form of hereditary illness, "*Negroidism*," and addressing the American Philosophical Society, Rush argued, "Whites should not tyrannize over them [blacks], for their disease should entitle them to a double portion of humanity." Rush spoke in terms of whites' benevolence toward blacks in the form of treating blacks as special cases, born into an unfortunate disease and forced into an outrageous social position.

Cartwright's Professorship at the University of New Orleans assured him access to patients, cadavers and laboratories that provided him with the most up-to-date scientific equipment and anatomical collections to make his determinations.¹⁰⁵ Cartwright certainly had exposure to basic scientific equipment like stethoscopes and microscopes. An 1852 advertisement in the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* boasted that the University of Louisiana's medical faculty enjoyed great

¹⁰³ See Benjamin Rush, "Observations Intended to Favour a Supposition That Black Color (As it is Called) of the Negroes is Derived from the Leprosy," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* (1799), cited in Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Thinking: A History of Theories of Culture*, (Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 87

¹⁰⁴ For a subtle exploration of the importance of historians awareness of the extent to which physicians used "science in medicine," see John Harley Warner, "Science in Medicine," 56-57

¹⁰⁵ In March 21st, 1850, the following Act was passed, "For the Advancement of Medical Education that Provided a generous grant of \$75,000 in order to obtain and make available to the medical faculty the following: "1st Anatomical preparations, (illustrative of human and comparative anatomy and anatomical paintings, plates and drawings.); 2nd Surgical preparations, (illustrative of disease and Surgical paintings, plates, drawings and instruments.); 3rd Medical preparations, (illustrative of disease, and Medical paintings, plates and drawings.); 4th Obstetrical preparations, (illustrative of the science of obstetrics, and paintings, plates and drawings, illustrative of diseases of women and children.); 5th Physiological preparations and apparatus, (illustrative of the science of Physiology.); 6th Preparations illustrative of general and special Pathology, paintings, plates and drawings.); 7th Pharmaceutical apparatus and preparations, (illustrative of *Materia Medica*, and Mineral and Botanical preparations.); 8th Chemical and Philosophical apparatus.); illustrative of the science of Chemistry, for the use of the Medical Department of the University of Louisiana.)" Thomas Hunt, MD, New Orleans, June 1st, 1852.

liberty in using facilities at the local New Orleans Charity Hospital:¹⁰⁶

The College affords opportunities to the student unsurpassed by any other institution in the world. The Act which established the University of Louisiana, gave the Professors of the Medical Department the use of the Charity Hospital as a school of practical instruction; it is during the session of the school therefore in charge of the Professors.

There are about 1000 cases usually in the wards of the Charity Hospital. The Professors visit every morning between 8 and 10 o'clock, the Medical, Surgical and Obstetrical wards. Hence a wide field is open for the practical study of diseases and their scientific treatment.

Members of the classes of the Medical Department have *gratuitous and free* admission to the wards of the Hospital; they also are permitted to attend post mortem examinations, which are incomparably greater in number here than in any other school in America or in Europe. Indeed, elsewhere, a class seldom sees an autopsy except during a lecture.¹⁰⁷

However even if Cartwright did use a microscope it would have rendered a far different clinical picture of the “cell” given restrictions on the microscope and limited thinking about cellular structure at that time. Although microscopes had been around since the 17th century, W. F. Bynum informs “technical improvements from the late 1820s corrected” two sources of distortion “and brought the microscope from the periphery to the center of medical and biological research.” It is likely that Cartwright was influenced by Bichat’s writing on the centrality of human tissue to detecting disease. For him the functional unit of analysis was not the Organ, but the tissues. Cartwright’s writings evidence that he too sought to locate both physiology and pathology at the level of tissues, and tissues stood in to determine normal and abnormal functions.¹⁰⁸

Cartwright’s experience as a physician and his anthropological convictions that “the Negro”

¹⁰⁶ Cartwright relocated from Natchez to New Orleans in 1848 in order to further his anatomical research at the Charity Hospital. Mary L. Marshall, “Samuel A. Cartwright and States Rights Medicine,” read before the Orleans Parish Medical Society, March 11, 1940, reprinted in *New OrL. Med. and Sur. Jour.* 93:2 (August, 1940)

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Hunt, MD, New Orleans, June 1st, 1852

¹⁰⁸ Bynum argues that Rudolf Ludwig Karl Virchow’s *Cellular Pathology*, published in 1858 “did for the cell what Morgagni’s *Seats and Causes of Disease* (1761) had done for the organ, or Bichat’s *Treatises on the Membranes* (1800) had for the tissues: established a new, essential unit for thinking about function and disease.” Whereas Virchow’s *Cellular Pathology* did not appear until 1858, his microscopical works from the 1840s *Omnis cellulae cellula* (All cells from cells) held greater significance. “They consisted of a nucleus and an outer membrane and could be formed—in a process he explicitly linked to a crystal growing within a solution—out of an amorphous organic matrix that Schwann called the blastema.” Bynum citations from W. F. Bynum, *Science and Practice in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge, 2006), 99-100; on Marie François Xavier Bichat see 32; on Rush’s notion of “*Negroidism*,” see Benjamin Rush, “Observations Intended to Favour a Supposition That Black Color (As it is Called) of the Negroes is Derived from the Leprosy,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* (1799)

was “subject” to “the white man’s spiritual empire over him” shaped his vision of proper slave management.¹⁰⁹ Cartwright’s version of slave management was shaped by a political theory of white sovereignty over black subjects. He alleged that “the white man has an exaggerated will, more than he has use for; because it frequently drives his own muscles beyond their physical capacity of endurance.”¹¹⁰ Cartwright created his own unique fusion of psychiatry and slave management as he described the intricate process through which white will power would calm blacks’ “exaggerated appetites” and “exaggerated senses” that “call[ed] loudly for their gratification.”¹¹¹ Cartwright argued that slave-owners should utilize the 19th century psychological medicine called “Moral Treatment” to manage slaves more ideally.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” *De Bow’s Review* 25:1 (1858): 52

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 47-48

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 48

¹¹² 19th century mental specialists used the term “moral” to mean the equivalent of “emotional,” “spiritual” and “psychological.” It is derived from “morale” and holds emotional connotations of words like “zeal” “confidence,” “hope” and “spirit.” see J. Bockoven, M.D., *Moral Treatment in American Psychiatry*, (New York, 1963), 12

Part III: Cartwright's Imagination

Chapter 8 “The Empire of the White Man’s Will”¹

A Principle of Superiority

Chapter eight explores Cartwright’s therapeutics and demonstrates how he combined notions of white “superiority” and Christian “benevolence” with native African ritual in order to manufacture Black consent on the Southern plantation. Labor historian David Roediger has reinvigorated the question of Samuel Cartwright’s significance to American labor history, declaring that Cartwright’s role in influencing slave labor was “just as striking” as its influence on industrialists’ vision of factory labor. In fact, according to Roediger and Elizabeth Esch, Cartwright was “not an extremist” in his views “but a powerful leader within the mainstream of managerially inspired racial medicine.” They argue, “Cartwright and his fellow physician associates effectively transformed resistance into disease;” that they created “a race-manager’s medicine” which shaped Northern labor management.² On the question of whether or not antebellum Southerners believed their thinking and culture to be distinctive from Northerners Todd Savitt and John Harley Warner contend that Southern medical men who subscribed to racialized medicine constituted a fringe effort in Southern science. Warner argues deftly that what was most particular about Southern physicians was their clamor, not their claims. He pointed to the “principle of specificity” as a property of medical practice common to all regions — Northerners had to deal with climate-based diseases and botanical resources in a regionally specific way just as Southerners did.³ What I would like to consider is another principle that governed Southern thinking above and beyond disciplinary expertise, and that is the *principle of superiority*. I propose that Southern regionalism was under-girded by assumptions of racial superiority that obscured physicians’

¹ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” *De Bow’s Review* 25:1 (1858): 48

² David Roediger and Elizabeth D. Esch, *The Production of Difference: Race and the Management of Labor in U.S. History*, (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 59

³ Warner observes that the South was distinctive not in “possessing medical knowledge and practice avowedly molded to its peculiarly regional needs,” but rather in “the fervor with which physicians exploited and proselytized its medical particularity.” See John Harley Warner, “The Idea of Southern Medical Distinctiveness” in *Science and Medicine in the Old South*, ed., Savitt and Numbers, (Baton Rouge, 1989), 203-205

ability to see blacks as fully human and equal to whites.⁴ Countering the claim that no difference existed between southern and northern medical practices, Sharla Fett argues that if any genuinely southern style of doctoring existed that it was African American healers who brought their own distinctiveness to Anglo medical practices.⁵ However it is not just that independent black medical practitioners thought of and used medicine differently, but more that black bodies demanded different medical approaches because white practitioners operated from a distorted somatic concept: Blacks were not independent clients or mere patients; viewed as inferiors or deviants they were perpetual patients.

Therefore even if physicians like Josiah Nott and Samuel Cartwright were “exceptions rather than the rule” in Southern medicine, it is clear that the assumption of black inferiority was the rule rather than the exception in Southern life. As Henry Commager put it, “Nowhere else on the globe had nature been at once so rich and so generous, and her riches were available to all who had the enterprise to take them and the good fortune to be white.”⁶ Furthermore if one believed that the healthiest black person was one who had been “improved” under slavery, then the logical extension of that thinking — the “humanitarian” thing to do — was to put medicine at the service of slavery. Whites’ *economic* interests in blacks certified the meaning of the categories “sickness” and “health” in pro-slavery America. Cartwright extended this logic and reasoned that, not only was a slave who ran

⁴ On the notion that the South had “a mind of its own,” see W.J. Cash, *The Mind of the South*, (New York, 1941); on southern distinctiveness, see Carl Degler, *Place over Time: the Continuity of Southern Distinctiveness* (Athens, 1997); On critiques of the notion of southern medical distinctiveness, see Todd L. Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: The Disease and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia*, (Urbana, 1978); John Harley Warner, “The Idea of Southern Medical Distinctiveness: Medical Knowledge and Practice in the Old South” in *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*, 2nd edition, ed. Leavitt and Numbers (Madison, 1985), 53-70; Horsman, *Josiah Nott of Mobile: Southerner, Physician, & Racial Theorist*, (Baton Rouge, 1987)

⁵ See Sharla Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002)

⁶ Henry Commager, *The American Mind*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 5; Also see Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution*, 20

away non-productive, the runaway was as “ill” as a slave who fell to disease.⁷ Carole Emberton clarifies that, “Southern physicians may have encountered more cases of malaria, and thus prescribed larger doses of quinine for its relief, but on the whole the ailments that plagued nineteenth-century Americans on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line were more similar than different, and more importantly, so were the therapeutics aimed at their cure.”⁸ However if one considers medical practice as a necessary extension of managing the plantation, this was not the case. From slave-owners’ regulating black women’s breast-feeding (to increase their fertility)⁹ to the practice of decreasing or increasing slaves’ nutrition,¹⁰ “feeding them up” before the taxing grinding season,¹¹ or to providing them with stimulants to work harder,¹² it is clear that medical thinking about black health was obscured by a “principle of specificity”¹³ as well as a principle of superiority that underwrote a rubric of greed.¹⁴

Highlighting the role of superiority enables one to investigate the murky question of what it meant to be black and to have an “ailment” in a world where a “healthy” black person was *ipso-facto* a slave. More importantly, given that antebellum physicians operated from a distorted somatic concept governing what it meant to be “black,” to what end was “therapy” aimed? Cartwright’s ideas about Africans’ immutable inferiority may be viewed as extreme but such claims ignore the fact that

⁷ Ariela Gross, *Double Character*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 72

⁸ Carole Emberton, “Curing the Disease of Distinctiveness,” Department of History, Northwestern University, and Reviewed for H-South (March, 2006) a review of Steven M. Stowe, *Doctoring the South: Southern Physicians and Everyday Medicine in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

⁹ Marie Schwartz argues that slave women found themselves in a three way struggle to define their reproductive health. See Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Antebellum South*, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2006); On instances of demographic and lactational management, see Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana’s Cane World, 1820-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 2005), 71

¹⁰ On regulating slaves’ diet more generally, see Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 113, 160-161; For a more elaborate consideration of the content and effect of slaves’ diet, see Kenneth F. Kiple and Virginia Himmelsteib King, *Another Dimension to the Black Diaspora: Diet, Disease and Racism*, (Cambridge, 2003)

¹¹ For an exploration of whites’ attempts to enumerate slave productivity with nutritional treatment—for instance one slave-owner’s claim that slaves loss 25 % of their health and strength due to diet and work regulation—and an elaboration of factory-like schedules and human management techniques, see Gross, *Double Character*, 107-108

¹² Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, (Harvard University Press, 1999), 16

¹³ On how a “principle of specificity” governed southern thinking, see Warner, “The Idea of Southern,” 56-57

¹⁴ Similar to my claim that a principle of superiority governed Southern medical practice, Stowe recognizes the importance of race to the practice of day-to-day physicians conducting “country orthodox” medicine; that slavery’s social order “drove race deeply into a white doctor’s sense of his daily work.” Stowe, *Doctoring the South*, 107

appraisals of black inferiority made it constitutionally justifiable to hold black people as “property” in the first place. Cartwright saw his work as a natural extension of true Revolutionary principles. He wrote that, “The framers of our *Constitution* were aware of these facts, and built the *Constitution* upon the basis of natural distinctions or physical differences in the two races composing the American population. A very important difference between the two will be found in the fact of the greater amount of oxygen consumed by the one than the other.”¹⁵ Cartwright reasoned that, if founders did not blush to use “Natural History” as the cornerstone of the new republic, why should contemporaries shy away from the stark “facts” of science? He wrote:

If the *Constitution* be worth defending, surely the great truths of Natural History, on which it rests as a basis, are worth being made known and regarded by our statesmen. That negroes consume less oxygen than the white race is proved by their motions being proverbially much slower, and their want of muscular and mental activity. But to comprehend fully the weight of this proof of their defective *hematosis*¹⁶ it is necessary to bear in mind one of the great leading truths disclosed by comparative anatomy. Cuvier was the first to demonstrate beyond a doubt that muscular energy and activity are in direct proportion to the development and activity of the pulmonary organs.¹⁷

In order to tighten their rationale to hold Africans as slaves whites combined the newer, scientific “weight of the proof” of blacks’ physical deformity with the older traditions of religion, culture and foreignness; an intellectual move that proved as heavy as the “enormity of murder” in Judge Ruffin’s legal decision that whites could kill blacks with impunity.¹⁸ Cartwright used the term “*hematosis*” to mean an inability to convert venous blood into arterial blood by oxidation in the lungs. When Cartwright declared black people suffered an automatic “*hematosis*” he was saying that being black automatically meant being suited for, destined to the laboring class because Blacks could only revitalize their sluggish blood while under physical labor directed by whites.

¹⁵ Cartwright, “Philosophy of the Negro Constitution,” *New Orleans Med. & Sur. Journal* 8 (Sept. 1852): 196-197

¹⁶ A “*hematosis*” means literally “sanguification” or “the conversion of chyle into blood.”

¹⁷ Cartwright cited Cuvier: “In his *29th Lesson* 7:17, D’Anatomie Comparee, he says, ‘*Dans les animaux vertebrales cette quantity de respiration fait connaltre presque parun calcul mathmatique la nature particulidre de chaque classe.*’”

Cartwright, “Philosophy of the Negro Constitution,” 196

¹⁸ I refer to the 1829 *State v. Mann* case that determined “the power of the master must be absolute, to render the submission of the slave perfect,” & that the freedom to kill with impunity “was inherent in the relation of master and slave.” Mark V. Tushnet, *Slave Law in the American South: State v. Mann in Hist. and Lit.*, (Univ. of Kansas, 2003)

Cartwright's views were more contemporary than extreme. What proved extreme about the proposition of perpetual black servitude was just how deep-rooted that fantasy was to America's financial success and to what degree black degradation underpinned the nation's developing identity. Warner argues that in order to understand the place of "basic science research" in American medicine, "it will be necessary for historians of medicine to unrivet our gaze from those few outstanding American contributions to medical science that attracted international notice and to examine closely the nature, motivation, and extent of the scientific enterprise that actually occupied the energies of so many ordinary American physicians."¹⁹ Cartwright's utilization of science — particularly cellular theory,²⁰ blood circulation²¹ and chemistry²² — shows a case of one practical physician's attempt to grasp hold of scientific concepts *as they emerged* and to apply those principles in his work.

Cartwright was at the head of his nascent field, even incorporating the new theories of auscultation and percussion as well as data from medical equipment like the microscope and stethoscope and "*spirometer*" into his treatises on social management and industrial improvements.²³

¹⁹ Warner, "Science in Medicine," *Osiris* 1, 2nd Series, Historical Writing on American Science, (1985): 56-57

²⁰ The essential unit for thinking about the function of disease evolved from conceiving disease at the level of the organ, then diseased tissues, and with the advent of the microscope to the idea of diseases originating in cells. Although Rudolph Virchow's *Cellular Pathology* did not appear until 1858, his microscopical works from the 1840s *Omnis cellula e cellula* (All cells from cells) held greater significance. On the emergence of cellular theory 32-33, on Virchow, 100-101; on Virchow's cellular pathology, 123-126, 240 all in W. F. Bynum, *Science and Practice*

²¹ Cartwright, on the "Circulation of Blood," *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, January 14, (1852); see also "On the Respiration of the Alligator," *Western Journal of Medicine and Surgery* 10 (1852): 167. Inspired by his alleged observations of how it was "Black Blood" affected the Black respiratory and circulatory systems, Cartwright wrote more widely on the "Motive Power of the Blood." For an interesting exchange on the subject, see Albert Welles Ely, A.M.M.D., "The Motive Power of the Blood," wherein he reviews five of Cartwright's articles on the topic. Ely covers Cartwright's enhancement of Emma Willard's writing on the motive power of the blood and critiques Cartwright's own experiments with alligators in which he attempted to prove her theories. It is of interest that Cartwright sought out and corresponded with a woman and followed her lead. See Albert Welles Ely, "The Motive Power of the Blood," *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Jour.* 8 (August 25 1852): 81, 348

²² On the increasing importance of chemistry in medical thinking, see W.F. Bynum, *Science and The Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, (Cambridge, 2006), 29

²³ Cartwright used innovative medical instruments and also questioned their efficacy: "The new knowledge, derived from the stethoscope, by detecting those abnormal deposits of abortive nutrition, called *tubercules*, has been received for more than its worth, and has greatly served to keep up the delusion of treating effects instead of causes. The tubercular deposits, revealed by auscultation, are not only the effects of abortive nutrition, but the latter is itself the effect of some derangement in the digestive and respiratory functions, vitiating the nutritive fluids, and producing what Rush called general debility." Cartwright, "Philosophy of the Negro Constitution," 196

Warner contends that, “Of course, even if American medicine was not distinguished by indifference to basic science, a recognition of medical science’s multi-vocality certainly suggests that science occasionally did speak in a distinctively American dialect worth listening for.”²⁴ Cartwright’s engagement with his own colleagues, his learning French and then visiting Europe to explore international developments in science and expand his knowledge of French medical innovations, combined with his presiding interest in white “superiority” meant that Cartwright’s science had a strong Southern accent.²⁵ Perhaps what differentiated Cartwright from other mental specialists and asylum superintendents of his era was that his science reflected local interests that perceived Blacks as a cursed species to be regulated as slaves.

Treadmills for Free Negroes

Cartwright exposed British double-talk while at the same time criticizing the impropriety of English missionaries and their mis-management of blacks. He argued that the British sought to do harm to slaves and Free Blacks alike. Cartwright wrote: “Some time ago, Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary, sent an agent to the West Indies, to watch the working of the emancipation bill. He advised his Lordship to have tread-mills built, to put the free negroes in, and to import fresh laborers from Africa.” Cartwright stressed that “He advised the Secretary to afflict them with want; ‘*create want!*’ were his words.”²⁶ [Original emphases] Cartwright argued that British emancipation was simply a rhetorical shift; that their benevolence disguised a malevolent intent toward blacks, in this case by

²⁴ Warner argues, “While Nathan Reingold’s proposal that the question of American indifference [to the basic sciences] simply cannot be resolved may be right for the other sciences, this is not true of American physicians’ pursuits.” See Warner, “Science in Medicine,” 56-57; see also Richard H. Shryock, “American Indifference to Basic Science during the Nineteenth Century,” reprinted in *Medicine in America: Historical Essays* (Johns Hopkins, 1966), 71-89; Nathan Reingold, “American Indifference to Basic Research: A Reappraisal,” in *Nineteenth-Century American Science: A Reappraisal*, ed. George H. Daniels (Evanston, 1972), 38-62; see also Shryock, *American Medical Research: Past and Present* (New York, 1947); and Ronald L. Numbers, “William Beaumont and the Ethics of Human Experimentation,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 12 (1979): 113-135; and Numbers and William J. Orr, Jr., “William Beaumont’s Reception at Home and Abroad,” *Isis* 72 (1981): 590-612.

²⁵ On how physicians added “a southern accent to 19th-century medical work,” see Stowe, *Doctoring the South*, 4

²⁶ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 1:2, (April 1842): 452

keeping them dejected and in constant need. In these attempts to detail British benevolence Cartwright applied his training as a physician to the political challenge of Free Black management. His citation that the British emissary advised Lord Glenelg to have “tread-mills” built “to put the Free Negroes in” indicated an institutional approach to governing blacks that utilized penal and work-house techniques, a harsh move that a more “benevolent” Cartwright opposed.²⁷

Using the tread-mill to punish blacks was not a British innovation. In Theodore Weld’s *American Slavery As It Is* he shared the testimony of a white mistress who sent her slaves, male and female, to the Charleston workhouse to be punished. One should read Weld’s widely circulated book as an effort at objectivity — its very title “*As it Is*” suggests as much. Weld sought only to re-print previously published accounts of slavery and assemble its “Thousand Witnesses” for public edification. Weld described that “One poor girl, whom she sent there to be flogged, and who was accordingly stripped *naked* and whipped, showed me the deep gashes on her back — I might have laid my whole finger in them — *large pieces of flesh had actually been cut out by the torturing lash*. She sent another female slave there, to be imprisoned and worked on the tread-mill.” The tread-mill was usually reserved for prisons but, as in the case with this mistress prisons licensed out their facilities for slave correction as well: “This girl was confined several days, and forced to work the mill while in a state of suffering from another cause. For ten days or two weeks after her return, she was lame, from the

²⁷ Ibid.; As additional evidence that the current article was in fact written by Cartwright, he used this same language, and shows identical emphasis in the “East India Cotton” (April, 1842) article as he did in the “Canaan Identified” (October, 1842) article—neither of which he signed: “We ascertained, when in Great Britain, that Want, as it respects that country, is not a natural consequence of the excess of population, but is, in fact, an artificial monster, created by the wealthy and governing classes in England, for the especial purpose of extorting work out of the poor laborers, without giving them value received for it,—that these monied and governing classes fix the wages of labor, and not as with us, the laborers themselves; that they put the wages of labor below the level of the daily necessities, and hence create want. That these low wages, with tithes, excise duties, stamps, taxation of all kinds, and coin laws to make bread dear, are all and each so many devices to create want, and that the want, thus created, is the proximate or efficient cause of the intolerable suffering and distress in that country, nay more, of its vices and irreligion. Satan unbound could scarcely afflict our noble brethren of the Anglo-Saxon race,—bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh,—with more terrific evils than those which this iniquitous system scatters broad cast among the laboring classes of industrious England and warm-hearted Ireland.” Cartwright, “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” *Southern Quarterly Review* (October 1842): 321-83, for citation 350

violent exertion necessary to enable her to keep the step on the machine. She spoke to me with intense feeling of this outrage upon her, as a *woman*.”²⁸ There is reason to speculate here that when the writer said “while in a state of suffering from another cause” he did so in order to punctuate the fact that it was a “*woman*” being punished in this manner without any concern for her respectability, reputation or her menstruation. The “witness” indicated that this same white mistress sent her “men servants” to be put to the mill and flogged there, “and so exceedingly offensive has been the putrid flesh of their lacerated backs, for days after the infliction, that they would be kept out of the house — the smell arising from their wounds being too horrible to be endured. They were always stiff and sore for some days, and not in a condition to be seen by visitors. This same prison facility made it a practice to treat other slaves in a similar fashion when called upon by plantation owners, like the current mistress, who had trouble commanding discipline at home.”²⁹

Having presented the evidence of Lord Gleneleg’s correspondence and establishing the “treadmill” as the English way, Cartwright then argued that such “inhuman” treatment was unfair to the African.³⁰ After warning of the ways that British “overseers” were advised to manage recently emancipated slaves he opined “It is enough to chill the blood of an American slaveholder, the only true friend of the slave on this earth, to look into the bottom of the horrible designs brooding in the bosom of the English abolitionists against the Negro race.”³¹ He suggested southern astonishment at what he felt was a clear mishandling of valuable property and misuse of vital energies. Asserting that he and other Southerners operated out of actual benevolence, Cartwright attempted to convince a wider readership that slave-holders knew better how to manage all blacks, slave and free. Cartwright castigated the British as “hypocrites,” rejected their governing methods and then posited Southern

²⁸ [Original emphases] Theodore Dwight Weld, *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses*, (New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839), 53-54

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 452

³¹ Ibid.

slave-holders as the “only true friend of the slave.”³²

Cartwright then amplified evidence that he published in the *Natchez Free Trader* and used his medical expertise to set up an impervious boundary between blacks and whites. In articulating absolute differences between the races he reasoned:

They know that the white man and the African cannot live on the same soil, on equal terms. They know that emancipation in the Southern states means the same thing as extinction of three million human beings. Yet the British Abolitionists, to destroy the competition of the Agricultural products of our Southern states . . . would bring wretchedness, and ultimately destruction upon millions of the colored race which they hypocritically profess to befriend.³³

So, to Cartwright’s thinking the British abolitionists, operating with rhetoric of black equality, sought to destroy blacks by imposing upon them a freedom they could not endure. By the same means England could rupture the United States by fomenting Civil War. With the Southern competition in indigo, sugar and cotton interrupted, the newly colonized East Indian territories could then secure England’s world-dominance, politically and economically. Cartwright rebuffed: “That very inhuman traffic, the slave trade, which they make so much noise about, they would renew, under circumstances more odious than have ever, heretofore, attended it. They would clothe the ‘soul driver’ and ‘kidnapper’ in the garb of a Christian missionary and send him to Africa, with the Bible in one hand, and the thumb-screws in the other, in order to re-stock the British West Indies with a new set of slaves...adding hypocrisy to crime.”³⁴ His reference to “thumb-screws” reflected again his focus on an improper therapeutic treatment of blacks.

³² Ibid.; Cartwright elaborated later that, “In other words, negroes, who have masters to take care of them, are as healthy in the South as any people in the world; and the white people in the South, who have negroes to work for them, enjoy generally about as good health, *ceteris paribus*, as those of Pennsylvania or New-York. On the other hand, all those negroes who have no masters to take care of them, and all those white people who have no slaves to work for them, but make negroes of themselves by doing drudgery-work, exposed to the hot summer’s sun of the cotton and sugar region, are cut down by disease and death like grass before the scythe of the mower. Hence, it would appear, that in the cotton and sugar region, Nature has ordained that the negro shall serve the white man, and the white man shall take care of the negro. Obedience to this law being rewarded with the health, comfort, peace and happiness of both parties-the security of the state, and its strength in war-and disobedience punished with disease, death and anarchy.” See Cartwright, “How to save the Republic,” 196

³³ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 452

³⁴ Ibid.

Cartwright hoped to expose to well-meaning Americans who might be misguided that all abolitionists, including the much more conservative ACS, operated from false premises about blacks' potential to enjoy true liberty. Cartwright held that British overseers and slaveholders in the West Indies understood blacks' true character even if their Lords in Parliament denied it. Like Hammond, Cartwright saw immanent threat to the slave system if stewards did not act quickly. If he could subsume all blacks as perpetually cursed servants he could nullify the issue of Free Negroes and 'what to do' with them.

The “*Tam-Tam*” Cure

Cartwright presented a series of case studies and case histories in which he detailed his unique approach to twinning the brutal violence of the plantation with medical cure. He described a situation in which fellow physicians and slave-holders sought out his opinion and adopted his proposed cures. One of those cures, the “Tam Tam” cure seems to have been created by Cartwright and then repeated by other slave-owners throughout the region. Cartwright wrote that the “Honorable Judge Bragg” from Lowden, Alabama had written for his advice on how to stave off a cholera epidemic on his plantation: “The letter concluded with an urgent request for my opinion of the character of the disease, and what ought to be its treatment.” Cartwright worked as a physician in Alabama after leaving Pennsylvania and Baltimore and before moving to Natchez in 1822 and it is possible that the judge knew of him from that time. “After I had dispatched my reply, under date of July the 3rd, Dr. Atchison, an old friend and acquaintance, called on me, who has had much experience in the treatment of the diseases of negroes, as he has long practiced in Adams County, Mississippi, in a rich planting district, where the negro population is greatly in excess of the white.” Here Cartwright not only commented on the excessive

“negro population” in his local Natchez, but he also declared his long-term specialty on treating blacks.³⁵

In this series of correspondence one sees again that Cartwright’s commitment to black thinking and manipulating and regulating black behavior extended back to the 1830s, just as the letter to his friend indicated his interest in psychology and phrenology as he sat in Dr. Caldwell’s lecture on the subject back in 1822.³⁶ Now, in 1854 Cartwright wrote, “I showed [Dr. Atchison] the Hon. J. Bragg’s letter, and he assured me that the year before last, precisely such a typhoid dysentery as the one described, prevailed on a number of plantations in Jefferson County, and proved very fatal under the practice recommended in the textbooks.”³⁷ Cartwright was announcing that the textbooks that reflected traditional British-inspired Northern medical thinking proved useless to treating blacks in the South. Here one hears Cartwright speak in a Southern accent as he spun his own home-grown network of medical advisers: he communicated via letter to Dr. Atchison while also answering a call to duty from “the Hon. J. Bragg” and printing the correspondence in a medical journal so that other Southern physicians might adopt his treatments. To his thinking — and his comrades agreed — he held the key to the best method of slave management. Cartwright reflected that:

He [Dr. Atchison] remembers hearing me say, what proved to be no jest, that *Gil Blas* was a better and safer book to practice by, among negroes, than *Watson, Bell and Stokes*, and other books of the kind, written by authors who ‘know nothing of the negro, or the peculiarity of his diseases, but suppose that he is like the white man in every respect except the color of his skin, and erroneously assume that the same remedies would do equally well for both.’³⁸

Cartwright celebrated here the folk wisdom in the French novel, *L’Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane*, (*The History and Adventures of Gil Blas of Santillane*). In that novel the protagonist, Gil Blas, enters into the service of an alternative medical practitioner, Dr. Sangrado and through that association he

³⁵ Cartwright, “Remarks on dysentery among Negroes,” *New Orleans Med. and Surg. Jour.* 11 (1854): 146

³⁶ For a discussion of this see Chapter 6, p. 176 above. Samuel A. Cartwright to Francis John Levert, December 13, 1966, Levert Family Papers, SHC

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 146-7

himself became a famous practitioner.³⁹ It is instructive that Cartwright recommended a French text and French medicine to be better suited for black slaves while at the same time rejecting out of hand British-inspired medicine. It is also curious that the gentleman Cartwright celebrated for these purposes, Gil Blas, operated as an alternative, non-allopathic medical practitioner—Blas was a ‘quack,’ but better than northern textbooks. Upon meeting “Dr. Sangrado” and serving him well, Blas reflected that the Dr. made a promise to educate him:

I will make your fortune. Without more ado, I will initiate you in the healing art, of which I have for so many years been at the head. Other physicians make the science to consist of various unintelligible branches; but I will shorten the road for you, and dispense with the drudgery of studying natural philosophy, pharmacy, botany, and anatomy. Remember, my friend, that bleeding and drinking warm water are the two grand principles; the true secret of curing all the distempers incident to humanity. Yes, this marvellous secret which I reveal to you, and which nature, beyond the reach of my colleagues, has failed in rescuing from my pen, is comprehended in these two articles -- namely, bleeding and drenching. Here you have the sum total of my philosophy; you are thoroughly bottomed in medicine, and may raise yourself to the summit of fame on the shoulders of my long experience. You may enter into partnership at once, by keeping the books in the morning, and going out to visit patients in the afternoon. While I dose the nobility and clergy, you shall labour in your vocation among the lower orders; and when you have felt your ground a little, I will get you admitted into our body.⁴⁰

Cartwright wrote in his article: “The Sangrado practice recommended in Gil Blas, (if the ‘bleeding were omitted or kept in bounds,) is very much the same as the French *ptisan* expectant treatment, and would be much safer for negroes, indiscriminately used for their diseases, than the white man’s medicines, recommended in the European text-books, written by authors who regard the negro ‘as a black white man,’ as Dr. Van Evrie would say.”⁴¹

Although Cartwright wrote this article in 1854 he reflected on the fact that the practice he recommended currently had stood the test of time as he had practiced it first in Mississippi:

Dr. Atchison resides in a neighborhood, amidst the very planters who had presented me with a piece of plate, in the shape of a vase, worth a thousand dollars, for saving their negroes from a terrible epidemic cholera, which appeared among them and scourged the neighborhood and the surrounding country.⁴²

³⁹ Alain Rene Le Sage, *L’Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane* (1715-1735), Chapter 3

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Cartwright, “Remarks on dysentery among Negroes,” 147

⁴² For a discussion of this vase and \$1000 award from the citizens Pine Ridge, MS, see Chapter 1 above; Ibid. 147

Therefore when a group of blacks began to die from typhoid dysentery on a plantation in neighboring Jefferson County, Dr. Atchison left his immediate neighborhood to visit the plantations afflicted in order to administer Cartwright's method of cure. Cartwright innovated a unique approach to the cure of slave diseases, what he called "the system of removing negroes, when cholera, dysentery, or any other malignant scourge appears among them." Following Cartwright's advice Atchison immediately recommended the same plan, which twenty-two years ago had saved the "negroes" in his own neighborhood, and "in all cases where it was adopted," from the ravages of the cholera.⁴³

Any thought that Cartwright worked in isolation and speculated on medical practices that he alone indulged is false.⁴⁴ It is clear from this article that his recommendations for cholera treatment had an audience of allopathic practitioners willing to put his therapies to work on black bodies and minds. It is important to see also the psychiatric — that is the bodily and the mental — components of his recommended therapies:

The plan consisted in making an impression upon the mind as well as the body, by breaking the chain of those superstitious influences which render epidemics so fatal among negroes, and at the same time to get out of the infectious atmosphere causing any unusual sickness among them. This is eventually accomplished by sending them back to an imitation of African barbarism in the neighboring fields, woods and wilds, to lead a savage life, exposed to the open air and weather, and unprotected by the sick and the well alike to be moved. For the former, however, temporary coverings or open sheds to keep off the rain are permitted.⁴⁵

He called that the slaves be isolated from the plantation into a wooded area void of any structures. He also called for the building of temporary huts or "coverings" in case of any rain during his intricate proceedings but that these huts should provide no convenience for "the well," just temporary cover for "the sick." He encouraged that slaves stand outdoors and remain exposed to the elements in order to mimic "a savage life." Cartwright reported in his medical letter that, "when Dr. Atchison arrived at M. Rowan's plantation, in Jefferson, he found forty sick with typhoid dysentery." By the time the

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Another book that considers Cartwright's work in some detail has just been published; See Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013)

⁴⁵ Ibid.

physician arrived, two or three black slaves had already died, and “many of the neighbors had lost from ten to fifteen.” Then Dr. Atchison followed Cartwright’s instructions and “ordered the sick and the well out into the woods, and permitted some sheds to be built over the sick. The whole forty got well, and there were very few new cases, and those of very mild grade.”⁴⁶

Cartwright was convinced that his “removal method” worked and he also became convinced increasingly that blacks’ physiology differed from that of whites: “On the neighboring plantations the latest and most approved European methods of treating the white man’s colitis and flea-colitis, and all the most approved methods for the prevention and cure of follicular inflammation and dysentery in the xanthous race, continued to be put in practice upon the Ethiopian, but without any salutary effect.” The term “xanthous” had only been coined in 1829 and meant “fair-haired and light complexioned” and was a combination of the Greek *xanthos* meaning “yellow.”⁴⁷ Cartwright determined that: “The poor negroes, treated like white men, continued to get sick and die.” Cartwright and the circle of planters, overseers and physicians whom he influenced believed blacks and whites were so physiologically different as to deserve different therapies, and that the same treatments applied to the opposite races would have the reverse effects.

The removal from one locale to another describes only one aspect of Cartwright’s therapy. He based the philosophy of his cure on a belief in psychological association:

At length some of the planters boldly ventured to do as Dr. Atchison advised M. Rowan to do—to carry their negroes, sick and well, back to an imitation of savage life, in the woods or open fields, and all, who did so, found the measure to put an instantaneous stop to sickness and death among their people.⁴⁸

To Cartwright’s thinking releasing blacks into uncultivated land and encouraging them to be raucous and “wild” awakened “an imitation of savage life” that went on to alter the physiological makeup and mental disposition of the slaves; it awakened them. He encouraged the blacks to become Africans.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 147-8

⁴⁷ In anthropology “xanthous” specified the yellow or Mongoloid type of mankind.

⁴⁸ Cartwright, “Remarks on dysentery among Negroes,” 148

Through their psychological association with native ritual he believed they could cause physical and mental cure.

Cartwright blamed Northern medical ignorance on the fact that his treatment had not been adopted there as it had in the South. He admonished that the reason his “system” had “gained ground very slowly since I first advised it, nearly a quarter of a century ago” is because “as the planter well knows, from dearly bought experience...it will not do to treat negroes like white men when they are in health, unless he would ruin them forever by making them sulky, dissatisfied and ambitious to be above the master that would put himself on an equality with them...” He highlighted the irony that, whereas whites already dared not to put blacks on an equal level with them socially, they failed to allow the same logic to apply medically. This baffled Cartwright, that “somehow or other most of them seem to practice upon the equally false doctrine that negroes ought to be treated exactly like white men when sick.”⁴⁹

Cartwright even went on to argue that for the whites who treated blacks as equals, that when “such persons” took up his “system” and “when they remove their negroes,” they failed to cure them. He alleged that they “build houses for them before the removal is made,” a move Cartwright prohibited because it provided blacks with a sense of anticipation and fellowship that worked against their cure. For the slaves to see the alternative dwellings being built merely meant shifting them from one set of huts to another. Cartwright wanted the blacks to experience the shock of being thrust into the “wild” and endure the disorientation of not knowing. He argued that when whites extended fraternity and built the accommodations first it “thus defeated the half, if not the whole, of the good effects for which it [his system] is made.”⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 148-9

His critique of the next case study demonstrated a wide array of forces coming together under the banner of psychiatric treatment. Cartwright provided a glowing window into his thinking by describing how on a large sugar plantation off the coast of Mississippi, “belonging to Capt. Wm. J. Minor,” and where the cholera appeared about two years before, that “a removal of the negroes from one set of houses to another set, (one of which had been built for the purpose,) was twice tried without arresting the progress of the disease at all.” Cartwright rejected one form of benevolence — the kind based on fellowship and mutuality — for another kind of benevolence — the kind based around astonishment and shame. Cartwright detailed that in this case, when Captain Minor worked *against* his instructions his slaves began to die. He recalled that “At length, after forty had died, being called on to visit the plantation, and invested with full power to do as I pleased, I took about three hundred negroes, sick and well, a mile or two back into a dry, open place in the swamp, where there was no house to be seen, or any preparation begun for building any.”⁵¹ Cartwright provoked fear in the slaves by removing such a large number to an unknown and unprepared location. He removed the slaves far enough from “home” to where they felt beyond the Rubicon and became possessed by terror of the unknown. The anxiety he generated among them was part and parcel of what he imagined to be the stimulant for their eventual cure.

Cartwright built a reputation on his ability to cure disease and on this occasion, he had to be doubly innovative as Captain Minor had already ruined the prospects of his usual “removal” cure would work. Now, in an effort to stave off the cholera epidemic, he combined anthropology and psychiatry more directly in order to effect treatment. It was important to him that he have sole, arbitrary power over the situation, and after forty black slaves had died from the disease, the plantation

⁵¹ Ibid.

owner gave Cartwright the “full power” to “apply his medical skills.”⁵² To his thinking he now had to sever any affinity whites held with the slaves, a trait he found intolerable. Cartwright detailed that when instructed to follow his commands and make preparations strictly to his liking “The overseer refused to obey until I recorded this fact in the plantation book, with an additional statement over my own signature that a cloud was coming up, and in all probability there would be rain. Having made the record, I headed the line of march, and, sure enough, the rain came up and all got wet. They encamped in the open air and built fires, although the weather was warm, and some booths were directed to be made over the sick to protect them from the sun and the rain.” Following that, and in striking detail, Cartwright relayed the ominous twilight scene:

The ashy-colored, dry skin conjurers, or prophets, who had alarmed their fellow-servants with the prophecies that the cholera was to kill them all, and who had gained, by various tricks and artifices, much influence over their superstitions minds, were by my orders, at twilight, called up, stripped, and greased with fat bacon, in presence of the whole camp—a camp without tents or covering of any kind, except some bushes and boards over the sick from the carts that conveyed them to the camp. After being greased, the grease was well slapped in with broad leather straps, marking time with the *tam-tam*, a wild African dance that was going on in the centre of the camp among all those, who had the physical strength to participate in it.⁵³ [Original emphasis]

Here Cartwright combined his fight against alternative medical practices (the Negro Conjurers), to his fight to end the cholera, and his need to exert proper mastery over the slaves (as per his disavowal of the overseer) with the slaves’ own African ritual as a way to render African power inert. He sought to combine the unwanted behavior with punishment when he professed that: “This procedure drove the cholera out of the heads of all who had been conjured into the belief that they were to die with that disease; because it broke the charm of the conjurers by converting them, under the greasing and slapping process, into subjects for ridicule and laughter, instead of fear and veneration.” Cartwright celebrated his cure and shared with medical audiences that, “The next morning, by times, all who had

⁵² Ibid., 241; Roediger and Esch, *The Production of Difference*, 58

⁵³ Cartwright, “Remarks on dysentery among Negroes,” 148-49; cited also in Haller, “The Negro and the Southern Physician,” 241-242; also cited in Roediger and Esch, *Production of Difference*, 58

been able to join in the dance the overnight, were ordered into the cane-field to work. There were no more cases of cholera, or deaths from that disease after the removal, except one man who had strayed away from the camp, and except also among some half dozen who had been left to take care of the houses, about half of whom died.”⁵⁴

Cartwright concluded that for all of those slaves who had been conjured into the belief that they were to die with the disease, that he had “broken the charm of the conjurers” by combining successfully theology, spirituality and allopathic medicine to affect widespread cures. He considered the low mortality rate to be ample proof that first, the cholera was an effect of superstition; second that the “Negro Conjurers or Prophets” held an undue influence and “veneration” over the others; third that abrupt removal, and not fellowship, excited the appropriate fear in their “superstitious minds;” and fourth that stripping, greasing and beating the slave leaders broke the public spirit and weakened their legitimacy by “converting them, under the greasing and slapping process,” into “subjects of ridicule.”⁵⁵ This is what Cartwright came to call “Beating the Devil out of them.”⁵⁶ Whereas Cartwright concluded that the extreme violence of the tread-mills worked to “create want” among the blacks, his more benevolent management set up a “counter-charm” in the minds of the blacks in order to create “ridicule.”

The most important factor in this therapy and the aspect of Cartwright’s work to which I now turn in order to explain his treatment was that Cartwright believed in the fundamental differences between black and white anatomy and that he based this belief in blacks’ unrelenting connection to Africa as a source of spiritual and moral renewal. Almost like Noah, Cartwright stressed that, “The removal [from plantation to woods] included not only the negroes, but the horses, mules and dogs, that

⁵⁴ Cartwright, “Remarks on dysentery among Negroes,” 148-49

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ For Olmsted citing Cartwright’s cure for “*Drapetomania*,” see Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, (Dix & Edwards, 1856), 191

there might be no excuse for revisiting the houses and haunts of civilized life. They remained in the camp at night, and labored in the fields by day for some six weeks before they were brought back to the houses, and during all that time they enjoyed good health.”⁵⁷ Removing the slaves from their homes and forcing them to remain away from the plantation (while continuing to labor in the fields) reflects primary tenets of asylum care.

“Cachexia Africana”

The impetus to connect African longing with slave behavior did not begin with Cartwright as he relied on prior understandings of blacks’ behavior as mental illness in order to evolve his elaborate cures. John Haller indicates that Cartwright was certainly not alone in his interpretation of black behavior as illness and he illustrates this through providing a history of whites’ attempts to control blacks’ who desired to eat dirt. Haller concluded that physicians considered the cause of dirt-eating, or *Cachexia Africana* to be primarily mental. He argued that, “Judging from the tendency of the blacks to desire death and thereby return to their homeland, physicians believed that the disease was the product of a state of mind rather than the result of a specific disease of the body.”⁵⁸ Physicians deployed a variety of means to dissuade the practice of dirt-eating from forcing slaves to digest purgatives to threats of physical restraint and extreme force.⁵⁹

Whites forced blacks to wear tin masks, chained them onto plank floors and inserted iron gags into their mouths in an attempt to deter the practice, but failed to alleviate it.⁶⁰ One physician, Dr. Shannon, described that the practice of dirt-eating was so widespread on West Indian plantations that on some occasions “planters cut off the heads of the slaves who had died” from “Cachexia Africana,” in an attempt to degrade these blacks’ bodies so that other would be deterred from repeating the

⁵⁷ Cartwright, “Remarks on dysentery among Negroes,” 148

⁵⁸ John S. Haller, Jr., “The Negro and the Southern Physician: A Study of Medical and Racial Attitudes, 1800-1860,” *Medical History* 16 (1972): 240

⁵⁹ E.D. Fenner, “Dirt Eating Among Negroes,” *Southern medical Reports* 1 (1849): 194-195

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

behavior.⁶¹ Charles Dickens offered the grim effect of the “enormity” of murder by detailing a decapitation scene from Cartwright’s hometown in Natchez, Mississippi in 1838. In an article that he wrote in response to Cartwright’s theories Dickens offered that before one considered copying the American system of governing deviants that one look first at the status that blacks are given in American law.⁶²

The Natchez *Free Trader*, of the twelfth of February, eighteen hundred and thirty-eight, published the following advertisement:—

FOUND—A negro’s head was picked up on the railroad yesterday, which the owner can have by calling at this office, or paying for this advertisement.

The head may have been of use to the master of the victim as evidence in establishing a claim against the railway company for the destruction of his *property* [Dickens’ emphasis].⁶³

Dickens re-printed the above advertisement in his own article in order to make clear to Englishmen the “fundamental relations subsisting between the master and the slave...” in the United States.⁶⁴ The principal distinction between managing a black person in America and managing a white laborer anywhere was that blacks in America had no “legal personality.”⁶⁵ Dickens relayed that a member of the Virginia Legislature “stated the whole case when, in answer to a proposal for the manumission of slaves, he sneeringly exclaimed: ‘Why, I really had been under the impression that I owned my slaves! I lately purchased four women and ten children, in whom I thought I had obtained a great bargain; for I really supposed they were as much my property as were my brood mares.’” Dickens added, “Another gentleman declared that slaves had no more right to be heard [in court] than horses and dogs.”⁶⁶

Driving the distinction that slaves were considered “property” home even more, Dickens stressed in

⁶¹ Haller, “The Negro and the Southern Physician,” 241

⁶² On Judge Ruffin’s characterization on the “enormity” of murder in reference to *State v. Mann*, see Tushnet, *Slave Law in the American South: State v. Mann in History and Literature*, (University Press of Kansas, 2003), 90

⁶³ Charles Dickens, “Slaves and Their Masters,” *Household Words*, (August 23, 1856): 134

⁶⁴ Dickens, “Slaves and Their Masters,” 134

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Dickens noted: “on the eleventh of February, eighteen hundred and thirty seven, this resolution—Resolved, that *slaves* do not possess the right of petitioning secured to the *people* of the United States by the Constitution.” Ibid.

detail that “slaves cannot make any contract...” that “Their offspring is the property of their masters, as foals and calves would be...” that “He has no sort of redress against his master...” and that “if he prove refractory, he may kill him with impunity.”⁶⁷

In response to the decapitation of blacks thought to be mentally ill Dr. Shannon remarked, “The negroes have the utmost horror and dread of their bodies being treated in this manner.” Shannon located the physical manifestation or behavior of dirt-eating as an effect of the mind. He wrote that, “The efficacy of this expedient, [cutting off the heads of dirt-eaters] which can only operate upon the mind, is strong proof, that the disease, in its origin, is more a mental, than a corporeal affection.”⁶⁸ The deterrence that whites wanted to enact, both in the case of using associative psychology in the “*tam-tam*” therapy, as well as in the threat to decapitate those who expressed free will, each demonstrate an early form of classical conditioning, a major tenet in twentieth century psychology.

When Cartwright wrote about the practice of dirt-eating he pointed again to what he believed were popular misconceptions regarding the disease. Upon the first signs of dirt-eating, Dr. Maxwell called for patients stomachs to be blistered “as a counter irritant,” and the patient “given small doses of calomel and antimonial powder.”⁶⁹ However, rather than treat blacks immediately, Cartwright argued that slave-holders should realize first that dirt eating was a symptom rather than a cause. This misunderstanding meant that “Without attempting to understand the nature of the mental state of the blacks which led to the predilection for dirt, the planter would merely confine himself to a fruitless effort of applying medication to the effects of the disease.” If one did not arrest the cause of the

⁶⁷ Ibid; On the existence of one law for whites and one law for slaves, as well as on the right to take a slave’s life, see Gross, *Double Character*, 43

⁶⁸ R. Shannon, *Practical Observations on the Operation and Effects of Certain Medicines in the Prevention and Cure of Diseases to Which Europeans are Subject in Hot Climates, and in these Kingdoms; Particularly those of the Liver, Flux, and Yellow Fever: Applicable also to the Prevention and Cure of the Scurvy*, (London, 1794), 377; Haller, “The Negro and the Southern Physician,” 241

⁶⁹ Maxwell, “Pathological inquiry into the nature of Cachexia Africana,” *Jamaica Physical Journal* 2 (1835): 416

disease instead of treating its symptoms, the slave would remain “poisoned.”⁷⁰ Dr. W.M. Carpenter suggested that in order to overcome the mental impressions of disease that slave-owners use what he called a “counter-charm.” Much like Cartwright’s use of the African “*tam-tam*” ritual — combined with flogging — as a way to counteract the mental impressions set up in the minds of slaves by the “Negro Conjurers,” Carpenter remarked that the physician use “counter-charms” or “other means which operate powerfully upon minds thus deeply tinctured with the grossest superstitions.”⁷¹

Cartwright envisioned long-standing and globally occurring cultural practices as overt symptoms of black mental disease. He claimed that whenever African slaves began to ‘eat-dirt’ that it signaled the onset of potentially rebellious behavior.⁷² Cartwright saw blacks’ propensity to eat dirt as confirmation of his argument that the serpent-like creature in the Garden of Eden was in fact a “Negro Gardener.”⁷³ He elaborated that:

We have only to look at them eating the bread which they prefer to all other kinds of bread, the ash-cake, and to witness their fondness for the ashes, and eating dust by the handfuls, to see re-written upon living negroes, a translation of the Hebrew word, “and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.” They are the only people in the world who are the victims of that peculiar disease called dirt-eating, *Cachexia Africana*, or Negro consumption.⁷⁴

Although he wrote the above in 1860 it is clear that Cartwright had been called into court on at least three occasions to give his medical opinion on dirt-eating on at least three occasions: First

The Adams Circuit Court of Mississippi lists Cartwright as the special witness in *Abbey v. Osborne*, on

⁷⁰ Cartwright, “Report on the Disease and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 7 (1851): 405; Haller, “The Negro and the Southern Physician,” 241

⁷¹ Dr. W. M. Carpenter, “Observations on the Cachexia Africana, or the habit and effects of dirt-eating in the Negro Race” *New Orleans Med. and Sur. Jour.* 1 (1845): 158-9; Haller, “The Negro and the Southern Physician,” 241-42

⁷² On “dirt-eating” as a means to return to Africa, see Roediger and Esch, *The Production of Difference*, 58

⁷³ Roediger and Esch, *The Production of Difference*, 55; for original Cartwright citation regarding the “Negro Gardener” in the Book of *Genesis*, see, Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Races,” *De Bow’s Review* 29:2 (1851): 130; For two contemporary reviews of Cartwright’s interpretation of the figure of the serpent, from a physician and from a clergyman, see Dr. B. B. Mays, “Dr. Cartwright Reviewed :The Negro, the Ape and the Serpent, Part 1,” *De Bow’s Review* 32:4 (March 1862): 238-250; for a review of Cartwright’s ideas by a clergyman, see Rev. W.D. Scull, “Dr. Cartwright on the Negro Race,” *De Bow’s Review* 29:6 (Dec. 1860): 712-716

⁷⁴ Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Race Disproved by the Hebrew Bible,” *De Bow’s Review* 4:2 (August 1860): 134-135; See also, James D. Guillory , “Southern Nationalism and the Louisiana Medical Profession, 1840-1860,” M.A. Thesis at Louisiana State University, 1965, 40-41

April 1839. The ailment listed in the case record was “*Struma Africana* or *Cachexia* or what is sometimes known on the Virginia and Maryland Plantations as Negro Poison.” Second, Cartwright’s presence as an expert witness in a Georgia court demonstrates the wide berth of his influence. The Georgia Supreme Court Records, August 1849 cite Cartwright as the star witness in *Dean v. Traylor*, in August 1849, and “Negro Consumption” was listed as the disease in question. Finally in May 1857 he served as a witness in *Buckner v. Blackwell*, for the same disease, this time cited as “*Cakescia Affrina* [sic] or Negro Consumption.”⁷⁵

Cartwright took culturally-based arguments, backed them scientifically and mobilized them legally and politically. He amplified to a world audience his belief that Black Freedom was a farce, drummed up by conniving British abolitionists who were misleading well-meaning North Americans away from biblical and scientific authority. Cartwright argued that there were other elements peculiar to “the Nigritian” [sic] on which the disease, “called negro consumption, or *Cachexia Africana*, depends,” and that the disturbing practice of dirt-eating would never occur if whites would only “subject the negro to the white man’s spiritual empire over him.”⁷⁶ Cartwright argued, “When that spiritual empire is not maintained in all its entirety, or in other words, *when the negro is badly governed*, he is apt to fall under the spiritual influence of the artful and designing of his own color, and *Cachexia Africana*, or consumption, is the consequence.”⁷⁷ He reflected:

Long ago I wrote a treatise on it. I proved it to be a disease of the mind, occurring in consequence of the negro not being properly governed, and his falling back under the empire of his indigenous superstition.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ See *Abbey v. Osborne*, Drawer 275 #52, April 1839, Adams Circuit Court, Mississippi (“*Struma Africana* or *Cachexia* or what is sometimes known on the Virginia and Maryland Plantations as Negro Poison”); See *Dean v. Traylor*, Docket #549, Georgia Supreme Court Records, August 1849, (“Negro Consumption”), appeal reported in 8 Georgia 169 (1850); *Buckner v. Blackwell*, Drawer 353 #23, May 1857, Adams Circuit Court, Mississippi, (*Cakescia Affrina* [sic] or Negro Consumption”

⁷⁶ Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Race,” 134

⁷⁷ See “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 52

⁷⁸ When Cartwright reflected that, “Long ago I wrote a treatise on it,” he is referring to his 1842 publication, which was published anonymously, [Cartwright], “Canaan Identified with the Ethiopian,” *Southern Quarterly Review*, (October, 1842): 321-83. The above excerpt was written twenty years later. See Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Race,” 135

Cartwright believed dirt-eating to be a quasi-religious ritual of African origin and he listed the ancient phenomenon as a “disease of the mind” stemming from the improper governance of blacks.⁷⁹

Cartwright suggested that the physical and mental health of blacks could only be sustained by blacks’ total submission to white rule. He believed whites’ enslaving blacks to be a measure of protection and benevolence, sustaining blacks’ mental health by curbing their enthusiasm for barbaric rituals.

Cartwright’s writing on the “Negro consumption” or “*Cachexia Africana*” essentially defined blacks’ liberty to think beyond white control as a “disease.” Defining black liberty as disease enabled him to rationalize slavery as benevolent while at the same time justifying and furthering whites’ dominance over blacks.

What Cartwright called the “peculiar disease” of dirt-eating is a trans-national phenomenon; a point that contemporary historians used to build their case for it as a disease in the first place.⁸⁰ Haller explored the practice of dirt-eating and indicated that diseases like “*Cachexia Africana* (mal d’estomac),” were believed to be “peculiar only to the Negro because of his mental constitution.”⁸¹ However in his observation of black slaves in Jamaica British physician James Maxwell wrote in the *Jamaica Physical Journal* of 1835 that dirt-eating had been a practice of many early civilizations, “but restricted principally to the black races” in the nineteenth century. Dr. Maxwell reported, “Greek youth would eat quantities of clay” in an effort to become “slender and effeminate.” This dirt-eating activity produced a “leucophlegmatic condition of the skin,” which the Greeks named “*malacia*.” In South American Indians, the Otomac tribe carefully harvested “factunctious clay” that was “coloured with

⁷⁹ Ibid., 134-35

⁸⁰ As recently as the 2010 Haitian Earthquake, Haitians resorted to the well-established practice of eating “dirt cookies” or “mud pancakes” made by combining water with dirt and then baking the mixture to consume for food; Susan Allport “Women who Eat Clay,” *Gastronomica, The Journal of Food and Culture* 2:2 (Spring, 2002)

⁸¹ For secondary historical discussions of the practice of “dirt-eating” see Kenneth F. Kiple and Virginia Himmelsteib King, *Another Dimension to the Black Diaspora*; see also Kenneth Kiple, *The Caribbean Salve: A Biological History*, (Cambridge, 2002), 262; B.W. Higman, *Slave Population of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*, (Univ. of the West Indies, 1995), 758; Higman, *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834*, (Univ. of the West Indies, 1995), 293; and Haller, “The Negro and the Southern Physician,” 238

iron oxide” that they ate “in prodigious quantities.” Similarly, in Java the natives baked “reddish clay” and sold it in the public market “for the purpose of making an individual thin and slender.”⁸² That was the international view. However back at the South in 1845 a Prof. of medicine at Louisiana Medical College, Dr. W. M. Carpenter expressed that the habit of dirt-eating was purely a black phenomenon. He wrote in the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* that he was unable to find the practice of dirt-eating in any of the eighteenth or nineteenth century peasantry of Europe.⁸³ However a Boston-based physician disagreed; a contemporary ethnographer traveling in China, Walter Medhurst, recorded that the Chinese also “mixed quantities of gypsum” into “a jelly” that they “ate with much relish.”⁸⁴ Domestic and international travel testimonies played a large role in shaping antebellum science and physicians like Maxwell, Carpenter and Cartwright used scientific travel literature to validate their assertions of the madness of black free will.⁸⁵

Cartwright revealed his own interest in instituting more moral treatment of blacks when he praised Southern slave-holders for removing the “iron wire-muzzle” that Americans used to “fasten and lock” the “Negro’s mouth and face, to prevent him from eating dust.”⁸⁶ Just as asylum reformers advocated removing physical restraints on the insane and limiting the level of violence and inattention they suffered, so too did Cartwright advocate for slave-holders to use more spiritual approaches to managing blacks. Ironically, in order to advocate normalcy in a turbulent era physicians used the principles of Absolute Authority, Terror, Shame and Force at a time when independent Republics formed out of efforts to rid themselves of absolute tyranny and monarchical rule. Through Rush’s

⁸² James Maxwell, “Pathological inquiry into the nature of Cachexia Africana,” *Jamaica Physical Journal* 2 (1835): 416; Jacques J. Labillardiere, *Voyage in Search of La Perouse*, 2 vols., London, (1800), 2:214, 238

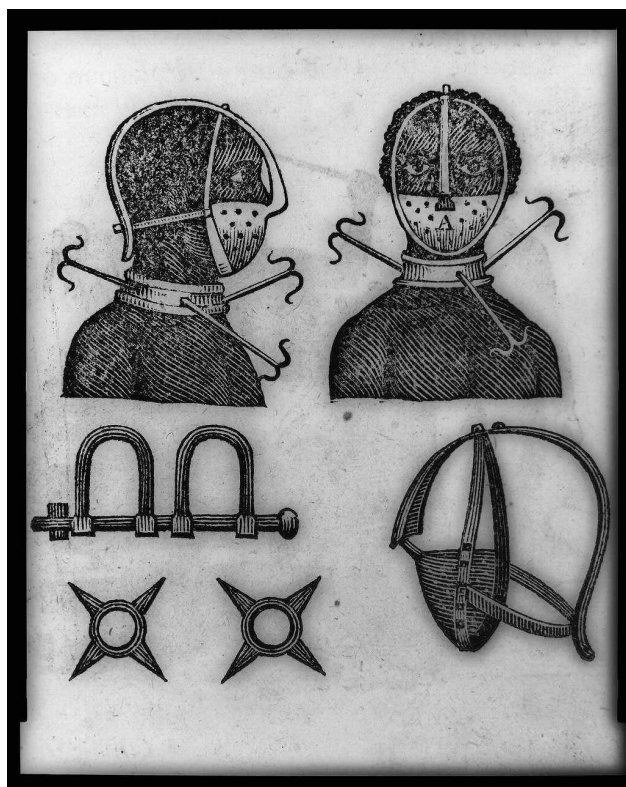
⁸³ Dr. Carpenter, “Observations on the Cachexia Africana,” 158

⁸⁴ Walter H. Medhurst, *China, its State and Prospects*, (Boston, 1838), 38

⁸⁵ For insight into the role of travel journals and “eye-witness” accounts of phenomenon to the formation of science concepts, it may be useful to see the special issue on “testimony” in *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 2002, 33(2), esp. Martin Kusch and Peter Lipton, “Testimony: A Primer,” 209–217, with bibliography. The two most influential historical works have been Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England*, (Chicago, 1994); and Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, “The Image of Objectivity,” *Representations* 40 (1992): 128

⁸⁶ Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Race,” 135

great influence these principles of medical treatment saturated early 19th century medical thinking constituents agreed on the centrality of a strong personality's influence on a patient's recovery. This theme of "absolute" power and the physician's dominion over the weakened subject provided a strong intellectual rationale for Cartwright's assertions about the "mesmerizing" quality of the "Empire of the white man's will" over blacks.





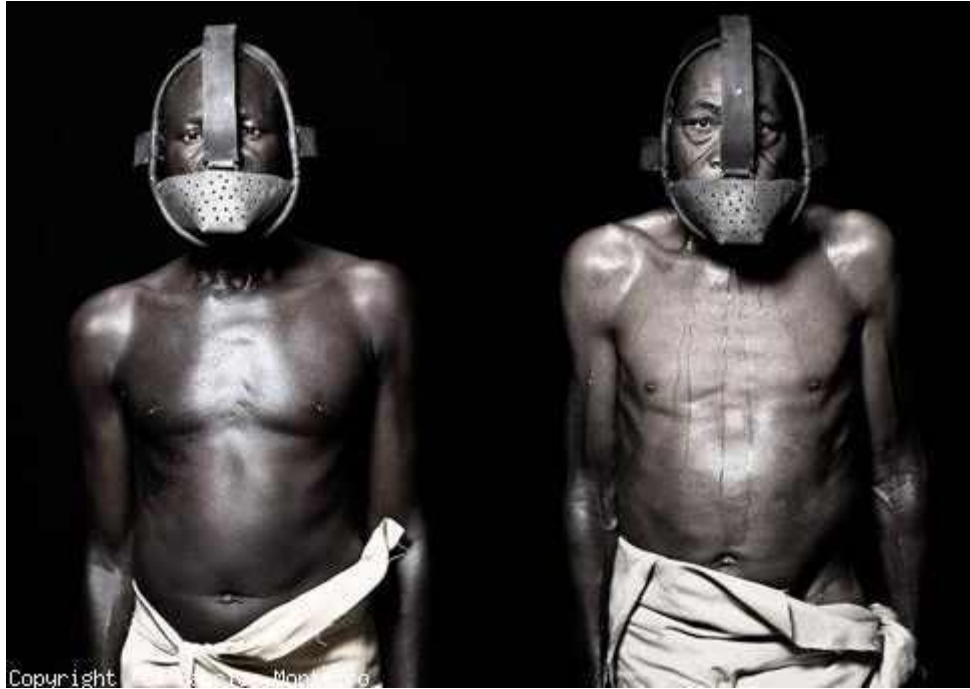
This image was called “Bed-stocks for intoxication, etc.” According to the travel-writer Bridgens, the “bed stock” “is generally placed in some of the out-houses belonging to the estate, where the offender may be denied the society and encouragement of his friends or accomplices. A tin mask, such as is put on the heads of Negroes addicted to dirt-eating, is seen hanging against the wall.”⁸⁷

Natchez resident Thomas Affleck advised that, “When it can be done without too great loss of time, the stocks offer a means of punishment greatly to be preferred. So secured... where no communication can be had with anyone, nothing but bread and water allowed, and the confinement extending from Saturday, when they drop work, until Sabbath evening, will prove much more effective in preventing a repetition of the offence, than any amount of whipping.”⁸⁸ Some slave-owners built private jails on their premises in order to prevent slaves from taking part in rituals. One planter noted that, “Negroes

⁸⁷ Richard Bridgens, *West India Scenery: From Sketches Taken During a Voyage to, and Residence of Seven Years in Trinidad* (London, 1836), plate 17; Richard Bridgens was born in England in 1785, but in 1825 he moved to Trinidad where his wife had inherited a sugar plantation. A sculptor, designer and architect, Bridgens’ book contains 27 plates, thirteen of which are shown on this website; the plates were based on drawings made from life and were done between 1825, when Bridgens arrived in Trinidad, and 1836, when his book was published. See T. Barringer, G. Forrester, and B. Martinez-Ruiz, *Art and Emancipation in Jamaica: Isaac Mendes Belisario and his Worlds* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 460-461, which gives the publication date of the Bridgens volume (p. 333, note 2); for details on Bridgens, see Brian Austen, *Richard Hicks Bridgens* (Oxford Art Online/Grove Art)

⁸⁸ Heeding Affleck’s advice, a Georgia Planter wrote that, “Drunkenness would be punished by lying in the stocks all night and drinking a pint of warm water.” Affleck, *Sugar Plantation Rec. and Account Book* cited in McCollam Diary, entry for February 5, 1845; *Southern Agriculturalist* 4 (1831): 352; Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 173

are gregarious...they dread solitariness and to be deprived from the little weekly dances and chit-chat. They will work to death rather than be shut up.”⁸⁹ Again one sees reference to the therapeutic importance of African dance for slaves.



Cartwright reasoned that the psychological coercion of slaves had led to their improvement and justified a more moral approach to slave management techniques: he praised that it was the “benevolent” nature of whites’ reformed treatment practices which had inspired the rationale behind dropping the brutal masks once used to restrain slaves.

Cartwright observed the recalcitrant nature of recently imported Africans and argued that the “mulatto” immigrants from the West Indies who had been radicalized during the Haitian Revolution proved to be the most refractory,⁹⁰ but that what had been mis-perceived and mis-reported as a “Haitian

⁸⁹ *De Bow's Review* 11 (1851): 371; Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, (New York, 1956), 173

⁹⁰ Carl Degler notices a similar phenomenon where the most radicalized slaves in Brazil were the blacks imported more recently from Africa. He argues: “In Brazil...the presence of thousands of newly arrived Africans, who were resentfully hostile to their new masters and society while also united by their common African tribal culture, provided a basis for slave rebellions that was clearly lacking in the United States, especially after the Revolution.” Degler, *Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States*, (Wisconsin, 1971), 54

Revolution” was in fact a mass outbreak of mere mental disease.⁹¹ He believed that the more domesticated or “seasoned” American “Negro” proved to be more properly governed and was less susceptible to deviant behavior. Cartwright argued that black people who acted on their own accord — including “Free Negroes” and runaways — suffered from “*rascality*” because they could only achieve physical and mental health under the auspices of white rule.

Cartwright merged spiritual and medical opinion into an argument for the less-violent and more *moral* treatment of black slaves.⁹² He believed that spiritual approaches to treating “*Cachexia Africana*” exemplified how slave management had progressed over the past decades:

The iron wire-muzzle that used to be so common, fastened and locked around the negro's mouth and face, to prevent him from eating dust, has gone pretty much out of use since the negro has been brought more immediately into the light of civilization and Christianity.⁹³

Cartwright imagined that when Africans or blacks in the *Diaspora* engaged in the ritual of eating dirt that the practice resulted from improper rule and not from cultural heritage. The British observed the practice of “dirt-eating” and reported it first in the West Indies and also most prominently among recently imported black slaves.⁹⁴ British physician James Maxwell indicated that during the African slave trade large groups of blacks “indulged in excessive dirt-eating” because they believed firmly that

⁹¹ Historian of Science Karl Figlio argued that the English medical profession in the 19th century also invented a mental disease in order to explain working class “*orneriness*.” “Disease as a clinical object structures a cluster of social relations, and at the same time it is itself socially constructed.” See Karl Figlio, “Chlorosis and Chronic Disease in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Social Constitution of Somatic Illness in a Capitalist Society,” *International Journal of Health Services* 8 (1978): 589-617; See also Figlio, “Medical Diagnosis, Class Dynamics, Social Mobility”, in L. Levidow and B. Young, eds., *Science, Technology and the Labour Process 2*, Free Association Books, London and Humanities Press, (Atlantic Highlands, 1985):129-65; and Figlio, “How Does Illness Mediate Social Relations? Workmen's Compensation and Medical-Legal Practices, 1890-1940,” in A. Treacher and P. Wright, eds., *The Problem of Medical Knowledge: Examining the Social Construction of Medicine*, (Edinburgh University Press, 1982), 174-224

⁹² For a fascinating study of the role of physical violence in 19th century humanitarianism and its origins in 18th century Quaker theology and moral philosophy, see Margaret Abruzzo’s *Polemical Pain: Slavery, Cruelty, and the Rise of Humanitarianism*, *New Studies in American and Intellectual and Cultural History*, (Johns Hopkins, 2011)

⁹³ Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Race,” 135

⁹⁴ For contemporary trans-Atlantic observations of the practice of “dirt-eating” in the Caribbean, see John Hunter, *Observations on the Diseases of the Army in Jamaica*, (London, 1808), 248; F. W. Cragin, “Observations on Cachexia Africana,” *American Journal of Medical Science* 17 (Philadelphia 1835): 356-64; Jean B. Dazille, *Observations sur les Maladies des Negres*, (Paris, 1776); Dazille, *Observations generales sur les Maladies des Climats chauds*, (Paris, 1785); Gray and Ellis, “On certain diseases of the African Slaves,” *Medical and Chirurgical Journal and Review* 1 (London 1816): 373-77; James Thomson, *A Treatise on the Diseases of Negroes as they Occur in the Island of Jamaica; With Observations on the Country Remedies*, (Jamaica, 1820)

the practice was part of a ritual of survival: “that after death, they would return to their native homes.”⁹⁵

In affiliating “the Negro” with the physical consumption of dirt Cartwright exploited the opportunity to cross-reference the practice of “dirt eating” with the ritual of “serpent worship.” Skillfully blending African and Christian traditions into the psychological medicine of moral treatment, Cartwright furthered the notion that blacks had in fact been “improved” through whites’ benevolent act of enslaving them. He wrote that:

Happily, as foretold, the seed of the woman is bruising the head of the serpent, and Christianity is setting the poor negro free from slavery to that evil spirit, which seizes upon him whenever he gets beyond the hearing of the crack of the white man's whip.⁹⁶

For Cartwright Christianity operated as a rationale for the “poor Negroes” advancement in the ‘plantation school.’ Ancient Hebrew Bible established his argument that blacks’ occupied a perpetual servile status and he saw vindication of his beliefs in the prophecy that the “seed” of white woman would “bruise the head of the serpent.”

⁹⁵ Maxwell, “Pathological inquiry into the nature of Cachexia Africana,” 413

⁹⁶ Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Race,” 134-135; See also, Guillory, “Southern Nationalism and the Louisiana Medical Profession, 1840-1860,” 40-41

Chapter 9: Comparing American Asylums and Plantations

During the 1830s and 1840s the network of humanitarians focused on prison reform and asylum superintendence had a great ideological effect on Southerners interested in the best way to regulate plantation labor.¹ In his 1844 circular “Directions for Treatment of Negroes” Cartwright advised that slave-owners also take an empathetic approach to blacks, especially toward newly purchased slaves. Writing as a physician interested in the mind, Cartwright suggested that white owners seek to make good impressions on men and women and children purchased at auction. He explained:

coming therefore to a new and strange country, among stranger Negroes and finding that they had plenty to eat and only moderate work to perform and had an impartial protector in their overseer, who would see that they were not imposed on, they as a matter of fact will naturally become contented and happy and, when they get sick, that happy and contented vein of humor running through them will often keep them up, through hard spells of sickness that would kill dejected, desponding and dissatisfied Negroes.²

A central principle of moral treatment in psychiatry was that the physician familiarize himself with the patient and learn through inquiry and conversation their needs and wants.³ In many ways the plantation regime mirrored the transformation from cruel to more “moral” procedures in human management, echoing this humanitarian shift in American attitudes toward criminals and the poor. In every way, to be “Black” meant, *prima facie*, to be a combination of the deviant, the criminal and the poor.⁴

“Blackness” meant far more than a color in southern legal systems based in what Cartwright called the

¹ On the relationships between reformers like Samuel Gridley Howe and Dorothea Dix, see David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic*, (Little Brown, 1990), 81

² Cartwright, “Directions for Treatment of Negroes,” Copy dated June 22, 1844, and transcribed by John Knight on June 27, 1844, John Knight Papers, RASP; cited in Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul*, 198

³ At this time it is likely that such a physician would be male. Bockoven argues that “the greatest requirement of all [in moral treatment] was that the physician spare no effort in gaining the confidence and good will of his patients and strive to discover their experiences and supply their needs. See J. Sanbourne Bockoven, M.D., *Moral Treatment in American Psychiatry*, (New York, 1963), 12

⁴ The term “*prima facie*” is Latin for “at first sight.” For instance, in 1831 *Randall vs. the State*, the Mississippi Supreme Court upheld that “the laws of this state presume a Negro *prima facie* to be a slave,” and later a lower court decision held that “if the jury believed that the plaintiff was a Negro, it was *prima facie* evidence that he was a slave.” See *Talbott v. Norager*, 23, Miss, 572. The same principle is also in *Heirn v. Bridault and wife*, 37 Miss. 209, and in *Coon v. the State*, 20 Miss. 249

“Aristocracy of the white skin.”⁵ “Blackness” is at once an economic and a social assessment.⁶

Keeping with the intense international exchange of ideas and concepts on managing indigent and deviant populations, Europeans traveled to America to evaluate the nation’s recent expansion in state-run penitentiaries, newly built asylums and infamous Southern plantations.⁷ Plantation-owners, prison-builders and asylum superintendents demanded that there be a physical separation of their respective institutions from the native community. The rural land proved cheaper places upon which to build, however seclusion stimulated public intrigue.⁸ The activities of the institutions remained aloof from the community, but some public institutions, like the Utica Asylum, opened its doors and welcomed guests to visit the inmate wards — nearly 2,700 people visited in a typical year.⁹ The French sent Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont in 1831 to appraise America’s “experiments” in inmate and labor regulation.¹⁰ In addition to his commentary on American asylums and prisons, Tocqueville made several observations on the labor regime of southern plantations. His observations were regarded generally to be as insightful about American thinking as they were about his official charge to describe prison conditions.¹¹ When it came to relations between blacks and

⁵ Cited in Jo Ann Carrigan, “Yellow Fever in New Orleans, 1853: Abstractions and Realities,” *Journal of Southern History* 25 (Aug. 1959): 352

⁶ Johnson concludes: “White men in the antebellum south talked to one another as if they could see slaves’ constitutions by looking at their complexions.” “Blackness” is more than mere color. Johnson, *Soul By Soul*, 139-140

⁷ During the 1820’s a prison movement began in New York and Pennsylvania that spread throughout the northeast and Midwest. Once New York devised the “Auburn system” of prison organization it led to the creation of Auburn State Prison (1819-1823); then to Ossining Penitentiary (commonly known as “Sing Sing”); Pennsylvanians devised their own system and implemented it in Pittsburgh (1826) and in Philadelphia (1829); Connecticut built Wethersfield Penitentiary (1827) and Massachusetts reformed Charlestown Penitentiary (1829). Maryland (1829) and New Jersey (1830) also build prisons; Ohio and Michigan built penitentiaries in the 1830s and Indiana Wisconsin and Minnesota built state penitentiaries in the 1840s. see Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, 71

⁸ Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, 137-138 and 140-141

⁹ *Ibid.*, 142

¹⁰ on the essentially “experimental” nature of both the asylum & penitentiary, Rothman, *The Discovery*, 136-137

¹¹ The principal reason for Alexis de Tocqueville’s voyage to the “United States” in 1831 was to act on a commission by the King of France to explore the young nation’s penal system. Of principal interests was the work of Edward Livingston to erect a penal code for the state of Louisiana. Although Livingston’s plan was not realized by the Louisiana legislature, several other states adopted his concepts and ushered in a movement for penal reform across the nation. Livingston knew and corresponded with Jeremy Bentham as well as other continental legal theorists. See David Brion Davis, “The Movement to Abolish Capital Punishment in America, 1787-1861,” *The American Historical Review* 63:1 (October 1957): 31-32

whites Tocqueville discerned that “The Americans of the South of the Union have discovered more *intellectual* securities for the duration of their power. They have employed their despotism and their violence against the human mind.”¹²

To consider this despotism and violence a “fantasy” may misconstrue the phenomenon at work in lieu of an anachronistic sentiment that these people couldn’t really have believed what they were saying or, perhaps that more modern people know better. I understand Cartwright’s work to be in earnest; therefore my question becomes: For Cartwright, what was the legitimate relationship between fantasy, violence and science? Walter Johnson has argued that, “Using the ideological imperatives of slave-holding culture—whiteness, independence, rationality, necessity, patriarchy, honor, paternalism—they [white people] produced, in the classical formulation, freedom out of slavery.”¹³ My research question becomes how did Cartwright use his anthropological curiosity to elaborate a portable, pragmatic science to support that formulation?

I propose that the prevailing logic in the management of slaves was scientific and not rhetorical. Managing any inmate or captive population presented logistical challenges and in the nineteenth century moral managers of all stripes looked to scientific concepts like physiognomy, phrenology and ethnology to under-gird their principles of moral management. Certainly for Cartwright, the science in medicine influenced heavily his concept of the proper regulation of captive laborers. When science gets applied to populations, to what populations does it get applied and how? I suggest that science under-girded the establishment and day-to-day regulation of large-scale labor-based reform institutions— spinning mills, plantations, asylums and prisons — that proliferated during the early to middle nineteenth century. I focus specifically on how science concepts were used in the “moral management” of blacks, slave and free. Scientific travel narratives and ethnological observations were

¹² Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* 1, (Vintage Edition, 1990), 379

¹³ Johnson, *Soul By Soul*, 116

the scholastic *modus operandi* of the Plantation Handbooks on “moral management” of blacks in the United States, the West Indies and throughout the Caribbean. The entire field of “Negro Diseases” was replete with empirical statements; claims culled from the traditions of natural history and taxonomy about the manners, morals and habits of the populations to-be-controlled. Just as racial classification *is* evaluation, so too is the discussion of “Negro Management” via “Plantation handbooks” evidence of applied science.¹⁴

During the 1830s and 1840s science erupted and then solidified to become a pivotal instrument in the white ambition to colonize and subjugate non-Europeans throughout the globe in an effort to extract their agricultural and industrial labor. Cartwright argued that blacks’ mental malleability was the catalyst for their physical and moral revitalization. He claimed that the discipline of Physiology had demonstrated distinctions in the black people's respiratory systems led to defects in their muscular systems:

His muscles not being exercised, the respiration is imperfect, and the blood is imperfectly vitalized. Torpidity¹⁵ of body and hebetude of mind¹⁶ are the effects thereof, which disappear under bodily labor, because that expands the lungs, vitalizes the blood, and wakes him up to a sense of pleasure and happiness unknown to him in the vegeto-animal or hibernating state.¹⁷

Cartwright was arguing that the sluggishness or “slow-motioned” behavior of Free Blacks produced in them “torpidity” that left them void of the vigilance required for true rebellion, let alone the intellectual capacity for free will or self-mastery.¹⁸

In addition to any influence the French school of moral treatment may have had on Cartwright, his impetus to think of mental health in terms of race proceeded in concert with the founders of the

¹⁴ Ian Hacking explores this claim, Hacking, “Why Race Still Matters,” *Daedalus* 314 (Winter 2005): 102-116

¹⁵ The term “*torpid*” was used widely to refer to slaves; it meant being mentally or physically inactive, lethargic, deprived of the state of motion as in a state of hibernation.

¹⁶ The term “*hebetude*” meant dullness, mentally slow, or mental lethargy.

¹⁷ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 47

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 47

“Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane”¹⁹ and the *American Journal of Insanity*. Both the Association and its *Journal* sustained that there were fundamental, natural distinctions between blacks and whites that prevented them from receiving similar political or medical treatment. The Association of the Medical Superintendents, organized in 1844, had membership composed exclusively of heads of asylums. David Rothman argues, “Institutional affiliation, not research or private practice, defined the profession.”²⁰ Since the organization was pragmatic and uniquely American, its Association’s committees divided up logistical issues and established committees to explore moral issues, including racial concerns. Just as there was a committee on architectural construction and the population capacities of various institutions, the committees also presided over “separate structures for colored persons” and the “best role of chapels and chaplains” in asylum construction.²¹

One of the fundamental features of the asylum reform movement was specifically the argument that slavery *protected* blacks from becoming insane, a belief that served as a rationale for whites not to include “insane” blacks and Indians in private and state institutions. Rothman claims that, “Before the civil war, practically no one in the United States protested the simple connection between insanity and civilization.”²² Asylum superintendents were convinced that a “fluid social order in the new republic encouraged and rewarded unlimited and grandiose ambitions. But rather than point with pride to these attitudes or achievements, they saw only the most pernicious effects.”²³ The cycles of bust and boom that characterized the 1820’s and the 1830’s initiated a fierce debate in the 1840s about the potentially deleterious effects of a free market economy. England provided an example of the birth pangs of

¹⁹ Originally founded in 1844, this organization was later named the American Psychiatric Association, the first association of professional physicians in the U. S. The American Medical Association was founded in 1847

²⁰ Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, 134

²¹ On architectural considerations based on housing blacks vs. white patient-inmates, see Gerald N. Grob, *The Mad Among Us: A History of the Care of America’s Mentally Ill*, (Free Press, 1994), 89-90; also see *Ibid.*, 135

²² *Ibid.*, 113

²³ *Ibid.*, 115

industrialization with its urban impoverishment, debauchery, crime and prostitution.²⁴ Fears of the social effects of urban industrialization, increased market speculation and the expanded plantation economy combined to threaten traditional agrarian, republican work ethics that valued thrift and hard work in lieu of “speculation” and “luxury.” Appleby observes that, “All of these changes made public life more spontaneous and fractured, weakening the guards of discretion and restraint that once patrolled the borders between private and public realms.” But these borders were not permeable to all; therefore “Universality was claimed for the qualities displayed by successful white men, throwing other people into the shadows of national consciousness.”²⁵ Facing the chaotic threats of financial failure, asylum reformers held “Great Expectations” and maintained it was their duty to ease the existence of those thrown into the “shadows of national consciousness.”

Since mental specialists at the time thought insanity was a function of increased civilization, most physicians of the mind believed that Africans and allegedly non-civilized people were exempt from experiencing madness. Contemporaries speculated either that blacks’ physiology differed from whites’ or that slavery somehow shielded blacks from the worries of civilization. Rothman argues, “A logical deduction from this doctrine was that primitive communities ought to be free of the disease, and so although writers cited only the crude observations of travelers and adventurers for proof, the popular idea went unchallenged.”²⁶ After visiting thirteen asylums in Europe, Pliny Earle offered, “As a general rule, insanity is but little known in those countries... which are either in a savage or barbarous state of society.” Earle cited the travels of Humboldt.²⁷ Such “travel narratives” served as models and

²⁴ Cartwright compared the pauper classes of Britain with his claim that no such class existed in the US because of slavery. He viewed that if the British enslaved Africans as divinely decreed, then they could erase their poverty and embolden their indigent classes: “all those negroes who have no masters to take care of them, and all those white people who have no slaves to work for them, but make negroes of themselves by doing drudgery-work... are cut down by disease and death like grass before the scythe of the mower.” Cartwright “How to Save the Republic,” 196

²⁵ Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans*, (Harvard University Press, 2000), 3-8

²⁶ Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 112

²⁷ Pliny Earle, *A Visit to Thirteen Asylums for the Insane in Europe* (Philadelphia, 1841), 124

proofs for disciplines built on the foundations of Natural History and Natural Philosophy. Reformer Dorothea Dix traveled the entire United States advocating that state legislatures fund mental asylums and, testifying before U.S. Congress, she observed that “those tracts of North America inhabited by Indians and the sections chiefly occupied by the Negro race produce comparatively few examples” of insanity.²⁸ Harvard Educated Southerner Dr. Sanford Challaie, an official of the insane asylum at Jackson, Louisiana and specialist in medical jurisprudence reported to the legislature that slaves did not lose their minds because of “the protection that the law guarantees to them, the restraint of a mild state of servitude, [and] the freedom of all anxiety respecting their present and future wants.”²⁹ One would have expected the same effect on whites and for the same reasons: a simple, ordered life where physical labor predominated and absent any threat of civilization.

One of the most distinguished medical diagnoses in the 19th century was J. C. Prichard’s “Moral Insanity.” Using Humboldt as a pillar of expertise Prichard asserted the incapacity of “savage” races to become insane:³⁰

In savage countries, I mean among such tribes as the negroes of Africa and the native Americans, insanity is stated by all scientific travelers, and by naturalists or other persons who have had means of correct information, to be extremely rare. Fr. Winterbottom declares that among the African tribes near Sierra Leone, “a mania is a disease which seldom if ever occurs.” He adds, that *he could not make the natives of that country comprehend the meaning of the term*, though they were not unacquainted with the delirium of drunkenness.³¹

Prichard understood insanity as his contemporaries did: as an effect of civilization. Prichard and his

²⁸ Dorothea Dix, “Memorial Praying a Grant of Land for the Relief and Support of the Indigent Curable and Incurable Insane in the United States,” 30th Congress, 1st session, (1848)

²⁹ Dr. Sanford Chaille, “A Memoir of the Insane Asylum of the State of Louisiana at Jackson,” *Legislative Documents*, 1845, 9

³⁰ In Prichard’s 1835 publication, *A Treatise on Insanity and Other Disorders Affecting the Mind*, (1835), he introduces the term “moral insanity” into the medical lexicon and discusses its relation to civil and criminal law.

³¹ Commenting on blacks in the Caribbean, Prichard wrote that “Among the Negro Slaves of the West Indies, it has been observed by many that insanity is scarcely known. It scarcely exists in the native races of America. This observation was made by Von Humboldt, and it has been confirmed by travelers who in late times have made the most accurate researches into the history of the tribes in the interior of this continent, and particularly by the scientific men who were sent by the government of the United States in 1819, on the expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains.” James Cowles Prichard, M.D., *A Treatise on Insanity and Other Disorders Affecting the Mind*, (London, 1835), 349 Prichard’s footnote indicated the source as *Sir A. Halliday’s General Account*

contemporaries shaped their assumptions about the low probability of insanity among blacks through the powerful testimonies in travel narratives. Prichard argued: “If there were as great a proportion of individuals predisposed to insanity in a nation of Negroes as Americans as in England or France, it is difficult to suppose that the disease itself would either not exist or be a rare phenomenon, nor could the existence of idiots have escaped the observation of travelers, who were scientific men and physicians, if there had been as many in Guinea or in Louisiana as there are in Wales and Scotland.”³²

Cartwright’s “Moral Treatment” to Regulate Blacks

Cartwright saw moral approaches to managing blacks as the answer to the salve-management challenges of previous generations. The most radical account of Thomas Jefferson’s thinking on blacks contends that Jefferson believed blacks “were in essence a dangerous class and had to be controlled at all times,” which is exactly what Cartwright advocated in his writings on slave management.³³

Cartwright’s work extended the main racial themes in Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*: both Virginians propagated the idea that slavery had been a pillar of the West since antiquity, that to end slavery would bring chaos to civilization, that the south depended on slavery and had no alternative labor source, that “Negroes” were physically inferior and at the same time sexually immoral.

Cartwright took Jefferson’s *Notes* as foundational and extended the paradigm of race-based science into the mid-nineteenth century. Cartwright felt it was his duty to investigate the research problem he claimed to inherit: What to do with the Negro? How to make him or her behave, achieve value and become beneficial were Cartwright’s core concerns. As he framed it, Washington and Jefferson formed the very basis of his research questions into “Negro Diseases and Peculiarities.”

Cartwright blended medical and managerial concerns when it came to determining the best method of managing black behavior and I now consider his use of psychiatric treatment in his

³² Ibid.

³³ Finkelman, *Defending Slavery: Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South*, (St. Martin, 2003), 21-23

suggestions for ideal slave management. Cartwright rooted himself in *fin de siècle* conceptions of mental illness and his prescriptions for the moral management of blacks reflected components of the then popular psychological medicine called “Moral Treatment.”³⁴ The implication behind the term moral treatment was that society held some moral obligation for the improvement of people who, because of incorrect understanding or ignorance, were not otherwise morally responsible for their acts or capable of improving themselves.

French physician Philippe Pinel’s definition of moral treatment incorporated an implicit consideration of slave management.³⁵ Pinel argued that one might determine the physician’s interest in treatment by the morale he intended to restore or instill in the patient. Rules for the treatment of patients differed depending on the treatment outcomes desired.³⁶ Treatment might have the curative goal of re-inserting a citizen back into the community, but it could also have the productive goal of properly isolating and maintaining non-citizens from contaminating the very meaning of citizenship. For Pinel and the generations of medical practitioners he influenced, treatment outcomes were both curative (an end unto itself) and productive (a means to a further end).³⁷

³⁴ Although taking a spiritual or moral approach to mental illness had precursors in William Battie. According to Battie, “Management does more than Medicine.” In his *Treatise on Madness* of 1758 Battie promoted a revised approach to the treatment of mental illness wherein he considered “the individual” as the basis for medical treatment. French physician Philippe Pinel first described moral treatment in his groundbreaking *Treatise on the Medical and Philosophical cause of mental Disease and Mania* published in 1801. In this study he advised “If the madman is met... by a force evidently and convincingly superior, he submits without opposition or violence.” for an exploration of the role of coercion, see Thomas Stephen Szasz, *Coercion as Cure: A Critical History of Psychiatry*, (New Brunswick, 2007), 88; and also Thomas Stephen Szasz, *The Manufacture of Madness: A Comparative Study of the Inquisition and the Mental Health Movement*, (Syracuse University, 1997), 146

³⁵ This claim is in contrast to what Steven Stowe suggests—that, “physicians examined blacks and whites in the same way, applying most of what they learned about the body and illness across racial lines.” See Steven Stowe, “Seeing Themselves at Work: Physicians and the Case Narrative in the Mid-Nineteenth American South,” *American Historical Review* 101:1 (Feb, 1996): 57; also Steven Stowe, *Doctoring the South: Southern Physicians and Everyday Medicine in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, (Chapel Hill, 2004)

³⁶ Norman Dain, *Concepts of Insanity in the United States, 1789-1865*, (Rutgers University Press, 1964), 25

³⁷ On the malevolent and “notorious” application of Western medicine, for example with the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment (where the government injected black men with syphilis under the pretense of cure in order to track the progress of the disease over decades, see the “Introduction” to W.F. Bynum, Anne Hardy, Stephen Jacyna, Christopher Lawrence, E.M. Tansey, *Western Medical Tradition, 1800-2000*, (Cambridge, 2006), 310, 329; see especially James Howard Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment*, (Free Press, 1981)

Cartwright sought out a way to delimit blacks' political participation with biomedical knowledge. Fusing moral and slave management, Cartwright asserted that:

The extension of the cotton and sugar culture, so far from being misfortunes to the slaves, has tended, more than anything else, to ameliorate their condition; because the product of their labor is thereby sufficiently valuable to enable their masters to supply them with all the necessary comforts of life being prompted thereto, if not by humanity, by the motives of interest.³⁸

Cartwright argued that "humanity," based in Divine beneficence of a "higher law," was his guiding principle.³⁹ In the converse, Cartwright offered that if not through social constructs like 'honor' or cultural ones like "humanity" that slave-holders *should* have been invested in how to manage workers out of sheer self-interest. From these "motives of interest," just as an asylum patient was to be re-inserted into society as a functioning member and returned his or her rights and privileges as citizens, so too should a slave take up his or her position in society as a well-cared for, productive laborer.

Cartwright thought it necessary to provide a theoretical framework for what had been only a series of ill-described behaviors called "*rascality*," but behaviors that were getting in the way of profits. Plantation owners were "profit-centered business-men." Whereas Southerners valued cultural traditions like gentlemanly honor, their plantations operated like factories and "resembled in complexity and uncertainty the most advanced operations of a northern capitalist."⁴⁰ What drove Southerners' thinking was a hybrid mixture in the planters mind between self-interested profit and paternalistic values that put them at odds with Northerners.⁴¹ Not only did Southern agriculturalists differ from Northern industrialists, but also *within* the South the "Sugar Masters" differed from the "Cotton Kings" because cultivating cane sugar required increased regimentation. In order to encourage a male-dominated slave force to work harder under increasingly dangerous conditions some plantation

³⁸ Cartwright, "How to Save the Republic," 189

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ William Dusinger, *Slave Master President: The Double Career of James Polk*, (New York, 2003); Richard Follett deftly discusses the "intellectual gulf" between the historians views on whether or not slave-owners were "shrew entrepreneurs" or "paternalistic lords" defending a hierarchical society, deflecting it from capitalism and "destabilizing liberal egalitarianism." See Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 6, note #4

⁴¹ Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 7

owners offered blacks rewards and incentives in the form of “overtime” work schemes.⁴² After a profitable harvest, one Louisiana planter wrote jubilantly, “Now—how much silver will you require— Let me know! The crop has been a large one—the boys have no doubt worked well—and a little money given to them would do good.”⁴³ Granting permissions was also a way of maintaining dependency and legitimacy; as Taylor put it: “If the granting of privileges aided in developing good discipline, the threat of withdrawing them was effective in maintaining it. The black who depended on his master or overseer for permission to visit his wife on another plantation thought twice before committing an Offence which might cost him his precious pass.”⁴⁴

Cartwright believed black slaves and white masters to be a part of a mutually beneficial relationship rooted in an ethic of reciprocity — albeit a reciprocity without reversibility. Cartwright concluded that “The most efficient, and, of course, the most profitable laborers, are those who are the most active, healthy, happy and contented. To be active, healthy, happy and contented, there is a higher law, which says, their griefs shall be inquired into, their troubles removed, and they shall be well fed, lodged and clothed.”⁴⁵ Here Cartwright intended “higher law” to be a compendium of Biblical and Natural Law. He also meant it as a rhetorical attack against abolitionist William Seward’s arguments during the debates over the Fugitive Slave Act, wherein he challenged that there was a “higher law” which governed even the *U. S. Constitution*.⁴⁶

Following the American and French Revolutions American reformers were inspired by the image of Pinel freeing the insane from their chains at Salpêtrière Hospital.⁴⁷ This image of compassion

⁴² Taylor argues that “incentives” encouraged good work as well as good discipline: occasional slave holidays, passes to move about town, and gifts of money or autonomy to raise and sell small crops of food were the most unusual incentives, Joe Gray Taylor, *Negro Slavery in Louisiana*, (Louisiana Historical Association, 1963), 200; also see Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 5

⁴³ Unsigned letter to Benjamin Tureaud, December 30, 1852, Trueaud Papers.

⁴⁴ Taylor, *Negro Slavery in Louisiana*, 201

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 189

⁴⁶ For quotation, see Cartwright, “How to Save the Republic,” 184

⁴⁷ Pinel is famous for removing the chains from inmates at France’s Salpêtrière (for women) and *Bicetre* (for men).

and empathy would have had an obvious appeal to men in the new republics dedicated to the erasure of slavery.⁴⁸ Both the Founding and the first generation of Americans had just emerged from tyranny and intended to bring freedom to others. Motivated by the *philosophes* of the American and French Revolutions Pinel developed the psychological medicine called moral treatment in order to expand the concept of universal freedom to “lunatics” suffering under poor medical care. These approaches were called alternately “psychological medicine,” “moral treatment,” or “moral therapy” specifically because it indicated the more lenient treatment of patients and focused less on violence or restraint and more on changing one’s environment, re-associating them with new ideas and re-inserting them into the community.⁴⁹

The history of the asylum and mental illness evidenced a fertile trans-Atlantic circulation of diagnostic and therapeutic concepts. In the development and implementation of Moral Therapy alone, with the exception of Benjamin Rush the central figures were mostly European. Rush incorporated Pinel’s moral treatment approach into his theories on vascular pathology and under Rush’s influence Americans experienced a parallel reform movement in the treatment of the insane.⁵⁰ Whereas Rush paved the way for acceptance of moral treatment in America his student, Cartwright, advocated using its principles to isolate a method for whites to dominate blacks psychologically. Information on the insane and how to treat them proved to be both a trans-national and an inter-generational effort. David Rothman claims, “American superintendents frequently crossed the ocean to examine Continental institutions, but their visits were usually unproductive. Pliny Earle, who first headed the Friends’

⁴⁸ On the potential effects that the image of Pinel freeing the insane from their chains at *Salpêtrière* might have had on American reformers, see Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, 110

⁴⁹ Norman Dain, *Concepts of Insanity in the United States, 1789-1865*, (Rutgers University Press, 1964), 25

⁵⁰ Although “Moral Treatment” can trace its genealogy back to Western Europe and to a lesser degree the United States, it has no specific national origin and developed “simultaneously and independently” during the last two decades of the eighteenth century. Its principal figures were Philippe Pinel (French), William Tuke (English Quaker), Vincenzo Chiarugi (Italy), Reil (German) and Benjamin Rush (American). J. Sanbourne Bockoven, M.D., *Moral Treatment in American Psychiatry*, (New York), 1963, 13

Asylum in Philadelphia and then Bloomingdale in New York, toured the European Continent in 1838-1839 and then again in 1845. His reports illuminated the unique problems and special opportunities confronting Americans, who were “at once more free to innovate and yet felt more keenly the lack of precedents.”⁵¹ In the European contexts—which had not undergone rapid construction projects in the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s—old buildings were made to service new needs. They proved inadequate. After his visit to European asylums Earle discovered that since each structure had a long history of different uses, the new asylums there were “frequently nothing more than a new name carved in an ancient doorway.”⁵²

Contemporaries used the term “*morale*” as a way to describe more lenient medical techniques however the debate over kind vs. cruel treatment took on unique features in the European and American contexts. In France Pinel did not exclude more violent, “heroic” treatments from his moral therapy whereas in England John Conolly rejected the use of all restraint or violent, painful procedures at the Hanwell Lunatic Asylum. Conolly advocated isolation and sedation over restraint at Hanwell from 1839 until 1843 and his recommendations went on to characterize the British system. However American physicians still held out the option to use more violent measures to ensure proper patient behavior. Nancy Tomes argues that, “If patients persisted in self-injury, violence toward others, or in what doctors referred to as ‘filthy habits,’ such as masturbation or feces-smearing, patients were likely to be physically restrained with straitjackets or other devices.”⁵³ The Father of American Psychiatry (his face is on the current seal of the American Psychiatric Association) advocated a complex pain-inclusive treatment regimen: For Rush the psychology of both the inmate and the observing public were central elements to punishment as they were a mutually constituted fabric—institutional treatment

⁵¹ on the “experimental” nature of asylums and penitentiaries, see Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 136-137

⁵² *Ibid.*, 135

⁵³ Lynn Gramwell and Nancy Tome, *Madness in America; Cultural and Medical Perceptions of mental Illness Before 1914*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 46

was meant to be a temporary asylum. Rush understood criminality to be an essentially medical problem, and for that he advocated a form of moral therapy. The punishments that Rush advocated for criminals included those “of BODILY PAIN, LABOUR, WATCHFULLNESS, SOLITUDE, and SILENCE.” Rush also demanded inmates inculcate habits “CLEANLINESS” and “A SIMPLE DIET.”⁵⁴ Rush suggested recuperating and re-inserting criminals back into society as active, reformed citizens, capable of reason and self-government.⁵⁵ This was the difference between the citizen and the slave. Moral Treatment advocated that patients cultivate self-control, good habits, a quiet environment, a strong relationship with the doctor, and engage in activities to increase self-esteem and promote re-education. But these treatments were rooted in a belief that temporarily disturbed humans attempted to achieve self-mastery and later exercise self-government as active citizens. Conversely Cartwright was claiming that blacks’ physiological distinctions prevented them from self-government and that they deserved a different medical approach entirely. A person’s reinsertion into society as an active member was determined by the role he or she was to assume in that society, slave or free.

Four Similarities between Plantation and Asylum ‘Care’

There were obvious similarities between the asylum and the penitentiary and below I offer a series of parallels between the asylum and the plantation. David Rothman explains that “Medical superintendents, carrying out the logic of a theory of deviancy, administered an ordered routine and hoped to eliminate in a tightly organized and rigid environment the instabilities and tensions causing

⁵⁴ Ibid. 12-13; Benjamin Rush, *An Inquiry into the Influence of Physical Causes upon the Moral Faculty*, (Philadelphia, 1786); cited in Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, (North Carolina, 1996), 134; See also; Meranze notes that a similar medicalization of punishment was occurring to English reformers as well; See Randall McGowen, “The Body and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England,” *Jour. of Modern Hist.* 65(1987): 675-676

⁵⁵ Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue*, 121-122

insanity.”⁵⁶ Similarly, in the discipline of African American Studies Kenneth Stamp argues that “Physical discipline, [was] an attempt to create shame, fear, and awe” and summarily to redirect the “interest” of the African away from his or her own subjective orientation, toward the interest of the master.⁵⁷ The white slave-owner took the interest and expense to “break” the slave; they made sure that the indigenous African understood that in *this* country he or she held no personal, civic or political freedom and existed to serve whites. Once one could banish a belief in any connection with Africa, one could transform blacks, alternately into “a Negro,” or “Nigger” and, as such, a slave. To this end whites attempted to create the psychological effect of making slaves’ interest coincide with the master’s interest. American physicians and masters alike reserved the right to use restraints and violent force, if necessary, because they felt that only potential punishment rendered ideal behavior. Although the *interest* of the physician determined the outcome of the moral management being prescribed, there were four fundamental similarities between the themes of plantation and asylum management: 1) The mandate that the recalcitrant or disruptive persons must be separated from their original locations and families and then settled into a neutral, highly-controlled environment. 2) The belief that ordered, agrarian or manual labor was therapeutic. 3) The belief that absolute authority and dominion of the master or physician was necessary to revitalize the slave or patient combined with the principle of re-educating the patient or slave by means of coercion. 4) The belief that new environmental influences produced new associations, generated new ideas and shifted the patient’s or slave’s self-perception.

First, the prime-mover of asylum-based treatment was the physician’s right to take a refractory patient from his or her home environment and Cartwright upheld Pinel’s institutional concern by maintaining that Africans’ proper mental conditioning could only take place under proper governance

⁵⁶ on the “obvious similarity” between the prison and the asylum in that both focused on the “utopian” curability and perfectibility of the inmate, see Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, 133; for quotation, 151

⁵⁷ Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 146

in well-regulated institutions as slaves.⁵⁸ Rothman argues, “The first postulate of the asylum program was the prompt removal of the insane from the community. As soon as the first symptom of the disease appeared, the patient had to enter a mental hospital.”⁵⁹

For over a twenty-year period Cartwright touted his “removal” system where he encouraged planters to remove refractory slaves, slave leaders and those affected mentally by such “conjurers” to a distant locale for treatment. The “removal” Cartwright enacted in the “*tam-tam*” cure cited above reflected the most fundamental part of the moral treatment program: that physicians had the need — and the right — to remove troublesome individuals and place them in a distanced, highly regimented environment. Institutionally the mandate for moral management in the early nineteenth century took at least five forms: the factory labor system, the education system,⁶⁰ the penitentiary, the asylum⁶¹ and I argue the plantation. In print both the genre of the “plantation handbook” and discussions of “negro management” took place in medical, penal and industrial journals alike.⁶²

⁵⁸ Pinel advanced French medical history by advocating the extreme importance of hospitals as pivotal centers of medical treatment and research. Pinel’s approach was inspired by laws put forth in the 1790s demanding public mandates on the availability of medical relief. France boasted the most number of hospitals in Europe; this meant that, whereas in the whole of England there were 3,000 hospital beds in 1801, France had over 6,236 patients in twenty eight hospitals in Paris as well as an additional 14,105 patients housed in public hospice-like accommodations. France’s greater number of patients and legal provision for cadavers meant that by 1830 Paris became the center of advanced laboratory and clinically-driven pathological approaches to biomedical research. Cartwright visited Paris in 1836 both to receive an award from the French government on his treatise on Yellow Fever as well as to undergo advanced treatments for his own deafness. See W.F. Bynum, *Science and Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 2006), 26

⁵⁹ Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, 137

⁶⁰ The extent to which men of different humanitarian backgrounds embraced the method of moral treatment ensured that its precepts affected a wide array of managed populations in the 19th century in both Europe and the United States. Drs. Eli Todd and Samuel Woodard had persuaded the state of Connecticut to fund the Hartford Retreat in 1824, and after conducting more surveys of mental illness in Connecticut persuaded Horace Mann, the “founder of the American Public School” to help found the Worcester State Mental Hospital in 1833. The significance is that Worcester was the first state-funded mental institution. Horace Mann joined enthusiastically with a wide variety of humanist groups from educators to clergymen and physicians alike who showed active interest in the alleged success of moral treatment. Bockoven, *Moral Treatment in American Psychiatry*, 14

⁶¹ In the first decades of the 19th century morally-based psychological medicine led to exaggerated cure rates that drove the movement for state-funded mental asylums wherein patients would receive moral treatment. See “Ted Porter, “Funny Numbers,” lecture, 2012 History of Science Soc. & Phil. of Science Assn. Conference, San Diego.

⁶² For a fascinating insight into medical practice and slave management on an American plantation, see Rhys Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation*, (Oxford, 2005); For document sources on the international debate over proper slave management, see James Oakes's *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slave-*

The right of seizure has obvious similarities to the centuries-long effort by Europeans to remove Africans from their native land and place them into the highly regulated plantation environment. It also had particular importance to Cartwright: he argued that not only was it therapeutic to remove blacks from their “indolence” and “torpidity” in Africa, but further that it was better to remove slave’s new-born babies from their black birth-mothers. Cartwright claimed that it was actually the intervention of *white* women that was responsible for the health of black slave children who would otherwise die at their own mothers’ hands.⁶³ What is similar about the asylum and plantation genres of inquiry was the extent to which they concerned themselves with human logistics: with the business of managing disruptive persons by separating individuals from his or her family and removing them to a neutral, highly-controlled environment. Moral treatment for the insane that were considered incapable of social advancement meant treating them medically in an asylum, with the intent to re-insert them back into their proper roles in society at a later date.⁶⁴

The asylum movement in the early to mid-nineteenth century revealed a humanitarian thrust in both Europe and the United States toward building hospitals for its degraded and indigent classes. In 1847 Amariah Brigham, superintendent of the Utica Asylum defined moral treatment as:

The removal of the insane from home and former associations, with respectful and kind treatment under all circumstances, and in most cases manual labor, attendance on religious worship on Sundays, the establishment of regular habits of self-control, diversion of mind from morbid trains of thought, are now generally considered in the moral treatment of the insane.⁶⁵

Since the time of the Enlightenment in Britain and Europe humanitarian reformers have linked concerns about architectural space and human management to psychiatry. William Battie,⁶⁶ the head

holders, (Knopf, 1982)

⁶³ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 54

⁶⁴ Carla Yanni, “The Linear Plan for Insane Asylums in the United States before 1866,” *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 62:1 (March, 2003): 31

⁶⁵ Amariah Brigham, “Moral Treatment,” *American Journal of Insanity* 4 (1847): 1-15

⁶⁶ William Battie’s (1704-1776) work in England exhibited the distinctions he observed between internal and external causes of insanity. His *Treatise on Madness* (1758) is among the first to articulate the conditions of what became known as “Moral Treatment,” a treatment that involved situating the insane person in isolation, away from the familiarity of family

physician at St. Luke’s Hospital in London, felt “Repeated experience has convinced me that confinement alone is often times sufficient, but always so necessary, that without it every method hitherto devised for the cure of Madness would be ineffectual.”⁶⁷ In order to justify the right of seizure and subsequent forced participation in a foreign institution medical and legal practitioners alike had to posit that a class of people existed who lacked social intelligence, were incapable of perceiving the rights of others and otherwise failed to learn to adapt as members of society.⁶⁸ In order to make such determinations one had to operate from some conception of what constituted minimal or “default legal-personhood.”⁶⁹

Cartwright’s larger concern for who was or was not a “competent candidate” for freedom was powered by these psychological and physiological concepts that eventually intersected in the new field of “medical jurisprudence” that emerged in the mid-19th century. The twin iterations of these “distinctions”—correct bodily constitution and mental competency—in American legal history are the concepts of “*legal personhood*” and “*non compos mentis*,” both of which indicate lines of demarcation between those who are subject to the privileges of the law (enjoyed by “citizens”) and those who operate *outside* the protections of the law.⁷⁰ In the American context, for instance, a slave is not considered a legal person, and as “real estate,” slaves were subject to protections by law (as in property protections), but not liberated to enjoy the privileges of law granted by “citizenship” (as in marriage or property ownership). Similarly, an “insane” person, “lunatic” or “idiot”⁷¹ operates outside of the law

members. When isolated, the individual was to be subjected to highly disciplined, often-times forceful, routines which attempted to manage his or her behavior.

⁶⁷ On the importance of the physical space of the asylum, its location and their role in asylum-building, see Gerald N. Grob, *The Mad Among Us: A History of the Care of America’s Mentally Ill*, (Free Press, 1994), 71-72; also see Yanni, “The Linear Plan for Insane Asylums,” 27-31

⁶⁸ Bockoven, *Moral Treatment in American Psychiatry*, 6

⁶⁹ Susanna L Blumenthal. “The Default Legal Person,” *UCA Law Review* 54 (2007): 1135; on the role of the “individual” in early 19th century legal thinking, Craig Haney, “Criminal Justice & the 19th Century Paradigm: The Triumph of Psychological Individualism in the ‘Formative Era,’ *Law & Human Behavior* 6:314 (1982)

⁷⁰ The term “*non compos mentis*” is Latin for “not of sound mind.”

⁷¹ 19th century terms for what we now call “mental disorder” or “Mental illness”

because he or she is not deemed competent to behave responsibly. Positive Law introduced both of these categories in an American context. This leads one to question the process of “concept-formation” which underlies 18th and 19th century “naturalist” assumptions that are the basis for what has come to be called *rational humanism*. Medical managers and slave-owners alike maintained the legal right to isolate any individual who fell below the minimal standard for personhood. To achieve that isolation in the emerging mental health specialization, physicians advocated that special “asylums” be built.

John Reynolds a former prisoner of Windsor Prison in Massachusetts wrote, “The science of architecture has been exhausted in experiments to construct a reformatory prison, as if the form of a cell could regenerate a vicious heart into virtue.”⁷² Reformers understood the particularly logistical challenge in inculcating habits of order and regularity in their inmate populations. Regulating every facet of inmates’ existence presented a physical and spatial challenge that could only be answered by building special institutions under the auspices of moral treatment. The superintending bodies’ collective aim was to turn the attention physically inward to the demarcations of time and space within the institution. Just as in the penitentiary and the asylum, the living and sleeping arrangements, the separation of gender, the manner of eating, the location of physicians or other superintending persons *vis-à-vis* inmates, were concerns of the plantation and asylum as well. It made sense that anyone investing a great deal of money into an institution, private or public, with the expressed intent to manage, regulate and reform captive populations shared an expressed concern for “moral architecture.”⁷³

Furthermore, humanitarian curative techniques emphasized that one’s familiar environment was

⁷² John Reynolds, *Recollections of Windsor Prison*, (Boston, 1834), 209

⁷³ The Boston Prison Discipline Society considered architecture the most important of the “moral sciences.” The society claimed that “There are principles in architecture, by the observance of which great moral changes can be more easily produced among the most abandoned of our race... There is such a thing as architecture adapted to morals; that other things being quite easy, the prospect of improvement, in morals, depends in some degree, upon the construction of buildings.” Boston Prison Discipline Society, *Fourth Annual Report*, (Boston, 1829), 54-55

not a suitable place for treating disease. In the 1830s officials presiding over penitentiary and asylum reform stressed the great importance of removing troubled individuals from their home or away from the native environment that produced the trouble. Samuel Gridley Howe wrote, “In the name of justice do not surround me with bad associates and with evil influences, do not subject me to unnecessary temptation, do not expose me to further degradation... Remove me from my old companions, and surround me with virtuous associates.”⁷⁴ Asylum superintendents believed it was important to “remove” patients into a “corruption-free environment.”⁷⁵

Second, the asylum attendant’s regime of exercise, work and amusement would be familiar to the routine of a plantation overseer. Ordered labor was a critical form of the subtle exercise of power in both moral treatment and with plantation slavery. One of the best disciplinary measures was a set routine: “The more habitual a round of activity became, the less supervision was necessary.”⁷⁶ The plantation system and the insane asylum shared the strikingly common amusement practice of allowing captive inmates the opportunity to engage in musical celebration, oftentimes involving folk dances, traditional instruments and sometimes-special costumes. As part of the moral approach to managing these captive populations, both plantation-owners (along with urban slaves) and asylum superintendents gave their inmates limited agency by allowing or encouraging amusement rituals. In an editorial entitled “The Gates of Hell,” the editor of the *Franklin Planters Banner* wrote that, “It is no uncommon sight to see staggering drunken negroes in our streets at 9 or 10 o’clock at night, and hear them cursing like madmen.”⁷⁷ The writer described the dance-ritual he witnessed:

In the afternoon a walk in the rear of the town will...astonish...[the] bewildered imagination with the sight of twenty different dancing groups of the wretched Africans... They have their own national music, consisting for the most part of a long kind of narrow drum of various sizes, three or four of which make a band. The principal dancers or leaders are dressed in a variety of wild and savage fashions, *always*

⁷⁴ Samuel G. Howe, *An Essay on Separate and Congregate Systems of Prison Discipline*, (Boston, 1846), 40-41

⁷⁵ on removal to the penitentiary, 71; on removal to the asylum, 133-137 in Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*

⁷⁶ Joe Taylor, *Negro Slavery in Louisiana*, (Louisiana Historical Association, 1963), 197

⁷⁷ “A Southern Farm, Louisiana,” 291; Taylor, *Negro Slavery in Louisiana*, 127-28

ornamented with a number of the tails of the smaller wild beasts, and those who appeared most horrible always attracted the widest circle of company. The amusements continued until sunset, when one or two of the city patrol show themselves with their cutlasses and the crowds immediately disperse.⁷⁸

The crowd of blacks might have been composed of free blacks, urban slaves or plantation slaves who were given greater liberty because their owners wanted to make profit by selling their skills.

By way of mixing merriment and medicine, one physician bragged that:

The most successful prophylactic course [against the cholera epidemic] I have heard of was practiced by a good Methodist acquaintance of mine who is a pretty large sugar planter. As soon as cholera appeared on his place he made all hands quit work, and permitted them to go into a regular frolic. Whiskey and fiddle were called in requisition, and for two or three days the plantation presented a sense of unrestrained merriment and mirth; he did not permit them to drink to intoxication, but sufficient to produce a pleasant exhilaration. He informed that hardly a new case occurred after the commencement of the frolic.⁷⁹

In Baton Rouge, for instance, the *Gazette* complained of “crowds of Negroes ...congregated” during their off hours around “a ten-pan alley near the steamboat landing.”⁸⁰ In Clinton Louisiana the local citizens expressed disdain at black celebrations, leading to the establishment of curfews and patrols. Clinton citizens adopted a resolution asking that planters keep their slaves out-of-town during Christmas week, adding “that if they do allow their slaves to come to town, a pass from sunrise to sundown shall be the extreme limit for such a pass.”⁸¹ Any person in Shreveport who gave “a ball or other entertainment” which caused “a night time assemblage of slaves” was “to be considered guilty of disorderly conduct.”⁸² In 1834 the Jefferson Parish Police Jury forbade “Every person...to give dancing or drinking, or any other amusement to slaves,” and ordered the patrols to “visit the places where they may suspect any such thing to exist.”⁸³ After 1844 any master in Avoyelles Parish who permitted gatherings of slaves other than his own in his quarter was liable to a fine of twenty-five

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ “Mortality and Hygiene in New Orleans,” *De Bow's Review* 11 (1851): 476

⁸⁰ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, June 7, 1845

⁸¹ Clinton, *American Patriot*, December 29, 1855

⁸² Wood, *Charter of Shreveport*, 26

⁸³ *Transcriptions of Parish Records of Louisiana (prepared by the Historical Records Survey Division of Professional and Service Projects Works Progress Administration, No. 26 [Jefferson Parish (Gretna) Series 1, Police Jury Minutes]):* 1:31

dollars.⁸⁴ In 1860 the Lafayette Parish Police Jury ruled, “that it shall be unlawful for anyone to permit or suffer a Negro ball or other assemblage of slaves to be held on his premises.”⁸⁵

Although asylums would encourage temperance instead of drunkenness, both asylums and plantations alike allowed wide public exposure to its “mad balls”⁸⁶ and its “nigger balls,” with asylums often charging admission fees in order to gain money for oftentimes-insolvent institutions. These scenes — reported widely as spectacles of astonishment and amusement — worked to raise the esteem of patients and inmates by offering them a reprieve from otherwise demanding schedules and regimented duties. Amusement made patients into agents through a communal ritual of mutual celebration and confirmation of their status as individuals. When Charles Dickens visited the Boston State Hospital for the Insane in 1842 he wrote about how the patients enjoyed a ceremonial weekly event, “sometimes called a Ball,” where they enjoyed great esteem: “Once a week, they have a ball, in which the Doctor and his family, with all the nurses and attendants, take an active part.”⁸⁷ Dickens elaborated a variety of activities intended for inmate amusement, like carriage rides, fishing, gardening and games. He reasoned, “The irritability, which would otherwise be expended on their own flesh, clothes, and furniture is dissipated in these pursuits. They are cheerful, tranquil and healthy.”⁸⁸

More foundational than amusement was work. Determining the value of labor — what it meant to thrive in the land — involved a complex set of religious and political assumptions, imported from Quaker (by men like William and Samuel Tuke) and British Common Law regarding the value and meaning of working the land.⁸⁹ Dr. Amariah Brigham advocated that “manual labor” was as important

⁸⁴ Police Jury Minutes, Avoyelles Parish, II, 17

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ On the practice of staging open “Lunatic Balls” inside nineteenth century insane asylums, see Lynn Gramwell and Nancy Tomes, *Madness In America: Cultural and Medical Perceptions of Mental Illness Before 1914*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995), 37; see also Norman Dain, *Concepts of Insanity in the United States*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1964), 39, and 42-45

⁸⁷ Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Distribution*, Chapter 4, Vol. 1, (London, 1842), 110

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ On moral therapy’s call for hard, constant labor in the penitentiary, see Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 103

to inmate recovery as was religious practice and Dr. Pliny Earle described “manual labor” as central to the moral treatment technique.⁹⁰ Brigham argued that “manual labor, we believe, proved more beneficial...by engaging the attention and directing the mind to new subjects of thought, than by its direct effect upon the body” and warns that if inmates are pushed beyond limit forced manual labor “appears to be injurious” because “it accelerates the circulation, and sometimes reproduces excitement of the mind in those who have become quiet and convalescent.” Dr. Brigham’s warning is based upon the same physiological assumptions that Cartwright was making about labor’s effect on the respiratory system and how hard labor quickened the respiratory systems and produced an “excitement of the mind” in otherwise drowsy and “torpid” blacks.

Cartwright declared that with the black man’s “muscles not being exercised,” that his “respiration is imperfect, and the blood is imperfectly vitalized.” Since “torpidity of body” and “hebetude of mind” dullness and mental lethargy were the effects of this poor respiration, Cartwright followed the advocates of moral treatment when he wrote that blacks’ physical sluggishness would “disappear under bodily labor, because that expands the lungs, vitalizes the blood, and wakes him up to a sense of pleasure and happiness unknown to him in hibernating state.”⁹¹ Similarly, Brigham was arguing that, among “those who have become quiet and convalescent,” that forced labor might prove rejuvenating.⁹² In a striking parallel to these tenets, the British “Professional Planter wrote:

Your new subjects will not have been long in the field, before they will exhibit a very different appearance from that which they had before they went there. If they have made any extraordinary efforts, as many of them will from the beginning, they will have grown much thinner. This is the natural consequence of exertion to which they have not been accustomed, and the consequent waste by perspiration, and need not alarm you, if they are otherwise well, and in good spirits; but if they are languid, and dispirited, you must indulge them either with a total remission of labour, or with such an abatement of it as circumstances may require, and no longer; for it is, in general, *better to keep them in action*, though it be in any trifling unproductive employment, than to suffer them to be quite idle; for by

⁹⁰ Amariah Brigham, “Moral Treatment,” *American Journal of Insanity* 4 (1847): 1-15; Pliny Earle, *History, Description and Statistics of the Bloomingdale Asylum of the Insane*, (New York, 1849); both cited in Bockoven, *Moral Treatment in American Psychiatry*, 70

⁹¹ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” *De Bow’s Review* 25:1 (1858): 47

⁹² Amariah Brigham, “Moral Treatment,” *American Journal of Insanity* 4 (1847): 1-15

remaining long in the sick house, sleeping and lounging when they are not sick, they become indolent and torpid, the indulgence of which weakens the body, and disposes to *diseases proceeding from relaxation*.⁹³

Writing in 1803, the English planter, “Dr. Collins”’ notation of “diseases proceeding from relaxation” predated Cartwright’s diagnosis of such a “disease” by four decades. Much like the labor-based traditions of Puritans and Quakers, the “Professional Planter” proscribed how forced agricultural labor combined with regular intervals of amusement should increase a slave’s esteem:

One afternoon of every week, exclusive of Sundays, must be allowed for the cultivation of their own grounds. I should prefer Wednesday or Thursday to any other for that purpose; because, being in the middle of the week, it enables your negroes, when returning from their labour, to bring home as many provisions as will serve them until Sunday, and on Sunday they may stock themselves until the middle of the week, which, where the grounds are remote from the negro houses, is no small advantage.⁹⁴

The British Planter advocated moral religious instruction of slaves in the West Indies: “if the influence of religion be great on those who are in a state of civilization, it is still more so on those who remain in *mental darkness*; for moral principles may exist in minds not firmly persuaded of religious truths provided they have been expanded by instruction; but in those who are totally uninformed, we are to look only for such actions as result from the immediate impulse of the passions.”⁹⁵ Ironically the planter recommended an immersion in religion to effect cure in blacks, whereas many nineteenth century alienists attributed insanity to people whose religious feelings were too strong and charged that it resulted in religious ‘enthusiasm.’

What the Planter called “mental darkness” in 1803 Cartwright elaborated on in 1842 and throughout the rest of his life. Secretary of State John C. Calhoun used a similar metaphor to describe

⁹³ Ibid., 78

⁹⁴ The Planter also advised on West Indian “runaway” slaves, speaking in much the same way that Cartwright would forty years later: “Some negroes... will not only abscond, without any assignable cause, or provocation, but will continue to absent as long as they can, until they are retaken, and brought home. These offenders must be punished, but rather exemplarily than with a view to their reformation, as they do not often reform, when they are once established in the habit, unless they are children or young people, and they are frequently reclaimed by proper treatment, from this vice (as we may so call it) as they advance into years.” See “An Anonymous Planter,” *Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negroes*, (London, 1803), 93

⁹⁵ Ibid.

black psychology when he used the results from the 1840 U.S. Census reports to accuse “Negroes” of suffering from “mental death.” Calhoun made his scientifically-based argument to the United States Congress in 1844: “Here is proof of the necessity of slavery,” Calhoun argued, citing the U.S. Census of 1840 which indicated statistically that “Free Negroes” were disproportionately insane. “The African is incapable of self-care and sinks into lunacy under the burden of freedom. It is a mercy to him to give him this guardianship and protection from mental death.”⁹⁶ These physicians and legislators operated from an obscured concept of blacks as perpetual patients with inferior physiologies and exaggerated passions—a reasoning that led them to see slavery as a compassionate improvement from Africans’ natural habits.

However the belief that labor was necessary to create cure was widespread among asylum superintendents. Dr. Woodard at Worcester asylum had inmates clearing the dining rooms, washing dishes, doing laundry and tilling the adjacent farm. Dr. Woodard also defended collecting a profit off of the insane, arguing it was a testimony to their “system of discipline that the labor of this class of individuals can be made available for any valuable purpose.”⁹⁷ The Quakers believed in the centrality of physical exertion and agricultural labor to good health.⁹⁸ Inspired by the Tukes’ success at “York Retreat” and “Friends’ Asylum,” American superintendents prized manual labor more than any other

⁹⁶ Although the concept “*mental death*” has origins in the 19th century it is still used as a clinical term today and its symptoms are startlingly antebellum. “Mental Death” indicates “Exposure to extreme interpersonal stress, exemplified by the experience of torture,” which “represents a threat to the psychological integrity of the victim... the loss of the victim’s pre-trauma identity. Mental death is characterized by loss of core beliefs and values, distrust, and alienation from others, shame and guilt, and a sense of being permanently damaged. Mental death is a primary feature of a distinct post-trauma syndrome, complex post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is refractory to standard exposure therapies.” From Ebert A, Dyck MJ., School of Psychology, Curtin University of Technology; for Calhoun quotation, see Opal G. Regan, “Statistical Reforms Accelerated By Sixth Census Errors,” *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 68:343 (September 1973): 541

⁹⁷ For coverage of Thomas Kirkbride, see Nancy Tomes’ inspiring, *A Generous Confidence: Thomas Kirkbride and the Art of Asylum-Keeping*, (Cambridge University Press, 1984); see Worcester Lunatic Hospital, *Seventh Annual Report*, 86-87; quotation is on 94; cited in Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 146

⁹⁸ When Samuel Tuke published his review of the conditions at the York Retreat in 1813, the popularity of the work in both England and America led to opening of the Friends Asylum in 1817. Friends Asylum set off a heated debate, inspiring critical exchanges between British and American physicians over the proper use of physical restraint and coerced labor in moral treatment practices.

recuperative activity at the asylum.⁹⁹ They went to exceptional lengths to keep patients busy with manual tasks, no matter how menial. Superintendent Thomas Kirkbride at the Pennsylvania Hospital clarified that the goal of inmate labor was to inculcate habits of industry, so whether it was private patients husking corn, planting a garden, sewing mattresses, and cleaning the furnaces; or at public asylums where patient-inmates were more heavily disciplined and worked harder.¹⁰⁰

Cartwright argued that once the African was removed from his indolence in Africa, that the “exaggerated” white will of the American more properly excited his blood circulation by coercing him to engage his muscles in productive field or manual labor. He alleged that “the white man has an exaggerated will, more than he has use for; because it frequently drives his own muscles beyond their physical capacity of endurance.”¹⁰¹ Whereas Rush taught that muscular exertion involved “the will acting from necessity,”¹⁰² Cartwright argued that, “The Nigerian has such little command over his own muscles, from the weakness of his will, as almost to starve, when a little exertion and forethought would procure him an abundance.”¹⁰³ Stimulating blacks’ “weak will” and controlling blacks’ “muscular exertion” was Cartwright’s primary interest in black moral management.¹⁰⁴ To Cartwright’s thinking, since the black man’s will was “too weak to command his muscles “ to engage in “such kinds of labor” as “would readily procure the fruits to gratify them,” it followed that black people required the stronger will power of whites to direct them.¹⁰⁵ Black prosperity required white guidance and, to Cartwright’s thinking, proper black management required medical treatment.

Proponents of moral treatment believed that patients should be unchained and engaged in

⁹⁹ Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 145

¹⁰⁰ Pennsylvania Hospital, *First Annual Report*, 27-29; see also its *Seventh Annual Report*, (Philadelphia, 1848), 32-33; cited in David J. Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 146

¹⁰¹ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 47-48

¹⁰² Rush, “Two Lectures Upon the Pleasures of the Senses and of the Mind,” *Lectures*, (1811), 224

¹⁰³ Cartwright, “The Negro or Prognathous Race,” *Atlanta Medical & Surg. Jour.* 3 (April 1858): 475

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 470-475

¹⁰⁵ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 48

occupational tasks like farming, carpentry or laundry.¹⁰⁶ Most asylum superintendents operated from an assumption that manual and agrarian labor served therapeutic ends. It was the one pillar to which the moral treatment model of psychological medicine owed its success. Rush reiterated these concerns in his 1811 “Lecture on the Pleasures of Agriculture.” He advised that it was under the yoke of field labor that “the memory, the imagination, the understanding, the taste, and even the moral faculties, in all their various operations, are highly and constantly gratified.”¹⁰⁷ As an example of the pleasures of agriculture—and in rare moment of agreement with Cartwright about the disposition of the slave—Rush cited an example of a “West Indian slave.” Rush claimed that following agricultural exertion the slave “exhibited the same degree of pleasure “by singing and dancing, all night, after working a whole day under a vertical sun, with the sound of a whip constantly in his ears...The pleasures we derive from THE ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS [Rush’s emphasis] are of an extensive and peculiar nature.” Rush was so convinced of the power of new associations to revitalize patients that he claimed “The pleasures of association afford a perpetual feast in the evening of life.”¹⁰⁸

In a description of the physical labor expected of patients as well as the role of agrarian therapy in their recovery, landscape historian Kenneth Hawkins signaled Thomas Jefferson as another intellectual precursor to the belief in the curative power of agrarian life. “Lunacy reformers,” as they were called, believed that human behavior could be explained by environmental factors and that nature

¹⁰⁶ When British Quaker merchant and physician William Tuke—well known for rejecting the mechanical restraints, chains, straitjackets and physical violence against patients—founded the York Retreat in England in 1792, he set it up “in a building that resembled a modest family farm.” “In 1811, Samuel Tuke (William’s grandson) corresponded with some ‘American Friends’ about starting an asylum based on the York Retreat,” a description of moral management appeared in Tuke’s *Description of the Retreat at York* in 1813.” Yanni, “The Linear Plan,” 31

¹⁰⁷ Rush, “On the Pleasures of the Mind,” *Lectures*, 447

¹⁰⁸ In Rush’s 1811 lecture he recalled “An old native African obtained permission from his master, some years ago to go from home, in order to see a lion. That was conducted as a show through the state of New Jersey. The moment he saw him, in spite of the torpid habits of mind and body contracted by fifty years’ slavery, he was transported with joy, which he vented by jumping, dancing and loud accumulations. He had been familiar with that animal, when a boy, in his native country; and the sight of him suddenly pored upon his mind the recollection of all his enjoyments from liberty and domestic endearments, in his own country, in the early part of his life. Happily, the pleasures from association, like those of the understanding, have no antagonists in pain, when they are enjoyed in the old age.” See Rush, “On the Pleasures of the Mind,” *Lectures*, 447

was curative, that exercise was therapeutic and that the urban chaos of cities drained the psyche.¹⁰⁹ Hawkins argues, “The general concept that a change of environment would bring about an improved psychological state has a long history, which encompasses Roman villas, Palladian houses, and Jefferson’s reinterpretation of both traditions.” Jefferson’s idealization of “living close to the land” was “a mythologizing of country life” that dated back to Virgil.¹¹⁰ Building an “asylum” where one could be pure and have natural impulses governed freely was to fulfill the classic agrarian American myth and create a “City upon a hill.”¹¹¹ Thomas Kirkbride boasted that many who previously “had unfortunately never been accustomed to labour, nor to habits of industry” could now enjoy the increased benefits of time well spent and work well done.¹¹² Kirkbride bragged about the benevolent, positive good of labor and regimented, exercise-based activity. He argued that when inmates inculcated regular habits that such activity “rarely failed to contribute to the rapidity and certainty of their cure.”¹¹³ Contemporary physicians believed that exhausting labor stimulated a rapid recovery.¹¹⁴ However Cartwright took this tenet, offered as a universal, and applied it specifically to Africans, as he believed that labor excited blacks’ respiratory systems so that they could draw oxygen into the blood system and stimulate the mind.¹¹⁵ In her writings on the founder of neuroscience, Marshall Hall, Diana Manuel recognized that Cartwright opted for an alternate, non-Greek based view of human biology and sought out a “Hebrew doctrine of Moses which held that life with its attributes of sensation, volition,

¹⁰⁹ Carla Yanni, “The Linear Plan for Insane Asylums,” 35-36

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ In Matthew 5:14, a “City upon a Hill” is from the parable of Salt and Light in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.

¹¹² Kirkbride cited in Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, 145

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Profoundly, this same tactic of stimulating the nervous system in order to produce cooperative behavior is the principal behind 21st century medicines—also stimulants—proscribed for Conduct and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The drugs Aderall (a combination of four amphetamine salts) and Ritalin (methylphenidate) both inhibit reuptake of dopamine in order to increase dopamine levels leading to “self-regulation” functions in the brain. Strikingly similar such drugs act to over-stimulate the nervous system in order that the patient/student/inmate might focus on otherwise mundane tasks.

¹¹⁵ Cartwright, “Decisive Experiment,” *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 48 (1853): 474-479

mobility and intelligence, existed in the blood.”¹¹⁶ To Cartwright’s thinking, black labor stimulated “black blood.”

Third, managing others through the influence of a strong and overpowering personality remained a theme in Cartwright’s work and the physician’s ability to exert moral influence onto a patient was a belief first held by practitioners of moral treatment.¹¹⁷ This was reflected, for instance, in the “*tam-tam*” cure when after the uncooperative overseer forced Cartwright to sign a note of reprimand to his employer—Cartwright demanded absolute authority. Rush believed that, upon entering the cell or chamber of a person struck with mania, the physician could catch the patient’s eye “and look him out of countenance.” Just as animals dread the “steady stare of the human eye”—the tiger, the mad bull, the estranged dog—so too the man “deprived of his reason” is “easily terrified of” and “composed by” the “eye of a man who possesses his reason.”¹¹⁸ By Rush’s description, the desired effect was achieved by “looking the patient out of countenance,” “with a steady eye,” and varying the gaze from the “highest degree of sternness down to the middle degree of benignity.”¹¹⁹ Deploying a metaphor that his student Cartwright would later use, Rush contended “there are keys in the human eye” “which should be suited to the state of the patient’s mind, with the same exactness that musical tones should be suited to the depression of spirits in *hypochondriasis*.”¹²⁰ Similarly Cartwright believed he held the “key” to “unlock the book,” & offer insight into Hebrew that held original insight into more proper slave-management techniques; he imagined that his “key” was forged in the hot fires

¹¹⁶ Diana E. Manuel, *Marshall Hall, (1790 – 1857): Science and Medicine in Early Victorian Society*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 275-78, 304

¹¹⁷ On the asylum system as “highly regimented and repressive” and on the necessary authority of the physician over the patient, see Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, 151-152

¹¹⁸ Rush, *Medical Inquiries and Observations*, (Philadelphia, 1812), 175, cited in Goodman, *Benjamin Rush: Physician and Citizen, 1746-1813*, (Penn, 1934), 266-267

¹¹⁹ Rush, *Medical Inquiries and Observations*, 266-267

¹²⁰ The term “*hypochondriasis*” refers to “an abnormal state characterized by emotional depression and imagined ill health, often accompanied by symptoms untraceable to any organic disease.” See Rush, *Medical Inquiries*, 174

of “sufficient knowledge” and rendered in “the revolution of ages.”¹²¹

To fulfill the requirement for his medical degree, New Yorker Dr. Theodore Romeyn Beck who became an important figure in the development of medical jurisprudence published his “Inaugural Dissertation on Insanity” in 1811, confirming that: “Coercion, by blows, stripes and chains...is...laid aside. The rules most proper to be observed are the following: Convince the lunatics that the power of the physician and the keeper is absolute...”¹²² Benjamin Rush agreed on the centrality of a strong personality’s influence on a patient’s recovery and as a result American asylum superintendents incorporated absolute dominion, terror, shame, force and physical compulsion among their range of treatment techniques. Stamp indicates that identical strategies were used to break the slave: “Physical discipline, an attempt to create shame, fear, awe and summarily to redirect the ‘interest’ of the African away from his or her own subjective orientation, toward the interest of the master.”¹²³ Recall that Cartwright’s “*tam-tam*” cure he sought to “ridicule” and defame the “Negro Conjurers and Prophets.” The principal shared features between moral treatment and plantation practices of slave management were to encourage terror, shame and force through mental and physical coercion.¹²⁴

The “absolute” sovereign power that the healer must assume in the psychological medicines of moral treatment and Mesmerism reflected the “absolute” sovereign power of the plantation master or overseer.¹²⁵ This was the “framework of human relationships” that powered the “peculiar institution.” Stamp argues, “To achieve the ‘perfect’ submission of his slaves, to utilize their labor profitably, each

¹²¹ See Cartwright, “The Unity of the Human Race,” 130

¹²² Dr. Theodore Romeyn Beck, College of Physicians and Surgeons, *An Inaugural Dissertation on Insanity Submitted to the public Examination of the Trustees of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in the State of New York for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine*, (New York, 1811), 28

¹²³ Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 140

¹²⁴ On the identical techniques use in slave management, Stamp indicates, “Physical discipline, an attempt to create shame, fear, awe, and summarily to redirect the ‘interest’ of the African away from his or her own subjective orientation, toward the interest of the master.” Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 140; on such tactics in psychiatry, see Lynn Gramwell and Nancy Tomes, *Madness In America: Cultural and Medical Perceptions of Mental Illness Before 1914*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 37; also Dain, *Concepts of Insanity in the United States*, 25

¹²⁵ For a thorough analysis of how the “arbitrary” and “absolute” authority of the master over his slave translated into the “enormity of murder” in the 1829 *State v. Mann* decision, Tushnet, *Slave Law in the American South*

master devised a set of rules by which he governed.” In order for a master to be who he was, “he had to be master over everything.” He set the laws for his “private domain,” which included inventing techniques to minimize the bondsmen’s resistance to servitude. Stamp surmises that, “The techniques of control were many and varied, some subtle, some ingenious, some brutal. Slaveholders generally relied upon more than one.”¹²⁶

From Rush recommending that asylum physicians confer power over the patient by using a strong tone of voice to German physician Franz Mesmer’s contention that weaker personalities were susceptible to “animal magnetism,” an international community of physicians contended that powerful, compelling men could manipulate the weak-minded. Cartwright fused international perspectives on the moral management of blacks with the practices of moral management used in contemporary mental asylums by focusing on what he felt was the superior moral power of white men. Cartwright racialized these beliefs to argue that white men manipulated blacks’ “muscles” through their “exaggerated” “white will power” and he extended these psychological tenets into a labor-productivity ratio. The crux of Cartwright’s contention was that it was through “moral not physical power” that white overseers influenced, controlled and subjugated blacks.¹²⁷ This assumption reflected not only a belief in the physicians’ capacity to extend moral influence generally, but it also located the method or technique of control particularly within the arena of psychological suggestion and mental penetration.

One expression of the central authority of the slave-owner or asylum superintendent was the notion that he was superintending over his own “family.” Rothman argued “Medical superintendents however, had very special qualities in mind when they spoke about the family. The routine that they would create in the asylum would bear no resemblance to a casual, indulgent, and negligent household

¹²⁶ Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 143

¹²⁷ Cartwright, “Negro Subservience,” *De Bow’s Review* 25 (1858): 47

that failed to discipline its members or to inculcate a respect for order and authority.”¹²⁸ The term family meant differently inside the institution as it omitted the play of free activity. Reporting on the Bloomingdale Asylum in New York, Pliny Earle wrote, “The internal arrangements of the Asylum are nearly the same as those of a well-regulated family.”¹²⁹ Asylum superintendents were determined not to use penitentiary terminology, and Kirkbride warned, “No insane hospital should ever be spoken of as having a cell or a keeper within its walls.”¹³⁰

Most asylum superintendents or “alienists” believed that blacks were less prone to become insane but disagreed about *why* blacks might be immune from insanity. Cartwright proposed that “Like children, they are constrained by unalterable physiological laws, to love those in authority over them, who minister to their wants and immediate necessities, and are not cruel or unmerciful.”¹³¹ Cartwright compared the mental capacity of blacks to the minds of children,¹³² a precept that positioned white masters as the head of both black and white households.¹³³ Here, in the double role of plantation manager and moral manager, a once-unified pastoral role was fractured into the multivalent functions of healer, pastor, master and “father,” a term some slaves used to refer to their masters.¹³⁴ Duty and obligation were the defining monikers of antebellum Southern culture and certainly operated as a governing principle for Cartwright. Southerners believed that slavery governed an “organic society” in

¹²⁸ Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, 152

¹²⁹ Pliny Earle, N.Y. Lunatic Asylum, “Annual Report,” (1851), 44

¹³⁰ For Kirkbride’s instructions, see Pennsylvania Hospital, *Fourth Annual Report*, 35

¹³¹ Cartwright, “On the Diseases and Physical & Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” *Georgia Blister & Critic* 1:5 (July, 1854):109

¹³² He wrote, “With negroes, the sanguineous never gains the mastery over the lymphatic and nervous systems. Their digestive powers, like children, are strong, and their secretions and excretions copious, excepting the urine, which is rather scant.” Cartwright, “Philos. of the Negro Constit.,” 196; Cartwright, “How to Save the Rep.,” 186

¹³³ Foucault refers to this phenomenon as the “pastoral” role which man takes up. See Michel Foucault, translated by Valerio Marchetti, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975*, (New York: Vintage Press, 2004), 177

¹³⁴ On the master operating with the status of “*in loco parentis*” to the slave, as his or her guardian and the levels of violence deemed acceptable, see Ariela Gross, *Double Character*, (Princeton, 2000), p. 108; see also Brenda Stevenson, “Black Family Structure in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia: Amending the Revisionists,” in Belinda Tucker and Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, eds., *The Decline in Marriage Among African-Americans: Causes, Consequences, and Policy Implications* (New York: Russell Sage, 1995); see also Brenda Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)

which “mutualism and domesticity ensured moral progress for all. They believed that reciprocal relationships of mutual benefit existed in the home with their wives and families as well as with their slaves.”¹³⁵ Cartwright operated by such principles personally and mandated the same mutualism and reciprocity in the treatment of slaves: Slaves were an extension of the Southern family.

Cartwright concluded that not only were blacks physiologically deficient and mentally open to suggestion, but that it was this special positioning of whites as governors and blacks as the inferior race that led Founders to write blacks into the *Constitution* as a dependent class of slaves. Cartwright argued that the opinions surrounding blacks’ industriousness and worker productivity reflected debates of the Founders who justified the position of blacks in American society as non-citizens. Anything contrary to this was contrary to the true “higher laws” of Nature and God. The humanistic sciences encouraged clearing the mind of bias in order that it might uncover universal law. If, for instance, the “law of falling bodies” was a universal, it suggested to the early scientists that human behavior also resulted from natural laws. This also meant that human behavior could be influenced by outside forces over which the individual had no control.¹³⁶ In the United States this logic meant that Blacks—slave and free—and “madmen” alike were subject to the right to seizure.

Mental “specialists” like Dr. Pliny Earle compared managing the mental ill to managing children as well: “The motives, the influences, and, as a general rule, the means necessary for the good government of children are equally applicable, and equally efficient for the insane.”¹³⁷ Asylum superintendents and their wives were also referred to as “Father” and “Mistress” in an effort to replicate the home environment in an otherwise institutional setting.¹³⁸ Bockoven argues that the superintendents of the moral treatment era often made references to “our family” in his annual

¹³⁵ Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 153

¹³⁶ Bockoven, *Moral Treatment in American Psychiatry*, 12

¹³⁷ Pliny Earle, *History, Description and Statistics of the Bloomingdale Asylum of the Insane*, (New York, 1849); cited in Bockoven, *Moral Treatment in American Psychiatry*, 70

¹³⁸ On the family model as a focus of “poor houses” & “almshouses” see Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum* 42-43

reports.¹³⁹ Carla Yanni indicates that the daily regimen of asylum patients routinely included a “visit daily with the superintendent or his wife, the official matron of the institution. Additional principles were that patients should be unchained, granted respect, encouraged to perform occupational tasks (such as farming, carpentry, or laundry), and allowed to stroll the grounds with an attendant.”¹⁴⁰ This replication of the family structure also secured the role of who was a patient, and who had agency.¹⁴¹

Fourth, the theory of Associationism¹⁴² provided the cornerstone for the very popular antebellum practices of Thomsonianism, Animal Magnetism and Mesmerism as well as for Cartwright’s writing on how the “Empire of the white man’s will” was sustained. Rush argued that if one operated with the appropriate knowledge of “the principles of sensation, and of the sympathies...in the nervous system” and in accord with “the laws of the association of ideas, of habit, and of imitation,” one could create programs to reform individual prisoners.¹⁴³

Subsequently, Cartwright argued the power of whites to exert their wills to “excite the muscles” of blacks to “act as machines.”¹⁴⁴ He argued also that a strong “will” had effect on surrounding objects. Writing on the distinctions he believes existed between “the Negro” and the “white will,” Cartwright argues that:

The will has two powers-direct and indirect. It is the direct motive power of the muscular system. It indirectly exerts a dynamic force upon surrounding objects when associated with knowledge. It gives to knowledge its power. Everything that is made was made by the Infinite Will associated with infinite knowledge. The will of man is but a spark of the Infinite Will, and its power is only circumscribed by his

¹³⁹ Bockoven indicates that to an asylum superintendent or physician practicing moral treatment, oftentimes references to “the family” included his patients, any attending staff as well as his own wife and children. Bockoven argues that, “It is not remarkable that he should feel like a father to his patients, for he ate, worked, played and worshipped with them. It would likewise be not surprising that he should acquire a fundamental understanding of personality through prolonged and intimate contacts with his patients in a wide variety of activities and interpersonal relationships.” Bockoven, *Moral Treatment in American Psychiatry*, 77

¹⁴⁰ Yanni, “The Linear Plan for Insane Asylums,” 31

¹⁴¹ on the use of the word “family,” to describe relationships between asylum superintendents, their wives, attendants and their inmates, see Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, 151

¹⁴² As well as “Sensationalism” and “Environmentalism.”

¹⁴³ Rush, *An inquiry into the Effects of Punishments*, 13 cited in Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835*, (Chapel Hill: Univ. of N. Carolina, 1996), 135

¹⁴⁴ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 48

knowledge.¹⁴⁵

Here Cartwright's distinction between what he calls the Negroes Indirect and direct will are quite similar of the kinds of "inner" and "outer" freedoms which powered the "culture of Freedom" in the late 18th century. Patterson argues that the Greek "distinction between inner and outer freedom," was an "equally important" aspect of the culture of freedom along with "contestation about the relative significance of each." It is worth considering these distinctions of inner and outer freedom as cornerstones of Cartwright's thinking, especially since Cartwright professed to be a scholar in Greek and Hebrew. This concept of inner/outer or direct/indirect freedom is present in Plato who "emphasized inner freedom as superior to the outer, physical freedom of the masses," to the Cynics who emphasized "inner freedom" as "pure liberation" to the Stoics who contended that "perfect freedom was achieved when one's own spirit or soul of reason participated harmoniously with the rationality of world-soul."¹⁴⁶

For Cartwright, his fine distinctions between indirect and direct will power related in a pragmatic way to his pecuniary interest in literally controlling "the Negro's" muscles:

A man possessing in a knowledge of the negro character can govern an hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand of the prognathous race by his will' alone, easier than one ignorant of that character can govern a single individual of that race by the whip or a club. However disinclined to labor the negroes may be, they cannot help themselves; they are obliged to move and to exercise their muscles when the white man, acquainted with their character, wills that they should do so. They cannot resist that will, so far as labor of body is concerned.¹⁴⁷

There is a propulsive quality that Cartwright claims white men have, a quality powered by directionality and intention — an "exaggerated will" — that allegedly had natural provenance over others across both time and space. The only limits to this "exaggerated will" were the "rights"

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Orlando Patterson, "The Ancient and Medieval Origins of Modern Freedom," in *The Problem of Evil: Slavery, Freedom and the Ambiguities of American Reform*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 34

¹⁴⁷ Cartwright, "Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans," 48

Cartwright declares, to which “Negroes” were in fact entitled.¹⁴⁸ And where is “the Negro” to receive his or her “will”? From the surplus but limited will of whites:

The will is not a faculty confined within the periphery of the body. It cannot, like the imagination, travel to immeasurable distances from the body, and in an instant of time go and return from Aldabran, or beyond the boundaries of the solar system. Its flight is confined to the world and to limits more or less restricted—the less restricted in some than in others.¹⁴⁹

There are deep intellectual roots, both in Scotland and England, for Cartwright’s concept of extending “the will” and affecting the mental “plasticity” of another individual.¹⁵⁰ Mesmerism was founded on the belief that when a sick person or lunatic encountered a particularly strong personality, he or she was compelled back into reason through the therapist exerting his sheer “animal magnetism” onto the patient.

The Liverpool-based clergyman, Dr. George Gregory based his system of moral management in the individual and came closest to articulating what Cartwright believed occurred during the white man’s extension of his will in order to command the impulses of black slaves. Dr. Gregory argued: “It is, I believe, generally agreed, that our ideas are all connected, linked, or, in the technical phrase, *associated* together; and that each idea has its proximate, which it never fails to introduce: and thus our thoughts succeed one another in a regular series, as they happen to be related to each other.”¹⁵¹ In his “Essay on Penetration and Foresight,” Dr. Gregory’s writing on the will reflected 18th and 19th century Scottish “common sense” understandings of human psychology and the Associationism of John Locke.¹⁵² Gregory used the term “penetration” to describe the impulse arc of what Cartwright took to

¹⁴⁸ The idea of *obligation* became a prudent legislative instrument to quell a self-interested human nature generally. As a slave-holder Cartwright took the concept of mutual obligation and articulated a ‘Negro Bill of Rights’ which reflected his belief in providing health care to the slave. Cartwright and slave-holders generally contended that in exchange for servitude, slaves’ basic needs were met. “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 48

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Battie claimed “Management does more than Medicine” and in his *Treatise on Madness* of 1758 he promoted a revised approach to mental illness where he considered “the individual” as the basis for medical treatment.

¹⁵¹ Dr. G. Gregory, “Essay on Penetration and Foresight,” *Essays, Historical and Moral*, (London, 1785), 373

¹⁵² See E. Brooks Holifield, “Scottish Philosophy and Southern Theology,” Chapter 5 of *The Gentleman Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795-1860*, (Durham, 1978), 130-138

be whites' capacity to control blacks:

That faculty, which is usually called *penetration* seems to depend altogether on such an intimate knowledge of human nature, as enables us accurately to distinguish the associations which influence the train of thought. It is, in fact, *the art of filling up the blanks in conversation*, and turning over readily a number of ideas which intervene, though not expressed, and which are *the several links of the chain in another persons mind*.¹⁵³

Cartwright believed blacks had weakened wills that made them susceptible to such manipulation.

Cartwright also argued that when the "white will" was associated with knowledge it produced telekinetic power over other *objects*.¹⁵⁴ What Gregory called "transforming yourself into that other person, and thinking for some time exactly the same" is the empathic identification process Cartwright called "benevolence."

Both physicians argued that the process of establishing an empire in another man's mind could be learned and adopted by the most strong-willed and intelligent people: "A lively genius is necessary in the observer."¹⁵⁵ Gregory acknowledged the role that he felt physical science played in making determinations about mental ability, specifically racial differences. He indicated "some aid may possibly be derived from *physiognomy*; the general character of the subject will assist in deciphering his thoughts; and the external manners and behavior must be carefully noted."¹⁵⁶ Follett argues that the practice of assessing a slave's personality traits by scars and body proportion, to tasks like scanning a black woman's body to determine her reproductive potential made the "sugar lords" into "masters of physiognomy."¹⁵⁷

The idea was that, through empathetic, conversational techniques a deranged person could be returned to his or her reason with the tone of the attendant's voice.¹⁵⁸ Rush wrote that, "In governing

¹⁵³ Ibid., 373

¹⁵⁴ Cartwright claimed that "the will" "indirectly exerts a dynamic force upon surrounding objects when associated with knowledge;" "Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans," 48

¹⁵⁵ Dr. G. Gregory, "Essay on Penetration and Foresight," 373

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 50

¹⁵⁸ Rush, "Faculties of the Human Mind," 268

mad people it should be harsh, gentle, or plaintive, according to circumstances,” supplementing the vocal intonation with the physician’s countenance, eye and voice in “ruling his patients.”¹⁵⁹ Rush’s 1811 *Lecture* argued, “The proper management and direction of the association of sick people by means of conversation consists a high degree of skill in physician.” Rush elaborated:

The influence of even a single word in *infusing strength into the body*, by means of the association of ideas, should have taught physicians much more, than they know or practice, of its efficacy in curing diseases. The Persian Soldiers, Xenophon tells us, were always invigorated in the onset of a battle by the cry of “Jupiter our deliverer.” And at the name of *Bonaparte*, a gentleman who witnessed it informed me, was used to increase the exertions of the sailors in raising their anchor in the French Navy, while that general was adding to the dominions of France by his victories in Italy. [My emphasis]¹⁶⁰

Rush identified Napoleon’s animal magnetism and the rousing effect “the name of *Bonaparte*” had on stirring up troops. In his treatise on military diseases “On Camp Diseases of the South,” Cartwright too evoked Napoleon and argued that the level of moral influence “the General” held over his troops prevented the soldiers from contracting illness and stirring them for heroic battle. Cartwright wrote:

Napoleon had the power of preventing disease, in an eminent degree, by *infusing his spirit into his soldiers*, and making them feel as he felt, and thus enabling them to revisit the natural causes of disease—fatigue, hunger, and exposure—by supplying them with mental stimulus to make up for the want of the usual animal stimuli, as food, drink, sleep, and rest. [My emphasis]¹⁶¹

In a striking similarity of subject and rhetoric, Cartwright quoted Rush without citing him. In the above passage, Cartwright echoed his mentor on three counts: 1) The exemplar of Napoleon, 2) that the proper domain of influence was the stronger physician or leader associating new ideas with the confused patient, and 3) That it was the General’s duty to infuse into that soldier a renewed will and

¹⁵⁹ Postures like the “stern eye,” the “steady voice” and the consistent deployment of favors are identical to the methods of control recommended in “plantations handbooks” on how to manage black behavior: “Orders should therefore be given in a firm, mild tone of voice, at all times forbearing threatening. Should they willfully and flagrantly violate orders they should first be reprimanded, and if nothing else will effect a reformation and insure obedience, as a *last* resort, the rod should be applied—not in severity, or in such manner as to induce the belief on their part that you take pleasure in correcting them, but that you do it from a sense of duty for their *good* as well as your *interest*: for the slave knows when he intentionally violates orders, and when he deserves correction; and, if inflicted capriciously or cruelly, it has a tendency to make him reckless and harden him in crime;” see *Georgia planter-prize essayist, Southern Central Agricultural Society of Georgia*, (1851), Document 20, for Rush citation, see Rush, “Faculties of the Human Mind,” 268

¹⁶⁰ Rush, “Faculties of the Human Mind,” 268

¹⁶¹ Cartwright, “On Camp Diseases of the South,” *New Orleans Medical and Sur. Jour.* 3:2 (1846): 438

vigor.¹⁶²

Two anonymous Virginia slaveholders debated mental control of slaves as well as the advantages and disadvantages of employing overseers, the best types of food, housing, and clothing for slaves. They also debated the relative benefits of kindness and severity in their treatment of slaves.¹⁶³ Most importantly the two white masters speculated about the mentality and character of their enslaved African-Americans:

The character of the negro is much underrated. It is like the *plastic* clay, which, may be moulded into agreeable or disagreeable figures, according to the skill of the moulder. The man who storms at, and curses his negroes, and who tells them they are a parcel of infernal *rascals*, not to be trusted, will surely make them just what he calls them; and so far from loving such a master, they will hate him. Now, if you be not suspicious, and induce them to think, by slight trusts, that they are not unworthy of some confidence, you will make them honest, useful, and affectionate creatures....H.H.¹⁶⁴

Kenneth Stamp argues “The successful master was often a keen student of human psychology.”¹⁶⁵ One Southern planter warned that, “As...some negroes are greater offenders than others, so does it require different management for differently disposed negroes. You should try *not* “to treat them all alike.” The Planter was advocating that slave-owners instill differential treatment in order to fracture any possibility of collective thinking among blacks. One Virginian warned that some slaves were manipulated better by “spurring up, some coaxing, some flattery, and others nothing but good words.”¹⁶⁶ The ideal in slave management was to command someone else’s muscles with *your* will power. As power indicates an ability to influence the actions of another, Cartwright formulated what this meant medically and transmuted diffuse planter opinion into distilled expert medical opinion.

¹⁶² Cartwright wrote, “Coming therefore to a new and strange country, among stranger Negroes and finding that they had plenty to eat and only moderate work to perform and had an impartial protector in their overseer, who would see that they were not imposed on, they as a matter of fact will naturally become contented and happy and, when they get sick, that happy and contented vein of humor running through them will often keep them up, through hard spells of sickness that would kill dejected, desponding and dissatisfied Negroes.” Cartwright, “Directions for Treatment of Negroes,” Copy dated June 22, 1844

¹⁶³ “Remarks on Overseers, and the Proper Treatment of Slaves,” *Farmers’ Register: A Monthly Publication Devoted to Improvement of the Practice & Support of the Interests of Agriculture* 5 (Sept. 1837): 301–302.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 142

¹⁶⁶ *Southern Cultivator* 18 (1860): 287; *Farmer’s Register* 1 (1834): 564-565; Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution* 142

Cartwright derived his conception of the “animal” state of “hibernation” that he claimed blacks entered into from the scientific writing of Thomas Jefferson. In Jefferson’s commentary alleging black people’s inability “to reason” he observed that slaves were disposed to sleep¹⁶⁷ when not working: “In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection. To this must be ascribed their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labour. An animal whose body is at rest, and who does not reflect, must be disposed to sleep of course.”¹⁶⁸ Exercising his “duty” a physician, Dr. Cartwright updated Jefferson’s observations with, what was for him, a more modern scientific analysis of “the Negro” at work and “the Negro” at rest:¹⁶⁹

Nothing but *will* is wanting to transform the torpid, unhappy tenant of the wilderness into a rational and happy thing—the happiest being on earth, as far as sensual pleasures are concerned.¹⁷⁰

According to Cartwright, given blacks inclination to fall into a “vegeto-animal” or “hibernating state,” the “so-called insurrection of that island,” Haiti, was caused by white men’s ability to affect blacks’ actions and thinking by spiritual extension, or “Animal Magnetism.” In Cartwright’s words:

There have been neighborhood disturbances and bloodshed, caused by fanaticism, and by mischievous white men getting among them and *infusing their will into them*, or *mesmerizing* them. But, fortunately, there is an ethnological¹⁷¹ law of their nature which stops the evil influence of such characters by limiting their influence strictly to personal acquaintances.¹⁷²

Here Cartwright made accusations of false missionaries, who offered their own distinct forms of “moral

¹⁶⁷ On references to slaves being “addicted to sleep” in the context of labor and factory workers’ behavior, see Roediger and Esch, *The Production of Difference*, 59

¹⁶⁸ Jefferson was quantifying black motion with a Newtonian formulation: A body at rest will remain at rest until acted upon by an outside force. In the case of Jefferson and Cartwright the “outside force” was white coercion. Sir Isaac Newton held great significance to Jefferson, Cullen and Rush, each of whom influenced Cartwright’s medical thinking. Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query 14, (1782) in *The Works of Thomas Jefferson* 4:50-51

¹⁶⁹ Jefferson was arguing that a non-reflective African or Negro was naturally pre-“disposed to sleep” and signaled to Cartwright a psychological connection to the operations of what he called the “will.” To Cartwright’s thinking the stronger white will stood in for the non-reflective blacks’ impoverished will and excited Africans into arduous labor that revitalized their respiratory systems.

¹⁷⁰ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 47

¹⁷¹ Clarifying the distinction between ethnology and ethnography, Cartwright alleged that “The natural history of mankind is divided into two parts: Ethnography and Ethnology. The former will be passed over, as it treats of the physical differences among men, their geographical distribution, history, origin, etc.; and the latter only will be considered, or that science which investigates the moral and mental differences among the different groups of mankind, and searches for the laws on which they depend.” A Lecture Delivered November 30, 1851, before the New Orleans Academy of Sciences by Samuel A. Cartwright, MD. (National Institutes of Health online link)

¹⁷² Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 47

instruction,” as well as false healers who offered their own distinct forms of “medical instruction.”¹⁷³

Cartwright amplified his observations of local slave mismanagement in order to influence repeated instances of slave rebellions, a crisis that held international proportions.

Based upon the republican concept of “obligation,” wherein those who consent to being governed do so in exchange for enumerated protections by the governor, Cartwright delineated specifically the rights he believes that Negroes did in fact have, *vis-à-vis* whites. Cartwright frames this Negro ‘Bill of Rights’ in the tone of “benevolence” and posits that his proposed rights are based in benevolent and ethical acts of giving “care.” He insisted that outside of proper management:

...they will resist his will and be refractory, if he encroaches on what they regard as their rights, viz: the right to hold property in him as he does in them, and to disburse that property to them in the shape of meat, bread and vegetables, clothing, fuel and house-room, and attention to their comforts when sick, old, infirm, and unable to labor; to hold property in him as a conservator of the peace among themselves, and a protector against trespassers from abroad, whether black or white; to hold property in him as impartial judge and an honest jury to try them for offences, and a merciful executioner to punish them for violations of the usages of the plantation or locality.

To conclude his Negro ‘Bill of Rights,’ Cartwright assured, “With those rights acceded to them,” no other “compulsion” was necessary to make them perform daily tasks “than his will be done.” He advocated applying the psychological medicine moral treatment to blacks, to affect them mentally in order to driving them physically: “It is not the whip, as many suppose, which calls forth those muscular exertions, the result of which is sugar, cotton, bread-stuffs, rice, and tobacco. These are products of the white man's will, acting through the muscles of the prognathous race in our Southern States.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Cartwright’s suspicion was a reflection of his larger concern for regulating medical reform against Thomsonians, Vegetarians and other practitioners of alternative medicine who had flooded the Southwest during mid-century. Cartwright’s campaign for “States Rights Medicine” cannot be understood outside of his racial beliefs about “Negroes” being controlled, dominated or misgoverned by whites.

¹⁷⁴ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 48

Chapter 10: “Drapetomania” and “Dysaesthesia Aethiopica”

Trans-Atlantic Science

Antebellum Southerners embraced two attributes of the aristocratic tradition: a strong belief in justified rage and violent resolution—Entitlement and Bellicosity. Combined, Southerners like Cartwright took the tangible Evil of slavery and under what Rush called “undue perception of truth, duty or interest”¹ disappeared that Evil by claiming that slavery originated in the very Will of God, a fact now allegedly justified by quantitative science.² Cartwright’s own ego, and to him clarity, trumped the illusions that predominated other whites’ thinking. He wanted other whites to see that their own ignorance of science had led to misinterpretations among Southerners, colonizationists and abolitionists about blacks’ true role in the American and global economy. Empowered by the very palpable fear whites experienced, Cartwright re-polarized local and national thinking about race and legitimized with a scientific rationale the close scrutiny of black people; he made what appeared to be “Good” actually keep alive the forces of “Evil.”

To Cartwright’s thinking the Southern physician’s responsibility included determining how climate, geography and race affected disease concepts and to use this knowledge as an instrument of Southern politics.³ He also believed it was an honor and duty to populate Southerners’ understanding of diseases particular to the Southern region. By 1850 De Bow helped Cartwright to craft a specialty in “Negro Diseases” and slave labor management. De Bow reasoned, “Those who are not accustomed to them have great trouble and difficulty in managing Negroes; and in consequence thereof treat them badly. If their ethnology was better and more generally understood, their value would be greatly

¹ Rush, “On the Different Species of Mania,” 212-213; Rush to Granville Sharp, Nov. 28, 1783, “The Correspondence,” 20; Rush, “An Address to the Inhabitants,” 7-8

² On the challenge of “Evil” in American History; see Steven Mintz and John Stauffer, *The Problem of Evil: Slavery, Freedom and the Ambiguities of American Reform*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2001)

³ John Harley Warner, “The Idea of Southern Medical Distinctiveness: Medical Knowledge and Practice in the Old South,” in *Science and Medicine in the Old South*, ed., Savitt and Numbers, (Baton Rouge, 1989)

increased, and their condition, as a laboring class, would be more enviable, compared to the European peasants, than it already is.”⁴ DeBow followed Cartwright in arguing that slave management, particularly under the intellectual guidance of the science of Ethnology, was an essential component if not the corner stone of Southern culture. Whereas De Bow’s *Review* worked as a national platform to spread Cartwright’s ideas, after publishing his “Report on Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro,” Cartwright gained international notoriety.

After Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 Charles Dickens expressed deep interest in how Americans rationalized their treatment of black runaway slaves. The new Act enforced an existing constitutional law obligating northern police to capture any “Free Blacks” suspected to be runaway slaves and return them to southern slavery. The liberal north was outraged and by 1856 Dickens recognized that what seemed to be a local issue was having international ramifications.⁵ Dickens traced the issue of runaway slaves through the “vector” of Frederick Law Olmsted back to the expertise of Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright.⁶ Cartwright’s 1851 “Report on the Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race” had been reprinted and cited widely as a scientific effort to justify black slavery and condemn black rebellion as acts of insanity. Cartwright held the title of “Professor of Diseases of the Negro” on the medical faculty at the University of Louisiana, the only such title in medical history. Dickens’ exploration of Cartwright’s disease categories reflects the trans-Atlantic significance of Cartwright’s writing and provides what I believe to be a unique opportunity to consider how his disease categories moved local knowledge to an international audience.

⁴ De Bow, “The Statistical Bureaus in the States,” *DeBow’s Review* 8:5 (May 1850): 434

⁵ When Dickens visited the U.S. in 1842 his Boston reception committee who received him included Edward G. Loring, who in 1854 served as the U. S. Commissioner and gained much notoriety for over-seeing the return of fugitive slave Anthony Burns back to his master, Virginia slave-holder Charles F. Suttle. The decision caused a riot and an attack on the courthouse, but without result, as Burns was conveyed back to Virginia in a U.S. revenue cutter. See William Clyde Wilkins, *Charles Dickens in America*, (London, 1911), 21-22

⁶ For Dickens on Cartwright, see Charles Dickens, “Slaves and Their Masters,” *Household Words—A Weekly Journal Conducted by Charles Dickens* 330 (August 23 1856): 133-138

Historians of science have expressed a renewed interest in how information circulates, travels and constitutes knowledge. Much like the traders of the early Mediterranean world who became the traveling sophists and skeptics, the world-travelers of the 18th and 19th centuries also shared information, culture currency and concepts. Nineteenth century expansions in the popular and specialized presses also increased the volubility of ideas. The “circulation” of knowledge is an issue of real analytic significance to the History of Science and according to James Secord it is “in fact, the central question for our field.”⁷ Secord challenges historians to ask, “How and why does knowledge circulate? How does it cease to be the exclusive property of a single individual or group and become part of the taken-for-granted understanding of much wider groups of people?”⁸ Notably Cartwright’s “Report on the Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race” was republished in serialized form at least seven times in 1851.⁹ This final chapter explores the international career of Cartwright’s concepts while at the same time revealing the trans-Atlantic network of ideas that helped shape his medical theories about black insanity.

When Frederick Law Olmsted¹⁰ traveled through the American seaboard states from 1852 to 1857 he recorded the recalcitrant behavior of slaves and cited Cartwright as the nation’s pre-eminent specialist on Black “*rascality*.”¹¹ Olmsted declared that there was a spirit of “general insubordination”

⁷ James A. Secord, “Knowledge in Transit,” Keynote Address, History of Science Soc., *Isis* 95:4 (2004): 661

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Cartwright, “Report on the Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race: Part I,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 7:6 (May 1851): 691-715; Cartwright “The Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race: Part. I,” *De Bow’s Review* 11:1 (July 1851): 64-74; Cartwright “The Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” *Fenner’s Southern Medical Reports* 2 (July 1851): 421; Cartwright “The Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race: Part II,” *De Bow’s Review* 11:2 (August 1851): 206-213; Cartwright “The Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race: Part III,” *De Bow’s Review* 11:3 (September 1851); Cartwright “Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race: Part III,” *New Orleans Med. Surg. Jour.*, (Nov., 1851)

¹⁰ Olmsted was a noted travel writer and is perhaps best known for his landscape design as he created New York’s Central Park and Brooklyn’s Prospect Park. Olmsted also designed insane asylums, had an asylum named after him and was sent to an insane asylum later in his life.

¹¹ Olmsted used term “*rascality*” numerous times throughout his study of the slave south. Basing the likelihood for recalcitrant behavior among slaves on geographical distinctions, Olmsted observed that “*The negroes working in the swamp were more sprightly and straight-forward in their manner and conversation than any field-hand plantation-negroes that I saw at the South; two or three of their employers with whom I conversed spoke well of them, as compared with other slaves,*

among blacks in the slave states.¹² Cartwright helped shape contemporary slavery debates through his notion that any radical behavior among blacks should be attributed to instances of mental illness. He argued that the study of black physiology and psychology would lead to an awareness of black diseases—physical and mental. Moreover Cartwright made therapeutic suggestions for their cure. Olmsted’s travel narratives featured detailed descriptions of the three mental diseases that Cartwright claimed to have discovered among “troublesome” slaves in the South: “*Drapetomania*,” the madness of running away; “*Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*,” the madness of destroying one’s tools or inattention to work; and “*Cachexia Africana*,” the madness of “dirt-eating” or “serpent worship.”

and made no complaints of ‘rascality’ or laziness.” 155; citing Cartwright’s critique of what slave-holders were calling generally “rascality,” Olmsted said “*Hence the overseers call it ‘rascality,’ supposing that the mischief is intentionally done.*” Olmsted presented Cartwright’s critique, “*The term, ‘rascality,’ given to this disease by overseers, is founded on an erroneous hypothesis, and leads to an incorrect empirical treatment, which seldom or never cures it.*” 192-193; It is clear that Olmsted made it a point to interview a wide range of slave-holders about “rascality;” he wrote “*As for ‘rascality,’ I never had but one case of anything approaching to what you call so. A man insolently contradicted me in the field: I told him to leave his job and go to the house, took hold and finished it myself, then went to the house, made out a written statement of account, counted out the balance in money due him, gave him the statement and the money, and told him he must go. He knew that he had failed of his duty, and that the law would sustain me, and we parted in a friendly manner, he expressing regret that his temper had driven him from a situation which had been agreeable and satisfactory to him. The probability is, that this single experience educated him so far that his next employer would have no occasion to complain of his ‘rascality;’ and I very much doubt if any amount of corporeal punishment would have improved his temper in the least.*” 197-198; Olmsted also studied Cartwright’s writing on the “rascality” of soldiers, and again citing Cartwright: “*They obey the letter, but defeat the intention of orders that do not please them, they are improvident, wasteful, reckless: they sham illness, and as Dr. Cartwright gives specific medical appellations to discontent, laziness, and rascality, so among sailors and soldiers, when men suddenly find themselves ill and unable to do their duty in times of peculiar danger, or when unusual labor is required, they are humorously said to be suffering under an attack of the powder-fever, the cape-fever, the ice-fever, the coast-fever, or the reefing-fever.*” 200; in considering the costs of plantation upkeep and slave insurance, Olmsted wrote “*The conclusion to which they directly point is, that the cost of any certain amount of labor, by measure, of tasks and not of time, is between three and four hundred percent higher in Virginia than in the Free States. To this is to be added the cost of clothing the slaves, of the time they lose in sickness, or otherwise, and of all they pilfer, damage, and destroy through carelessness, improvidence, recklessness, and ‘rascality.’*” 207-208; and in considering the extent to which whites could coerce black slaves physically before they became recalcitrant, Olmsted wrote: “*Under this ‘Organization of Labor,’ most of the slaves work rapidly and well. In nearly all ordinary work, custom has settled the extent of the task, and it is difficult to increase it. The driver who marks it out, has to remain on the ground until it is finished, and has no interest in over-measuring it; and if it should be systematically increased very much, there is danger of a general stampede to the ‘swamp’—a danger the slave can always hold before his master’s cupidity. In fact, it is looked upon in this region as a proscriptive right of the negroes to have this incitement to diligence offered them; and the man who denied it, or who attempted to lessen it, would, it is said, suffer in his reputation, as well as experience much annoyance from the obstinate ‘rascality’ of his negroes. Notwithstanding this, I have heard a man assert, boastingly, that he made his negroes habitually perform double the customary tasks. Thus we get a glimpse again of the black side. If he is allowed the power to do this, what may not a man do?*” 435-436; for all citations see Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States; With Remarks on Their Economy*, London, New York, (Dix & Edwards, 1856).

¹² for Olmsted characterization of the ubiquity of work stoppages, indolence, insubordination among slaves see also his *Journey in the Back Country* (1860), 475

In an effort to blend the principles of governing ‘free blacks’ with the rules for managing ‘black slaves’ Cartwright used the science of medicine to legitimize his claims.¹³ Cartwright considered “free” black behavior—black people acting on their own accord—as intolerable acts of mental illness. He argued that blacks were slaves by nature and as a medical expert he used his cultural authority as a physician to legitimize negative interpretations of black behavior. As a physician of the mind Cartwright extended a punitive power to black appearance and behavior that offended but did not necessarily breach the law. What Dr. Cartwright attempted to do—indeed what the prefix “Dr.” certified he had the skills to do—was to offer a rational response to the heated sectional debate over runaway slaves. Cartwright hoped to convince others that the new knowledge he professed in his 1851 “Report” offered the proper lens through which to view “Negro Peculiarities” and he insisted that he held the scientific authority to make such moral and biomedical judgments.

“Drapetomania”

Cartwright viewed African culture, black independence, leadership and collectivism as expressions of mental disease and Frederick Law Olmsted determined to hold such theoretical concepts up against the empirical evidence that he had encountered himself during his travels through the slave states. Following Secord’s argument regarding the circulation of scientific concepts, the matter is not merely that Olmsted and Dickens reflected on medical knowledge when citing Cartwright’s ideas, but that through citing Cartwright’s ideas and increasing their trajectory, Olmsted and Dickens were in fact *making* medical knowledge by writing about it. The trans-Atlantic communication in which they engaged was itself an act of science. In considering Olmsted’s work and how it acted as a “vector” for Cartwright’s local concepts to reach Charles Dickens’ international audience, it is helpful to keep in

¹³ Motivated by John Warner’s essay, “Science in Medicine,” this dissertation shows particular concern for the extent to which Cartwright deployed basic science concepts in his medical practice. For the phrase cited, see Cartwright, “Extension of the Sugar Region of the United States,” *De Bow’s Review* 14:3 (March 1853): 204; also see John Harley Warner, “Science in Medicine,” *Osiris* 1, 2nd Series, Historical Writing on American Science, (1985): 56-57

mind Secord's argument that "Questions of trust, testimony, and communitarian objectivity are simultaneously questions of how knowledge travels, to whom it is available, and how agreement is achieved." Scott Montgomery argues, "As a shared form of knowledge...scientific understanding is inseparable from the written and spoken word...Communicating is the doing of science."¹⁴

Olmsted introduced "the learned Dr. Cartwright of the University of Louisiana"¹⁵ who "believes that slaves are subject to a peculiar form of mental disease, termed by him *Drapetomania*, which, like a malady that cats are liable to, manifests itself by an irrestrainable propensity to *run away*; and in a work on the diseases of negroes, highly esteemed at the South for its patriotism and erudition, he advises planters of the proper preventive, and curative measures to be taken for it."¹⁶ Olmsted went on to cite Cartwright extensively:

[Cartwright] asserts that, "with the advantage of proper medical advice, strictly followed, this troublesome practice of running away, that many negroes have, can be almost entirely prevented." Its symptoms and the usual empirical practice on the plantations are described: "Before negroes run away, unless they are frightened or panic-struck, they become sulky and dissatisfied. The cause of this sulkiness and dissatisfaction should be inquired into and removed, or they are apt to run away or fall into the negro consumption." When sulky or dissatisfied without cause, the experience of those having most practice with *Drapetomania*, the Doctor thinks, has been in favor of "whipping them *out of it*." It is vulgarly called, "whipping the devil *out of them*," he afterwards informs us.¹⁷

Olmsted took up Cartwright's writings five years after Cartwright first began serving as the "Prof. of Negro Diseases." Olmsted took Cartwright's reputation and his scholarship under serious consideration as 'case studies' in claims of mental illness.¹⁸

Cartwright was an accomplished physician who felt that it was his duty to be instrumental in such public, political discussions. What Cartwright said about the creation of "*Drapetomania*" was that

¹⁴ Secord, "Knowledge in Transit," 661; see also Scott L. Montgomery, *The Chicago Guide to Communicating Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1

¹⁵ Beginning in 1851 Cartwright served as the nation's only "Professor of Diseases of the Negro" at the University of Louisiana (now Tulane University).

¹⁶ Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, (Dix & Edwards, 1856), 191

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 191

¹⁸ On the role of the "case study" in determinations of mental illness, see Theodore M. Porter, "Cases, Statistics and the Search for Causes of Mental Illness," lecture delivered at the *History of Science Society* (2012)

he considered it his “duty” to create and propagate the term. Writing on the “necessary influence”¹⁹ of medicine on the management of Blacks, Cartwright wrote:

The few scraps of knowledge which my imperfect acquaintance with that science [chemistry], which I have not half mastered, has enabled me to pick up, are communicated as a *duty*, hoping that they may be of some benefit to southern agriculture, and promote the public good. To go where duty calls, regardless of the good or evil in the way, I fain would make a rule of action. The writing of this paper I conceive to be a duty, and in its performance nothing else is looked to but the duty itself, or I would not write it, know it will be used to my prejudice, as a proof that I am a politician, and, of course, do not know how to give quinine and calomel.²⁰

Cartwright was not arrogant—he was convinced in what he termed the “God-like Science of Medicine.”²¹ He realized that his work had been criticized as too political, but the fact that his intellectual daring might bring ridicule did not deter him from his “duty.” He was convinced of the power of science in medicine and admitted his own ignorance of the burgeoning field of chemistry.²² However as an innovative scientist Cartwright still sought out chemistry to assist in the planning and harvesting of Louisiana sugar cane. Cartwright imagined his writing as both a “performance” and a “duty,” a “public good” and a “benefit.” In conceiving his work as a “duty” Cartwright and other whites in the south regarded slaves as “wayward children who required guidance and occasionally disciplinary control.”²³ Slave-owners specifically thought of themselves as Christian stewards whose “enlightened mastery ensured a perfect world” order wherein slaves increased their esteem among whites in their devotion to honoring white commands.²⁴ In conceiving of and describing his work as a

¹⁹ Cartwright argued, “[substances] From the earth or animal kingdom, are more intimately connected with the cure and prevention of diseases, than those substances called drugs or medicines—they require the same careful study; being also more intimately connected with mind, the disposition, and moral qualities. Thus medicine becomes, from necessity, an associate of agriculture, as it must teach the properties of the various agricultural products, and their influences on the mind and body. If it aspires no higher than to knowledge of a few drugs, it is not the godlike science of medicine, but mere quackery.” See Cartwright, “Extension of the Sugar Region of the U. S.,” *De Bow’s Review* 14:3 (March 1853): 204

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² For the role of “chemistry” in medical education, see W.F. Bynum, *Science and The Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, (Cambridge, 2006), 29, 47; and on chemistry’s influence on medical practice, see 118-123

²³ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” *New Orleans Medical and Surg. Journal* 1:2 (May 1851): 697-98; Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, (Baton Rouge, 2005), 153

²⁴ Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 154

“performance,” Cartwright was stressing that his duty was not merely to think but to *act*. Jeffrey Young argues that white southerners embraced slavery as romantics and constructed a “fictive idea” through which to see their relationships with blacks.²⁵ However, Follett argues that this attitude or orientation effectively “exorcized” slavery’s “gross realities.”²⁶ He claims that paternalism “evolved as a cohesive, if blinkered, ideology and deluded planters into believing their own idealized notions of mastery.” The advantage of believing in “benevolence” was that it enabled slave-holders to “cast themselves as Christian stewards who stood *in loco parentis* to the slave” as a way to legitimize their authority.²⁷ By classifying blacks as a sub-species²⁷ and binding all Africans everywhere as inheritors of the “Curse of Ham” Cartwright took this legitimization a step further and secured blacks’ perpetual dependence. Believing blacks operated as children and perpetual patients provided white southerners with a view of themselves as guardians and perpetual agents: it gave them a world-view into which they could fit.

Cartwright’s self-proclaimed “duty” was to follow in the footsteps of his mentor Rush and his hero Thomas Jefferson and put basic science in service of the state. Cartwright remarked that, “That the science of medicine, properly so-called, can throw much light on the qualities and properties of sugar, and the natural history of the cane plant, no one will question, who has looked into its archives.”²⁸ Cartwright’s statistical and medical advice was cited on the salubrity of the New Orleans and Mississippi regions and he was consulted for his outlook on agricultural development in the

²⁵ For the argument that paternalism was a “performance” wherein slave-owners impressed slaves, see Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery*, (Baton Rouge, 1982), 72-104; and also Jeffrey Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837*, (Chapel Hill, 1999), 133, 168, 170, 228; also Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 154-155

²⁶ Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 155

²⁷ “*In loco parentis*” is the Latin term meaning “in the place of a parent” and it is the legal term referring to an individual who assumes the legal status of a parent. Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 154

²⁸ Here Cartwright was arguing that medical knowledge could influence agricultural practices, a natural transition as the *medica materia* of contemporary pharmacology consisted mostly of plants, herbs, spices and minerals, all natural plant-derived or earth-based substances. Cartwright, “Extension of the Sugar Region of the United States,” 204

territories.²⁹ Putting the learned—or *savants*—in the service of the state extended back at least to Voltaire and Diderot in the French Enlightenment. Savants are especially useful in times of perceived crisis and international conflict.³⁰

Cartwright's medical neologisms brought a wide array of defiant and rebellious behavior among blacks—what contemporaries were calling “*rascality*”—under the umbrella of a single medical diagnosis of mental illness. The utility of diagnosis was that it offered conceptual closure. Cartwright understood himself as bringing coherent expression to otherwise diffuse and overlooked medical phenomena.³¹ He wrote, “In noticing a disease not heretofore classed among the long list of maladies that man is subject to, it was necessary to have a new term to express it.” Cartwright discussed specifically how he derived the neologism “*Drapetomania*” and described his duty to invent the term as a way to isolate the problem of the runaway slave. He elaborated:

It is unknown to our medical authorities, although its diagnostic symptom, the absconding from service, is well known to our planters and overseers, as it was to the ancient Greeks, who expressed by the single word “*drapeto*,” the fact of the absconding, and the relation that the fugitive held to the person he fled from.³²

Cartwright felt compelled to push against the limits of language in order to unleash a term that would define a diagnostic category of interest in black defiance. Cartwright was thrilled with language as a set of possibilities and confident in the discursive field of influence. He wrote consistently on the capacities that lie within language and he looked to the ancient Greeks for both terminology and vindication. That “*drapeto*” had come to expression in the Greek language signified its pertinence to Greek culture and went to support Cartwright's claim that Greek slave-holders were essentially

²⁹ James De Bow, “Agriculture in the West,” *De Bow's Review* 3:2 (February 1847): 182

³⁰ Porter argues that the French state relied increasingly on technical knowledge in the last years of the Old Regime and then a great deal more during the crises of the Revolution and Napoleon's Wars, Porter, “How Science became Technical,” *Isis* 100:2 (June 2009): 29

³¹ In crafting his diagnoses and therapeutics Cartwright followed both Cullen and Rush in their professional drive to conceive holistic frameworks for disease that sought to bind local experiences to universals.

³² Cartwright, “Report on the Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race: Part I,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 7:6 (May 1851): 711

“Southerners” and shared the American South’s medical distinctiveness. Following that logic Cartwright contended that, “I have added to the word meaning runaway slaves, another Greek term, “*mania*,” to express the disease of the mind causing him to abscond.”³³ The significance here was that the proper management of slaves had also challenged the ancient Greeks. As the Greeks addressed “*drapeto*” by isolating the phenomenon in language, Cartwright aimed to hone in on its cause and determine its treatment—as a Southerner, he inherited that “duty.”³⁴

In addition to singular diagnoses and the qualitative analyses provided by travel-writers and ethnographers, the 1850 U.S. Census motivated much of the contemporary concern about slavery as it was the only evidence of a national character that the North and the South could view objectively.³⁵ Statistics elevated tightly focused inquiries to the status of statistical pictures—it enabled a quantitative argument to reflect a social image. Statistics extended the sovereignty of an individual question into a kind of public domain, producing ‘statistical pictures’ of potential populations.³⁶

Cartwright’s response to the current 1850 “Crisis” was that black madness and mental alienation occurred most readily in a Free State wherein “the Negro” was given identity as a “free” person:

The cause in most cases, that induces the Negro to run away from service, is as much a disease of the mind as any other species of mental alienation,³⁷ and much more curable, as a general rule. With the

³³ Ibid., 711

³⁴ John Harley Warner investigates Southern claims to Greek knowledge of medical practice as an appeal to classical civilization and Southern aristocratic tendencies. On distinctions between Northern “Hyperborean” medicine, its relationship to “Edinburgh” medicine and the work of Hippocrates, see Warner, “The Idea of Southern Medical Distinctiveness: Medical Knowledge and Practice in the Old South” in *Sickness and Health in America*, 2nd edition, ed. Leavitt and Numbers (Madison, 1985), 58 and 61

³⁵ Statistical authors self-consciously attempted to imitate the successful strategy of natural science as a way to uncover natural principles that governed society. Since the incredibly persuasive error curve “was conceived as descriptive of the imperfections of instruments and of the senses,” Statisticians were able to expand the scientific domain. see Theodore M. Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking, 1820-1900*, (Princeton, 1986), 7

³⁶ The inherently differential nature of statistics and its operation as an organizing principle made it an ideal method to illustrate perceived differences. However, Porter argues that, “Implicitly, at least, statistics tended to equalize subjects. It makes no sense to count people if their common personhood is not seen as somehow more significant than their differences.” See Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking*, 25

³⁷ By mid-century Early physicians specializing in the mind were called “*alienists*,” derived from French physicians and meaning that the man or woman had been alienated from his or her true self and required re-integration. The term

advantage of proper medical advice, strictly followed, this troublesome practice that many Negroes have of running away can be almost entirely prevented, although the slaves be located on the borders of a free state, within a stone's throw of the abolitionists.³⁸

Cartwright argued that Blacks' tendency toward Freedom was a disease involving "alienation" and that with "proper medical advice," i.e. to whip the slave with broad leather straps, refractory blacks would return to their natural servile position as productive laborers. Since defiant blacks were merely "alienated" from their true nature, the problem was curable:

If the white man attempts to oppose the Deity's will, by trying to make the Negro anything else than "the submissive knee-bender," (which the Almighty declared he should be,) by trying to raise him to a level with himself, or by putting himself on an equality with the Negro' or if he abuses the power which God has given him over his fellow-man, by being cruel to him, or punishing him in anger, or by neglecting to protect him from the wanton abuses of his fellow servants and all others, or by denying him the usual comforts and necessaries of life, the Negro will run away.³⁹

Cartwright leveraged the authority of medical science against what he saw as the misguided beliefs of foreigners, Southerners and Northern abolitionists alike. Cartwright's point was that "if he [the white man] kneels him [the Negro] in the position that we learn from the Scriptures he was intended to occupy, that is, the position of submission; and as if his master or overseer be kind and gracious in his hearing towards him, without condescension, and at the same time ministers to his physical wants, and protects him from abuses, the Negro is *Spell-Bound*, and cannot run away."⁴⁰

As the first census to enumerate the number of escaped slaves from Southern plantations, the new 1850 U.S. Census signaled America's renewed commitment to black slavery in the form of scientific evaluation. Servicing the intentions behind the recently strengthened Fugitive Slave Act, the 1850 Census reported that 279 fugitives escaped from the border state of Maryland in 1849. This

"*psychiatrist*" was of German origin and, although used in Germany at mid-19th century did not take hold in the United States until the late 19th century. Psychiatry was the first medical specialization. In the United States and Asylum Superintendents organized their professional organization in 1844 (Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane, later the American Psychiatric Association) while medical doctors founded the American Medical Association in 1847. W.F. Bynum, *Science and The Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, (Cambridge, 2006), 104-196

³⁸ Frederick Law Olmsted, *Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, with Remarks on their Economy*, (1856), 177

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ "Drapetomania, or the Disease causing Slaves to run away," 439-440

number provided objective evidence *against* the pro-slavery claim that Blacks preferred or were improved by slavery. If slavery improved blacks, then why did they run away?

Dickens targeted Americans' political complacency surrounding the issue of escapees:

The assertion that slavery is a domestic institution of their own, with which other states have no right to interfere, is a vain and a false one. Slavery is, in the abstract, an abomination; but persisted in under such laws as those existing in the United States, it is something more. The federal legislature has interfered in favor of the institution by passing the Fugitive Slave Bill, and it is equally bound to interfere against it.⁴¹

The 1850 Census also showed a telling progression: with Kentucky reporting 96 successful escapees and Georgia and Louisiana with 90, Alabama 29, Florida 18, South Carolina 16, the census results suggested that the Upper South held more to risk in escaped property costs than the Lower South.⁴²

The numbers could be interpreted differently. James De Bow later concurred that the results proved the significance of white benevolence, suggesting that the number of runaways was most minimal where the population of slaves was the largest.⁴³ On the other hand, the numbers showed black cultural and political dynamism—it *quantified* blacks moving across time and space, irrespective of white command. Cartwright felt it was his duty to determine whether or not slaves' "running away" was a sign of advancement or a sign of regression.

These fresh new facts presented Cartwright with a statistical and theoretical puzzle: What made

⁴¹ Up until 1850, Northerners had the option to ignore the contentious fugitive slave law of 1793. For instance in 1826 the Pennsylvania passed a law that made "kidnapping" a felony, which effectively nullified the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793. see Charles Dickens, "Slaves and Their Masters," 138

⁴² The eighth U.S. Census in 1860 reported that Kentucky lost 119 slaves, Virginia 117, and Maryland 115. Delaware reported 12 fugitives. The records gathered for both 1850 and 1860 are incomplete, since the tabulations noted only the slaves who escaped in the year preceding each survey. Therefore the numbers here represent only two years in the mid-nineteenth century. See John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 279

⁴³ An aggressive pro-slavery apologist, John C. Calhoun hand-selected James De Bow to lead his statistical vanguard—after the two met at the Memphis Convention in 1845, Calhoun convinced De Bow to move to New Orleans, start his *De Bow's Review* and to move subsequently to Washington in 1853 to become U.S. Census Director and oversee the publication of the 1850 U. S. Census results.

slaves run away?⁴⁴ If slavery was the natural condition of “Negroes” who were mesmerized by the “Empire of the white man’s will,” then why were harsh seasoning techniques necessary to “break” the slave? Why did the white slave trader force the three African boys to drink liquor after neglecting them in an over-night storm? Why did the seven-year-old African refuse the liquor, and what to make of his recalcitrance?⁴⁵ If “Freedom” was not native to Africans and if the word was not present in their languages, how did one account for the increased presence and financial status of Free Blacks in the North and in the South?⁴⁶

There were at least three options with how to deal with precedents like the Haitian Revolution⁴⁷ and the 1840 and 1850 U.S. Census reports of Black advancement: 1) Whites like Cartwright could modify their ontology to accept that Blacks and whites were equal; 2) They could trivialize the facts and claim that Revolutions were mere insurrections or that escapees had merely run away out of madness;⁴⁸ 3) Whites could craft new facts by reinterpreting the significance of the census data in order

⁴⁴ The “glowing self-portrait” that whites had of themselves astounds the modern reader. For insight into the phenomenon of slave-holders’ inability to see wrong in their actions and the citation for the above phrase, see Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, 258

⁴⁵ Olmsted cited, “Early one morning, after a very stormy night, when they must have suffered much from the driving rain and cold, I saw their owner with a glass of spirits, giving each a few swallows from it. The older ones smacked their lips, and said, “Tank ‘ou, massa;” but the little one couldn’t drink it, and cried aloud, when he was forced to. The older ones were very playful and quarrelsome, and continually teasing the younger, who seemed very sad, or homesick and sulky.” See Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States; With Remarks on Their Economy*, London, New York, (Dix & Edwards, 1856), 563

⁴⁶ Cartwright wrote that, “When the language [the concept of Freedom] is given to them they cannot comprehend its meaning, or form a conception of what is meant by it.” Cartwright’s view of black recidivism buttressed his claims about the “unalterable” nature of black slavery. See Cartwright, “Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” *De Bow’s Review* 25 (1858): 50-51

⁴⁷ I mention the Haitian Revolution specifically because it was so pivotal in inspiring other revolutions, insurrections and revolts or other organized and disorganized acts of defiance throughout the African Diaspora, most notably Gabriel’s Virginia Insurrection in 1800 and again in Virginia with Sancho’s Rebellion in 1802, Deslondes’ 1811 Insurrection in Louisiana, Denmark Vesey in South Carolina in 1822, Nat Turner’s 1831 Rebellion, the 1835 Insurrections in Brazil, Cuba, and Mississippi. The Haitian Revolution also operated for Cartwright as a kind of ultimate scientific puzzle that he had championed—he cited it in nearly 80% of his writings. For details on the slave revolts and their inspiration from the Haitian Revolution, see Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, 12

⁴⁸ Indeed the resilience of the slave rebels was so pivotal that, notwithstanding antebellum fear to speak of the Haitian Revolution in the popular press, a vibrant 19th century literature of the Black revolt, including an 1820 piece by Victor Hugo did exist: See William Wordsworth, “To Toussaint L Overture” (1802), in *Selected Poetry*, ed. Stephen Gill and Duncan Wu, (Oxford, 1997); Heinrich von Kleist, *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo*, (1811), in Heinrich Von Kleist: *The Ambiguity of Art and the Necessity of Form*, ed. Hilda Meldrum Brown (Oxford, 1998), 179–94. IN her “Remembering,” “Défilée: Dédée

to regulate its meaning. Cartwright chose to use his skill as a physician to re-frame knowledge about Blacks in order to educate the North to what he argued was the mutual benevolence of plantation slavery. Cartwright perceived himself as following his friend James De Bow's call, who reproached his readers that "We are strikingly deficient in knowledge of the black and colored population, although living among us for nearly three hundred years."⁴⁹ As a dutiful scientist and statistician Cartwright filled this void.

"DYSÆSTHESIA ÆTHIOPICA"

To offer perspective on the re-occurring theme of "rascality" among blacks Olmsted delved more deeply into Cartwright's diagnostic and therapeutic concepts. He indicated that "Another droll sort of 'indisposition,' thought to be peculiar to the slaves, and which must greatly affect their value, as compared with free laborers, is described by Dr. Cartwright, as follows 'DYSÆSTHESIA ÆTHIOPICA, or Hebetude⁵⁰ of Mind and Obtuse Sensibility of Body.'⁵¹ With the neutrality of a dispassionate observer Olmsted relayed what Cartwright hailed to be the symptoms of the malady: "From the careless movements of the individuals affected with this complaint, they are apt to do much mischief, which appears as if intentional, but is mostly owing to the stupidity of mind and insensibility of the nerves induced by the disease."⁵² Olmsted then cited Cartwright's litany of accusations about the behavior of slaves struck by "*Dysaesthesia Aethiopica*": "They wander about at night, and keep in a half nodding state by day. They slight their work—cut up corn, cane, cotton, and

Bazile as Revolutionary *Lieu de Mémoire*," *Small Axe* 18, (September 2005): 57–85, Jana Evans Braziel notes that, "Victor Hugo published a short story under the title "Bug-Jargal" in 1820, which is a precursor to the novel, originally published in 1826. Christopher Bongie has recently translated both. *Victor Hugo, Bug-Jargal*, trans. Christopher Bongie (New York: Broadview Press, 2004); for other 19th century literature references see also John Greenleaf Whittier, "Toussaint Louverture" (1833), in *Selected Poems*, ed. Brenda Wineapple (New York, 2004); Alphonse de Lamartine, *Toussaint Louverture, poème dramatique* (Paris: Michel Levy Freres, 1850); *Toussaint Louverture*, ed. Leon-Francois Hoffmann (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 1998); Wendell Phillips, "Toussaint Louverture," in *Speeches, Lectures, and Letters* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1892), 468–94; Victor Schoelcher, *Vie de Toussaint Louverture* (Paris: Karthala, 1982)

⁴⁹ De Bow, "The Statistical Bureaus in the States," *DeBow's Review* 8:5 (May 1850): 422-444

⁵⁰ The term *Hebetude* meant dullness, mentally slow, or mental lethargy.

⁵¹ Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, (Dix & Edwards, 1856), 192

⁵² *Ibid.*

tobacco, when hoeing it, as if for pure mischief. They raise disturbances with their overseers, and among their fellow-servants, without cause or motive, and seem to be insensible to pain when subjected to punishment.”⁵³ Cartwright was arguing that property destroyed property not out of conscious rebellion against their masters but out of mental disease. He offered “The fact of the existence of such a complaint, making man like an *automaton* or senseless machine, having the above or similar symptoms, can be clearly established by the most direct and positive testimony.”⁵⁴ Slaves’ work strikes, equipment sabotage, slowness of gait and insurrection-like activities of defiance figured, to Cartwright’s thinking, as symptoms of mental disease.

What Cartwright hoped to do by introducing his disease categories was to hone in on what had been mere speculations about the connection between black physiology and black behavior and establish more precise definitions and therapeutic recommendations for better slave management. During the formative period of plantation management in the first decade of the 19th century, one British “Professional Planter” writing on the “Sugar Colonies” recommended that slaves-holders employ a similar, less-aggressive approach to “seasoning” black slaves.

The combined result of Britain’s abolition of slavery in 1807 and England’s Indian and Chinese colonization sponsored by the East India Company encouraged British Planters to move toward a

⁵³ Ibid. The striking resemblance between Cartwright’s disease specifications and the current *DSM-IV* definition of childhood “Conduct Disorders” bears citation. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* reads currently: “This mental disorder may be diagnosed when a child seriously misbehaves with aggressive or nonaggressive behaviors against people, animals or property that may be characterized as belligerent, destructive, threatening, physically cruel, deceitful, disobedient, or dishonest. This may include stealing, intentional injury, and forced sexual activity.” The “Diagnostic criteria for 312.8 Conduct Disorder” reads: “A repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated, as manifested by the presence of three (or more) of the following criteria in the past 12 months, with at least one criterion present in the past 6 months--Aggression to people and animals, Destruction of property, Deceitfulness or theft, Serious violations of rules i.e. ”often stays out at night despite parental prohibitions, beginning before age 13 years,” “has run away from home overnight at least twice while living in parental or parental surrogate home (or once without returning for a lengthy period)” or “is often truant from school, beginning before age 13 years.” See *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for mental Disorders, IV*, (2001)

⁵⁴ Cartwright, “Dysaesthesia Aethiopica or Hebetude of Mind and Obtuse Sensibility of Body—A Disease Peculiar to Negroes—called by Overseers, ‘Rascality,’” *De Bow’s Review Southern and Western States* 11, (New Orleans, 1851) Cartwright’s article was published in May of 1851, and reprinted in July, August & Sept. of that same year.

different type of workforce—”Coolies.”⁵⁵ In response to the recent revolutionary radicalism among West Indian slaves, in 1803 a “Professional Planter” (later identified as “Dr. Collins”) published his *Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negroes in the West Indies* in London. The physician addressed the potentially threatening reality of Black liberation, a danger that increasingly concerned Cartwright and many other white Americans. The book stands as an exemplar of a text written by a physician in order to direct more proper slave management techniques. The British writer stressed the importance of increased moral treatment of slaves and he condemned the use of violence in slave management:

Other *instruments of torture*, such as heavy chains, puddings, and crook, which were introduced in the less civilized days of our ancestors, and retained too long in ours by prescription, though seldom employed, must be condemned as unfit for any occasion or emergency whatever; as every purpose which they are designed to answer may be better obtained without them...⁵⁶

The anonymous “Professional Planter” added that violent measures “can never be used without great injury to the health of the negroes, as they cramp their efforts in the field, and by pressing on the blood-vessels, prevent their contents from circulating freely, and bring on complaints of a *dropsical* nature.”⁵⁷ Note that the “Professional Planter”—writing as a trained physician—showed specific interest in the medical or physiological effects of physical violence on the black respiratory and circulatory systems and the sluggish psychological state that such physical offences induced. In his own writing Cartwright stressed that blacks should not be pushed to exert themselves beyond their limit, but that Africans’ tolerance for labor exceeded that of whites. It was this “slow-motioned” or “torpid” quality that Cartwright wrote about alleviating. Cartwright described that the “healthy Negro” was indeed a “well-governed Negro.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ John Keay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the English East India Company*, (Harper Collins, 2010)

⁵⁶ Although the front piece reads, “From a Professional Planter,” the work is credited to “Dr. Collins,” *Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negroes in the West Indies*, (London, 1803), 210

⁵⁷ The term “*dropsical*” means “turgid” or “swollen.” See Dr. Collins, *Practical Rules*, 210

⁵⁸ Cartwright, “How to Save the Republic,” 191

What workers did and how they performed at given tasks had world-wide, real-time economic effects. Cartwright proposed that in American society workers were judged by *movement*: what they did and how quickly they did it. He argued that:

While Mr. Jefferson was casting about for some remedy to remove the evil of having the country filled with a slow-motoned, inefficient, profitless black population, who, for want of brisk motion of the body and attention of mind, could not compete with the white man in the ordinary branches of industry and of the arts, and who were half naked and starved near his own door, the rich cotton, cane and rice fields were opened in the burning South, where free white labor is much farther behind slave labor in efficiency, than the latter behind the former in other branches of industry in a cold climate.⁵⁹

In addition to his not moving quickly enough in order to follow commands, Cartwright also branded the slave with a disorder in his “attention of mind.” His argument that blacks had a deficit in “attention of mind” suggested that black slaves failed to inculcate new rules or focus on details deemed important only to whites — they acted freely and autonomously.⁶⁰

Cartwright shifted the terms of the debate — he characterized Jefferson’s view of slavery as a troublesome “evil” but was now arguing that improper moral *management* of slaves was the only evil at work.⁶¹ Cartwright addressed Jefferson’s impetus “to remove the evil” as a mis-conception, based only on tentative available scientific information on Africans.⁶² Cartwright now was compelled to update Jefferson’s perspective with new theory and to provide quantitative data to back his new theories up.⁶³ Cartwright blended economic, psychological and physiological rhetoric — “some remedy” to “remove

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ George Yancy argues that slaves gave the “outward appearance of accommodation,” but that beneath this outward appearance blacks engaged in dynamic processes of dialectical thinking that enabled them to “envision possibilities that were actionable (and thereby “freeing”) in the very midst of white hegemony and oppression.” See George Yancy, “Historical Varieties of African American Labor: Sites of Agency and Resistance,” *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 28:2 (2004): 337; see also George Yancy, *What White Looks Like: African American Philosophers on the Whiteness Question*, (Routledge, 2004); also Yancy *White on White/Black on Black*, (Rowan & Littlefield, 2005)

⁶¹ For an investigation into the quality of “evil” and its relationship to American Slavery, see Mintz and Stauffer, eds., *The Problem of Evil: Slavery, Freedom and the Ambiguities of American Reform*, (Amherst, 2007)

⁶² Jefferson advocated the American Colonization Society’s policy to deport Free Blacks and relocate them to Liberia or Haiti instead of risking their potentially violent retribution at home. Charles Dickens approved of Jefferson’s concepts. See Dickens, “Slaves and Their Masters,” 133

⁶³ In addition to his dedication to statistics as a method of quantification Cartwright claimed to have invented a “*Spirometer*” to test his theory that black lung capacity was inferior to that of whites. See note #14 *op. cit.* above, see also Dr. Cartwright on the Philosophy of the Negro Constitution,” *The New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 9:2 (May 1852): 198-199

the evil” of “slow-motioned,” “inefficient” and “profitless black population” — to justify the need to instruct whites in proper black management.

John Harley Warner argues that historians of American medicine should acknowledge the role of the “Jeffersonian Circle’s” influence in Philadelphia and at the University of Pennsylvania in particular.⁶⁴ Less specialized fields of American History also stand to benefit from seeing Jefferson’s writings as contributions in the History of Science. The deep influences Jefferson inherited from his mentors set a precedent for the deep influence he and other heroes of his generation — like Benjamin Rush — would have on burgeoning scientists like Cartwright, Caldwell, Morton and Nott. Thomas Jefferson’s reflections in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* have become notorious for their meditations on the role of Time in the productivity of “Negro” slaves at work domestically and in the field.⁶⁵ Cartwright cited that black movement presented a puzzle: the puzzles of how to manage successfully a despised and refractory population “that he did not know what to do with,” and who, to Jefferson, were not “worth their weight in salt.” Cartwright took Jefferson’s concern with temporality and productivity and extended an important intellectual and political foundation for what would become an array of expectations regarding the role of precision and efficiency in the employment of agricultural and later industrial labor.⁶⁶

Cartwright also sought precedent in the writings of George Washington who paid particular attention to the movements of his slaves at labor. Cartwright inculcated Washington’s observations

⁶⁴ John Harley Warner, “Southern Medical Distinctiveness,” in Ronald Numbers and Todd L. Savitt, (ed.) *Science and Medicine in the Old South*, (Baton Rouge, 1989), 184

⁶⁵ For more on Jefferson’s racial theory, see Edwin Thomas Martin, *Thomas Jefferson: Scientist*, 212-240

⁶⁶ In a precursor to more modern 20th century notions of “Taylorism” and “Fordism” and their interest in measuring the movements and productivity of workers’ bodies, Jefferson put mathematics to the interest of worker productivity. Fauvel observes that “Travelling through France... in 1788 [Jefferson] noticed peasants near Nancy ploughing, and fell to wondering about the design of the moldboard, that is, the surface which turns the earth: he spent the next ten years working on this, on and off, wondering how to achieve the most efficient design, both offering least frictional resistance, and which also would be easy for farmers out in the frontiers to construct, far from technical help.” This is quite a good example of “Newtonian mathematics in action, its perhaps surprising applicability to frontier needs, and of Jefferson’s command of it.” See John Fauvel, “Mathematics and Passion in the Life of Thomas Jefferson,” a lecture delivered at the University of Virginia on April 15, 1999, p. 5

and argued, “The slow gait of the Negro is an important element to be taken into consideration in studying his nature.” Implicating Washington, Cartwright bragged that:

I have the authority of one of the very best observers of mankind, that this element in the Negro’s economy [“the slow gait of the Negro”] is particularly worthy of being studied. It is no less an authority than the father of this country, the first President of the United States, the illustrious Washington.⁶⁷

The line of demarcation Washington drew, Cartwright underscored and deepened. Cartwright sought and found “authority” in George Washington. He argued that:

Washington knew better, perhaps, than any other man what the white man could do; his power of endurance and strength of wind under a given speed of motion. Yet he found that all of his observations on the white race were inapplicable to Negroes.⁶⁸

To Cartwright’s thinking Washington was befuddled, puzzled by “the Negro” in the same way that he claimed Jefferson “did not know what to do with” “Negroes.” Cartwright was lobbying for a new approach, formed out of Jefferson’s and Washington’s scientific observations on slaves and tempered with Rush’s medical lectures on moral treatment to form his own technique of “Negro management.”

To provide insight into how Cartwright’s theory of human nature (wherein blacks were being mis-recognized as sub-human) served as the basis for his political theory (wherein white sovereign masters lorded over black subjects) and went on to effect his medical thinking one could take the fact that he referred to blacks as “machines,” his favorite metaphor for “black muscles”:

To know what they could do, and to ascertain their power of endurance and strength of wind, new observations had to be made, and he [Washington] made them accordingly; he made them on his own Negroes. He saw they did not move like the soldiers he had been accustomed to command.⁶⁹

Cartwright’s heralding Washington’s “new observations” gave weight to the implication that his own observations were even newer. The military-plantation metaphor emerged for Cartwright as a function of his indebtedness to the therapeutic tenets of the contemporary psychological medicine “Moral

⁶⁷ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Philosophy of the Negro Constitution,” 202

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Treatment” and the centrality of a strong leader’s effect on the morale of his inmates or soldiers.⁷⁰

Cartwright consistently compared the act of compelling black slaves at labor to the military commander compelling soldiers in a time of war:

Their [black slaves’] motions were much slower, and they performed their tasks in a more ‘dilatary manner’ the amount of labor they could perform in a given time, with ease and comfort to themselves, could not be told by his knowledge of what white men could do. He [Washington] therefore noted the gait or movements natural to Negroes, and made observations himself of how much they could effect in a given time, under the slow motions of gait natural to them. He did this to enable him to judge of what would be a reasonable service to expect from them, and to know when they loitered and when they performed their duty.⁷¹

Cartwright explicitly rooted his concerns for the study of black movements in the founding generation’s interest in productive slave labor. Cartwright reflected the great attention the previous generation of Revolutionary leaders had given to black body movements as a way to further his own “new knowledge” about old puzzles. Planters efforts to “improve” slave management meant incorporating a level of professionalism and demanding a level of competency that was rare anywhere. British observer James Stirling wrote that compared to West Indian sugar plantations that Louisianans exacted a greater economic value from their workforce whereas the Caribbean counterparts suffered from “stagnation and contented nonchalance.”⁷²

Cartwright took explicit interest in the trans-Atlantic trade in sugar as well as cotton. In his essay “East India Cotton” Cartwright laid out his conspiracy theory of how British agents attempted to use chemical and genetic enhancements to reproduce Mississippi’s renowned cotton-seed. Here, some ten years later, one writer reviewed Cartwright’s suggestion that planters could increase sugar production by paying attention to basic chemistry and by reforming their slave management practices — to him they were part of the same science. The reviewer wrote:

In one of the last numbers of the *Review*, appeared an article from Dr. Cartwright, "On the Further

⁷⁰ For an extensive look at the similarities between asylum, penal, military and plantation care, see Chapter 4 above.

⁷¹ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Philosophy of the Negro Constitution,” 202

⁷² James Stirling, *Letters from the Slave States*, (London, 1857), 124

Extension of the Sugar Region," in which there are many statements that are entirely erroneous. At present, I refer more particularly to his estimate of the relative production of Sugar in Mexico, Cuba and Louisiana.⁷³

Although the reviewer disagreed with Cartwright's "erroneous" calculations regarding the capacities of southern regions to produce sugar, when it came to Cartwright's assessment of black slaves' work-to-productivity value he agreed:

In one statement, however, he is very right: one hand in Louisiana is equal to half a dozen in most other countries, and that, too, where the treatment of the slaves is much more severe. A gentleman, a Sugar planter from Guadaloupe, after riding through a Sugar plantation, told me that he was much struck with the industry of the slaves, even when the overseer was away.⁷⁴

The reviewer agreed that moral treatment produced better, more productive slaves and also proposed the direct connection between factory and slave labor. Since planters followed Caribbean precedents in order to meter the agriculturalist natural time to the industrialist time of the steam age, the enterprise of Louisiana sugar lords was based on a trans-Atlantic array of information. Louisiana masters established regular watches in order to ensure that fresh hands were always available throughout the day and night. This driving labor system was driven by the clock and by command.⁷⁵

Writings on the ratio of productivity of black slaves provided the basis for calculating the basic budget of any plantation, as well as any theory of profit-maximization that involved Southern foodstuffs and cotton. Taken together, these facts framed Cartwright's interest in Revolutionary politics, the Missouri Compromise's confirmation of black slavery and the thirty years of debate over the limits of white power over blacks that lead up to his lengthy 1851 letter to Daniel Webster. Cartwright's quest to rivet black identity to slave labor accounted for why he grounded his arguments in science, the heroic wisdom of the Revolutionary leaders and the *Declaration of Independence* and *Constitution* which that Founding generation produced.

⁷³ Editor, "Remarks on Dr. Cartwright's paper, 'The Extension of the Sugar Region,'" *De Bow's Review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources* 15:6 (December 1853), 647-647

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 647-648

⁷⁵ Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 2005), 105-106

Diagnosis and Quantification

Cartwright's central concern was the "efficiency" of the slaves and his consideration of mentally and physically coerced slave labor reflected one of the primary functions of the "plantation handbook" genre and its interest in black productivity.⁷⁶ Cartwright wrote, "The Empire of the white man's will over the prognathous race [blacks] is not absolute, however. It cannot force exercise beyond a certain speed; neither the will nor physical force can drive negroes, for a number of days in succession, beyond a very moderate daily labor-about 1/3 less than the white man voluntarily imposes on himself."⁷⁷ Cartwright's mathematical ratio for free vs. slave productivity—"about 1/3 less than the white man"—reflected his effort to racialized further the already vague notion of "quotas of contribution" that the founding generation included in America's earliest documents. The Founders calculated a 3/5 ratio and Cartwright calculated 2/3 — the fractional shift alone shows alleged improvement in slave management. Charles Dickens saw the contrast between free labor and slave labor to be a stark one and advocated the Free Labor system. Dickens wrote that:

If a native Virginian can confess, as one who wrote to the editor of the *New York Daily Times*, that "where you would see one white laborer on a northern farm, scores of blacks should appear on the Virginia plantation, the best of them only performing each day one-fourth a white man's daily task, and all requiring an incessant watch to get even this small modicum of labour." We may feel sure that many others feel the same disadvantage and the same distress.⁷⁸

Whereas Cartwright assessed that the slave would work at 2/3 the rate of a free laborer, Dickens reported a slave-productivity-ratio of 1/4 that of a free laborer. Dickens went on to elaborate that "The Rev. E. J. Stearnes...shows by an elaborate calculation, in the criticism of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, that in Maryland the 'cost of a negro at twenty-one years of age has been to the man who raised him eight

⁷⁶See for instance, "On the Management of Slaves," *Southern Agriculturalist* 6 (June 1833): 281-287; Pee Dee, "The Management of Negroes," *Southern Agriculturalist* 11 (October 1838): 512-514; P. T. "Judicious Management of Negroes," *Southern Cultivator* 7 (May 1849): 69; Philon, "Moral Management of Negroes," *Southern Cultivator* 7 (July 1849): 105-106; "Management of Slaves," *De Bow's Review* 13 (August 1852): 193-194; see James O. Breeden, ed., *Advice Among Masters The Ideal in Slave Mgmt. in the Old South*, (Greenwood Press, 1980), 342

⁷⁷ Roediger and Esch discuss Cartwright's worker-productivity-ratio in relationship to factory labor, see Roediger and Elizabeth D. Esch, *The Production of Difference*, 58; for quotation "Cartwright on the Caucasians," 51

⁷⁸ Dickens, "Slaves and Their Masters," 137

hundred dollars. Six percent on this cost, with one and three-quarters percent, for life insurances, per annum makes the lowest wages of a negro under the most favourable circumstances, sixty-two dollars a year, or five dollars a month, paid in advance in the shape of food and clothing.”⁷⁹ Dickens was citing an abolitionist in order to reason with his international community of readers that the Southern slaveholding system operated at an economic *disadvantage*. But Cartwright saw himself as a Southerner and his endorsement of slavery as morally correct. Cartwright wrote that:

The slow-motoned, sleepy headed negro population,⁸⁰ whom Mr. Jefferson did not know what to do with, and to use a common expression, (“could not earn their salt,”) suddenly became, by the introduction of the cultivation of cotton, cane and rice, superior to the white man in efficiency-benefiting themselves, enriching their masters, the whole South, and the entire Union.⁸¹

Cartwright was influenced by Jefferson’s science as much as he was his politics. Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* was active, applied science, reflecting Jefferson’s life-long enthusiasm for both quantitative precision and Baconian observation. His *Notes* provided a template for scientific speculations on slave productivity and should be seen as a pioneering scientific document that addressed the pragmatic concerns of men and women on the American frontier.⁸² Jefferson’s concern with temporality and productivity provided an important intellectual and political foundation for what would become an array of expectations regarding the role of precision and efficiency in the employment of agricultural and later industrial labor.⁸³

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ On references to slaves being “addicted to sleep” in the context of labor and factory workers’ behavior, see Roediger and Esch, *The Production of Difference*, 59

⁸¹ Cartwright, “How to Save the Republic,” 191

⁸² Aside from Jefferson’s deep interest in the largely scientific Lewis and Clark expedition, one non-mathematical book owned by Jefferson makes a compelling case that his *Notes* should be viewed as a document of applied science. Jefferson bought at auction in Amsterdam in 1789 a copy of Theodor de Bry’s 1619 edition of *Travels to the Americas*, the first volume of which contained Thomas Harriot’s *Briefe and true report of the newfound land of Virginia*. This text was a report on Raleigh’s 1585 expedition—the first European mathematician to visit to America. Fauvel argues that when Jefferson wrote his “great Enlightenment treatise,” *Notes on the State of Virginia* in 1785, “Jefferson was in a sense following in the footsteps of Harriot, his mathematical predecessor of two centuries before: both students of native American languages, promoting scientific knowledge of the territories on the eastern seaboard and westward, both using the format of a simple report as vehicle for a wider ideological tract.” See John Fauvel, “Mathematics and Passion in the Life of Thomas Jefferson,” a lecture delivered at the University of Virginia on April 15, 1999, 3

⁸³ In a precursor to more modern 20th century notions of “Taylorism” and its interest in measuring the movements and

Jefferson's attempt to create a mathematical formula regarding worker productivity was prefaced by the *Articles of Confederation* and later codified in the *Constitution*, both of which attempted to account for the "contribution" that non-free persons would make to proportioning who would govern. To Cartwright's thinking, the status of the slave was clearly a constitutional issue, clarified best by the writers of that *Constitution*. Cartwright argued that "The North could not object to a consideration, of the question [of the Fugitive Slave Act] on the higher law basis," if they would only follow his lead and "inquire into the reasons why our fathers, anterior to the Revolution, during that period and at the formation of our present *Constitution*, kept the negro under the same institutions he is still under in the South."⁸⁴

In his observation on the use of statistics and the role of the U.S. Census in early American Government Ted Porter observes "Battles between North and South were fought with numbers long before they were fought with soldiers."⁸⁵ Cartwright too shaped his argument with numbers when he provided a medical rationalization the infamous "3/5 Clause" in the *U. S. Constitution*. The clause was conceived initially as an amendment to the *Articles of Confederation* for the purpose of providing a mechanism to tax black slaves as property without speaking explicitly of slavery. During *that* debate Southern Founders rejected the notion that blacks should be taxed at all. Why confuse persons with property and levy an undue financial burden on the South by taxing its labor force? That proposal failed but it is important to stress that the South argued *against* counting slaves as property — for taxation. When the issue of whether to count slaves for the purposes of representation came up during

productivity of workers' bodies, Jefferson put mathematics to the interest of worker productivity. Fauvel observes that "Travelling through France...in 1788 [Jefferson] noticed peasants near Nancy ploughing, and fell to wondering about the design of the moldboard, that is, the surface which turns the earth: he spent the next ten years working on this, on and off, wondering how to achieve the most efficient design, both offering least frictional resistance, and which also would be easy for farmers out in the frontiers to construct, far from technical help." This is quite good example of "Newtonian mathematics in action, its perhaps surprising applicability to frontier needs, and of Jefferson's command of it." See Fauvel, "Mathematics and Passion in the Life of Thomas Jefferson," 5

⁸⁴ Cartwright, "How to Save the Republic," 192

⁸⁵ Theodore M. Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking, 1820-1900*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 37

the writing of the *U.S. Constitution*, the South reversed their logic and argued that blacks *should* be counted.⁸⁶ The 3/5 number also facilitated counting the “non-free” population for the purposes of electing members to both the House of Representatives and to appointing members to the Electoral College. Exactly how much work a man, woman or child must average before he or she was given consideration as being a contributing member to society was the logic behind the Constitutional Framers’ employment of the phrase “quotas of contribution.”

In Jefferson’s *Notes of Debate on Confederation*, he acknowledged “Mr. Chase [of Maryland] moved that the quotas should be fixed, not by the number of inhabitants of every condition, but by that of the ‘white inhabitants.’” Jefferson recalled that Chase “admitted that taxation should be always in proportion to property; that this was, in theory, the true rule; but that, from a variety of difficulties, it was a rule which could never be adopted in practice.” Chase concluded that since the value of the property in every state could “never be estimated” justly and equally, that “Some other measures for the wealth of the state must therefore be devised, some standard referred to, which would be more simple.” Then Jefferson has Chase introduce the issue of race:

[Chase] considered the number of inhabitants as a tolerably good criterion of property, and that this might always be obtained. He therefore thought it the best mode which we could adopt, with one exception only: he observed that negroes are property, and, as such, cannot be distinguished from the lands or personalities held in those states where there are few slaves; that the surplus of profit which a northern farmer is able to lay by, he invests in cattle, horses, &c., whereas a southern farmer lays out the same surplus in slaves.⁸⁷

After citing Chase’s rationale, Jefferson writes that “There is no more reason, therefore, for taxing the Southern States on the farmer’s head, and on his slave’s head, than the Northern ones on their farmers’ heads and the heads of their cattle; that the method proposed would, therefore, tax the Southern States

⁸⁶ Finkelman argues that the only useful legacy of the Congress of 1783 was the numerical ratio itself, which Congress had applied only to taxation. The application of the ratio to representation was an entirely new concept.

⁸⁷ Jonathan Elliot, *The Debates in the Several State Conventions of the Adopting of the Federal Constitution Vol.1 (Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation Journal of Federal Convention)* [1827]

according to their numbers and their wealth conjunctly, while the Northern would be taxed on numbers only; that negroes, in fact, should not be considered as members of the state, more than cattle, and that they have no more interest in it.”⁸⁸

As one reads the intent of the earliest Americans expressed clearly in their published debates it becomes clear that Founders were stymied about how to determine, and then how to claim, blacks’ “contribution” to the state, while at the same time denying blacks the rights of representation and protection guaranteed by the state. John Adams put forth that: “Certainly five hundred freemen produce no more profits, no greater surplus for the payment of taxes, than five hundred slaves. Therefore the state in which are the laborers called *freemen*, should be taxed no more than that in which are those called *slaves*. Suppose, by an extraordinary operation of nature or of law, one half the laborers of a state could, in the course of one night, be transformed into slaves; would the state be made the poorer, or the less able to pay taxes.”⁸⁹

Statistics and “Contributions”

Just as our political and social cultures are influenced by the sciences that bring us to terms with our behavior and experiences, cultural concepts have a transitive property in that science too has a culture. In his essay, “Pragmatic Science,” Polkinghome reminds us “Science is a human activity.”⁹⁰ The debates surrounding the “Great Compromise” and its much-debated 3/5 clause indicated the first national attempt to enumerate workers’ productivity and ability to contribute to the state — it also provided the conditions for the possibility of pro-slavery science. Perhaps the idea that pro-slavery science began in the 1830s is due to an incomplete appreciation of the horizon of scientific activity. How the sovereign body is conceived determined all future conversations about slavery and African-Americans. It is clear from Madison’s notes to the Convention that the techniques of object creation,

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Donald Polkinghome, “Pragmatic Science,” *Methodology for the Human Sciences*, (New York: SUNY, 1983)

value creation and race-craft were imbricated in enumeration. It is also clear that when Founders crafted the constitution they made population thinking the central component to nation building. Therefore soliciting formulae and ratios of enumeration in crafting the “United States” meant that pro-slavery science began in the summer of 1787, much earlier than is generally argued.

The *Articles of Confederation* made it quite easy to determine how to apportion representatives to Congress: each state received one vote. However at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia Governor Edmund Randolph of Virginia proposed that in the new *U.S. Constitution* that the delegates use population, and not states, as the basis for apportioning representatives. Randolph put forth a series of resolutions on May 29, 1787 that came to be called “The Virginia Plan.” Randolph did so to avert what he called a factional “crisis” in government “and the necessity of preventing the fulfillment of the prophecies of the American downfall.”⁹¹ Paul Finkelman elaborates that “This plan would create an entirely new form of government in the United States. The power of the central government would be vastly enhanced at the expense of the states. The new Congress would have greater powers to tax, to secure the nation ‘against foreign invasion,’ to settle disagreements between states, and to regulate commerce.”⁹²

Randolph’s new model of the *Constitution* retained features of the *Articles of Confederation* which colonists had depended on for nearly a decade, however by abandoning the one-state-one-vote rule and switching to population as the basis from which to determine representation in Congress, Randolph’s plan restructured radically the way that government would function. The “Virginia Plan” created immediate tensions between the large and small states at the Convention, but it also shifted the sectional divide from debates over large and small states (a debate about raw numbers) to a debate between slave and free states (a debate about fractional representation). Most notoriously Randolph’s

⁹¹ Max Farrand, ed., *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, rev. ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 1:18

⁹² Paul Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson*, 3-7

plan raised the dilemma of whether slaves would be counted in allocating representation in the new Congress.

The Philadelphia delegates' issue of how to count slaves or whether to count them at all reflected like a mirror earlier debates which emerged in the failed attempt to amend the *Articles of Confederation* over how to tax southern slaves. Randolph and Madison imported the term "three-fifths" from those debates and this proposed ratio would trouble the delegates throughout the Convention. Finkelman argues the importance of this decision for Randolph as a Southerner as well as his identity as a pro-slavery Virginian:

Virginia's white population, as the 1790 census would reveal, was only slightly larger than Pennsylvania's. If representation were based solely on free persons, the North would overwhelm the South. But if slaves were counted equally with free persons, the Virginia delegation would be the largest, and the South would have more members of Congress than the North.⁹³

Randolph's plan "hedged the issue," by declaring, "the rights of suffrage in the National Legislature ought to be proportioned to the Quotas of contribution, or to the number of free inhabitants, as the one or the other rule may seem best in different cases." Randolph's avoidance of the term "slaves" by referring to "quotas of contribution" indicates the sensitivity of the subject.⁹⁴ These debates over how to enumerate slaves established the first instance of scientific thought being applied to the pro-slavery cause.

When most people think of the "3/5 Clause" in the *U.S. Constitution*, it is popularly thought of as a measure of humanity rather than a measure of legal personhood. However, instead of the 3/5 clause indicating the measure of what it meant to be *human*, the fraction refers to the measure of how much any given human *contributes* to the wealth and prosperity of the state. This was the rationale behind using the figure to determine proportional government; that is, to calculate how many

⁹³ Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, 8

⁹⁴ Farrand, *Records*, 1:20; Virginia's free population in 1790 was 454,983, and in Pennsylvania 430,630; Massachusetts, 378,693; and New York, 318,824. In the South, Virginia had 292,627 slaves, compared to the fact that there were only 40,089 slaves in the entire north in 1790. see Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, 8, 171

“Negroes” in any given state population related proportionally to the number of whites present and property owned as a way of determining the state’s wealth. Since delegates determined that blacks counted at only “3/5 of all other persons,” in order to insure that Northern states did not gain advantage when it came to electing the president, delegates went further and invented the notion of the “Electoral College.”

Mired in debates over whether or not “the people,” or “free white inhabitants” were competent enough to vote on the president, or whether he should just be appointed, delegates fused that concern with the issue of slavery and in an unprecedented — and underappreciated — move *against* democracy, approved the Electoral College. Charles Pickney, George Mason and Hugh Williamson opposed the idea that “the people” should elect the president due to their incompetence to do so. Williamson noted that Virginia would be stifled from electing its leaders because “her slaves will have no suffrage.”⁹⁵ Conversely, Madison believed that “concepts of right and justice were paramount expressions of *majority rule*.”⁹⁶ Therefore Madison argued in favor of “the people” electing the president as he told the convention that “the people at large” were “the fittest” to choose the president, but that “one difficulty...of a serious nature” made election by “the people” an impossibility—slavery. He wrote that “right of suffrage was much more diffusive in the Northern than the Southern states; and the latter could have no influence in the election on the score of the Negroes.”⁹⁷ It was thus that the “fundamentally *anti*-democratic electoral college” developed in order to protect the interests of slavery.⁹⁸

The very concept that “Negroes” counted as “Three-fifths of all other persons” was offered as a

⁹⁵ Farrand, *Records*, 2:20-43

⁹⁶ Ralph Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography*, (New York, 1971), 181, 186-189

⁹⁷ Farrand, *Records*, 2:56-57; The acceptance of the “Electoral College,” based on the House of Representatives, occurred one day after Madison’s speech on July 20, 1787. See Ketcham, *James Madison*, 111; for how debates over slavery shaped the Executive Branch, see Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, 18-19

⁹⁸ Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, 11

compromise, initially proposed by James Madison in 1783 and then overruled by alternate suggestions as to how to account for the number of “Negroes” as property or as part of plantation households in southern slave states. Like other compromises it secured the balance of power among individual states by assuring southern states with majority “Negro” populations that they would not be ill-considered when it came time to enumerate the population. Although most delegates accepted this proposal, Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts protested: “Blacks are property, and are used to the southward as horses and cattle to the northward; and why should their representation be increased to the southward on account of the number of slaves, than horses or oxen to the north?... Are we to enter into a Compact with Slaves?”⁹⁹

A British scholar, Hamilton Richardson, pointed out that by asking to determine an individual’s “quota of contribution” the Americans relied on a British custom, and then tainted it with a Confederate interpretation. He elucidates:

But though the Virginia Plan proposed the British constitutional principle of representation of the members of the Union, that it should be according to their ‘quotas of contribution,’ yet the *rule* which it proposed was the American rule, the rule of the Confederation and Union as amended.¹⁰⁰

The Brit critiqued that “In the Confederation and Union” the “rule of quotas of contribution from the states has been the value of their lands with improvements thereon.” The critic noted that this was all fine and good, “but by resolution of Congress of April 18, 1783, recommended to the states for ratification, the Confederation and Union had been amended so that the states

⁹⁹ Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders*, 9; Gerry’s arguments must be culled from notes taken by Madison, Yates, Paterson, Butler and Lansing, all in Farrand, *Records*, 1:201, 205-206, 208; see also James H. Hutson, ed., *Supplement to Max Farrand’s The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, (New Haven: Yale University Press), 69-70

¹⁰⁰ Hamilton R. Richardson, Esq, *The Journal of the Federal Convention of 1787 Analyzed: The Acts and Proceedings Thereof Compared; and their Precedents Cited: In Evidence of the Making of the Constitution for Interpretation or Construction in the ALTERNATIVE, According to Either the Federal Plan or the National Plan: That by the Latter CONGRESS have GENERAL POWER to Provide for the Common Defense and General Welfare of the United States; DIRECT TAXES are Taxes Direct TO THE SEVERAL STATES, IN Contrast with Duties Extending Throughout the United States, Which are Indirect Taxes to the Several States; And the LIMITS OF THE UNION are Coextensive with the Bounds of AMERICA*, (San Francisco: The Murdock Press, 1899), 61

should contribute according to the whole number of their free inhabitants and three fifths of their slaves.” The British critic expressed some shock and disdain that “this amendment had been ratified by at least eight states,” and was “accepted without dissent in the convention as the rule for quotas of contribution, as is elsewhere more fully set out.”¹⁰¹ So when the Virginia Plan proposed that the states “should have suffrage in proportion either to their quotas of contribution, or in the alternative, their number of free inhabitants,” Richardson perceived correctly that, “the only rule of quotas known as an alternative to the number of free inhabitants” was the failed 1783 amendment introducing the “number of free inhabitants and three fifths of the slaves.” He remarked that it was equivalent to proposing “on the one hand the principle of the Revolution, of representation according to taxation” while “in the alternative, the exclusion of the slaves from the rule of representation according to taxation...”¹⁰²

James Madison noted that “Mr. Williamson”¹⁰³ had made it clear that it was the duty of the Legislature to do what is right regarding granting the suffrage, and therefore Williamson moved that Mr. Randolph’s¹⁰⁴ proposition be postponed in order to consider the following: “that in order to ascertain the alterations that may happen in the population & wealth of the several States, a census shall be taken of the free white inhabitants and 3/5 ths. of those of other descriptions on the 1st. year after this Government shall have been adopted and every year thereafter; and that the Representation be regulated accordingly.”¹⁰⁵ Madison indicated that, “Mr. RANDOLPH agreed that Mr. Williamson’s proposition should stand in the place of his. He observed that the ratio fixt for the 1st. meeting was a mere conjecture,” and additionally that such a formulation “placed the power in the hands of that part

¹⁰¹ Richardson, *Journal of the Federal Convention of 1787 Analyzed*, 61

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Hugh Williamson of North Carolina

¹⁰⁴ Edmund Randolph of Virginia

¹⁰⁵ JAMES MADISON’S NOTES FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION WED., JULY 11, 1787

of America, which could not always be entitled to it, that this power would not be voluntarily renounced; and that it was consequently the duty of the Convention to secure its renunciation when justice might so require; by some constitutional provisions.” Given the argument that the 3/5 figure from the failed amendment to the *Articles* was “conjecture,” Northern and Southern conservatives set out to substantiate a rational figure.

Madison concerned himself with balancing the interests of the Body Politic and he sought to use the proposed U.S. Census as a way to do so; otherwise if “equality between great & small States be inadmissible,” it would lead to disorder. He noted that, “The census must be taken under the direction of the General Legislature. The States will be too much interested to take an impartial one for themselves.” Madison framed his logic in Enlightenment rationality: “What relates to suffrage is justly stated by the celebrated Montesquieu, as a fundamental article in Republican Govts.” He wrote that, “If a fair representation of the people be not secured, the injustice of the Govt. foundations.”¹⁰⁶

Although congressional leaders settled on a formula, finally, it was not a singular effort at enumeration. Madison noted remarkably “Mr. BUTLER & Genl. PINKNEY¹⁰⁷ insisted that blacks be included in the rule of Representation, *equally* with the Whites, and for that purpose moved that the words ‘three fifths’ be struck out.” However, that was the extreme liberal view; Benjamin Harrison of Virginia proposed the figure of 1/ 2. Other New England states suggested 3/ 4 and Madison noted “Mr. GERRY,¹⁰⁸ thought that 3/5 of them was to say the least the full proportion that could be admitted.” They finally agreed on the figure of 3/5, which Madison proposed.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Pierce Butler of South Carolina and General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney

¹⁰⁸ Elbridge Gerry, of Massachusetts and New York, was the chief architect of the “Great Compromise” as he chaired the committee that arranged it. See Michael Kammen, ed., *The Origins of the American Constitution: A Documentary History, Key Selections from Constitutional Plans, Private Correspondence of the Founders and Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers*, (New York: Penguin/Viking Books, 1986), 253-55

Then the debate over enumeration sparked further debate about what the new formula for “quotas of contribution” meant? Madison juxtaposed the temporal importance of what the number may have meant in the past versus the purposes to which it was being put presently: “It was urged by the Delegates representing the States having slaves that the blacks were still more inferior to freemen;” but then he clarified that, “At present when the ratio of representation is to be established, we are assured that they are equal to freemen.”¹⁰⁹ By suggesting that blacks were “equal to freemen” but at the same time denying them the suffrage, Madison was proposing an incongruent view — as Richardson, the English esquire discerned, Madison and his colleagues adopted an English custom by perverting it through its Confederate interpretation. The following passage demonstrates that the formula for “quotas of contribution” had come to represent labor *productivity* explicitly. Madison noted that:

Mr. BUTLER insisted that the labour of a slave in S. Carola. was as productive & valuable as that of a freeman in Massts., that as wealth was the great means of defence and utility to the Nation they were equally valuable to it with freemen; and that consequently an equal representation ought to be allowed for them in a Government which was instituted principally for the protection of property, and was itself to be supported by property.

Mr. MASON,¹¹⁰ could not agree to the motion, notwithstanding it was favorable to Virga. because he thought it unjust. It was certain that the slaves were valuable, as they raised the value of land, increased the exports & imports, and of course the revenue, would supply the means of feeding & supporting an army, and might in cases of emergency become themselves soldiers. As in these important respects they were useful to the community at large, they ought not to be excluded from the estimate of Representation.¹¹¹

Mr. Butler’s insistence that black slave labor bore equivalence to white free labor served as a metaphor to assert that the wealth of South Carolina as well as Massachusetts proved “equally valuable” to the nation. Founders argued that one should protect the well-being of property because the nation was “supported by property” and slaves’ labor proved to benefit whites.

¹⁰⁹ He noted that, “The arguments on ye. former occasion had convinced him that 3/5 was pretty near the just proportion and he should vote according to the same opinion now.” Madison, *James Madison’s Notes*, July 11, 1878

¹¹⁰ George Mason of Virginia

¹¹¹ Madison gives the notes on how each state voted: “On Mr. Butlers motion for considering blacks as equal to Whites in the apportionmt. of Representation: Massts. no. Cont. no. [N. Y. not on floor.] N. J. no. Pa. no. Del. ay. Md. no. Va. no N. C. no. S. C. ay. Geo. ay.” See Max Farrand, ed., *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, rev. ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966) 1:1580-81

I juxtapose these two representatives' comments—as Madison did—in order to amplify that what kept Mr. Mason from sharing Mr. Butler's radically egalitarian opinion was the fact that Mr. Mason argued that he “could not however regard them [blacks] as equal to freemen and could not vote for them as such.” He remarked, “The Southern States have this peculiar species of property, over & above the other species of property common to all the States.” Alternately “Mr. John Adams” of Massachusetts charged that “What matters is whether a landlord, employing ten laborers on his farm, give them annually as much money as will buy them the necessaries of life, or give them those necessaries at short hand? The ten laborers add as much wealth to the state, increase its exports as much, in the one case as the other.”¹¹² Adams suggested here that free laborers who were employed on a farm participated in commercial activity and that their consumption patterns increased the state's financial profile.

Founders argued to what extent a person was more productive when working for themselves, autonomously, than for someone else. Self-interested, “free” labor inspired a person to contribute a full effort to his or her employments as well as licensing them to participate in a growing global economy. Alternately, a coerced — specifically a forced — laborer would be less likely to over-exert him or herself, as they held little interest in the final outcome of their labor. “Non-free persons” contributed less because they were coerced into the labor they executed and the 3/5 numerical ratio reflected that presumed relationship between productivity, coercion and “contribution.” Southerners carried this debate over slave productivity ratios well into the antebellum period and leading up to the Civil War.

Just as Cartwright had determined that blacks operated at 2/3 the capacity as whites, Edmund Ruffin made worker productivity ratios a central component to his much noted, *The Political Economy of Slavery*, published in 1853. Ruffin extended the work-to-productivity ratio to include a

¹¹² Ibid.

consideration of free laborers: “The greater the demand, and the higher the rewards, for labor, the less will be performed, as a general rule, by each individual laborer. If the wages of work for one day will support the laborer or mechanic and his family for three, it will be very likely that he will be idle 2/3 of the his time.”¹¹³ In other words, fewer workers meant more profits which lasted longer and caused idleness. Curiously, Ruffin used enumeration to argue against free-labor advocates and, like Cartwright, Jefferson and Washington, based his argument in observations of black movement:¹¹⁴

Slave labor, in each individual case, and for each small measure of time, is more slow and inefficient than the labor of a free man. The latter knows that the more work he performs in a short time, the greater will be his reward in earnings. Hence he has every inducement to exert himself while at work for himself, even though he may be idle for a longer time afterwards. The slave receives the same support, in food, clothing, and other allowances, whether he works much or little; and hence he has every inducement to spare himself as much as possible, and to do as little work as he can, without drawing on himself punishment, which is the only incentive to slave labor.¹¹⁵

The challenge of holding dear this argument is that if slaves produce less it would seem cheaper to hire free-laborers who, according to Cartwright, Ruffin and the Founders, contributed more. But Ruffin took himself and his slaves seriously¹¹⁶ and held to his tenacious argument; he clarified:

Suppose it admitted that the labor of slaves, for each hour or day, will amount to but 2/3 of what hired free laborers would perform in the same time. But the slave labor is *continuous*, and every day at least it returns to the employers and to the community, this 2/3 of full labor. Free laborers, if to be hired for the like duties, would require at least double the amount of wages to perform 1/3 more labor in each day, and in general, would be idle and earning nothing, more length of time than that spent in labor.¹¹⁷

Ruffin used these figures to conclude that slave labor, “with its admitted defect in this respect,” will

¹¹³ Edmund Ruffin, *The Political Economy of Slavery; or The Institution Considered in Regard to Its Influence on Public Wealth and the General Welfare*, (Washington D.C.: Lemuel Towers, 1853); cited in Finkelman, *Defending Slavery: Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South, A Brief History with Documents*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 2003), 64

¹¹⁴ Jefferson observes black movement, which he discusses as an “animal whose body is at rest” being “disposed to sleep,” see Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia,” in Finkelman. *Defending Slavery*, 50; For Cartwright citing Washington, see Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Philosophy of the Negro Constitution,” 202

¹¹⁵ Ruffin, *The Political Economy of Slavery*, 64-65

¹¹⁶ In 1859, at the age of 65, Ruffin joined the military in order to witness the execution of John Brown and then moved to South Carolina two years later because his home state of Virginia refused to secede from the Union immediately. He also lit the fuse on the cannon that fired the first shot at Fort Sumter and, fittingly, at the end of the Civil War he shot himself in the head with a pistol rather than live among blacks as equals.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 65

still “be cheapest and most profitable.” The conceptual link here was still to the notion of “quotas of contribution,” as Ruffin admits the slave labor to be of benefit “to the employer, and to the whole community, and will yield more towards the general increase of production and public wealth; and that the free laborer who is idle two days out of three, even if receiving double wages for his days of labor, is less laborious, and less productive for himself, and for the community, and the public wealth, than the slave.”¹¹⁸ Ruffin’s logic that slaves could be worked “continuously” had precedence in Cartwright’s famous “*Report on the Diseases Peculiarities of the Negro Race*” published widely just two years earlier.¹¹⁹

In 1851 when Cartwright offered his own worker productivity ratio for blacks as 2/3 that of whites, he asserted first that whites required respite and leisure, whereas blacks could be driven “continuously.” He argued that, “A white man, like a blooded horse, can be worked to death. Not so the negro, whose ethnical elements, like the mule, restricts the limits of arbitrary power over him.”¹²⁰ Cartwright took what the Founders held to be an ambiguous statement of worker-value and made it specifically about race. He elaborated how his own racially based assessment of the work-to-productivity value related to how hard whites could drive blacks as slaves:

Among the four millions of the prognathous race in the United States, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to find a single individual negro, whom the white man, armed with arbitrary power, has ever been able to make hurt himself at work.¹²¹

Cartwright argued blacks were insensitive to pain and had a natural resistance to it. When he coined his neologism “*DYSÆSTHESIA ÆTHIOPICA*” he deployed the Greek term “*Dysaesthesia*” which

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 65

¹¹⁹ Cartwright, “Report on the Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race: Part I,” *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* 7:6 (May 1851): 691-715; Cartwright “The Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race: Part. I,” *De Bow’s Review* 11:1 (July 1851): 64-74; Cartwright “The Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” *Fenner’s Southern Medical Reports* 2 (July 1851): 421; Cartwright “The Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race: Part II,” *De Bow’s Review* 11:2 (August 1851): 206-213; Cartwright “The Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race: Part III,” *De Bow’s Review* 11:3 (September 1851); Cartwright “Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race: Part III,” *New Orleans Med. Surg. Jour.*, (Nov., 1851)

¹²⁰ “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 51-52

¹²¹ Ibid., 51

means “insensitivity to pain.” Michael Ignatieff poses the question: “Force being necessary to the maintenance of any social order, what degree of coercion can the state legitimately exert over those who disobey? Every debate about prison conditions and prison abuses is ultimately about such questions.”¹²² For Cartwright physical force or confrontation was conjoined with spiritual force to create a new psychiatric technique wherein even private realms like “self-consciousness” and solitude could be used as punitive techniques against blacks.¹²³ Cartwright’s and Ruffin’s argument that “the negro” cannot be overworked made the critical difference between driving black slaves versus employing free white laborers. Criticizing European free labor systems while at the same time degrading blacks, Cartwright wrote that “It is beyond the power of the white man to drive the negro into this long continued and excessive muscular exertions such as the white laborers of Europe often impose upon themselves to satisfy a greedy boss, under fear of losing their places, and thereby starving themselves and families.”¹²⁴

Cartwright argued that the proper moral management of blacks accounted for the success of Southern slave economy. As evidence for this claim he cited the economic collapse caused by the Haitian Revolution and Britain’s increased economic interest in East Indian trade; to Cartwright both stood as evidence of the incommensurability of Blackness and Freedom. Reflecting the interests of an international community of physicians,¹²⁵ Cartwright’s rhetoric revealed the trans-Atlantic influences

¹²² Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850* (New York, 1978), xii

¹²³ See also Markus Dirk Dubber, “The Right to Be Punished: Autonomy and Its Demise in Modern Penal Thought” in *Law and History Review* 16:1 (Spring 1998): 113-146; Dubber also cites Jeremy Bentham, *Principles of Penal Law (Rationale of Punishment)*, in *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, ed. John Bowring (New York, 1962; 1830): 1:365, 398. Grotius’s theory of punishment had already stressed the identity of humans in contrast to omniscient and omnipotent God. See Hugo Grotius, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, bk. 2, chap. 20, sect. 4 (Amsterdam, 1625). See also Samuel Pufendorf, *De Jure Naturae et Gentium*, bk. 8, chap. 3, sect. 8 (London, 1672); Christian Thomasius, *Institutiones Jurisprudentiae Divinae*, 7th ed. (Halle, 1730; 1687), bk. 3, chap. 7, sect. 36; Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain*, 55-56 (discussing John Howard). At least since Hobbes, intra-communal punishment was distinguished from extra-communal war. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 2 8 (London, 1651); John Locke, *Of Civil Government*, chap. 2, sect. 9 and chap. 7, sect. 88 (London, 1689)

¹²⁴ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” 51

¹²⁵ For the imbrications of science and empire in an international context as seen through plantation management manuals,

of French, British and American concepts of psychological medicine and treatises on slave management that were traded internationally.¹²⁶

Although it might be a parallel without causality, moral management — what we would now call psychiatric treatment — provided a mechanism for plantation overseers and masters to “season” or to remind “Africans” that they were now “Negro” slaves. Whereas Cartwright coined the neologism “the Nigeritan” and claimed that blacks were likely to resist white commands, a British “Professional Planter” advised that there was another African tribe that held a similarly resistant spirit affecting their mental quality. The British Planter wrote that:

The Ebbos, and the Ebbo-bees, commonly called Mocos, who constitute the greater part of the cargoes carried from the coast of Africa to the British islands, are turbulent, stubborn, and much *addicted to suicide*; yet they are hardy and susceptible of labour, the women in particular, who are superior to any other, and very little inferior to the men. If well trained during their seasoning, and not urged with undue rigor, they frequently turn out good slaves.¹²⁷

This “Planter” shared Cartwright’s concerns about the “badly governed Negro” and the challenge to

see James E. McClellan III, *Colonialism and Science: Saint Domingue and the Old Regime* (University of Chicago, 2010); and for a survey of the networks involved in the colonial side of slave management and plantation handbooks, see James Delbourgo and Nicholas Dew, eds. *Science and Empire in the Atlantic World*, (Routledge, 2008); see also David Lambert and Alan Lester, eds. *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire*, (Cambridge, 2006); also David Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity During the Age of Abolition*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005) See specifically the chapter on Joshua Steele and the “improvement” of slavery. Here Lambert examines an effort to reform slavery from ‘within’ in Barbados in the late 18th century and includes a discussion of the discourses articulated in contemporary plantation management literature.

¹²⁶ In his recent study of French physicians’ treatment of blacks, Andrew Curran presents one physician who, like Cartwright, lamented the lack of medical information on blacks and focused on black physiology and psychology. Curran argues that, “Members of the medical profession in particular found it of paramount importance to provide special guide books (destined presumably for Caribbean planters) that took the Africans’ particular physiology into consideration. In his 1776 *Observations sur les maladies des nègres, leurs causes, leurs traitemens et les moyens de les prévenir*, Jean-Barthélemy Dazille[JC1] began his study of African diseases by lamenting the poor treatment of slaves, as well as the era’s inadequate understanding of specific liabilities of the African body, e.g., “la sécheresse et l’aridité naturelles des fibres.” Such statements regarding the particular nature of African physiology were only the beginning of Dazille’s meditations on a branch of “l’espèce humaine” that was “la plus malheureuse et la plus négligée, malgré [son] utilité.” In a discussion where Dazille describes the unnecessarily high mortality of slave populations in the Caribbean due to “une nourriture insuffisante, le défaut de vêtements et un travail au-dessus de leurs forces.” Dazille chides the colonists for causing unnecessary deaths, or as he put it, “[faisant] périr le produire annuel de la génération des Nègres et l’objet de l’importation.” While Dazille was criticizing European “cupidité” on a certain level, the clinical euphemisms he used to refer to the death of African babies - the loss in the “annual generative production” - certainly speak volumes regarding the growing conceptual difference between Africans and Europeans.” See Andrew Curran, *Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment*, (Johns Hopkins, 2011)

¹²⁷ “A Professional Planter,” *Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negroes*, (1803), 43

“season” Africans properly so that they became productive laborers.¹²⁸ Cartwright borrowed from contemporary moral treatment techniques that proved useful in American and European mental asylums in order to shape black thinking. Whereas the challenge of the asylum superintendent was to turn the lunatic into a functioning citizen, the challenge of the slave-owner was how to turn a man into a slave. Although Cartwright characterized the process of Africans-becoming-slaves as a benevolent “improve[ment]” from barbarism to the school of slavery, the substantive shift was to move Africans from Freedom to dependency: it took people who possessed natural will-power and autonomy, then put them through a rigorous and violent “seasoning” ritual wherein the once-autonomous individual was coerced into behaving as a morally correct, productive slave.

Given that slave “seasoning” or “negro management” and “moral management” shared similar goals of using more psychologically-based management techniques, I explore whether or not—or to what degree—these two phenomena which share a genealogy also shared an interest. To what extent were the “interest” in slavery and the “interest” in psychological medicine the same or different? In order to make that determination or at least begin to explore the possibility of shared interests between slavery and moral treatment techniques, it is important to consider that for physicians like Cartwright—i.e. “specialists,” or physicians dedicated to the study of mental illness—operated from a common set of assumptions about their patients. Four basic propositions undergirded early 19th century notion of “mental illness”—what later became psycho-pathology: the concept relied on a medical model of both disease and treatment; this model depended on a distinction between the normal and the abnormal; the concept depended on analogies between psychic processes and bodily or somatic ones; and the notion of mental illness followed a disease syndrome model.

Following Cartwright’s assertion that benevolence led him to specialize in the medical

¹²⁸ Cartwright, “The Negro or Prognathous Race,” *Atlanta Medical & Surgical Journal* 3 (April, 1858): 475

evaluation of black slaves I argue that the only distinction between moral treatment and negro management was interest. For asylum superintendents, the interest in medical treatment was limited to those who could be admitted as patients to any given asylum. Men and women were routinely separated, but there were often no provisions for non-paying clientele including blacks, Indians and often the Irish. The fact that blacks were either housed in segregated halls or not admitted to state asylums at all reveals that, at its inception, the creators of Moral Treatment did not believe that it was intended for all races, or at least that all races did not warrant the same facilities or location.

Cartwright based his work in wider thinking about physiology and psychology that were integral to American concepts of liberty, citizenship and the body politic. In this regard his concepts were rooted firmly in the Enlightenment tradition of rational humanism. One sees in fact a deep relation between the concepts of physiology (bodily structure), psychology (knowledge acquisition) ideas of freedom (ethical behavior) and citizenship (competency for freedom). Inspired by both Francis Bacon and Thomas Jefferson, Cartwright understood science as a rational, pragmatic duty: as a work to be done. He believed his tutelage with Rush and his own scholarship to be a continuation of Baconian scientific inquiry and an extension of Jefferson's scientific writings on race. Craig Haney argues that "Laws embody theories of behavior," and to Cartwright American law required a specific bodily constitution and mental competency to be recognized.¹²⁹ Cartwright's distorted somatic concept of blacks as "property" obscured his ability to see us as persons and only as perpetual patients.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ See Susanna Blumenthal's fascinating elaboration of the concept "default-legal personhood" as the minimal legal requirement for personhood—in either slavery or insanity cases—that one had to meet in order to be subject to law. See Susanna L Blumenthal. "The Default Legal Person," *UCA Law Review* 54 (2007): 1135; on the influence on the role of the "individual" in early 19th century legal thinking, see Craig Haney, "Criminal Justice and the Nineteenth Century Paradigm: The Triumph of Psychological Individualism in the 'Formative Era,'" *Law and Human Behavior* 6:314 (1982); see also "See Arthur Riss, "The Figure a "person" makes: on the aesthetics of liberalism," in his *Race, Slavery and Liberalism in Nineteenth Century American Literature*, (Cambridge,2009); Mariana A. Oshana writes the relationship between "self-mastery" and "self-government" in her analysis of "agent responsibility" and "agent autonomy" in Oshana, "The Misguided Marriage of Responsibility and Autonomy," *Journal of Ethics* 6 (2002): 261-880

¹³⁰ The idea of a "distorted somatic concept" was discussed at a recent History of Science Society meeting on a panel on revising the current DSM-IV and replacing it potentially with the new RDOC initiative.

Conclusion: Rejecting Law & Embracing Madness

I have examined closely the road to Cartwright's medical claims and demonstrated that he sought to understand scientifically the world in which he lived. Propelled by the belief that looking into smaller and smaller structures would reveal the truth, he used statistics to generate detailed, incremental information about supposed types and etymology to “unlock” the “little books” that existed in words. In attempts to justify his numerical view, he moved beyond Founders' focus on skin color and sought out racial distinctions in structure, at the level of skin, tissues, organs, muscles, bones, blood and the cell. What I hope to show here in the conclusion is how scientists continue to focus on race and difference in the modern era, enough so that it warrants further investigation into how automatic assumptions about race affect health-care and influence concepts of normalcy in medical treatment, governance and jurisprudence.¹

Cartwright died in 1863 but remained a force until late in life because his ideas illustrated a natural outcome of the hotly debated US *Constitution*. As demonstrated in the dissertation, the period between 1819 and 1857 saw several constitutional convulsions regarding not only the rights of citizens, but also what constituted “citizenship,” a designation which weighed heavily on how to govern new territories as well as the function of the original colonies and new states. It should be stated directly that legally, it was *Cartwright* and other pro-slavery advocates who won these early-to-mid nineteenth century debates over black character and destiny by winning the approval of the US Supreme Court. The 1857 *Dred Scott* decision swept away any anti-slavery legal gains won since the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.²

¹ For an examination of how concepts of normalcy have gone on to define modern psychiatry and criminal justice — particularly on how individuals “resemble their crimes before they commit it” — see Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the College De France, 1974-1975*, (New York: Picador, 1999, 2003).

² Adopted by the Confederation Congress on July 13, 1787 the document's official title was “An Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States North West of the River Ohio.” The Northwest Ordinance established a

The bevy of intellectuals and politicians from the North and South who debated black humanity and whether or not black people shared in the “rights of man” convinced the Supreme Court finally that the *Constitution* did not consider blacks as part of the “We” in “We the people.” The ruling stated that black people were not to be considered citizens of the United States and that, as non-citizens, they should expect no protections from the federal government nor a voice in its courts. Based in this reasoning the decision also rejected congressional authority to ban slavery from any federal territory.³ This decision alone rendered moot the protracted debate over whether or not to allow slavery in new territories like Texas, Kansas or California. Supreme Court Justice Benjamin R. Curtis dissented and then resigned from the court following the *Dred Scott* decision.⁴

Editors at *New York Day Book* appended Cartwright's essay “Natural History of the Prognathous Race of Mankind” to an off-print of the Supreme Court's highly controversial decision and advertised the pro-slavery pamphlet in an 1859 issue of *Harper's Weekly*.⁵

government for the Northwest Territory, outlined the process for admitting new states to the Union (and guaranteed that newly created states would be equal to the original thirteen states), and outlawed slavery in the new territories. See also Judgment in the U.S. Supreme Court Case *Dred Scott v. John F.A. Sanford*, March 6, 1857; Case Files 1792-1995; Record Group 267; Records of the Supreme Court of the United States; National Archives.

³ Judgment in the U.S. Supreme Court Case *Dred Scott v. John F.A. Sanford*, March 6, 1857; Case Files 1792-1995; Record Group 267; Records of the Supreme Court of the United States; National Archives.

⁴ Melvin I. Urofsky, *The Supreme Court Justices: A Biographical Dictionary*, (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1994), 126; Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*, (New York, 2001), p. 167

⁵ See, *The Dred Scott decision: opinion of Chief Justice Taney, with an introduction / by J.H. Van Evrie. Also, an appendix, containing an essay on the Natural history of the prognathous race of mankind, originally written for the New York day-book / by Dr. S.A. Cartwright*, (New York: Van Evrie, Horton & Co., 1859, 1860).

**NOW READY:
THE
Dred Scott Decision.**

**OPINION OF CHIEF-JUSTICE
ROGER B. TANEY,
WITH AN INTRODUCTION,
BY DR. J. H. VAN EVRIE.**

ALSO,
AN APPENDIX,

By SAM. A. CARTWRIGHT, M.D., of New Orleans,
ENTITLED,
"Natural History of the Prognathous
Race of Mankind."

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN FOR THE NEW YORK DAY-BOOK.

THE GREAT WANT OF A BRIEF PAMPHLET, containing the famous decision of Chief-Justice Taney, in the celebrated Dred Scott Case, has induced the Publishers of the DAY-BOOK to present this edition to the public. It contains a Historical Introduction by Dr. Van Evrie, author of "Negroes and Negro Slavery," and an Appendix by Dr. Cartwright, of New Orleans, in which the physical differences between the negro and the white races are forcibly presented. As a whole, this pamphlet gives the *historical*, *legal*, and *physical* aspects of the "Slavery" Question in a concise compass, and should be circulated by thousands before the next presidential election. All who desire to answer the arguments of the abolitionists should read it. In order to place it before the masses, and induce Democratic Clubs, Democratic Town Committees, and all interested in the cause, to order it for distribution, it has been put down at the following low rates, for which it will be sent, free of postage, to any part of the United States. Dealers supplied at the same rate.

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In their effort to present "a concise compass" on the debate over slavery editors fused the "historical, legal, and physical" dimensions of the pro-slavery argument. They sought to "place it before the

⁶ The original essay is taken from Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright, "Natural History of the Prognathous Species of Mankind, *New York Day-Book*, (Nov. 10, 1857); For above advertisement see *Harper's Weekly*, (July 23, 1859), 479

masses” and popularize it in order to be “circulated by thousands before the next presidential election.” Cartwright’s professional analysis added medical authority to the legal opinion of Chief Justice Taney and the nation’s highest court: Since slavery was the natural state of the “knee-bending” “Negro,” planters’ paternalism worked to keep blacks sane. Editors fused law with medical authority in attempts to demonstrate physiological evidence that the ‘peculiar institution’ was not peculiar at all.

Championing a legal decision that set the nation on its path to Civil War, the editors of the *New York Day Book* and *Harper’s Weekly* sought to influence national political opinion in the upcoming presidential election of 1860. Although the nation launched forward into Civil War, the editor’s logic reached backward:

The doctrine of 1776, that all (white) men “are created free and equal,” is universally accepted and made the basis of all our institutions, State and National, and the relations of citizenship—the rights of the individual—in short, the *status* of the dominant race, is thus defined and fixed for ever.

But there have been doubts and uncertainties in regard to the negro. Indeed, many (perhaps most) American communities have latterly sought to include him in the ranks of citizenship, and force upon him the *status* of the superior race.

This confusion is now at an end, and the Supreme Court, in the Dred Scott decision, has defined the relations, and fixed the *status* of the subordinate race forever—for that decision is in accord with the natural relations of the races, and therefore can never perish. It is based on historical and existing facts, which are indisputable, and it is a necessary, indeed unavoidable inference, from these facts.

A few years after Columbus had discovered and planted a Spanish colony in the

7

The summary argument was that slavery reflected a natural order, a “Positive Good” expressed by Founders in the US *Constitution* and upheld by white descendants of those Founders.

The tendency to twin radicalism with mental instability intensified in the 1840’s and 1850’s, peaking in John Brown’s trial for his raid on Harper’s Ferry in 1859.⁸ The white abolitionist’s relatives offered up a plea of insanity (on the argument that his mother was insane) in an attempt to save the

⁷ *The Dred Scott decision: opinion of Chief Justice Taney, with an introduction / by J.H. Van Evrie. Also, an appendix, containing an essay on the Natural history of the prognathous race of mankind, originally written for the New York day-book / by Dr. S.A. Cartwright*, (New York: Van Evrie, Horton & Co., 1859, 1860), 3

⁸ Karen Whitman, “Re-evaluating John Brown’s Raid at Harper’s Ferry” *West Virginia History* 34:1 West Virginia Archives and History, (October 1972): 46-84

radical from his inevitable execution.⁹ Brown's response is enlightening. In a letter to the Honorable D. L. Tilden, Brown wrote that, "I may be very insane; and I am so, if insane at all. But if that be so, insanity is like a very pleasant dream to me. I am not in the least degree conscious of my ravings or my fears, or of any terrible visions whatever; but fancy myself entirely composed, and that my sleep, in particular, is as sweet as that of a healthy, joyous little infant."¹⁰ But why did whites twin madness with rejecting the pro-slavery U.S. *Constitution*?

As shown in the dissertation, by 1837 Calhoun warned that the abolitionists' enthusiasm and "fanaticism" "would work their way upward;" that such discussions could not proceed "without a shock or convulsion;" that black political consciousness would certainly "rise and spread;" and even that it had already "taken possession of the pulpit." Striking a cord that reverberated throughout white society, Calhoun spoke of the devastating threat of social contagion — of having to mix not only with "fanatics," but also with "fanatical" free Negroes:¹¹

Be assured that emancipation itself would not satisfy these *fanatics*—that gained, the next step would be to raise the negroes to a social and political equality with the whites; and that being effected, we would soon find the present condition of the two races reversed. They and their northern allies would be the masters, and we the slaves; the condition of the white race in the British West India Islands, bad as it is, would be happiness to ours.¹²

When Calhoun warned Congress against radical calls for immediate abolition he reflected the threat of "moral contagion" articulated by Justice Taney when he served as a young Attorney General to Andrew Jackson (1831-1833).¹³ Calhoun argued that advocates for Black ambition — including whites

⁹ Daniel C. Draper, "Legal Phases of the Trial of John Brown," *West Virginia History* 1:2 (January 1940): 87-103

¹⁰ On Monday, November 28, 1859; see Franklin Benjamin Sandborn, *The Life and Letters of John Brown: Liberator of Kansas, and Martyr of Virginia*, ed., p. 608-610

¹¹ For a discussion on the implications of Calhoun's rhetoric, see George M. Fredrickson, *Black Image in the White Mind*, 57; for citations, see John C. Calhoun, "Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions, Delivered in the Senate, February 6th, 1837," in Richard R. Cralle, ed., *Speeches of John C. Calhoun, Delivered in the House of Representatives and in the Senate of the United States*, (New York: Appleton, 1853), 626-627

¹² John C. Calhoun, "Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions," 633

¹³ On the continuing threat of "moral contagion" fear from the Haitian revolutionaries see Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South*, (The New Press, 1974); p. 35-36; and on Taney's reliance on this concept, see also Michael A. Schoepner, "Status across Borders: Roger Taney, Black British Subjects, and a Diplomatic Antecedent to the Dred Scott Decision," *Journal of American History*, (June, 2013), p. 51-52

who proselytized Black Freedom — were actually “fanatics” and he suggested that they spread information akin to the way one would spread “disease” and “infection.”¹⁴

Taney, Calhoun and Cartwright argued collectively that methods of ideological transmission bore equivalence to actual physiological disease. Michael Schoeppner reminds historians that the logic of Taney's interpretation in *Dred Scott* that blacks had no share in the U.S. *Constitution* came from whites' fear of the international implications of “moral contagion” during the 1820s and 1830s.¹⁵ Although Taney penned his infamous *Scott v. Sanford* decision in 1857 that opinion originated in legislation Taney crafted while he was Andrew Jackson's attorney general in 1832.¹⁶ But the question remains, why did Cartwright, Calhoun and other pro-slavery practitioners conflate calls for Black Freedom with “fanaticism” and “madness”?

Why “Madness”?

Why did contemporaries use the term “fanatical” to describe black advancement? I conclude that this charge came from three factors: 1) the *intensity* and enthusiasm of the claims for freedom, 2) the magnitude or *extremity* of abolitionists' demand for radical egalitarianism, 3) as well as the *totality* of the end result: a total reversal from the protections promised to white men by the slave-based U.S.

¹⁴ John C. Calhoun, “Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions,” 633

¹⁵ Taney's involvement in this case provided him the legal reasoning he used later in *Dred Scott*. Taney argued that the logic of “quarantine” was relevant to the case of Free Black British seamen because of the threat of their “moral contagion” of other blacks in South Carolina. His argument was that liberating information was contagious, like a disease; that these world-wise men might infect local slave populations with abolitionist thought. On the phrase “moral contagion” see Michael A. Schoeppner, “Status across Borders: Roger Taney, Black British Subjects, and a Diplomatic Antecedent to the *Dred Scott* Decision,” *Journal of American History*, (June 2013): 46-68

¹⁶ Little known is that the 1832 case used the logic of medical quarantine to ban the free ingress of Black British soldiers in South Carolina seaports. At the request of the U.S. State Department Taney argued that President Jackson had no obligation to honor the treaty rights of Black British sailors: “Yet this word [subject] cannot be regarded as having been used in that extensive sense by the parties to the contract. That unfortunate people [of the African races] came into the dominions of Great Britain not as aliens coming to settle among them & whose descendants would be free born British subjects, but as slaves; whose posterity it was then intended should always remain so. The privileges there granted to some of them, are rather favours than rights inherent in British subjects... They are not to be intended to be included when the British people or British subjects are spoken of. . . . They have never been looked to or considered as forming any part of the body politic.” See Roger B. Taney to State Department, May 28, 1832, manuscript opinion on the Negro Seamen Act, box 1 (1790–1839), Opinions on Legal Questions, 1790–1882, Records of the Office of the Attorney General, 1790–1870, General Records of the Department of Justice, RG 60 (National Archives, College Park, Md.).

Constitution. Cartwright described what he saw as the increased *intensity* of calls for abolition in the United States. He traced that intensity back to British calls for abolition in Parliament and specifically to James Cropper's radical sect within the British Anti-Slavery Society who initiated a petition drive to energize Parliament to enforce what had become lenient provisions under the initial Abolition Act of 1833.¹⁷ Part of what accounted for the intensity of "immediatism" was the "moral certainty" of the younger generation of anti-slavery activists.¹⁸ Cartwright used terms like "Swarms of abolition emissaries" to depict the intensity he saw in the abolitionist claim for immediate action.¹⁹

The *extremity* of the claim for "immediate" abolition was an additional reason Cartwright and his Southern cohort labeled the more "radical abolitionists" as "fanatical." Cartwright pivoted from being a diagnostician predicating mental theories of black behavior based in physiological claims about their natural differences, to writing as an historian, searching out relevant facts in obscure sources. It was during this time, before the professionalization of medicine, that the social sciences were being formed and Cartwright acted as a hybrid figure pulling from a variety of evidence. Knitting together notions of French radicalism and British imposture Cartwright reminded southerners that, "The French republic, so called, went to all the extremes which the London abolitionists desired, and like South American and every other republic founded upon extreme and fanatical principles, it soon went to ruin." Cartwright alleged that the French notions of radical egalitarianism were "fanatical principles" because they were too "extreme."²⁰

But France's radical egalitarianism was a different kind of extremity than the one Cartwright outlined earlier when he detailed abolitionists' call for "immediate" abolition. His critique of immediatism was that gradualism made more sense. Stressing the unreasonable nature of mounting

¹⁷ That act stated that current slaves would be held, without pay, for a period of apprenticeship.

¹⁸ Timothy Patrick McCarthy & John Stauffer, eds. *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, (New York: The New Press, 2006), xxvi

¹⁹ [Cartwright], "East India Cotton," 467

²⁰ [Cartwright], "East India Cotton," 456

demands for immediatism in North America Cartwright reasoned that the British did not act “immediately” in the emancipation of its *own* slaves. Cartwright argued that on August 28th, 1833, the same day that Britain passed its Emancipation Act Parliament also passed “An act for effecting an arrangement with the East India Company, and for the better government of his Majesty’s Indian territories, until the 30th of April, 1854.” Cartwright alleged that Section 9 of this Act stipulated that “none of the cotton, sugar, rice or indigo made in India, for 20 years, from 1833, can be seized for the company’s debts.”²¹ The Abolition Act secured both property and financial assurances to fortify the East India Company’s stronghold against its competitor in Cartwright’s native south. To give some sense of the scope of that power Cartwright reminded Southerners “The extent of the plantation, over which this English overseer has control, is greater than the whole territory of the United States.” Using the 1840 U.S. Census Cartwright wrote that “The number of slaves directly subject to the overseer, who has full power over their persons and property, having no civil or political rights, except as he chooses to give them, amount to the enormous number of one hundred and sixteen millions of persons; about seven times the number of the whole population of the United States in 1840.”²²

Cartwright recorded that “Section 68th” of that Act required the Governor General “to take into consideration the means if *mitigating* the state of slavery, and of ameliorating the condition of slaves, and of extinguishing slavery throughout said territories as soon as it shall be *practicable and safe*.” [Original emphases]²³ Cartwright saw hypocrisy in the way Britain viewed the United States—gradualism in England but immediatism in North America: “This is the tone of Great Britain to her East India Overseer, but what is her tone to her equal, the republic of the United States? Does she request America to extinguish slavery as soon as practicable and safe? She *orders* us to extinguish it immediately, safe or nor safe; but her overseer in India is permitted to exercise a discretion, which she

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 458

²³ Ibid., 457

is unwilling to grant to America!”²⁴ Cartwright’s proclamation echoed Jefferson’s stress on establishing “a *practicable* . . . cession of that kind of property, for so it is misnamed.”²⁵ Cartwright stressed that the British were pushing the North against the South and fomenting slaves into a threatening fervor wherein they became hungry for abolition; what Jefferson called having “the wolf by the ears,” where “we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other.”²⁶ When Cartwright indicated that “immediatism” was neither “safe” nor “practicable” his concerns were temporal and pragmatic. Cartwright’s critique of France’s “fanatical principles” rested on his charge that they had abandoned rational principles; it revealed a concern for the extremity of abstraction and imagination defeating reason.

In addition to the *intensity* of the abolitionist tactics and the *extremity* of their egalitarian claim was the *totality* of its effect — “immediatism” reflected a sharp break from linear notions of progress and history, which had led to the current Western world-view.²⁷ The possibility of Black Freedom threatened deeply the Southern slave-holder’s self-image because it challenged their entire understanding of the way Nature, God and Law worked together to establish and uphold white supremacy. To Cartwright the three worked together to secure an “Empire of the White man’s Will,” a world-image wherein whites governed blacks benevolently through moral force.²⁸ But the younger abolitionists rejected such thinking and the “gradualism” it engendered. To get at the riveting danger of the two extremes, as Stauffer and McCarthy put it, “While gradualists were willing to compromise with sin, immediatists believed that the nation would soon become all one thing or all the other—to paraphrase Lincoln’s 1858 ‘House Divided’ speech” which led the nation eventually into Civil War.²⁹

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Thomas Jefferson to John Holmes, April 22, 1820

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ McCarthy and Stauffer, *Prophets of Protest*, xxvi

²⁸ Cartwright, “Dr. Cartwright on the Caucasians and the Africans,” *De Bow’s Review* 25:1 (1858): 48

²⁹ McCarthy and Stauffer, *Prophets of Protest*, xxvi

In addition to immediatists demanding a sharp-break, they also forced what, for many whites, proved an unthinkable reversal of circumstance, advocating “a total and swift transformation of society.”³⁰ Cartwright’s historical account of the abolitionists’ influence on French radicalism and what he described as the “fanatical principles” of radical equality expressed outrage at the magnitude of the claim that blacks and whites deserved equal treatment. His statistical citations and consistent accusations of “fanatical principles” are instructive as they form the bases for his diagnoses of specific black mental illnesses. His perceptions were political, moral and natural. Cartwright wrote that:

Republicanism in the United States is founded upon *natural* distinctions in society. [Original emphasis] The governments of Europe are all founded, more or less, upon *artificial* distinctions of birth, property, &c. In the United States all that extensive class of persons, who are unable to take care of themselves, and provide for their own wants, are placed under a domestic or home government, which keeps them in subjection and makes them happy and comfortable out of the proceeds of their own labor. In what are called the non-slaveholding States of this Union, about three-fourths of the entire population is under the domestic or fireside government, and in the Southern States, about four-fifths or five-sixths are under identically the same government, and no other.”³¹

As Cartwright relayed it, Southern slaves were really no different from Northern industrial apprentices and wage-laborers that depended on an overseer or boss. In calling it a “fireside government,” he wanted to make the terror of slavery seem charming. What Cartwright called loosely the “rod and strap” government, he also referred to as a system of “associated labor,” each synonyms for plantation-style rule by threat of violence and restraint. Cartwright’s political theory was essentially a bounded concept of Freedom wherein the privileges of citizenship held an inverse relationship between blacks and whites.³² The *Constitution* circumscribed blacks, litigating them by their alleged nature to a different order of “rights” which culminated in the reciprocal master-slave relationship.

To Cartwright, to live without this current arrangement — to reject law — was madness because it meant to exist without the orientation of privilege and absent protection. To reject law also

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ [Cartwright], “East India Cotton,” 470

³² See Carole Pateman and Charles Wade Mills, *The Contract and Domination*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007); and Charles Wade Mills, *The Racial Contract*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997)

constituted open rebellion. Without a reasoned and agreed-upon foundation to replace law, governing would become anarchy. The logic of the right to rebellion appealed to radical abolitionists and secessionists alike — Southerners threatened that if Northerners acted to deprive them of their constitutionally protected property in slaves, the Federal union would be stepping outside of its original contract stipulated in the *Constitution*. If there was no contract, there was no binding law and only open rebellion. Conversely Madison’s recent publication of his notes on the writing of the *U.S. Constitution* radicalized the young abolitionists as they revealed that the Founders’ debates were decidedly pro-slavery. Rebellion requires adherence to an internal world-view that is more powerful than the external situation. Rejecting law meant rejecting the social contract, and a just-cause for open warfare in a state of all against all. The radical abolitionists and the South Carolina secessionists welcomed such social reorganization, anarchy or not.

The persistence of an internal worldview over external situations is also a way to describe madness. When the physician labels a persistent viewpoint as “diseased” he or she proceeds from the presumption that the external situation is also the correct orientation or arrangement of things. The very cultural authority that produces the physician’s opinion interpellates the patient’s viewpoint as the opposing, broken world-view. In making a diagnosis the physician is arguing that his own self-concept (and at the time it would have been a male-only point of view) and outlook was more powerful, more penetrating, and more pervasive than the mad-man’s or mad-woman’s world-view. “Alienists” sought to restore balance to the “fanatic” believed to be “alienated” temporarily from himself or herself, caught up in a schism and adopting an unreal but compelling point of view—and Cartwright specialized in restoring balance to the “Negro.”

Cartwright’s arguments about the physiological differences between blacks and whites, as well as his most famous diagnoses, *Drapetomania* and *Dysaesthesia Aethiopica* reflect wide-spread

nineteenth century thinking about race, 'correct conduct' and science which continues to influence twenty-first century thinking about race, rebellion and diagnoses of mental illness. The following is a brief list of titles culled from recent news venues, including *The Associated Press*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *MSNBC*, and the *New York Times*:

- "Bigotry as Mental Illness or Just Another Norm," by Emily Eakin³³
- "How Teenage Rebellion Has Become a Mental Illness," by Bruce Levine³⁴
- "U.S. Military: Heavily Armed and Medicated," by Melody Petersen³⁵
- "Validation and Extension of the Endophenotype Model in ADHD Patterns of Inheritance in a Family Study of Inhibitory Control," *American Journal of Psychiatry*³⁶
- "FDA Issues Safety Communication about an Ongoing Review of Stimulant Medications Used in Children with ADHD," Press Release from the *Federal Drug Administration*³⁷
- "FDA Panel Backs 3 Psychiatric Drugs for Kids," by Matthew Perrone³⁸
- "Patient wants Right to Refuse Electroshocks, Associated Press³⁹

³³ Eakin quotes Dr. Cartwright and interviews Harvard Psychiatrist Dr. Alvin Poussiant of the Harvard Medical School. The article claims that Poussiant, along with seven other black psychiatrists, petitioned to get "Racism" added to the DSM-IV, basing his assertions on the 1950's behest of the American Jewish Committee to study "The Authoritarian Personality." Three of the authors were Jewish, and one of them, including the philosopher Theodor Adorno, were refugees from Nazi Germany. The article also goes on to cite UC Santa Cruz Professor Emeritus, psychologist Thomas Pettigrew, who argued, "You almost had to be mentally ill to be tolerant in the South... The authoritarian Personality was a good explanation at the individual level, but not at the societal level. See Eakin, Emily, *New York Times*, January 15, 2000

³⁴ Bruce Levine, "How Teenage Rebellion Has Become a Mental Illness," AlterNet, January 27, 2008; or see http://www.alternet.org/story/75081/how_teenage_rebellion_has_become_a_mental_illness

³⁵ "According to data from a U.S. Army mental-health survey released last year, about 12 percent of soldiers in Iraq and 15 percent of those in Afghanistan reported taking antidepressants, anti-anxiety medications, and sleeping pills. Prescriptions for painkillers have also skyrocketed. Data from the Department of Defense last fall showed that as of September 2007, prescriptions for narcotics for active-duty troops had risen to almost 50,000 a month, compared with about 33,000 a month in October 2003, not long after the Iraq War began." See Melody Petersen, "U.S. Military: Heavily Armed and Medicated: Prescription pill dependency among American troops is on the Rise," *Men's Health Magazine*, May 19, 2009

³⁶ "Inhibitory control was studied in children with ADHD, unaffected siblings, and their biological parents. Co variation in inhibitory control within families was investigated. Differential co variation as a function of parental sex was also studied. A number of validity criteria for inhibitory control as an endophenotype were assessed, including sensitivity to the disorder and presence in unaffected relatives." See Goss, Crosbie, Payne, Scharchar, et al, "Validation and Extension of the Endophenotype Model in ADHD Patterns of Inheritance in a Family Study of Inhibitory Control," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 166:6 (June 2009): 711-717

³⁷ "There may be an association between the use of stimulant medication for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, known as ADHD, and sudden cardiac death in healthy children, according to a study published by the American Journal of Psychiatry. But the U.S. Food and Drug Administration says that, because of the study's limitations, parents should not stop a child's stimulant medication based on the study. The FDA recommends that parents should discuss concerns about the use of these medications with the prescribing health care professional." From "FDA Issues Safety Communication about an Ongoing Review of Stimulant Medications Used in Children with ADHD," Press Release from the *Federal Drug Administration*, June 15, 2009

³⁸ "Advisers to the Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday that three blockbuster psychiatric drugs appear safe and effective for children and adolescents, despite side effects that can increase the risk of diabetes. The FDA's panel of psychiatric experts voted to approve the use of drugs from Astra Zeneca, Eli Lilly and Pfizer for treating schizophrenia and bipolar disorder in patients 10 to 17." See Matthew Perrone, "FDA Panel Backs 3 Psychiatric Drugs for Kids," *Associated Press Business Writer*, June 10, 2009

³⁹ "Sanford, who had been declared legally incompetent, said he agreed to the [electro-shock] treatments at first, but after more than 40 of them he finds it hard to remember names and other things. His bipolar disorder is under control he says,

- “Your Brooding Teen: Just Moody, or Mentally Ill? First signs of Mental Illness Often Occur During a time of Typical Teen Turmoil,” by Roni Caryn Rabin, *MSNBC*, Dec. 2, 2008⁴⁰
- “Panel: All Teens Should be Tested for Depression: 2 Million in U.S. are Affected but most are Undiagnosed, Task Force Says,” *The Associated Press*, Monday, March 30, 2009⁴¹
- “AstraZeneca Chalks Up Seroquel Dismissal in State Court,”⁴²

In his introduction to *The Western Medical Tradition*, Harold J. Cook, Director of the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine in London, helps to make better sense of the sometimes-muddled relationship between normalcy, disease and healing.⁴³ In one of the first extensive historical overviews of medicine’s recent past editors contend that “Governments and other parties have... invested large amounts of political and financial capital in encouraging certain kinds of medicine, claiming that it would yield positive results in the struggle against disease and disability,” however the editors charge also, “*Their aims have sometimes been far from humanitarian: to increase the population and the number of fit productive workers paying taxes rather than drawing on them, to reduce the financial burden on powerful business interests or to favour certain kinds of economic development, to return*

and he should have the right to say no...” This is worse than water-boarding,” said David Oakes, executive director of Mind Freedom International, who led about two dozen people in a rally at the Minnesota Capitol this month to draw attention to Sanford’s case. “Offer somebody the choice between water-boarding or forced electroshock, and a lot of our people who know what it is will say water-boarding,” Oakes said. See “Patient wants Right to Refuse Electro-shocks, *Associated Press*, May 10, 2009

⁴⁰ “By the time they are college age, nearly one in five young American adults has a personality disorder that interferes with everyday life, found an extensive study released Monday by a Columbia University and New York State Psychiatric Institute. While half of all serious adult psychiatric illnesses start before the age of 14, evidence suggests that parents may be the last to know. One study found that parents were unaware of 90 percent of suicide attempts made by teenagers. Another report from a screening program found that the vast majority of parents of kids identified as having psychiatric symptoms thought their child was all right...” See “Your Brooding Teen: Just Moody, or Mentally Ill? First signs of Mental Illness Often Occur During a time of Typical Teen Turmoil,” *MSNBC*, Dec. 2, 2008

⁴¹ “An influential government-appointed medical panel is urging doctors to routinely screen all American teens for Depression—a bold step that acknowledges that nearly 2 million teens are affected by this debilitating condition. Most are undiagnosed and untreated, said the panel, the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force, which sets guidelines for doctors on a host of health issues... SCREENING ADVISED EVEN FOR KIDS WITHOUT SYMPTOMS. It cited two questionnaires that focus on depression tip-offs, such as mood, anxiety, appetite and substance abuse... The recommendations come at a pivotal time for treatment of depression and other mental health problems in children. Recently passed federal mental health equity legislation mandates equal coverage for mental and physical ailments in insurance plans offering both. The law is expected to prompt many more adults and children to seek mental health care... The report says pediatricians should routinely consult with child psychiatrists, including working in the same office when possible. And it says insurers should compensate pediatricians for any mental health services they provide.” See “Panel: All Teens Should be Tested for Depression: 2 Million in U.S. are Affected but most are Undiagnosed, Task Force Says,” *The Associated Press*, Monday, March 30, 2009

⁴² Jeanne Whalen, “AstraZeneca Chalks Up Seroquel Dismissal in State Court,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 10, 2009

⁴³ W. F. Bynum, Anne Hardy, Stephen Jacyna, Christopher Lawrence and E. M. Tansey, *The Western Medical Tradition, 1800-2000*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 4-5

soldiers to the battlefield as quickly as possible, or to recruit more souls to a religious movement or more voters to a political party.” Therefore, even given the extent to which medicine has made great strides, we cannot say fundamentally that it has made great strides forward. Cook continues, “Whatever the mixture of causes, despite horrific setbacks and continuing challenges... there have been clearly measureable improvements in human health in the West over the last centuries because governments have supported certain kinds of intervention to prevent disease.” He warns however, “It is less easy to say whether the results have created greater happiness because the modern world has also developed, sometimes with the aid of medicine, new methods for controlling behaviour and even for enabling mass murder.”⁴⁴ Certainly those of us who can recognize science’s advances can also recognize how science in medicine can harm, confuse and in some tragic instances kill.

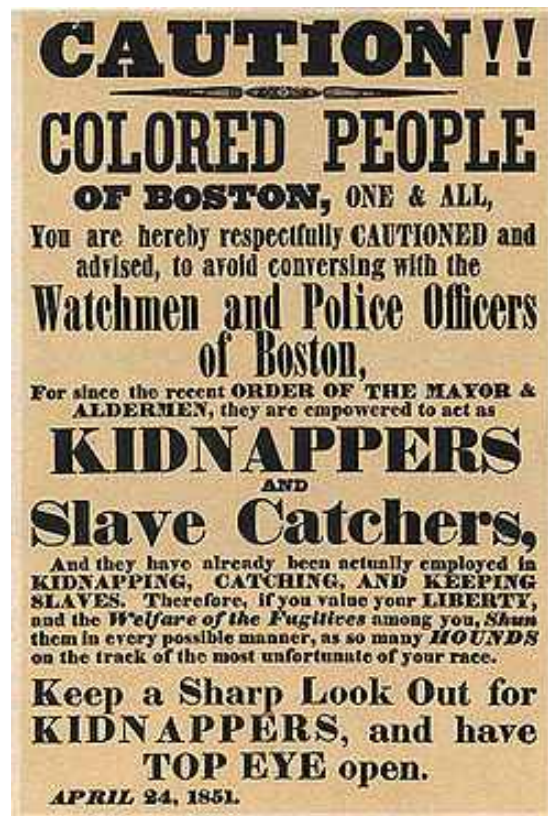
In addition to physicians continuing to label defiant populations as mentally ill, Cartwright's work on the biological differences between the races has also protruded its intellectual scaffolding into the twenty-first century. This raises the very important question of how general claims about the moral depravity of blacks took the shape of actual medical diagnoses, as well as how an automatic and negative heuristic makes certain populations more vulnerable to exploitation than others. This question takes two forms that I shall address briefly before offering some final analyses from critical race theory that help to address why distinctions between the races continue even into the modern period.

Excellent studies have appeared that explore the grim business of medical experimentation on blacks.⁴⁵ What is certain from Cartwright’s career is that his personal practice of procuring blacks for

⁴⁴ Bynum, et al, *The Western Medical Tradition*, 5

⁴⁵ On Physicians using blacks for medical experimentation, see Chapter 1 above; see also Harriet A. Washington, *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present*, (New York: Random House, First Anchor Books, 2006); Todd L. Savitt, “The Use of Blacks for Medical Experimentation in the Old South,” *Journal of Southern History* 48 (1992): 331-48; most recently, see Stephen C. Kenny, ‘I can do the child no good’: Dr. Sims and the Enslaved Infants of Montgomery, Alabama,” *Social History Medicine* 20 (2007): 223-41; as well as Kenny “Anatomy, Autopsy, and Dissection of Enslaved Bodies in the Old South” (forthcoming in *The Slave Body in the World of Southern Medicine*); on using slaves’ bodies to “advance their fantasies of mastery and potency,” see Johnson, *Soul By Soul*, (Harvard, 1999), 103-105

medical experimentation was in no way singular, and in more ways the norm. Southern courtrooms allowed physicians to purchase sick slaves at slave-warranty trials,⁴⁶ and slave traders also sold off sick slaves to physicians at a bargain rates.⁴⁷ After the 1850 US Census generated a statistical picture of the frequency of slaves running away, and subsequent passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, at the North traders hunted down Free Blacks in order to kidnap and sell them to the South:



Most profoundly, the majority of the cadavers used for anatomical research in southern medical colleges in the antebellum era were slave bodies.⁴⁸ When physicians view blacks as sub-humans, non-persons or demons, how does that relate to the ability to pose research questions?

⁴⁶ On buying slaves at trial, based on their physical conditions, see Johnson, *Soul By Soul*, 181-189

⁴⁷ On slave traders bargaining with physicians over the value of “sick” slaves, see Johnson, *Soul By Soul*, 201

⁴⁸ Stephen Kenny argues this point effectively by using archaeological evidence from the excavations in the 1990s that confirmed the “disproportionate use in the use of slave corpses in the teaching of anatomy, a practice that investigators called “postmortem racism.” See R. L. Blakely and J. M. Harrington, eds., *Bones in the Basement: Postmortem Racism in Nineteenth-Century Medical Training* (Washington, DC, Smithsonian Inst. Press, 1997)

When one takes into account the rather remarkable twenty-first century history of how physicians procured tissue and cell samples from Henrietta Lacks, it becomes clear how present this concern continues to be. Lacks was a poor black tobacco farmer, but she is known quite widely to the medical and scientific community as “HeLa,” the name given to the strain of cancer cells which were taken from her body without permission. What was and continues to be remarkable about Lacks' cells is the rate at which they continue to replicate. It is considered among the most important components or tools of modern medicine. Jonas Salk used the “HeLa” cell strain to test for and then discover the cure to polio, but the government worked with physicians to exploit Henrietta Lacks' cells to test for the effects of the atomic bomb and they have also become important in vitro fertilization, gene-mapping and genetic cloning. Although the “HeLa” cell line has been “bought and sold by the billions,” neither Lacks nor her family received any consideration or compensation. According to Rebecca Skloot, Lacks cell strain, if amassed, would weigh more than 22 tons.⁴⁹ The Tuskegee Syphilis study is another well-known case of government and medical campaign to infect numerous black men in rural Alabama with the syphilis disease while pretending to cure them.⁵⁰ Returning to Charles Mills' point regarding “willful ignorance,” how is it possible for very reasonable scientists and knowledgeable public officers to have assisted in these acts? The Tuskegee and “HeLa” outrages demonstrate that the issue of using black bodies as raw material for medical study is not a dead letter from Cartwright's day.

Less egregious and potentially benign cases of medical interest in racial theory is evidenced in the field of pharmaceutical therapeutics, specifically with the ethical concerns which erupted in 2004 around the development and FDA approval of the drug “BiDil,” a new medical treatment that contains

⁴⁹ Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, (Tuggerah, Australia: Pan Macmillan, 2011)

⁵⁰ The iconic work on this topic is James H. Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, The modern Classic of race and medicine updated with an additional chapter on the Tuskegee Experiment's Legacy in the Age of AIDS*, (New York: The Free Press, 1981, 1993)

genetically altered sequences which allegedly make the heart disease medication specifically oriented to work better on African Americans.⁵¹ Considering “Why Race Still Matters” in medicine historian of science Ian Hacking takes a cue from a 2004 news headline in the *New York Times*:

“Drug approved for Heart Failure in African Americans”—headline on the first business page of *The New York Times*, July 20, 2004. Here we go again? Quite possibly. “The peculiar history [of this drug] on the road to the market presents a wide array of troubling and important issues concerning the future status of race as a category for constructing and understanding health disparities in American society.” For a stark reminder of the commerce, the *Times* reported that the previous day the stock of the drug’s maker, *NitroMed*, rose from \$4.31 to \$10.21, and had reached \$16 at midday. This story has been ongoing for a decade in medical, commercial, and regulatory circles.⁵²

According to literature provided by *NitroMed*, the company that promoted the long-term study that won “BiDil” its FDA approval:

The Company's lead drug, BiDil®, was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) June 23, 2005. BiDil is indicated for the treatment of heart failure as an adjunct to current standard therapy in self-identified black patients, to improve survival, prolong time to hospitalization for heart failure and improve patient-reported functional status. *NitroMed is directly marketing BiDil to physicians who treat black patients with heart failure...* By building on the BiDil development experience and commercialization infrastructure, NitroMed seeks to identify and market additional pharmaceutical products for cardiovascular and metabolic diseases for the black population.⁵³

Similarly, in a document entitled, “Our Strategy,” the *NitroMed* literature reads:

Our goal is to become a leading, multi-product pharmaceutical company by developing additional innovative nitric oxide products and by building on our BiDil development experience and *commercialization infrastructure to identify and market additional products for cardiovascular and metabolic diseases for the African American population.*⁵⁴

In a cogent critique of the ubiquitous and pervasive effect of pharmaceutical companies over our perceived well-being, Cook concludes quite importantly that global and financial interests affect radically how we conceive health and disease, particularly in the case of the interests of medical

⁵¹ *NitroMed* of Lexington, Massachusetts is the maker of BiDil (isosorbide dinitrate/hydralazine hydrochloride), an orally administered medicine available in the United States for the treatment of heart failure in self-identified black patients. In this population, BiDil is indicated as an adjunct to current standard therapies such as angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors and beta-blockers. There is little experience in patients with New York Heart Association Class IV heart failure. BiDil was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, primarily on the basis of efficacy data from the company's landmark A-HeFT (African American Heart Failure Trial) clinical trial. For full prescribing information, visit: www.BiDil.com.

⁵² Ian Hacking, “Why Race Still Matters,” *Daedalus* 134:1 (Winter, 2005): 102-116

⁵³ http://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/927829/000110465905030079/a05-11357_1ex99d1.htm

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, (emphasis mine)

corporations: “the most visible of which are the pharmaceutical companies, which have in their harvesting of resources, production methods, and distribution and remuneration systems, affected people the world over for good and ill in ways that national governments can sometimes not control even if they try.”⁵⁵ The emphasis in these documents focuses on marketing as much as it does curing. In a stark way, *NitroMed*’s genetic alteration of pharmaceuticals in the “BiDiI” case raises additional concerns about the development of our knowledge of the “human genome.”

The “human genome project” and scientists’ attempt to map the human genome, record genetic activity, as well as graft genetic material from, or onto, stem-cells each raise questions about the equitable treatment of genetic material. This is especially a concern in embryonic stem cell research where there is the possibility that scientists could operate under the moral conflicts which arise in the misperceived disposability of one “type” or “kind” of fetus over another. The attempt to record and database hereditary and genetic information manifested itself in the late twentieth century as the Clinton/Gore Administration’s *Violence Initiative* which targeted youth believed to be genetically pre-disposed to violent behavior.⁵⁶

In assessing the viability of a public health approach to violence, Workgroup B focussed [sic] on the special considerations critical to conducting research in this area. Recent events such as the controversy over the proposed University of Maryland “Genetic Factors in Crime” conference remind us that the suspicions in the African American community fostered by such research tragedies as the “Tuskegee Studies,” still exist. The youth violence prevention program surfaced at a time when these suspicions ran highest.⁵⁷

The “suspicions” that the 1993 federal report cited are reflected also in the newer 1993 edition of Jones’ book, *Bad Blood*, whose updated subtitle read: “The modern classic of race and medicine updated with an additional chapter on the Tuskegee Experiment’s Legacy in the age of AIDS.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ibid, 6

⁵⁶ See “DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, REPORT OF THE SECRETARY’S BLUE RIBBON PANEL ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION,” U.S. Department of Justice National Institute of Justice, (Jan. 15, 1993); or click here: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/148206NCJRS.pdf>

⁵⁷ See “Report of the Secretary’s Blue Ribbon Panel on Violence Prevention,” 27

⁵⁸ James H. Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, The modern Classic of race and medicine updated with*

Incursions on black privacy and wellness like the University of Maryland “Genetic Factors in Crime” conference,⁵⁹ the “Tuskegee Syphilis Experiments,” the Federal “Violence Initiative” and the exploitation of the “HeLa” cell strain are among the reasons why the American government has generated generations of distrust among poor and African-American communities; because of its complicity with experiments on people who are already most at risk.⁶⁰

Although the “Violence Initiative” project drew protests and was abandoned, it was a well-funded attempt by the Federal government to ferret out potentially violent individuals by looking into the genetic and hereditary history of a captive population. The “applicant pool” for the study consisted of primary and secondary relatives of already convicted criminals. With the rationale that, if criminal or violent activity manifests itself in the gene pool once, it may re-emerge in family members closely linked to that violent offender’s genetic code.⁶¹ Regarding the value of genetically-mapped information, a March 2009 ruling by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg condemned Britain's policy of storing DNA samples from innocent people, a ruling that the British government described as “disappointing.” The court said police in Yorkshire, northern England, should not have kept the DNA and fingerprints of two British men who had no previous convictions on a national database. The judges said keeping the information constituted a “breach of rights” and “could not be

an additional chapter on the Tuskegee Experiment's Legacy in the Age of AIDS, (New York: The Free Press, 1981, 1993)

⁵⁹ Philip J. Hilts, “U.S. Puts a Halt to Talks Tying Genes to Crime,” *The New York Times*, September 5, 1992

⁶⁰ Harriet Washington covers this sense of distrust among blacks in her Harriet A. Washington, *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present*, (New York: Random House, First Anchor Books, 2006); she outlines this reasons for distrust on 4-7, and speaks of distrust of medical personnel on 15-19, the medical fears generated by the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment on 179-180, 199-200, and on distrust of contraception, 222; and curiously on how science fiction authors integrated experimenting on blacks in their creative narratives on 229, and finally on how the historical buildup of distrust led to blacks distrust over the AIDS diagnoses on 340, 369

⁶¹ On a discussion of the disadvantages of the federal “Violence Initiative,” see Peter R. Breggin, M.D. & Ginger R. Breggin, “The Federal Violence Initiative: Threats to Black Children (and Others),” *Psych Discourse* [journal of the Association of Black Psychologists] 24:4 (April 1993): 1-11; and Breggin & Breggin, “A Biomedical Programme for Urban Violence Control in the US: Dangers of Psychiatric Social Control,” *Changes: An International Journal of Psychology and Psychotherapy* 11:1 (March, 1993): 59-71

regarded as necessary in a democratic society.”⁶²

Perhaps the most significant eruption in this enduring relationship between race and science came in 2007 when scholars rebuked the comments of Nobel Prize winning scientist and co-founder of the field of genetics, Dr. James Watson. The debacle surrounding his comments led to the famed physician's selling his gold Nobel Prize in 2014. The world-famous biologist said he sold the Nobel Prize medal he won in 1962 for discovering the structure of DNA because he has been ostracized and needs the money “because no-one wants to admit I exist.”⁶³ Watson, along with Dr. Francis Crick, determined the existence of the DNA-helix and presented the structural model for their concepts in 1953. In 1962, Watson and Crick famously shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with Maurice Wilkins for their joint discovery of the molecule that carries the genetic information in a life system from one generation to another. However, despite his tremendous accomplishment, according to statements made at a professional conference, Nobel Laureate Watson gave twenty-first century credibility to three cornerstones of Cartwright’s nineteenth century work in “Negro Diseases:” *First*, Watson re-positied — and for some confirmed — the belief that Blacks possess a different physiology, a deficient intellect and lower mental competency, therefore blacks think and operate differently than whites. *Second*, given Blacks’ allegedly inferior intelligence, Watson posited thinking differently about the role of Black people in society and how it is we should be governed differently. *Third*, Watson re-asserted the antebellum belief of Jefferson and Cartwright that blacks “suffer from a hyper-sexuality.” Watson went so far as to compare directly the behavior of young Black males in American cities to the behavior of Rhesus monkeys in the Jungle. His senior U.S. colleagues rebuked him: “He has failed us in the worst possible way,” said Henry Kelly, president of the Federation of American

⁶² For citation, see “DNA database 'breach of rights,’” *British Broadcasting Corporation*, December 4, 2008; See also Alan Travis, “17 Judges, one ruling—& 857,000 records must be now wiped clear,” *The Guardian*, Thursday, December 4, 2008

⁶³ “James Watson Selling Nobel Prize “Because no-one Wants to Admit I Exist,” *The Telegraph, UK*, Nov.. 28, 2014

Scientists. “It is a sad and revolting way to end a remarkable career.”⁶⁴

According to the *Sunday Times*, London, the “eminent biologist” told the British newspaper he was “inherently gloomy about the prospect of Africa” because “all our social policies are based on the fact that their intelligence is the same as ours—whereas all the testing says not really.” Watson, 79 at the time, had been due to give a lecture at London's Science Museum but the museum canceled his appearance, saying his comments had “gone beyond the point of acceptable debate.” CNN’s coverage of the exchange reported that, “In the newspaper interview, [Watson] said there was no reason to think that races which had grown up in separate geographical locations should have evolved identically.” He went on to say that although he hoped everyone was equal, “people who have to deal with black employees find this not true.” The British government's skills minister, David Lammy, who is Black, called the comments “deeply offensive” and said Watson would only succeed in providing oxygen for extremist political groups. “It is a shame that a man with a record of scientific distinction should see his work overshadowed by his own irrational prejudices,” Lammy told CNN. Watson is not the first scientist to show sympathy for the theory of a racial basis for intellectual difference. In March of last year Dr. Frank Ellis from Leeds University provoked anger in Britain after he admitted he found evidence that racial groups perform differently “extremely convincing.”

Upholding eighteenth and nineteenth century speculations on the links between climate, geography and physiology, Watson told the *Sunday Times*, “There is no firm reason to anticipate that the intellectual capacities of peoples geographically separated in their evolution should prove to have evolved identically. Our wanting to reserve equal powers of reason as some universal heritage of humanity will not be enough to make it so.”⁶⁵ *The Independent* of London reported “[Watson] has also suggested a link between skin colour and sex drive, positing the theory that black people have higher

⁶⁴ “Watson suspended over comments on race,” *Nature: International Weekly Journal of Science* 449 (October 2007): 960

⁶⁵ James Watson, *Avoid Boring People: Lessons from a Life in Science.*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007)

libidos, and argued in favour of genetic screening and engineering on the basis that ‘stupidity’ could one day be cured. He has claimed that beauty could be genetically manufactured, saying: ‘People say it would be terrible if we made all girls pretty. I think it would great.’⁶⁶ When the “discoverer” of the genetic code posits quite openly and casually that blacks and whites have a different physiological makeup, sexual temperance, and mental competency than do whites, he is standing firmly in the tradition of Dr. Samuel Cartwright.

However distasteful, such concepts are not dismissed by accusations of “absurdity;” in fact the appellation “absurd” indicates simply that the idea in question hovers outside of tolerable conceptual frameworks. Scholars must now ask, how is such a deformed view of blacks still possible in the modern era? From what substance was this *anathema* originated, and how is it framed to communicate to others? I conclude that the effort to use bio-medical knowledge as a dehumanizing, objectifying and criminalizing tool is embedded unfortunately in how legal theorists have articulated American laws.⁶⁷

“Whiteness,” Hostility & Democratic Anxiety

Neither slavery nor the management or punishment of slaves is behind us because the “institution” is not yet abolished under the *United States Constitution*. The thirteenth amendment reads: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, nor any place subject to their jurisdiction.” That “exception” continued slavery into the present and fused abolition to criminalization. This slight amendment did two things at once: First, it mentioned slavery outright, instead of hiding it in inference, where one had to derive it through the through the process of elimination (as in “three-fifths all other persons”). This is no small fact, as the masking of slavery (and the racial nature of our social contract) is part and parcel of its continuance. Second the thirteenth

⁶⁶ “Fury at DNA pioneer’s theory: Africans are less intelligent than Westerners,” *The Independent*, London, UK, Wednesday, October 17, 2007 Science Section

⁶⁷ For a persuasive argument see Joan Dayan, “Legal Slaves & Civil Bodies,” *Nepantla: Views from South* 2:1 (2001): 3-39

amendment banned only one form of slavery while leaving the institution itself intact.⁶⁸

Legal scholar John A. Powell⁶⁹ argues that the notion of “whiteness” was born in the United States of two parents: One parent, the Enlightenment project, came of European origins and bequeathed to new Americans the value of rationality, knowledge and democracy. These qualities and categories were not neutral because they also grew out of deep anxiety about the unknown. Powell argues that Rene Descartes had a dilemma in that he needed something that was certain. He needed a world that did not keep moving; that need produced what Powell calls a “Cartesian anxiety” which has gone on to affect Western concept creation. After conceding that one cannot know with any certainty that the world really exists—that the chair could be an illusion, a dream—Descartes demanded but I *can* know that I think; therefore I am. Descartes’ insight was critical in terms of organizing the mind, the rational mind, which enabled him to hold at bay the anxiety that he was experiencing.⁷⁰

Powell identifies that slavery served as the second parent of “whiteness” in the United States. African slavery and Enlightenment rationality combined uniquely in the American context to create a particular form of whiteness that existed nowhere else in the world. Powell concludes the real “American exceptionalism” is that the United States became one of the few major countries where ideals of religious and political freedoms were formed despite having amassed large numbers of slaves within the country.

The significance of fusing rationality and democracy into a political scaffolding undergirded by an untenable anxiety is that in order to tame that anxiety whites casted slaves as the “infinite other.” Powell derives this notion of “the other” from Thomas Hobbes’ enlightened conception of “the self.” Hobbes construed that the self is autonomous, detached and isolated from the surrounding world.

⁶⁸ The 13th Amendment was passed by the Congress on January 31, 1865, and ratified by the states on December 6, 1865.

⁶⁹ Prof. Powell does not capitalize his name.

⁷⁰ John A. Powell, *Racing to Justice: Transforming our Conceptions of Self and Other to Build an Inclusive Society*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012)

powell interprets that this Hobbesian self is threatened by others and rooted fundamentally in fear. The role of society (and the state) is to protect individuals from others. In the new United States, notions of self and other, which were once determined by hereditary succession, forged a new schema following the Revolution. In the new arrangement—and out of this crucible of fear—is where race-craft began. powell observes that “The fear that, if you failed to totally embrace the enlightenment self, if you failed to totally embrace the rational self, then you would fall and become like the slave. That fear and anxiety gave birth to American whiteness.”⁷¹

Philosopher Charles Mills sees Hobbes as a transitional figure in that by isolating the state of nature as hypothetical for whites but extant in blacks, he racialized the social contract. Differently, powell views that the schism between governing versus succumbing to natural impulses creates a tension which drives the hostility between the civil and the natural state. This tension exists within and without. The man-becoming-civil by law experiences tension between his inner impulses and his social commitments, and in order to keep his commitments he puts himself at odds with anyone outside his contracts—whether they are natural men or a nation of men. powell sees Hobbes as a transitional figure because he focused on the element of hostility between the man attempting to civilize himself by entering the contract and the primitive man or woman outside of the social contract, in the ‘state of nature.’ Therefore Mills argues that Hobbes made the abstract ‘state of nature’ specifically *about race* and powell perceives that act of interpellation as an act of hostility.

The social contract exists so that these tensions do not mature into crises for the white men who have entered into compact. When one considers the electoral politics between 1780-1860 it is clear that the critiques of Mills, powell and Carole Pateman are by no means trivial philosophical abstractions. By shifting from wealth to a population-based electoral process and introducing a “three-

⁷¹ john a. powell lecture, *UCLA Thurgood Marshall Lecture, 2014*

fifths” numerical value to represent blacks in the *US Constitution*, this “Great Compromise” secured slave-holder dominance ideologically in that it incorporated blacks into the state as fractional sub-persons and politically because it apportioned representation in the House of Representatives and in the Electoral College by counting five black slaves as three free white persons. Founders invented the Electoral College as a mechanism to retain slave-holding interests during presidential elections and this college of *unelected* men and women continue to decide presidential elections. On the one hand the “three-fifths” figure reflected a concept of personhood and signaled that all blacks fell beneath the level of legal consideration. On the other hand, after mandating that a federal census be taken every ten years in order to count the enlarging population, the decision to count all white people, a fraction of the slaves and no Native people granted political dominance to the slave states. As pro-slavery theorists from Jefferson to Cartwright to Supreme Court Justice Roger Taney trumpeted up until the Civil War, the *US Constitution* secured the argument for who belonged in American society and who did not.

This is one point on which the sexual contract and the racial contract diverge in that white women are counted in the population census as part of the “all other persons,” whereas all blacks and Native people are cast out of the “we” entirely. White women had no right to vote but they literally counted more than black slaves. Dis-empowering women and excluding women proved different and the constitution made clear who had power as well as who belonged; it dictated governance as well as community. Politically the South won more representation in Congress (by adding in 3/5 of its black population) than if only whites had been represented in the census. Tragically it also meant that the more slaves white southerners acquired the larger their representation in Congress! As slave-holders gained more territories and worked more land with more slaves, not only did they enjoy a financial gain from slavery, the increased number of slaves puffed the population count and gave the South a vice-like vote in Congress throughout the antebellum period, and particularly when pro-slavery interests

were threatened. The more slaves southerners acquired, the greater their power to influence national policy. It is in this way that Mills' and Powell's conception of the deep racial grounding of our federal and state constitutions are critical, not as a starting point, but as an atmosphere in which to consider the work of a man like Cartwright. This is the air he breathed; the existential stuff from which his memories and sense of duty, and fundamental projects were formed.

As the nation moved from its founding period into the Age of Jackson, younger First generation Americans like Cartwright born after the Revolution "became obsessed" with "hyper individualism," because "to be connected, dependent and vulnerable was to be like the slaves; it was to be "black." Furthermore Founders denied that children, women, Indians and blacks possessed the fundamental value of reason, the light that makes it possible to see and to know the universe, because they were not fully human.⁷² Thomas Laqueur argues that the interest in fundamental differences between the sexes reflects a cultural rather than an empirical argument. Laqueur concludes that neither the "one-sex" model of gender, which originated with the ancient Greeks, nor the "two sex" model prevalent now is based in anything more than cultural conception undergirding political control. Laqueur claims, "Since the eighteenth century it has been that there are two, stable, incommensurable, opposite sexes and that the political, economic, and cultural lives of men and women, their gender roles, are somehow based on these 'facts'"⁷³

Laqueur argues also that the two-sex model formed from fear of women possessing power and that differentiating the sexes secured further the power held by men. Under the "one-sex" model a woman would be seen as an unfinished man, but under the new binary model a woman could be conscripted as a different and inferior being. Laqueur implies that the two-sex model was an attempt to take power from women, making them the "other" sex. Just as Powell perceives blacks as the "infinite

⁷² Thomas W. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990)

⁷³ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 6

other,” Laqueur identifies the “two-sex” model as the means by which women were made into the “other sex.”⁷⁴ Both race and gender science contributed to the role that biology played in determining destiny in the early United States. This negligible view of blacks, women and children infected jurisprudence, legal, social and political arrangements as well our sense of self as individuals.⁷⁵ powell’s legal insight enables one to see that blacks were not considered part of “the people” either—we are considered “the infinite other” and “unreachable.”⁷⁶

“He looked like a demon”

Modern social scientists have demonstrated that racial bias exists in health care today where black patients receive lower-quality health-care wherein they are subjected to adverse or undesirable procedures: black patients are more likely to have limbs amputated as a result of diabetes,⁷⁷ black patients are underrated for pain,⁷⁸ and receive less pain medication than white patients, when medicated receive less medication,⁷⁹ and suffer from the perception of blacks' inability to pay for the health-care received.⁸⁰ Numerous articles on physician-patient interactions that demonstrate how physicians underrate black patients’ pain more than white patients’ pain⁸¹ led to more recent psychological studies

⁷⁴ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 6-8

⁷⁵ For brilliant insight into how race and gendered notions effect science, see Nancy Leys Stepan, *Race and Gender: The Role of Analogy in Science*,” in Goldberg, ed., *Anatomy of Racism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1990), 38-57

⁷⁶ powell, *Racing to Justice: Transforming our Conceptions of Self and Other to Build and Inclusive Society*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), xix, 158

⁷⁷ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, “Disparities in health care quality among racial and ethnic minority groups: Findings from the national healthcare quality and disparities reports, 2008.” (2009) *Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality* website. Available: <http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/nhqrd08/nhqrdminority08.pdf>

⁷⁸ B.B. Drwecki, C.F. Moore, S.E. Ward, K.M. Prkachin, “Reducing racial disparities in pain treatment: The role of empathy and perspective-taking,” *Pain* 152: (2011): 1001–1006; C.R. Green, K.O. Anderson, T.A. Baker, L.C. Campbell, S. Decker, et al., “The unequal burden of pain: Confronting racial and ethnic disparities in pain,” *Pain Medicine* 4: (2003): 277–294; V.L. Bonham “Race, ethnicity, and pain treatment: Striving to understand the causes and solutions to the disparities in pain treatment,” *Journal of Law and Medical Ethics* 29 (2001): 52–68

⁷⁹ H.P. Freeman, R. Payne, “Racial injustice in health care,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 342 (2000): 1045–1047; K.H. Todd, C. Deaton, A.P. D’Adamo, L. Goe “Ethnicity and analgesic practice,” *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 35 (2000): 11–16

⁸⁰ V.L. Shavers, A. Bakos, V.B. Sheppard, “Race, ethnicity, and pain among the U.S. adult population,” *Journal of Health Care for the Poor Underserved* 21 (Feb. 2010): 177–220 ; C.R. Green, K.O. Anderson, T.A. Baker, L.C. Campbell, S. Decker, et al., “The unequal burden of pain: Confronting racial and ethnic disparities in pain,” *Pain Medicine* 4: (2003): 277–294

⁸¹ L.J. Staton, M. Panda, I. Chen, I. Genao, J. Kurz, et al. “When race matters: Disagreement in pain perception between

of racial perceptions. Studies conducted by Adam Waytz from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management suggest that some whites experience a dehumanization process when thinking about blacks; and sometimes they see blacks as more than human.⁸² One striking example of this is when Senator John McCain could not mask his disdain for Senator Barack Obama and called Obama “that one,” and “that thing over there” during the 2008 presidential debate, suggesting that the black man was less than human or non-human.

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1 up at me and had the most intense aggressive face.
2 The only way I can describe it, it looks like a
3 demon, that's how angry he looked. He comes back
4 towards me again with his hands up.
5 At that point I just went like this,
6 I tried to pull the trigger again, click, nothing
7 happened.

In light of the recent refusal by the Missouri Grand Jury not to indict the white police officer Darren Wilson, who killed the unarmed teenager Michael Brown, Waytz et al re-published their findings in the *Washington Post*: “The Racial Bias Embedded in Darren Wilson's Testimony.” The scholars focused on Officer Wilson's testimony where he compared Wilson to “a demon.”⁸³ Officer Wilson's statements are efforts to externalize the teenager: he interpellated the black boy before him as the “infinite other”—a monster, “a demon.”⁸⁴ Wilson deployed the same terms and depended upon the same anathema that proslavery theorists from before the Civil War depended upon in their quest to

patients and their physicians in primary care,” *Journal of the National Medical Assoc.* 99 (2007): 532–538

⁸² Sophie Trawalter, Kelly M. Hoffman, Adam Waytz, “Racial Bias in Perceptions of Others' Pain,” *PLOS-One*, November 14, 2012

⁸³ Waytz, Hoffman and Trawalter, “The Racial Bias Embedded in Darren Wilson's Testimony,” *The Washington Post*, November 26 2014

⁸⁴ On the process of “externalization” & the interpellation it involves, see Introduction above.

dehumanize black people.

Therefore despite heralding democratic themes American's revolutionary leaders neither abandoned hierarchy nor instituted a democracy. Instead they sought out a new social order based in deference to the individual merit of white male property-owners, a social order that deforms our moral order, rendering us cognitively blind to our mutual humanity. The Founding generation who fought against hereditary succession and white slavery conversely secured the balance of white power in the new nation by making black slavery and Indian exclusion the crucible of the constitution. Having inculcated these articles of faith, Cartwright fulfilled his own duties as a physician and cultural steward and continued the pro-slavery traditions embedded in the *Constitution* that his father's generation fought to secure.

Granted, the 1857 "Dred Scott" decision set into chain-reaction a series of events that led to the Civil War, but exactly how the best legal minds corroborated with the best scientific minds of the nineteenth century—ranging from the University of Louisiana's Prof. Cartwright in the south to Harvard University's Louis Agassiz in the north—to agree that Africans were less than human and deserved a different set of rights, if any at all, deserves continued attention, particularly when scientists in the twenty-first century seek to vindicate their findings.⁸⁵

As recently as 2011 scientists at the University of Pennsylvania claimed to have "vindicated" Samuel Morton's argument that blacks had smaller cranial capacities.⁸⁶ In an article called "Debunking the Debunker," Janet Monge "Keeper of Physical Anthropology" at the University of Pennsylvania along with Stanford University's David DeGusta and Jason E. Lewis indicate: "Monge and her team

⁸⁵ Craig Wilder writes in scathing detail of the extent to which American universities acted eagerly and complicity to support the slavery cause. See Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of American's Universities*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013)

⁸⁶ Jason E. Lewis, David DeGusta, Marc R. Meyer, Janet M. Monge, Alan E. Mann, Ralph L. Holloway, "The Mismeasure of Science: Stephen Jay Gould versus Samuel George Morton on Skulls and Bias," *PLoS-Biology*, June 7, 2011 or click here: <http://www.plosbiology.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pbio.1001071>

painstakingly re-measured the skulls, following Morton's procedure. They allege that their measurements matched Morton's exactly. The research team charged also that either Gould had never done any measurements of his own, or that *he* had actually been the one fudging data to fit his agenda.⁸⁷ This bevy of six researchers claim now that, despite Gould's reassessment of Morton's cranial measurements, having actually re-launched Morton's original study with modern equipment, that Morton was absolutely correct in his conclusions. One wonders what motivated such a study? Monge reflects, "Because [Gould's] motives are good, you don't want to cast aspersion on how he got to that end...It's frustrating, isn't it?" she says. "For me, it was really kind of depressing."⁸⁸ Even more discouraging is that this "vindication" of Morton required a kind of scholarly choreography: In addition to Stanford University's Profs. Lewis and DeGusta, the other scientists on the project are Profs. Marc Meyer (Chaffey College), Janet Monge (University of Pennsylvania), Alan Mann (Princeton University), and Ralph Holloway (Columbia University).⁸⁹ Given the persistent efforts to "vindicate" notions of structural differences within the human race, more work needs to be done to develop a new grammar to combat such projects and sharpen our analyses of race. Also, given that differences do exist, why must one view difference as a source of hostility, and then go on to declare that "natural kinds" exist, when in actuality the differences are minor?⁹⁰ It remains to be seen the extent to which we can each distance ourselves from such conversations and re-tune our ideas of what constitutes 'the Good Life,' a life of inclusion and actual esteem, beyond the reach of the "hideous monster" of race.⁹¹

⁸⁷ See, "The Debunker Debunked: Samuel Morton (Class of 1820) is Vindicated," *Penn Gazette* 3 (June 20, 2011); see also Nicholas Wade, "Scientists Measure the Accuracy of a Racism Claim," *The New York Times*, Jun1 13, 2011

⁸⁸ "The Debunker Debunked: Samuel Morton (Class of 1820) is Vindicated," *Penn Gazette* 3 (June 20, 2011)

⁸⁹ See "Mismeasuring Skulls: New Research Resolves Historical Controversy, Shows Science Resists Bias," Stanford University Department of Anthropology, click here: <https://web.stanford.edu/dept/anthropology/cgi-bin/web/?q=node/897>

⁹⁰ Ian Hacking, "A Tradition of Natural Kinds," *Philosophical Studies* 61:1-2, (Feb. 1991): 109-126; for a discussion of this concept as it pertains to race, see Hacking, "Why Race Still Matters," *Daedalus* 134:1 (Winter, 2005): 102-116

⁹¹ Bruce Dain, "*A Hideous Monster of the Mind*": *American Race Theory in the Early Republic*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003)