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**Pro-slavery and the Classics in Antebellum America,
1840 – 1860: Thomas Cobb, Louisa McCord, George
Frederick Holmes, George Fitzhugh, and James
Henry Hammond under Scrutiny.**

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Doctorate of Philosophy
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Signed Declaration

I hereby declare that that this thesis is entirely my own composition and work. It contains no material previously submitted for the award of any other degree or professional degree.

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Abstract

In their important contributions to the study of American history, Eugene Genovese and Michael O'Brien noted the significant intellectual culture that existed in the South prior to the Civil War. Scholars such as Caroline Winterer, Michael O'Brien, Eugene Genovese, and others have already offered important contributions which bridge the gap between the ancient world and antebellum America. My research addresses this particular gap because it examines both American (specifically Southern) pro-slavery in the two decades leading up to the Civil War through the lens of pro-slavery intellectual culture and classicism. By directly exploring individuals associated with this period, and their literary output, this study deepens this connection further. Caroline Winterer's 2002 work constituted a major contribution to the study of the Classics in American intellectual life between 1780 and 1910 more broadly. By addressing how five white Southerners used classicism to develop sophisticated arguments to defend black slavery, my thesis constitutes a fresh contribution to this aspect of the study of American history. The chapters in this thesis will examine pro-slavery literature produced by Thomas Cobb, Louisa McCord, George Frederick Holmes, George Fitzhugh, and James Henry Hammond. This thesis will show that the ancient societies of Greece and Rome emerged as an essential support base for the development of pro-slavery arguments. Cobb, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and Hammond utilised classicism to overall strengthen their pro-slavery literature. In my view, the utilisation of the Greco-Roman world by these authors makes "historical" sense, because classicism partially bridges the gap between a time when societies widely accepted servile labour and a period when it underwent heavy scrutiny. My thesis will argue that had they not utilised classicism, their literature would look significantly different. Essentially classicism permeated the antebellum South, and this provided white Southern authors of pro-slavery with a strong source of inspiration. Each of the five authors examined in this thesis used classicism in significant ways. My aim will show that this group of antebellum intellectuals provides modern historians with a new platform to discuss classicism in relation to American pro-slavery. Cobb, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and Hammond believed in their utilisation of classicism, and from an intellectual viewpoint, thought their arguments would foster the

growth of Southern pro-slavery. My research demonstrates a varied and crafty use of classical sources, ranging from philosophical treatises to agricultural manuals, to the Roman legal sources and more. Studying these individuals separately would provide little weight to the modern debate on pro-slavery, but when examined together, the work of the five individuals examined in this work helps us to see that the Classics did significantly influence their pro-slavery arguments. This remains important for many reasons, but for the purposes of this study, it sheds new light on pro-slavery during the antebellum period and its relationship with classicism in Southern intellectual life. Moreover, my thesis shows that by utilising the Classics, the pro-slavery argument can be shown to have a strong basis in critical thinking. In sum, this thesis will demonstrate that the Classics, in relation to the American South, historically has been used to support a form of “white supremacy”. Very few works have endeavoured to provide analysis of this particular aspect of American classicism; by situating my own work at this crossroad, the thesis will start bridging the gap more broadly between the study of pro-slavery, the Classics, and American intellectual culture.

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Close friends and family have also offered their own forms of guidance along the way. My flatmate, Shane Horgan, and part-time flatmate, Melissa Akoral, who have suffered with me through the trials and tribulations brought on by postgrad life. Melissa and Shane are also Ph.D candidates, so we had the opportunity to experience the highs and lows together (late night bantering in the kitchen over a beverage is probably one of my favourite memories). Jordan Bellinger for Hamburg (and everything else)! Despite having returned to Canada during the summer months between 2015-2017 for personal reasons, I look very fondly on the time spent with my good friend. Plus, all of the laughs shared over late-night FaceTime sessions have kept me sane. Other members of my clan that have offered their support include Alaina Kelsey, Joey Gordon, Nick Seebruch, Brendan “Flanders” Nolan, Joseph Liptrap, Declan Falconer, Christopher Bowling, Charles Doyle, Rachel Murray, Claire Forkes, Gavin Rowan, and many others (you know who you are)! Without the friendships (and banter) of these folks, my postgrad life would have been devoid of fun and random adventures – so my friends, thank you!

Lastly, I would like to thank my parents, Jacqueline and Steven, for all of their love and support, because without this, this thesis would literally not exist. I came to Edinburgh five years ago still green from my undergraduate degree without a clue about my future direction. After completing an MSc in Classics, I decided that pursuing a Ph.D was a good idea – this perception has not changed, yet without their support, this life path would have been closed to me. Thus, for that, I will always be eternally appreciative – this thesis is dedicated to you (even if the topic is bleak and, on the whole, discusses a terrible social institution, the nod is still fairly remarkable).

Two Worlds Collided: Greco-Roman Antiquity and the Antebellum United States

The importance of maintaining a large middle class is recognised by every writer on constitutional government. The absorption of real estate by a small portion of the community, which grew smaller from generation to generation, ultimately ruined the fortune of Sparta, as the sage oracle of Delphi predicted. The rise of the plantation system, and the gradual extinction of yeomanry, were agencies which went hand with the creation of an aristocracy of money and the increase of a penniless rabble to further the disintegration of the Roman commonwealth. We of the South have thus far been preserved from these pernicious extremes, and the perpetuity of our institutions depends on the care with which we avoid the errors which, in other republics, have first divided society into opposing factions and then restored the unity by a common servitude. Of all of these errors, the most fertile of mischief is unwise taxation; and when our legislators approach the Gordian knot of financial reform, let them beware of following the example of ALEXANDER, and of cutting in twain the rope which is to draw the car of State.¹

On the evening of April 14, 1865, at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. John Wilkes Booth shot and killed Abraham Lincoln. During the ensuing pandemonium, Booth fled on horseback and retreated to southern Maryland. Shortly after the assassination, Booth wrote in his journal that as he shot Lincoln he shouted "*sic semper tyrannis*" (translated as "thus ever for tyrants"): the same phrase that some argue originated with Marcus Junius Brutus after the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC.² Booth, a trained stage actor, played Marcus Antonius in a New York production of William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar in 1864. This provides evidence towards his awareness of Caesar's assassination and illuminates why he chose to reference this during his plot against Lincoln.

Nearly a century earlier, in 1776, Virginia adopted the phrase *sic semper tyrannis* as the state motto. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson pushed for Virginia to use this motto under the premise that it supported the evolution of a new American Republic

¹ Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, "Taxation of the Middle Class", *Richmond Examiner* (December 7, 1863).

² Booth had an extensive acting career before and during the Civil War. In 1864, during a performance in New York he played Mark Antonius in William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, alongside his brother who played Marcus Junius Brutus. The proceeds from the play helped fund a statue of William Shakespeare, which still currently stands in Central Park.

– one free from a tyrannical monarchy. Lincoln, however, grappled with the difficult task of reuniting a fractured Union, and his assassination only furthered existing problems in the United States. On April 26 at Garrett Farm in Port Royal, Virginia the Union cavalry caught up with Booth and his accomplice David Herold. Herold surrendered, but Booth refused. Despite orders to take him alive, Sergeant Boston Corbett shot and killed Booth. With the apostate dead, and the capture of accomplices shortly thereafter, the nation could start moving forward. No doubt many white Southerners continued to share Booth’s smouldering hatred for Lincoln, and just because the Confederacy fell, should not imply that Southern culture immediately underwent reform.

The effects of the Civil War had drastic implications on the United States and the Reconstruction period remained tense for more than a decade after Lincoln’s assassination. Before the war, secession by white Southerners, or those who pushed a strong pro-slavery agenda, led to major conflicts throughout the country. The pro-slavery argument evolved into a widespread phenomenon during the antebellum period of American history, with its epicentre in the slaveholding South. The output of this literature spans a wide spectrum of topics and approaches, which range from religious arguments based on the Bible, to political justifications borne out of the assumed necessity for slave labour. Sociological defenders of slavery manifested in the South, and after 1830 bombarded America with literature on multiple fronts. In the South, views on slavery shifted from a “necessary evil” to a “positive good”. In the North, abolitionists responded with literature fighting against the evils of slavery. Fuelled by ever more severe criticism from the North, the pro-slavery argument increased in the South. The research presented in this thesis will focus on one aspect of this – classicism and the pro-slavery argument. Modern scholars on the antebellum American South recognise the importance classicism played within that culture. Overall, my thesis underlines this perspective, but it will show in detail how five white Southern intellectuals used the worlds of ancient Greece and Rome to support the preservation of black slavery. In my view, without their use of classicism, the impact of their pro-slavery literature significantly diminishes. This may appear a bold thesis. Yet, in my opinion, if we strip the classical argument away from their works, the literature would

either collapse or fundamentally appear different: the chapters below will focus precisely on this.

Each chapter will focus on a single author, emulating a case study format, although some overlap does occur throughout the thesis – as most of these authors knew or had contact with one another. After my examination of the five pro-slavery authors, a concluding discussion will allow us to contrast the diversity of classicism in their literature. First, however, this introductory chapter will situate classicism as it stood in the antebellum United States, its importance in that culture, and significance this plays on the modern scholarly debate.

Classicism in the Antebellum United States

In the years leading up to the Revolutionary War the ancient societies of Greece and Rome emerged as crucial role models for colonial Americans. This trend continued too when the Founding Fathers used these democratic and republican models as the foundations for their newly established government.³ Thomas Jefferson reaffirmed the importance of receiving a classical education, emphasising that knowledge of antiquity acted to distinguish all (Southern) gentlemen.⁴ Jefferson had a profound fondness for the Classics, claiming that:

The utilities we derive from the remains of the Greek and Latin languages are, first, as models of pure taste in writing. . . among the values of classical learning, I estimate the luxury of reading the Greek and Roman authors in all the beauties of their originals. And why should not this innocent and elegant luxury take its preeminent stand ahead of all those addressed merely to the senses?⁵

For many of the white Southern elite, proficiency in ancient Greek and Latin characterised the educated few. Studying the Classics in turn promoted the usefulness of ancient knowledge for antebellum society. Jefferson further praised the benefits of receiving a classical education, by stating that:

³ Paul Finkelman, *Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South, A Brief History with Documents* (Boston, MA.: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003), 29.

⁴ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith and the Southern Slaverholders' Worldview* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 250.

⁵ *Thomas Jefferson to John Brazer, August 24, 1819*. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mtjbib023604/>. (Accessed February 2nd, 2017).

The agriculturist needs ethics, mathematics, chemistry and natural philosophy. The mechanic the same. To them the languages are but ornament and comfort. I know it is often said there have been shining examples of men of great abilities in all the businesses of life, without any other science than what they had gathered from conversations and intercourse with the world. But who can say what these men would not have been had they started in the science on the shoulders of a Demosthenes or Cicero, of a Locke or Bacon, or a Newton? To sum the whole, therefore, it may truly be said that the classical languages are a solid basis for most, and an ornament to all the sciences.⁶

Thomas Jefferson emerges as an ideal figure to exemplify this, because he, among other aristocrats, powerfully championed classicism in early America.⁷ By invoking the Jeffersonian endorsement of classicism, we can, in turn, get a sense of his impact on Southern cultural developments. Jefferson, however, was not alone in expressing these classical sentiments; thus, while writing a letter to his son, George, in 1818, John Quincy Adams stated that “all great Classics are teachers of morals, no less than of Letters”.⁸ Adams continually motivated his son to pursue the writings of notable Roman authors, such as Plutarch, Cicero, and Horace. Upon George Adams’ election to the Massachusetts legislative assembly in 1826, his father reminded him of Plutarch’s lessons in “all the Stoic virtues – prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice”.⁹ Adams clearly identified the good qualities of American politicians in these ancient works, and therefore, displayed strong connections between a classical education and good governance.

The two examples merely scratch the surface, because classicism permeated the young republic – most politicians realised its importance as a cultural tool and means to access political power. Adams’s writings show that American political elites understood the Classics as a political tool to establish the legitimacy of their newly founded government and to promote the practice of good governance. Even though a classical education was the reserve of the elite (white men), classicism nonetheless spread

⁶ *Thomas Jefferson to John Brazer, August 24, 1819.* Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mtjbib023604/>. (Accessed February 2nd, 2017).

⁷ For Jefferson and the ancient world see Caroline Winterer, “Thomas Jefferson and the Ancient World” in Francis D. Cogliano (ed.), *A Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (Wiley and Blackwell, 2011), 380-97; Peter S. Onuf and Nicholas P. Cole, *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America* (Charlottesville, VA.: The University of Virginia Press, 2011).

⁸ John Quincy Adams to George Washington Adams, 10 August 1818,” Founders Online, National Archives <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-03-02-3528>. (Accessed June 14, 2018).

⁹ John Quincy Adams to George Washington Adams, 10 August 1818,” Founders Online, National Archives <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-03-02-3528>. (Accessed June 14, 2018).

throughout American culture from the mid-18th century onwards. Yet, the figures examined below will show how classical knowledge was not limited to the elite but rather disseminated throughout the rank of American society – despite class or gender. Overall, the classical tradition emerged then as a prerequisite for American political, cultural, and social participation.

The conflict between John Rowan and Dr James Chambers of Bardstown, Kentucky reinforces the important role classicism held in the young republic. On February 3, 1801 Rowan defended his honour and challenged Chambers to a duel, because he publicly questioned Rowan’s mastery of ancient Greek and Latin. This might appear to modern scholars as a trivial act over something less than important. Rowan, a politician and resident of Bardstown, served as Kentucky’s delegate to the state constitutional convention in 1799 and planned to seek election to the United States House of Representatives in 1802. As a political representative of his state, Rowan’s character as a gentleman and his fitness to govern factored greatly into his public image. Chambers’ slanders against Rowan represented a direct attack against his intelligence and fitness to govern. He also indirectly attacked his ability to adequately represent the citizenry of Bardstown. Chambers died as a result of the duel, while Rowan went on to have a successful political career.¹⁰

A few contemporary accounts provide other reasons for the duel: one popular theory suggests that a drunken dispute occurred between Chambers and Rowan over a card game, which led to the duel. The mainstream belief among modern historians cites the questioning of Rowan’s classical education as the cause, however.¹¹ Rowan, therefore, met Chambers on the duelling ground to defend his knowledge of ancient Greek and Latin. Something he believed represented a critical element of his political legitimacy and overall intelligence. Consider too that Kentucky only received its statehood in 1792, so Rowan and Chambers lived in a recently settled area of the country. At first, the reasoning behind the duel documents the widespread nature of classical knowledge in

¹⁰ Dixie Hibbs. *Bardstown: Hospitality, History, and Bourbon* (Charleston, SC.: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 26-27; Carl J. Richard. *The Golden Age of the Classics in America: Greece, Rome, and the Antebellum United States* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 45.

¹¹ Hibbs, *Bardstown: Hospitality, History, and Bourbon*, 26-27; Richard, *The Golden Age of the Classics in America*, 45.

early 19th century era America. Furthermore, this also demonstrates the importance of classicism as a political and cultural tool. Almost all politicians in the United States throughout the late 18th and 19th centuries received some form of a classical education – which developed as the backbone of the new republic.

As we proceed deeper into the antebellum era, strong political leaders such as James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun, among others, emerge as figures who devoted their lives to the public service and classicism. Commonly these politicians also would publicly display themselves in the classical form – either depicted in statues or paintings in a form similar to ancient Roman statesmen and orators.¹² Beyond this, politicians like Monroe, Jackson, and Calhoun owned slaves who provided for their economic needs. As in ancient Greece and Rome, the slave mode of production removed white Southern politicians from the day-to-day rigours of agriculture. Slavery provided them with the necessary outlet, so they could devote much of their time to public service. Indeed, white Southern planters believed they borrowed this element from the slaveholding societies of antiquity. This idea aided the Southern elite in their pursuit of developing an aristocracy composed of great planters and politicians.¹³ As a matter of fact, slavery in the Greek and Roman worlds developed into a central institution of these respected ancient societies. White Southerners incorporated elements from the classical world into their own, in an attempt to construct the “ideal” society. Beyond this endorsement of the classical tradition, classicism developed into a central component of their pro-slavery culture. Utilising ancient Greece and Rome as a focal point for their literature, white Southerners possessed strong evidence of these great societies and their reliance on servile labour.¹⁴

The classical defence of slavery often emphasised the ancient legacies of Greece and Rome, while Southern intellectuals used the practice of human bondage as a platform to display ancient greatness. The centrality of classicism fleshed out this idea of Southern dominance, which materialised into a cultural phenomenon throughout the region. In

¹² Caroline Vout, *The Myth of the Toga: Understanding the History of Roman Dress*, *Greece & Rome* 43, no. 2 (1996): 204-220.

¹³ Finkelman, *Defending Slavery*, 29.

¹⁴ J. Drew Harrington, “Classical Antiquity and the Proslavery Argument” *Slavery and Abolition* 10, no.1, (1989): 60-72.

terms of modern scholarship and understanding of this development, Meyer Reinhold's *Classica Americana* represents the first in depth study that examined American classicism. Reinhold suggested that reverence for the Classics in the United States began a steady decline around 1790 – he coined it the 'Silver Age' of the Classics. Debates at the time, spearheaded by the sentiments of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, and Benjamin Rush, centred around the growing usefulness of applicable knowledge, such as modern languages, natural sciences, and engineering.¹⁵ Similar debates raged in Europe and Britain during this period too. Other modern scholars, however, dispute Reinhold's claims, and, thus, the prevalence of classicism in 19th century era America is difficult to deny. It remains important to briefly sketch the modern scholarly developments to fully understand the current status-quo in the field. Thus, Caroline Winterer's 2002 study *The Culture of Classicism*, follows Reinhold's line of research. Yet, Winterer primarily opposes Reinhold's thesis, and her study brings the importance of 19th century American classical thought to the forefront. The study charts the role of classical intellectualism within American culture between 1780 and 1910. Moreover, Winterer contextualises the role of the Classics in both a Northern and Southern setting. She also offers new insights through a specific focus on the antebellum period, showing how both the North and South adapted to utilise the Classics respectively.

Winterer begins her study with the European Renaissance, when revived interests in the classical world started a journey from antiquity to the forefront of scholarly debate. The Renaissance provided a cultural outlet for contemporary European societies to reconnect with the ancient world. It remains important to remember in this context that the widespread effects of the classical revival had implications on many European colonies in the Americas. For example, the cultural ties between America and Britain helped to stimulate the transition and engagement with the classical world on the North American continent. Culturally, from colonial America to the newly founded United States, through politics, architecture, literature, education, jurisprudence, and so forth, classicism increasingly took a prominent role.¹⁶ After the Revolutionary War,

¹⁵ Meyer Reinhold. *The Classica Americana: The Greek and Roman Heritage in the United States* (Detroit, MI.: Wayne State University Press, 1984).

¹⁶ Caroline Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life 1780-1910* (Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Caroline Winterer, *The Mirror of*

Americans found themselves in a unique situation, and independence from Great Britain allowed them to forge their own identity. As mentioned above, the classical tradition factored greatly in this endeavour and spread across the entirety of the young republic. As Americans embarked on this journey, classical literature and ancient philosophical thought emerged at the centre of academia.¹⁷

Within the realm of higher education, Winterer defines the antebellum period as the “heyday of the classical college”, because the classical tradition portrayed “the very symbol of retrograde pedagogy and scholarship”.¹⁸ Many Americans who could afford a college or university education pursued the Classics, and the volume of students enrolled in the field drastically increased. For example, in 1843 the University of Virginia had just 33 students studying Classics. By the 1850s, enrolment had increased significantly, and the department boasted hundreds of students.¹⁹ The University of Virginia provides a good example of how the classical tradition manifested itself in the South, but enrolment rose at several other Southern institutions too. During the 19th century the opposite trend occurred throughout many other educational systems, as mentioned, notably those in France and Britain. Criticism amongst leading educators, especially in France, helped reduce the classical curriculum to a faded relic of an aristocratic and decadent Europe. The popular opinion stressed that young minds should be provided with an education which could advance the “practical” fields of mathematics and scientific knowledge.²⁰

In the United States, the dramatic increase in the number of colleges and universities provided the logistical context for the flurry of education in general. At the same time the rapid influx of these institutions allowed for a wider range of people to receive

Antiquity: American Women and the Classical Tradition, 1750-1900 (Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University Press, 2007).

¹⁷ Peter Kolchin, *A Sphinx on the American Land: The Nineteenth Century South, A Comparative Perspective* (Baton Rouge, LA.: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 41.

¹⁸ Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*, 77.

¹⁹ “In 1843, the University of Virginia had 33 students enrolled in classical studies; by the mid-1850s the number had grown to 259, more than any other subject. By the advent of the [Civil] War, a total of some 1,800 students had taken courses in that especially demanding program in Classics, and many of their papers displayed obvious competence”. For more on this see, Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 252.

²⁰ Fox- Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 251. For more on classical education in antebellum America see Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*, 44-99.

higher forms of education. The steady increase saw the number of students who attended a higher institution rise from approximately 1,000 in 1800 to nearly 16,000 in 1860, with the total number of colleges growing from 20 in 1800 to around 200 by the mid-1850s. These newly established institutions spread more rapidly across the Midwest and the South, and by the 1850s both regions possessed over 50. Notable institutions in New England, such as Yale, Harvard, and Dartmouth College, numbered around fifteen by this period, but carried the stronger reputations.²¹ Nevertheless, the growth of higher education in America factored into the prominence of classicism in both the North and South.

Regarding the literary output in the North during this period, writers generally focused on other topics beyond abolition and slavery. This offers a unique contrast with the South, where pro-slavery literature drove the agenda forward. Indeed, abolition did have an impact on the literary output in the North, but the identity there went beyond the genesis of anti-slavery works. In the South, formulating defences for slavery had a negative effect on their literary output, because authors tended to focus on producing works to support the (black) slave mode of production. Despite pro-slavery literature dominating white Southern intellectualism in the years leading up to the Civil War, authors did too produce works not related to slavery. Outside of the South, these “other” intellectual productions received less attention. As Michael O’Brien’s research, which will receive more detailed attention below, shows that white Southerners possessed a class of citizens capable of contributing to modern intellectualism. Timothy J. Williams work *Intellectual Manhood: University, Self, and Society in the Antebellum South* contributes to the discussion as well by revealing that institutions providing a higher education in the antebellum South did more than train future secessionists and pro-slavery zealots.²² Williams developed a narrative that focuses on the students’ perspective and their journey through higher education at the University of North Carolina. His work considers every part of student life from the vigorous curriculum, the formal classroom, to students’ personal relationships with each other, young women,

²¹ Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*, 44.

²² Timothy J. Williams. *Intellectual Manhood: University, Self, and Society in the Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, NC.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

their families, and slaves working on university grounds. Williams' fresh take on the intellectual development of these young white Southerners provides a new perspective that male students of this era established a distinctly Southern form of intellectual masculinity and maturity. This possessed less of an impact on the already established antebellum period and the pro-slavery argument, but the aforementioned younger generation of educated white Southerners laid the foundations for the composition of the post-Civil War South.

Thus, pro-slavery dominated the literary genesis among white Southerners during this period and the differences of production between the North and South began to manifest. Specifically, when a revolution erupted in Greece during the early 1820s, which caused many Northern authors to display a strong connection with Hellenic themes. With the Northern interest in the Classics booming, literature which reflected Hellenistic ideals grew in popularity. In *Moby Dick*, for example, Herman Melville frequently alluded to Greek mythology, commenting for instance on: "The Whiteness of the Whale – in the Greek mythologies, Great Jove himself being made incarnate in a snow-white bull".²³ This allusion to the Rape of Europa (whereby Zeus transformed himself into a bull to entice Europa) illustrates how Northern authors came to use their knowledge of the Classics. As an increasing number of Northern writers embraced classicism, so too would this "ancient fever" have spread among their audiences. In the North, prominent authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, and many others used classical themes to enhance their literary output. By contrast, in the South pro-slavery works represented the major outlet for classicism, although during the late 1850s and beyond Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve set out to challenge this narrow focus. Gildersleeve, a staunch supporter of Jefferson's vision for the Classics, emphasised his views through his late antebellum literature, which he often linked to Southern culture more broadly.²⁴ His emphasis on the Classics possessed more weight and panache after he established the *American Journal of Philology* in 1880, a journal still flourishing today. Despite his academic successes after the Civil War,

²³ Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 254.

²⁴ Michael O'Brien, *All Clever Men Who Made Their Way: A Critical Discourse on the Old South* (Athens, GA.: The University of Georgia Press, 1982), 398-418.

Gildersleeve still possessed his fiery Southern patriotism, strong support of black slavery, and a passionate demeanour towards states' rights. During the conclusion chapter of this thesis we will revisit Gildersleeve, and the brief discussion will show the direction classicism in the South took during the post-Civil War era.

In sum, Winterer's *Culture of Classicism* represents an exemplary study which shows us how Americans during the 18th century and onwards viewed and used the ancient Greco-Roman world. The work also does well to document the prevalence of classicism in the United States during the antebellum era – the first study to provide a thorough examination on this critical element of history. Her later work *The Mirror of Antiquity: American Women and the Classical Tradition 1750-1900* distinguishes itself because its emphasis exclusively focuses on subjects other than aristocratic white men.²⁵ *The Mirror of Antiquity* dives into the world of American women and classicism while overturning the widely held notion that aristocratic white men possessed a special reserve over political thought and the Classics. Overall, both of Winterer's studies portray the glory days of classicism in the United States, which directly refutes Reinhold's suggested 'Silver Age'; with which this brief survey started.

Carl J. Richard's work *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* also directly refutes Reinhold's position of classical decline in the United States. His follow up study *The Golden Age of the Classics in America: Greece, Rome, and the Antebellum United States* takes specific issue with Reinhold's 'Silver Age' theory, and instead, Richard argues that classical thought flourished in the antebellum United States. He utilised literature, politics, and education as the spearhead for his argument.²⁶ Thus, thanks to the works of Winterer and Richard we can posit that the prevalence of Classics in antebellum era America remains undeniable. The subjects examined in this thesis will reinforce this idea – but it will examine how the Classics permeated one, important, aspect of Southern literary history!

To reiterate, the works of Reinhold and Richard focus exclusively on politics, education, and white men; as does Winterer's *Culture of Classicism*. As also previously

²⁵ Winterer, *The Mirror of Antiquity*.

²⁶ Carl J. Richard. *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1994); Richard. *The Golden Age of the Classics in America*.

mentioned, Winterer did also produce the first work, *The Mirror of Antiquity*, which solely examines classicism from the perspective of American women. Winterer's thesis does allot some discussion to women and American political classicism, but the work primarily focuses on art, fashion, interior design, and motherhood. Nevertheless, Winterer has shown that, from the mid-18th century onwards classicism clearly permeated the white population in the United States – both men and women. But, this keen desire to explore and learn from the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome did too influence the black population. Black interest in the worlds of Greece and Rome increased throughout the 19th century and culminated in substantial academic contributions, primarily after 1865.

Thus, American intellectual life during the antebellum period did not exclusively come from white contributions to scholarship – some blacks made literary contributions of their own.²⁷ The sample size prior to the process of Emancipation remains much smaller than their white counterparts, but former slaves such as Phillis Wheatley and Jupiter Hammon represent good examples of blacks drawing inspiration from the Classics. Patrice Rankine's *Ulysses in Black* charts the course of the *Classica Africana* from the death of Phillis Wheatley in 1782 and concludes during the Civil Rights movement during the 1960s.²⁸ Rankine's narrative portrays the other side of the coin, when compared with Reinhold, Richard, and Winterer's theses. The latter half of the 19th century saw a large increase in black scholarship which focused on the Classics – with scholars like W.E.B Du Bois and William Sanders Scarborough leading the way. Blacks, long denied the benefits of a classical education, now turned to the Classics as a method of self-perfection and a means to ascend in society.²⁹ Rankine used the idea of ancient heroism as the central element of his argument – he utilised the heroic journey of Homer's Odysseus (Ulysses) to describe the conditions experienced by black slaves in the American South. As shown, Homer's *Odyssey* and the character archetype of Odysseus emerged as literary tropes to help springboard American blacks into the

²⁷ Patrice Rankine. *Ulysses in Black: Ralph Ellison, Classicism, and African American Literature* (Madison, WS.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); Onuf and Cole, *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America*; Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*.

²⁸ Rankine, *Ulysses in Black*, 6.

²⁹ Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*, 5.

classical world.³⁰ Aside from this, Rankine's work merged the educational relationship between black literature before and after 1865 with the Classics. In a wider context, the connection between Wheatley and the Classics started this entire process. Her literature helped spur forward a link between American *Classica Africana* and the ancient world – most notably, her connection with the ancient comedy writer Terence along with other ancient playwrights and authors.

In his *Notes on the State of Virginia* Jefferson remarked on the condition of ancient literary artists in direct response to the successes experienced by both Wheatley and Hammon, which the following passage reflects:

Yet notwithstanding these and other discouraging circumstances among the Romans, their slaves were often their rarest artists. They excelled too in science, insomuch as to be usually employed as tutors to their master's children. Epictetus, Terence and Phaedrus, were slaves. But they were of the race of whites. It is not their condition then, but nature, which has produced the distinction.³¹

Classicists tend to agree that Publius Terentius Afer came from a region near ancient Carthage in North Africa during the early 2nd century BC. The cognomen *Afer* denotes the regional origin of the Roman playwright (the cognomen also indicates his foreign status).³² In reality, scholars assume that the Romans enslaved Terence after the Second Punic War.³³

Terence represents an important connection between black Americans and the ancient world, primarily due to his presumed Carthaginian origins. Wheatley most certainly perceived Terence to possess African origins, and, thus, he had a critical influence over her literary output. Jefferson attempted to undermine this black connection with the Classics by insisting Terence's whiteness. Despite the initial hostile reception to Wheatley's poetry by her contemporaries, Rankine correctly recognises her as a founding voice of black American intellectualism. While an important contribution, Rankine's work does not represent the sole study on black classicism during the 19th century. John Levi Barnhard's *Empire of Ruin: Black Classicism and American Imperial*

³⁰ Homer. *The Odyssey*. (trans.) Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 1996).

³¹ Yarbrough, *The Essential Jefferson* (2006), 117-120.

³² In Jefferson's copy of Suetonius's *Life of Terence*, he was described as *colore fusco* which when translated means 'dark complexion'

³³ Emily Greenwood. "The Politics of Classicism in the Poetry of Phillis Wheatley" in Edith Hall, Richard Alston, and Justine McConnell (eds.), *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 153-181.

Culture continues to build upon the thesis established by Rankine.³⁴ Barnhard's work examines the integral nature of black classicism in the development of culture in the United States from the antebellum era onwards. Both Rankine and Barnhard do well to show the importance of classicism on the American black population, but other works exist which explore this concept further.

William W. Cook and James Tatum's *African American Writers and the Classical Tradition* looks at the connection between black literature and the Classics. Rather than attempting a large narrative, the strategy employed by Cook and Tatum focuses on suggestive figures or events in American history. The "Ciceronian speech of Frederick Douglass – seized from his self-proclaimed [white] 'betters' – leads into the troubled Odyssey of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, where the Cyclops lies in wait in an American psychiatric ward, and the allusive, quicksilver verse of Melvin Tolson, the 'Pindar of Harlem'".³⁵ Much like Rankine's *Ulysses in Black*, Cook and Tatum follow a chronological order, starting with the 18th century poetry of Phyllis Wheatley and ends with the satire of Fran Ross.³⁶ Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp's *Setting Down the Sacred Past: African American Race Histories*, in part, looks at black classicism as a form of cultural identity.³⁷ Her work focuses more so on how several little-known authors from the 18th century onwards explored how the black community in the United States developed the meaning of their diasporic experience. Unlike the other works mentioned, classicism does not represent the sole purpose of Maffly-Kipp's thesis, but it nonetheless weaves through her text as she explores black scholarship.

The Classics helped many black intellectuals find their voice, and the classical trope developed into an important aspect of black culture in the United States. Eric Ashley

³⁴ John Levi Barnhard. *Empire of Ruin: Black Classicism and American Imperial Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

³⁵ William W. Cook and James Tatum. *African American Writers and the Classical Tradition* (Chicago, IL.: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 5.

³⁶ Fran Ross published a satirical novel in 1974 called *Oreo*. The novel follows the adventure of protagonist Oreo, born to a Jewish father and black mother, who grows up with her maternal grandparents. As a teenager, Oreo sets off for New York City in search of her father. Along the way she experiences a number of challenges – accepted notions of race, culture, and ethnicity. The unique framework of her adventure resembles the ancient Greek mythical story of Theseus. See Fran Ross. *Oreo* (Boston, MA.: Northeastern University Press, 1974).

³⁷ Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp. *Setting Down the Sacred Past: African American Race Histories* (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 2010).

Hairston's *The Ebony Column: Classics, Civilization, and the African American Reclamation of the West* provides further evidence of this.³⁸ Hairston's work pays thorough attention to the varieties of classical education black writers attained during the 19th century. The work looks at the writings of four black scholars—Phillis Wheatley, Frederick Douglass, Anna Julia Cooper, and W.E.B. Du Bois. Overall it provides a good narrative of the chronological progression for black scholarship and their relationship with classicism. Hairston's book displays a valuable counterpart to Winterer's *Culture of Classicism*, which as mentioned above, focuses on classicism in relation to the white population.

In sum, the black connection with classical intellectualism in America came under much scrutiny from whites for much of the 19th and 20th centuries.³⁹ Blacks, as now recognised by the modern scholarship, clearly developed their own culture of classicism in the United States. This gives us a broader window on the Classics and its influences on American intellectual life during the antebellum era and beyond. The modern works of Reinhold, Richard, and Winterer tend to exclusively focus on white classicism. On the other hand, those of Rankine, Cook and Tatum, Maffy-Kipp, Barnhard, and Hairston tend to focus primarily on classicism from the perspective of blacks. Both groupings of authors underplay or ignore the similarities and differences between white and black classicism. My thesis will not endeavour to explore this observation: but, given my focus on white pro-slavery arguments based on the Classics, it remains essential to acknowledge the much broader use of classicism. On some level, classicism possessed very important connotations for both populations at varying points from the 18th century until present day. At the end of this section, we can say that modern scholarship widely recognises the importance of classicism in American society from the colonial period onwards. Moving forward, the following section will explore another crucial facet of

³⁸ Eric Ashley Hairston. *The Ebony Column: Classics, Civilization, and the African American Reclamation of the West* (Knoxville, TN.: The University of Tennessee Press, 2013).

³⁹ Many white Southerners did respond to the remarks made by Jefferson, whereby he claimed the Greeks and Romans employed white servile labourers. So too did Dr. Samuel Cartwright of Louisiana and E.A. Pollard of Virginia. Both Cartwright and Pollard argued that Greco-Roman enslavement of whites violated God's racial arrangements and provoked rebellion from racially equal slaves. They commended the South for avoiding that error and for its efforts to support an inferior race. For discussion see Fox-Genovese and Genovese *Mind of the Master Class*, 286-90.

this introduction by looking at some modern works which focus on the role of black slavery in America.

Black, White, and Grey: The Modern Historiographic Landscape

Naturally all generations regard their own as the epitome of civilisation. Present day society follows a similar formula – cutting edge science, major advancements in modern medicine, and technology lead the way forward. Nevertheless, we cannot alter history. Slavery existed in the global economy well into the 21st century and its abolition represents a recent modern construct. Nonetheless, we agree that Emancipation in the antebellum South occurred more than 150 years ago and logically, the history of black slavery in the United States holds an important position in modern scholarship. The centrality of slavery in the antebellum South, in particular, illuminates a unique relationship between the black and white populations of that region. White Southern free traders sought to find a more direct relationship with the global economy. This immediately connected cotton exchanges in cities around the world (for example, Liverpool) directly with the day-to-day field operations on cotton plantations. Less mediated global economic relations meant that more capital entered the South, and this increased the incentives for slaveholders to push their labour force harder and enforce discipline if they came up short on daily quotas. To protect economic interests and preserve their society, white Southerners developed many arguments detailing the positive influences of slave labour. It remains the purpose of the present section to sketch some key contributions to the debate in the 20th century (and the early 21st century) to document, in brief, this process – and give credit to those who have taken the study of Southern slavery into new territories. We also know, based on the previous section, that the prevalence of classicism in the United States during this period remains difficult to deny. My goal in the chapters that follow will aim to build upon our modern perspective of pro-slavery in the American South – specifically how the Classics existed as a fundamental support for white apologists. But for now, the present part of the introduction will explore the evolution of academic works on slavery in the American

South from the early 20th century onwards. Again, this will aim to provide clarity on the scholarly status-quo and further situate my thesis within the conversation.

Scholarship in the early 20th century started investigating Southern slavery at a much higher rate than previously witnessed. Authors like Ulrich Bonnell Phillips led the way in this, and his literature stood as the status-quo until the 1950s. Phillips, a historian of the American South and the era's most influential expert on slavery, contended that servile labour developed into an economically inefficient system. Yet he held the view that slaveholders treated their labourers well – providing them with adequate amounts of clothing, food, shelter, and so forth.⁴⁰ In his 1918 work, Phillips emphasised that Southern slavery rescued blacks from their barbaric existence in Africa, converted them to Christianity, sheltered them from the harshness of reality, and, generally, benefitted them.⁴¹ While Phillips' work mirrored core elements of the antebellum pro-slavery argument, he refused to acknowledge comparisons between himself and Southern advocates of slavery.⁴²

After the Second World War, even more scholars started examining the antebellum period and unsurprisingly pro-slavery literature received mostly negative attention. During the 1950s historians attempted to separate themselves from Phillips' earlier insights on slavery. In his 1956 book, *A Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, Kenneth Stampp sharply countered many of Phillips' arguments. On the one hand, Stampp framed Southern slaveholders as practical businessmen (and women) who tried to preserve their way of life. He also focalised on the conditions experienced by black slaves, concluding that their treatment often translated into mistreatment (at the hands of the master class). In his work, Stampp focused on primary sources such as plantation records, diary entries, letters, journals, and so forth. The information revealed in these pieces of literature tells us more about the master class than it does about black slaves, because most servile labourers did not keep such documents. Nevertheless,

⁴⁰ Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery* (London: Penguin, 1993), 134-36.

⁴¹ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labour as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (New York: Appleton, 1918).

⁴² William Sumner Jenkins's 1935 publication *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* should too be considered here, largely because of his misleading views on the history of Southern pro-slavery.

Stampp's work challenged the historical portrayal of slavery which up until the 1950s largely relied on the works of Phillips.

Stanley Elkins also contributed to the discussion on slavery during the 1950s, although Stampp's position vexed Elkins' 1959 work, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*. Unlike Stampp, Elkins' arguments do not follow the progression of other works on Southern slavery. He described black slavery as a grotesque institution, believing the master class would often physically harm servile labourers under their care. To his detriment, however, Elkins compared the conditions experienced by black slaves with prisoners held in labour camps during the Second World War.⁴³ Elkins presented a largely misguided investigation into Southern slavery, while creating a great deal of controversy in the process. Beyond this, Elkins did not consider the value of pro-slavery literature, or how this literary output helped characterise white Southern intellectuals. Overall Elkins' portrayal of black slavery presented moral arguments against the Southern institution and his version of events lacks intellectual engagement with the pro-slavery argument. The Civil Rights Movement also helped to restrict the genuine study of slavery during this period, because pro-civil rights audiences often responded poorly to academic engagement with pro-slavery literature and, more generally, the intellectual history of the American South.

The intellectual sides of this history did not entirely get pushed aside. For instance, C. Vann Woodward's 1960 publication on George Fitzhugh's *Cannibals All!* represents a good example of scholarship on pro-slavery during this period.⁴⁴ In the essay ("George Fitzhugh, *Sui Generis*": or George Fitzhugh, a class of his own) he acknowledged Fitzhugh's contributions to pro-slavery, although he did not recognise him as a Southern

⁴³ Stanley Elkins. *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago IL.: The University of Chicago Press, 1959).

⁴⁴ Woodward represents a good example of this. During the 1960s and beyond, Woodward, an American scholar, devoted significant attention to Southern pro-slavery. He was the first to compile and edit George Fitzhugh's 1857 work *Cannibals All!* Woodward included a forward called "George Fitzhugh, *Sui Generis*". George Fitzhugh, a class of his own. Woodward most certainly viewed Fitzhugh's work as an important tool for deciphering the pro-slavery argument. Nevertheless, he made Fitzhugh an outlier. The inclusion of *Sui Generis* indicates that Fitzhugh should exist in a category outside of white Southern thinkers. This claim is not wholly untrue, because Fitzhugh did emerge as bold apologist. His ideas often clashed with other mainstream pro-slavery works, and although polemical, we cannot deny his relevance.

intellectual.⁴⁵ Woodward endeavoured to make Fitzhugh an outlier, and fundamentally, *Sui Generis* served as a disclaimer that he should exist in a category outside of the mainstream antebellum thinkers. Chapter six will explore Fitzhugh in much greater detail, but he did put forth some extreme views and many white Southerners widely read his literature. His ideas received critical acclaim from his contemporaries, so his relevance to supporters of black slavery remains undeniable! Overall, Woodward did offer a few interesting insights on Fitzhugh's impact to pro-slavery, while doing this he too successfully, and ironically, resurrected his work, *Cannibals All!*. Beyond this he offers minimal engagement with Fitzhugh as an intellectual or author of pro-slavery literature. Thus, much of this early scholarship put forth a negative view of Southern pro-slavery.

Did this negative attention imply a lack of Southern intellectualism – or, does Henry Adams' opinion that, “strictly, the Southerner had no mind; he had no temperament. He was not a scholar; he had no intellectual training; he could not analyse an idea, and he could not even conceive of admitting two” possess any basis in fact?⁴⁶ At one point, academics viewed the antebellum South as a region devoid of modernism and intellectualism. Merely a provincial part of the United States, perceived as inhospitable to the cultivation of intellectual thought. The institution of slavery played a large part in deforming the Southern image and its post-Civil War legacy. As a matter of fact, the American South was a fragile region and did possess intellectuals, many of whom devoted a significant amount of energy (in the decades prior to the Civil War) to defending their way of life. Black slavery overshadows what represented a society, perhaps not on the brink of greatness, but a culture which did contribute to the development of 19th century intellectual thought. As noted earlier, Southern scholarship did more than focus on the production of pro-slavery works, and even though this does represent a major endeavour, there did exist a “sub-intellectual” culture: a culture which produced discussion on philosophical thought, political economy, republicanism, theology, modern art, history, classicism, among much more. This “sub-culture” also

⁴⁵ George Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All! or, Slaves Without Masters*, edited by C. Vann Woodward (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 1960).

⁴⁶ Michael O'Brien, *Henry Adams and the Southern Question* (Athens, GA.: The University of Georgia Press, 2005), 3.

supported pro-slavery, because based on their intellectual prowess many white Southerners crafted sophisticated arguments in favour of servile labour. The difficulties in achieving this proved an immense task for those white Southerners who pursued to protect their way of life, but it clearly fell into a bigger box of Southern classicism.

The social portrait of the American South sometimes reflects an isolated society, where its intellectuals resided on remote plantations far from the invigoration of cosmopolitanism and urbanism.⁴⁷ This portrayal does possess some accuracy, but in fact, most of the regional intellectuals did reside in urban centres, such as Charleston, New Orleans, or Richmond. Some of these citizens owned plantations and may have resided in rural areas during certain parts of the year, but a high percentage did own urban dwellings. These Southerners often served as “lawyers, politicians, clergymen, planters, diplomats, teachers, newspaper editors” and so forth.⁴⁸ Overall, 19th and 20th century sceptics of the South generally misunderstood Southern intellectual culture.⁴⁹ This mistaken view of their identity only began to shift during the mid-1960s and beyond – starting with the works produced by Eugene Genovese, to whom we must now turn.

The emergence of Eugene Genovese’s 1969 work *The World Slaveholders Made* started to broaden the discussion on the history of American slavery.⁵⁰ The work specifically looks at white Southern intellectual culture, and within a few years of Genovese’s publication many historians called for the re-evaluation of Southern pro-slavery. Genovese even completed a rehabilitation of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, after reviving Phillips’ views in the mid-1960s. After receiving much negative attention during the 1950s, this rehabilitation brought many of Phillips’ insights on the nature of Southern class structure and the master-slave relationships back into the light – they still retain value for scholars of the antebellum South. American historians began researching pro-slavery literature to better understand Southern intellectual culture. By the mid-1970s, literature emerged “that associated pro-slavery with the intellectual elite of the

⁴⁷ O’Brien. *All Clever Men, Who Make Their Way*, 1.

⁴⁸ O’Brien. *All Clever Men, Who Make Their Way*, 2.

⁴⁹ See Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago IL.: The University of Chicago Press, 1959).

⁵⁰ Eugene Genovese, *The World Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation* (Hanover, NH.: The University Press of New England, 1969).

Old South who struggled for acceptance in a non-intellectual culture”.⁵¹ Genovese’s theories on Southern slaveholding created much controversy and *The World Slaveholders Made* marked the beginning of the inquiry into a more intensive study of pro-slavery. Moving forward throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Genovese’s works became increasingly more focused on the functionality of Southern culture, society, slavery, and intellectualism. Even so, he paved the way forward for our modern understanding of the master class and their relationship with slavery in the Old South. Late in their careers Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, co-authored *The Mind of the Master Class* which represents a culmination of these endeavours.⁵² The work provides a lengthy discourse on pro-slavery and draws upon several primary sources from the antebellum period (including many other modern academic studies) to achieve this. By using hundreds of primary sources, which focus on slavery, Southern intellectual culture, and the pro-slavery argument, the Genovese’s provided a clear insight into Southern intellectualism and its importance to pro-slavery, ultimately cementing *The Mind of the Master Class* as an essential piece of modern scholarship on the antebellum South.

As mentioned above, for nearly 50 years Phillips’ early 20th century works represented the best scholarship on the antebellum South. With the works of Genovese and then Drew Gilpin Faust (see more discussion on Faust below) came a drastic increase in the interest in pro-slavery and Southern intellectualism – scholarly focus on the intellectual culture of an “anti-intellectual” society flourished. Many early scholars of the antebellum American South and its history found it difficult to remove themselves from the moral dilemmas surrounding servile labour. Only when scholars such as Genovese, Faust, and O’Brien broke down these social barriers did historians begin getting a more accurate view of the antebellum South. For instance, throughout the late 1970s and 1980s Faust joined the historiographical debates on slavery, continuing to build upon the foundations established by Genovese. Faust’s works offered new insights into slavery and filled in gaps left by earlier scholarship. She also initiated a more

⁵¹ Larry Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defence of Slavery in America, 1701-1840* (Athens, GA.: The University of Georgia Press, 2004).

⁵² Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class*.

vibrant study on the culture of Southern pro-slavery, and in 1979, published a major contribution to the field called “A Southern Stewardship”.⁵³ The article explores the methodology behind the defence of slavery in the three decades leading up to the Civil War. On the modern study of slavery, Faust asserts that: “the very distastefulness of the pro-slavery argument has intrigued modern scholars, who have sought to understand how writers and thinkers—individuals in many ways like themselves—could turn their talents to such abhorrent purposes”.⁵⁴ Faust correctly recognises the polemical nature of pro-slavery, although rather than exhibiting moral outrage, she objectively inserts herself into the minds of the men and women who defended the institution. She achieved this by examining the literary output of prominent Southern thinkers, acknowledging the legitimacy of their arguments, and their purposes for writing. As mentioned, historians previously struggled to overcome the moral issues associated with Southern slaveholding. Thus, removing herself from these burdens, Faust produced a good analysis of the minds of the master class. The article also plots the interactions between 19 white Southern advocates of slavery – an interesting component which displays the breadth of Southern intelligentsia during the late antebellum era.⁵⁵ The chart also presents modern scholars with a network, which we can use to cross-examine how pro-slavery writers communicated and where they influenced the works of one another.

Faust continued her descent into the minds of the master class through the mediums of two other works: *The Ideology of Slavery* (1981) and *James Henry Hammond and the Old South* (1982).⁵⁶ *The Ideology of Slavery* focuses on literature produced by a few leading Southern minds, and includes works from Thomas R. Dew, William Harper, James Henry Hammond, Thornton Stringfellow, Henry Hughes, Josiah Nott, and George Fitzhugh. Much like the study framed in the present thesis, these figures, through their literature, provide unique contributions to the discussions on pro-slavery and remain crucial to this study. The following year Faust released *James Henry Hammond and the*

⁵³ Drew Gilpin Faust, “A Southern Stewardship: The Intellectual and the Proslavery Argument.” *American Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (1979): 63-80.

⁵⁴ Faust, “A Southern Stewardship”, 63.

⁵⁵ For the chart see Faust, “A Southern Stewardship”, 67-68.

⁵⁶ Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge, LA.: Louisiana State University Press, 1981); Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery* (Baton Rouge, LA.: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).

Old South, in which she narrows the view further and specifically focuses on the life of Hammond. Faust's literary output conveys Hammond's contributions to pro-slavery, but the work primarily investigates Hammond's biographical narrative. Overall Faust's works continue to reinforce the importance of discussions on Southern slavery, especially in relation to the growth of the pro-slavery argument after 1830.

Michael O'Brien represents another scholar who seriously examined white Southern intellectualism. O'Brien primarily focused on the social portrait and intellectual structure of the American South through a different lens. O'Brien suggested that "the mind of the Old South has come to seem uninteresting and inaccessible. Only worth studying for the pro-slavery argument or for picking out from its literary dross the solitary gold of Poe or the tarnished silver of Simms. Why?"⁵⁷ O'Brien's scholarship takes much of the attention away from the pro-slavery argument, and rather focused on understanding other facets of Southern intellectual history. By placing emphasis on their scholarly works not related to pro-slavery, O'Brien looked at Southern intellectuals in a different context. In the process, he provided us with a more vibrant image of Southern intellectualism. *All Clever Men, Who Make Their Way* and *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South* represent powerful investigations into the intellectual life of white Southerners and the leading advocates of slavery.⁵⁸ As mentioned above, outside of pro-slavery, white Southern intellectuals did focus on cultural and social topics such as philosophical thought, republicanism, political economy, modern art, history, and so forth. O'Brien, therefore, chose to examine these other literary contributions in turn. For example, he wrote commentaries on George Frederick Holmes' works on Friedrich Schlegel's Philosophy of History, Louisa McCord's writings on women's suffrage in America, Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve's position on the "necessity of the Classics", and much more. Overall, O'Brien showed the social portrait and intellectual structure of the antebellum American South from a different, and up until this point unique perspective, which also shows that the breadth of antebellum Southern literature went beyond defending slavery.

⁵⁷ O'Brien, *All Clever Men, Who Make Their Way*, 2.

⁵⁸ O'Brien, *All Clever Men, Who Make Their Way*; Michael O'Brien. *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860* (Chapel Hill, NC.: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Despite boasting many intellectual attributes, the antebellum American South possessed one of the largest black slave populations in the New World – so intellectualism and human-bondage co-existed. While, exploring the white Southern intellectual culture and the impact of pro-slavery represent important caveats, we must still recognise the dark underside of the antebellum period. When the Civil War began in 1861 the servile labour population in the South neared 4 million. Many notable modern works also chart the actual phenomenon of servile labour under the gritty lens of black slavery in the South.⁵⁹ These works focus on the relationship between slavery and the Southern economy. The thousands of labourers that passed through slave markets on route to plantations throughout the South served as the backbone of the economy.⁶⁰ New Orleans, for example, had hundreds of slave yards which during the antebellum era saw over 2 million black slaves separated from their friends or families and treated like livestock. In New Orleans and elsewhere, slave traders bartered, examined, fondled, and priced human beings for the sole purpose of profit.⁶¹ The slaves, made to parade around the markets of New Orleans by day and locked in a slave pen by night, underwent extremely arduous and morally detrimental conditions.⁶² Walter Johnson's *Soul by Soul* does well to explore the dark underside of the slave markets in New Orleans, and his work paints a vibrant yet chilling image for the thousands of black slaves who passed through the city.⁶³ Much like his work *Soul by Soul*, Johnson's later book *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* goes beyond the gruesome slave markets of New Orleans and portrays the much larger underside of the American South.⁶⁴ The work elaborates on the story of enslaved blacks – the people who planted the fields, harvested the cotton, and laboured for the master class. Johnson's work also does well to show the connection between the American South and the 19th century free market economy.

⁵⁹ Walter Johnson. *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 27-28.

⁶⁰ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 18.

⁶¹ Frederic Bancroft. *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Charleston, SC.: The University of South Carolina Press, 1931); Michael Tadman. *Spectators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves of the Old South* (Madison, WI.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996).

⁶² Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 32.

⁶³ Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 33-34.

⁶⁴ Walter Johnson. *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 2013), 15.

As mentioned above, this thesis will focus on the importance of classicism on the pro-slavery argument. But, to properly do this we must first understand the importance this argument possessed throughout the American South. Much like classicism acted as a political tool for American politicians, so too did the pro-slavery argument. White Southern politicians desired a more direct connection to the global economy, and the pro-slavery argument helped to push this political agenda forward. If we look at Johnson's *River of Dark Dreams*, he notes that the traditional historiography focuses on the Compromises of 1820 and 1850 or the Kansas-Nebraska Act to help us recognise the centrality of black slavery and the coming of the Civil War.⁶⁵ With this borne in mind, the intransigence of Southern politicians in the decades before the Civil War arose because of their commitment to slavery. We therefore need to include the Compromises of 1820, 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act into our discussions on the pro-slavery argument, along with how these events impacted Southern nationalism and secession. Southern nationalism and pro-slavery co-existed as two very popular facets of that society during this period. Essentially the nationalist identity in the South gravitated towards America's revolutionary heritage, whereas many white Southerners who visited the North tended to regard industrialism, materialism, and capitalism as anti-American. At the same time, white Southern intellectuals began to militantly defend slavery as a positive good – so the nationalist agenda in the antebellum South tended to promote America's revolutionary heritage, agrarianism, and black slavery. In this sense, Southern nationalism and the pro-slavery argument complemented each other.⁶⁶

As modern historians we look to these events and the emergence of Southern nationalism as representing major developments for what occurred in America in the years before the Civil War. But for contemporary 19th century Americans, especially white Southerners, the centrality of servile labour and the pro-slavery argument possessed a different meaning – so too did the Compromises of 1820, of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Sectionalism between the North and South, which inevitably led to secession, also possessed totally different implications. At the time, the future of the

⁶⁵ Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, 42-90.

⁶⁶ See Drew Gilpen Faust. *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge, LA.: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defence of Slavery in America, 1701-1840*, 354-367.

entire United States was at stake – the world too. The continuance of black slavery in the American South possessed the potential to change the development of modern history. Thus, if we ask ourselves to define the true differences between the antebellum North and South – our answers might reflect this sentiment: various shades of grey. What did white Southerners hope to achieve with pro-slavery? We can interpret this question in a variety of different ways, and the modern historiography tells us this well enough, but my research will show the centrality of classicism within the greater pro-slavery argument. It remains my hope that this section and the previous one paint an adequate picture to display the critical nature possessed by classicism and pro-slavery on cultural developments in the American South. Classicism helped define Southern culture while pro-slavery paved the way forward for their relationship with the world. Utilising classicism and pro-slavery a white Southern politician, an ordinary man, or a woman of modest upbringing, all possessed the ability to define their culture and way of life. The chapters below will show the centrality of both pro-slavery and classicism within this white Southern culture during the 19th century. But at no point can modern historians specifically lock classicism into the pro-slavery argument, or only into the South. However different the goals of the North and South during this period, the use of classicism in the pro-slavery arguments breaks away from a neat black-and-white contrast.

In sum, looking at Johnson's *River of Dark Dreams* offers a good point to conclude this section on the historiographical discussion. His work clearly makes a connection between white Southerners, black slaves, and pro-slavery. Johnson explores the relationship each group had within the confines of the antebellum South. Considering too *Soul by Soul*, Johnson does well to explore this dark underside of American antebellum history. But numerous good works exist on black slavery in the American South, and to enumerate them in this thesis represents the impossible, therefore, we must establish a threshold for our discussion.

We must characterise the culture of the antebellum South as paternalistic – a society led by 19th century white pro-slavery free traders, many of whom engulfed the spirit of classicism. This concept possesses little relevance to the ancient Greek and Roman slave systems, but this introduction shows us first, that classicism did emerge as a central

element of white Southerners' outlook on politics and intellectualism. Second, that pro-slavery arguments, many utilising the Classics for support, developed into popular cultural icons for which apologists rallied behind. While my research does not offer direct parallels with ancient slavery, it nonetheless will show the importance of classicism on the pro-slavery argument. Despite this, antebellum white Southerners thought their practice of slavery possessed similarities with the slave systems in both ancient Greece and Rome. Most modern scholarship on this topic generally demonstrates the fallacy in this; ancient slavery differed from its modern version in many important facets.⁶⁷

This, then, situates the wider context in which my thesis sits. As mentioned above, the research presented below will focus on how classicism fit within the Southern pro-slavery framework. A classical education was not the reserve of white Southerners, but how they utilised it in this context represents a unique outlook on the ancient world. The pro-slavery authors obviously did not restrict their arguments to focus on the Classics alone. Thus, the second chapter of this thesis will elaborate on the pro-slavery argument further, to show the other mainstream approaches white Southerners used in their endeavours to defend black slavery. Overall the chapter on the pro-slavery argument provides necessary context for the ensuing discussion on the writings of Thomas Cobb, Louisa McCord, George Frederick Holmes, George Fitzhugh, and James Henry

⁶⁷ A few relevant studies which draw comparisons between the ancient Greco-Roman and Southern slave systems include the following: Moses Finley. *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (Princeton, NJ.: Markus Wiener, 1998).

Keith Hopkins. *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Keith Bradley. "On the Roman Slave Supply and Slavebreeding" *Slavery and Abolition* 8, no.1, (1987): 42-64; Alan Watson. *Roman Law and Comparative Laws* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1991); Walter Scheidel. "Human Mobility in Roman Italy, I: the free population," *Journal of Roman Studies* 94 (2004): 1-26; Walter Scheidel. "Quantifying Sources of Slaves in the Early Roman Empire", 156-169; Walter Scheidel. "Human mobility in Roman Italy, II: The slave population" *The Journal of Roman Studies* 95 (2005): 64-79; Enrico Dal Lago. *Agrarian Elites: American Slaveholders and Southern Italian Landowners 1815-1861* (Baton Rouge, LA.: Louisiana State University Press, 2005); Enrico Dal Lago and Constantina Katsari. "Ideal models of slave management in the Roman world and the ante-bellum American South". In Enrico Dal Lago and Constantina Katsari eds., *Slave Systems, Ancient and Modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Walter Scheidel. "In Search of Roman Economic Growth," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 22 (2009): 46-70; Walter Scheidel. "The Roman Slave Supply", in Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Slavery, 1: The Ancient Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Edith Hall, Richard Alston, and Justine McConnell (eds.). *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Hammond through a brief discourse on the main approaches to pro-slavery. It remains essential to understand the full range of the pro-slavery argument to connect the special contributions of classicism.

The third chapter will look towards the Southern jurist, Thomas R. Cobb, and his work *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*. Chapter four will explore the remarkable Louisa McCord, her views on pro-slavery, and the landscape of late antebellum Southern political economy. The fifth chapter will look at the classically trained scholar, George Frederick Holmes. The chapter on Holmes will explore his 1855 article “Ancient Slavery”, in which he utilised ancient demographics to defend the Southern mode of production. Chapter six will look at the socioeconomic writer George Fitzhugh by focusing on his 1857 publication *Cannibal’s All!*. Finally, chapter seven will examine James Henry Hammond’s Cotton is King Speech, along with his plantation manual, and how he established parallels with Cato the Elder’s agricultural treatise *De Agricultura*. Cobb, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and Hammond represent a small data-set of pro-slavery authors who used the Classics, and by design, this PhD thesis must cover a finite amount of information. However, beyond this limited remit, my choice of these figures from the antebellum American South will allow for a wider interpretation of how classicism permeated the pro-slavery argument. My decision to pursue this approach and the figures chosen will allow us to see Southern pro-slavery under a new lens. A lens which details a particular aspect on the importance of classicism within the much larger spectrum of Southern intellectualism. The arguments examined in the chapters below display a calculated approach to the defence of slavery. In many ways, these five individuals represent a good selection of pro-slavery writers, as they all possessed keen minds, strong intellectual backgrounds, and an intense passion for studying the worlds of ancient Greece and Rome. Because of this, my analysis throughout the thesis will improve our understanding of the relationship between pro-slavery literature and classicism. Each chapter will reflect the strong literary output of these writers, in attempt to show off their flare and unique contributions to pro-slavery. Overall, this is why my research will focus on this set of individuals. With that awareness borne in mind, the work below can focus on one critical aspect of their literary output. This will also help us put into a broader perspective these white Southern

intellectuals, why they produced literature on black slavery, and what drove their arguments forward.

All in all, the focus of my current research will provide a better understanding on the role classicism played in the much larger discussion on the American South. Pro-slavery fuelled the vast amounts of literature produced in the South between 1820 and 1860, so my hope remains fixed on ascertaining if ancient perceptions on slavery purely influenced the Southern defence of servile labour more generally, or to determine if white Southerners commonly used classical literature, because it possessed the potential to strengthen their arguments. The chapters below provide a preliminary data-set for this endeavour and the research will examine more deeply how white Southerners embraced the Classics, not only as a springboard, but developed it as a cornerstone—arguably a fundamental support mechanism—for their entire pro-slavery framework. The exploration of these authors and their literature will champion a different approach than previously attempted by other studies, and it remains my hope to shed new light on the developments in the unique, albeit peculiar culture of the American South.⁶⁸ First, however, the wider context of the pro-slavery argument.

⁶⁸ Any translations of ancient Greek and Roman texts appearing in this work have been taken from the Loeb Classical Library, unless otherwise indicated. The chapters below will also list, where possible, the contemporary translations used by Cobb, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and Hammond – or possible candidates.

The Pro-Slavery Argument

I am a democrat because I believe in the Fall of Man. I think most people are democrats for the opposite reason. A greater democratic enthusiasm descends from the ideas of people like Rousseau, who believed in democracy because they thought mankind was so wise and good that everyone deserved a share in government. The real reason for democracy is just the reverse. Mankind is so fallen that no man can be trusted with unchecked power over his fellows. Aristotle said that some people were only fit to be slaves. I do not contradict him. But I reject slavery because I see no men fit to be masters.⁶⁹

Pro-Slavery and Abolition during the Antebellum Era

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, among many of the Founding Fathers owned slaves. Apart from John Adams (1797-1801), a well-known abolitionist, Washington, Jefferson, and Madison led the United States well into the 19th century. Even after James Madison finished serving his second term in 1817 the trend of white Southern planters holding the presidency continued. This indicates how the United States, specifically the South, depended on slavery during this period. Many politicians and statesmen who served throughout the antebellum era also owned slaves. Slavery provided Southern politicians with an economic mode of production that removed them from the everyday concerns of life. Thus, these slaveholders and statesmen possessed an adequate amount of time to focus on their political pursuits.⁷⁰ Slaves functioned as prosthetic tools used by the master class to sustain their agrarian pursuits. Most certainly the white Southern aristocracy wanted to preserve this way of life, and the elite utilised their aristocratic status and political panache to defend the slave mode of production.

Given this background, it remains unsurprising that after 1820, many pro-slavery authors emerged throughout the South in their endeavour to defend black slavery. These men and women worked hard at their task, by poring over census returns, studying the reports of the British parliamentary committees on Poor Laws, and by combing the files

⁶⁹ C.S. Lewis, *Present Concerns*. (ed.) Walter Cooper (New York: Harcourt, 1986), 17.

⁷⁰ David Donald. "The Proslavery Argument Reconsidered." *The Journal of Southern History* 37, no. 1 (1971): 3-18.

of British and Northern reviews for evidences of flaws in free society.⁷¹ This group developed ardent and well-crafted pro-slavery arguments, and this literature increased in its fervour as the antebellum era progressed. As industrialism took a strong foothold, Northern states clearly made further strides towards developing a free wage labour system. Abolition gradually increased in its popularity in the North, and the physical practiced of slavery began to disappear. This first began in Vermont in 1777 and continued until around 1840 – at which point abolition in the North had taken full effect.

As Northern states continually abolished slavery, black slaves held in bondage rarely achieved free status, but their offspring did.⁷² By 1808, one fourth of the black population in the North remained in human bondage.⁷³ In 1840, the last year census forms for Northern states included a line for slaves, only New York and Pennsylvania retained black servile labourers.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the overall increase of industrial production and the shift towards a free wage labour market economy did well to aid Northern state legislatures with the gradual progression of abolition. Northern states eventually dismantled their slave labour system, but in the South chattel slavery (economically) paved the way forward. Naturally, this led to increased tensions between the North and South, which eventually culminated with the Civil War.

Pressure continued to mount between abolitionists and pro-slavery camps, which continued to drastically escalate after John C. Calhoun gave his *Speech on the Reception of Abolitionist Petitions* on February 6, 1837. This speech represents a major turning point and sparked a literary war that continued until the outbreak of the Civil War. Calhoun used his platform to express the threat posed by abolition. He asserted the threat of abolition represented a far greater concern than the current amount of enthusiasm expressed by minority groups. Until this point, politicians had done well to avoid the harder issues surrounding slavery.⁷⁵ Heeding Calhoun's warning—more on Calhoun

⁷¹ Donald, "The Proslavery Argument Reconsidered", 5.

⁷² Ira Berlin. *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 228-56.

⁷³ David Brion Davis. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 250-68.

⁷⁴ David Nathaniel Gellman. *Emancipating New York: The Politics of Slavery and Freedom, 1777–1827* (Louisiana State University Press, 2006).

⁷⁵ John. C. Calhoun. "Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions, Delivered in the Senate, February 6, 1837", in Richard R. Cralle, ed., *Speeches of John C. Calhoun, Delivered in the House of Representatives*

below –authors of pro-slavery literature started taking a more defensive approach. The literary output often expressed the benefits of Southern slavery through the medium of many different arguments, which this chapter will explore in more detail. To keep up with Northern abolition, white Southern apologists turned their attention westward. They came up with the theory that the successes of free states rested upon the available lands of the Western frontier. “So long as the resource exists,” Robert Barnwell wrote, “the free systems of Government in the Northern States may endure . . . but the time is rapidly approaching when the way West will be blocked up . . . What then will become of the Republican forms of Government in the Northern States?”⁷⁶

This encroaches on George Fitzhugh’s pro-slavery literature (a more detailed analysis can be seen in chapter six). Fitzhugh conducted extensive research on the labour systems of the Northern states, and other countries (primarily Great Britain and France). This research led Fitzhugh to conclude that the working conditions experienced by white labourers in England, Scotland, France, and the North could potentially befall the Western territories. Fitzhugh expressed that little good came out of the rise of industry in Great Britain. He expressed this in the following quote: “The Edinburgh Review well knows that the white laborers of England receive more blows than are inflicted on Southern slaves... there is more cruelty, more physical discomfort, than on all farms in the South”. Fitzhugh continued with “This Review, for twenty years, has been a grand repository of the ignorance, the crimes, and sufferings of the workers in mines and factories, of the agricultural laborers, of the apprentices, and, in fine, of the whole laboring class of England”.⁷⁷ Fitzhugh did most of his mainstream writing during the 1850s. A time when pro-slavery and abolitionist literature reached its most vibrant apex.

Fitzhugh theorised that slavery represented the sole option to prevent warfare among different classes of society. In the slave-holding South “capital was labour, and labor

and the Senate of the United States (New York: D. Appleton, 1853), 625-33. Lacy K. Ford. "Recovering the Republic: Calhoun, South Carolina, and the concurrent majority". *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 89, no. 3 (1988): 146-159. United States Senate. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese. *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 75, 218-220, 387-88, 670.

⁷⁶ Donald, “The Proslavery Argument Reconsidered”, 5. See Laura A. White, *Robert Barnwell Rhett: Father of Secession* (New York, 1931), 49.

⁷⁷ George Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All! or, Slaves Without Masters* (Richmond VA.: A. Morris, Publisher, 1857), 169.

was capital.”, Fitzhugh wrote in 1857.⁷⁸ For Fitzhugh and many of his contemporaries the pro-slavery argument represented a direct attack against the free wage market economy, so this group of writers took it upon themselves to defend the black slave mode of production. Northern abolitionists opposed this by developing arguments which attempted to undermine the socio-economic system in the South. Ideally, authors of these works desired to convince white Southerners and politicians alike that industrialism needed to pave the way forward.⁷⁹ Thus, this chapter will inevitably lead to the forefront of my study, which explores the role classicism played on the development of pro-slavery thought.

The Pro-Slavery Argument

As has long been recognised by modern scholarship, the supporters of Southern slavery utilised multiple approaches to support their pro-slavery arguments. My thesis will analyse one particular area of that effort – the relationship between classicism and the

⁷⁸ Donald, “The Proslavery Argument Reconsidered”, 6.

⁷⁹ Abolition and pro-slavery hotbeds did also engage in bouts of extreme violence – especially in the decade leading up the Civil War. Bleeding Kansas emerged as a main economic issue, and platform for violence, between pro-slavery and abolitionist ideologies. A brief reminder of the central issues shows us how the pro-slavery writers responded to their abolitionist contemporaries. Between 1854 and 1861 slaveholders and free-soil forces fought in open conflict over the territory of Kansas. Slaveholding settlers believed that they possessed the right to bring any form of property they wished. On the other hand, the free-soiler’s feared that wealthy Southern aristocrats would saturate the territory with servile labour. The fighting in Kansas precluded the Civil War, while tensions between pro-slavery and abolitionist also attracted extremists – most notably John Brown. Brown used extreme forms of violence in his attempt to overcome slavery. Despite his many insurrections throughout Kansas, for example during Pottawatomie massacre his posse killed five pro-slavery settlers, Brown’s infamous raid on Harper’s Ferry is best known. On October 21, 1859, he led an unsuccessful raid on the federal armory there (located in modern day West Virginia). Under siege by an army garrison, Brown and a few other insurrectionists attempted to fight off the soldiers, but their efforts failed. After facing a swift trail, Brown was executed for treason on December 2, 1859. Brown’s uprising most certainly influenced other extreme bouts of violence, for example, the canning of Senator Charles Sumner in May 1856. Sumner spoke against slavery (and the violence) in Kansas, and because of this, Congressman Preston Brooks actively canned Sumner hours after his condemning speech to the Senate. On January 29, 1861 Kansas was admitted to the Union as a free state, and the Civil War began a few months later. On Bleeding Kansas and John Brown see David S. Reynolds. *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2009). David Roediger, ed., W.E.B Du Bois, *John Brown* (New York: The Modern Library 2010); On Charles Sumner and Preston Brooks see William H. Hofer. *The Canning of Charles Sumner: Honor, Idealism, and the Origins of the Civil War* (Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press 2010); Paul Quigley. *Shifting Grounds: Nationalism and the American South, 1848-1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011), 60-64.

pro-slavery argument in the American South. My research will show that literature and perceived arguments stemming from the ancient world helped fuel the entirety of the Southern pro-slavery movement. The selection of authors below will further this position, because each had their individual opinions and crafted different pro-slavery literature – ranging from legal, socio-economic, and political justifications for the existence of slavery. Classicism, however, or rather, the use of the classical tradition by these authors, displays the centrality of the ancient world on their literary output. This chapter then, will expand upon the mainstream arguments that most authors of pro-slavery works tended to rely upon. Considering the other main types of approaches will help us better understand how the pro-slavery argument worked. This will benefit further as we progress deeper into the thesis, when my work eventually discusses other aspects of pro-slavery in relation to classicism.

Moving forward, this chapter will then precisely survey what represent the other mainstream approaches of the pro-slavery argument, specifically the religious, scientific, political, economic, and legal defences of slavery. Nevertheless, there exists considerable overlap between these different areas of the pro-slavery argument. My analytical separation, and the accompanying stress on some defences over others, does not deny the considerable level of similarity in some of the outputs. Only after we place these main approaches and sources of inspiration into clear perspective, can we start to appreciate their respective contributions to the development of pro-slavery. This chapter will provide the fundamentals for its entire framework – acting as a reference point for my audience. This chapter will begin, then, with an overview of the extraordinarily powerful approach: the religious defence.

The Religious Defence

For centuries, humankind has recognised the use of slave labour in the Bible – to quote the book itself: in this sense “there is nothing new under the sun”.⁸⁰ The concept of slavery remains an easily recognisable theme throughout the Bible, and because of this,

⁸⁰ Ecclesiastes 1:9.

white Southerners used biblical scripture (and a moral high ground) to support servile labour. The Old Testament, or a religious text composed of works derived from Hebrew canonical literature and other authoritative scriptures, mentions slavery first in the Book of Genesis (a telling sign of its popular exploitation throughout the work).⁸¹ On the other hand, abolitionist literature used the Bible to emphasise the principles of right, wrong, and the sin associated with the institution of slavery. The biblical defence acted as a moral shield for white Southern advocates of servile labour, and this, combined with a literal reading of the Bible, aided the growth of contributions to the religious defence. The Compromise of 1820, mentioned in the introduction chapter, acted as a catalyst for this, because the legislation brought religion and slavery to the forefront of many political debates.⁸² In 1820, the *Richmond Enquirer* published a lengthy article which detailed the various examples from the Bible which invoked support for slavery.⁸³ The article concluded with these five propositions:

- 1) That the volume of sacred writings commonly called the Bible, comprehending the Old and New Testaments, contains the unerring decisions of the word of God.
- 2) That these decisions are of equal authority in both Testaments, and that this authority is the essential veracity of God, who is truth himself.
- 3) That since there can be no prescription against the authority of God, whatever is declared in any part of the holy Bible to be *lawful* or *illicit*, must be *essentially so* in its own nature, however repugnant such declaration may be to the current opinions of men during any period of time.
- 4) That as the supreme lawgiver and judge of man, God is infinitely just and wise in all decisions, and is essentially irresponsible for the reasons of his conduct in the moral government of the world – so it is culpably audacious in us to question the rectitude of any of those decisions – merely because we do not apprehend the inscrutable principles of such wisdom and justice.
- 5) That if one, or more decisions of the written word of God, sanction the rectitude of any human acquisitions, for instance, the acquisition of a servant by inheritance or purchase, whoever believes that the written word of God is *verity itself*, must consequently believe in the absolute rectitude of slaveholding.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Stephen Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Charles F. Irons, *The Origins and Proslavery and Christianity* (Chapel Hill, NC.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008). Michael Taylor, "British Proslavery Arguments and the Bible 1823-1833." *Slavery and Abolition* 37, no. 1 (2016): 139-158.

⁸² The Compromise of 1820 sought to preserve a balance between free and slave states by admitting Missouri (slave) and Maine (free) to the Union.

⁸³ Larry R. Morrison, "The Religious Defense of American Slavery Before 1830." *The Journal of Religious Thought* 37, no. 2 (1980): 16-29.

⁸⁴ *Richmond Enquirer*, February 15, 1820.

Many pro-slavery articles, pamphlets, books, speeches, among other works placed a similar emphasis on biblical support. As the antebellum era progressed, so too did the intensity of religious arguments, and pro-slavery works often demonstrate this. For example, Matthew Estes' 1846 publication, *A Defence of Negro Slavery*, represents an important piece of literature. The work begins with a chapter on ancient Jewish slavery and at the outset stated the following:

The existence of Slavery among the Ancient Jews, throughout the entire period of their national existence, is a fact which all candid and intelligent persons will readily admit... Abraham, the great progenitor of the Jewish nation, the "Friend of God," and the "Father of the Faithful," was an extensive owner of Slaves. We are enabled to form some estimate of the number of slaves owned by Abraham, from the number that he took with him to the field in pursuit of the kings who had taken Lot and his family, prisoners. In Genesis, (14.13-14) we are informed that "When Abraham heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants [retainers], born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them onto Dan."⁸⁵

Originally from Columbus, Missouri, Estes eventually gained prominence throughout Southern social circles, leading to vibrant exchanges with James Henry Hammond and John Anthony Quitman (a prominent planter from Mississippi). And, the excerpt from Estes' work provide us with some insight into the biblical defence of slavery, along with how its defenders relied on the Bible for moral support.

Beyond the Old Testament, its counterpart, The New Testament, also offered white Southerners with plenty of biblical support for slavery. Set into the context of the Roman Empire, the growth of Christianity provided Southern thinkers with further literature from antiquity on which to draw for their contributions to the pro-slavery argument. This part of the Bible held more significance, because the New Testament, written during the mid-to-late 1st century AD, emerged on the backdrop of the early Roman Empire. In addition to this, white Southerners highly praised ancient Rome – often looking to this society for validation. Slavery in the Roman world developed into a popular trope utilised by white Southerners, so the New Testament factored into the saturation of classicism during this period. Scriptures from the New Testament relied upon early Christian theology and this provided white Southerners with moral arguments for

⁸⁵ Matthew Estes, *A Defence of Negro Slavery* (Montgomery, AL.: Press of the Alabama Journal, 1846), 13-14.

defending slavery.⁸⁶ Examples from the Pauline *Epistles*, which explore the concept of slavery are: Corinthians 1:7, 12-13, 21-24, Ephesians 6:5-9, Philemon 1:10-20.⁸⁷ Pro-slavery thinkers, therefore, utilised the various gospels, letters, and epistles in the New Testament as moral support for defending servile labour – Paul’s Letter to Philemon represents a more popular example.⁸⁸ The Pauline *Epistles* circulated during a period when the roots of Christianity cultivated throughout the early Roman Empire. Normally white Southerners interpreted the Bible literally, and, thus with the endorsement of slavery in the Old and New Testaments, pro-slavery writers could rely on numerous passages for support. On the other hand, abolitionists used broader biblical themes to contradict the religious sanction of slavery. A common anti-slavery argument contended that Paul could not publicly condemn slavery, because it existed as a central institution

⁸⁶ Harrill. *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social and Moral Dimensions*, 183. See also Harrill. *Paul the Apostle: His Life and Legacy in Their Roman Context*.

⁸⁷ For passages from these *Epistles* see chapter 1, section 2 (the Religious Defence); Peter Garnsey. *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); James Albert Harrill. “Incentive against Paul (2 Cor 10:10), the Physiognomics of the Ancient Slave Body, and the Greco-Roman Rhetoric of Manhood.” In Adela Yarbro Collins and Margaret M. Mitchell (eds.). *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 189-213; Harrill. “The Domestic Enemy: A Moral Polarity of Household Slave in Early Christian Apologies and Martyrdoms.” In David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek (eds.). *Early Christian in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmann, 2003), 249-53; Jennifer A. Glancy. *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, MI.: Fortress Press, 2006); Glancy. *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Glancy. *Slavery as a Moral Problem in the Early Church and Today*. (Minneapolis, MI.: Fortress Press, 2011); Roth. “Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus: a Christian design for mastery”, 102-130.

⁸⁸ Modern scholars argue over various contexts of Onesimus’ identity, which include interpretations regarding Onesimus’ situation, as reflected in the letter. Examples include: Was he merely a run-away slave? Was he a fugitive slave seeking asylum with Paul? Did Philemon send Onesimus to seek Paul out? Was Onesimus an apprenticed slave? Was he a (slave) agent of Paul?⁸⁸ The list continues and exploring these questions in greater detail will not be done here: while they represent some of the more important modern discussions on Onesimus’ role within the Letter to Philemon, they are of no importance to the present analysis. Abolitionists did, however, raise some of these questions, if not to curb the dangers represented by the epistle. Defenders of slavery took a hard stance and called this letter a Pauline “mandate” for the Fugitive Slave Act. The situation of Onesimus or Philemon did not concern advocates of slavery, and normally pushed for a more literal interpretation the letter. For pro-slavery writers, Onesimus represented a run-away slave, and therefore, he must legally be returned to his master. Most advocates of slavery also argued against an abolitionist position that Onesimus “was of the kindred of Philemon” (i.e. the idea that Onesimus and Philemon shared some sort of fraternal connection). Specifically, Albert Barnes emphasised this hypothesis and argued in favour of a fraternal relationship between Onesimus and Philemon, shown in the following text: “The principles laid down in this epistle to Philemon, therefore, would lead to the universal abolition of slavery. If all those who are now slaves were to become Christians, and their masters were to treat them ‘not as slaves, but as brethren beloved,’ the period would not be far distant when slavery would cease”. Barnes offered the first in depth analysis regarding the possible fraternal relationship between Onesimus and Philemon. Albert Barnes. *An Inquiry into the Scriptural Views of Slavery* (Philadelphia: Perkins & Perves, Chestnut Street, 1846), 318-30

of the Roman Empire. Displaying open contempt for slavery had the potential to yield a Roman political or military response. Abolitionists suggested that rather than denouncing slavery—or the entire Roman Empire itself—Paul chose a more cautious path and urged early followers of Christianity to obey governmental powers.⁸⁹ However, advocates of pro-slavery normally held the advantage and they could use the Bible for literal support, forcing abolitionists to instead use fewer effective methods to undermine the religious endorsement of slavery.

In his parables, Jesus exemplified slaves as characters representing duty and obligation, for example, in The Gospel of Luke it says: “Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions”.⁹⁰ The gospel continues by revealing that, given such a responsibility, the slave might act recklessly, as shown in this passage:

But if the slave says to himself, “My master is delayed in coming”, and if he begins to beat the other slaves, men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him to pieces [or cut him off], and put him with the unfaithful.⁹¹

The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians reveals yet another example of this:

Slaves, obey your earthly master with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to the men and women, knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free. And, masters do the same to them. Stop threatening them, for you know that both of you have the same Master in heaven, and with him there is no partiality.⁹²

⁸⁹ Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 173.

⁹⁰ Luke 12:43-44. James Albert Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social and Moral Dimensions* (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Publishing, 2006), 183; James Albert Harrill, *Paul the Apostle: His Life and Legacy in Their Roman Context* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁹¹ Luke 12: 45-47.

⁹² Ephesians 6:5-10. For other passages within the New Testament which mention slavery see Luke 7:1-10 (The Story of the Centurion), 1 Corinthians 7:21, Colossians 3:22-4:1, Titus 2:9-10, Philemon 1:10-20. For Philemon see the following passage: “Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for ever, no longer as a slave but as more than a slave, a beloved brother – especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So, if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self”. Philemon 1:15-20.

Unsurprisingly, advocates of slavery used these passages, among others from the New Testament, to support their pro-slavery arguments. They claimed that if Jesus and his Apostles wanted to condemn chattel slavery they would have done so. According to biblical sources, early Christians made no attempt to challenge the institution of servile labour, which further supports their positions that Jesus and his Apostles did not oppose slavery. This led to pro-slavery discussions about early Christians, and how their biblical support for the institution provided moral grounds for its continued existence. The above passage from Estes, among other pro-slavery authors who used biblical examples to defend slavery interpreted passages from both Testaments to illustrate the religious sanction of slavery.⁹³ In sum, the lack of opposition in biblical scripture developed into an important tool for pro-slavery authors, which acted to empower their literature.

Historical discussions by slavery's defenders (specifically evidence derived from Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*) recognised that the Roman world contained a large slave population during the 1st century AD. With this literary evidence at their disposal, Harrill suggests pro-slavery activists "pursued the victory of exegetical control over the New Testament with two powerful allies in nineteenth-century political discourse: racism and conservative republicanism".⁹⁴ On one hand, racism illuminated the dichotomy of white and black, or the superior versus inferior argument, and pro-slavery theorists argued that slavery rescued blacks from an ill-fated condition of savagery. On the other hand, conservative republicanism supported the paternalistic or patriarchal nature of Southern slavery – the idea that slaves depended on their white masters for survival.⁹⁵ Slavery's defenders approached the Pauline *Epistles* with this mind-set, and, thus, Paul's religious contribution began to manifest itself in

⁹³ Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 166-80; for pro-slavery authors see Frederick Dalcho, *Practical Considerations Founded on Scripture, Relative to the Slave Population of South Carolina by a South Carolinian* (Charleston, SC.: A.E. Miller, 1823); Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists Relative to the Coloured Population of the United States* (Charleston, SC.: A.E. Miller, 1833); A.T. Holmes, "The Duties of Christian Masters," in *Duties of Masters to Servants* (Charleston, SC.: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1851); Thornton Stringfellow, "The Bible Argument: Or, Slavery in the Light of Divine Revelation," in E. N. Elliot *Cotton is King, and Pro-Slavery Arguments: Comprising the Writings of Hammond, Harper, Christy, Stringfellow, Hodge, Bledsoe, and Cartwright on This Important Subject* (Augusta, GA.: Prichard, Abbott and Loomis, 1860), 461-521.

⁹⁴ Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 185.

⁹⁵ Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

pro-slavery.⁹⁶ These complex set of letters relate to early Christian communities or certain individuals, and as mentioned previously, the communities which Paul addressed existed within the confines of the Roman Empire.⁹⁷ Today, scholars differentiate carefully between Roman communities, and for instance, free Greek cities in the eastern Empire. But, for pro-slavery writers this was fully Roman.

Slaveholders, pro-slavery writers, and Northern abolitionists knew well that the Romans relied heavily upon chattel slavery, and that Christianity developed on the backdrop of the emerging Roman Empire. Slavery's defenders possessed the upper hand, since the Bible sanctioned slavery, but beyond this, they underscored their arguments with support from Roman society. Many white Southerners, however, suggested that Roman slavery existed in a form infinitely more revolting than anything known in the South, and relates to the ancient enslavement of "white races".⁹⁸ Southerners often vindicated their own slave system over their Greek and Roman counterparts, because they enslaved non-blacks, an aspect which pro-slavery authors regularly condemned. Despite this contrast, Southern reverence for the Classics endured, and in pro-slavery literature, the description of Southern servile labour maintained a positive image (or the good treatment of slaves, the benefits of Southern paternalism, and so forth).

As shown, defenders of servile labour continuously exploited religious scripture, and both the Old and New Testaments contributed to the formulation of many pro-slavery works. This led to white Southerners raising multiple questions, for instance: if the Bible indeed supported slavery, then how could any moral dilemma exist regarding the institution? Religious leaders used these interpretive positions to their advantage and offered their own perspectives when drawing upon biblical stories. The opinions of religious leaders reverberated throughout the South, and sermons normally spread via the oral tradition, so they also reached the illiterate. Ultimately, religion guaranteed the

⁹⁶ Harrill, *Paul the Apostle*, 76-97.

⁹⁷ I follow the views on slavery in the New Testament by Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*; Ulrike Roth, "Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus: a Christian design for mastery" *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 105, no. 1 (2014): 102-130.

⁹⁸ Stringfellow, "The Bible Argument: Or, Slavery in the Light of Divine Revelation", 480.

pro-slavery argument widespread popularity. The following section will discuss a rather different, yet, equally powerful approach: the scientific debate.

The Scientific Defence

Southern scientists, physicians, and anthropologists put forth multiple observations about the condition experienced by blacks. The common position taken by white Southern scientists and advocates of slavery illustrated that blacks developed as a separate (inferior) species. Josiah C. Nott, of Mobile, Alabama, advanced the scientific debate about black slaves, and he researched his theory after completing many medical experiments on black slaves. Nott circulated his scientific findings through a few publications, such as the *Connection Between the Biblical and Physical History of Man* (1849), *Types of Mankind* (1854), and *Indigenous Races of the Earth* (1857). Devoted to pro-slavery ideology, Nott attempted to unite science and black servile labour. Based on their physiology he argued, whites maintained mental supremacy over blacks, although increased stamina and strength made blacks ideal candidates for physical labour. Nott believed in the enforcement of fixed races, or the existence of a racial hierarchy in the South (i.e. white governance over an inferior black race).⁹⁹ Nott, while a major supporter of black slavery, also served the South as a capable physician and scientist. For example, he observed that yellow fever required an intermediate host prior to spreading onto a human population and Dr. Walter Reed “would later use Nott’s theories to solve the mystery of the spread of both yellow fever and malaria”.¹⁰⁰

Samuel Cartwright, another leading Southern physician, theorised that blacks and whites possessed many anatomical differences. Naturally the differences observed by Cartwright argued that blacks evolved solely to perform physical labour. Known for treating many black labourers at his medical practice, for a time, Cartwright too worked out of Mobile. During his encounters with black slaves, Cartwright conducted his

⁹⁹ Junius P. Rodriguez, *Slavery in the United States: A Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopaedia* (Santa Barbara, CA.: ABC-CLIO Publishing, 2007), 116-17.

¹⁰⁰ Finkelman, *Defending Slavery*, 36; Todd L. Savitt. *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* (Champaign, IL.: The University of Illinois Press, 2002).

medical experiments and observations. He made what he “believed to be scientific discoveries about blacks”, and he concluded that there existed many anatomical differences between blacks and whites. Cartwright maintained the belief that blacks possessed more nerve endings than whites, but also speculated that “the brain being ten percent less in volume and weight, he is, from necessity, more under the influence of his instincts and *animality*, than other races of men”.¹⁰¹ He also highlighted that blacks suffered from diseases not applicable to the white population, for example, *Dysaesthesia Aethiopsis* (an ailment causing slaves to misbehave), or, *Drapetomania*, a disease which affected their minds, and caused slaves to run-away.¹⁰²

Overall Cartwright’s scientific theories about the Southern black population contributed to the pro-slavery argument, and he viewed slavery as an institution which served to protect an inferior race. Both Cartwright and Nott argued that the intellectual capabilities of blacks prevented them from surviving outside the confines of paternalism. Nott, however, went beyond this, and maintained that black inferiority possessed a deeper meaning, contending further that their mental condition had strong religious roots. Nott made these claims several times throughout *Types of Mankind*, as exemplified in this passage:

Our Negro [discussing a relief image of a black in ancient Egyptian art] is from the bas-relief of Ramese III at Medeenet-Haboo, where he is tied by the neck to an Asiatic prisoner. The head, in the original, is now uncoloured; and it serves to show how perfectly Egyptian artists represented these races. We quote Gliddon’s *Ethnographic Notes*, before referred to: “This head is remarkable furthermore, as the *usual type* of two-thirds of the Negroes in Egypt at present day.” And anyone living in our Slave-States will see in this face a type which is frequently met with here. We thus obtain proof that the Negro has remained unchanged in Africa, above Egypt, for 8,000 years; coupled with the fact that the same type during some eight or ten generations of sojourn in the United States, is still preserved, despite transplantation.¹⁰³

In *Types of Mankind*, Nott characterised blacks as a separate species altogether, and he based this in the belief that historically, blacks consistently remained a subordinate race. To fully support this theory, Nott frequently referenced the ancient world (as seen in the

¹⁰¹ Finkelman, *Defending Slavery*, 36.

¹⁰² William Sumner Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Chapel Hill, NC.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935), 250-51.

¹⁰³ Josiah C. Nott, *Types of Mankind: or, Ethnological Researches, based upon the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures, and Crania of Races, and upon their Natural, Geographical, Philological, and Biblical History* (Philadelphia, PA.: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1854), 249.

above passage). For Nott, God created blacks solely to exist as slaves, and as mentioned above, he theorised that black inferiority represented a fixed law of nature rather than a social condition created by whites.¹⁰⁴ Promoted by Nott and Cartwright, the scientific defence developed into a fundamental building block of the pro-slavery argument. Yet, white Southerners manufactured more, and the following section will look at the political defence.

The Political Defence

At the heart of American politics, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison represent the core group of the Founding Fathers who established the presidency of the United States.¹⁰⁵ As mentioned above, even after James Madison finished serving his second term in 1817, the trend of Southern planters holding the presidency continued. Furthermore, this helps us to document America's strong ties to pro-slavery culture during this period. Slavery provided antebellum politicians and statesmen with an economic system that removed them from the day-to-day concerns of life.¹⁰⁶ As the young republic emerged, politicians developed themselves into slaveholders and aristocrats alike, which sparked a favourable reception of slavery among many Southern elite. Out of this came the trend of aristocratic self-fashioning, and naturally as the antebellum era moved forward, abolitionist and pro-slavery arguments intensified, thus leading Southern aristocrats to fight for the preservation of their way of life.

Holding onto the belief that abolitionist attacks against slavery would eventually lead to civil war, the political defenders relied heavily upon the American Constitution. Southern pro-slavery authors took advantage of their constitutional system to demonstrate that slavery represented an untouchable institution. A popular argument suggested that servile labour helped maintain successful democracies, because slavery

¹⁰⁴ Reginald Horseman, *Josiah Nott of Mobile: Southerner, Physician, Racial Theorist* (Baton Rouge, LA.: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 80-84.

¹⁰⁵ The abolitionist sentiments of John Adams, who served as President between 1797-1801, added flare to the established precedent.

¹⁰⁶ Donald, "The Proslavery Argument Reconsidered", 8.

removed politicians from the day-to-day dealings of domesticity and agrarianism. This, they argued, provided slaveholders with a necessary buffer to focus on their political careers, which would in turn lead to the development of a healthy democracy and good governance.

As mentioned above, when abolitionist literature called for the end of slavery in the United States, John C. Calhoun realised the importance of a strong political defence for slavery. During the winter of 1837, Calhoun gave his *Speech on the Reception of Abolitionist Petitions*.¹⁰⁷ In the months leading up to Calhoun's speech, Congress received thousands of anti-slavery petitions, which he insisted caused the House of Representatives to fall into disorder.¹⁰⁸ Calhoun knew denying the petitions outright, represented the best option, but not a viable one. His speech not only brought his views on servile labour to the forefront, it also altered the overall political climate on slavery in the United States. Fundamentally, Calhoun warned his contemporaries that abolition posed a great threat to the continuance of black slavery.¹⁰⁹

Calhoun's boisterous rhetoric throughout the speech attempted to dismantle the abolitionist petitions; for instance, he stated that: "Consent to receive these insulting petitions, and the next demand will be that they be referred to a committee in order that they may be deliberated and acted upon". Calhoun continued with this: "At the last session we were modestly asked to receive them, simply lay them on the table, without any view to ulterior action".¹¹⁰ Calhoun recognised the anti-slavery petitions represented

¹⁰⁷ During the early 1830s many important events occurred within America, which directly affected the political climate and slavery. To name a few: the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which granted white Southerners access to land once inhabited by indigenous Americans; Nat Turner's Revolt in 1831; William Lloyd Garrison commenced with the publishing of *The Liberator* in 1831; in 1832, the Ordinance of Nullification passed in South Carolina. The same year Calhoun resigned as Vice-President, instead returning to the Senate to fight for the sovereign boundaries of South Carolina during the Nullification Crisis.

¹⁰⁸ John Quincy Adams led a minority opposition against Calhoun, but overall, his band of partisans represented a minor threat to the political situation.

¹⁰⁹ John C. Calhoun, "Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions, Delivered in the Senate, February 6, 1837," in Richard R. Cralle, ed., *Speeches of John C. Calhoun, Delivered in the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States* (New York: D. Appleton, 1853), 625-33. Lacy K. Ford, "Recovering the Republic: Calhoun, South Carolina, and the concurrent majority". *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 89, no. 3 (1988): 146-159. Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class*, 75, 218-220, 387-88, 670.

¹¹⁰ Cralle, *Speeches of John C. Calhoun*, 627-28.

a larger shift in Northern public opinion, and during the latter half of the speech, he emphasised the positive good of Southern slavery, as shown in this:

[Slavery] be it good or bad, it has grown up with our society and institutions, and is so interwoven with them, that to destroy it would be to destroy us as a people. But let me not be understood as admitting, even by implication, that the existing relations between the two races in the slaveholding States is an evil: – far otherwise; I hold it to be a good, as it has thus far proved itself to be both, and will continue to prove so if not disturbed by the fell spirit of abolition. . . . But I take the higher ground. I hold that in the present state of civilization, where two races of different origin, and distinguished by color and other physical differences, as well as intellectual, are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good – a positive good.¹¹¹

The positive good argument emerged from Calhoun’s speech, which characterised pro-slavery literature until Emancipation. This argument provided a strong framework for authors of pro-slavery literature to build upon. As mentioned, Calhoun’s speech also shifted the political outlook on abolition. Previously, politicians and statesmen commonly regarded both pro-slavery and abolitionist hotbeds as overenthusiastic minorities. By focusing direct attention on the larger issues, Calhoun altered this perception and brought the opposing forces into the light.¹¹² Overall, Calhoun’s positive good speech created a formidable argument from which supporters of slavery could draw.

Another aspect of the political defence involved Southern responses to the Declaration of Independence. Some white Southerners tended to reject the Declaration entirely; notables among this group includes John Randolph, Edmund Ruffin, John C. Calhoun, James Henry Hammond, George Fitzhugh, and Louisa McCord. This group of white Southerners condemned the Declaration for professing falsehoods on the grounds of equality. For them the Founding Fathers erred in their attempt to use the Declaration as a tool to embody equality for humankind. Other white Southerners, such as Alexander Stephens, illustrated the errors of the Founding Fathers, because their views clearly reflected equality for all men. Stephens proclaimed that equality between blacks and whites could not exist – for blacks, “subordination to the superior race, is his natural and

¹¹¹ Cralle, *Speeches of John C. Calhoun*, 630-31.

¹¹² Stephanie McCurry. *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2010). James Oakes. *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865* (New York: Norton and Company, 2013), ch. 1-3.

normal condition”.¹¹³ Stephens reinforced the idea that slaves needed to be excluded from the equality discussion, and therefore, barred from the Declaration entirely (consider too, slaves could not become citizens).¹¹⁴ By way of this came the caveat that all men “were free and equal as the Declaration of Independence holds they are” – but, this excluded black slaves.¹¹⁵ Louisa McCord, who will be discussed in chapter 4, interpreted at length what she called the six unfortunate words that blundered the Declaration of Independence, shown in this:

Our Declaration of Independence was a great and noble act. It showed the world that a people capable of self-government has the right of self-government, and will, almost of necessity, seek the exercise of that right – that thinking and intelligent people cannot be kept under subjection by a dogmatically assumed power. Physical strength may – ought to be – curbed and governed; and submits willingly and naturally to such government. Our negro, for instance, feels by instinct that his condition is suited to his powers; and would, but for mischievous interference, never seek, never wish to change it. Intellectual strength, conscious of the power and right of self-government, can no more be crushed, than could the fiery Pegasus be broken to plough and wagon. The Declaration of Independence was, then, a great and noble act; but never was a great or more mischievous fallacy contained in six unlucky words, than in the blundering sentence *all men are born free and equal. No man is born free*. What freedom, but the power of exercising a will? The right an ability to act independently of the dictates and control of others? Will any man contend that the infant “mewling and puking in its nurse’s arms” is a free agent? Or the school-boy, “creeping like a snail/unwillingly to school?”¹¹⁶

As this passage suggests, McCord argued that freedom in the Declaration underscored a deeper meaning, and even though she removed slaves from the equation, she warned that “free” men and women could easily be deceived by the fallacy. McCord implied that the realisation of a true freedom will only exist after men and women exercise their own sense of free will. Overall, the examples utilised by McCord acknowledge that a deeper understanding of “freedom” needed further consideration within contemporary discussions on the Declaration. Thus, with the political aspects of the pro-slavery argument outlined, the next section will shift focus onto the economic defence.

¹¹³ Henry Cleveland, *Alexander H. Stephens, in Public and Private: With Letters and Speeches, Before, During, and Since the War* (Philadelphia, PA.: 1886), 717-729. Stephens served as Vice-President of the Confederate States (1861-65).

¹¹⁴ Jeremy Tewell, *A Self-Evident Lie: Southern Slavery and the Threat to American Freedom* (Kent, OH.: Kent State University Press 2013), 120-125.

¹¹⁵ James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: The History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1982), 143.

¹¹⁶ Richard C. Lounsbury, ed., *Louisa S. McCord: Social and Political Essays* (Charlottesville, VA.: University Press of Virginia 1995), 170.

The Economic Defence

In 1855 William J. Grayson composed an epic poem called *The Hireling and the Slave*.¹¹⁷ Grayson used the poem as a platform to emphasise the economic importance of Southern slavery, but the work also acted as a basis to discredit free wage labour:

The manumitted serfs of Europe find
Unchanged this sad estate of all mankind;
What blessing to the churl has freedom proved,
What want supplied, what task or toil removed?
Hard work and scanty wages still their lot,
In youth o'erlabored, and in age forgot,
The mocking boon of freedom they deplore,
In wants and labors never known before.
Free but in name —the slaves of endless toil...¹¹⁸

In *The Hireling and the Slave*, Grayson portrayed the importance of servile labour in relation to Southern economic sustainability. Grayson contended that slaves brought to the Americas exemplified religious intervention. Furthermore, he believed that in Africa blacks led misguided lives. Only after their removal from this barbaric existence, and eventual enslavement, did they embark on their proper historical course. For emphasis on this, see the example below:

Hence is the Negro come, by God's command,
For wiser teaching to a foreign land;
If they who brought him were by Mammon driven,
Still have they served, blind instruments of Heaven;
And though the way be rough, the agent stern,
No better mode can human wits discern,
No happier system wealth or virtue find,
To tame and elevate the Negro mind:
Thus mortal purposes, whate'er their mood,
Are only means with Heaven for working good;
And wisest they who labor to fulfill,
With zeal and hope, the all-directing will,
And in each change that marks the fleeting year,
Submissive see God's guiding hand appear.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ William J. Grayson, *The Hireling and the Slave, Chicora, and Other Poems* (Charleston, SC.: McCarter, 1856), 74. This pro-slavery epic records the first written example referring to Southern whites as a master race: "By slavery tamed, enlightened, and refined; instructs him, from a master-race, to draw wise modes of polity and forms of law".

¹¹⁸ Grayson, *The Hireling and the Slave*, 22.

¹¹⁹ Grayson, *The Hireling and the Slave*, 35

Grayson suggested that God guided blacks from the bonds of savagery to civilisation, which confirms his belief that blacks relied on the religious practices ordained by whites (Southern Protestantism) for the progression of their civilised existence. Grayson, however, emphasised that blacks benefitted from Southern paternalism as well. He upheld that paternalism (unlike Northern free wage labour) sheltered blacks from the harshness of reality. This concept represented the foundation of the economic argument: a paternalistic system offered slave labourers protection, shelter, clothing, and food.

From an economic standpoint, pro-slavery writers also tended to argue that black servile labourers produced most of America's raw exports (cotton, tobacco, and hemp). James Henry Hammond framed this part of the economic defence rather well in his 1858 discourse, *Cotton is King*. In this speech, delivered to United States Senate, Hammond declared that "No you dare not make war on cotton. No power on earth dares make war upon it. Cotton is king".¹²⁰ In the speech, Hammond stressed the urgency of Kansas' admission to the Union as a slave state, because its introduction as a free state would possess negative consequences on the westward expansion of slavery. Put differently, this had the potential to contribute the decline and collapse of the Southern slave mode of production, which it did – but, more on this in chapter 5.

Grayson, Hammond, and others used the perceived harshness of Northern industrialism to reinforce their positions and they argued that slavery offered stability, where Northern free wage labour did not. Labourers, for example, who went on strike for a pay increase or to fight for better work conditions, had the potential to cause severe economic stoppages. On the other hand, unemployment also threatened the capitalist mode of production. Based on this, defenders of slavery argued that work stoppages disrupted the social order, which could potentially leave workers unable to physically support themselves or their families.¹²¹ In stark contrast to this, the economy in the South operated mainly on slave labour, so pro-slavery writers commonly argued that unemployment never affected its mode of production.

¹²⁰ Hammond, March 4, 1858, *Cotton is King*.

¹²¹ Keri L. Merritt, *Masterless Men: Poor Whites and Slavery in the Antebellum South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 114-143; 216-286. The multiple economic crises that plagued America during the first half of the 19th century also affected the Southern economy. Southerners, however, based their argument on the fact that recessions and depressions did not contribute to unemployment among its servile labour force.

George Fitzhugh built on this position, and suggested that to avoid class warfare, society required the support of slavery, while he also observed that in the slave-holding South “capital was labor, and labor was capital”.¹²² Literature, generated by the economic argument, came mostly from Calhoun, Hammond, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, Grayson, and so forth. Their literary output did go beyond condemning Northern industry, because they also needed to keep pressure on slave states (i.e. their literature needed to expunge any belief that industry represented a better way forward). The economic cornerstone of the pro-slavery argument represented a direct attack against the free wage market economy, but this literature simultaneously sought to defend the slave mode of production. Ideally this helped Southern audiences believe in the economic benefits of slave labour. We know well enough that abolitionists sought the complete destruction of Southern slavery, and, thus, planters had to contend with literature from both pro-slavery and abolitionist hotbeds.

Paternalism represented the last central theme to the economic defence (although paternalism developed into a common factor in most pro-slavery literature). When discussed in relation to the Southern economy, paternalistic ideology proposes that planters protected their labourers, while keeping them happy and healthy. Slaveholders and the Southern aristocracy wanted to protect their livelihoods as they sought to retain their status as wealthy planters. Without the infrastructure provided by slavery, the collapse of the Southern economy would soon follow. Economics, however, rarely move in isolation from other facets of society, such as the law. Moving forward, the next section will therefore look towards the legal defence of slavery.

The Legal Defence

The *Sanford vs. Dred Scott* case, or the most infamous legal decision to emerge out of the antebellum era, saw the United States Supreme Court rule 7-2 in favour of Sanford. The ruling guaranteed that Dred Scott could not continue suing for his freedom, even though at the time Scott resided in New York (a free state). The court also ruled that

¹²² Donald, “The Proslavery Argument Reconsidered”, 6.

blacks could not be declared citizens of the United States, and furthermore the Supreme Court also considered the Compromise of 1820 as unconstitutional, because it possessed no formal power to forbid or abolish slavery. Scott, a Missouri slave, originally belonged to John Emerson, but after Emerson's death in 1843, ownership of Scott transferred to his brother-in-law, John Sanford. Previously Scott filed two suits in Missouri, and in 1850 the state court declared him free. In 1852, however, the Missouri Supreme Court reversed the ruling, leading to the suit against Sanford. Scott's lawyers filed a suit against Sanford at the United States district court, which ruled in Sanford's favour. The case eventually made its way to the United States Supreme Court, where the court, again, ruled in favour of Sanford, and the following shows passages from the final trial records:

- 3) In the Circuit Courts of the United States, the record must show that the case is one in which by the Constitution and laws of the United States, the court had jurisdiction—and if this does not appear, and the court gives judgment to either plaintiff or defendant, and it is erroneous, the judgment must be reversed by this court—and the parties cannot by consent waive the objection to the jurisdiction of the Circuit Court.
- 4) A free negro of the African race, who's ancestors were brought to this country and sold as slaves, is not a "citizen" within the meaning of the Constitution of the United States.
- 5) When the Constitution was adopted, they were not regarded in any of the States as members of the community which constituted the State, and were not numbered among its "people or citizens." Consequently, the special rights and immunities guaranteed to citizens do not apply to them. And not being "citizens" within the meaning of the Constitution, they are not entitled to sue in that character in a court of the United States, and the Circuit Court has no jurisdiction in such a suit.
- 6) The only two clauses in the Constitution which point to this race, which treat them as persons whom it was morally lawful to deal with as articles of property and to hold as slaves.¹²³

Freedom suits, although rare in most Northern states, emerged prior to the Revolutionary War – a suit heard in Massachusetts during the winter of 1766 provides one of the earliest examples.¹²⁴ Dred Scott's freedom suit was the first instance of a black slave case making its way to the federal judiciary of the United States, which sheds light on the Constitution, and how it offered a strong legal support for slaveholders. During the

¹²³ J. H. Van Evrie, *The Dred Scott Decision. Opinion of Chief Justice Taney, with An Introduction by Dr. J. H. Van Evrie, also An Appendix Containing and Essay on the Natural History of the Prognathous Race of Mankind by Dr. Samuel Cartwright* (New York: Van Evrie and Co. 1860), 7.

¹²⁴ Anne Twity, *Before Dred Scott: Slavery and Legal Culture in the American Confluence, 1787-1857* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Kelly M. Kennington, *In the Shadow of Dred Scott: St. Louis Freedom Suits and the Legal Culture of Slavery in Antebellum America* (Athens, GA.: The University of Georgia Press, 2017).

antebellum era, the Constitution emphasised that blacks “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect”. Moreover, “neither the class of persons who had been imported as slaves, nor their descendants, whether they had become free or not, were then acknowledged as a part of the people, nor intended to be included in the general words used in that memorable instrument”.¹²⁵ Either due to state legislature, or reliance on the United States Constitution, advocates of slavery used the American system of governance to their benefit. The Dred Scott case reflects this and shows the firm control slaveholders possessed over their legal system. This view does neglect the rigid application of the Constitution by Chief Justice Roger B. Taney during the Dred Scott proceedings – arguably the decision represented the worst of his legal career.

The legal system protected the interests of slaveholders, and examples exist beyond Dred Scott. For example, during the case of *State vs. Mann*, the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled that (apart from murder) slaveholders could impose severe treatment upon their slaves. Another example occurred in the proceedings of *State vs. Hale*, after which the court ruled to protect the property rights of slaveholders. The North Carolina Supreme Court upheld the prosecution of a white man, who unlawfully beat a slave belonging to another planter, and during the trial proceedings the court noted the following:

Usually committed by men of dissolute habits, hanging loose upon society, who, being repelled from association with well disposed citizens, take refuge in the company of slaves, whom they deprave by their example, embolden by their familiarity, and then beat, under the expectation that a slave dare not resent a blow from a white man.¹²⁶

This decision, and others like it, signified the importance of protecting the property interests of slaveholders, because state legislatures in the South did not recognise masters abusing slaves as warranting justification (as reflected in the cases above). In sum, through its legal enactments and conceptualisation, American slaveholders supported and boosted the pro-slavery ideology!

This final section of the chapter on Southern pro-slavery brings the introduction and laying of groundwork for my thesis to a conclusion. The following chapter will start the

¹²⁵ *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 60 U.S. (1857), 393; see also Paul Finkelman, *Dred Scott v. Sandford: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston, MA.: Bedford/St. Martin’s 1997), 24-33.

¹²⁶ Finkelman, *Defending Slavery*, 34.

examination of my research and new contributions to the field. As mentioned above, the chapter will look at Thomas Cobb, a jurist and politician from Georgia who fought and died in defence of the South. Prior to his death at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Cobb contributed many legal and ideological works to the repertoire of white intellectualism in the South during the antebellum era. As the chapter will show, Cobb used classicism as a springboard to support his views on black slavery and how it benefitted the advancement of the Southern economy. Not only this, but Cobb relied heavily on classicism when drafting his contributions to the first legal code for the state of Georgia. His offerings focused primarily on codified slave laws for the entire state of Georgia – oddly, nothing on this scale previously existed.

**As the Greeks and Romans “Did”:
Thomas R. Cobb’s Black Slaves of Antiquity
With a Twist of Southern Jurisprudence**

I propose to consider the Law of Negro Slavery as it exists in the United States of America; to examine into its origins, its foundation, and its present condition; to note the striking differences in the legislation of the various slaveholding States, and occasionally to suggest amendments to the existing laws.¹²⁷

Introduction

The first chapter of this thesis focused on establishing the historiographical landscape of the antebellum United States – with emphasis on the American South. Beyond this, we too explored contemporary research on the rise of classicism throughout 19th century America and the influences this had on Southern culture. We also briefly examined some works from notable historians who have made great strides over the past 60 years in researching and defining the antebellum period of American history. The second chapter outlined the primary arguments that made up Southern pro-slavery. Both chapters provide the necessary support for developing my thesis – the two previous chapters set the stage for my research, which starts now with a study of Thomas Cobb. The chapters below follow this trend and will show how classicism influenced the pro-slavery arguments of four other prominent white Southerners. But rather than merely describing how five white Southerners utilised classicism to defend slavery, my thesis argues that without the Classics, the identity of their pro-slavery literature would look very different today. With the slaveholding societies of Greece and Rome acting as models for their own, white Southerners could look to ancient greatness as a fundamental source of validation for their own culture. This started with pro-slavery, because in order for the South to flourish beyond the 19th century, pressure from abolitionist ideology had to cease. The five white Southerners under scrutiny in this

¹²⁷ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 1.

thesis, through their literary outputs, will illuminate how they utilised classicism as a main pillar of support. My work will illustrate the different ways they did this and will demonstrate the particular dimensions that drove their literary output forward – for example, this chapter focuses on the legal defence of slavery, while the following chapter, in part, looks at classicism in relation to the political defence. My goal in this will aim to show the unique ways these white Southerners drew on classicism to construct their elaborate pro-slavery arguments and critiques of abolition. As mentioned above, this chapter will look at Thomas Cobb and his contributions to Southern pro-slavery, and, thus, without further preliminary discussion, the body of this thesis begins!

On December 13, 1862, Union and Confederate forces collided at the Battle of Fredericksburg in Virginia.¹²⁸ Nearly 200,000 men fought during the battle, which resulted in a Confederate victory, although Thomas Cobb did not live to see it. Entrenched with his troops upon Marye’s Heights and defending against waves of Union advances, Cobb was wounded by a piece of exploding artillery, which forced him from the field. As soldiers carried him to a rear medical post, Cobb shouted to his men “be brave and hold your ground... For I am only wounded, and will be back fighting with you shortly”. Within minutes of uttering these words, Cobb bled out and died, because the piece of exploding artillery had severed his femoral artery. The Battle of Fredericksburg claimed the lives of nearly 5,000 Confederate soldiers, while the Union Army suffered more than 10,000 fatalities in their attempt to capture Mayre’s Heights.¹²⁹ These represent significant human losses and as this chapter will show, Cobb’s death during the engagement at Fredericksburg represented a primarily detrimental cultural loss to Southern society.

The following chapter will focus on two pro-slavery works authored by Cobb; the first *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery* (1857-58) and his contributions to the first Georgia State Legal Code (1860-61).¹³⁰ The *Inquiry* established the Southern legal theory behind slavery and discusses at length, law, philosophy, history, racism, among a

¹²⁸ George C. Rable, *Fredericksburg! Fredericksburg!* (Chapel Hill, NC.: The University of North Carolina Press 2002), 14.

¹²⁹ James K. Bryant, *The Battle of Fredericksburg: We Cannot Escape History* (Charleston, SC.: The History Press, 2010).

¹³⁰ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*.

repertoire of other topics. The first part of the *Inquiry*, known as *The Historical Sketch of Slavery from the Earliest Periods to the Present Day*, begins with an examination of slavery in the ancient world, but also moves through the slaveholding societies of Medieval Europe and the early modern periods. The latter chapters of the work focus on the role that slavery played in the British Empire and the United States. The examination of the *Historical Sketch* will explore Cobb's claim that the ancient Greeks and Romans showed preference towards the use of black servile labourers. As the discussion below will show, this view represented a manipulated and distorted view of ancient slavery.

In the second part of the *Inquiry*, called *The Law of Negro Slavery*, Cobb started developing his vision for segregated black laws for both slaves and freepersons. This part of the work parallels well with his contributions to the Georgia State Legal Code of 1861. *The Law of Negro Slavery* acts well as a platform to develop his views on segregated laws for blacks, which he later disseminated in the legal code. *The Law of Negro Slavery* draws heavily from ancient sources—notably Gaius' *Institutes* and Justinian's *Digest*—so, the backbone of Cobb's argument heavily relies on sources from antiquity. By exploring these works together, we can see where and how Cobb's ideology in *The Law of Negro Slavery* relate to his work on the first Georgia State Legal Code. This will help us to determine where classicism influenced his development of Southern slave law. Cobb's use of classicism in his pro-slavery literature highlights how white Southerners could perceive or use the Greco-Roman world as a critical component in their arguments. But Cobb also manipulated ancient literature, and this chapter will illustrate how he achieved this. We can make the argument that he used poor translations of ancient texts, but Cobb received a university education and had experience reading Latin and Greek – which included a familiarity with several ancient Greek and Roman authors. From my view, Cobb's manipulations acted to weaponize Greco-Roman literature to better support his own pro-slavery agenda. He wanted to successfully “prove” that the great slaveholding societies of Greece and Rome supported, and fundamentally preferred, black slavery. With this borne in mind, we must consider the important position classicism held in antebellum America, as discussed in chapter 1. Pro-slavery authors sought, in part, to alleviate the pressures brought on by abolition. The successful utilisation of the Classics as a support mechanism for their own system

of slavery possessed the potential to help achieve this. Overall, as a leading jurist from the state of Georgia, Cobb's writings emerged as vital pieces of the pro-slavery argument and his literary impact culminated in his contributions to the first Georgia State Legal Code. As shown below, Cobb represented a group of white Southerners who misused and manipulated ancient texts to better support his rhetoric.

This chapter will look at both parts of the *Inquiry*, in turn, and the first section will discuss Cobb's use of ancient texts in the *Historical Sketch*, while the second part of this chapter will examine how the Classics influenced Cobb's development of Southern slave law. This chapter will foreground why Cobb remains important to modern discussions on Southern pro-slavery, but it will also set the stage for everything that will follow. The first section will begin with a brief discussion on Cobb's background, so to situate his writings into the appropriate historical and biographical context.

Cobb's Origins

Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb, a prominent Southern jurist, served during the Civil War as a Brigadier-General in the Confederate Army. Prior to the war, Cobb worked on developing Southern legal theory, which he exemplified in the above-mentioned treatise *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery*. He also worked on developing the Georgia State Legal Code.¹³¹ The *Inquiry* foregrounded Cobb's legal ideologies, although the work loosely resembles a digest, and much of the discourse would later be rehearsed in the Georgia State Legal Code. In the decades leading up to the Civil War, precedents for slave law existed, but local authorities and state legislatures tended to rule on these cases, because "slave law" differed between states, regions, and counties. In this sense, by the late antebellum era there did not exist a unanimous legal code for Southern slaves or the free black population.¹³² Through his work in the *Inquiry* and on the legal code, Cobb endeavoured to change this.

¹³¹ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*.

¹³² Watson, *Slave Law in the Americas*. Paul Finkelman, ed., *Slavery and the Law* (Lanham, MD.: Rowman and Littlefield 2001). John W. Cairns, *Codification, Transplants and History: Law Reform in Louisiana (1808) and Quebec (1866)* (Lawbook Exchange, 2015).

Born at Cherry Hill plantation in Jefferson County, Georgia, on April 10, 1823, Cobb was the second son of Colonel John Addison Cobb and Sarah Rootes Cobb. The following year, the Cobb's departed Cherry Hill, leaving the plantation under the guidance of an overseer, and relocated to a large tract of land just outside of Athens, Georgia. The proximity to an urban setting offered more opportunities for the growing family, and because of this Cobb enjoyed a normal childhood. He attended school in Athens, and often accompanied his father on business trips to Louisville, Augusta, and Savannah. The colonel's business did experience set-backs; for example, in 1832 his cotton crop failed, this followed with a depression caused by the Panic of 1837, which severely crippled his material wealth.¹³³ Yet, in 1837, Thomas' father paid for his college tuition. He graduated first in his class from Franklin College in 1841.¹³⁴ A year later, at the age of 18, shortly after his admission to the Georgia bar, he opened a legal practice in Athens. As a member of a prominent Georgian family, Cobb possessed many significant connections within local society. Political and financial assistance from Georgia's aristocratic families aided Cobb in shaping his early career. His brother Howell Cobb, a well-established statesman, served in Buchanan's cabinet as Secretary of the Treasury (1857-61). Early in Thomas' career, Howell regularly secured for him small amounts of political and patronage jobs in Athens. These generous acts, combined with hard work and devotion, allowed Cobb to start building a successful career.

In 1844, he married Marion Lumpkin and this familial connection proved very fruitful for Cobb, because his father-in-law, Joseph Henry Lumpkin, sat on the Georgia Supreme Court. Owing his advancement to Lumpkin, Cobb gained insightful experience into the world of Southern politics. Shortly after the marriage, Lumpkin was appointed to the position of chief justice for the Georgia Supreme Court, and commissioned Cobb as the assistant reporter. In 1849 Lumpkin promoted Cobb again, this time to the position of reporter for the Georgia Supreme Court.

¹³³ William B. McCash, *Thomas R.R. Cobb (1823-1862): The Making of a Southern Nationalist* (Macon, GA.: Mercer University Press, 1983), 9; for background on the Panic of 1837 see Peter Temin, *The Jacksonian Economy* (Norton, 1969); Jessica M. Lepler, *The Many Panics of 1837: People, Politics, and the Creation of a Transatlantic Financial Crisis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

¹³⁴ Franklin College was established in 1806, and later became the University of Georgia. For a history of Franklin College see Thomas Dyer, *The University of Georgia: A Bicentennial History, 1785-1985* (Athens, GA.: The University of Georgia Press, 1985).

When the Civil War started, Cobb put his theoretical endeavours into law, politics, and pro-slavery theory on hold, instead volunteering to fight for the Confederacy. In June 1861, he organised what he called the “Georgia Legion”, referred to by later historians as “Cobb’s Legion”.¹³⁵ In the autumn of 1861, Cobb, now promoted to the rank of Colonel, began campaigning with his troops. Later during a campaign in November 1862, Cobb received yet another promotion, this time to the rank of Brigadier-General. As mentioned above, on December 13, 1862, at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Cobb was killed by an exploding artillery shell. Upon news of his death General Robert E. Lee wrote a letter to Cobb’s brother Howell, in which he eulogised the man by writing the following:

I beg leave to express my sympathy in your great sorrow. Your noble and gallant brother has met a soldier’s death, and God grant that this army and our country may never be called upon again to mourn so great a sacrifice.

Of his merits, his lofty intellect, his genius, his accomplishments his professional fame, and above all his true Christian character, I need not speak to you, who knew him so intimately and well. But as a patriot and soldier, his death has left a gap in the army which his military aptitude and skill renders it hard to fill.¹³⁶

In a Confederate army, which possessed several generals, Lee believed Cobb’s death represented both a detrimental military and cultural loss. Like many of his comrades, Cobb developed into a capable military leader, although his death also brought with it the challenge of replacing a scholar and intellect of his stature. Lee’s eulogy elaborated upon this idea, because written recognition from him represented a display of merit. Unlike many modern militaries, the Confederate Army did not give its soldiers medals to exemplify duty and valour, so Lee’s written praise often implied that a soldier performed above and beyond his duty. Lee’s personal correspondence with Howell Cobb helped frame Thomas Cobb’s overall importance to the South, and the significance of his intellectual contributions. Indeed, Cobb developed into a prominent figure during the late antebellum era, with his literature and service to the Confederacy playing a key role in this.¹³⁷ The following sections will inquire further into Cobb’s intellectual

¹³⁵ For Cobb’s Legion see Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 5-6. For an in-depth analysis see McCash, *Thomas R.R. Cobb (1823-1862)*, 239-271.

¹³⁶ McCash, *Thomas R.R. Cobb (1823-1862)*, 322.

¹³⁷ For biographical information on Cobb see McCash, *Thomas R.R. Cobb (1823-1862)*; Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 1-20. Finkelman, *Defending Slavery*, 143-156.

contributions to Southern ideology to put a check on the notion that his death represented a major cultural loss. It will be shown that Cobb's literary output, in part, utilised the classical past to support his pro-slavery arguments. This investigation will start by looking at the *Historical Sketch* in relation to Cobb's use of the Classics and how he factored ancient Greco-Roman literature into his work.

The *Historical Sketch* and the Classical Approach

The following sections will discuss Cobb's use of ancient Greek and Roman literature, and, specifically, his claim that both societies used black slavery as a matter of preference. The ancient Greeks and Romans did acknowledge skin colour, and as Eric Gruen recognises, "Greek and Latin authors observed with curiosity and interest persons of black skin. They remarked on that color, wondered about it; some had discomfort with it, even occasionally mocked it and caricatured it".¹³⁸ Ancient perceptions regarding skin colour have spurred forward many studies on the existence of racism in the classical world.¹³⁹ In a similar way to these discussions, this section will explore a modern pro-slavery response to ancient views on skin colour, and for this, we will examine excerpts from Cobb's *Historical Sketch of Slavery*.

As mentioned previously, the *Historical Sketch* focuses on the development of slavery in antiquity, the Medieval era, the early modern period, and concludes with a discourse on the Americas. Throughout these historical sketches, Cobb examined the societies of Judea, Egypt, India, Assyria, Greece, Rome, post-Roman Europe (notably Britain, France, Italy, and Germany), The British Empire, and the Americas. In the final sketch on slavery in the Americas, Cobb included his opinions regarding the threat abolition posed on the Southern slave mode of production. Having established the layout of Cobb's work, the first section of this part will discuss his position on the use of black slaves during antiquity. This will be achieved through engagement with Cobb's literary

¹³⁸ Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2011), 197.

¹³⁹ For the racial argument see Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2004). For discussion on racial physical markers during antiquity see Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*, 197-211.

sketches of Greece and Rome, including also a discussion on the primary source material he utilised. Second, this analysis will contextualise Cobb's work on the Greco-Roman world with other examples found in the *Historical Sketch*. Finally, this part of the chapter will conclude with a discussion of the findings therein.

Cobb on Slavery in ancient Greece

In his sketch on Greece, Cobb put forth his views on the functionality of these ancient slaves, which ranged from agricultural servile labourers, specifically those tied to the land (which he referred to as serfs), to domestic or personal slaves. These groupings of servile labourers do not represent a summative interpretation, because beyond the confines of the domestic and agricultural spheres, Greek slaves served many different purposes.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Cobb utilised this framework of Greek slavery for his audience. He also expressed preference for the Spartan slave system, holding much respect for their enslavement of the Helots. From Cobb's perspective, the Helots possessed no political, social, or military ties to the *polis* whatsoever.¹⁴¹ This submissiveness fuelled Cobb's curiosity, and he no doubt observed parallels between the treatment of the Helots and Southern blacks. After offering his praise and insights on Spartan slavery, Cobb swiftly moved forward onto a discussion of domestic slavery. In the domestic sphere, Cobb claimed black slaves experienced favourable conditions, shown in the following excerpt:

From Egypt principally came the supply of negroes. These were prized for their colour, were kept near the persons, and were considered slaves of luxury... As we have seen, the negro was a favourite among slaves. The opposite colour, 'white', does not seem to have enjoyed the same favouritisms. According to Plutarch, in his Life of Agesilaus, when that king made an expedition to Persia, he ordered his commissaries, one day, to strip and sell the prisoners. Their clothes sold freely,

¹⁴⁰ For studies on ancient Greek slavery see Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, 105, 135, 146-7, 154; Geoffrey de Ste-Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (London: Duckworth: 1981); Yves Garlan, *Slavery in Ancient Greece* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988); Deborah Kamen, *Status in Classical Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

¹⁴¹ For a modern interpretation of this see Stephen Hodkinson, "Spartiates, helots and the direction of the agrarian economy: toward and understanding of helotage in comparative perspective". In Enrico Dal Lago and Constantina Katsari eds., *Slave Systems, Ancient and Modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 285-320; see also Kolchin, *A Sphinx on the American Land*.

‘but,’ says the historian, ‘as to the prisoners themselves, their skins being soft and white, by reason of their having lived so much within doors, the spectators only laughed at them, thinking they would be of no service as slaves’.¹⁴²

In the passage, Cobb exemplified that the ancient Greeks preferred black slaves, yet, the sources do not provide evidence on this. Nor do the facts exist to prove it. Indeed, the Greeks might have used slaves from Africa, but overall, their labour force consisted of multiple ethnicities.¹⁴³ Fundamentally, Cobb’s literature attempts to link the posterity of the Greco-Roman world and the slave systems that existed there with his own society. Based on this, he developed a stream of pro-slavery propaganda, which supports the idea the Greeks actually preferred black slaves. Cobb used this platform to defend black slavery, on the basis that white Southerners refused to support the enslavement of “white races”. Cobb upheld this view by suggesting that the Greeks preferred black slavery. This position also undermined the idea that the Greeks used any other race of labourer. The following part expands upon this and will include the corresponding Roman component of Cobb’s argument.

Cobb on Slavery in ancient Rome

In his sketch on ancient Rome, Cobb contrasted the condition of Southern slaves with their Roman counterparts by using a variety of ancient and modern sources to achieve this. He also tried to use these ancient sources to support his black slavery argument, and this section will show three examples from Cobb’s text which draw on Roman literature

¹⁴² Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 66.

¹⁴³ My position here disagrees with this statement, because it lacks a fundamental understanding of classical texts, and there is no possible way to prove what Cobb claims here. For discussion on ethnic diversity and racism in the ancient world see Erich S. Gruen, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1992), ch.7; Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*; Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*, 197-211. Isaac specifically looks at the existence of “proto” or “pre” racism in the Greco-Roman world (i.e. Roman and Greek attitudes towards other “cultures” in the Mediterranean basin). His analysis is quite broad and more generally does not specifically focus on blacks in antiquity. Gruen, on the other hand, puts forth his examination on the ancient reception of blacks in the eighth chapter of *Rethinking the Other*. In this chapter, he focuses on Greco-Roman textual, and visual evidence on ancient blacks from Northern Africa (i.e. Egypt, and beyond the First Cataract). For more on the ethnographic and geographic approach see L.A. Thompson, “Observations on the Perception of ‘Race’ in Imperial Rome,” *PACA*, 17 (1983): 1-21.

for support. For the first example Cobb turned to a poem which he dated to the second century AD, shown in the passage below:¹⁴⁴

To attest the early day at which the negro was commonly used as a slave at Rome, the following description of a negress, written in the second century, serves well:
*Interdem clamat cybalem; era tunica custos. Afra genus, tota patriam testante
figura, torta comam, labroque tumens et fusca colorem, pectore lata, jacens
mammis, compressior alvo, cruribus exilis, spatiosa prodiga planta, continuis rimis
calcanea scissa rigebant.*¹⁴⁵

Cobb borrowed this passage of Latin text from Josiah C. Nott's work *Types of Mankind*. Nott, in turn, took the Latin text from a Virgilian poem called the *Moretum*.¹⁴⁶ The passage describes the image of Scybale (a black character in the poem). Cobb suggested the reference to Scybale indicated Virgil's description of field slaves, although the text does not support this, as the translation shows well enough:¹⁴⁷

... Now he sings rustic songs, and with rude strains solaces his toil; at times, he shouts to Scybale. She was his only help, African by race, her whole appearance proclaiming her native land: her hair curly, her lips swollen, and her complexion dark; she was wide-chested, with breasts hanging low, her belly somewhat pinched, her legs thin, her feet broad and ample.¹⁴⁸

Nott makes a similar claim in *Types of Mankind*, and the excerpt from that work suggests the following:

To Mr. Gustavus Myers, are we indebted for indicating to us the unparalleled description of a "Negress"; no less than for the loan of the volume in which an unapplied passage of Virgil is contained. Through it we perceive that, in the second century after C., the physical characteristics of a "field" or agricultural nigger were

¹⁴⁴ He also included Seneca's description of blacks in his text here, shown in this: "[N]on est *Æthiopsis inter suos insignitus color, nec rufus crinis et coactus in nodum apud Germanos uirum dedecet*. The colour of the Ethiopian is not remarkable among his own [people], nor his hair, red and gathered into a knot, unfitting for a man among the Germans". See Seneca, *De Ira* 3.26.6-7. Cobb did not affix BC or AD to this, and just states that the poem was written during the 2nd century. I assume that he meant the 2nd century AD, since Virgil was born during the early 1st century BC. Also, Virgil died around 19 or 18 BC, which suggests that the poem may have been released posthumously – or it was written by a separate author familiar with the Virgilian style.

¹⁴⁵ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 81.

¹⁴⁶ *Moretum*: a type of garlic, cheese and herb paste consumed by the Romans (made using a pestle and mortar - hence the name). See *Appendix Virgiliana* for the complete poem. Virgil was a famous Roman poet who influenced the literary movement during the early Roman Empire (among his notable works are the *Georgics*, the *Aeneid*, and the *Eclogues*). Evidence suggests that his began around the mid-1st-century BC and continued until his death in ca.19 BC.

¹⁴⁷ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 81.

¹⁴⁸ *Appendix Virgiliana Moretum* 30-35.

understood at Rome 1800 years ago, as thoroughly as by cotton planters in the State of Alabama, still flourishing in AD 1858.¹⁴⁹

The description of Scybale in the Latin text simply contextualises her character and makes no indication of her potential status as a slave.¹⁵⁰ Cobb based Scybale's social status as a slave on her skin colour. Cobb's reference to the passage from *Types of Mankind* informs us that other white Southerners argued for the existence of black slavery in ancient Rome as well. The passage from *Types of Mankind* makes that connection explicit by paralleling cotton planters of the South with ancient Roman agrarians. Both Nott and Cobb suggested that Virgil produced the poem, and while this is possible, modern historians have placed this poem in the *Appendix Virgiliana*. The *Appendix Virgiliana* comprises a diverse collection of minor poems written by various Roman authors during the 1st century AD. These poems either portray influences from Virgil's style of writing, or directly show signs of pseudepigrapha. Either way, we cannot ascertain if Virgil wrote the *Moretum* – but, the modern consensus indicates that he did not and instead the author took inspiration from Virgil's poetic style of writing.

In the second example Cobb added to his theoretical approach by stating the following: “For her footmen and couriers the [Roman] wife preferred always the negroes . . . because of the contrast of the skin and the silver plate suspended upon the breast, upon which was inscribed the name and titles of the mistress”.¹⁵¹ He indicated Seneca's *Epistle 87* as the source for this, but if we look at a contemporary translation from 1851 we see the following:¹⁵²

I suppose you call a man rich just because his gold plate goes with him even on his travels, because he farms land in the provinces, because he holds an account book, because he owns a villa near the city so great that men would grudge his holding of them in the waste lands of Apulia. But after you mentioned all these facts, he is poor. And why? He is in debt. ‘To what extent’ you ask? For all that he has. Or perchance you think it matters whether one from another man or from Fortune. What good is there in mules caparisoned in uniform livery? Or in decorated chariots

¹⁴⁹ Josiah C. Nott and George R. Gliddon, *Types of Mankind or Ethnological Researches Based upon the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures, and Crania of Races and upon their Natural, Geographical, Philological, and Biblical History* (Philadelphia, PA.: Lippincott, Grambo, and Co, 1858), 255.

¹⁵⁰ For examples appearing in ancient primary sources see: Herodotus 7.70; Martial *De Spectaculis* 3.10; Petronius *Satyrica* 102; Pliny *Natural History* 2.189. This should not be considered an exhaustive list, as other ancient sources from the Greco-Roman world do mention (black) Africans – nevertheless, these ancient authors represent good examples.

¹⁵¹ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 83.

¹⁵² Per Cobb see Seneca, *Epistles* 87.8; Martial, *Epigrams* 3.62.

and steeds decked with purple and with tapestry, with golden harness hanging from their necks, champng their yellow bits, all clothed in gold? Neither master nor mule is improved by such trappings.¹⁵³

Despite the availability of a contemporary English translation, Cobb's interpretation of Seneca differed from the original text, which means that he either referenced it from a third party who cited the text incorrectly, used a poor translation, or manipulated the text to suit his argument. In my view, Cobb manipulated the text, and the excerpt from *Types of Mankind* helps reinforce this view. Nott and Cobb's use of the *Appendix Virgiliana* provide evidence on how Southern advocates of slavery could misuse ancient literature. Cobb's utilisation of Seneca goes beyond this because he physically manipulated the source, and based on the evidence, nothing relating to black slavery does appear in *Epistle 87*.¹⁵⁴

The third example adds further support to my position, and using Juvenal's *Satires*, Cobb wrote this: "[N]egroes" were considered "slaves of luxury" which "commanded a very high price".¹⁵⁵ He continued with this: "Juvenal declares, that a rich man could not enjoy his dinner unless surrounded by the dusky and active Moor, and the duskier Indians".¹⁵⁶ If we look at Sidney George Owen's translation of Juvenal *Satires* from 1903 we see the following:

In those days our tables were home-grown, made of our own trees; for such use was kept some aged chestnut blown down perchance by the Southwestern wind. But presently a rich man takes no pleasure in his dinner—his turbot and his venison have no taste, his unguents and his roses no perfume—unless the broad slabs of his dinner-table rest upon a gaping leopard of solid ivory, made of the tusks sent to us by the swift-footed Moor from the portal of Syene, or by the still duskier Indian—or perhaps shed by the monstrous beast in the Nabataean forest when [he became] too big and too heavy for his head. These are the things that give good appetite and good digestion; for these gentle-men a table with a leg of silver is like a finger with an iron ring.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Seneca, *Epistles* 87.7-8. (trans.) John Selby Watson (London and New York: D. Appleton, 1851). Seneca the Younger was a Roman statesman, philosopher, and author who was active during the 1st century AD.

¹⁵⁴ This will be exemplified further in the chapter on George Fitzhugh (specifically in relation to his adaptation of Aristotle's theories on natural slavery).

¹⁵⁵ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 85. Cobb claimed this excerpt was taken from Juvenal *Satire 5*. Juvenal, a Roman satirical poet (primarily known for the *Satires*), was active during the late 1st and-early 2nd centuries AD.

¹⁵⁶ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 85

¹⁵⁷ Juvenal *Satires*, Sidney George Owens (trans.) Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903), 203. See Thomas Faulkner. *The Satires of Juvenal Translated: with Explanatory Notes*,

Sidney George Owens translation of *Satires* builds on a couple of others that circulated throughout 19th century America – notable among these was Thomas Faulkner’s 1777 translation *The Satires of Juvenal*. The last published edition of Faulkner appeared in the United States around 1854, so we can postulate that Cobb used this version. Copies of the 1854 edition are difficult to locate, but textual discrepancies between the 1777 and 1903 translations are minimal. Thus, for the benefit of my research, we can safely assume that Cobb altered a translation of *The Satires of Juvenal* to better suit his pro-slavery view of the ancient Greeks and Romans preferring black slaves. Building upon this idea further, Juvenal mentioned the “swift-footed Moor” and the “still duskier Indian”, but only to indicate their geographical origins.¹⁵⁸ Instead Juvenal satirised about a rich man, who demanded a luxurious table for dining purposes, and in the process he mocked the moral degradation which occurred among the Roman elite during his own era.¹⁵⁹ For Cobb to see this as a slur against blacks represents a badly interpreted version of Juvenal, so like the examples above, Cobb’s interpretation does not correspond with the original text. Consider too that Cobb consciously invoked these manipulations, which indicates the existence of the deliberate nature behind these oversights. What then do these manipulations tell us about Cobb’s utilisation of ancient texts? In Cobb’s sketches on Greece and Rome there exists a common theme: an ancient fondness for black slavery. When Cobb’s work reaches the chapters, for example, on Medieval Europe, he placed less emphasis on black slavery. The topic, however, comes back into focus during his discussion on the American South. This shows that Cobb limited his reverence for black slavery to Greece, Rome, and modern America. Cobb claimed that

Relating to the Laws and Customs of the Greeks and Romans (Dublin: Faulkner, 1777). Also note that Roman Pleb wore an iron ring, but on the other hand, senators and *equites* often wore rings made from precious metals, such as gold or silver.

¹⁵⁸ Ancient Roman authors frequently associated skin colour with geographical regions, but debates remain on ancient sentiments towards racism from a cultural point of view. For more see Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*; Gruen. *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*.

¹⁵⁹ Juvenal envisaged three sources for ivory: imports via Aswan (modern Egypt); the southern frontier (Mauritania: modern Morocco); and India (see Pliny *Natural History* 8.32). Nabataea (modern Jordan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia) was an important part of the trade route between the Roman Mediterranean and the Far East (ivory being a popular item among the Roman elite). For economics and discussion on trade routes see Moses Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley, CA.: The University of California Press, 1973); Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Berkeley, CA.: The University of California Press, 1987); Peter Temin, *The Roman Market Economy* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2013).

black slavery existed in other ancient societies, but these observations lack the same kind of depth that he provided for those on Greece and Rome. These other chapters focus on slavery in Judea, Egypt, India, and Asia Minor.¹⁶⁰

These textual excerpts differ from the examples we see in the Greek and Roman cases, mainly because the passages merely imply that black slavery existed in Judea, Egypt, India, and Asia Minor (in some cases, for example in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, it still existed in Cobb's own time).¹⁶¹ Beyond predicating that blacks have historically functioned as slaves, Cobb leaves his audience with little discussion on the use of black chattel within these societies. But many white Southerners shared Cobb's viewpoint and implying that the ancients used black slavery most certainly appeared normal to his audience. As we saw, in the Greek and Roman cases, Cobb argued that those societies preferred black slaves. This distinction empowered Cobb's argument, because to his audience Greece and Rome represented the pinnacle of civilised culture.

The evidence suggests that Cobb manipulated the works to comply with his use of the classical defence. The following question, then, emerges regarding Cobb's literary output: how central were these passages to his overall argument? We know that Cobb's work represents a piece of pro-slavery literature, but he used the ancient sources as a support mechanism for black slavery in the South. As shown, in their original form the sources provided Cobb's text with no substantial evidence to argue in favour of black slavery having existed in ancient Greece and Rome. He needed to corrupt the passages, otherwise his use of the classical defence would appear as unfounded. By utilising Greece and Rome as model examples for black slavery, Cobb defined one aspect of the classical defence within the pro-slavery argument. Textual manipulation exists as the critical difference between Cobb and the other figures chosen and represented in this thesis. McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and Hammond utilised accurate translations of ancient literature in their works. By contrast, Cobb did not accurately incorporate classicism into his *Historical Sketch*. He instead drew from the power and respect the

¹⁶⁰ See Chart 1 in the Appendix of Tables for passages from Cobb on Judea, Egypt, India, and Asia Minor.

¹⁶¹ Monika Trümper, *Graeco-Roman Slave Markets: Fact or Fiction* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2009), in the first chapter discusses a "cross-cultural perspective" on slave markets during the 19th and 20th centuries. Thus, she addresses slavery in modern Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, which offers a good contrast with Cobb's discussion on ancient slavery in these regions (Trümper's cross-cultural perspective also includes the modern slave markets of Marrakesh, Havana, and the American South).

Greco-Roman world held in Southern culture. Other authors of pro-slavery literature drew from the same source of power, but Cobb, a well-educated man of high standing, knew ancient Greek and Latin. Ultimately, he possessed adequate knowledge of the ancient world, and most certainly possessed the ability to accurately use Greek and Latin literature. Instead Cobb chose to manipulate the sources to better establish his argument. As the chapters below will show, other authors of pro-slavery literature successfully reflected classicism in their arguments without manipulating ancient works.

The Greek and Roman examples show that Cobb deliberately recruited classical slavery into his argument. Many white Southerners revered the ancient world, so if these cultures embraced black slavery it provided further justification for its continued existence in the South. Without the textual manipulations, Cobb's argument and the effectiveness of this particular pro-slavery work diminishes because it would lack a precedent established by two prominent ancient slaveholding cultures. Contrary to his claims, Cobb did not provide his audiences with a deeper understanding of the historical context of slave exploitation. Rather, he created a narrative of historical progression, ending with the Romans, in which black slavery developed into a popular economic mode of production. Black slave exploitation, therefore, represented a symbol for advanced civilisations.

Building on this discussion, the following section will examine Cobb's *Laws of Negro Slavery*, and as mentioned above, this work encompasses the second half of the *Inquiry*. The analysis will focus on Cobb's development of black slave law in conjunction with the Georgia State Legal Code of 1860. The discussion will also look at how Cobb's views on slavery in the worlds of Greece and Rome influenced his development of black Southern slave law.

The *Inquiry* and the Georgia State Legal Code of 1860-1861

The *Inquiry* allowed Cobb to develop his contributions to the pro-slavery argument, and as shown above, he did this by first focusing on black slavery in the Greco-Roman world. He used the idea of black slavery to exemplify a time when ancient civilisation had reached a high point (i.e. Greece and Rome). This serves to illustrate the suggested

preference for black slaves during antiquity and Cobb defined the exploitation of black slavery as the apex of civilised culture. From Cobb’s perspective, Southern society, therefore, needed to emulate his established ancient ideal to reach the height of modern civilisation. This section will demonstrate that Cobb’s literary output in the *Law of Negro Slavery* possessed different implications.

Completed between 1860 and 1861, the first Georgia State Legal Code was ratified by the General Assembly in 1863. Cobb along with David Irwin, and Richard Clark drafted the code, which incorporated elements from Cobb’s previous works (particularly the sections regarding slave law).¹⁶² Published in accordance with the state constitution, the code incorporated several Southern legal statutes from various digests written between 1790 and 1855.¹⁶³ After the Civil War, the code needed to comply with the Thirteenth Amendment, so between 1866 and 1867 Clark and Irwin made significant revisions to the original document.

The first version of the code consisted of 1,100 pages that are broken down into four main parts, which appear as follows:

Chart 1

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| 1.The Political and Public Organization of the State |
| 2.The Civil Code |
| 3.The Code of Practice |
| 4.The Penal Laws |

The relevant sections on slave law fell under the Civil Code and Penal Laws. Cobb’s first contribution to the Civil Code was a chapter titled: “Different Kinds of Persons, Their Rights and Status”, which outlined these four articles:

¹⁶² For the code see *The Code of the State of Georgia*. Prepared by R.H. Clark, T.R.R Cobb, and D. Irwin (Atlanta, GA.: Franklin Steam Printing House, 1861); for revisions see *The Code of the State of Georgia*. Prepared by R.H. Clark and D. Irwin (Atlanta, GA.: Franklin Steam Printing House, 1867); for modern discussion on the development of common and slave law in the state of Georgia see Andrew P. Morriss, “This State Will Soon Have Plenty of Laws’ – Lessons from One-Hundred Years of Codification in Montana.” *Montana Law Review* 56 (1995): 359-450; Christopher C. Meyers, ed., *The Empire State of the South: Georgia History in Documents and Essays* (Macon, GA.: Mercer University Press, 2008); see also Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1998), ch. 11-12.

¹⁶² David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 250-68; see also Oakes, *Freedom National*.

¹⁶³ For examples see Watkins Digest of Statutes (1799); Marbury and Crawford’s Digest (1802); Clayton’s Compilation (1813); Lamar’s Compilation (1821); Prince’s Digest (1822); Foster’s Digest (1831); Howell Cobb’s Analysis of Statutes (1846); Thomas Cobb’s Digest (1851).

Chart 2

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|-------------------------------------|
| 1.Citizens |
| 2.Residents and aliens |
| 3.Slaves and free persons of colour |
| 4.Corporations |

Article Three (Slaves and free persons of colour) starts with a broad definition for slaves, which appears as follows: “A slave is one over whose person, liberty, labor and property another has legal control”.¹⁶⁴ To fully comprehend Cobb’s methodology we need to shift our focus onto his *Law of Negro Slavery*. The *Law of Negro Slavery* first sets out with a chapter called “What is Slavery?”, and in this chapter, Cobb discussed the historical origins for the term “slave” by loosely using a Greco-Roman definition. According to Cobb, from a historical perspective, the law of nature perpetually defined the evolution of slavery, and he first believed the idea stemmed from Aristotle, as displayed in the following:

In this view, is Negro Slavery consistent with the Law of Nature? We confine the inquiry to negro slavery, because, upon the principles already established, it is undoubtedly true, that the enslavement, by one man or race, physically, intellectually, and morally their equals, is contrary to the law of nature, because it promotes not their happiness, and tends not to their perfection. Much of the confusion upon this subject has arisen from a failure to notice this very palpable distinction. The ancient Greeks were so far the superiors of their contemporaries that it did no violence to the existing state of things for their philosophers [in particular, Aristotle] to declare their pre-eminence, and draw thence the conclusions which legitimately followed. Hence, Aristotle declared that some men were slaves by nature, and that slavery was necessary to a perfect society.¹⁶⁵

In this passage, Cobb grappled with the ancient sources, although based on this we can extrapolate the origins for his definition of Southern slavery as it eventually appeared in the code. This example demonstrates that classicism influenced the development of Cobb’s black slave law.

On the Roman side of things, Cobb argued, that the Romans characterised their slaves as “things” or “objects”, but we know well enough that the rights and social status of Roman slaves changed over the course of several centuries. Naturally, during this

¹⁶⁴ GSLC 2.1.1. Persons (1861: 319).

¹⁶⁵ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 17.

long period of transition, Roman perceptions on slave law also evolved.¹⁶⁶ He too related the law of nature to the evolution of Roman slavery, as shown in the following passage:

We must be careful to distinguish between the state of nature and the law of nature. Many things are contrary to the state of nature, which are not contrary to the law of nature... It may appear that slavery is repugnant to the law of nature; but that may be properly denied. For slavery in itself is nothing but an obligation for perpetual service. If it be not wrong to be bound to serve for a year, why not also for life? This kind of [perpetual] slavery is not repugnant to the law of nature, but yet is not of natural right, which often times authors confound. The admission therefore of the proposition that ‘all men are created free’, or are free in a state of nature, does not carry it as a consequence that slavery is inconsistent with the law of nature: *jus naturae id non impedit*. So, the Roman law defined slavery to be a product of [the law of nature]: *qua quis dominio altero contra naturam subjicitur*... This is not to be understood as if it was opposed to the law of nature, but only that natural or primeval condition, in which everyone is born free. Roman definitions of slavery and the law of nature possess a genuine connection.¹⁶⁷

In the above passage Cobb correctly observed that the ancient Roman state established that “all men are created free”. But Cobb fails to address the *ius gentium* or law of nations, which ultimately from the Roman point of view, reduced some people to the status of slaves. Florentinus’ *Institutes* (mid-late 4th century AD) illustrates the Roman side of the coin in more detail, as shown in the following passage:

Freedom is one’s natural power of doing what one pleases, save insofar as it is ruled out by either coercion or the law. Slavery is an institution of the *jus gentium*, whereby someone is against nature made subject to the ownership of another. Slaves (*servi*) are so-called, because generals have a custom of selling their prisoners and thereby preserving rather than killing them: and indeed, they are said to be *mancipia*, because they are *captives* in the hand (*manus*) of their enemies.¹⁶⁸

This passage from Florentinus (which Justinian later included in his *Digest*) shows that indeed the law of nature did not dictate Roman slave law. Cobb does intertwine his discussion in this part of the *Inquiry* with Aristotle’s views on slavery and the law of nature. Thus, most certainly Cobb just combined the ancient Greek and Roman outlooks on slavery within the same discussion, rather than address them separately. This reflects

¹⁶⁶ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 5; for discussion see William W. Buckland, *The Roman Law of Slavery: The Condition of the Slave in Private Law from the Time of Augustus to Justinian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908); for a compilation of Roman statutes see Michael H. Crawford, *Roman Statutes* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1996).

¹⁶⁷ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 14.

¹⁶⁸ Buckland, *The Roman Law of Slavery*, 103. The original contribution comes from Florentinus’ *Institutes 9* – a Roman politician and jurist from the late Antique period. Justinian included the legal works of Florentinus in his *Digest*; compiled during the early 6th century AD.

another manipulation of the ancient world, because as the above passages show, the Greeks and Romans had different perceptions on the legal definition of slavery. The passage from Cobb’s *Inquiry* does illustrate his awareness for the Roman position that “all men are created free”. The excerpt from Florentinus, however, addresses *ius gentium*, which shows us the Roman disconnect between slavery and the law of nature – so the passage from Cobb represents a misinformed view.

The other sections of Article Three outline the legal parameters for the operational nature of slavery within Georgia. These parts of the article focus less so on slave law for individual labourers or slaveholders, yet, the broad range and scope of these topics define aspects such as:

Chart 3

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| 1. The natural laws applicable to blacks |
| 2. Dominion of third persons |
| 3. Chattel slavery |
| 4. The acquisition of slaves |
| 5. The legal terminology for ‘mulatto’ ¹⁶⁹ |
| 6. Property of slaves |
| 7. The right of freed persons of colour to sell themselves into slavery; |
| 8. The importation of slaves |

The list highlights the most important points of the article; although the chart does not portray a cumulative listing, it nevertheless sheds light on the bigger issues Southern jurists and slaveholders regularly faced.

The second part of the Civil Code (relating to slave law) put forth statutes for slavery within the domestic sphere.¹⁷⁰ Similarly this chapter contains four articles, displayed in the following:

Chart 4

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|--|
| 1. Of the relative duties of master and slave |
| 2. Of the rights and liabilities of the master |
| 3. Of manumission |
| 4. Of fugitive and runaway slaves |

Cobb divided Article One into the following three subcategories: The Right and Power of the Master, Cruel Treatment, and Duty of the Master. These sections of the article

¹⁶⁹ According to Cobb at minimum, black slaves had to consist of one/eighth “negro blood”.

¹⁷⁰ See GSLC 2.2.4. Domestic Relations (1861: 367-75).

detail the shared responsibilities within the master-slave relationship, as shown in the following example:

1849. The master is entitled to the time, labor and services of the slave, and to a prompt obedience to all his lawful commands. The master may enforce his rights by corporal punishment, not extending to life or limb or cruel treatment. 1850. Cruel treatment may consist of withholding necessary food or clothing from the slave, inflicting cruel punishment or doing any act, the necessary consequence of which is to impair the health or endanger the life or limb of the slave. 1851. The master is bound to treat his slave with humanity, to furnish him a sufficiency of nutritious and healthy food and proper clothing, to provide him lodging and fuel, to furnish him medical attendance and nursing during sickness, and to provide for all his necessary wants when infirmity or old age renders him incapable of service.¹⁷¹

From a legal perspective, this passage defines the role of paternalism within the master-slave relationship. In an ideal situation, masters provided for the needs of their slaves, while the obligation of slaves was to obey their masters.¹⁷² This comes to light even more in the sections on cruel treatment and duty of the masters, as these parts illuminate the real issues surrounding slavery in the domestic sphere. For a better understanding of Cobb's methodology, we need to contrast the corresponding text found in the *Law of Negro Slavery* with the above passage. In the following excerpt from the *Law of Negro Slavery*, Cobb implied there existed a crucial difference between Roman and American slave law:

In the Roman law, a slave was a mere chattel (*res*). He was not recognized as a person. But the negro slave in America, protected as above stated by maniple law, occupies a double character of person and property. Having now ascertained who are and may be slaves in America, a natural division of our subject suggests itself in considering the slave, - first, AS A PERSON, and then, AS PROPERTY.¹⁷³

Cobb's interpretation of Roman law, while rudimentary, presents a near inhuman definition. Furthermore, he identified black slaves in America as "persons". This portrayal represents more fallacy than truth, because as shown in chapter 2, specifically the section on the political defence of slavery, Southern black slaves never achieved the same status as free whites. Thus, Cobb's characterisation of Southern blacks "first, as a person, and then, as property" represents a fallacy in his proposed legislation. Regarding

¹⁷¹ GSLC 2.2.5.1849-1851 (1861: 367).

¹⁷² See Orlando Paterson. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 17-77.

¹⁷³ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 83.

his discourse on Roman slave law, we also saw above, that it developed continuously over the course of several centuries and that unfree servile labourers did eventually achieve some legal rights; the law also upheld the position of natural law (or that all humans are born free).¹⁷⁴ The previous section displays how Cobb misused classicism and once again he demonstrated significant misunderstandings of the ancient world. Cobb's discourse on the status of slaves in the Roman world possesses many inaccuracies and lacks some important information. For example, from the early days of the republic Roman slaves could not physically own property, but slaves could receive a *peculium* (quasi property).¹⁷⁵ The *peculium*, which the slave held with the agreement of the master, does suggest that the Romans viewed their slaves with more objectivity than Cobb suggests.¹⁷⁶ Consider too, that during the imperial period slaves increasingly achieved greater legal protection and some legislation even sought to establish restrictions to limit the power of the masterclass. For example, the Roman Emperor Hadrian (in office: 117-38 AD) enacted a mandate which prevented the unlawful corporal punishment of slaves, unless such physical treatment was legally recognised by a magistrate.¹⁷⁷ Earlier during the republic (prior to the enactment of other imperial edicts and legal statutes) masters possessed nearly complete autonomy over their servile labourers.¹⁷⁸ Cobb's methodology shows that his lack of engagement with the development of Roman law and the ancient treatment of slaves functioned as a benchmark. In the *Historical Sketch*, he provided his audience with a narrative which praised the widespread use of black slavery in ancient Greece and Rome, but here he chastises the Romans for treating their chattel as objects. This indicates Cobb's desire to emulate Greco-Roman ideals, but his work simultaneously undermined this by arguing

¹⁷⁴ See Cato *De Agricultura* 8.10.2; 10.11.2 for indication of slaves included in lists of equipment for oliveyards and vineyards. Cato does not offer any suggestions towards how these slaves may have been treated. Nevertheless, it may indicate his perceptions as Roman chattel slaves as being "things".

¹⁷⁵ For more discussion see Alan Watson, *Roman Law and Comparative Law* (Athens, GA.: The University of Georgia Press, 1991); Cairns, *Codification, Transplants and History*.

¹⁷⁶ For discussion on the *peculium* see Ulrike Roth, "Peculium, Freedom, Citizenship: Golden Triangle or Vicious Circle? An Act in Two Parts", in Roth (ed.) *By the Sweat of Your Brow: Roman Slavery in its Socio-Economic Setting* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2010), 91-120.

¹⁷⁷ Detlef Liebs, *Summoned to Roman Courts: Famous Trials from Antiquity* (Berkeley, CA.: The University of California Press, 2012), 139-150. (*Dig.* 1.6.2; *Gaius Inst.* 1.53.).

¹⁷⁸ See Watson, *Slave Law in the Americas*; Alan Watson, *The Spirit of Roman Law* (Athens, GA.: The University of Georgia Press, 1995).

that Southern culture needed to learn from the mistakes of the ancients – Cobb points out errors in Greco-Roman slaveholding, where none (or not to the same extent) actually existed. Furthermore, he believed that white Southern slave-owning culture developed into a better version of its ancient counterpart, which represented yet another advance in civilisation. Ancient practice and legal writings did characterise slaves as “things”, which displays that Cobb’s claims do possess some legitimacy, His inaccurate portrayal of Roman slave law highlights Cobb’s true wrongdoing, however. By the late 1850s the United States had existed for about 75 years, but the country lacked a unified legal mandate for its slave or free black populations.¹⁷⁹ The Romans had slave laws in place for hundreds of years, so Cobb’s interpretation of Roman law develops more so into an overly critical analysis of a slave system that (successfully) functioned for centuries.

With these central issues borne in mind, we can now return to the domestic aspects of the legal code. The purpose of these laws sought to construct a protective veil for slaves residing within Georgia, and evidence from other sources (for example, plantation manuals) indicate similar ideologies existed in other slaveholding states.¹⁸⁰ The role of Southern paternalism declared the masters’ duty required them to adequately care for their slaves – from birth, until sale or death.¹⁸¹ Mentioned previously, the main purpose of Article One established the roles of both the master and the slave, while the article also includes a discourse on the following aspects of this:

Chart 5

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|----------------------------------|
| 1. Slaves neglected by owners |
| 2. Proceedings against overseers |
| 3. Rest on the Sabbath |
| 4. Unlawful privileges to slaves |

¹⁷⁹ My personal views do not support the idea of segregated legal systems. This part merely illuminates that culturally, white persons in antebellum United States did not view the black population with an egalitarian lens. To develop population control for its black slave population, the laws in the South required further implementation and Cobb tried to achieve this.

¹⁸⁰ See James Henry Hammond’s agricultural manual published in 1858 for treatment of slaves on his estates. This is not reflective of every Southern slaveholder, nor was Hammond active in Georgia. But his manual does provide an indication of how black slaves ought to have been treated and this synchronises well with some of the statutes outlined in the Georgia State Legal Code. This manual will be examined in more detail in chapter seven of this thesis.

¹⁸¹ Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 204.

This discussion continued in Article Two (see Chart 4), where Cobb outlined the rights and liabilities of the master, which detail the following subcategories: liability for acts of slaves; presumption for command (i.e. the slave was always under the command of his master, unless otherwise specified – for example, slaves “loaned” out as a third party to another individual); liability of the master for slaves’ unlawful destruction of property; harbouring a fugitive or run-away slave (the party involved in harbouring a run-away legally had to pay damages to the slaveholder); white persons on plantations (slaveholders, in the possession of ten or more slaves, had to employ a white overseer or superintendent. Disregard for this resulted in a fine of 100 dollars).

The discourse in Article Three moves onto the layout of manumission laws for Georgia. No slave could be manumitted without the expressed approval of the General Assembly, this included freeing slaves via wills, contractual agreements, and stipulation.¹⁸² For guidance on crafting these manumission laws Cobb again turned to the Greco-Roman world, displayed in the following passage from the *Law of Negro Slavery*:

Almost every State has placed some restraint as to the slaves capable of being manumitted... No formality was prescribed by the Grecian laws, nor were such required at Rome during the earlier days of the kingdom and republic. Subsequently, by various decrees, certain prescribed forms were to be complied with; and, at a still later day, the consent of a tribunal, established for that purpose, was necessary to make valid the manumission. The usual forms were the *census lustralis*, the *vindicta*, and the *testamentum*. The first was effected by the master’s entering the name of the slave upon this list of citizens. The second was the stroke from the *vindicta*, or freedom-rod, of the praetor. The last was by will, thus: *Cicero, si neque censu, neque vindicta, nec testament liber factus est, non est liber.*¹⁸³

The manumission laws in the legal code placed heavy restrictions on the ability for blacks to achieve their freedom.¹⁸⁴ Cobb substantiated this view by indicating in his discussion that many slaveholding states placed restrictions on the manumission of labourers. The article stipulates that if a master wanted to manumit slaves’ he could do

¹⁸² See GSLC 2.2.5.1876 (1861: 372).

¹⁸³ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 258.

¹⁸⁴ For more discussion on Greek and Roman manumission practices see Keith Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 81-113; Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free: The Concept of Manumission and the Status of Manumitted Slaves in the Ancient Greek World* (Netherlands: Brill, 2005); Deborah Kamen, “Sale for the Purpose of Freedom: Slave-Prostitutes and Manumission in Ancient Greece,” *CJ* 109, no.3 (2014): 281-307 (2014), 281-307.

this elsewhere (for example, in another state and in accordance with those manumission laws). With strict manumission laws in place, the act of freeing slaves did not develop into common practice throughout the South. In Georgia, by way of this legislation, Cobb framed manumission as a state driven initiative which removed the ability of masters to free their slaves. Throughout the last chapter of the *Law of Negro Slavery*, Cobb discusses the consequences of manumission at Rome, foregrounding the strong continued dependence of the former slave on the previous master (now patron). In this he directly compared the status of free blacks to the manumitted slaves of ancient Rome, as shown in the following:

Manumission once effected, removes forever the dominion of the master, and by no act of his can it be restored; nor can even the legislative power of the State deprive the freedman of his liberty, except for some violation of the law. By the Roman law, the freedman became the client of the master, who, as patron, continued to exercise considerable power over him. This, however, was the result of municipal law.

To withdraw his dominion, is the privilege of the master. To incorporate a new citizen into the body politic, is only within the power of the State. The freed negro does not become a citizen by virtue of his manumission. It requires the act of another party, the State, to clothe him with civil and political rights. Before such act he stands in the position of an alien friend, and in the absence of legislation he would be entitled to all such privileges as are allowed to such residents.¹⁸⁵

In this passage, Cobb broadened his discussion to include the legal status of free blacks in Georgia. He argued that free blacks possessed the same status as slaves, which nearly fits with the description of the freed slaves at Rome. Such Roman freed slaves, while in theory not contractually bound to slavery, often acted as an agent of his or her patron. They depended on their “former” master, and this restriction often appealed to Roman slaveholders.¹⁸⁶ On free blacks in Georgia, Cobb wrote the following:

He [black freedmen] occupies in such a case the position of freedmen of Rome (*liberti* or *libertini*), before the right of citizenship was conferred upon them. They were capable of all those rights founded on the *jus natural* and *jus gentium*, but not political rights or those appertaining to citizenship. They were as to these in the same condition with alien friends (*peregrini*)... Hence, the penal slave code usually embraces the free negro. They occupy, therefore, a position very similar to that of

¹⁸⁵ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 313.

¹⁸⁶ See Buckland, *The Roman Law of Slavery*, 56-102; 182-233; James A. Harrill, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 55.

the class of freedmen in Rome known as *dediticii*, whose condition was but slightly removed from that of the slave.¹⁸⁷

Here, Cobb expanded his discussion to include a free status at Rome during the imperial period, which modern scholars call Junian Latinity. Cobb recognised the difference between formal manumission and the status given to the Junian Latins, and he equates free blacks with these ancient informally manumitted slaves. He wanted free blacks to ideally have the same status as their ancient Roman semi-servile counterparts, a point that will be explored in more detail in the section on the Penal Code.¹⁸⁸ The fourth Article of the Civil Code detailed statutes for run-away slaves, their recapture, and their sale. Slaves fleeing captivity was problematic for many slave systems throughout history. This part of the code established a legal premise to address this issue and help prevent further occurrences in Georgia.

The fourth section of the Code focuses on the Penal Laws (see chart 1 above) and consisted of five articles categorised into the following parts:

Chart 6

| |
|-------------------------|
| 1. General principles |
| 2. Capital offences |
| 3. Offences not capital |
| 4. Trail of offences |
| 5. Bail – when allowed |

The Penal Laws applied to the entire black population within Georgia, and, therefore, acted to discriminate between black free persons and whites. In the Penal Laws, Cobb set out by establishing definitions and provisions, which the following text reflects:

4692. All definitions of the Penal Code, so far as the same are applicable to offences committed by slaves and free persons of color, shall be held and taken as embraced and made a part of this legal Code. 4693. The age or capacity, and the exceptions as to insane persons and idiots, the provisions as to drunkenness, misfortune, or accident, and crimes committed under fear or threats, shall be held applicable to slaves and free persons of color.¹⁸⁹

This excerpt clearly suggests that Georgia state officials intended to draft a separate penal code for its black population, making these articles less about the nature of slavery

¹⁸⁷ Finkelman and Hall, eds., Thomas R.R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, 313-315.

¹⁸⁸ Whether Cobb knew to make such distinctions is debatable. See Roth, *By the Sweat of Your Brow*, 91-120 for discussion on the Junian Latins.

¹⁸⁹ GSLC 4.3.1.4692-4693 (1861: 916).

and reflect more on Southern racial bias. Under this lens, no differentiation existed between free blacks and slaves, yet for a state seeking to limit its manumission rates, this information brings into focus its sizable population of free blacks. The 1860 Census indicates the entire state population of Georgia was 1,059,453 – consisting of both blacks and whites. We know too from this census that the population ratio between blacks and whites was nearly 1:1 – so, when broken down Georgia consisted of 595,088 whites; 462,198 black slaves; 2,167 free blacks.¹⁹⁰ In contrast, the small population of free blacks versus the slave population in Georgia illustrates the restrictive laws placed on manumission.¹⁹¹

If the Civil War never occurred and the Confederacy continued many states needed to implement similar laws for their servile population.¹⁹² By the outbreak of the Civil War, the number of black slaves in the South neared 4,000,000 and a population of this size required a legal mandate. The efforts of Cobb (along with his colleagues Clark and Irwin) equip modern scholars with insights on the legal methodology that emerged within Georgia. This also foregrounds Cobb's position as a Southern jurist and illustrates his advocacy for slavery. In sum, this section bridges the gap between the ideas presented in the *Law of Negro Slavery* and the impact they possessed over the slave laws in the legal code. As written in the original document, the laws do not indicate the influence of classicism, but when read together we can see that some of Cobb's inspiration for Southern slave law originated in the Greco-Roman world – even if Cobb's ingenuity represents a manipulated or misunderstood approach.

¹⁹⁰ See 1860 Census Records for the United States, Georgia index.

¹⁹¹ For discussion on Southern forms of manumission see Ronald Findlay, "Slavery, incentives, and manumission," *Journal of Political Economy* 83, (1975): 923-34; Shawn Cole, "Capitalism and Freedom: Manumissions and the Slave Market in Louisiana, 1725-1820," *Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 4 (2005): 1008-27; Tewel, *A Self-Evident Lie*, specifically ch.4 and ch.5.

¹⁹² For discussion on the development of slave law in the Americas see Watson, *Slave Law in the Americas*; for a contrasting view with Roman common law see Watson, *The Spirit of Roman Law*; Mark V. Tushnet, *Slave law in the American South: State v. Mann in history and literature* (Lawrence, KS.: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

Conclusions

This chapter pioneers the way for what will develop into a thesis focused on five figures from the American South who utilised classicism as a support mechanism for their pro-slavery literature. Beyond the interesting nature of this topic, why should we care; how does my thesis relate to modern scholarly discussion on the antebellum United States; does exploring this aspect of pro-slavery provide us with new insights on American history? Well, using this chapter on Cobb as a reference point, we can see that he constructed his literature around classical themes. From manipulation to genuine discussions regarding identical ideologies between Greco-Roman and Southern black slavery. This chapter has shown the importance of classicism in Cobb's literature, which also brings to the fore the centrality of classicism in antebellum America and its penetration into their culture. We can refer back to Winterer's thesis in the *Culture of Classicism* and the other modern works which focus on classicism in America, as discussed above. My thesis takes this idea, and as it develops further below, it will show the centrality of classicism in white Southern pro-slavery culture. In my view, Cobb and the authors examined below reflect the overarching permeation of classicism in that society. We know that classicism had a strong impact on the South – where debates frequently raged regarding their status as a reincarnation of Athens or Sparta (or, more largely, as a new Greece or Rome). The chapter on Cobb represents a good spearhead for this thesis because his use of the classical tradition offers a striking and bold contribution to the pro-slavery propaganda machine. Cobb's interpretation of classicism conveniently presents an interesting discourse for the historian and classicist alike. Overall this chapter explores Cobb's literary output and contributions to pro-slavery – specifically *The Historical Sketch*, *The Inquiry*, and the 1860 Georgia State Legal Code. Through these works, Cobb drew a narrative of black slavery in antiquity to show that civilised nations chose black slaves as a matter of preference. In the Roman case, and to expound to his audience that ancient Rome was a representation of a cultural apex, he manipulated and distorted the ancient literary sources to support his claims. He used this classical argument to support his legal research where he again drew on Greco-Roman ideology to advance his fundamental notion that blacks were well suited to their condition as slaves, and the most civilised functioned best as the masterclass.

The *Law of Negro Slavery* and Georgia State Legal Code of 1860 advanced Cobb's argument by claiming that Southern slaveholders represented (even) better versions than their Roman counterparts, because white Southerners recognised the slaves' humanity. Without this stepped classical argument, Cobb lacked the precedent and the sources to develop his peculiar approach to pro-slavery, which understood slavery and slaveholding as a form of civilisation. For modern scholars, his approach to the classical world appears distorted, misunderstood, and fictitious. Nevertheless, he represented a class of pro-slavery writers who utilised classicism to defend their economic mode of production.

The following chapter will focus on the remarkable Louisa McCord. Unlike Cobb, McCord used her intellectual acuity of the Classics to construct a strong platform for her pro-slavery literature. This furthers the idea that classicism permeated the American South, because as the chapter will show, McCord possessed a keen and vast knowledge of Greco-Roman literature. Cobb clearly did too, but McCord utilised classicism in a different way and the following chapter will reflect this view.

**Classical Erudition
and Pro-slavery: Louisa McCord's Journey through
Southern "Womanhood"**

Witness, for instance, the enthusiastic exclamation and high-wrought feelings of the illustrious traveller we have just named, as, when passing Mason and Dixon's line, he first finds himself in a slave State: Declaration of Independence which I read yesterday – pillar of Washington which I looked on today – what are ye?¹⁹³

Introduction

The examination of Thomas Cobb and his literary contributions to pro-slavery in the previous chapter commenced the main body of my research. Overall, given Cobb's often distorted and forced use of classicism, does not paint the best image of the group of white Southerners selected for my thesis. Nevertheless, it remains important to cover the spectrum as much as possible – not all white Southerners manipulated the Classics. Despite his regular manipulations of the ancient sources, Cobb also showed an ingenious approach when he referenced classicism as a source of influence for his development of slave laws in the State of Georgia. Cobb provides a good spearhead for my work, because he shows how advocates of slavery used the Classics as both a blunt object (manipulation) and a strong tool for constructive purposes (black slave laws). Indeed, as an object of manipulation, classicism possessed a strong reputation throughout the South, so its use as a powerful tool for the creation of eloquent literature carried even more weight and panache. This chapter on Louisa McCord will focus more on the eloquent use of the Classics in her pro-slavery literature, and by doing this, we will gain more insights into the mind of one of the greatest women to emerge out of the antebellum South.

In 1842, while he resided in Orangeburg, South Carolina, George Frederick Holmes (the focus of the next chapter) met Louisa McCord for the first time. After their initial

¹⁹³ Lounsbury, ed., *Louisa S. McCord: Social and Political Essays*, 160. Originally from lectures given by the Earl of Carlisle on his travels in America.

meeting, Holmes and McCord cultivated a longstanding friendship. Their relationship included frequent personal correspondence, but they also remarked on each other's individual works, such as critiques of publications and response pieces. For example, in her essay, *Slavery and Political Economy*, McCord outspokenly expressed her disagreement with the critique of Holmes' article "Slavery and Freedom":

Hailing, as we do, with pleasure, the first number of a new series of the *Southern Quarterly*, issuing from the hands of its highly distinguished and talented editor, we must yet put ourselves in arms against a grave error which appears in its pages. This we do with great deference and some hesitation; but, believing firmly in the necessity of giving to the public mind a proper bias on such questions, we deem it the duty of each to give his effort, however feeble, to the working out of the truth. We must, therefore, express our strong dissent from at least a portion of the opinions expressed in the article "Slavery and Freedom," in number for April 1856.¹⁹⁴

As these lines show, although McCord maintained an on-going friendship with Holmes, this fact did not dissuade her from providing a critical commentary on some of his pro-slavery literature. Notably, Holmes drafted a response to McCord's opinion piece, which he intended to publish in the *Southern Quarterly*, but James H. Thornwell, editor of the periodical, discouraged him from pursuing the matter:

It is a gratification that your view of inexpediency of replying to Mrs. McCord is so decided. It accords fully with my judgement and feelings. I had only one apprehension – that Mrs. McCord's friends might represent the attack as unanswerable, and might use it to disadvantage the Review. There is nothing to be gained in a controversy, or the appearance of a controversy, with a lady – *nullum memorabile nomen, foeminea in poena est, nec habet Victoria laudem*. Still less is to be gained in irritating a friend, and one meriting the highest esteem. I am relieved at finding that the absence of necessity for reply permits me to avoid it: and I am glad that you have suppressed my note.¹⁹⁵

The Latin in the above passage translates: "There is no memorable name to be gained in punishing a woman, nor does the victory receive praise".¹⁹⁶ Holmes amended the Latin text to read as follows: "*etsi nullum memorabile nomen / feminea in poena est, habet haec Victoria laudem*" and his translation reads: "Although there is no memorable name to be gained in punishing a woman, *this* victory receives praise".¹⁹⁷ This shows that the

¹⁹⁴ Lounsbury, ed., *Louisa S. McCord: Social and Political Essays*, 423

¹⁹⁵ Lounsbury, ed., *Louisa S. McCord: Social and Political Essays*, 423.

¹⁹⁶ Lounsbury, ed., *Louisa S. McCord: Social and Political Essays*, 423. For original text see Holmes to Thornwell, December 1, 1856, James Henley Thornwell Papers, South Carolina Library).

¹⁹⁷ "Holmes prepared a reply to McCord but was dissuaded by Thornwell from publishing it: "It is the gratification that your view of inexpediency of replying to Mrs. McCord is so decided. It accords fully

relationship between McCord and Holmes, while always formally remaining amicable, experienced some tension – but it also implies that Holmes viewed McCord as an equal and demonstrates her standing among pro-slavery writers.

Both McCord and Holmes frequently used Latin anecdotes, among other references to classical antiquity, in their literature. As just noted, the above passages illustrate McCord's high esteem in Southern society – as emphasised also by Thornwell in his letter to Holmes. These passages too reflect the effective use of Virgil's *Aeneid* as a literary device by two authors of pro-slavery literature. The off-shoot of this, which although focused on McCord's response piece, emphasises that authors of pro-slavery literature could optimise the classical trope (without much manipulation). At this point, my thesis will deviate from looking at how pro-slavery authors manipulated Greco-Roman sources, as illustrated in the previous chapter on Cobb. Rather, much of the remaining material will look at more reputable attempts to grapple with classicism in arguing for the continued existence of slavery. Overall, this chapter will acknowledge some of McCord's contributions to pro-slavery, but it will also explore the particular embrace of classicism in her literature. First, however, the next part of the discourse will briefly review her origins and impact on Southern culture, which will serve to contextualise the entire chapter.

with my judgment and feelings. I had only one apprehension – that Mrs. McCord's friends might represent the attack as unanswerable and might use it to the disadvantage of the Review. There is nothing to be gained in a controversy, or the appearance of a controversy, with a lady – *nullum memorabile nomen. Foeminea in poena est, nec habet victoria laudem*. Still less to be gained in irritating a friend, and one meriting high esteem. I am relieved at finding that the absence of any necessity for reply permits me to avoid it: and I am glad that you have suppressed my note" (Holmes to Thornwell, December 1, 1856, James Henley Thornwell Papers, South Carolina Library). As displayed in the above text, the Latin from the letter translates: "There is no memorable name to be gained by punishing a woman, nor does the victory receive praise." Virgil's text (*Aeneid* 2.583-84), which as we saw Holmes altered, reads: *etsi nullum memorabile nomen/feminea in poena est, habet haec victoria laudem*; "Aeneas, as Troy is being sacked, catches sight of Helen, the cause of the destruction of his city, and meditates killing her: Although there is no memorable name to be gained in punishing a woman, *this* victory receives praise." Lounsbury, ed., *Louisa S. McCord: Social and Political Essays*, 423.

McCord's Origins and White Southern Womanhood

Born on December 3, 1810 in Charleston, South Carolina, Louisa Susanna Cheves was the second daughter and fourth child borne to Langdon Cheves and Mary Elizabeth Dulles. Langdon Cheves, a prominent social figure, served as the director of the Bank of the United States in Philadelphia (where the family resided between 1819 and 1829). In Philadelphia, McCord received an education appropriate for a young woman of her class, and along with her sister, Sophia Cheves, she attended William Grimshaw's school for young ladies. At the academy, the young ladies received tutoring in French, Italian, history, music, astronomy and the "related cultural graces that constituted the light academic course option her father considered appropriate for his daughters".¹⁹⁸ Throughout her formative years, McCord developed a passion for mathematics – for example, from about the age of ten she would often complete the mathematical assignments given to her brothers by their private tutor. In addition to this, McCord had a curious personality, and began concealing herself in the household study during her brothers' daily lessons. Langdon Cheves eventually discovered his daughter, but upon his realisation of her keen interest, he concluded that "a girl with such a love of knowledge should have every opportunity to perfect herself not only in mathematics, but also in other branches [of education]".¹⁹⁹

In 1829, the family left Philadelphia and moved back to Charleston. In South Carolina, Langdon Cheves had renown as a wealthy planter, owning 300 slaves spread across four plantations. The family's personal holdings and connections with the elite situated them within the Southern planter aristocracy. In 1830, McCord's grandmother, Sophia Dulles, liquidated her servile labour force and divided the assets among her granddaughters: Louisa received 40 slaves. Unlike her sisters, however, McCord had yet to marry, so ownership of these slaves provided her with an unusual level of financial security and independence. In 1833, her father purchased a small tract of land adjacent to his plantation, Lang Syne, and relocated her slaves to this part where they remained

¹⁹⁸ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 253.

¹⁹⁹ Richard C. Lounsbury, ed., *Louisa S. McCord: Poems, Drama, Biography, and Letters* (Charlottesville, VA.: University Press of Virginia 1996), 235-241; Leigh Fought, *Southern Womanhood and Slavery: A Biography of Louisa McCord, 1810-1879* (The University of Missouri Press, 2003), 28.

under the supervision of her brother-in-law.²⁰⁰ Little other evidence remains of her life during the 1830s, but her experiences throughout the decade apparently left her with a cynical perspective on the status of the “Southern belle”.²⁰¹ As already shown in brief above, McCord’s writing included discussions on politics, economics, slavery, and women’s suffrage, even though social issues of this magnitude normally did not receive attention from female authors. But, liberal women, such as McCord or Harriet Beecher Stowe, went against the norm and wrote opinion pieces on these more “masculine” topics.

Back to her private life, Louisa Cheves married David James McCord in 1840. Shortly after the marriage Langdon Cheves deeded Lang Syne along with 200 slaves to Louisa.²⁰² She retained possession of the plantation: importantly, Lang Syne, nor its servile labourers, ever came under the ownership of David McCord, reflected in this excerpt from his will:

I must state in the first place that I own in my own right no other property real or personal than Two Bonds due to me . . . The property of Lang Syne, real and personal, as well as that in Columbia is not mine, but my wife’s . . . I wish it to be understood in case of my death and a balance should appear for or against me, it is in fact, not mine, but my wife’s, Louisa S. McCord, and she is to receive the balance or pay the debt . . . I owe no debts whatsoever.²⁰³

The reason for this is straight forward: prior to their marriage, Langdon and Louisa presented McCord with a contract, and forced him to sign against any future claims on the family’s property. The contract, however, permitted McCord to borrow against the worth of Lang Syne, so possibly he intended to buy his own land elsewhere. Beyond serving as a notable politician in South Carolina, McCord never officially achieved planter status, but he did oversee the operation of Lang Syne until his death in 1855.²⁰⁴ He ensured its smooth operation, and when their son, Langdon Cheves McCord reached adolescence, David McCord educated him in plantation management.²⁰⁵ Louisa, with much help from her husband, zealously managed Lang Syne, but in the extract from his

²⁰⁰ Fought, *Southern Womanhood and Slavery*, 64-65.

²⁰¹ Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 253.

²⁰² McCord remained in sole possession of the property until 1870, at which point she sold Lang Syne including all other landholdings owned by the family.

²⁰³ Fought, *Southern Womanhood and Slavery*, 90. See the Will of David James McCord (dated February 21, 1854).

²⁰⁴ O’Brien, *All Clever Men, Who Make Their Way*, 338; Fought, *Southern Womanhood and Slavery*, 89.

²⁰⁵ Fought, *Southern Womanhood and Slavery*, 93.

will, he clearly emphasised that Louisa, through her property, financially supported the family. Considering the period, this document vividly portrays the inverted social roles in the marriage, which, again, characterised Louisa's position as atypical. Nevertheless, the two shared a passionate connection, and when David McCord died suddenly in 1855, Louisa fell into a deep depression.²⁰⁶

McCord, far from being branded as a "Southern belle", in fact never intended to associate herself with this social role. Her attitude towards the characterisation of Southern women possessed two significant underlying causes. First, during her adolescence, she spent a considerable amount of time in the company of her father's political friends. Through this exposure, McCord enriched her understanding of current events, American political culture, and slavery. This would later help McCord develop a passionate Southern patriotism, which she often personified in her pro-slavery literature. The second reason relates to her level of education. Consider too that during the antebellum period Southern female academies and colleges flourished under religious leadership.²⁰⁷ As mentioned, after her schooling at William Grimshaw's academy, McCord's education took a different direction. Regarding these female academies, some of the institutions did offer an advanced curriculum, although it remains unclear how many young women took advantage of this. Throughout their academic careers, women could have expected to receive instruction in modern languages, but in addition to this, might have attended classes in science, philosophy, grammar, literature, mathematics, history and geography, religion, and so forth. Some female institutions did offer courses rooted in the classical tradition, including comprehensive instruction in Latin and Greek. The Classics, however, did not develop into a popular educational subject for women, whereas modern languages and a light academic course option represented the norm. Men, on the other hand, pursued the Classics along with the intense study of both Greek and Latin.²⁰⁸ Through her education and classical training, McCord comprehensively read both Latin and Greek, while she also possessed an adequate amount of knowledge

²⁰⁶ O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 209.

²⁰⁷ Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 256.

²⁰⁸ Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 256.

on the ancient world (a direct result of the “masculine” education provided by her father): another indication of the uniqueness of her situation.

The level of education McCord received throughout her early life documents her keen intellect, while this also illustrates her negative attitude towards the prescribed social roles for women. This unique situation generated a very powerful pro-slavery voice in the literary output of McCord. The following section of this chapter will therefore focus on her classical contributions to the pro-slavery argument; this part will determine where McCord belongs in relation to Southern pro-slavery. The chapter will also explore how classicism played a role in defining her literary output.

McCord’s Classical Approach to Pro-Slavery

As mentioned above, Langdon Cheves provided his daughter with a higher education, which included instruction in Latin, Greek, and the Classics. More broadly, this schooling provided McCord with the opportunity to use her knowledge of the ancient world to strengthen her pro-slavery argument. In the discussion that follows, the chapter will map out McCord’s pro-slavery theses in relation to her use of ancient Greek and Roman literature. The examination of McCord’s literary output will show how and why she used these ancient sources to better support her arguments.

In her social and political essays, McCord often explored the strife occurring within antebellum America; through these papers, she illustrated the growing schism between the North and South. As an outspoken critic of The Declaration of Independence, McCord suggested this “pillar of the American government” did not represent both Northern and Southern political interests, as the following quotation shows:

Our negro, for instance, feels by instinct that his condition is suited to his powers; and would, but for mischievous interference, never seek, never wish to change it. Intellectual strength, conscious of the power and right of self-government, can no more be crushed, than could the fiery Pegasus be broken to plough and wagon. The Declaration of Independence, was then, a great and noble act; but never was a greater or more mischievous fallacy contained in six unlucky words, than the blundering sentence, ‘all men are born equal and free.’ No man is born free. What is freedom, but the power of exercising a will? The right and ability to act independently of the dictates and control of others? Will and man contend that the infant ‘mewling and puking in its nurse’s arms’ is a free agent? Or the school-boy, ‘creeping like a snail, unwillingly to school?’ The madman or the drivelling idiot –

what law can make free agents of them? Here, we will no doubt be answered, is a subjection instituted by the order of nature, for the regulation and benefit of the feeble and uninformed intellect.²⁰⁹

Naturally, in her critique of the Declaration, McCord referenced the laws of nature, because this important concept arose frequently in both pro-slavery and abolitionist works. As the antebellum period progressed, the relationship between natural law and the pro-slavery argument intensified, especially as free wage labour emerged at the forefront of the debate. In chapter 2 we saw McCord's position that the Founding Fathers' did not consider slaves within their discussions on freedom, instead she suggested that freedom in the Declaration possessed a deeper meaning. Even though she removed slaves from the dialogue, McCord warned that free men and women could potentially be deceived by the fallacy represented in the Declaration. Furthermore, McCord claimed the realisation of true freedom will exist only after men and women exercise their own sense of free will. In this, McCord acknowledged that a deeper understanding of "freedom" needed further consideration within discussions on the Declaration. Based on this, she provided us with a definition for pre-Civil War American diversity (i.e. black and white slavery).

The passage also draws on Aristotle's theory on natural law, specifically when McCord discussed the idea of exercising free will.²¹⁰ She concluded that any oversight regarding the definition of black slaves in relation to natural law assumed that "in their estimation" black slaves "did not represent men" of equal standing.²¹¹ To better explain black inferiority, McCord used the writings of the famous faculty member at Harvard University, Louis Agassiz. Agassiz's research primarily focused on zoology and geology, but his views on black inferiority are well reflected in the following passage:

This compact continent of Africa exhibits a population which has been in constant intercourse with the white race, which has enjoyed the benefit of the example of the Egyptian civilisation, of the Phoenician civilisation [or the Carthaginians, my emphasis], of the Roman civilisation, (or the Arab civilisation,) and of all those nations that have successfully flourished in Egypt and in the northern parts of

²⁰⁹ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 170.

²¹⁰ For discussion on Aristotle and natural law see Tony Burns. *Aristotle and Natural Law* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, 2011).

²¹¹ For discussion on the status of slaves in antebellum America see Berlin, *All the Thousands Gone*; Paul Finkelman, *An Imperfect Union: Slavery, Federalism and Comity*. (New Jersey: Lawbook Exchange, 2000); for slaves during the Civil War see Oakes, *Freedom National*; for Southern political culture during the late antebellum and Civil War era see McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*.

Africa, and nevertheless there has never been a regulated society of black men developed on that continent, so peculiarly (particularly) congenial to that race. Do we not find, on the contrary, that the African tribes are today what they were in the time of the Pharaohs, (or) what they were at a later period, what they are probably to continue to be for a much longer time? And does not this indicate in this race a peculiar apathy, a peculiar indifference to the advantages afforded by civilised society?²¹²

This passage, taken from McCord's social essay called the *Diversity of Races*, shows that she used Agassiz's interpretations of African culture to better support her position on black inferiority. For McCord, when the Founding Fathers signed the Declaration, the inclusion of black slaves in their assessment "of all men are created equal" did not factor into the equation. The passage from Agassiz fits well in her argument because he proposed that, despite the many great civilisations to influence African culture throughout history, blacks remained unenlightened; McCord, through Agassiz's literature, suggested that black inferiority remained constant throughout antiquity and modernity. McCord explored this argument further and builds upon it by drawing a contrast between the Southern political economy and ancient Rome – discussed in more detail below

McCord wrote many essays, articles, and review pieces in which she expressed the positive impact slavery had on the Southern economy. She strongly believed the institution of slavery acted to civilise blacks, and this point will develop more clearly as this section progresses. McCord, among many other white Southerners, perceived Greece and Rome as model societies for their eventual Confederacy. This thinking is evident for instance in *Separate Secession*: "They were but the agents of a similar power, pushed to a further extreme. Let us here, once and for all, disclaim any wish to cast the taint or shadow of a doubt upon the sincerity of men whose zeal, alone, we regard as their stumbling-block. They love their State, but *qui amat non semper amicus est*. Their love is death".²¹³ The passage is best contextualised by reference to this excerpt from the same essay:

²¹² Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 172. Originally from Agassiz, *Diversity of Origin* (1850), 143.

²¹³ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 206. Lounsbury reports the original Latin text appears as follows: *Nunc enim amas me, amicus non es. 'Quid ergo? haec inter se diversa sunt?' immo dissimilia. Qui amicus est amat; qui amat non utique amicus est; itaque amicitia semper prodest, amor aliquando etiam nocet*. For a contemporary translation see: Seneca, *Epistles* 35. (trans.) John Selby

They have the courage of that Aemilius who, at Cannae, after vainly striving to check the hot zeal of an imprudent colleague [Gaius Terentius Varro], when that colleague had, in spite of all remonstrances, made such a disposition of his troops as completely to place himself in the power of the enemy, was yet ready to die nobly, in the desperate struggle, brought on by the headlong rashness of another. While the boastful Varro fled from slaughter consequent upon his own obstinate folly, Aemilius died upon the field. ‘My part is chosen,’ exclaimed the expiring hero when urged to flight. ‘My part is chosen. Go tell the Senate, from me, to fortify Rome against the approach of the conqueror.’²¹⁴

McCord wrote *Separate Secession* (a political essay which argued in favour of South Carolina’s secession from the Union) as a response piece for the Southern Rights Association of South Carolina convention. The association met in Charleston and debated over whether South Carolina should secede without support from other Southern states. McCord, who favoured secession, displayed outrage at the initial decision by politicians not to secede. The passage which borrows a quote from Seneca’s *Epistle 35* reflects her disappointment, although as the essay progresses, she continued to scorn these politicians. For this we turn to the above passage, in which McCord depicted a scene from the Battle of Cannae (216 BC), which occurred during the Second Punic War. Her use of the Battle of Cannae as a literary trope adds a historical narrative to the work and she fundamentally transformed a negative aspect of Roman history into a favourable interpretation.²¹⁵

In the first excerpt discussed here, McCord utilised a phrase from Seneca’s *Epistle 35* and when translated it reads: He who loves, is not always a friend. Throughout the dialogue, Seneca urged his friend to make progress, so they could enjoy a true friendship, while appealing to his friend’s affection.²¹⁶ In the dialogue, Seneca commented that to achieve this a “constancy of one’s desires” must be realised.²¹⁷ In the essay, McCord claimed that the politicians and statesmen involved in the Southern

Watson (London and New York: D. Appleton, 1851). The translation of the Latin in this text mirrors closely to that of Lounsbury.

²¹⁴ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 215. McCord sources Livy 22.45-49 and Plutarch’s *Life of Fabius Maximus* 14-16

²¹⁵ The Battle of Cannae – fought in 216 BC during the Second Punic War (218-201 BC) saw Hannibal and the Carthaginians win a decisive victory over the Roman republic.

²¹⁶ See Seneca, *Epistles 35*. (trans.) John Selby Watson (London and New York: D. Appleton, 1851)

²¹⁷ Mark Davies. “Living with Seneca Through his Epistle. *Greece and Rome* 61, no.1, (2014), 75. “*Qui amicus ... amicus est*: Seneca generalises in a chiasmic contrast between the one *qui amat* and the *amicus*: all friends love, but not all who love are friends. Seneca does not specifically say he is speaking of true friendship, but the contrast rests on such a distinction.”

Rights Association convention loved their state, but she condemned the unwillingness of the politicians to vote in favour of secession. Furthermore, McCord implied that the decision not to secede went against Southern patriotism, because the preservation of slavery, and more broadly the Southern way of life, represented the only way forward.

McCord followed up with the excerpt on the Battle of Cannae and she identified with the politicians who publicly supported South Carolina's secession from the Union. She provided these men with praise and she highlighted her support by comparing their courageous spirit to the bravery displayed by Lucius Aemilius Paullus.²¹⁸ Both excerpts portray her views on South Carolina's secession, and she positioned herself as a stark opponent of the politicians who claimed to "love" their state without recourse to secede. In contrast to this, McCord gave high praise to the politicians who publicly supported secession, she also compared these statesmen with a "fierce and brave Roman general", who, "did not crumble in the face of imminent danger".²¹⁹ McCord's portrayal displays Paullus, who stood up against all odds in the face of adversity, in comparison to his counterpart Varro, who initially displayed "hot zeal ... and headlong rashness", but fled from the battle. McCord used this narrative to display the differences between the politicians who supported secession, and those who did not. The next part of this chapter will build on this discussion and will focus on a passage which exemplifies how McCord drew upon Greek mythology in her response essay to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

McCord began her response essay on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with a reference to the ancient Greek myth of King Sisyphus:

Truly it would seem that the labour of Sisyphus is laid upon us, the slaveholders of these southern United States. Again and again have we, with all the power and talent of our clearest heads and strongest intellects, forced aside the foul load of slander and villainous aspersion so often hurled against us, and still, again and again, the unsightly mass rolls back, and heavily as ever, fall the old refuted libels, vamped, remodelled, and lumbering down upon us with all force, or at least impudent assumption, of new argument... We, too, have studied our mythology,

²¹⁸ The consuls Gaius Terentius Varro and Lucius Aemilius Paullus commanded the Roman forces during the Battle of Cannae 216 BC. See Polybius. 3.106-18; Dexter Hoyos, *Mastering the West: Rome and Carthage at War* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 97-126.

²¹⁹ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 209.

and remember well, that aforesaid Sisyphus was condemned to his torment for the sins of injustice, oppression, and tyranny.²²⁰

McCord does well to incorporate the myth of Sisyphus, and her reference clearly attempted to rebuke Stowe's anti-slavery rhetoric. As an active abolitionist, Stowe used *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a springboard for an attack against Southern slavery.²²¹ Published in 1852, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* portrayed Southern slavery as an evil institution that promoted sexual abuse, senseless beatings, and murder.²²² The work received critical acclaim from international audiences and garnered many negative opinions on Southern slavery. Not only did Stowe manage to chastise the white Southerners who defended slavery, but she successfully unmasked the grotesque economic system in the process.²²³

Uncle Tom's Cabin struck a strong blow against slavery and the ratified Fugitive Slave Law (part of the Compromise of 1850). In response to this, McCord crafted an allegorical message derived from the ancient myth of King Sisyphus. The gods in ancient Greek mythology condemned Sisyphus for trickery, and as his eternal punishment, he had to push an immense boulder up a mountain. A futile and cyclical task, because the boulder constantly rolled back towards the bottom of the hill.

McCord's use of the myth alluded to the increasing tensions between abolitionist and pro-slavery activists, which is further reflected in this:

Boldly, however, before God and man, we dare hold up our hand and plead 'not guilty'. Clearly enough do we see through the juggle of this game. It is no hand of destiny, no fiat of Jove, which rolls back upon us the labouring bulk. There is an agent behind the curtain, vulnerable at least as ourselves; and the day may yet come when, if this unlucky game cease not, the destructive mass shall find another

²²⁰ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 245. More accurately, "Sisyphus, King of Corinth, suffered for insulting the gods (*hubris*). Sentenced to die for betraying one of Zeus' love affairs, Sisyphus instructed his wife Merope to refuse his body a proper burial. In the Underworld, he persuaded Hades to permit him to visit earth, so that he might punish Merope for her impiety before returning to the Underworld. Hades agreed; Sisyphus then was careful never to punish Merope. But when he came to die of old age, Hades had not forgotten the trick and sentenced Sisyphus to eternally roll up a hill, a boulder, which at the summit, eternally rolls back down again".

²²¹ This is reflected in the sales the book amassed within the first year of being published; 10 000 within the first week (U.S.); 300 000 within the first year (U.S.); 1.5 million within the first year (G.B.).

²²² The negative sides of slavery that Stowe stressed is also shown in the issue over run-away slaves. For Fugitive Slave Law see Kenneth Stampp, *America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 15-46; Rodriguez, *Slavery in the United States: A Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopaedia*; Stanley W. Campbell, *Slave Catchers: Enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law* (Chapel Hill, NC.: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

²²³ Larry J. Reynolds, *Righteous Violence: Revolution, Slavery, and the American Renaissance* (Athens, GA.: The University of Georgia Press, 2011).

impetus, and crush beneath its unexpected weight the hand that now directs it, we scarce know whether in idle wantonness or diabolic malice.²²⁴

Naturally *Uncle Tom's Cabin* received negative commentary from white Southerners, although for McCord, the work represented yet another abolitionist contribution which sought to cast a false shadow over Southern slavery. From her perspective, the scenes depicted by Stowe created a literary fallacy, but Stowe developed most of her narrative from the testimony provided by run-away and fugitive slaves.²²⁵ Throughout the essay McCord argued that, "Nothing new [appears] in these volumes. They are, as we have said, only the old Sisyphus rock, which we have so often tumbled over, tinkered up, with considerable talent and cunning, into new shape, and rolled back upon us".²²⁶ As mentioned, the myth illustrates a never-ending cycle, but McCord does not frame the pro-slavery argument as Sisyphean. Rather, her allegorical message emphasised that her contemporaries would not back down from the literary output of abolitionists. Instead, McCord argued that authors of pro-slavery literature would continually craft sophisticated defences to combat anti-slavery rhetoric. The Sisyphean task represented the constant struggle between the abolitionist and pro-slavery arguments – neither side willing to admit defeat. Yet, her literature indicates a steadfast demeanour, which illustrated that she had no intentions of backing down from the debate. In my view, McCord's allegorical message and reference to Sisyphus in this instance does indeed represent a constant cycle: one side strikes a blow and the other responds. The message from McCord indicates that fighting for a cause represents the true hardship – a cause she passionately believed in!

The next part of this chapter will shift focus away from ancient Greek polytheism and will examine how McCord incorporated the Bible into her review of *Uncle Tom's*

²²⁴ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 246.

²²⁵ *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sparked a literary response movement in the South, which is referred to as anti-Tom literature. For example, William Gilmore Simms. *Sword and the Distaff: Fat, Fair, and Forty. A Story of the South* (Philadelphia, PA.: Lippencott, Grambo, and CO., 1853), arguably one of the more popular pieces of anti-Tom literature. Other notable examples include: Mary Henderson Eastman, *Aunt Phillis's Cabin* (Philadelphia, PA.: Lippencott, Grambo, and CO., 1852); Caroline Lee Hentz, *The Planter's Northern Bride* (Philadelphia, PA.: T.B. Peterson, 1854); Robin W. Winks, "The Making of a Fugitive Slave Narrative: Josiah Henson and Uncle Tom: A Case Study." in *The Slave's Narrative* Charles T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 113-133; suggests that white Southerners published at least twenty-five anti-Tom novels between 1852 and 1861.

²²⁶ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 246.

Cabin. We briefly looked at the use of religious scripture in chapter 2, which discussed how pro-slavery authors utilised advantageous evidence from the New Testament (itself a product of the Mediterranean under Roman rule) in their literature. McCord drew an interesting contrast between Paul's Letter to the Romans in her pro-slavery papers, which will add another facet to our understanding of the use of this type of evidence.

Set into the context of the Roman Empire, the growth of Christianity provided McCord with an impetus from the Greco-Roman world to incorporate ancient dimensions further into her pro-slavery argument. Scriptures from the New Testament illustrated early Christian theology, and the portrayal of slavery in the Bible generally provided white Southerners with moral arguments for defending slavery.²²⁷ McCord's use of Paul's Letter to the Romans reflects a unique approach, however. As mentioned, there exist other examples from the Pauline *Epistles*, which explore the concept of slavery more directly, such as Corinthians 1:7, 12-13, 21-24, Ephesians 6:5-9, Philemon 1:10-20.²²⁸

The Pauline *Epistles*, dated to the mid-to-late 1st century AD, circulated during a period when the roots of Christianity cultivated throughout the early Roman Empire. Most white Southerners interpreted biblical scripture without much scrutiny, thus with the endorsement of slavery in the Old and New Testaments, pro-slavery writers often relied on the Bible for support. Abolitionists used broader biblical themes to contradict the religious sanction of slavery.²²⁹ As shown in chapter 2, advocates of pro-slavery normally held the advantage and used the Bible for literal support. This forced

²²⁷ Harrill. *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social and Moral Dimensions*, 183. See also Harrill. *Paul the Apostle: His Life and Legacy in Their Roman Context*.

²²⁸ For passages from these *Epistles* see chapter 1, section 2 (the Religious Defence); Peter Garnsey. *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); James Albert Harrill. "Incentive against Paul (2 Cor 10:10), the Physiognomics of the Ancient Slave Body, and the Greco-Roman Rhetoric of Manhood." In Adela Yarbro Collins and Margaret M. Mitchell (eds.), *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 189-213; Harrill. "The Domestic Enemy: A Moral Polarity of Household Slave in Early Christian Apologies and Martyrdoms." In David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek (eds.), *Early Christian in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmann, 2003), 249-53; Jennifer A. Glancy. *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, MI.: Fortress Press, 2006); Glancy. *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Glancy. *Slavery as a Moral Problem in the Early Church and Today*. (Minneapolis, MI.: Fortress Press, 2011); Roth. "Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus: a Christian design for mastery", 102-130.

²²⁹ Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 173.

abolitionists to use less-effective tactics when undermining the religious endorsement of slavery.

With a brief discussion on the context of Pauline scripture borne in mind we may now shift back into McCord's use of Paul's Letter to the Romans. The passage below, taken from McCord's response essay to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, illustrates a reference to Paul's Letter to the Romans:

Slavery, even in his own land, is his destiny and refuge from extinction. Beautifully has the system begun to expand itself among us. Shorn of the barbarities with which slavery established by conquest and maintained by brute force is always accompanied, we have begun to mingle with it the graces and amenities of the highest Christian civilisation. Have begun, we say, for the work is but begun... Our system of slavery, left to itself, would rapidly develop its higher features, softening at once to servant and master... God created man, "in the image of God created him;" and "though sin came into the world and death by sin," yet is the glorious, though clouded, image still there, and erring man is still a man, and not a devil.²³⁰

This excerpt comes from the conclusion to McCord's essay. The beginning of the passage, which states that "shorn of the barbarities with which slavery established by conquest and maintained by brute force is always accompanied" may reflect a critical assessment of ancient slavery. As shown previously, pro-slavery writers often critiqued ancient Greek and Roman slavery, because the ancients enslaved white labourers. Even though white Southerners respected ancient slaveholding, they nevertheless perceived their own system as superior to all others. McCord reinforced the idea by stating that "we have begun to mingle with it the graces and amenities of the highest Christian civilisation. Have begun, we say, for the work is but begun... Our system of slavery, left to itself, would rapidly develop its higher features, softening at once to servant and master".²³¹

In her discussion, McCord referenced Paul's Letter to the Romans to support her pro-slavery argument, in which, one might call creative ways: "God created man"... "in the image of God created him;" and "though sin came into the world and death by sin, yet is the glorious, though clouded, image still there, and erring man is still a man, and not a devil".²³² Directly, this phrase has nothing to do with slavery, nor does Paul's commentary throughout Romans 5 and 6. In Romans 5:12-18, and later, in Romans

²³⁰ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 279.

²³¹ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 279.

²³² Romans 5:12-13.

6:15-23, Paul drew a comparison between slaves of sin and slaves of righteousness.²³³ Regarding this part of Paul’s letter, Jennifer Glancy states that, “This passage is not *about slaves*. Instead, it is about a theological idea that Paul finds congenial to describe the terms of slavery... While this passage is clearly not *about* slavery (neither for or against it), it depends on the reality of slavery to convey its meanings and... [therefore] reinscribes the relations of slavery”.²³⁴ Glancy interprets the slave metaphor weaved throughout Romans 5 and 6 as a concept attributed to servile submissiveness. In her reference to Paul, McCord contextualised this metaphor to emphasise the development of paternalism in American slaveholding culture. This higher relationship between master and slave, according to McCord, illustrated the best system of slavery to emerge in Christendom. She interpreted the mortal relationship with the divine (i.e. God), described by Paul, as the relationship that existed between master and slave (i.e. inferior vs. superior). McCord paralleled this part of her essay with Paul’s Letter to the Romans, whereby she expressed the “divine” nature of American slavery, exemplified in the following:

We have undertaken the defence of slavery in no temporizing vein. We do *not* say it is a necessary evil. We do *not* allow that it is a temporary makeshift to choke the course of Providence for man’s convenience. It is *not* “a sorrow and a wrong to be lived down.” We proclaim it on the contrary, a Godlike dispensation, a providential

²³³ “Therefore, just as sin came in to the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned – sin was indeed in the world before the law but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgressions of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come. But the free-gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man’s trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free-gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. And the free-gift is not like the effect of the one man’s sin. For the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free-gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the one man’s trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free-gift of righteousness exercise dominion in the like through the one man, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:12-18). “What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But, thanks be to God, that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves of impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. When you were slaves of sin, you were free regarding righteousness. So, what advantage did you then get from the things of which you are now ashamed. The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free-gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”. (Romans 6:15-23).

²³⁴ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 98.

caring for the weak, and a refuge for the portionless. Nature's outcast, as for centuries he appeared to be, he – even from the drawing of tradition, the homeless, houseless, useless negro – suddenly assumes a place, suddenly becomes one of the great levers of civilisation.²³⁵

This passage stresses the superior nature of American slavery, but here, McCord also emphasised the superiority of whites over blacks. Thus, McCord's interpretation of Romans 5 and 6 successfully drew parallels between the biblical passages and slavery. Unlike Paul's metaphor, which used slaves as tools to express the relationship between mortals and the divine, McCord reversed the idea to imply an almost divine relationship between master and slave. Her words apply the trope of slavery, and in the process, she made Paul's metaphor *about* slavery. The next part of this section will look at a passage from McCord's essay *British Philanthropy*, in which she discussed black and white slavery.

The following extract, taken from McCord's essay titled *British Philanthropy*, states the following:

Here again we subject ourselves to the sneers of the reviewer, who, because a common ground of defence with us is to show how much the position of our negro is preferable to that of the white slave of other countries, remarks: "The way that this argument is pushed would seem to imply that *better* must mean always *good*". Truly this is laughable enough. If *better* does not mean always good, it certainly does not mean always *better*; and it would be the part of a madman to abandon *better* because it was not *good*, and to take *worse* instead. It is a most legitimate and strong argument to prove that, however we must acknowledge some faults in a system, there is in casting up of results none other found to surpass it. *Pro optimo est minime malus*.²³⁶

As already mentioned, white Southerners portrayed the idea of "white slavery" as a deplorable condition; enslaving whites was linked with a pro-slavery attack on free wage labour (i.e. industrialism in the North, Great Britain, and so forth). Southern pro-slavery writers did not accept the ancient enslavement of whites (see the previous chapter on Cobb). Rather than accepting white slavery in the Greco-Roman context, pro-slavery authors normally tampered with the ancient literature to reflect a more favourable utilisation of black slavery. White Southerners successfully manipulated modern perceptions of ancient literature, while the power to transform views on industrialism

²³⁵ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 279.

²³⁶ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 309.

and free wage labour developed into a much harder task.²³⁷ Pro-slavery authors, therefore, went on the offensive against economic systems that threatened the continuance of Southern slavery. Beyond this passage, which supports the benefits of black servile labour, McCord included the following phrase from Seneca's *De tranquillitate animi: pro optimo est minime malus*. When translated this excerpt means: "in place of the best man take the one least bad".²³⁸ Exploiting Seneca's words to identify positive aspects of black slavery constitutes a misuse of his work; yet, it remains fair to say that McCord does accurately apply Seneca – the reference fits, despite its abhorrent thematic use. McCord used Seneca to imply that black slavery maintained a better status quo than white slavery (black slavery=a lesser of two evils). In the original text, Seneca wrote, "*In amicorum legendis ingeniis dabimus operam ut quam minime inquinatos adsumamus... Nec hoc praeceperim tibi, ut neminem nisi sapientem sequaris aut adtrahas. Ubi enim itsum invenies quem tot saeculis quaerimus? Pro optimo sit minime malus*". A 19th century translation of the Latin text reads as follows:

So, in choosing our friends, we shall have regard for their character, so that we may appropriate those who are marked with fewest stains. Yet I would not lay down the rule that you are to follow, or attached to yourself, none but a wise man. For where will you find him whom we have been seeking for so many centuries? In place of the best man take the one least bad!²³⁹

De tranquillitate animi has nothing to do with slavery, and throughout the work, Seneca's dialogue contemplated the mental state of his friend Annaeus Serenus. Seneca's dialogue claimed that his friend suffered from having too many doubts about life and the purpose of the work tries to guide Serenus through these difficult issues. Seneca sums up several key points about the dialogue in his final commentary, shown in this:

First, men should make light of human folly and endure it easily. Next, it is more human to laugh at than bewail the problems of life. Furthermore, when men laugh, they entertain some hope for humanity, whereas tears would indicate total pessimism. And finally, he who laughs over the world is nobler-minded than he who weeps.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, 44.

²³⁸ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 309; for a contemporary translation see Seneca, *De Consolatione ad Marciam. De Vita Beata. De Otio. De Tranquillitate Animi. De Brevitate Vitae. De Consolatione ad Polybium. De Consolatione ad Helviam* 7.5. (trans.) George G. Hardingham (London, 1841).

²³⁹ Seneca, *De Consolatione ad Marciam. De Vita Beata. De Otio. De Tranquillitate Animi. De Brevitate Vitae. De Consolatione ad Polybium. De Consolatione ad Helviam*. (trans.) George G. Hardingham (London, 1841).

²⁴⁰ William S. Anderson, *Essays on Roman Satire* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 344.

From this, we can see the dialogue had nothing to do with Roman slavery, therefore, applying it to defend American slavery represents a misleading view of Seneca's literature. But as stated, McCord does satisfactorily apply the phrase "*pro optimo sit minime malus*" to achieve her point that enslaving blacks remained preferential. For her audience, the proper use of Seneca's dialogue possessed no consequence; as shown, the opposite remained true in the previous chapter. At least McCord attempted to frame her use of Roman literature with relative accuracy, and in the process, she displayed her familiarity with Classical Latin.

Turning to McCord's essay on *Slavery and Political Economy*, the selected passage serves to illustrate her claim that slavery – not free wage labour – paved the way for America:

Wealth is studied not to put self-interest above morals and religion, not to bid it clash with duty and charity, but to show how all work together in beautiful concord for man's improvement and progress. "When" says our reviewer, "we see political economists so blinded by narrow aims as to ignore or be ignorant of the more urgent wants of society than those embraced in their special investigations, and also of the real effects of the contrasted systems, we are strongly inclined to apply to their science, especially when the attempt is made to carry it rigidly into practice, the words of the last of the Roman poets: *Blanda quidem vultus, sed qua non taetrius ulla: Ultrices fucata genas, et amicta dolosis Illcebris, torvos auro circumlinit hydros.*" Now what does this mean? We say the most urgent wants of society are precisely those which fall under the investigation of Political Economy. It is essentially the science of society, or, as it has been sometimes termed, "social science." The contrasted systems of slavery and free labour are now for the first time, as we have already remarked, brought before its tribunal... It is for us now to show Political Economy in its connexion with slavery. It is for us to prove that the general weal [prosperity] of mankind is forwarded by slavery as now established in America.²⁴¹

Beyond McCord's opinions regarding slavery, the passage draws on a text from the late Roman imperial poet, Claudian.²⁴² The Latin translates, "Fair, indeed, is her face but

²⁴¹ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Political and Social Essays*, 435.

²⁴² Claudian, *On Stilicho's Consulship 2-3. Panegyric on the Sixth Consulship of Honorius. The Gothic War. Shorter Poems. Rape of Proserpina*. (trans.) James Henry (Trinity College, Dublin, 1834); "Claudius Claudianus, Latin poet of great affairs, flourished during the joint reigns (394-5 AD onwards) of the brothers Honorius (Emperor in the West) and Arcadius (in the East). A native of Greek Alexandria in Egypt, he was of Roman descent, though his first writings were in Greek, and his pure Latin may have been learned by him as a foreign language. About 395 CE he moved to Italy (Milan and Rome) and though really a pagan, became a professional court-poet composing for Christian rulers works which give us important knowledge of Honorius's time. Through the patronage of Stilicho or through Serena, Claudius in 404 married well in Africa and was granted a statue in Rome. Nothing is known of him after 404. In his poetry are true poetic as well as rhetorical skill, command of language, polished style,

none is fouler than within; dyed are her cheeks; clothed about is she with treacherous lures, and deadly vipers hide them in her golden hair".²⁴³ McCord used Claudian's description of Circe, the ancient Greek goddess of magic, to emphasise the deceptions of free wage labour.²⁴⁴ On the surface, like Claudian's depiction of Circe, free wage labour had the potential to emerge as an appealing economic system, but McCord used the reference to reveal the fallacy of industrialism.²⁴⁵ She applied the phrase from Claudian to present her audience with an allegory between free wage labour and slavery. Here, too, once more McCord well utilised her knowledge of Latin texts in her pro-slavery literature, even if this example illustrates an allegorical meaning in its original usage. The final part of this section will look at one further aspect of McCord's work to fully comprehend her contribution in the usage of classicism in respect to pro-slavery.

First, it remains important to recognise the strong personal attraction that some aspects of antiquity had for McCord. This encouraged her use of classicism during her intellectual observations of Southern, and more broadly American, culture. McCord's essays represent significant examples for modern scholars who study Southern slavery. Beyond her explicit pro-slavery works, she used her knowledge of the Classics to also elaborate in broader terms on the South – most notably her creation of a five-act Roman themed play, *Caius Gracchus* (published in 1851). McCord wrote *Caius Gracchus* to sketch her Roman heroine, Cornelia of the Gracchi. For McCord, and in fact many white Southerners, a representation of a strong and virtuous Cornelia symbolised Roman motherhood.²⁴⁶

diversity, vigour, satire, dignity, bombast, artificiality, flattery, and other virtues and faults of the earlier 'silver' age in Latin".

²⁴³ Claudian, *On Stilicho's Consulship* 2-3. *Panegyric on the Sixth Consulship of Honorius. The Gothic War. Shorter Poems. Rape of Proserpina* 2.43-47.

²⁴⁴ Claudian, *On Stilicho's Consulship* 2.135-37 describes Luxury as a Fury in disguise.

²⁴⁵ Claudian, *On Stilicho's Consulship* is broken up into three books, and Claudian delivered the first book of his panegyric of Stilicho's consulship in January 400 AD, subsequently, books two and three came shortly after. Claudian portrayed the essence of the political landscape under Honorius in poetic fashion, while illustrating Stilicho's rise to prominence within the imperial court. For Claudian see, Alan Cameron. *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Clarendon, 1970); Michael H. Barnes, "Claudian" in John Miles Foley (ed.) *A Companion to Ancient Epic* (Blackwell, 2005), 538-550; For Stilicho see, Thomas S. Burns, *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome: A Study of Roman Military Policy and the Barbarians, ca. 375-425 A.D.* (Indiana University Press, 1994), 183-247; See also Harper. *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275-425*.

²⁴⁶ Lounsbury, *Louisa S. McCord: Poems, Drama, Biography, and Letters*, 170. "Cornelia was the daughter of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus, the Roman general who defeated the Carthaginians at the battle of Zama which concluded the Second Punic War. Her maternal grandfather, Lucius Aemilius Paullus, was one of the consuls who commanded the Roman army at the battle of Cannae in 216 BC, in which he was killed. Her husband, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, was twice consul (177 BC and 163

Through this play, McCord created for herself a strong advocate with roots in both classical antiquity and the South. Cornelia, arguably one of the most frequently invoked ancient models of Southern motherhood, helped McCord realise her own social and political ambitions.²⁴⁷ This personification of womanhood, while highly respected in the South, showed that women should remain subordinate to (white) men (including sons): This role model, in other words, allowed McCord a double-coup, and from her view, Cornelia symbolised the ideal balance between intelligence and subordinate womanhood.²⁴⁸ By aligning herself with Cornelia, McCord relieved the anxieties that her role and position caused throughout the male-dominated culture of the South. In my view, this further legitimised her own contribution, making it acceptable for her male contemporaries to approve of, and utilise her writings.

In broad terms, the play illustrates the idealism surrounding republican motherhood, because the ability to raise great men developed into a popular facet of Southern culture. McCord personified herself with Cornelia as a widow who understood the implications of political choices better than the son (in her case: Langdon) who she cherished.²⁴⁹ At the same time, beyond a public statement of her own republican ideals and motherhood, the play was conceived of as a gift precisely for her son Langdon Cheves McCord.²⁵⁰ To this end, McCord included a poem at the beginning of the play, which she dedicated to her son, given here in full:

To My Son: Too young thou art to read a Mother's heart; too young to guess that quenchless fount of love which ever gushes forth in joy and woe, limitless, always. If careworn and sad, by want or sickness bowed almost to earth – or yet if triumphing in life's success, flattered, beloved, admired – the Mother finds (Be she true woman with a woman's heart) no moment when that heart can idly rest from the long love which ever fetters it in bondage to her child. My boy, thine eye someday perchance may fall upon these lines, and catching here the shadow of my love, they soul may guess its fullness, and may feel through every struggle in this changing life, that, like a guardian angel hovering round, to comfort, check – to pity, or to blame, to chide, to hope, to pray, it watching stands, but never to condemn. A Mother's heart might throb itself away in patient woe, might break to end its pang, but never, never could deem her child a thing of vice or shame. God

BC), celebrated two triumphs and was censor in 169 BC". Her learning and cultivation were renowned; her letters, of which some disputed fragments survive, were commended by Cicero, *Brutus* 2.11 and Quintilian 1.1.6.

²⁴⁷ Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 300.

²⁴⁸ Winterer, *The Mirror of Antiquity*, 179.

²⁴⁹ Fox Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 303.

²⁵⁰ Winterer, *The Mirror of Antiquity*, 180.

bless thee, boy and make thee stainless, pure, upright and true, even as my thought
doth paint thee.²⁵¹

During the Civil War, McCord sacrificed a great deal for the South. First, she provided monetary funds to support the Civil War and she also served as president of both the Ladies' Clothing Association and the Soldier's Relief Association. Second, she worked as a nurse for the military hospital at South Carolina College. The ultimate sacrifice, however, came in 1862 after the Battle of Second Manassas, when Langdon Cheves McCord received a fatal head wound and died.²⁵² The above passage illustrates McCord's location in the Southern context well, and by way of the dedication to her son, we can imagine that the personifications of Cornelia and Gaius in the play possess the potential to reflect on McCord's relationship with her son, Langdon. This also highlights another connection between Cornelia and McCord, which may explain the foreboding nature of her choice in drawing on this ancient example, as both lost their sons in defence of the state. As with McCord's use of Paul's Letter to the Romans, as discussed earlier, the play too makes her use of classicism for pro-slavery real.

Conclusions

The examples discussed above demonstrate the importance of classicism in McCord's literature. As this chapter has shown on multiple cases, her papers and essays provide many references to classical antiquity; the examples indicate how she used ancient literature to strengthen her pro-slavery works. In particular, this chapter has shown the different ways in which McCord did this, exemplifying her use of the classical texts on both historical and mythical themes. The examples discussed above provide us with a broad view of her literary output, while at the same time provide an accurate reflection of

²⁵¹ Louisa McCord, *Caius Gracchus*, 16.

²⁵² David James McCord died in 1855. McCord herself was significantly active during the early days of the Civil War and she strongly supported the Confederacy – providing horses, money, and slave labour. She also took upon the presidency of the Soldier's Relief Association, the Ladies' Clothing Association, and served as a matron of the army hospital on the campus of South Carolina College. Her only son, Langdon McCord, perished after suffering fatal injuries at the Battle of Second Manassas. After his death, she continued to support the South, but after the surrender in 1865, rather than pledging allegiance to the United States, she moved to southern Ontario, only returning to Columbia, South Carolina several years later.

the use of classicism in her pro-slavery writings. No doubt, McCord's knowledge of the ancient world makes her a strong candidate for any analysis of classicism and pro-slavery. On the other hand, McCord's peculiar, albeit remarkable, situation as a Southern woman brings a unique historical figure into the discussion. McCord's affiliation with the Gracchi, specifically her association with Cornelia, contains an important personal association with classical antiquity that served to further boost her use of classicism. Yet, despite her taking on a contemporarily masculine role, McCord craftily employed the Classics to find an acceptable female mould – which the discussion on her use of Cornelia has exemplified. As a result, McCord's literary output constituted an important contribution to the defence of slavery, white supremacy, black inferiority, and classical erudition.²⁵³

In this thesis, thus far, we have looked at two individuals from the antebellum era to identify and illustrate various classical approaches to pro-slavery. In these analyses, my focus looks at particular aspects of these authors' approaches. The discussion has included dimensions that show the individual ways they achieved this – such as McCord's use of Cornelia of the Gracchi. Indeed, this one case alone suggests that the Classics represented a significant source and model for McCord. The following chapter, which focuses on George Frederick Holmes, will continue endeavouring to understand the personal motivations of these authors, and to explore more fully my argument that classicism developed into an important component of pro-slavery. In sum, white Southerners utilised Greco-Roman literature and ideologies to build up their own literary output. The chapters on Cobb and McCord have however shown that, despite some overall consistencies, each of the two individuals utilised the Classics in different ways. To continue the discussion and to help us understand more fully the range of approaches of these authors, the thesis will now shift its focus onto George Frederick Holmes. My goal in this chapter will focus particularly on where Holmes' use of classicism fit within the wider framework of Southern pro-slavery.

²⁵³ Winterer, *The Mirror of Antiquity*, 177.

The Unmitigated Southerner: George Frederick Holmes, Pro-Slavery, and Classicism

In the U.S. South there developed the last and most perfectly articulated slave culture since the fall of the Roman Empire. The religion [Christianity] that had begun in and was fashioned by the Roman slave order was to play the identical role eighteen hundred years later in the slave system that was to be Rome's closest cultural counterpart in the modern world. History did not repeat itself; it merely lingered.²⁵⁴

Introduction

The previous chapter noted that both Louisa McCord and George Frederick Holmes maintained a personal friendship throughout the antebellum period. The ramifications of this has little effect on my overall argument, but it tells us that two highly educated individuals communicated with each other, while utilising their knowledge of classicism to defend slavery. As shown personal oddities existed, especially with McCord's use of classicism in her pro-slavery literature. In Holmes' case, his defence of slavery presents an even stranger image, because he migrated to the American South and emerged as a strong advocate of black servile labour. In consequence, Holmes's article, "Ancient Slavery", and the central point of discussion of this chapter, argues against contemporary claims that slavery caused economic and agricultural decline in the Roman world. Some historians during the 19th century suggested this would again happen with modern slaveholding societies. As this chapter will show, Holmes went on the offensive and actively displayed that slavery did not represent a cause of either economic or agricultural decline in the Roman world. In my view, Holmes's article represents a unique piece of pro-slavery literature because it primarily focuses on the Roman world as a real-life model for slavery in the American South. In most cases, white Southerners used classicism as a mainstay for their pro-slavery literature – either by taking inspiration from Greco-Roman ideology or taking quips from ancient literature

²⁵⁴ Paterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 76.

in translation. Holmes instead frames his article from the Roman point of view, shows his audience how slaveholding unfolded there, and how it would most certainly continue developing in the American South. This also provides us, modern historians, with a view into the mind of a white Southerner and his strong connection with the classical world. As seen, Cobb utilised his knowledge of the Classics as a means of manipulation and inspiration; McCord channelled her tenacious spirit into the pro-slavery argument and excelled to incorporate classicism into her literature; on the other hand, Holmes approached pro-slavery with a subdued attitude. He defended the South by advocating the Greco-Roman world more broadly – suggesting that Southern society should proclaim themselves either as a reincarnation of Greece or Rome. This chapter will discuss this in more detail below, but it remains important to note here that popularised debates throughout the South pushed this agenda forward. Holmes’ views on white Southerners seeking ancient Greco-Roman validation only fuelled the fire, but this will provide us with further insight on how classicism permeated the South.

Holmes also stood as an important individual in Southern society. William E. Gladstone summed this up rather eloquently in a eulogy given shortly after Holmes’ death in 1897; in the eulogy Gladstone stated that “[Holmes] possessed one of the most remarkable minds that [Gladstone] had ever known”.²⁵⁵ Holmes’ achievement of a high standing reputation did not follow an easy path, and as this chapter will show, he experienced significant hardships along the way. Holmes relocated to America after spending much of his early life in rural Yorkshire. Despite his tumultuous road to a permanent position at the University of Virginia in his thirty-seventh year, Holmes’ brilliance played a remarkable part in his cultural journey through Southern academia. During his tenure at the University of Virginia, Holmes experienced the burst of classical pedagogy, which quickly spread throughout the South after 1830. During the Civil War, Holmes also bore witness to the near collapse of the University, and the overall decline of the classical college that had once flourished there. He actually developed a melancholy during the Civil War. Many of his students left to join the war effort, which drastically effected his ability to teach. When the Civil War concluded, and the Confederacy fell, Holmes took the polarising experience in stride by using the

²⁵⁵ Richmond *Dispatch*, November 5, 1897.

opportunity to seek out new horizons. Between 1866 and 1885, he taught multiple courses on political science and classical civilisations, while publishing several articles and textbooks. Overall, Holmes represents an important contributor to antebellum pro-slavery culture, adding further weight to the group of white Southerners already examined in this thesis.

On multiple occasions throughout the antebellum era, Holmes wrote articles in the defence of slavery and Southern culture. His arguments focused on the social benefits of servile labour, but he also started developing a sociological theory regarding slavery, which he modelled on the idea of paternalism. Holmes, an academic pioneer of his age, used his knowledge of Aristotle's philosophy to develop a system of sociology which sanctioned a paternalistic slave system. This chapter, however, will focus on his academic training in the Classics and towards Holmes' contribution to the pro-slavery argument in a much broader sense.²⁵⁶ It will concentrate on a discussion of his 1855 article, "Ancient Slavery", in which he utilised knowledge of agriculture in ancient Greece and Rome to defend the Southern slave mode of production. Prior to this, the chapter will outline Holmes's origins and explain how he developed into one of the most prominent intellectuals of the South, thus providing the personal and historical frame for the ensuing discussion of his work.

Holmes' Origins

Holmes, born on August 2, 1820 in British Guiana, from the age of two, lived with his aunt and maternal grandfather in Northern England.²⁵⁷ In England, Holmes received his elementary education at Grange School in Sunderland. During the autumn of 1836 he attended the University of Durham, although he dropped out at the end of his first semester. Early in 1837, Holmes departed for Quebec City, Canada where he resided for just under a year. In 1838, he journeyed to Virginia, and took up an academic position at the school of John G. Lawrence of Caroline County where he taught ancient Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and mathematics. After a short tenure at the school, Holmes

²⁵⁶ Chapter six, which looks at George Fitzhugh, will discuss slavery and sociology in the South.

²⁵⁷ Holmes' father served as Procter to the Vice-Admiralty in Guiana.

moved to Decatur, Georgia to study law. After a few months, William Campbell Preston, who took notice of Holmes' intellect, invited him to Charleston, South Carolina to undertake further instruction.²⁵⁸ On February 15, 1842, Holmes gained admittance to the South Carolina bar, and shortly afterward relocated to Orangeburg, South Carolina and established a legal practice there. During his residency in Orangeburg, Holmes met Louisa McCord, and the two cultivated a strong intellectual relationship – as noted earlier. During this period Holmes developed a dissatisfaction with his legal career, which inspired him to pursue other scholarly interests. He left Orangeburg in 1846, spending the next few years teaching at institutions throughout Virginia, first at Richmond College and second at the College of William and Mary.²⁵⁹ He arrived at Richmond College on January 17, 1846, but his tenure there lasted less than 12 months.²⁶⁰ Holmes found no satisfaction in the rigid curriculum that came with the teaching of ancient languages, so in 1847, he took on yet another academic role at the College of William and Mary. This position focused less on classical erudition and more on politics, but he too resigned from this post within a year. After his tenure at the College of William and Mary, Holmes applied for the presidency of the newly established University of Mississippi and, surprisingly, he was appointed over the favoured Augustus Baldwin Longstreet.²⁶¹ John Newton Waddell reported in his 1891 memoirs that Longstreet's "ministerial character defeated him"; on the other hand "Mr. Holmes was furnished with the most flattering testimonials of accomplished scholarship, and has since held a chair of importance at the University of Virginia".²⁶²

²⁵⁸ For more on Preston see Michael O'Brien, *Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860: An Abridged Version of Conjectures of Order* (Chapel Hill, NC.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), ch.3; Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 252.

²⁵⁹ For history of Richmond College see John Reuben Alley, *University of Richmond* (Charleston, SC.: Arcadia Publishing, 2010) and *The History and Architecture of the University of Richmond, 1834-1977* (United States Department of Interior, 2012); for William and Mary see Wilford Kale, *From Student to Warrior: A Military History of the College of William and Mary* (Williamsburg, VA.: Botetort Press, 2017).

²⁶⁰ Leonidas J. Betts, "George Frederick Holmes: A Critical Biography of a Nineteenth Century Southern Educator," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 76, no.4 (1968): 472-484.

²⁶¹ For Longstreet see M. Thomas Inge (ed.), *Augustus Baldwin Longstreet: A Study of the Development of Culture in the South* (Athens, GA.: The University of Georgia Press, 2010).

²⁶² John N. Waddell, *Memorials of Academic Life: Being an Historical Sketch of the Waddell Family* (Richmond, VA.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1891), 254.

Holmes arrived at the University of Mississippi during the summer of 1848, leaving his wife and two young children at the family plantation in Virginia. Upon his arrival in Mississippi, Holmes, taken aback by his surroundings, described the University campus as a “frontier” setting, as shown in the following passage:

No preliminary arrangements, or suitable preparation had been made. The handsome campus was covered by unsightly stumps of trees, and littered with their branches, for the previously unbroken forest had been cleared for the new buildings. Scaffolding and scantling were scattered all about.²⁶³

Holmes clearly underwhelmed by the state of the campus, and without much experience took on this newly established role in an attempt to forge a path for the University of Mississippi. In his opening address as President, and true to his character, Holmes stated that translations of Greek and Latin texts failed to convey “a thousandth part of the riches imbedded in those languages”.²⁶⁴ Many Southern elite agreed with Holmes’s opinion and wondered how reading translations of ancient texts provided any educational value whatsoever.²⁶⁵ Though he lacked the enthusiasm to teach classical Greek and Latin, Holmes clearly valued the instruction of these languages in relation to understanding ancient texts.

In the autumn of 1848, the University of Mississippi experienced a rough start to its inaugural term – mainly because of a poorly organised governing body. Located within the interior of the state, the campus did not have direct access to major thoroughfares or railroads. This required a considerable amount of manpower to transport the necessary teaching equipment to the campus. Not only did university operations suffer from disorganization during this period, but shortly after the term began, Holmes fell into his usual routine of discontent. James Cabaniss, who wrote a detailed history of the University, reported that Holmes’ character lacked the requirements needed in a university administrator, which he described in the following:

In his manner of dress, he was slovenly, and is reputed not to have looked in a mirror since 1847. He was moreover violently prejudiced and exceedingly iconoclastic toward American heroes and practices. For instances, when he was asked if he were Episcopalian, his answer was unnecessarily tactless: ‘Sir, I was

²⁶³ George Frederick Holmes, “William and Mary College Quarterly”, *Historical Magazine* 2, vol. 3 (1923): 32.

²⁶⁴ George Frederick Holmes, *Inaugural Address, Delivered at the Occasion of the Opening of the University of the State of Mississippi* (Memphis, Tennessee: 1849).

²⁶⁵ Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 260.

born under the allegiance of George III, christened by the Bishop of York, confirmed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. I am a communicant of the Established Church of England, and have an utter contempt for that church in this country.²⁶⁶

Based on this, Holmes's colleagues began to question his abilities, so in March 1849, he returned to Virginia to help in the recovery of one of his children who had fallen severely ill. With criticism of Holmes still looming, shortly after returning to Virginia, he resigned his post.²⁶⁷ Following his unsuccessful tenure at the University of Mississippi, Holmes formally gave up on academia until 1857. During the interim period, he resided at Burke's Garden, in Tazewell County, at the Tanglewood plantation, which belonged to his wife's family.²⁶⁸ This seclusion offered him a significant amount of time for intellectual endeavours, but his domestic life suffered. Holmes, a polished scholar, did not fit the mould for Southern agrarianism, because "as an earner of bread, he was incompetent. As an author, he had critical talents".²⁶⁹ Even Holmes recognised his flaws in Southern slaveholding, as shown in the following:

I have not even a profession engagement of any sort now: for, though a member of the Bar, I practiced law but a few years, and at present am only a farmer of 'Agricola' in the midst of the forests of American – and almost on the outer edge of civilization. I regard this humble and unostentatious, but independent position, as the most favourable that the present age offers, to the free and healthy development of my moral and intellectual powers, and to the unbiased utterance of candid opinions, slowly and conscientiously formed, and often re-examined in the midst of the solitude and peace of the primeval forests.²⁷⁰

Holmes merely expressed contentedness with his situation because the seclusion provided him with time to focus on scholarly pursuits, rather than learning to practice the trade of Southern agriculture.

During his eight-year absence from meaningful employment, Holmes and his family suffered from severe financial uncertainties. He remained unemployed for the duration of this period and did not possess his own property or much money. Fortunately, his wife Lavallette Floyd, through her family, possessed a considerable amount of financial

²⁶⁶ James Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi: Its First One-Hundred Years* (Jackson, Mississippi: The University College Press of Mississippi, 1971), 15.

²⁶⁷ Betts, "George Frederick Holmes", 476.

²⁶⁸ Betts, "George Frederick Holmes", 476.

²⁶⁹ O'Brien, *All Clever Men Who Make Their Way*, 177. During his rural exile, Holmes wrote nearly 70 articles for Southern journals and periodicals.

²⁷⁰ Betts, "George Frederick Holmes", 477. For original source see letter of George Frederick Holmes to Auguste Comte, July 8, 1852, Duke MSS, vol. 1808, 1835-1874.

support and Holmes greatly relied upon this. Despite his personal financial troubles, Holmes experienced significant intellectual growth during this period; publishing nearly 70 articles while sharing regular correspondence with the likes of Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill, and Professor Louis Agassiz of Harvard (who we saw previously).²⁷¹ On the other hand, his domestic life declined, primarily due to his inactive approach to plantation management, which furthered his descent into a penniless existence. In the autumn of 1856, he reconciled with the idea of returning to the academic world and sought a position at the University of Virginia. Initially Holmes did not get the position, so he quickly gave up hope of attaining the post and resolved to relocate elsewhere to find work. On February 17, 1857, Holmes received a letter which stated the following: “Dear Sir, George Holmes, henceforth have been elected to serve at the University of Virginia as Professor of History and General Literature to take effect from and after the 1st of July next”.²⁷²

Shortly after starting at the University of Virginia, Holmes experienced his usual discontent with academic life, but he did not resign from the post. Holmes instead held the position until his death in 1897. As a professor at the University of Virginia, Holmes primarily taught in the subject areas of ancient languages and political economy. During his tenure, he also taught on a few courses on ancient Greek and Roman civilisation. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, in 1843 the University of Virginia had only 33 students enrolled in the Classics, but by the late 1850s the number had grown to 260.²⁷³ The University of Virginia displays a trend which occurred throughout several other Southern institutions as the emphasis on receiving a classical education increased in the South.²⁷⁴

Yet, the Civil War brought about a drastic decrease in student enrolment at the University of Virginia. Attendance during the 1860-1861 academic year saw numbers reach over 600, but these plummeted during the following session when no more than 60

²⁷¹ His correspondence with Professor Louis Agassiz focused on observations Holmes made regarding the local fauna and wildlife surrounding the plantation at Burke’s Garden.

²⁷² Betts, “George Frederick Holmes”, 479.

²⁷³ Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 252.

²⁷⁴ Fox- Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 251. For more on classical education in antebellum America see Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*, 44-99.

students registered.²⁷⁵ Enrolment dwindled further in 1862 when the General Assembly removed professors and students from exemption, and, thus, most prospective students enlisted to fight for the Confederacy. Meanwhile Holmes, left in a void of financial distress and worry for his family, spent most of his time between Charlottesville and Burke's Garden. Despite the few students who remained enrolled, Holmes believed, because of the general exodus of its academic population, the University would collapse. Holmes expressed these concerns in a diary entry during May 1862:

In other countries, even during Civil wars, scholars have continued to pursue their vocations successfully – and to write amidst the thunder of cannon and the conflagration of cities works that have insured immortality to their authors. Is there any room or hope for such employment here? I fear not – there is a fury of war abroad in the land which maddens or consumes everything.²⁷⁶

The situation worsened in 1863, when the visiting board of governors decided to reduce the salaries of the remaining professors and lecturers by over half. Holmes, with his salary reduced to roughly 1,000 dollars annually, also faced severe economic inflation brought on by the war. Holmes once again relied on financial support from his in-laws.

When news of Robert E. Lee's surrender at the Battle of Appomattox on April 9, 1865 reached Holmes at Burke's Garden, he initially expressed uncertainty for the future. Nevertheless, he returned to Charlottesville in the autumn to continue with his teaching duties. For Holmes, the world had changed—intellectual paralysis, confusion, and despair coursed rampant throughout the veins of the Old South—as the following remark shows:

The subversion of all society, the ruin of all industry, the speedy loss of all the fruits of the past accomplishment, the decay of all civilisation, are thus presented to our apprehension... For good or for evil a new birth of time is at hand; a new cycle of the ages is preparing to unroll itself; a new revolution of fate is in prospect.²⁷⁷

Holmes recognised that a general social depression had swept throughout the South, but he also anticipated new horizons. He continued to teach, and in the process, published several textbooks over the ensuing 20 years, ranging from spelling to history. His wife passed away on September 17, 1887; Holmes took her loss severely. He continued as

²⁷⁵ Betts, "George Frederick Holmes", 482.

²⁷⁶ The University of Virginia (vol.1791), George Frederick Holmes Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University.

²⁷⁷ Betts, "George Frederick Holmes", 482.

chair at the University of Virginia, although he took a less active role after her death. On November 4, 1897 Holmes died in Charlottesville and his final request, emblematic of his character, stated that: “I want no funeral ceremonies, no parade, no resolutions, [and] no flowers – but to be forgotten, except in silent memories of the few that have known me”.²⁷⁸ The next section of this chapter will look at one of Holmes’ contributions to the pro-slavery argument, an article he wrote in 1855, titled “Ancient Slavery”. Holmes wrote this article after spending many years at Burke’s Garden plantation, while having regular contact with black servile labourers. As the section will show he deeply intertwined his views on ancient slavery and those on the slave system in the South, which he rooted in both theory and practice.

Holmes, ancient slavery, and the American South

When compared with other authors of pro-slavery literature who embraced classicism in their output, George Frederick Holmes represents a unique individual to examine. Raised in England, Holmes migrated to Virginia in 1838 and from that point began his new life in the American South. Not a traditional slaveholder, nor influenced by Southern culture from a young age, he instead embraced this aristocracy and cotton kingdom. In the South, Holmes interpreted a rebirth of classical Greek and Roman slaveholding practices. For Holmes, ancient Greece and Rome represented societies worthy of idealisation, as shown in the following passage:

We cannot help remembering that slavery formed the basis of the Spartan institutions during the whole period of Spartan ascendancy and heroism; that much of the agriculture, trade commerce. Finance, and manufacturers, were in the hands of slaves during all generations of Athenian triumph and glory; that when Aeschylus composed his tragedies, and Pindar sung his odes, and Thucydides wrote his history, and Plato delivered his divine philosophy, and Demosthenes spoke, and Aristotle mastered, collected, expanded, reformed, and multiplied all knowledge, slavery was universal. The battles of Thermopylae and Salamis, of Plataea and Mycale were fought by slaveholders, and it is not easy to see how slavery degraded the Greeks. It was a senate of slaveowners that the Gaul’s found in the porticoes of Rome; it was slaveowners who conquered the world, legislated for all succeeding

²⁷⁸ Betts, “George Frederick Holmes”, 484.

ages, and laid the broad foundations of modern civilization and modern institutions.²⁷⁹

In the early parts of “Ancient Slavery” Holmes acknowledged that slavery formed the basis of these ancient societies, and in this, he often praised Spartan heroism. Many white Southerners, however, had an issue with the lack of an educational element in ancient Spartan culture. Frederick Porcher, for example, perceived educational practice in Sparta as “an absolute negation of self, and a surrender of the whole person, body and soul”.²⁸⁰ In contrast, white Southerners identified ancient Athens as possessing social, political, and intellectual superiority. This led to a controversy among Southern pro-slavery theorists: Athens or Sparta as a model for Southern society? Popular opinion in the South tended to settle on Sparta, but many also favoured Holmes’ hybrid opinion, “in attributing both the intellect of Athens and the heroism of Sparta to the moral and material effects of their respective systems of servitude”.²⁸¹ Holmes wanted the South to represent the best aspects of both ancient city-states, combining them to form one ubiquitous (or superior) culture. As the article continues, Holmes’ discussion shifts onto ancient Roman civilisation, and here he draws more emphasis on slavery in the wider Greco-Roman context.

As we shift the discussion from ancient Greece to the Roman world, a major point of the debate between abolitionist and pro-slavery arguments begins to emerge: the link between social degeneration, slavery, and free labour. Northern abolitionists argued that slavery caused depopulation, which displaced free labourers. Positions such as these stressed that slavery in the ancient world brought on a significant drop in population, leading to economic unsustainability, and caused the collapse of Greece and Rome. To counter these anti-slavery positions Holmes developed a unique argument and claimed that slavery did not cause depopulation in the ancient world:

It is not true that slavery produced depopulation, or displaced the free labourers in the ancient world. These were concurrent, and perhaps connected phenomena, but slavery was not the prime cause of the evil; it was only a partial effect in common with the other effects of a higher cause... The Peloponnesian, the Theban, the social wars, the Macedonian conquests, and the rivalries of the

²⁷⁹ George Frederick Holmes. “Ancient Slavery”, *De Bows Review* (1855): 617-637.

²⁸⁰ Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 290. For original source see Frederick Porcher, “Political Institutions of Sparta and Athens,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 2 (1856): 457.

²⁸¹ Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Mind of the Master Class*, 291

successors of Alexander; the campaigns of the Aetolian and the Achaean leagues, and the rest of the long series of domestic discords depopulated Greece – and there is no period in its history when it can be said that free labour was displaced by slavery.²⁸²

From the perspective of capitalists and industrialists, free wage labour represented the only way forward.²⁸³ On the other hand, from the perspective of Southern slaveholders, the North had dissolved the institution of slavery to merely replace indentured servants with free wage labourers. Many white Southerners argued that Northern labourers experienced much harsher conditions when compared with black slaves, and on this, Holmes wrote the following:

It is a direct corollary from these principles that slavery cannot displace free labour, and cannot have itself been a cause of depopulation; and that, therefore, it did not generate these effects in the Roman Empire... Under the Roman government there is no evidence of the displacement of free labour by slavery. The free labourers disappeared unquestionably, and slaves filled the places that had been abandoned, or never occupied. But it is an assumption to represent the latter as the cause, and the former as the effect. The greed of the wealthy monopolized the public lands, and depressed the mass of the citizens, but it was not slavery that produced this rapacity, for the same tendencies are manifested by the landlords and manufacturers of Great Britain, and the capitalists of France, and even of the free States of northern America. No such tendency is yet distinctly pronounced in the southern States.²⁸⁴

Holmes suggested there existed a comparison between the agriculturalists of ancient Rome and modern industrialists, but his focus seeks to ascertain why free labourers in the Greco-Roman context disappeared. He argued against blaming the occurrence of this on slavery, because there existed no evidence to prove otherwise. Holmes concluded that slavery did not cause ancient social and moral decay, instead, he suggested that greed, land monopolies, and war led to the decline and fall of the classical world.

For Holmes, the wealthy Roman elite created an equivocal counterbalance between slavery and free labour. From this perspective, slavery, in theory, left a larger economic

²⁸² Holmes, “Ancient Slavery”, 620.

²⁸³ In chapter seven I will show that advocates of pro-slavery frequently argued that Northern free labourers caused a massive economic drain on society. In many instances, free labourers received very little physical capital in return for their industrial output and usually did not possess any sort of job security. Therefore, in the case of an economic downturn workers could be laid off without any consequences to their employers, and, thus, these unemployed workers became detrimental to the social order.

²⁸⁴ Holmes, “Ancient Slavery”, 620-21.

footprint, because the free population endeavoured to remove themselves from laborious work. He stated that, “luxury and avidity, bribery and laziness, impoverished the world, and had already substituted slavery only for the free labour which had already renounced the work”.²⁸⁵ Holmes proposed the same thing occurred in the North, and rather than believing that slavery caused a popular revulsion of moral degradation, it represented the opposite. Capitalism and free wage labour symbolised a fallacy used by industrialists to undermine the working class of “servile” labourers, because in return for their service, workers often received an inadequate amount of material wealth.

Holmes put forth the idea that slavery in ancient Greece and Rome did not threaten the survival of free industry, nor did it contribute to the moral, social, or political decline of those civilisations. To prove this, he utilised the political reforms made by the Gracchi as examples in his discussion, shown in the following:

Our anti-slavery professor [Barthold Niebuhr] gives the Gracchi great credit for their efforts to avert the dangers of slavery and create an independent yeomanry as a check on the wealthy aristocracy, and their monopolizing appetencies... What the legislation of the Gracchi really was, what its objects, and what its effects, exercised the industry and research of Niebuhr, and cannot be satisfactorily expressed in the brief summary of a couple of sentences. Slavery had little or nothing to do with it; but one of the consequences of the Sempronian laws, apprehended by their opponents, was to seduce the poorer citizens from industrial avocations, and thus leave a vacancy which was soon filled by slaves.²⁸⁶

Tiberius Gracchus enacted the *lex Sempronia Agraria* in 133 BC and Holmes correctly recognised that this law as such had nothing to do with challenging slavery. The *lex Sempronia Agraria* allowed largescale Roman landowners the flexibility to continue exploiting *ager publicus* – thus to effectively increase land worked by slave labour.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ Holmes, “Ancient Slavery”, 622.

²⁸⁶ Holmes, “Ancient Slavery”, 621.

²⁸⁷ Under the *lex Sempronia Agraria* individual landowners could possess no more than 500 *iugera* of land (this did not include an additional 250 *iugera* of land allotted to each son within a household). In addition to this, landholders could use an “undisclosed” amount of *ager publicus* for the pasturage of livestock (the law also sought to limit livestock to a maximum of 100 cattle and 500 sheep or other small animals), see Appian 1.8-9. If we compare this to *De agricultura*, Cato suggests the ideal amount of land required for olive-yards was 250 *iugera* and for vineyards 100 *iugera*. Both are well below the limitations set forth in the law. For more discussion on the *lex Sempronia Agraria* see Daniel Gargola, “Appian and the Aftermath of the Gracchi Reform,” *The American Journal of Philology* 118, no.4 (1997): 555-581; for discussion on the land requirements for the adequate pasturage of livestock in ancient Italy see G.K. Tipps, “The Generosity of Public Grazing Rights Under the *Lex Sempronia Agraria* of 133 B.C.,” *The Classical Journal* 84, no. 4 (1989): 334-342; for the Gracchi see Henry C. Boren, “Tiberius Gracchus: The Opposition View”, *The American Journal of Philology* 82, no. 4 (1969): 358-369; B.J. Lutz and J.M. Lutz,

Gracchus attempted to solve some immediate problems facing Italy, and while the legislation sought to limit the amount of land members of the Roman elite could use, it did not deal with all or even the biggest problems. As Tribune of the Plebs, Gracchus dealt with some major issues, such as drastic overpopulation in urban centres due to displaced landowners seeking alternative employment, or the increase in largescale agricultural estates. The increased number of these slave-manned estates led to the mass production of staple crops (i.e. wine, olive oil, and so forth), which represented a cause for the overall growth of the servile labour population throughout Roman Italy. Agricultural production represented the economic backbone of Italy during this period, thus we can assume that as the wealth of the elite grew, so too did their agricultural holdings. Typically modern scholars assume that this led to the establishment of large tracts of land manned by slave labourers, which produced cash crops to feed the swelling urban populations throughout Italy.²⁸⁸ Servile exemption from conscription developed into an incentive for landowners to employ enslaved labourers, and arguably, as the establishment of these agricultural estates in the republic grew, so too did the economy rely more on slavery.²⁸⁹ Holmes interpreted these agricultural developments in the following passage:

The rapacity of the rich and powerful was imprudently counterbalanced by the gratuitous distribution of support to the poorer citizens, and this temptation withdrew them from labour. The provisions of the poor, as the exactions of the proconsuls and propraetors, were drawn from the plunder of the conquered provinces; and thus the whole earth was despoiled and impoverished to satiate the covetous idleness of the Romans, patrician, plebeian, and proletarian. Luxury and avidity, bribery and laziness, impoverished the world, and substituted slavery only for the free labour which had already renounced work. It was the licentious greed,

“Political Violence in the Republic of Rome: Nothing New under the Sun,” *Government and Opposition* 41 (2006): 491-511.

²⁸⁸ For critical analysis of Roman agricultural expansion see Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Berkeley, CA.: The University of California Press, 1987), 43-83; for discussion of the slave labour force employed during the Roman Republic see Ulrike Roth, *Thinking Tools: Agricultural Slavery between Evidence and Models* (London: The University of London, 2007); for the comparative economics of Roman slavery during the late Republic see Walter Scheidel, “In Search of Roman Economic Growth”, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 22 (2009): 46-70.

²⁸⁹ For discussion on the growth agriculture and the Roman aristocracy in republican Italy see Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); W.V. Harris, “Towards a Study of the Roman Slave Trade”, *MAAR* 36 (1980): 117-140; R. Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 19; Scheidel, “Quantifying Sources of Slaves in the Early Roman Empire”, 159. N. Rosenstein, “Aristocrats and Agriculture in the Middle and Late Republic,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 98 (2008): 1-26.

the peculating and hungry indolence of the Romans that destroyed the free labour of Italy.²⁹⁰

Holmes argued against the position that the increase of slave labour in ancient societies, such as Rome, led to the decline of free labour. When contextualised with modern sources, we see that slave labour in ancient Rome replaced a pre-existing form of economic production. The Roman elite chose to utilise slave labour on their estates over free labour, not least because slaves did not qualify for conscription into the Roman army. On the other hand, abolitionists argued that Southern slavery prevented the growth of free labour, so Northerners labelled the slave mode of production as an exploitative system. Holmes and many slaveholders countered with the position that abolition had the potential to cause the collapse of the Southern economy – in this situation, for Holmes, slavery truly represented a positive good.

George Bancroft summed up Northern sentiments towards the Gracchi best by writing the following: “imitate Gracchus and pass a law in spirit like his; that none but the free shall till the soil. Let the plough, the spade, and the hoe be safe from the touch of bondmen, and bondage will cease”.²⁹¹ This excerpt, while an intrinsic element of the abolitionist agenda here, has no basis in fact. Using Tiberius Gracchus as a spearhead for abolitionism represent a gross misrepresentation of Gracchus’s goal in this situation. As mentioned above, Gracchus’ legislation did not support an ancient idea of abolition, instead he attempted to slow urban overpopulation and tried to prevent the Roman aristocracy from forming land monopolies. (Bancroft’s statement merely suggests that writers of anti-slavery works could too manipulate the classical world to suit their agenda). Holmes responded to this in the following passage:

It is ridiculous to listen to the arguments of modern abolitionists, and to hear them citing the laws of the Gracchi as ineffectual attempts to repress the growth of slavery, when measures, identical in spirit, and similar in form, and much more extensive in their application than the system of land distribution assailed by the Gracchi, are recommended and urged by the ultra-political economists of Great Britain as a redress for the existing evils there. The Roman system, which the Gracchi impugned, was to retain ownership of the greater part of the conquered lands in the hands of the state, and to lease out the lands themselves to individuals. The current system [in the United States] is for the state to assume ownership of all

²⁹⁰ Holmes, “Ancient Slavery”, 622.

²⁹¹ Margaret Malamud, *Ancient Rome and Modern America* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 75; see George Bancroft, “Slavery in Rome,” *North American Review* 39, no. 85 (1834): 413-437.

lands and to hire them out to the highest bidder. Either the early Roman plan was not intrinsically wrong, while the Gracchi were, in which case the eulogy of the Gracchi is absurd, or the Gracchi were right; but modern abolitionising political economists are wrong, and therefore contradict the doctrine they assert.²⁹²

Based on his suggestions, in conjunction with abolitionist rhetoric, the general antebellum American audience may have believed that slavery had the potential to cause the depopulation of societies and undermine productive agrarianism. Holmes reckoned that this phenomenon did not occur during antiquity and he clearly believed it did not (or would not) develop into a problem for the American South. This leads to questions about the bigger picture: first, did the plantation system represent the Southern corruption of agricultural pursuits by the wealthy elite? Second, where do Greece and Rome fit into this discussion? Having foregrounded Holmes' position, these questions will be addressed in the following section which will also get closer to his contribution to the wider pro-slavery framework.

Contextualising Holmes' Use of Classicism

In Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, slavery represents a small fraction of the work's overarching remit. Gibbon does not imply that slavery developed into a leading cause in the decline of the Roman economy, nevertheless antebellum Americans relied on this source for much of their historical knowledge about ancient Rome.²⁹³ Northern abolitionists used the source to argue that Southern slavery prevented free farmers from tilling the land. This abolitionist argument, therefore, fought to hinder the continuance of slavery in favour of free labour. Northern abolitionists rallied behind the land reforms of the Gracchi in an attempt to portray Southern planters as wealthy aristocrats who exploited "public" land for financial gain. This outcry against agriculture in the South, and its use of servile labour, developed into a major political juxtaposition for westward expansion. The idea of slaveholders moving west caused major conflicts among non-slaveholding "free" farmers, because many believed that slavery would

²⁹² Holmes, "Ancient Slavery", 623.

²⁹³ Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275-425*.

leave little opportunity for independent agricultural pursuits. Bleeding Kansas, for example, represents a period in antebellum history, where in the six years leading up to the Civil War extreme violence between pro-slavery and abolitionist factions spread across the territory. Slaveholders entered the territory with the belief that settlers had the right to bring any form of property they wished (including slaves). Free soil farmers feared that the wealthy Southern aristocracy would use their wealth and influence to dominate the territory with slavery. Between 1854 and 1861 this feud contributed to open conflict throughout the territory, and it remains important to contextualise Southern expansionism prior to discussing Holmes' discourse further.²⁹⁴

On the surface, Southern archaeological evidence suggests the broad nature of westward expansion. Evidence of large plantation systems throughout the Southern countryside, from Virginia to Texas, does exist, and these "agricultural estates signalled to all Southerners the many rewarding aspects linked with the plantation system".²⁹⁵ In other words, these planters benefitted from the rewards of producing large amounts of agricultural produce for financial profit, while belonging to the Southern aristocracy. By the mid-19th century those benefits applied to any Southern slaveholder who possessed 20 or more slaves.²⁹⁶ The following table represents the breakdown of slaveholding in the South by 1860.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ Between 1854 and 1861 slaveholders and free-soil forces fought in open conflict over the territory. The fighting that occurred in Kansas increased, especially as tensions between pro-slavery and abolitionist hotbeds rose, which started to attract extremists. John Brown represents the most infamous of these individuals. Brown believed the only way to overcome slavery was to lead a violent uprising against the institution. Nevertheless, and despite years of fighting, the Union admitted Kansas as a free state on January 29, 1861, and the Civil War began a few months later. On John Brown (including his escapades and contributions to Bleeding Kansas) see David S. Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights* (New York, NY.: Alfred A. Knopf 2009); David Roediger, ed., W.E.B Du Bois, *John Brown* (New York, NY.: The Modern Library 2010); on Charles Sumner and Preston Brooks see William H. Hofer, *The Caning of Charles Sumner: Honor, Idealism, and the Origins of the Civil War* (Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press 2010); Quigley, *Shifting Grounds*, 60-64; Malamud, *Ancient Rome and Modern America*, 75.

²⁹⁵ John M. Vlach. *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill, NC.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 8.

²⁹⁶ Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery*, 8.

²⁹⁷ Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labour: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1987), 54.

Table 1

| Number of Slaves Owned | 1–9 | 10–19 | 20–49 | 50–199 | > 199 |
|----------------------------|------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| Percentage of Slaveholders | 71.9 | 16.0 | 9.3 | 2.6 | 0.1 |
| Percentage of Slaves | 25.6 | 21.6 | 22.5 | 22.5 | 2.4 |

By 1860, the number of plantations in the South had grown to approximately 46,274, with many planters owning between one and nine slaves, which accounted for over one-quarter of the overall slave population. Twelve percent of all slaveholding families retained about half of the total slave population.²⁹⁸ Based on these figures, the representative class of white Southern slaveholders operated their plantations with a labour force of between one and 30 slaves.²⁹⁹ The remaining white Southerners worked their estates with slave numbers totalling between 30 and 200. Plantations that operated with a larger number of slaves (over 100) achieved the manorial ideal, and by the beginning of the Civil War, approximately 2,300 of these large-scale plantations existed. Of these, only about half promoted the Southern plantation mythology, which supported the idea of sprawling agricultural estates: possessing numerous field labourers; hundreds of acres of arable land; at the centre of which existed lavish gardens littered with plaster casts of antique statues, and a plantation house adorned with neo-classical Palladian architecture.³⁰⁰

In fact, prior to the Civil War, “less than one percent of all slaveholding families fit the plantation stereotype, a percentage that had remained constant since the middle of

²⁹⁸ U.S. Census Records 1860, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, (United States Census Office), 245-50.

²⁹⁹ Kolchin, *Unfree Labour*, 54. In 1860, 71.9% of Southern slaveholders owned between 1-9 slaves). Even though this chart does outline accurately the percentage of slaveholders versus the numbers of slaves owned, the size of holdings varied. For example, states in the Deep South such as South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and so forth. retained a larger percentage of slaves versus Border States because those states in the Deep South required more labourers for the economic production of cotton. Thus, while the table does provide the numbers and percentages of slaves versus slaveholders it is not entirely representative of the regional requirements for the slave mode of production in the South.

³⁰⁰ For more discussion on these neo-classical plantation houses see Theresa A. Singleton, “Nineteenth-Century Built Landscape of Plantation Slavery in Comparative Perspective” in Lydia W. Marshall (ed.), *The Archaeology of Slavery: A Comparative Approach to Captivity and Coercion* (Carbondale, IL.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014), 93-116.

the eighteenth century”.³⁰¹ Northern assertions that wealthy Southern slaveholders wanted to “conquer” the western territories does contain some inadequacies. Wealthier planters no doubt aspired towards expanding west, but this possessed as many political and social ramifications as it did agrarian ones. Nevertheless by 1860, the South had reached its agricultural climax and required more territory. The region had produced cash crops for decades and the signs of agricultural degradation effected the soil quality. Also, the cumulative slave population of the Southern states, just under 4 million by this period, emerged as a major concern.³⁰² Beyond the realisation of reducing its labour force (i.e. through manumission), for Southern agriculture to remain sustainable, a sizeable westward expansion represented the only viable option.³⁰³ With these important points borne in mind, we can once again return to Holmes.

In relation to the accumulation of land by the wealthy Roman elite, Holmes suggested that “either the early Roman plan was not intrinsically wrong, while the Gracchi were, in which case the eulogy of the Gracchi is absurd, or the Gracchi were right; but modern abolitionising political economists are wrong, and therefore contradict the doctrine they assert”.³⁰⁴ From Holmes’ vantage point, the system of land division in the United States carefully prevented the undue accumulation of land. Yet, he argued that his society had failed in achieving this, just as the Romans did.³⁰⁵ He implied that slavery did not cause this in either antiquity or modernity. Holmes defended the Southern institution on two fronts – from both the rhetoric of abolitionists and westward expansionists. In the Roman case, Holmes attributed a decrease in the population to devastations brought on by conflicts during the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, which caused the Italian rural population to seek out urban refuge, as shown in the following:

We proceed to maintain our numerous traverses. The civil wars of Marius, and Sylla, and Cuina [Cinna], and Carbo, their proscriptions, decimations, and devastations, succeeded by the conspiracy of Catiline and its consequences, and by

³⁰¹ Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (New York, NY.: Norton, 1974).

³⁰² George Bancroft, “The Decline of the Roman People”, in George Bancroft. *Literary and Historical Miscellanies* (New York: 1857), 286: “Philanthropy, when it contemplates a slaveholding country, may have its first sympathies excited for the slaves... but the needy freeman is in a worse condition. The slave has his task, and also his home and his bread... The indignant freeman has neither labour, nor house, nor food”.

³⁰³ Oakes, *Freedom National*, 25-36; Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, Ch. 7, 10, and 11.

³⁰⁴ Holmes, “Ancient Slavery”, 619.

³⁰⁵ Holmes, “Ancient Slavery”, 619-23.

the bloodshed, proscriptions, disasters, and exterminations of the first and second triumvirates. It was the struggle between Pompey as Caesar that the ancients attributed the depopulation of Italy... The population had been rapidly diminishing from various causes before, but this completed the disaster. If the object of Julius Caesar's celebrated decree, enacting that one-third of those employed in pasturage should be adult freemen, had been principally designed to produce an independent class of free labourers, and to repress the advances of slavery, he would neither have commenced nor contented himself with such an ineffectual measure.³⁰⁶

During his first consulship in 59 BC, Julius Caesar proposed a new land distribution bill – something that had proved costly for both Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus.³⁰⁷ Caesar's land reforms, however, presented an organised approach to what had developed into a volatile situation throughout Roman Italy.³⁰⁸ Holmes recognised the increasing problems faced by the Roman Senate between the period of the earlier land reform bill proposed by Tiberius Gracchus and the one put forth by Caesar. Holmes argued against the idea that legislation for Roman land redistribution sought to abolish slavery, in an attempt to return the land to citizen farmers. Rather, Roman legislators recognised the problem caused by an increase in the urban and the decrease in the rural populations.³⁰⁹ Based on this, we cannot reasonably deduce that the Romans desired to abolish slavery.³¹⁰ Holmes

³⁰⁶ Holmes, "Ancient Slavery", 624-25.

³⁰⁷ His brother, Tiberius Gracchus, had succumb to a murderous plot at the hands of the Roman Senate a decade earlier.

³⁰⁸ The urban population of Rome swelled with landless farmers, and veteran soldiers from both foreign and domestic conflicts. This did not include the urban slave population at the time. For discussion on this see N. Rosenstein, *Rome at War: Farms, Families, and Death in the Middle Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Walter Scheidel, "Human Mobility in Roman Italy, I: the free population," *Journal of Roman Studies* 94 (2004): 1-26; Scheidel, "Human Mobility in Roman Italy, II: the slave population", 64-79. Caesar proposed to relocate these citizens and veteran soldiers, who were draining the public coffers, to *ager publicus* throughout Italy. For discussion on problems related to the land and the army see Rosenstein, *Rome at War*; Arthur Keaveney, *The Army in the Roman Revolution* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007). Caesar carefully crafted the bill to exempt *ager publicus* in Campania. Especially around the Bay of Naples, because this fertile area offered a steady stream of agricultural income for numerous members of the Roman elite. He tasked a commission to assess the land throughout Italy (without removing anyone from lands currently owned by citizens). The money for the purchase of lands did not cost the state anything, but rather, funds would be directed from taxes and tribute attained from Pompey's conquests in Syria and Judea. Much like the land reform bill presented by the Gracchi, Caesar received opposition from many optimates. Unlike the Gracchi, however, Caesar had Pompey's military support and the financial wealth of Crassus behind him (the three formed a powerful alliance in 59 BC known as the First Triumvirate). The opposition eventually yielded, and the legislation eventually passed.

³⁰⁹ Appian, *Roman History: The Civil Wars*, Book 1. Translated by Horace White (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1913).

³¹⁰ For critical discussion see Hopkins, *Slaves and Conquerors*. Michael Crawford, *The Roman Republic* (London: Harper Collins UK, 1992).

exposed the fallacy of the abolitionist position here and stressed the Roman bounce back from the social crises of the 1st century BC in the following:

But from its first devastation Italy did recover, notwithstanding slavery and the vast estates of the wealthy... In this he [Hume] observes 'were I to assign a period when I imagined this part of the world might probably contain more inhabitants than at present, I should pitch upon the age of Trajan and the Antonine's; the great extent of the Roman Empire being then civilized, settled almost in a profound peace, both foreign and domestic, and living under the same regular police and government.'³¹¹

But Holmes' literature added another aspect to his utilisation of classicism: his engagement with the most recent scholarly views on Roman history. Thus, throughout the work he often referenced the works of Barthold Niebuhr. Niebuhr, a German scholar, established a new era for the study of history.³¹² Due to a growing interest in Roman history, Niebuhr's works widely circulated throughout the South during the 1850s. In his article, Holmes argued against Niebuhr's claims that agriculture led to the decline of Roman Italy. Northern abolitionists embraced Niebuhr's position that slavery caused the decline of agrarianism, as a result, many used his literature to support their anti-slavery rhetoric. The following passage shows an example of Niebuhr's position on agriculture in Italy during the 2nd century BC:

I have a very accurate knowledge of the present system of agriculture in Italy, and I am acquainted with large farmers, who have vast possessions, which they manage on speculation, and who are an abominable class of men, and must lead to the ruin of their country; although in some respects they have a title to praise, which is not sufficiently acknowledged. But I also know small independent peasants, the most respectable class of men in Italy. I remember very well one poor peasant of Tivoli, who was obliged to recover his small estate from the hands of a usurer, and exerted all his powers to satisfy his noble pride of being an independent proprietor... It was exactly such a state of things as this which presented itself to Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus.³¹³

³¹¹ Holmes, "Ancient Slavery", 625. Holmes uses David Hume's *Moral, Political, and Literary Essays* Part 2, Essay 11 as his source for this passage (see Hume's *Philosophical Works*, vol. 3). The work does not specifically focus on the population of imperial Rome, but it jumps between certain periods of antiquity and modernity. Hume tended to focus on societies from the ancient world, notably Greece, Rome, and Phoenicia and often transitions his discussion between these, modern Europe, and Great Britain. For discussion on Hume see Spencer K. Wertz, *Between Hume's Philosophy and History: Historical Theory and Practice* (New York, NY.: The University Press of America, 2000); Willie Henderson, *The Origins of David Hume's Economics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010); James Wiley, *Theory and Practice in the Philosophy of David Hume* (Basingstoke, UK.: Macmillan, 2012).

³¹² O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 604.

³¹³ Barthold G. Niebuhr, *The History of Rome: Volume III* (London: Taylor, Walton, and Maberly, 1851), 157-58; for modern comparisons between ancient Roman and modern Italian landowners see Enrico Dal

Niebuhr represented an intellectual class of historians who, rather than deconstruct, used their knowledge to reconstruct history. A Prussian conservative by birth, so his influence on Southern society may appear peculiar, but as readers kept pace with new literature on Roman history, the circulation of Niebuhr's works increased. For white Southerners, he proved that "human intelligence could establish control, and create order from the most refractory of materials, from even broken columns and crumbling palimpsests".³¹⁴ On the other hand, Holmes lacked enthusiasm for Niebuhr's positions, and in a critical discourse he wrote this about his works: "notwithstanding his liberal tendencies and his ardour in the cause of well-regulated freedom, he was not seduced by the Utopian dreams but licentious plans of the Prices, Priestleys, and Horne Tookes".³¹⁵ Holmes' engagement with the modern historiography on ancient Rome emerges as a second leg of his contribution to pro-slavery. We must not forget, however, that scholars generally consider Niebuhr as one of the first modern historians on ancient Rome. Openly challenging the likes of Niebuhr represents an important aspect of Holmes' article, because often Niebuhr's views supported the abolitionist agenda.

Naturally, Niebuhr's historical interpretations did retrospectively fuel some abolitionist rhetoric and the following example illustrates why Northern abolitionists developed an attraction to his literature:

While the number of Roman citizens was increasing every year by Italian allies, who obtained the Roman franchise, and more especially by freedmen, the number of landed proprietors decreased. The numerous small estates of the former times were no more. During the [Second Punic War] everything had become altered; for where, for example, a poor peasant was the neighbour of a rich one, the former had been compelled during those times of distress and epidemic disorders among the cattle, to borrow money from his neighbour, and not being able to give security, he had undoubtedly to pay a high percentage as interest. Now the son of such a peasant was, perhaps, serving in the legions, and if the father happened to be attacked by illness, he was obliged to engage labourers. In this manner he was reduced more and more, and if in the end he was not able to pay the interest, he was compelled to give up his land to his neighbour. In this and various other ways many a small estate had passed into the hands of the rich.³¹⁶

Lago, *Agrarian Elites: American Slaveholders and Southern Italian Landowners 1815-1861* (Baton Rouge, LA.: Louisiana State University Press, 2005).

³¹⁴ O'Brien, *Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860*, 145.

³¹⁵ O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 605.

³¹⁶ Niebuhr, *The History of Rome: Volume III*, 158. To characterise Niebuhr as a historian who spoke against the evils of slavery would be inaccurate, as his volumes on the history of Rome encompass

In response, Holmes' article took on the role of calming the fervour erupting over slavery and the classical tradition. Mentioned above, Holmes' engagement with the modern scholarship on ancient Rome developed into the second leg of his contribution to pro-slavery. This point is strengthened by looking in brief at how Holmes undermined other, European historians of antiquity, especially Henri Wallon of France. As mentioned, the Southern identification with the classical world suffered threats from abolitionists who claimed that slavery caused moral and social degradation.³¹⁷ Naturally pro-slavery authors responded with similar arguments, because they too believed similar circumstances occurred in the North and beyond (notably Great Britain and France). These ideas dominated modern interpretations of the ancient slave mode of production, as reflected in the following from Wallon's *Histoire de l'esclavage dans l'antiquité*:

The slave was a dominated thing, an animated instrument, a body with natural movements, but without its own reason, and existence entirely absorbed in another. The proprietor of this thing, the mover of this instrument, the soul and the reason of this body, the source of life, was the master. The master was everything for him: his father and his god, which is to say, his authority and his duty... Thus, god, fatherland, family, existence, are all for the slave, identified with the same being; there was nothing which made for the social person, nothing which made for the moral person, that was not the same as his personality and his individuality.³¹⁸

Wallon's work, initially released in 1847, helped fuel the growth of abolitionism during the 1850s. White Southerners frequently argued against rhetoric from historians like Niebuhr, Wallon, and Northern abolitionists. Wallon implied in his work that slaves lacked control over their existence within the ancient Greco-Roman master-slave relationship. Abolitionists used Wallon to argue that a similar condition occurred within the master-slave relationships in the South.³¹⁹ As abolitionists debated the passive status of blacks in the South, they too established that slavery led to the social decay of Greece and Rome. As shown above, Holmes responded to these allegations by stating that

hundreds of pages, of which he only devotes a small fraction to the topic. Ironically, however, abolitionists framed his work to suit their arguments against the Southern slave mode of production. Therefore, based on his literature, it remains difficult to place Niebuhr in either camp, because he affected the North and South in different ways.

³¹⁷ For modern discussions on slavery and its effects on moral and social degradation see Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*.

³¹⁸ Henri Wallon. *Histoire de l'esclavage dans l'antiquité* (Paris, 1849).

³¹⁹ For more on the "slave body" see Buckland, *The Roman Law of Slavery: The Condition of the Slave in Private Law from the Time of Augustus to Justinian*; Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*; Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*.

slavery did not directly cause the degradation of the Greco-Roman world, thereby also at least implicitly rejecting the associated claims regarding the body and person of the slave. In this context, Holmes' views on ancient slavery are not entirely unfounded, because numerous causes led to the decline and fall of both classical Greece and the Roman Empire.³²⁰ Holmes's article, therefore, represented a unique contribution to pro-slavery, primarily since he utilised a logical argument to undermine abolitionism. Thus, Holmes's article "Ancient Slavery" developed into a central component of the pro-slavery argument.³²¹

In sum, throughout the article, Holmes made a central point with regard to modern society based on his knowledge of ancient Rome: slavery in the ancient and modern contexts did not have fatal effects on agricultural production. In "Ancient Slavery", Rome emerged as Holmes's champion, and as the discussion evolved, he used Rome as an example to defend slavery in the modern context. In relation to the pro-slavery argument, this piece of literature presents a unique view because other white Southerners did not use classicism like Holmes did (especially the inclusion of ancient demographics). At this point in American history, his argument lacked the Roman precedent, whereby slavery and society had to endure many hardships (for example, servile wars, civil wars, among other examples of social, military, and political strife).³²² But, this started changing as increasing conflict arose during the 1850s. Holmes did argue that if the South faced similar social crises, in comparison to the Romans, its way of life would also endure. For Holmes, agriculture in the South developed "into a much more productive, efficient, and progressive element, than that of the Northern States where so much more of the appliances of wealth, and the means for the amelioration of

³²⁰ Holmes was not radical in his approach, however. He does add the disclaimer that, like any nation or empire, the chief economic institution of the Roman world may have played a social role in its inevitable decline and fall. His position outlines the number of other reasons why the Roman world collapsed – he did his research and used specific examples from antiquity to support his argument.

³²¹ James Henry Hammond had occasional correspondence with George Frederick Holmes, and the topic of discussion usually centred on Hammond's pursuit of classical knowledge. Hammond also aided Holmes with securing his position at the College of William and Mary. For more see Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Master*, ch.5

³²² The 1st century BC, for classicists and historians, represents a very interesting period in the development of Roman culture. The citizenry living during this era would have experienced tumultuous amounts of uncertainty.

the soil, are available”.³²³ In “Ancient Slavery”, Holmes attempted to correct the views that first, slavery directly caused the depopulation of Italy during the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, and second, that servile labour led to the decline of agriculture and Roman society. Slavery did not emerge as a leading cause for the decline of agriculture and depopulation throughout the history of the Roman republic and Empire, not least because the institution thrived there for hundreds of years. It may have caused economic downturns, and at times, displaced poorer landowners, but as shown in the broader discussion on this, there existed numerous other reasons which caused the eventual decline and collapse of the Roman world.³²⁴ Holmes article does a decent job within the context of its time to rightly point this out.

Conclusions

This chapter has sought to place George Frederick Holmes within the confines of white Southern intellectuals who made significant contributions to pro-slavery while proactively using classicism. The discussion focused on Holmes’ article “Ancient Slavery”, which provides this chapter with some striking insights into the mind of Holmes and his use of the classical tradition. Throughout the article, Holmes fundamentally defended the South, and more accurately its agricultural practices. To achieve this, he used his knowledge of the Greco-Roman world to establish a precedent worthy of imitation and validation. Holmes’s entire text argued against abolitionist rhetoric, which undermined Southern agricultural practices by suggesting it relied too much on servile labour. Based on this, Holmes emphasised that a decline would not occur in the South, because slavery did not cause the collapse of the Greco-Roman world. In the process, Holmes fought with the likes of Niebuhr and Wallon, who produced literature that abolitionists could easily draw on for support, which represented the new, modern discussions on ancient history. Throughout the work, he demonstrated

³²³ Holmes, “Ancient Slavery” 628.

³²⁴ For studies on the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West see Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2013); Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275-425*.

an acute knowledge and understanding of the classical sources in general, and Roman history in particular. As a result, among the individuals studied so far, Holmes represents a unique intellectual who successfully used classicism for the pro-slavery argument. In sum, Holmes brought knowledge and skill to the table; his deep understanding of the Roman sources added a new aspect to the pro-slavery argument by demonstrating correctly that ancient Rome did not decline due to slavery. And, he concluded that slavery would not cause a decline in the American South either.

Thus far, Cobb, McCord, and now Holmes paint a unique as well as diverse image of how classicism permeated Southern pro-slavery. In each instance, we can discern the different ways each author went about doing this. Cobb through manipulation and inspiration; McCord through intense creativity and extreme personalisation; finally, Holmes through his knowledge, skill, and understanding of the ancient sources to prove that slavery did not lead to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. If anything, in my view his article successfully argued against the position that slavery caused depopulation in the ancient Roman world. The following chapter will shift its focus onto George Fitzhugh and his sociological approach to pro-slavery. As mentioned above, Holmes also theorised about sociology – particularly regarding paternalism, but Fitzhugh represents a better case study for this. Fitzhugh utilised Aristotle to theorise about his vision for sociological paternalism, which represents yet another way of analysing classicism in relation to Southern pro-slavery.³²⁵

³²⁵ Holmes and Fitzhugh shared a significant correspondence during the 1850s, which the following chapter will explore in greater detail.

Slavery According to the Philosopher King of the Old South: George Fitzhugh's Southern Utopia

History inevitably served as one vehicle for empirical investigation into the problem of human bondage. From Greece and Rome to the American South, these thinkers proclaimed, slavery had served as the great foundation of all great civilizations.³²⁶

Introduction

The previous chapters of this thesis which focused on the pro-slavery works of Thomas Cobb, Louisa McCord, and George Frederick Holmes show the dynamic ways these authors utilised classicism within their literature. As shown in the chapter on Cobb, he used the high reputation of classicism among white Southerners to his advantage. By doing this, Cobb made classicism integral to his work by specifically manipulating ancient literature to support his approach to pro-slavery. On the other hand, in her numerous editorials and commentaries on pro-slavery, McCord often incorporated texts on both historical and mythical themes to add context to her arguments. Finally, Holmes' contribution to my thesis strengthens the position that white Southerners looked to ancient Greece and Rome as a source of validation for themselves and slavery. When looked at together, their literature shows us that an intricate intellectual culture existed in the South, and as shown, classicism factored into this in diverse ways. This chapter will shift its focus onto the sociological argument which emerged out of Southern pro-slavery literature. As mentioned in the previous chapter, George Frederick Holmes outlined the idea of sociological paternalism in some of his works – so too did George Fitzhugh. Holmes and Fitzhugh maintained a correspondence for a significant period during the 1850s and the former almost acted as a mentor to Fitzhugh. Fitzhugh represents a unique specimen, however, not least because he developed a sociological view of black slavery well before its establishment as an academic discipline.³²⁷ In the

³²⁶ Faust, "A Southern Stewardship", 72.

³²⁷ Early writings that we can relate to sociology date back to Plato, but it only came into focus during the 18th century with the writings of Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès.

1830s, Auguste Comte coined sociology as a new way of looking at society. We know that Fitzhugh read the works of Comte, because he wrote about the French philosopher in *Cannibals All!* We cannot call Fitzhugh a pioneer of sociology, but he does represent one of the earliest scholars to write about this field of study. Also, only a handful of others used a sociological approach to defend the slave mode of production in the American South: so, while not a pathfinder, Fitzhugh does nonetheless represent a unique historical figure. Fitzhugh also went to the North in an attempt to persuade the population there of the benefits of both paternalism and black slavery – this also represents a unique feat, because not many white Southerners did this.

Thus, during the spring of 1855, George Fitzhugh, a man of low standing from rural Virginia, made his first endeavour north of the Potomac River. Fitzhugh adventured to the North after receiving an invitation by Northern abolitionists to give a series of lectures in Boston and New York. His endeavour culminated in a debate with the zealous abolitionist Wendell Phillips. The trip presented Fitzhugh with an opportunistic moment to engage with a prominent member of the abolitionist community, and the experiences of this had an enlightening effect on his outlook towards pro-slavery. On alternating evenings, Fitzhugh and Phillips addressed a cohort of onlookers in New Haven, Connecticut. Fitzhugh's theories on servile labour caused concern among the primarily Northern audience, chiefly because he argued for the introduction of paternalistic slavery into free society.³²⁸ Despite Fitzhugh's strong views against free wage labour, he nonetheless entertained a positive view of his experiences in the North, shown in this: "indeed, we should be ungrateful and discourteous in the extreme . . . [but should] make gentlemanly return for the generous reception and treatment we received, especially from leading abolitionists, when we went north to personate Satan by defending slavery".³²⁹ Outwardly, Fitzhugh a man of a charming and courteous repute, portrays the opposite image in his works, as this chapter will show.

Fitzhugh remained a fierce advocate of slavery until his death in 1881 as shown, for example by *Sociology for the South*, published in 1854. This work contributed to Fitzhugh's notoriety, piqued abolitionist curiosities in the North, and led to his speaking

³²⁸ George Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All! or, Slaves Without Masters* (Richmond, VA.: A Morris, 1857), 90-95.

³²⁹ Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!*, 98.

tour.³³⁰ For some, however, the curiosities developed into a disingenuous fear of reality; the idea of class-based slavery certainly appeared far-fetched to much of Fitzhugh's Northern audience. Nevertheless, his debate with Wendell Phillips, and subsequent lectures in New York and Boston, had lasting effects on Northern perceptions regarding his literary output. In this instance, Fitzhugh acted not as a rational advocate speaking in favour of slavery, but he presented Northerners with a chaotic image of the South.³³¹ After his tour of the North, Fitzhugh vigorously took up the pen in the defence of slavery. Between 1854 and 1867 he wrote over 100 articles for *De Bow's Review*, as well as two major books: the above-mentioned *Sociology* and *Cannibals All!*.³³² In both works, Fitzhugh argued that all societies required a lower (or servile) class of labourers to function. Fitzhugh's work did not establish the foundations of this, as the next chapter will show. James Henry Hammond too utilised this argument in his *Cotton is King* Speech which he delivered to the Senate in 1858. Moreover, Fitzhugh's Tidewater neighbour and fellow Virginian, Edmund Ruffin, also expressed similar views on slavery and society. Yet, Fitzhugh's social calibre was not of the same cultural level as that of Hammond or Ruffin, nevertheless his Southern patriotism remains unquestionable. Overall Fitzhugh's works received mixed views: Southern partisans provided him with praise; members of the elite (such as Hammond and Ruffin) regarded him as a polemical extremist; while many leading abolitionists of the North fearfully assumed that he represented the entirety of the Southern pro-slavery argument.

In his literature, Fitzhugh placed much emphasis on ancient slavery, while attempting to convey his wider belief that the South needed to emulate a classical ideal. Next to Thomas Mores' *Utopia*, he utilised Plato's *Laws*, and Aristotle's *Politics* as inspirational templates for this. Overall, Fitzhugh did embrace ancient literature in a significant way. This chapter, therefore, will examine Fitzhugh's use of ancient philosophy and how classical literature impacted his pro-slavery works. First, as the case with every chapter thus far, this study will begin with a section on Fitzhugh's origins. In it, we will briefly

³³⁰ Aside from this, he published a pamphlet in 1849 called *Slavery, Justified*, although he included this as an appendix in *Sociology*.

³³¹ Tewell, *A Self-Evident Lie*, 58.

³³² From this point forward, these works will be typically referred to as *Sociology* and *Cannibals* respectively.

analyse his Southern roots, so that we can better situate the historical Fitzhugh and his contributions to the pro-slavery argument.

Fitzhugh's Origins

George Fitzhugh was born on November 4, 1806 in Prince William County, Virginia to Dr. George Fitzhugh and Lucy Stuart Fitzhugh. Shortly after Fitzhugh's birth the family relocated to King George County, Virginia where his father owned a modest 500-acre plantation.³³³ Fitzhugh's success at plantation management steadily declined and he eventually sold his land for cash in 1825. By contemporary standards the Fitzhugh's of King George County did not possess much material wealth, even though the family descended from the English aristocrat, William Fitzhugh of Bedfordshire.³³⁴ William Fitzhugh, known for his immense wealth, status as a classical scholar, lawyer, tory, and as a major slaveholder in Virginia moved to colonial America during the 17th century.³³⁵ The estranged Fitzhugh clans re-established their lineage in the 1980s, when modern descendants of William Fitzhugh produced a comprehensive work which traces the history of the family from its 13th century origins.³³⁶ The family identified George Fitzhugh as a distant relative and suggests further that family members referred to him as "Crazy Cousin George".³³⁷

³³³ The size of Fitzhugh's estate was a representative of many Southern plantations for this period. The elder George Fitzhugh was on the lower end of the agrarian spectrum and served as a surgeon during the War of 1812.

³³⁴ Tewell, *A Self-Evident Lie*, 57.

³³⁵ For more on the Fitzhugh Family see Henry A. Fitzhugh and Terrick V. Fitzhugh, *The History of the Fitzhugh Family* (Bloomington, IN.: Authorhouse, 2007).

³³⁶ The origins of the family are linked with Hugh and Joyce (Hugh – from which the family name is derived) of Bedfordshire, England – who were married ca. AD 1223.

³³⁷ Fitzhugh and Fitzhugh, *The History of the Fitzhugh Family*, 129-30: "George Fitzhugh, though not in our family's direct line of descent, deserves a mention because of his place in American history. He was fourth cousin of our ancestor John Henry Fitzhugh, being descended from William the Immigrant's son Henry. George was an intellectual, given to analysis of the developing economic system of America, and particularly the South . . . Lincoln took great note of George's views as expressed in pamphlets and editorials and went to considerable pains to refute them in his speeches. However, Georges' was not a doctrine which had much chance of success, and he lived to see the total collapse of the Society he hoped would lead the way to social revolution. He lived to 1881, in time to see America thoroughly industrialised, having left any thought of his ideas far behind. It is sad that in some Fitzhugh family circles, he is referred to as 'Crazy Cousin George'".

In 1829 Fitzhugh moved to Port Royal, Virginia and shortly after this he met Mary Metcalf Brockenbrough, who later became his wife. After the marriage, he settled on the Brockenbrough estate, in a decrepit and decaying mansion on the banks of the Rappahannock River.³³⁸ Fitzhugh did not receive a formal education, but instead furthered his academic interests through his personal fondness for learning. He initially studied law, although Fitzhugh discovered that he possessed more of a passion for reading, writing, and personal discovery. Spending most nights in his study, Fitzhugh read a variety of antislavery papers including the *Liberator*, the *Tribune*, and *Investigator*. He also read prominent British journals such as *Blackwood's Magazine*, the *North British Review*, and the *Edinburgh Review*.³³⁹ Through his wide reading of abolitionist journals, Fitzhugh's research developed a thorough understanding on the opinions on slavery as expressed by Northern and international authors. From this position, he started to construct his own pro-slavery theories. This led to a flurry of literary genesis, which for Fitzhugh began in the early 1850s, and from this point he frequently published his works in *De Bow's Review*, the *Richmond Enquirer*, and the *Examiner*.

The majority of his literary output argued that many nations possessed a sizable population of chattel. Fitzhugh referred to these "chattel" as the free wage labourers of industrialised societies. He suggested these labourers constantly suffered at the hands of their capitalist oppressors and he put forth paternalistic slavery as a suitable alternative option. For Fitzhugh, Southern slavery eradicated the social problems related to unemployment and labour exploitation. In theory, slaves under the protection of paternalism would receive adequate food, clothing, and shelter (in return for their indentured servitude). Free workers, he argued, faced major problems and during economic depressions could face starvation, exposure, or death.³⁴⁰ In an editorial Fitzhugh wrote for the *Richmond Enquirer* in May 1856, he denied promoting the enslavement of white free labourers. The following quote shows this: "We do not hope,

³³⁸ Tewell, *A Self-Evident Lie*, 57. Through the marriage Fitzhugh inherited some land and slaves. By the onset of the Civil War, however, he had sold most of the estate and most of his servile labourers – the Census of 1860 indicated that he possessed eight slaves and a small tract of land.

³³⁹ Tewell, *A Self-Evident Lie*, 57-60.

³⁴⁰ Finkelman, *Defending Slavery*, 189.

nor wish, to see slavery like ours introduced at the North. There is no room for black slaves, and we never wish to see white men made slaves”.³⁴¹ Fitzhugh unlikely never envisaged the creation of a white slave system, but he clearly wanted to emphasise the integrity of Southern servile labour over the capitalist mode of production.³⁴² This idea also relates closely to the manipulations of the ancient texts by Cobb. As shown in that chapter, white Southerners had a difficult time imagining the enslavement of white races, which inevitably caused pro-slavery authors to sometimes corrupt ancient sources. For Fitzhugh, the continued use of black slavery undoubtedly transcended his desire to see the fruition of white slavery.

For the duration of his life Fitzhugh suffered from significant financial troubles, nor did he possess much in terms of a family inheritance (especially after his father sold the family estate in 1825). Pressed to meet the needs of his growing family, Fitzhugh took on minor public service jobs. For example, under the Buchanan administration he served as a law clerk in the office of the Attorney-General.³⁴³ At the outset of the Civil War he moved to Richmond, Virginia and settled into a role with the Confederate government as a clerk in the Treasury Department. After the war, Fitzhugh took a legal position with the Freedman’s Bureau, but ironically produced literature protesting the conditions of Reconstruction and what he described as the “horrors of Emancipation”. The Freedman’s Bureau terminated his position shortly thereafter. Throughout the late antebellum era, Fitzhugh developed a congenial disposition for both his abolitionist foes and pro-slavery compatriots – as shown in his interactions with Wendell Phillips. But Fitzhugh’s postbellum writings took a vulgar turn, mainly because he continued to emphasise strong support for black racism.³⁴⁴ Following the war, both Emancipation and

³⁴¹ The Richmond *Enquirer*, May 5, 1856.

³⁴² But Fitzhugh had the tendency to damage his claims through contradiction. In a letter, he wrote to George Frederick Holmes in 1855, Fitzhugh stated the following: “I assure you Sir, I see great evils in slavery, but in a controversial work I ought not to admit them.” See Harvey Wish, *George Fitzhugh: Propagandist of the Old South* (Baton Rouge, LA.: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), 111; Fitzhugh to Holmes (April 11, 1855).

³⁴³ Faust, *The Ideology of Slavery*, 273; Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All! or, Slaves Without Masters*, C. Vann Woodward (ed.), 6

³⁴⁴ Faust, *The Ideology of Slavery*, 274. His release from the Freedman’s Bureau most certainly was linked with the views he expressed in his article titled *The Freedmen*. In this article, he stated that even though black slaves had been freed, because of their “inferior nature” they should remain in a state of bondage (i.e. free in theory, but still working the land as freed surfs). See also *De Bow’s Review*, November 1866, 489-93.

Reconstruction emerged as popular topics of discussion in the media outlets throughout the North and South. Fitzhugh publicly criticised these widely-debated topics, and, thus, he increasingly received negative attention from a polarizing Southern readership.

In 1866, after his release from the Freedman's Bureau, Fitzhugh returned with his family to a war-torn and beleaguered Port Royal. The following year, and shortly after the death of his long-time friend J. D. B. De Bow, Fitzhugh published his last article in the *Review*. After his death, W.M. Burwell took over as the chief editor, with whom Fitzhugh shared a tumultuous, albeit brief, relationship.³⁴⁵ This led to the *Review* parting ways with its long-time contributor. After this, Fitzhugh occasionally published in the *Richmond Enquirer*, but after 1871 he stopped producing work for a public audience.³⁴⁶ His wife died in 1877, and after this traumatic event Fitzhugh lived with his son in Kentucky for two years. Following this, Fitzhugh moved to his daughter's residence in Huntsville, Texas, where he died on July 30, 1881. Like his humble and modest origins, Fitzhugh spent the last decade of his life financially strained. His failure to adapt to the changing social climate in America after the Civil War primarily caused this; ultimately, his spirit perished after the Confederacy collapsed.³⁴⁷

The following parts, now having discussed Fitzhugh's origins and life, will look towards classicism and his 1858 pro-slavery publication, *Cannibals*. The chapter will specifically focus on his use of Aristotelian philosophy and how Fitzhugh applied Aristotle's works to the pro-slavery argument.³⁴⁸ The chapter will first provide a thorough textual analysis of Fitzhugh's approach to Aristotle's philosophy, which will explore the role of classicism in relation to his position on pro-slavery. The second part of the chapter will examine where Fitzhugh borrowed directly, where he made additions, and where he deviated from Aristotle. The sections that follow will offer an elaboration

³⁴⁵ The new public stance of the *Review* focused on the benefits of Reconstruction and editorials from abolitionists were also frequent, making Fitzhugh an outlier. All publications of the *Review* ceased in 1884.

³⁴⁶ Faust, *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South 1830-1860*, 273; Finkelman, *Defending Slavery*, 187; Wish, *George Fitzhugh: Propagandist of the Old South*, 104.

³⁴⁷ Genovese, *The World Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation*, 50.

³⁴⁸ Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, was a pupil of Plato, and tutored Alexander the Great; he was a renowned scholar during antiquity and retains his prominent status as one of the great minds of the ancient world.

to show how Fitzhugh utilised classicism in his most significant contribution to the pro-slavery argument.

Fitzhugh and Aristotle: Sociology Created by Ancient Ideas

Fitzhugh emerged as a sociologist during the 1850s and his perceptions on society (explored further in this section) show intense engagement with this subject. As mentioned previously, in her article “A Southern Stewardship: The Intellectual and the Proslavery Argument”, Drew Faust provides a diagram that plots the personal interactions between the main Southern advocates of slavery.³⁴⁹ In the article, Faust presents a critical view of Fitzhugh and she frames his contributions to pro-slavery in a negative light.³⁵⁰ Faust’s *The Ideology of Slavery*, which she published two years after the previously mentioned article, presents a more positive view of Fitzhugh. Faust does not indicate if her initial negative position on Fitzhugh changed or if she simply developed a better understanding of the man and his literature. As mentioned, Fitzhugh did not shy away from extremism, so the first read through of his works can lead the audience towards a firm impression of his insanity. This raises the following question: as historians and classicists, are we left with the imagery of “Crazy Cousin George” holding a smoking gun after pillaging Aristotle’s think-tank? The potential exists to view Fitzhugh as an uneducated extremist who lacked the ability to come up with his own ideas. The notion that he resorted to stealing concepts on social theory from the likes of Marx, Aquinas, Plato, and Aristotle to piece together his fractured philosophies is not farfetched. If we compare Fitzhugh’s use of classicism with the others examined in the previous chapters a pattern, however, emerges. As shown below, Fitzhugh, like Cobb, McCord, and Holmes, used classicism as a springboard to support Southern arguments in favour of servile labour. In *Cannibals*, Fitzhugh took Aristotle’s philosophy and applied it to contemporary Southern culture. Throughout the work, he

³⁴⁹ For the diagram see Faust, “A Southern Stewardship”, 68.

³⁵⁰ Faust’s only included personal interactions between these figures via correspondence and does not consider any physical meetings in public or private spheres. Her article is critical of Fitzhugh, including his lack of personal communication with other contemporary white Southerners. However, based on the nature of her article, the analysis does not look at Fitzhugh’s correspondence with Northerners.

utilised Aristotle to define his interpretations of American society. Fitzhugh clearly possessed a high opinion of Aristotle, as shown in this: “the Bible, (independent of its own authority), is by far man’s best guide, even in this world. Next to it, we would place Aristotle”.³⁵¹ Indeed, this represents high praise for the ancient Greek philosopher!

The passage below displays that Fitzhugh used Aristotle’s philosophy in fact as a central component of his pro-slavery literary output. Fitzhugh expressed his views of the value of Aristotle in a letter to George Frederick Holmes, where he stated the following:

I received from Mr. Appleton’s, a week ago, Aristotle’s *Politics and Economics*. I find I have not only adopted his theories, his arguments, and his illustrations, but his very words. Society is a work of nature and grows. Men are social like bees: an isolated man is like a bird of prey. Man and society are coeval . . . It was strange that when writing my book I did not know the daring attempt I was making, till you, who had only read my newspaper essays informed me that I was assailing all the Social, Economic, Political, and Ethical philosophy of the day – but you encouraged me to proceed. Now, I find that, although Locke, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Jefferson, Franklin, Macaulay, and Calhoun are against me, Aristotle, Carlyle, you, and all the leading minds of the day are with me. Why the Devil, don’t someone abuse me, and vindicate the sages of the last two centuries? I used to think I was a little paradoxical. I now fear I am a mere retailer of truisms and common places.³⁵²

Based on his correspondence with Holmes, Fitzhugh most certainly acquired a copy of Richard Congreve’s work on *Politics* while on his tour of the North. Congreve’s work on Aristotle was commonly published in both London and New York during the mid-1850s.³⁵³ Fitzhugh purchased his copy of Aristotle from D. Appleton and Company in

³⁵¹ Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!*, 55.

³⁵² Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!*, 16. The original passage come from: Fitzhugh to Holmes, April 11, 1855, in Holmes Letter Book. D. Appleton’s and Company was a publication firm which operated out of New York City. The company published and imported (primarily from England) several works from across the spectrum of various literary genres – including ancient texts in translation.

³⁵³ The relationship between Holmes and Fitzhugh appears to have been solely based on mutual correspondence and there is no indication from the sources of these two having ever met. In 1853 Holmes discovered an editorial written by Fitzhugh in the *Richmond Enquirer*. Upon reading the article he realised that he and Fitzhugh shared a similar range of interests regarding contemporary political culture and the socio-economic impacts of slavery – at least on the surface. This common interest initially spurred forward the relationship and the steady stream of correspondence that followed. The two corresponded during interim period between Fitzhugh’s major publications *Sociology* and *Cannibals*. Holmes strongly promoted *Sociology*, which helped along its successful reception among white Southerners audiences – at the time Holmes had renown as a prominent reviewer of pro-slavery literature. Holmes published a total of three major reviews in 1855 (separate periodicals) of *Sociology*. In his third evaluation, released in the *Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Holmes once again boasted the merits of Fitzhugh’s theories. Holmes did, however, express an outward belief that Fitzhugh’s theories, while unique, would not cause a popular revulsion of opinion. Despite this factual prediction, Holmes continued to endorse Fitzhugh and his literary output. Holmes declared Fitzhugh a “rebel against antiquated political doctrines and that he had (in conjunction with Albert T. Bledsoe’s work: *An Essay on Liberty and Slavery*)

New York – Congreve’s transcription was the only version sold by the publisher. Congreve did not translate Aristotle’s text in its original form, rather he transcribed *Politics* and included notes in English, so Fitzhugh either possessed some comprehension of ancient Greek, or he only used the English notes – we do not know for certain.³⁵⁴

As a result, the core of Fitzhugh’s *Cannibals* would look significantly different without the influences of ancient philosophy. When comparing *Cannibals* with Fitzhugh’s earlier work, *Sociology*, this suggestion gains further momentum, because he published the book prior to his “discovery” of Aristotle. Arguably *Cannibals* and *Sociology* are similar works, but *Cannibals* carried with it more weight and panache since it drew heavily on Aristotle’s works. It follows that Aristotle’s philosophy provided Fitzhugh with enough guidance to put forth a more polished piece of pro-slavery literature. If Aristotle offered Fitzhugh a basis to promote his personal ideological agenda, a question emerges: did Fitzhugh embrace Aristotle’s philosophy simply to advocate support from an ancient source, or did he explore and use Aristotle with a more systematic mindset?

As shown in the chapter on Thomas Cobb, some pro-slavery authors did manipulate or blatantly change ancient sources to better suit their arguments. Fitzhugh on the other hand approached the ancient world with a different mindset. Rather than pillaging ideas through manipulation, he provided his audience with a clear indication that he attempted to understand Aristotle’s philosophy. For modern readers, this suggests that any implications of manipulation reflect an “uneducated” misrepresentation. Fitzhugh did not actively seek to undermine Aristotle, but to the contrary, he revered the ancient philosopher. His remarks to Holmes support this and after 1855 Aristotle’s philosophy developed into a central element of Fitzhugh’s pro-slavery literature. We should not perceive George Fitzhugh as “Crazy Cousin George”, but instead, as a pioneer for the sociological vision of Southern slavery. His views possessed the potential to

inaugurated a new school of political speculation”. Even though Fitzhugh’s developed many of his ideas—especially those about natural slavery—using influence from Aristotle’s philosophy. For more on the relationships between Fitzhugh and Holmes see Wish, *George Fitzhugh: Propagandist of the Old South*; Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*; Richard, *The Golden Age of the Classics in America*.

³⁵⁴ Richard Congreve, *Ta Politika: The Politics of Aristotle* (London: J.W. Parker, 1855), 30-332.

revolutionise later social perceptions on society in the South, and in the process, his works received negative acclaim from Abraham Lincoln: “Lincoln took great note of George’s views as expressed in pamphlets and editorials and went to considerable pains to refute them in his speeches”.³⁵⁵ Lincoln never directly mentioned Fitzhugh in any of his speeches, although he did possess a collection of Fitzhugh’s works, including copies of both *Sociology* and *Cannibals*.³⁵⁶ Having set the agenda for this chapter in the current section, the following part will continue the descent into Fitzhugh’s elaborations of Aristotle’s philosophy; it will also specifically uncover the heart of Aristotle in *Cannibals*. The discussion below will demonstrate the extent and depth of Fitzhugh’s use of Aristotle, giving specific examples of textual evidence from both Aristotle’s *Politics* and Fitzhugh’s *Cannibals*: the text of Fitzhugh is directly compared with corresponding passages from Aristotle’s *Politics* on which, in my view, he drew.

Aristotle in Fitzhugh’s *Cannibals All*: Uses and Approaches

The previous section described the importance of Aristotle’s literature to Fitzhugh and his discourse in *Cannibals*. This part will compare a selection of passages from Aristotle’s *Politics* and Fitzhugh’s *Cannibals*, so we can ascertain where there exists a fundamental connection between Aristotle’s theories in Fitzhugh’s work. Thus, the following analysis will determine more fully where similarities and differences between Fitzhugh and Aristotle occur. Fitzhugh borrowed ideas from the ancient philosopher on political economy, property rights, natural slavery, wealth, and utopia (note: Fitzhugh took his ideas for wealth and utopia from Aristotle’s commentary on Plato’s *Republic*). By incorporating Aristotle into his work, Fitzhugh created an ally from the ancient world who, in turn, he used to support his own socio-economic agenda: his views on the failure of mid-19th century capitalism and the uncontrolled exploitation of free wage labour.

³⁵⁵ Fitzhugh and Fitzhugh, *The History of the Fitzhugh Family*, 129-30.

³⁵⁶ For more on Lincoln and Fitzhugh see William H. Herndon, *The Hidden Lincoln: From the Letters and Papers of William H. Herndon* (New York: Viking Press, 1938); see also Abraham Lincoln, *Address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society* (September 30, 1859). In this speech, Lincoln addressed the mudsill theory, but strategically he does not acknowledge Hammond or Fitzhugh. Instead, he directed his response towards opposing the Mudsill Theory and the so-called, “white paternalism”.

Motivated by this, Fitzhugh used Aristotle's philosophy to argue that the patriarchal nature of Southern society provided the best option for future generations. Fitzhugh believed employers needed to have a direct interest in the overall health of their workers. He argued that relationships between the employer and employee in capitalist societies did not follow this fundamental management model. That said, he believed the sole purpose of a working relationship in a capitalist state sought to maximise output from labourers, while providing little for their health, safety, physical compensation, and job security. Based on these suggestions, Fitzhugh used Aristotle to develop his idea of a class system; the following passage reflects this:

Throwing the Negro slaves out of the account, and society is divided in Christendom into four classes: The rich or independent respectable people, who live well and labor not at all; the professional and skilful respectable people, who do a little light work, for enormous wages; the poor hardworking, who support everybody, and starve themselves; and the poor thieves. Swindlers and sturdy beggars, who live like gentlemen, without labor, on the labor of other people. The gentlemen exploit, which being done on a large scale, and requiring a great many victims, is highly respectable – whilst the rogues and beggars take so little from others, that they fare little better than those who labor.³⁵⁷

The passage from *Cannibals* indicates Fitzhugh's perceptions on the landscape of antebellum American labour. The following excerpt from a contemporary 19th century translation of *Politics* provided the material for Fitzhugh's discussion on social divisions, in which he exploited Aristotle's theories on the ideal city-state:

A collection of similar persons does not constitute a state. For a city is not the same thing as a league; a league is of value by its quantity, even though it is all the same in kind (because the essential object of the league is military strength), for instance weight would be worth more if it weighed more, whereas components which are to make up a unity must differ in kind (and it is by this characteristic that a city will also surpass a tribe of which the population is not scattered among villages but organized like the Arcadians).³⁵⁸

Aristotle emphasised that a city-state should involve a certain level of plurality: in other words, he affirmed diversity within these social structures and advocated that people must make individual contributions for the advancement of civilisation. He inferred that

³⁵⁷ Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!*, 20.

³⁵⁸ Aristotle. *Politics* (trans) W.E. Bolland (London: Longman's, Green, and CO., 1877), 56. In ancient Greece, hegemonic leagues were a collection of city-states which were governed by a patron state – for example the Delian League, under the leadership of Athens, controlled several city-states along the Aegean coast of Greece and Asia Minor (this included various islands throughout the Aegean – notably Lesbos, Euboea, and Rhodes). From an Aristotelian view, the American South represented a league comprised of a variety of city-states.

citizens, women, resident aliens, slaves, and so forth, all fulfilled different roles and, therefore, should occupy distinct social classes.³⁵⁹ Fitzhugh used Aristotle's theories on social classes to support his position, which stressed the pluralism in American society (i.e. the wealthy elite; the middle class; the working class, and so forth.).³⁶⁰ Yet, his interpretations of Aristotle do not portray an accurate image because in this instance he "misinterpreted" or "misread" Aristotle – a mistake which helped support his argument.

The analysis of Fitzhugh's definitions for social classes indicate that slavery played a fundamental role in his *utopia*. A major theme of his discussion established the "roles" that chattel played within the American South. In Book 1 of *Politics*, Aristotle sought to outline his theory on natural slavery which emphasised the morality of enslaving certain peoples. This also included a discussion of the potential social uses for these slaves.³⁶¹ In this, Aristotle characterised several groups of persons as natural slaves. He justified this by using a variety of examples, such as a psychological perspective, in which natural slaves lacked deliberation and foresight.³⁶² He also recognised natural slaves because of their aptitude for physical labour.³⁶³ Fitzhugh used these ideas, many already circulated throughout the South, to bring Aristotle to the forefront of his discussion, which the following text shows:

There is one strong argument in favour of negro slavery over all other slavery: that he, being unfitted for the mechanical arts, for trade, and all other skilful pursuits, leaves those pursuits to be carried on by the whites; and does not bring all industry

³⁵⁹ Bolland, *Politics*, 115. "His system was for a city with a population of ten thousand, divided into three classes; for he made one class of artisans, one of farmers, and the third class that fought for the state in a war and was the armed class".

³⁶⁰ The notions of class division from a modern sociological view illustrates that we can perceive society based on different principles of vision and separation. An example from Fitzhugh's ideal society would have been the inclusion of a modern interpretation of class and ethnic divisions. Under this circumstance, individuals belong to a certain class of society and were tied to specific roles; e.g. slaves, masters, overseers, free labourers, employers, and so on. To Fitzhugh these social roles were static in nature (i.e. a slave was a slave and therefore could not deviate from this designation). In his utopia, slaves could not become members of the wealthy elite, nor could the wealthy elite submit themselves to slavery – there was no room for lateral social movements, but only forward progression. This breached the idea of specific social groupings and implies that he intended for individuals to possess designated societal roles. But Fitzhugh never entirely excluded the possibility of organising society in accordance with other principles of division – e.g. ethnic or national ones, whereas for Aristotle the division of class was more of a metaphysical dilemma rather than a sociological one. This is the most notable "development" and structural difference imposed by Fitzhugh on Aristotle's theories – Aristotle was more theoretical in his approach, while on the other hand, Fitzhugh was suggesting the application of these theories. See Pierre Bourdieu, "The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups", *Theory and Society* 14, no. 6 (1985): 726.

³⁶¹ Nicholas D. Smith, "Aristotle's Theory of Natural Slavery", *Phoenix* 37, no.2 (1983): 109.

³⁶² Bolland, *Politics*, 116.

³⁶³ Bolland, *Politics*, 116.

into disrepute, as in Greece and Rome, where the slaves were not only the artists and mechanics, but also the merchants.³⁶⁴

The following passage from the translation of Aristotle displays where Fitzhugh borrowed ideas from the ancient philosopher:

Nature is inclined to make a difference also between the bodies of freemen and of slaves, making those of the latter strong for their necessary employments, of the former upright and useless for such services, but still useful for public life (which again is divided into the employments of war and peace) but yet the very reverse is often found—namely, that some have the bodies of freemen and others the souls. This much at least is clear, that if there were men as superior in bodily form as the images of the Gods are, all would say that those inferior to these, ought properly to be slaves to them. And if this is true in the case of the body, with much more justice should there be this distinction in the case of the soul. However, it is not as easy to see the beauty of the soul as it is to see that of the body. It is then (in conclusion) evident that there are some persons by nature free and others, slaves, and that to these latter the state of slavery is both advantageous and just.³⁶⁵

Aristotle defines three aspects of natural slavery: first, the very notion of the “natural slave” and the characteristics possessed by chattel; second, the social roles allocated to these slaves (including how they interacted with the masterclass). Third, he illustrates the differences between the body types of freemen and slaves.³⁶⁶ Fitzhugh suggested that blacks embodied the ideal natural slave – Aristotle’s description of the body types fits well into Fitzhugh’s literature here. Overall, Fitzhugh enjoyed what Aristotle’s theory on natural slavery brought to his own arguments: that white Southerners needed to embrace Aristotle’s literature and base their system of slavery on the unmitigated slave societies of the ancient world.³⁶⁷ This discourse continued throughout *Cannibals* and the passage below exemplifies this:

The humble and obedient slave exercises more or less control over the most brutal and hard-hearted master. It is an invariable law of nature, that weakness and dependence are elements of strength, and generally sufficiently limit that universal despotism, observable throughout human and animal nature. The moral and physical world is but a series of subordinates, and the more perfect the subordination, the greater the harmony and the happiness. Inferior and superior act to react on each other through agencies and media too delicate and subtle for human apprehensions; yet, looking to usual results, man should be willing to leave for God

³⁶⁴ Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!*, 294.

³⁶⁵ Bolland, *Politics*, 122. for modern analysis of Aristotle’s theory on natural slavery in *Politics* I see Malcolm Heath, “Aristotle on Natural Slavery”, *Phronesis: Journal for Ancient Philosophy* 53, no. 3 (2008): 243-270; Joseph A. Karbowski, “Aristotle’s Scientific Inquiry into Natural Slavery”, *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 51, no.3 (2013): 331-353.

³⁶⁶ Heath, “Aristotle on Natural Slavery”, 247; for analysis on natural slavery and the classical approach to pro-slavery see Harrington, “Classical Antiquity and the Proslavery Argument”, 60-72

³⁶⁷ For a modern work on Aristotle and natural slavery see *Politics* 1260a20-40, 1260b1-25.

what God only can regulate. Human law cannot beget benevolence, affection, maternal and paternal love; nor can it supply their places; but it may, by breaking up the ordinary relations of human beings, stop and disturb the current of these finer feelings of our nature. It may abolish slavery; but it can never create between the capitalist and the laborer, between the employers and employed, the kind and affectionate relations that usually exist between the master and slave.³⁶⁸

Aristotle's theory on natural slavery states the following:

An article of property is a tool for the purpose of life, and property remains a collection of tools, and a slave is then an article of property... And [article of property] is used in the same way as a part of something [a thing that is a part is not only a part of another thing but absolutely belongs to another thing, and so also does an article of property]. Hence whereas the master is merely the slave's master and does not belong to the slave, is not merely the slave of the master but wholly belongs to the master. Making clear these considerations, and therefore we see the nature of the slave and his essential quality: a human body not belonging to himself but to his master is by the laws of nature a slave [and a person is a human being belonging to another if being a man he is an article of property, and an article of property is an instrument for action separable from its owner].³⁶⁹

Fundamentally Aristotle wrote that chattel slaves represented a physical extension of their masters. More accurately, these labourers, perceived as human tools by their masters, lacked a genuine sense of self. In this regard, Fitzhugh combined his interpretations of Aristotle with his thoughts on capitalism and slavery in the South (i.e. the superior whites versus the inferior blacks).³⁷⁰ Aristotle's ideas on economics likely did not inspire Fitzhugh here, because in *Politics* he did not directly associate his theories on slavery with his views on (applied) economics.³⁷¹ Aristotle's outlook on economics spurred forward the ideas expressed by the likes of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber. These theorists, however, did not necessarily apply his ancient sentiments to the

³⁶⁸ Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!*, 221.

³⁶⁹ Bolland, *Politics*, 133.

³⁷⁰ See works by Thomas Aquinas, specifically commentaries on Aristotle's *On the Soul*, *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Metaphysics*. For modern discussion on Aquinas' adaption and elaboration on Aristotle see Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); for interpretation of Aquinas as an apologetic and his justification of servile labour via natural law see Hans Küng, *Great Christian Thinkers: Paul, Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Schleiermacher, Barth* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 104-107.

³⁷¹ This does come later in *Politics* when Aristotle discussed slavery in terms of agriculture. But the connection between natural slavery and general discourses on servile labour in ancient Greece does become more ambiguous as his treatise evolves. For a modern outlook, compare passage 1253b-23-1254a17 (whereby he advocated that natural slaves were tools of action not production, with; passage 7.1330a25-30 where he characterised the use of slaves for agricultural production. This emphasises an obvious disconnect with his ideas on natural slavery and servile labour more generally.

modern context.³⁷² Unlike Aristotle and contemporary social theorists, by making the economic systems of America central to his definitions of natural slavery and the laws of nature, Fitzhugh preached the opposite.³⁷³ These passages show that Aristotle's perceptions on the ideal master and slave relationship (which primarily labelled human chattel as property and tools) provided Fitzhugh with the foundations for his own definitions of slavery and liberty. In sum, Fitzhugh constructed his version, all the while adding to and changing Aristotle. This allowed him to better develop his own theories.

Fitzhugh's definition of slavery included providing basic provisions for labourers such as foodstuffs, clothing, and shelter (much like black slaves under Southern paternalism). Fitzhugh sought to promote this vision and he intended to convince his Southern audience of its benefits. Driven by an unsavoury attitude towards capitalism, Fitzhugh forcefully brought his argument into the light. Factoring in slavery and the laws of nature, Aristotle's views on natural liberty appealed to Fitzhugh. In *Politics*, Aristotle's theory on natural liberty did not necessarily relate to servile labour in ancient Greece. Yet, Fitzhugh clearly borrowed from Aristotle on this matter when he outlined his definition of liberty. On this Aristotle wrote the following:

And we laid it down that the slave is serviceable for the mere necessities of life, so that clearly he needs only a small amount of virtue, in fact just enough to prevent him from failing in his tasks owing to intemperance and cowardice. [But the question might be raised, supposing that what has just been said is true, will artisans also need to have virtue? For they will frequently fall short in their tasks owing to intemperance. Or is their case entirely different? For the slave is a partner in his

³⁷² For commentary on Marx, Durkheim, and Weber see John B. Foster, "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology", *AJS* 105, no.2 (1999): 366-405; Kenneth Allan, *Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World* (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Pine Forge Press, 2005), 101-181; Ken Morrison, *Marx, Durkheim, and Weber: Formations of Modern Social Thought* (London: SAGE, 2006); for Aristotle, the highest human activities, at least non-productive ones, were not conducted under the premise of necessity, but rather by choice. On the other hand, Marx posited that work for sustainability was not characterised by choice, and therefore, in this sense physical labour is necessary for survival. But as Marx emphasised in *Capital*, the vast expansion of productivity via the growth of 19th century forms of capitalism did aid to increase the potential for disposable time, which could then promote the cultivation of individuality and choice. For more discussion on Aristotle, Marx, and capitalism, see George E. McCarthy, *Marx and Aristotle: Nineteenth German Social Theory and Classical Theory* (Savage, MD.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1992), 301-20.

³⁷³ Contrary to this, Aristotle provided an inadequate account of natural slavery, and from his output it is possible to suggest that slavery only arises in *Politics* because it was incidentally connected to his main discussion on the diversity of political authority. See Heath, "Aristotle on Natural Slavery", 243-270; Karbowski, "Aristotle's Scientific Inquiry into Natural Slavery", 331-353; cf. Aristotle *Politics* 1253b1-40, 1254a1-25. It is not uncommon to discover that Aristotle left some works unfinished and modern scholars have tirelessly tried to interpret many aspects of his philosophical doctrine to resolve any inconsistencies.

master's life, but the artisan is more remote, and only so much of virtue falls to his share as of slavery—for the mechanic artisan is under a sort of limited slavery, whereas the slave is one of the natural classes, no shoemaker or craftsman belongs to his trade by nature]. It is manifest therefore that the master ought to be the cause to the slave of the virtue proper to a slave, but not possessing that art of mastership which teaches a slave his tasks. Hence those persons are mistaken who deprive the slave of reasoning and tell us to use command only; for admonition is more properly employed with slaves than with children.³⁷⁴

The following passage shows Fitzhugh's text from *Cannibals*:

It will of course be asserted that the people would not be contented as slaves, but it is only to make a state inevitable, and humanity is soon reconciled to it, as we are to death, governments, and the income-tax. Besides, what is liberty? A word almost forgotten; a battle sound used to juggle men in every age and country; in Greece, Rome, and America, the war-cry of slaves to fight for the liberty of slavery. Must we, then, ever remain the tools of words; reject all the true advantages of slavery because we cannot bear the name, and take its evils, and more, because we wish to renounce the sound? What are soldiers and sailors but bondsmen? Indeed, they are happy specimen of slavery; well fed, clad, and tended; with plenty leisure and repose. Why, then should they be happier than the peasant, who pines away his dreary existence on bread and potatoes and water? What is the convict but a slave, who by his crimes has earned his right to be kept well and safe from the elements and want? We reward the criminal with slavery and competence, and leave the honest man to liberty and want.³⁷⁵

In the passages, both authors discussed the differences between governing and being governed. Aristotle suggested the act of *being* free or having control over one's own liberty implied that individuals possessed the ability to exercise their own sense of free will. Using this logic, while in bondage, slaves possessed little objective recourse in controlling their own fate. Aristotle's characterisation of this might suggest, for example, that pillaging barbarians can compare to servile labourers. Under this premise barbarians succumb to their basic instincts, rather than possessing the ability to enjoy a sense of free will.³⁷⁶ This idea also remains a constant for Fitzhugh's examples of

³⁷⁴ Bolland, *Politics*, 137.

³⁷⁵ Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!*, 168.

³⁷⁶ Aristotle has an affinity with modern liberal theories, especially in relation to the concept of freedom. Under this notion, we can suggest that the heart of Aristotle's views on natural liberty stemmed from the idea that all individuals (in his day this only pertained to citizens of a *polis*) possess some form natural rights (i.e. these rights go beyond legal and constitutional elements of society). Therefore, it is the responsibility of a governing state to observe and respect these rights, and if this is breached by the state, its citizens may legitimately overthrow the imposing government. For more discussion see, T.K. Lindsay, "Liberty, equality, and power: Aristotle's critique of the democratic 'presupposition'", *The American Journal of Political Science* 36, no.3 (1992): 743-61; Fred Miller, "Aristotle's political naturalism", *Ancient Philosophy* 16 (1996): 873-907. For obvious reasons Fitzhugh either chose to ignore or misrepresent these views. With the circumstance of Aristotle's theories on natural liberty borne in mind, black slaves in the South may have possessed the basis to "overthrow" their oppressors. Any form of (pro-

peasants, sailors, soldiers, or convicted criminals: the peasant, tied to the land as a serf; the sailor and soldier, often well fed, clothed, and housed, lived as subordinates; or the convicted criminal continually in a state of surveillance and kept separate from society.³⁷⁷ As this shows, Fitzhugh, inspired by Aristotle, developed a wide concept of slavery – one that went far beyond the notion of agricultural slavery, but to what end?

Fitzhugh argued that if the peasants, soldiers, and so on, engaged in social or contractual slavery, why should Southern servile labour be perceived in a negative light? Fitzhugh used Aristotle to defend the Southern slave system through a much wider conceptual definition of slavery and liberty. This argument had the potential to yield a wide-ranging and ambiguous response; after all, many abolitionists did not share Fitzhugh's philosophy or logical discourse. From the abolitionist perspective, peasant farmers, while tied to the land, lived free from the shackles of bondage.³⁷⁸ On the other hand, men exercised their free will by enlisting to serve (note: Fitzhugh did not consider conscription in his argument).³⁷⁹ Essentially, Fitzhugh failed to persuade his Northern audience of these facts, which brings the discussion back to his construction of a paternalistic slave system based on Aristotelian thought. But as this shows, Fitzhugh's thinking remained constant between *Sociology* and *Cannibals*. Beyond this, Aristotle's works provided him with a more stable foundation for his approach to paternalistic sociology. If Fitzhugh had written earlier in the 19th century, or possessed more time to develop his ideas, he might have contributed to the early debates on American sociological thought.

In sum, this section illustrated a few examples of Aristotelian thought in Fitzhugh's *Cannibals*. This suggested that Fitzhugh clearly relied on Aristotle in the development of

slavery) literature that embraced these theories could potentially have incited a slave rebellion. It is also relevant to note that the (later) Romans employed a similar concept of liberty and slavery; for discussion of some central texts, see Myles Lavan, *Slaves to Rome: Paradigms of Empire in Roman Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

³⁷⁷ Albeit, Fitzhugh was also aware of the writings of Immanuel Kant, and the themes of liberty and freedom are also evident in his writings – along with several other contemporary philosophers who did work on ethical theory. However, there is no doubt that Fitzhugh did borrow directly from Aristotle here.

³⁷⁸ For a comparative analysis of American slavery and Russian serfdom see Kolchin, *Unfree Labour*.

³⁷⁹ Fitzhugh was ambiguous in his descriptions on the idea of soldiers and sailors existing in a state of contractual slavery. Most certainly his views were spurred forth by elements such as conscription and drafting, whereby the bondsman possesses very little objective recourse, although he does not specifically discuss conscription as a contributing factor for this.

his own ideas, nonetheless there exist striking differences between the ancient and modern philosophers. Based on this, two questions remain: what does Aristotle add to Fitzhugh; and what would his approach to pro-slavery resemble if it lacked his influence? Aristotle's theory on natural slavery drives Fitzhugh's main thesis in *Cannibals*. Using Aristotle's perceptions on natural slavery, Fitzhugh presented his audiences with a new vision of pro-slavery. He characterised the South as a well-ordered household – postulating that slavery composed the foundation (in terms of the labour supply) of the society. He suggested to his readers that abolition would initiate the collapse of healthy families and cause the entire socio-political framework of the South to disintegrate.³⁸⁰ His use of Aristotle may appear as manipulations to modern historians and classicists. By, however, placing Aristotle at the forefront, Fitzhugh insinuated that slavery protected civilisation against the destructive influences of the social contract and natural rights theory. Fitzhugh situated himself well and utilised his position to label abolitionists as fanatics seeking to undermine a natural order. With Aristotle's support, Fitzhugh portrayed capitalists, abolitionists, and anyone who did not buy into Southern society as “irrational extremists in the grip of false ideology”.³⁸¹ To that end, Fitzhugh used *Cannibals* and his other articles as springboards for his pro-slavery elaborations of Aristotelian thought.³⁸²

³⁸⁰ S. Sara Monoson, “Recollecting Aristotle: Pro-Slavery Thought in Antebellum America and the Argument of *Politics* Book 1”, in Edith Hall, Richard Alston, and Justine McConnell (eds.), *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 257-58

³⁸¹ Monoson, “Recollecting Aristotle: Pro-Slavery Thought in Antebellum America and the Argument of *Politics* Book 1”, 257.

³⁸² For examples see George Fitzhugh, “The Counter Current or Slavery Principles”, *De Bow's Review* 21, no.1 (1856): 90-95; “The Politics and Economics of Aristotle and Mr. Calhoun” *De Bow's Review* 23, (1857): 173-184; “The Superiority of Southern Races”, *De Bow's Review* 31, no.4 (1861); “Society, Labour, Capital, Etc”, *De Bow's Review* 32, no.1 (1862): 134-139. Modern scholars who focus on classical intellectualism in America tend to reiterate Aristotle's importance in relation to the ideologies of the Founding Fathers and other notable intellectuals from the antebellum era. Fitzhugh's interests were inspired by Aristotle's views that some groups of human beings could be enslaved without cause, because within the natural order these men, women, and children could only be identified as slaves. Fitzhugh's approach to Aristotle was an attempt to configure his theories on slavery into an argument that supported the exploitation of servile labour as a natural right inherent to certain individuals. Yet, he did this to clairvoyantly justify slavery as an ideal condition for black slaves. But by doing this he fundamentally undermined any individual willpower Southern blacks may have possessed. For work on classical intellectualism see Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*. Winterer, *The Mirror of Antiquity*; Malcolm Heath, “Aristotle on Natural Slavery”, 243; Carl J. Richard, *The Golden Age of the Classics in America: Greece, Rome, and the Antebellum United States* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

A final point in this discussion relates to Fitzhugh's use of Aristotle as a medium to defend racial slavery: Aristotle, by contrast, did not theorise about slavery in a racial context. Mentioned numerous times throughout this thesis, the Greeks and Romans did not use skin colour or other physical markers to identify their slaves. Aristotle did define *barbaroi* (barbarians) as ideal servile labourers and he concluded that the barbarian peoples from Europe or Asia possessed servile qualities.³⁸³ Fitzhugh, on the other hand, used these ancient theories to re-define black racism. For this, he needed to factor in the non-existent discourse on racial inferiority lacking in Aristotle's philosophy; if not, his arguments would appear less persuasive to a Southern audience. Fitzhugh attempted to "correct" Aristotle's theory on natural slavery, which made it more conducive to the inferiority argument. Overall, Fitzhugh utilised Southern scientific theory in conjunction with Aristotle and declared that black inferiority did not exist during antiquity – labelling it a modern construction. He wrote further that, "Aristotle was neither anatomist, physiologist, nor phrenologist; hence, he mistook varieties of the Caucasian race for distinct and inferior races of the human family".³⁸⁴ The logic of the argument is clear: unlike the ancient Greeks, antebellum Americans possessed knowledge to identify black people as racially inferior; at the same time, these Americans would not commit the mistake of enslaving whites.

The discourse that Fitzhugh presented in *Cannibals* sought to glorify Aristotelian thought. He also attempted to stand apart from his ancient ally, and his modifications to Aristotle's literature document this. For Fitzhugh, these ancient ideologies represented classical Greece, along with his perceptions on the systems of slavery established there

³⁸³ *Βάρβαρος* (singular, barbarian) is an onomatopoeic word in ancient Greek and was made to imitate the sound foreigners made to native Greek speakers: *βάρ-βάρ-βάρ-βάρ-βάρ*.

³⁸⁴ Fitzhugh, "The Superiority of Southern Races", 448; Monoson, "Recollecting Aristotle: Pro-Slavery Thought in Antebellum America and the Argument of *Politics* Book 1", 269; for discussion on racism in classical antiquity see Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*; Gruen, *The Other in Antiquity*. The only real parallel that can be associated with Aristotle and the black inferiority argument are related to the idea that slavery is only justifiable when slaves are naturally suited to that condition (i.e. not including free peoples relegated or forced into bondage). Many black slaves were initially relegated to their condition, because of being removed from Africa and forced into the role of chattel. But the clear majority of black slaves in American South during the late antebellum period were borne into their condition. These slaves would not have been aware of life outside of captivity. Arguably, using Aristotle's logic, these servile labourers did not possess knowledge of life outside of their condition. Nevertheless, slavery was not their natural condition, so the parallel is at best, ambiguous

during antiquity.³⁸⁵ Fitzhugh's work promoted the view that Aristotle's philosophy represented the justification of a practice that went unquestioned during Greek antiquity. Fortunately, the institution which he sought to defend did not benefit from a lack of scrutiny. As we well know, Southern slavery received many criticisms from Northern abolitionists and abroad. Fitzhugh represented a school of thought that worked with Aristotle's views and theories to craft a sophisticated argument towards the defence of slavery. For contemporary historians in general, Fitzhugh exemplifies how Aristotle's works provided Southern intellectuals with the foundations for a toxic approach to (modern) civilisation – due to the inclusion of slavery.

Conclusions

This chapter explored some of the philosophical and sociological views presented by George Fitzhugh's second major contribution to the pro-slavery framework, *Cannibals All!* Specifically, my research on Fitzhugh showed that Aristotle's philosophy contributed in a major way to his defence of slavery. Putting Fitzhugh's elaboration and interpretation of Aristotle into focus raises a question for us to consider: to what extent did he rely on Aristotelian thought in *Cannibals!*? In my opinion (based on the evidence presented above) *Cannibals!* would have looked entirely different if not for the contributions of the ancient philosopher. For Fitzhugh, classical Greece represented a utopian society. He found the benefits of unmitigated slavery appealing, because he sought a similar vision for the South: a utopia built on the foundation of slavery. By incorporating Aristotle's theories into his literary output, Fitzhugh attempted to persuade his audience that Southern society needed to strive for this. His efforts ultimately failed to shift attitudes in both the North and South, although Fitzhugh's literary output provides modern scholars with a unique window into early sociological thought.

Fitzhugh's *Cannibals!* continues to support my position that classicism not only

³⁸⁵ His intentions, at times, suggest that he perceived the slave societies of ancient Greece and Rome as being utopian states – he inferred that the American South was on the precipice of developing into a similar utopian society. This is reflected more so towards his views on Plato's sketch of Magnesia in one of his later dialogues, *The Laws* and Thomas More's *Utopia*. For further discussion; see Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!*, 222-223.

permeated Southern culture, but it too possessed a drastic influence over pro-slavery literature. Fitzhugh fits into this thesis as a more intriguing author of pro-slavery works to emerge out of the American South. Unlike Cobb, McCord, and Holmes, Fitzhugh did not fit into the main group of pro-slavery thinkers – he operated in the shadows. Despite this, Fitzhugh still managed to develop many interesting ideas regarding black slavery, Northern industry, and capitalism. Indeed, some of his ideas border on insanity, but they too often reflect genuine intelligent thought – this influenced my decision to include Fitzhugh in this thesis. Unlike, Cobb, McCord, Holmes, and Hammond (the focus of chapter 7), Fitzhugh came from a relatively poor family and did not receive a normal education. Yet, by utilising classicism, he produced some fascinating and intellectual contributions to the pro-slavery argument. In recent years, Fitzhugh’s historical image has improved – Faust’s, *Ideology of Slavery*, and Jeremy Tewell’s, *A Self-Evident Lie*, lend serious weight to the intelligence of the man.³⁸⁶ Hopefully as modern historians continue to study intellectualism in the antebellum American South, the serious nature of Fitzhugh’s image and contributions will continue to increase.

In sum, Fitzhugh utilised Aristotle’s ideology and developed it to fit within the confines of pro-slavery doctrine. This, in my view, makes Fitzhugh a unique specimen – worthy of attention and scrutiny. This chapter stressed the importance of Aristotle in relation to Fitzhugh’s pro-slavery argument: it would look entirely different if not for Aristotle’s philosophy. Furthermore, if we want to come to terms with the full depth and range of the pro-slavery argument, Fitzhugh’s contributions survive as important tools for modern investigations in the field. The next chapter will continue to advance my broader thesis on the importance of classicism on Southern pro-slavery. To this end, it will focus on James Henry Hammond’s contributions to Southern pro-slavery. In particular we will see how he used classicism to defend his cotton kingdom.

³⁸⁶ Faust, *The Ideology of Slavery*, 272-301; Tewell, *A Self-Evident Lie*, 7-61 – this does not represent an exhaustive list of works that discuss Fitzhugh in a positive light, but both Faust and Tewell devote a significant amount of attention to his pro-slavery literature and intellect.

Pro-Slavery in James Henry Hammond's Cotton Kingdom: Agriculture and the "Classical Ideal"

The present editor made the acquaintance of Cato and Varro standing at a book stall on the Quai Voltaire in Paris, and they carried him away in imagination, during a pleasant half hour, not to the vineyards and olive yards of Roman Italy, but to the blue hills of a far distant Virginia where the corn was beginning to tassel and the fat cattle were loafing in the pastures. Subsequently, when it appeared that there was then no readily available English version of the Roman agronomists, this translation was made, in the spirit of old Piero Vettori, the kindly Florentine scholar. In the preface of his edition of Varro he says that he undertook the work, not for the purpose of displaying his learning, but to aid others in the study of an excellent author. The present editor has no such claim to attention: he therefore, makes the confession frankly and offers this little book to those who love the country, and read about the country amidst the crowded life of towns, with the hope that they may find in it some measure of the pleasure afforded the editor.³⁸⁷

Introduction

Thus far my research in this thesis has shown how four Southern advocates of slavery utilised classicism to defend their primary economic mode of production. Before moving onto my overall conclusions, this fifth and final chapter will continue the analysis by looking at James Henry Hammond. Unlike his contemporaries examined above, Hammond did not outwardly defend slavery by writing explicit pro-slavery literature. Yet, he strongly supported black slavery, owned hundreds of labourers, and two plantations. He energetically pushed for states' rights and had a patriotic loyalty to South Carolina and the South. In these ways, Hammond represents a true believer and supporter of both the South and black slavery. Hammond also deviates from the above group in his social and political status. While Cobb, McCord, Holmes, and Fitzhugh all represent an important core of pro-slavery thinkers, Hammond stands slightly apart from these four, partially because he utilised his position as a United States Senator to publicly defend black servile labour: this provides my thesis with a different insight into Southern pro-slavery. Thus, much like Calhoun did in the 1830s, during the 1850s

³⁸⁷ Fairfax Harrison, *Roman Farm Management. The Treatises of Cato and Varro: Done in to English, with Notes of Modern Instances* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913), 6.

Hammond stood up and spoke out against the rise of abolition and the positive good of slavery. None of the previous white Southerners examined here had the opportunity to put forth their opinions in front of the United States Senate, so Hammond provides my research with that voice. Beyond this, in my view, and based on his own knowledge of Cato the Elder's *De Agricultura*, Hammond utilised the ancient Roman work as a source of inspiration when writing his own agricultural manual. This did not directly add weight to the pro-slavery argument, but it shows that ancient Roman literature also played a role in defining the slave mode of production in the American South. Hammond's inclusion in my thesis adds then another interesting character from the American South (as the story below from his sojourn to Europe shows well enough) who shows that classicism played an important role in the pro-slavery argument. In particular, Hammond documents the use of the Classics in defining American plantation slavery from an agricultural perspective. Before moving forward, however, this chapter will provide some background and historical context about Hammond.

In 1835, at the age of 28, James Henry Hammond began his first term as a Congressman in the United States House of Representatives; yet a nervous collapse forced Hammond to relinquish his seat early in 1836. He embraced the opportunity and turned his sights towards a journey across the Atlantic. The physical wealth gained through his marriage with Catherine Fitzsimmons five years prior, provided Hammond with the means to travel throughout the British Isles and the European Continent. During the 19th century a journey from the United States to Europe did not come cheap and remained an indulgence of the privileged few citizens that could afford such luxuries.

Between July 1836 and October 1837, Hammond spent his 15-month expedition exploring the differing political and sociological landscapes of Britain and Europe. He had a difficult time disassociating Southern slavery from European servitude, and in his diary, he often expressed his frustrations over a lack in subservience from British and European menials. This frustration quickly escalated to rage while Hammond visited the Belgian city of Charleroi. At this juncture of the trip Hammond physically assaulted a servant working for a hotel. Hammond believed the innkeeper had cheated him and resolved to leave without paying for his stay. The servant chased after Hammond and to stop him from departing, the worker managed to grab the reins attached to the carriage.

Hammond “warned the servant... I would strike him”, but the Belgian did not release the reins, which led Hammond to deliver “a severe rap upon the hand of the servant”. Undeterred, the servant “turned upon me” and “he was a sturdy fellow and twice my strength, but I held him off until I wore out my stick on him and then turning the butt gave him seven severe blows on the head which sickened him, but the stick was too light to knock him down... The fellow pulled off his hat and his head, I was glad to see, was in a gore and bled profusely”.³⁸⁸ Shortly after the incident, Hammond wrote his next diary entry from a jail cell, or as he described it “in the midst of all the felons”.³⁸⁹ About six hours after the arrest, Hammond’s rage had subsided, and he agreed to pay the required 500 francs for bail. Prior to his release, Hammond’s jailors instructed him to attend a trial ten days later, instead he left for France the following day and never returned to Belgium.

Hammond’s expedition throughout Europe builds upon what we saw in the previous chapter, on George Fitzhugh, who focused much on the social systems of Europe and the North, as shown by his use of Aristotle. Hammond’s expedition in Europe gave him experiences and insights into the social systems of those societies. Thus, when Hammond returned to the American South, he boasted the superiority of slavery over the “squalid misery, loathe-some disease, and actual starvation” of English and European labourers.³⁹⁰ These observations provided Hammond with the opportunity to strengthen his pro-slavery ideas; he also used the experiences to form his opinions on the nature of comparative sociology. Hammond’s diary presents mostly negative perceptions on Europe and the British Isles, although he did mention a few instances which brought him enjoyment. For example, upon his arrival in Italy he could not “but feel uncommon sensations in putting my foot for the first time on the native soil of the Romans”.³⁹¹

Hammond emerged as one of the more important figures in the South, and this chapter will analyse how he utilised classicism in his unique defence of slavery. In 1982, Drew Gilpin Faust published a historical biography, *James Henry Hammond and the*

³⁸⁸ Drew Gilpin Faust, “A Slaveowner in a Free Society: James Henry Hammond on the Grand Tour, 1836-1837”, *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 81, no.3 (1980): 189-206 (202).

³⁸⁹ Faust “A Slaveowner in a Free Society”, 203.

³⁹⁰ James Henry Hammond, *Selections from Letters and Speeches of the Hon. James H. Hammond* (New York: John F. Trow and Co., 1866), 108.

³⁹¹ Faust, “A Slaveowner in a Free Society”, 194.

Old South: A Design for Mastery, which constitutes a rich resource for his life.³⁹² The first section of this chapter will draw substantially on Faust's work to provide a general overview of Hammond's life. From there, the chapter will move on to analyse Hammond's Cotton is King Speech, given before the United States Senate in 1858. The aim of this is to examine where he used influences from classical literature to defend the Southern mode of production against the rhetoric of Northern abolitionists. The second part of this chapter will analyse Hammond's agricultural writings, and how the Classics factored into his style of slaveholding: this will show how classicism influenced Hammond's agricultural manual. As mentioned, this chapter will first begin with a brief section on Hammond's Southern origins.

Hammond's Origins and Rise to Southern Prominence

James Henry Hammond was born on November 15, 1807 in Newberry County, South Carolina, to Elisha Hammond and Catherine Spann Hammond. The same year, Elisha Hammond taught at the South Carolina College in Columbia for its inaugural term, but he resigned shortly after the pregnancy.³⁹³ Elisha Hammond spent his early career working as a stone mason. By embracing a sensible outlook towards his own self-education (which included a frugal existence) he provided himself with a college education. Hammond's mother, Catherine Spann Hammond, came from a modest slaveholding family in Edgefield, South Carolina. Shortly after Catherine Spann Hammond's pregnancy, Elisha took a posting as head administrator at the nearby Mount Bethel secondary school, located in rural Newberry.³⁹⁴ Hammond spent his formative years under the close educational guidance of his father. During this period of his life Hammond developed a keen interest in the pursuit of knowledge, which he utilised later in both his political and agricultural careers. His thirst for knowledge contributed to his unorthodox tactics when it came to his plantation at Silver Bluff. This allowed

³⁹² Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 7.

³⁹³ For the history of South Carolina College see Elizabeth Cassidy West, *The Campus History Series: The University of South Carolina* (Charleston, SC.: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 9-65.

³⁹⁴ Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 8-9.

Hammond the flexibility to think beyond the current and observed Southern agricultural practices. Hammond's contemporaries knew well that he often experimented with unconventional agricultural ideas, for example testing new forms of crop rotation, manuring practices, and so forth.

In 1814, Elisha returned to Columbia with his wife and four children. This urban setting provided the young Hammond with more academic opportunities than rural Newberry could and in 1823 he began as a freshman at South Carolina College with advanced standing. This indicated that he "already mastered the basics of Latin and Greek and was prepared to read Tacitus, Cicero, Homer, and Xenophon" during biweekly oral presentations.³⁹⁵ His course load also encompassed mathematics, natural sciences, history, and philosophy. He graduated fourth in his class in 1825 and gave the valedictorian address during the ceremony. A remarkable achievement, considering Hammond had fallen to the bottom percentile of his class the previous year.³⁹⁶ After taking on a few teaching and tutoring positions, Hammond decided that he did not enjoy the profession. Hammond instead shifted his focus towards studying the law. In 1828, shortly after his admittance to the South Carolina bar, he opened a legal practice in Columbia. During this period, he began to publish an editorial column for the *Southern Times*, which initially focused on issues regarding the Nullification Crisis.³⁹⁷ Hammond's time as an editor with the *Southern Times* sparked his interest in politics and because of this he started his journey towards what developed into a long political career. The following statement documents this: "in the year 1830, I began my political career by starting a newspaper in Columbia... I had not up until that time been a very warm politician".³⁹⁸ By 1830, Hammond controlled the *Southern Times*, and continued

³⁹⁵ Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 14.

³⁹⁶ Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 20.

³⁹⁷ For more on Nullification and the crisis this posed see William Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Crisis in South Carolina: 1816-1836* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965); Richard B. Latner, "The Nullification Crisis and Southern Subversion", *Journal of Southern History* 43 (1977). The crisis primarily occurred between 1828-1832 and plagued Jackson's early presidential career. Southern farmers had issues with the tariffs being enforced on them for more expensive imports originating in Europe, which deflated the value of goods manufactured in the North. Southern politicians, notably those from South Carolina, fought the tariff increase because it benefitted Northern industrialists at the expense of Southern planters.

³⁹⁸ Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 44. See also James Henry Hammond, February 7, 1841, Personal Diary, James Henry Hammond Papers, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

as editor in chief until the spring of 1831. His strong support for Nullification increased his popularity among his colleagues, and, more broadly, his readership.

Beyond his legal and editorial duties, in 1829 Hammond started courting Catherine Fitzsimons, who belonged to a relatively wealthy family situated in Charleston. Hammond began his relationship with the 15-year old just before his twenty-third birthday. The age differences created tensions among her relatives because some of them believed Hammond lusted after the family's wealth; Faust suggests the Fitzsimons's despised Hammond's low social standing. However, after nearly two years of courtship, the two married on June 23, 1831.³⁹⁹ In the autumn of that same year Hammond closed his legal practice in Columbia and moved with Catherine to the Silver Bluff plantation, an endowment received through the marriage. Hammond now devoted much of his attention to politics and slaveholding – two key elements which he thought personified the ideal white Southerner. Hammond developed a keen passion for Southern agriculture, using his new position to experiment with many agricultural and slaveholding practices. Despite its original condition, which he described as underdeveloped with both the chattel and livestock generally “unrestrained”, Hammond transformed Silver Bluff into a productive estate.⁴⁰⁰ He did experience some hardships, especially during the first ten years of his mastery, although Hammond discovered success through an extraordinary amount of trial and error; for example, to decrease the slave mortality rate he attempted variations of homeopathy. Moreover, based on suggestions from Edmund Ruffin, Hammond developed a tremendous interest into the exploration of scientific agriculture (especially for crop rotation and manuring practices).⁴⁰¹ For the remainder of his life, Hammond attempted to adapt the operations at Silver Bluff, which over time, gradually increased its production and profit. Over his 30-year agricultural career he developed a keen business sense, and this played a large role in his overall success at Southern farming.

³⁹⁹ Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 59.

⁴⁰⁰ Hammond Plantation Diary, James Henry Hammond Papers, 1831-55, SCL.

⁴⁰¹ Edmund Ruffin, *Essay on Calcareous Manures* (Richmond, VA.: J.W. Randolph, 1852). In 1843 Ruffin was invited to make an agricultural survey of South Carolina. During this visit, Hammond and Ruffin developed close personal ties, and spent numerous evenings at Hammond's estate at Silver Bluff analysing specimens of Carolina soil over “games of billiards and glasses of port”. Faust, “A Southern Stewardship: The Intellectual and the Proslavery Argument, 63-80; Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 126.

Hammond also maintained a prominent political career and began by serving in the United States House of Representatives as a member of the Nullifier Party in 1835 and between 1842 and 1844 as Governor of South Carolina. During his governorship Hammond committed transgressions with his teenage nieces – the daughters of Wade Hampton II (and Hammond’s brother-in-law). In his diary, Hammond admits to having undue familiarity with his nieces, but he strongly denies the seduction charge hurled at him by Hampton.⁴⁰² Based on the humiliation brought on by this, at the conclusion of his two-year gubernatorial term, Hammond abandoned his mansion in Columbia and retreated to Silver Bluff. He spent this period in a sort of agricultural exile – not dissimilar to the one experienced by George Frederick Holmes (although under different circumstances). During Hammond’s exile, he shared a lengthy and amicable relationship with Holmes, even helping Holmes to secure the previously mentioned teaching position at the College of William and Mary. In the early 1840s, Holmes published many articles in the *Southern Quarterly Review* and the *Southern Literary Messenger* which mainly focused on moral philosophy in (contemporary) society. In 1845, Hammond began following the young classically trained scholar, because he agreed with several of Holmes’ opinions. Both Hammond and Holmes shared common ground on the premise of “discovering the true laws of social organization, with design of thence descending to the amelioration of the social distemper of the times”.⁴⁰³ Unlike Hammond, Holmes devoted his life to academia, specialising in philosophy and the classical world. Importantly, Holmes’ unique outlook presented Hammond with an opportunity to learn more about classical antiquity.⁴⁰⁴ Hammond’s correspondence with Holmes did broaden his intellectual horizons, but he also used his relationships with other prominent white Southerners to cultivate his knowledge. The likes of William Gilmore Simms, the mentioned Edmund Ruffin, Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, Holmes, among others, shared their individual pro-slavery sentiments with Hammond. Through networking, Hammond regularly communicated with these men and incorporated their positions into his own

⁴⁰² For discussion see Drew Gilpin Faust, *A Sacred Circle: The Dilemma of the Intellectual in the Old South, 1840-1860* (Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 16-17, 48-54; Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 241-45.

⁴⁰³ Faust, *A Sacred Circle*, 5, 116, 139.

⁴⁰⁴ Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 253.

outlook on pro-slavery. Hammond constantly sought to broaden his scope of knowledge, and for example, his friendship with Edmund Ruffin developed because of Hammond's interest in Ruffin's expertise on manuring practices. Overall, Hammond's connections with other Southern intellectuals represents a main reason for his successes as an advocate of slavery.⁴⁰⁵

During his self-imposed political exile, Hammond primarily resided at Silver Bluff; yet, in 1857 he returned to Washington D.C as Senator of South Carolina.⁴⁰⁶ In the Senate, Hammond presented his infamous speech on the Mudsill Theory called Cotton is King (examined in greater detail below). In 1860 Hammond retired from politics, although he remained vocal during the Civil War. His retirement from politics was brought on by an increasingly severe illness (most likely bowel or colon cancer), which permanently forced Hammond to reside on his plantations – either at Silver Bluff, or Redcliffe. Hammond, plagued with haemorrhages originating in his bowels, would sometimes lose nearly a pound of blood daily, and in November 1864, after battling with the illness for nearly three years, Hammond died a short distance from Silver Bluff, at his Redcliffe plantation.⁴⁰⁷ He perished before the conclusion of the Civil War – likely the best situation for such a patriotic white Southerner and staunch defender of slavery. Had he not succumbed to his illness, Hammond may have suffered a fate not dissimilar to his long-time friend Edmund Ruffin, who committed suicide on June 18, 1865 (rather than submit to “Yankee rule”). For modern scholars, Hammond represents a main icon of Southern society; for white Southerners he stood as one of the ardent defenders of their culture. As stated, Hammond received training in the Classics, exchanged views on classical material with other white Southerners, and represents an ideal candidate for my current research in this thesis. The next section of the chapter will therefore examine Hammond's Cotton is King Speech and analyse how he used ideas from two classical texts, Aristotle's *Politics* and Cicero's *De Legibus*, to defend his Mudsill Theory.

⁴⁰⁵ Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*.

⁴⁰⁶ Kolchin, *Unfree Labour*, 120.

⁴⁰⁷ Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 377. “At the time of his death, Hammond was consulting both homeopathic and regular physicians. The lack of precise information about which compounds he used, how frequently, and in what dosages makes it impossible to be certain about the diagnosis of Hammond's illness or cause of death”.

Cotton is King: Hammond and the Exploitation of Labour

Hammond delivered his Cotton is King Speech to the United States Senate on March 4, 1858, and during the height of Bleeding Kansas.⁴⁰⁸ Throughout the speech, Hammond voiced his disapproval of admitting Kansas into the Union as a free state, which he framed as a potential act of aggression against the South.⁴⁰⁹ As shown in the chapter on George Frederick Holmes, in the Kansas Territory, Southern expansionists feuded with abolitionist extremists and homesteaders who, like the abolitionists, regarded slavery as a threat to free soil farming.

Hammond's position emphasised that the North did not require the land "because they [Northern states] produce no great staple that the South does not produce; while we produce two or three, and those are the very greatest, that she [the North] can never produce".⁴¹⁰ Hammond appealed to the Senate and suggested that admitting Kansas to the Union as a free state would squander the benefits of its agricultural richness. His appeal culminated in the following declaration:

But if there were no other reason why we should never have war, would any sane nation make war on cotton? Without firing a gun, without drawing a sword, should they make war on us we could bring the whole world to our feet. The South is perfectly competent to go on, one, two, or three years without planting a seed of cotton... What would happen if no cotton was furnished for three years? I will not stop to depict what everyone can imagine, but this is certain: England would topple headlong and carry the whole civilized world with her, save the South. No, you dare

⁴⁰⁸ For Bleeding Kansas see Oakes, *Freedom National*; Jonathan H. Earle, Diane M. Burke, *Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri: The Long Civil War on the Border* (Lawrence, KS.: The University of Kansas Press, 2015).

⁴⁰⁹ This was a genuine concern, because during the 1850s several of the Southern elite realised that slavery needed to expand into these territories to remain sustainable. If the institution became solely an entity contained in the South, it would not survive. This had multiple factors, chief being land exploitation and overuse of agricultural space (i.e. more was needed for economic stability). Also, the idea that if territories engulfed in westward expansion were admitted to the Union as free-states they would quickly encircle the South and cut off any viable hope for the expansion of slavery. This was exemplified in the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 (subsequently leading to Bleeding Kansas), whereby the popular sovereignty of white settlers determined whether they would allow slavery within each territory. This led to both pro-slavery and abolitionist extremists flooding the territories; establishing hotbeds for both camps. This resulted in numerous conflicts between both sides between 1854 and 1861. For discussion on the economics of the late antebellum era see Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (Middletown, CT.: Wesleyan, 1989); Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 169-200; Stanley Engerman and Kenneth L. Sokoloff, *Economic Development in the Americas since 1500: Endowments and Institutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 329-66.

⁴¹⁰ Hammond, March 4, 1858, Cotton is King. See Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!*, 428-31.

not make war on cotton. No power on earth dares make war upon it. Cotton is king.⁴¹¹

Put differently: No, you dare not make war on the South. No power on earth dares make war upon it. The South is king. These excerpts indicate that Hammond believed the Southern economy out-produced Northern industry. He claimed that if Southern planters stopped producing cotton and its other main staples, many modern economies would halt (including the North). Many senators agreed with Hammond, and during the Buchanan Administration the Senate held a Democratic majority. The political party, founded by Andrew Jackson in 1824, possessed a fundamental commitment to Jeffersonian agrarianism. Hammond illustrated this political support throughout his speech, shown for instance in this passage: “I have nothing to say in disparagement either of the soil of the North, or the people of the North, who are a brave, and energetic race, full of intellect”, but continued with this: “As to her men, I may be allowed to say, they have never proved themselves to be superior to those of the South, either in the field or the Senate”.⁴¹²

The ideas resemble those expressed by Fitzhugh in the previous chapter, but he never had the opportunity to address the United States Senate. As mentioned above, he served as a clerk in the Buchanan administration – well beneath Hammond’s elite standing. By 1858, Hammond had enjoyed a (relatively) illustrious political career and possessed three decades of agricultural experience. On the other hand, Fitzhugh had limited political and agricultural expertise, while *De Bow’s Review*, the *Richmond Enquirer*, and the *Richmond Examiner* acted as his main outlets for publishing. When compared with some of his contemporaries, Hammond did possess similar ideas, but his (social) standing allowed him to express his positions in different contexts. In particular, Hammond’s elite status afforded him strong connections with several Southern intellectuals and Faust’s chart (explored previously in chapter 1) illustrates the personal

⁴¹¹ Hammond, March 4, 1858, Cotton is King.

⁴¹² Hammond, March 4, 1858, Cotton is King. I do find it interesting that he chose to use the word “race” here when describing his Northern compatriots. It perhaps implies that Hammond viewed Northern whites as being beneath his “race” of white Southerners. Perhaps this is exemplified in the following statement where Hammond proclaimed that “Northerners never did prove themselves as being superior in either politics or agriculture”. From a Southern perspective being successful in these pursuits indicated a great accomplishment – so if Northerners were successful in neither, it stands to reason that Hammond did view them as a “lesser race” of whites.

interactions among slavery's defenders. Within this chart, Faust indicates that Hammond communicated with 90% of the white Southerners listed therein, which supports the opinion that he constructed a vast social network with his contemporaries.⁴¹³ It follows that Hammond's views received much attention from his contemporaries. With this borne in mind, Hammond's use of classicism would have also found wide circulation. Therefore, the next part of this section will analyse Hammond's Cotton is King Speech by looking at the rhetoric he used in the speech and how he used ancient ideology.

As mentioned above, based on his prior training in both Latin and Greek, Hammond received advanced status upon his admission to South Carolina College. South Carolina College maintained a strong classical curriculum, so prior training in the Classics strengthened Hammond's chances of gaining admittance. Hammond read the texts of many Greek and Latin authors such as Homer, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Cato, Cicero, Tacitus, Plutarch, and so forth. His Cotton is King Speech reflects philosophical elements from Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero's natural law (which he mentions specifically). The overarching theme of Cotton is King builds upon the idea of natural slavery and this theory, which we saw previously, heavily influenced Hammond's concept of the so-called mudsill. In the speech, Hammond defined mudsill, as follows:

In all societies there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is, a class requiring but a low order of intellect and but a little skill. Its requisites are vigor, docility, fidelity. Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, civilization, and refinement. It constitutes the very mud-sill of society and of political government; and you might as well attempt to build a house in the air, as to build either the one or the other, except on this mud-sill. Fortunately for the South, she found a race adapted to that purpose to her hand. A race inferior to her own, but eminently qualified in temper, in vigor, in docility, in capacity to stand the climate, to answer all her purposes. We use them for our purpose, and call them slaves. We found them slaves by the common 'consent of mankind', which, according to Cicero, *lex naturae est*. The highest proof of what is Nature's law. We are old-fashioned at the South yet; slave is a word discarded now by 'ears polite;' I will not characterize that class at the North by that term; but you have it; it is there; it is everywhere; it is eternal.⁴¹⁴

In this passage Hammond states that "we found them slaves by the 'common consent of mankind', which according to Cicero, *lex naturae est*. The highest proof of what is

⁴¹³ Faust, "A Southern Stewardship", 68.

⁴¹⁴ Hammond, March 4, 1858, Cotton is King.

Nature's Law".⁴¹⁵ Hammond's inclusion of Cicero here yields little functionality – as his ancient writings have very little to do with offering support for black slavery. Yet, by merely mentioning Cicero in his speech, Hammond did well to exploit a (non-existent) historical precedent to defend slavery. The above chapters do well to show this common theme; during the 1850s, in particular, pro-slavery authors regularly turned to historical precedents from the Greco-Roman world to justify slavery. Thus, Hammond used the potential impact of including Cicero in his speech to receive a positive response from his audience.

In his works *De Re Publica* and *De Legibus* Cicero did indicate his views on natural law, but they offer little support to Hammond.⁴¹⁶ Cicero perceived that individuals should strive to work towards the betterment of the state, and from his perspective, these established laws (i.e. those seeking to protect citizens, or maintain the preservation of the state) furthered the advancement of civilised society.⁴¹⁷ Hammond viewed natural black slavery as an extension of Cicero's natural law, and, thus, took *De Legibus* out of context. The passage below, taken from a popular 19th century translation of Cicero, illustrates a portion of his views on natural law:

When such rules were drawn up and put in force, it is clear that men called them 'laws'. From this point of view it can be readily understood that those who formulated wicked and unjust statutes for nations, thereby breaking their promises and agreements, put into effect anything but 'laws'. It may thus be clear that in the very definition of the term 'law' there inheres the idea and principle of choosing what is just and true.⁴¹⁸

In the above passage, Hammond indicated his personal opinions on abolitionism. By way of this he insisted that Northern states merely changed their economic system from the slave mode to the free wage mode of production (i.e. slavery still

⁴¹⁵ Hammond, March 4, 1858, Cotton is King.

⁴¹⁶ For Cicero Andrew R. Dyck, *A Commentary on Cicero: De Legibus* (Ann Arbor, MI.: The University of Michigan Press, 2004); Elizabeth Asmis, "Cicero on Natural Laws and the Laws of the State", *Classical Antiquity* 27, no. 1 (2008): 1-33; Fernando H. Alonso, "Cicero and Natural Law", *Archives for Philosophy and Law of Social Philosophy* 98, no. 2 (2012): 157-168.

⁴¹⁷ Francis Barham. *The Political Works of Marcus Tullius Cicero: Comprising His Treatise on the Commonwealth and his Treatise on the Laws. Translated from the Original with Dissertations and Notes in Two Volumes.* (London: Edmund Spettigue, 67, Chancery Lane, 1842). "For every law which deserves that name is truly praiseworthy, as they prove by approximately the following arguments. It is agreed, of course, that laws were invented for the safety of citizens, the preservation of States, and the tranquility and happiness of human life, and that those who first put statutes of this kind in force convinced their people that it was their intention to write down and put into effect such rules as, once accepted and adopted".

⁴¹⁸ Barham. *The Political Works of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, 131.

existed through the exploitation of free wage labour). Hammond explored this idea further in the following section of his speech:

Your whole hireling class of manual labourers and ‘operatives,’ as you call them, are essentially slaves. The difference between us is, that our slaves are hired for life and well compensated; there is no starvation, no begging, no want of employment among our people, and not too much employment either. Yours are hired by the day, not cared for, and scantily compensated, which may be proved in the most painful manner, at any hour in any street of your large towns. Why, you meet more beggars in one day, in any single street of the city of New York, than you would meet in a lifetime in the whole South. We do not think that whites should be slaves either by law or necessity. Our slaves are black, of another and inferior race.⁴¹⁹

In this passage, Hammond explicitly defined capitalist free wage labour (especially in the North) as an extension of chattel slavery. He believed Southern paternalism offered a suitable replacement for free wage labour, because under this umbrella slaves remained protected from the “harshness” of reality. Hammond’s position, which accused the North of continuing to use chattel slavery, proposed that servile labour in the South represented a better economic option for America. To revisit my earlier point, this has nothing to do with Cicero’s views on natural law. The inclusion of Cicero does, however, strengthen Hammond’s prose – as mentioned many times throughout this thesis, white Southerners frequently looked for ancient validation for their own society. Hammond’s use of Cicero here provides us with yet another example of this. Despite Cicero having little relevance on the discussion here, Hammond’s position in the mudsill theory does appeal to Aristotle’s natural slavery. In his mudsill theory Hammond argues that instead of using white free labourers—as they did at the North—the South utilised an “inferior” race of blacks. Clearly, Aristotle’s ideas on natural slavery fit well into Hammond’s so-called mudsill, and we can see evidence of this in the following passage:

Nature is inclined to make a difference also between the bodies of freemen and of slaves, making those of the latter strong for their necessary employments, of the former upright and useless for such services, but still useful for public life (which again is divided into the employments of war and peace) but yet the very reverse is often found—namely, that some have the bodies of freemen and others the souls... However, it is not as easy to see the beauty of the soul as it is to see that of the body. It is then (in conclusion) evident that there are some persons by nature free and others, slaves, and that to these latter the state of slavery is both advantageous and just. [Does a slave possess any other excellence, besides his merits as a tool and a servant, more valuable than these, for instance temperance, courage, justice and

⁴¹⁹ Hammond, March 4, 1858, Cotton is King.

any of the other moral virtues, or has he no excellence beside his bodily service?
For either way there is difficulty; if slaves do possess moral virtue, wherein will
they differ from freemen?]⁴²⁰

The mudsill represented in Hammond’s discourse can easily apply to Aristotle’s opinion that barbarians—or non-Greeks—functioned best as servile labourers (for more on this see the previous chapter on George Fitzhugh). Hammond took this idea and applied it to black slaves (or white free wage labourers). We saw many of these concepts in the previous chapter on Fitzhugh, so my research will not labour on them here. My emphasis here merely intends to reflect the ongoing struggle between slavery and capitalism during this period of antebellum history. With Hammond’s *Cotton is King* Speech and its central issues borne in mind, the final section of this chapter will shift focus onto plantation management. As mentioned above, Hammond did not use classicism solely to buffer his wider political ideas. He also used it in a more “bottom-up” fashion; for example, with particular relevance to plantation and slave management. This part will then focus on passages from Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* Cato’s *De Agricultura*, and Hammond’s personal plantation manual, which will determine how ancient literature influenced his views on agricultural practices at Silver Bluff and Redcliffe.

The Southern Plantation: Hammond’s Classical Ideal

In the *Oeconomicus*, the ancient Greek writer Xenophon opened with a dialogue between Socrates and Critobulus, in which they discussed the management of their ideal agricultural estate:

Tell me, Critobulus, is estate management the name of a branch of knowledge, like medicine, smithing, and carpentry?

I think so, replied Critobulus.

And can we say what the function of estate management is, just as we can say what the function of each of these occupations is?

Well, I suppose that the business of a good estate manager is to manage his own estate well.

Yes, and in case he were put in charge of another man’s estate, could he not, if he chose, manage it as well as he manages his own? Anyone who understands

⁴²⁰ Bolland, *Politics*, 122; for natural slavery in *Politics* I see Heath, “Aristotle on Natural Slavery”, 243-270; Karbowski, “Aristotle’s Scientific Inquiry into Natural Slavery”, 331-353.

carpentry can do for another exactly the same work as he does for himself; and so, I presume, can a good estate manager.⁴²¹

Through his education Hammond developed a familiarity with many ancient texts, which presumably included the works of Xenophon. After Hammond inherited Silver Bluff, by way of his marriage to Catherine Fitzsimons, he developed a keen interest in the practice of agriculture. By the end of his life, Hammond had enjoyed a long career of plantation management and personified a successful slaveholder. For three decades, he committed himself to “rationalise and regularise as much of the operation of his plantation as managerial efficiency and the existing state of agricultural science would permit”.⁴²² His mastery of control over his plantations led to many advances, but also to the occasional failure (i.e. sabotage by his slaves, drunken overseers, utilisation of white labour, poor crop yield, and so forth.) Nevertheless, “his ambition made him an aggressive and interventionist master; it similarly transformed him into an innovator in farming methods and a leading advocate of scientific agriculture”.⁴²³ This description of Hammond reflects the sentiments expressed by Socrates and Critobulus in the dialogue above. No doubt Hammond had some familiarity with the text and likely desired to emulate (in some respects) this ancient ideal. Having introduced Hammond’s style of plantation management, which paralleled a monarch governing over his fiefdom, the next part of this section will examine one key ancient text that, in my view, influenced his writings.

Between 1857 and 1859 Hammond compiled a plantation manual in which, he outlined the operations of his estates at Silver Bluff and Redcliffe. The manual included over 25 years of his experiences, so arguably, his writings represent both descriptive and idealised versions of slaveholding and plantation management. The work contains

⁴²¹ Xenophon. *Oeconomicus*. (trans.) E.C Marchant (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1913), 1. Having experienced difficulty in locating a suitable 19th century translation, the above passage is taken from early 20th century Loeb edition. Socrates (ca. 470-399 BC) was an ancient Athenian philosopher who is often credited with establishing Western philosophical thought. For more discussion see Donald R. Morrison (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Critobulus, active during the 5th-century BC, was an agriculturist and a close friend of Socrates.

⁴²² Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 105.

⁴²³ Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 266, 273-74; see also James Henry Hammond to John C. Calhoun. September 10, 1842, John C. Calhoun Papers, Clemson University, Clemson, S.C.; James Henry Hammond. “Suggestions for Southern Planters”, *Southern Agriculturalist* 5, (1845): 100-205.

several instructional elements on matters such as, crops, how to select an effective overseer, rations for slaves (food, clothing, and shelter), adequate punishments for slaves, livestock management, and so on. The work displays significant overlaps with the work of Cato the Elder written during the 2nd century BC. Modern scholars agree that Cato, like Hammond, wrote his work later in life, after several years of experience. Hammond stated his awareness of Cato's agricultural manual during a meeting of the ABC Farmers Club of Beech Island.⁴²⁴ During a meeting of the club in 1854 "Hammond himself, by far the largest landholder in the area, dominated the proceedings by regaling his neighbors with Cato's views on manure, as well as the results of his own undertakings at Silver Bluff".⁴²⁵ Hammond also mentioned Cato in an oration to the State Agricultural Society of South Carolina in 1841; the following passage reflects this:

Let me recommend to their earnest consideration a much more extensive use of that implement which has wrought such a revolution in a short staple culture within the last 10 years. I mean the plough. Horse power is in planting what machinery is in manufacturing. And not only saves labor, but does better work and assists to preserve and renovate the land. Cato said—so long ago as his day—that 'the best culture of land was good ploughing: the next best, ploughing in the ordinary way, and the next best'—but after these, "laying on manure". I commend his maxims to our Sea Island Planters, and believe that by adoption of them they will soon absorb a portion of the labor which will be thrown out of the Short Staple crop.⁴²⁶

From this we get a clear idea that Hammond did possess knowledge of Cato's writings on Roman agriculture, and, therefore, potentially used *De Agricultura* as a source of inspiration for his personal manual. Hammond did too read other ancient Roman authors in his agricultural pursuits, shown in the following passage from a letter he wrote in 1846:

Pliny, who wrote during the first century of our Era, mentions Marl as having been long in use among the Greeks and, also in Gaul and Britain... Varro, who wrote a century before Pliny, mentions having seen fields in Gaul covered with a 'white fossil clay', and describes several varieties of marl as in common use.⁴²⁷

As the Roman world expanded throughout the Mediterranean basin, they learned the affects marl had on the character of the soil from regions such as Gaul, Germania, and

⁴²⁴ Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 161.

⁴²⁵ Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 161.

⁴²⁶ James Henry Hammond. *Anniversary Oration of the State Agricultural Society of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC.: A.S. Johnson, 1841), 16.

⁴²⁷ James Henry Hammond. "Marl: A Letter Addressed to the Agricultural Society of Jefferson County, Georgia", (1846): 1-2.

Britannia. There exist no natural deposits of marl in Italy, so the Romans knew nothing of its use, from experience, but Pliny's treatment of the subject provides a sound source of information.⁴²⁸ Nevertheless, the above passages tell us that Hammond possessed an awareness of ancient literature and some manuring practices which occurred in the Roman world. Relating this back to Cato, the passage above from Hammond's oration shows us that he commended his ploughing and manuring style to contemporary planters. We cannot ascertain if Hammond did prefer Cato's work, because he does not directly say this, but his comments at least indicate that he developed a fondness for *De Agricultura* – perhaps, too, Cato's staunch reputation as a politician appealed to Hammond.

Assuming that Hammond used Cato's work for inspiration in his own agricultural manual, we can look at three examples which indicate this. In both agricultural works, Cato and Hammond emphasised concise ways to approach plantation management. Hammond and Cato also both wrote extensive sections on the role for the overseer; which include specific instructions for the proper behaviour befitting an overseer (motivated, hardworking, and sober individuals) or the requirements for the treatment of slaves (punishments, ensuring labourers arrive to their post on time, and so forth). Cato and Hammond, therefore, recognised the importance of retaining an adequate farm manager. Both authors provide detailed accounts on the role of the overseer, so the passages below display extracts from an early 20th century translation of Cato, followed by Hammond's manual. On the role of the overseer Cato, in part, wrote the following:

These are the duties of the overseer: He should maintain discipline. He should observe the feast days. He should respect the rights of others and steadfastly uphold his own. He should settle all quarrels among the hands; if any one is at fault he should administer punishment. He should take care that no one on the place is in want, or lacks food or drink; in this respect he can afford to be generous, for he will thus more easily prevent picking and stealing. Unless the overseer is of evil mind, he will himself do no wrong, but if he permits wrong-doing by others the master should not suffer such indulgence to pass with impunity. He should show appreciation of courtesy, to encourage others to practise it. He should not be given to gadding or conviviality, but should always be sober. He should keep the hands busy, and should see that they do what the master has ordered. He should not think that he knows more than the master... He should confine his religious practices to church on Sunday, or to his own house... He should not lend money to no man

⁴²⁸ Marl is a calcium carbonate or lime-rich mud which contains high amounts of clay and silt. It was used by Southern farmers as a soil conditioner and to neutralize acidity. Pliny *Natural History* 17.4.

unbidden by the master, but what the master has lent he should collect... First up in the morning, he should be the last to go to bed at night; and before he does, he should see that the farm gates are closed, and that each of the hands is in his own bed...⁴²⁹

Whereas Hammond, in part, wrote this:

The overseer will never be expected to work in the field, but he must always be with the hands when not otherwise engaged in the employers business, and will be required to attend on occasion to any pecuniary transaction connected with the plantation. The overseer should never give away, sell or exchange, not buy, order or contract for anything without the full knowledge of the employer and [with] positive order to do so. The overseer must never be absent a single night, nor an entire day, without permission previously obtained. Whenever absent at church, or elsewhere, he must be on the plantation by sundown without fail... All use of spirituous liquors by the overseer is objected to and should he get drunk he must expect to be instantly discharged.⁴³⁰

The major difference between Cato and Hammond's overseer comes in the form of slave versus free – Cato used slaves for his overseers, while Hammond employed white freemen. Yet, Hammond's job description for his overseers indicated a strict work regime, which yielded little time for personal activities. Based on Hammond's writings, overseers on his plantations lived isolated from the outside world and had to seek his permission to leave the plantation. In my view, Hammond would have found it extremely difficult to exercise this level of control over a free person, which explains his high turnover of overseers. In contrast to Cato's text, Hammond's description signifies a role closer to that of a slave.⁴³¹ Plantation owners in the American South employed white men, often on short term or fixed contracts; it therefore remains difficult to make comparisons between Roman and American estate managers.⁴³² My observations convey the implications that Cato's style of writing in *De Agricultura* influenced Hammond's plantation manual. On this basis, my argument puts forth that Hammond accepted Cato's

⁴²⁹ Harrison, *Roman Farm Management: Cato and Varro*, 32-35. See chart 2 in the Appendix for the full text.

⁴³⁰ James Henry Hammond. May 1858, Plantation Manual, James Henry Hammond Papers, Library of Congress Washington D.C., 15-22. See chart 2 in the Appendix for the full text

⁴³¹ For modern discussion on the role of the overseer in the American South see William K. Scarborough, *The Overseer: Plantation Management in the Old South* (Athens, GA.: The University of Georgia Press, 1966); James O. Breeden (ed.), *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1980); Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 290-325; Dal Lago and Katsari, *Slave Systems: Ancient and Modern*, 187-214.

⁴³² For more discussion on Roman bailiffs see Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome*, 10-31, 57-107; Jesper Carlsen, "Recruitment and Training of Roman Estate Managers in a Comparative Perspective", in Roth (ed.), *By the Sweat of Your Brow*, 75-90.

microcosmic approach to estate management. The ancient work, while easily accessible to (literate) Southern planters provided a source of support for Hammond's agricultural writings. Michael O'Brien suggested that John Taylor portrayed another example of a white Southerner using Cato for literary support. O'Brien references Taylor's 1814 work, the *Arator, Being a Series of Agricultural Essay's, Practical and Political: In Sixty-One Numbers* as evidence of this. In the *Arator*, Taylor provided his Southern audience with a selection of chapters outlining advice for plantation management. The work addressed key issues such as instruction on how to keep overseers employed for an extended period (including adequate wage scales); how not to be an absentee master; the benefits of having proper fences; manuring practices for crops and fields; proper slave quarters; slave rations; crop rotation; the benefits of drinking cider, and so forth. The *Arator* mainly focused on practical advice for planters and reflects elements of Cato's ideal approach to estate management. Again, it made sense for white Southern planters to draw influence from Roman farm management, as they continually sought validation from this ancient society.⁴³³

The following passage shows another example of Cato's influence, as it outlines his ideal food and wine ration for Roman slaves:

The following are the customary allowances for food: For the hands, four pecks of meal for the winter, and four and one-half for the summer. For the overseer, the housekeeper, the wagoner, the shepherd, three pecks each. For the slaves, four pounds of bread for the winter, but when they begin to cultivate the vines this is increased the five pounds until the figs are ripe, then return to four pounds. The sum of wine allowed for each hand per annum is eight quadrants, or Amphora, but add in the proportion as they do work. Ten quadrants [ca.260 litres] per annum is not too much to allow them to drink. Save the wind fall olives as much as possible as relishes for the hands. Later set aside such of the ripe olives as will make the least oil. Be careful to make them go as far as possible. When the olives are all eaten, give them fish pickles and vinegar. One peck of salt per annum is enough per hand.⁴³⁴

Hammond claimed to provide his slaves with the following food rations:

⁴³³ O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 885; see also, Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South*, 274, in this she claims Hammond often "regaled his neighbors with Cato's views on manure". James Henry Hammond to Edmund Ruffin, July 22, February 6, 1846, both in Ruffin Papers. "Record of the Proceedings of Beech Island Agricultural Club, 1846-1862" (typescript in South Carolina Library). For more evidence of Hammond's familiarity with ancient texts see, James Henry Hammond. "Marl: A Letter Addressed to the Agricultural Society of Jefferson County, Georgia", (1846): 1-2.

⁴³⁴ Harrison, *Roman Farm Management: Cato and Varro*, 36-37.

Allowances are given out once a week. No distinction is made among work-hands, whether they are full-hands, under field-hands or adjuncts about the yard, stables, etc. Each work-hand gets a peck of meal every Sunday morning – the measure filled and piled as long as it will stand on it, but not packed or shaken. Each work hand gets 3 lbs. of bacon or pickled pork every Monday night. Fresh meat may be substituted at the rates of 3 ½ lbs. of fresh pork, (uncured, but salted) or 4 lbs. of beef or mutton, or 4 ½ of pork offal. When 1 pint of molasses is given the meat is reduced to 2 ½ lbs. of bacon or pickled pork, or 3 lbs. of fresh pork, beef or mutton, or 3 ½ lbs. of pork offal. Mixed allowances of bacon and fresh meat are given in the same proportions. The entire amount of meat is weighted out from the smokehouse and divided satisfactorily in the presence of the overseer. Fresh beef maybe given late in summer and until spring – never in full allowances but in cold weather. Fresh pork and pork offal only at hog killing times... Drams are never given as rewards, but only as medicinal.⁴³⁵

Based on these passages, we can see that Hammond's text reflects Cato's ideas, but the types of foodstuffs differ. As shown, Hammond's slaves received a considerable meat ration, while Cato's did not.⁴³⁶ But this difference is easily explained by the different economic and cultural contexts that promoted vast differences in diet; for example, meat did not represent a main staple in the Roman diet, more generally. For Cato and Hammond, the fundamental principles of practicing agriculture remained similar; both slaveholders placed emphasis on maintaining the estate and the health of its servile labour force. Even if their methodology towards agricultural practices differed in the details, the broader framework need not. The final connection between the two manuals, as discussed here, concerns the clothing ration for slaves. Cato suggested the following clothing ration for his slaves:

Allow each hand a smock and a cloak every other year. As often as you give out a smock or cloak to any one, take up the old one, so that caps can be made out of it. A pair of wooden shoes should be allowed every other year.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁵ Hammond. May 1858, *Plantation Manual*, 23-27.

⁴³⁶ For discussion on slave nutrition in the American South see Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, 109-117; Breeden, *Advice Among Masters*, 89-114; Richard H. Steckel, "A Peculiar Population: The Nutrition, Health, and Mortality of American Slaves from Childhood to Maturity", *Journal of Economic History* 46, no.3 (1986): 721-41; for discussion on the development of the food ration given to the Roman army between 264 BC – 235 BC see Jonathan P. Roth, *The Logistics of the Roman Army at War: 246 BC-235 AD* (New York: Brill, 1999), 7-67. While this does not entirely give an accurate picture of the "typical" Roman slave diet, we have more sources which predict the types and amounts of food that Roman soldiers were eating than we do for the slave population. Roman agricultural slaves most likely had a similar diet; see Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome*, 90-91; for more discussion on the Roman slave diet see Roth, *Thinking Tools*, 25-53; Sandra Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 131-35; Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World: AD 275-425*, 100-144.

⁴³⁷ Harrison, *Roman Farm Management: Cato and Varro*, 36-37.

This passage shows Hammond's ideal annual clothing ration for his slaves:

Each man gets in the fall 2 shirts of cotton drilling, a pair of woolen pants and a woolen jacket. In the spring two shirts of cotton shirting and two pairs of cotton pants. Jackets or pants may be substituted for each other whenever the wish is expressed before making them. [Which is] often done. Each woman gets in the fall six yards of woollen cloth, six yards of cotton drilling and a needle, skin of thread and ½ dozen buttons. In the spring six yards of cotton shirting and six yards of cotton cloth similar to that for men's pants, needle, thread, and buttons. Each worker gets a stout pair of shoes every fall, and a heavy blanket every third year.⁴³⁸

As with the food rations, Cato and Hammond's allotment for the clothing ration differs: in the Roman case slaves received a tunic and pair of shoes every second year, while Hammond's field slaves received multiple shirts and pants on an annual basis.⁴³⁹ Both authors, however, appear to recommend the reuse of old clothing items. For this Cato suggests "as often as you give out a smock or cloak to any one, take up the old one, so that caps can be made out of it".⁴⁴⁰ While Hammond suggests "Jackets or pants may be substituted for each other whenever the wish is expressed before making them. [Which is] often done".⁴⁴¹ The excerpts show the frugality of both Cato and Hammond in their approach to farm management, which in my view, is the main source of inspiration between these two authors.

Clearly Hammond's motivations for writing his agricultural manual did not stem from the necessity to emulate ancient practices as such. However, the very similar approach and framework as found in Cato's work reinforces my position that Hammond

⁴³⁸ Hammond. May 1858, *Plantation Manual*, 28.

⁴³⁹ For discussion on slave clothing in the antebellum South see John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 192-95; Breeden, *Advice Among Masters*, 140-150. When compared with other slaveholders and planters from this period, Hammond's recommendation seems rather generous. On the very frugal end, some clothing rations for black slaves merely included one shirt, one pair of pants, and shoes for the males; while women were allotted one winter and one summer dress. See Shane White and Graham White. "Slave Clothing and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", *Past and Present* 148, (1995): 149-186. Contemporary planter, John Potter, of South Carolina distributed 1 800 yards of cloth to his 400 labourers (or roughly 4 ½ yards per slave). Plus, blankets every three years. But there remains no possible way to indicate for certain if this cloth was evenly distributed. For Roman slaves see Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire* and *Slavery and Society at Rome*. This gives the approximate cost and materials used when making the average tunic for Roman soldiers. Since we have more evidence for the army than we do for the slave population this, like the food rations above, provides a relatively accurate picture (based on Cato's textile allotment) of slave clothing from the Roman perspective. See also Thomas E. J. Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery* (London and New York, 1981); J.C. Edmondson and Alison Keith, *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture* (Toronto, ON.: The University of Toronto Press, 2008).

⁴⁴⁰ Harrison, *Roman Farm Management: Cato and Varro*, 36-37.

⁴⁴¹ Hammond. May 1858, *Plantation Manual*, 28.

sought to mirror Cato's ideal: provide the labourers with the essential basics for a decent quality of life, but nothing in excess. This portrays the frugality of farm management in both the Roman and American cases.

Both Cato and Hammond expressed the necessity for frugality in estate management, but in his manual, Cato suggested that a landlord needed to unite frugality with effective farm management. Hammond does something similar when he discussed equipment for the plantation, shown in this: "a good crop means one that is good taking into consideration everything – negroes, land, mules, stock, fences, farming utensils, etc., all of which must be kept up and improved in value... farming utensils must be in fine condition at the close of each year".⁴⁴² Hammond followed a frugal approach to farm management and the need to replace slaves, horses, equipment, among other things, on a regular basis (every few years, for example) did not appeal to him. He pushed for the proper maintenance of farm equipment, along with an adequate food and clothing ration for his slaves (and the livestock too), under the premise that this characterised the best scenario for a successful planter. Cato's advice on farm equipment expressed that, "the farm should be one of no great equipment".⁴⁴³ This provides yet another example which suggests that Hammond utilised Cato as a source of inspiration when writing his own manual.

Before concluding, we must consider where the Roman agricultural works of Varro and Columella factor into this discussion: did Hammond prefer Cato over these later authors? We cannot possibly answer this question with certainty, but we know from the text above that Hammond did express a personal fondness Cato's ancient manuring and ploughing techniques. With this borne in mind and upon reading his plantation manual, it remains difficult to imagine that Hammond did not have a copy of *De Agricultura* nearby while writing his own. But, the crowded shelves of his library at Silver Bluff most certainly also contained editions of both Varro's *Res Rusticae* and Columella's *De Re Rustica*. My position emphasises that Hammond preferred Cato because similarities between the two manuals appear clearer and the passages analysed above imply connections between their styles of writing.

⁴⁴² Hammond. May 1858, Plantation Manual, 13.

⁴⁴³ Roth, *Thinking Tools*, 123; Harrison, *Roman Farm Management: Cato and Varro*, 28.

In the case of Varro, he addressed his work to his wife, under the pretence that she continued to operate the estate after his death. His approach in the work, which he presented in the form of a dialogue, lightens the rigid and systematic arrangement of information. Hammond, perhaps, found Varro's discussion and knowledge of Roman agricultural practices interesting, nevertheless he used a more conservative style for his own manual.⁴⁴⁴ On the other hand, Columella's comprehensive work vigorously details the cultivation of field crops, vines, and olives with a fine grasp of technical detail – this may too have appealed to Hammond.⁴⁴⁵ Columella's work consists of three volumes, which do not always focus on estate management. This returns the discussion to Cato's work, where the most important sections focus on the organisation and management of agricultural estates. Hammond's manual emphasised the most effective way to run a plantation and the organisation of its contents make this clear. Hammond, therefore, found the agricultural information in the works of Cato, Varro, and Columella perhaps all useful. He nevertheless valued Cato's discourse more, in relation to his personal manual. In sum, the works of Cato and Hammond illustrate that (while ancient Roman and Southern agricultural practices differed) parallels did exist in the ancient and modern approaches to farming. More to the point, the comparison shows that Southern advocates of black slavery could use ancient literature to style and flesh out their own farming practices.

Conclusions

When compared with Cobb, McCord, Holmes, and Fitzhugh, the study of Hammond uncovers yet another contribution to the pro-slavery argument. Unlike the previous four, Hammond did not regularly produce literature to undermine the abolitionist movement (in fact he normally avoided this). Instead Hammond devoted his life to slaveholding

⁴⁴⁴ Jens Erik Skydsgaard, *Varro the Scholar: Studies in the First Book of Varro's De Re Rustica* (Copenhagen, Denmark: E. Munksgaard, 1968); Ulrike Roth, "No more slave-gangs: Varro, *De re rustica* 1.2.20-1", *Classical Quarterly* 55, no.1 (2005): 310-315.

⁴⁴⁵ R. Martin, "Etat present des etudes sur Columelle", *ANRW* 2.32.3 (1985): 1959-1979; P.W. de Neeve, "A Roman landowner and his estates: Pliny the Younger", *Athenaeum* 68 (1990): 363-402.

and politics.⁴⁴⁶ Rather than publishing a stream of pro-slavery literature, Hammond committed himself to defending the Southern way of life in practice. For Hammond, free wage labour and the harsh treatment of its workers represented something far worse than the most negative sides of Southern slavery. To defend his arguments against Northern abolitionism, Hammond used Cicero's theories on natural law and Aristotle's ideas on natural slavery. In Hammond's view, black slavery represented a justifiable institution, because his version of natural law identified these slaves as inferior persons. Hammond included Cicero's theories on natural law in an attempt to strengthen his position that Northern states enslaved whites via industrialism. Hammond's view championed, in effect, the idea that the laws of nature extended onto its labour force – much like Fitzhugh did with natural slavery in the previous chapter. In this, many whites believed the condition experienced by black chattel represented a natural phenomenon.

The chapter also explored Hammond's plantation manual and Cato's work on agriculture, *De Agricultura*. The comparison showed the influence that Cato possessed on the style of Hammond's writing; even though the Roman and Southern approaches to agriculture significantly differed. Nevertheless, Cato appealed to Hammond, because the former directly outlined his ideal approach to farm management. Considering that agricultural practices changed between the ancient and modern periods, slaveholding societies did continually recognise the value of protecting the estate and its labour force. In their creation of firm regulations for overseers, along with a detailed account of the slave rations for food and clothing, Cato and Hammond endeavoured to maintain the rigid organisation of their agricultural estates. Thus, in my view, Cato's practical treatise on agriculture helped inspire Hammond to compose his own plantation manual. Hammond's self-fashioning on the model of Cato, shows that classicism transcended a role in Southern slavery beyond the actual pro-slavery argument. The case of Hammond demonstrates clearly how the Classics functioned as a fundamental basis for the modern conceptualisation of farming and slavery in the antebellum South.

Overall, this chapter examined aspects of a Southern reality from the perspective of James Henry Hammond. This has yielded that, from a literary point of view, white

⁴⁴⁶ For more on agriculture and politics see Jeffrey H. Morrison, *The Political Philosophy of George Washington* (Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 84-86.

Southerners, like Hammond, developed an interest for ancient slavery in relation to their own slave system. We can, therefore, infer that antiquity continued to play a major role in the literature of the antebellum South – it permeated that culture! As a part of the whole, this chapter continues to help us better understand the underlying connections between the antebellum South and the Greco-Roman world. The following part of my thesis will put forth the conclusions of this study. In this final chapter we will analyse what the previous chapters on Cobb, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and now Hammond tell us about classicism and American pro-slavery between 1840 and 1860. Studying these individuals separately would provide little weight and insight for the modern debate on pro-slavery, but when examined together, we begin to see that classicism did significantly influence their pro-slavery arguments. This remains important for many reasons, but for the purposes of this study, it sheds new light on pro-slavery in antebellum America, while telling us that these arguments did have a strong basis in critical and intelligent design.

Conclusion:

Reconsidering the Pro-Slavery Argument

From whence shall we expect the approach of danger? Shall some trans-Atlantic military giant step the earth and crush us at a blow? Never. All the armies of Europe and Asia...could not by force take a drink from the Ohio River or make a track on the Blue Ridge in the trial of a thousand years. No, if destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of free men, we will live forever or die by suicide.⁴⁴⁷

When the Civil War ended in 1865 the Thirteenth Amendment legally ended slavery in the United States – the processes of Emancipation and Reconstruction followed closely. In theory, the conclusion of hostilities should have brought an end to the pro-slavery argument in America – it did not. Evidently, pro-slavery literature experienced a drastic decrease in its production, but the issues brought on by those who fought to preserve the Old South festered. As intellectual paralysis struck their former nation, the figures studied above who survived the war, such as McCord and Fitzhugh, experienced difficulty acclimating to the new situation.⁴⁴⁸ My thesis does not touch upon pro-slavery beyond the antebellum era, but it remains appropriate to acknowledge here that pro-slavery continued to play a defining role after the Civil War. Thus, we can say with certainty that extinguishing these pro-slavery sentiments represented a challenging endeavour for those who sought to reform white Southern culture.

As mentioned throughout this thesis, the institution of slavery caused the Civil War, and the Americans who partook fought each other over interpretations of freedom and human dignity – ultimately a fight about life and death. Most notably, on April 14, 1865, as pockets of Confederate resistance continued to fight, John Wilkes Booth shot Abraham Lincoln in Ford's Theater. A few weeks later on May 9, 1865 the newly

⁴⁴⁷ Abraham Lincoln, *The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions: Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois* (January 27, 1838).

⁴⁴⁸ Perhaps apart from Mark Twain and George Washington Cable, as both produced an extensive output of literature during the late 19th century. For the Southern Renaissance see Sarah Gardner, *Reviewing the South: The Literary Marketplace and the Southern Renaissance, 1920-1941* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

installed Andrew Johnson declared the conflict had officially ended. Even though Lincoln did not survive to witness the official end of hostilities, he nevertheless played a crucial role during the antebellum period and had a significant influence on the outcome of the Civil War. The reasons for his assassination throw the present study into clearer relief.

Thus, in the years before the Civil War, Lincoln repeatedly articulated his criticisms of slavery and its existence. On January 27, 1838 Lincoln delivered an address to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois in which he identified the dangers posed by slavery. The address marked one of the earliest given in Lincoln's illustrious political career, and his future law partner William Herndon described the event as such:

We had a society in Springfield, which contained and commanded all the culture and talent of the place. Unlike the other one its meetings were public, and reflected great credit on the community... The speech was brought out by the burning in St. Louis a few weeks before, by a mob, of a negro. Lincoln took this incident as a sort of text for his remarks... The address was published in the *Sangamon Journal* and created for the young orator a reputation which soon extended beyond the limits of the locality in which he lived.⁴⁴⁹

In 1831, Lincoln visited New Orleans, and while there he witnessed the slaves' condition – as mentioned earlier in this thesis, thousands of slaves annually passed through the horrible slave pens and markets located throughout the city. Lincoln's sojourn to New Orleans, among other contemporary events which occurred across the antebellum United States, such as the burning of Francis McIntosh, helped to motivate his speech.⁴⁵⁰

In the address, Lincoln suggested that servile labour led to many acts of lawlessness throughout the United States and reiterated that the institution of slavery threatened the system of government established by the Founding Fathers. Lincoln also suggested to

⁴⁴⁹ William Herndon. *Abraham Lincoln: The True Story of a Great Life, Volume 1* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1892), 111.

⁴⁵⁰ Francis McIntosh served as a steward and cook on the steamboat *Flora*, who was arrested for breaching the peace shortly after the boat came to port in St. Louis. After the two arresting officers told him he would remain in jail for five years, McIntosh proceeded to attack the officers with a knife – killing one and wounding the other. McIntosh was eventually caught and arrested. Shortly after his arrest, a white mob broke into the jail, took McIntosh to a site on the outskirts of the contemporary city, tied him to a tree, and burned him alive. For more on this see Mark J. Miller. *Cast Down: Abjection in America, 1700-1750* (Philadelphia, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 109-112.

the gathering of young men that, in its current state, a tyrant could easily overthrow the American political system, as documented in the following passage:

The question then, is, can that gratification be found in supporting and maintaining an edifice that has been erected by others? Most certainly it cannot. Many great and good men sufficiently qualified for any task they should undertake, may ever be found, whose ambition would inspire to nothing beyond a seat in Congress, a gubernatorial or a presidential chair; *but such belong not to the family of the lion, or the tribe of the eagle*. What! think you these places would satisfy an Alexander, a Caesar, or a Napoleon? Never! Towering genius distains a beaten path... It thirsts and burns for distinction; and, if possible, it will have it, whether at the expense of emancipating slaves, or enslaving freemen. Is it unreasonable then to expect, that some man possessed of the loftiest genius, coupled with ambition sufficient to push it to its utmost stretch, will at some time, spring up among us? And when such a one does, it will require the people to be united with each other, attached to the government and laws, and generally intelligent, to successfully frustrate his designs.⁴⁵¹

Ironically, many Southern supporters of secession and slavery (not just Booth) identified Lincoln as a tyrant. Unlike Alexander the Great, Caesar, or Napoleon—who he mentions specifically in the above passage—Lincoln did not consider himself a conqueror. As the Civil War raged on, however, white Southerners often perceived Lincoln and his forces as invading conquerors seeking to undermine their way of life. In the years prior to the collapse of Buchanan's administration, white Southerners clearly did not look positively upon Lincoln's views on servile labour.

Beginning in December 1860, with Buchanan's administration in serious decline, Southern states started seceding from the Union over the issues of states' rights and slavery. In 1861, a mere few weeks before the war officially started, the Vice-President of the Confederacy, Alexander Stephens, delivered his Cornerstone Speech. Presiding over a large congregation of South Carolinians, Stephens spoke about tyranny, much like Lincoln did in 1838. Stephens used the British oppression over the American colonies to exemplify the contemporary tensions between Northern and Southern states. He suggested further that abolitionists attempted to undermine slavery, and this directly caused the increase in conflict, as the following shows:

The new constitution has put at rest, forever, all the agitating questions relating to our peculiar institutions – African slavery as it exists amongst us – the proper status

⁴⁵¹ Lincoln, *The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions*, (January 27, 1838).

of the negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution.⁴⁵²

Overall, the excerpts from Lincoln and Stephens reflect the wider picture of the contemporary social, political, and economic situations in the antebellum United States: Southern states pushed for the continued existence of slavery, while Northern states moved towards industry and abolition. My thesis adds to this broader discussion by focusing on the pro-slavery argument, and specifically on how classicism played a crucial role in its development. And, the chapters above provide modern scholars with insight on how five antebellum white Southerners incorporated classicism into their pro-slavery literature.

In the decades leading up to the Civil War, tensions between pro-slavery and abolitionist hotbeds increased, and as mentioned, many advocates from both sides frequently fought against each other. For example, in 1847, John Quincy Adams stated the following:

The spirit which animated Hamilcar in administration of the oath to his son was identically the same as that which actuated Cato in closing every speech he made in the Senate of Rome with the memorable words, *Delenda est Carthago*; and we have recently had the utterance of the same sentence from the Moloch of Slavery, applied to the angel of light, Abolition.⁴⁵³

Supporters of the pro-slavery argument often used the phrase *Delenda est Abolitio* – or, abolition must be destroyed. The above passage reflects that this phrase draws support directly from Cato the Elder, the well-known Roman politician and slaveholder explored previously. As shown throughout this thesis, the ancient societies of Greece and Rome emerged as an essential support base for the development of pro-slavery arguments. Much like how Adams drew on the Classics to declare *Delenda est Servitudo*, Cobb, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and Hammond utilised classicism to call for *Delenda est Abolitio*. There remains little doubt that the pro-slavery writers contributed to these wider social and political discussions. But, while the broader picture stays fairly clear, one question lingers: what does my analysis of Cobb, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and

⁴⁵² Henry Cleveland, *Alexander H. Stephens, in Public and Private: With Letters and Speeches, Before, During, and Since the War* (Philadelphia, PA.: 1886), 717-729.

⁴⁵³ Margaret Malamud, “The *Auctoritas* of Antiquity: Debating Slavery through Classical Exempla in the Antebellum USA” in Edith Hall, Richard Alston, and Justine McConnell (eds.), *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 293.

Hammond tell modern historians about the particular role played by classicism in the pro-slavery argument? First, the utilisation of the Greco-Roman world by these authors makes “historical” sense, because classicism partially bridges the gap between a time when societies widely accepted servile labour and a period when it underwent heavy scrutiny. My thesis argues that had they not utilised classicism, their literature would look significantly different. As discussed in the introduction chapter, we know that during the 19th century, educational systems in the United States relied heavily upon the classical tradition for their curricula. Essentially classicism permeated their society, and this provided white Southern authors of pro-slavery with a strong source of inspiration.

The broader classical support of pro-slavery led also—as this thesis shows—to particular and active usages of classicism in the literary output of these authors. Cobb made classicism integral to his work by specifically manipulating ancient literature to support his approach to pro-slavery. He drew on classicism, the important status it held in Southern culture, and twisted it to achieve his goal. By showing his audience that the great societies of ancient Greece and Rome displayed a preference for black slavery, Cobb further legitimised the institution in the South. Consider too, white Southerners frequently debated on their status as a modern version of ancient Greece or Rome and Cobb’s literature added weight to this idea. The chapter on McCord shows a different approach to classicism and pro-slavery – her use of the Classics reflects a delicate, yet tactical touch. In her commentary on the political and social problems affecting the United States, she often incorporates classical texts on both historical and mythical themes. The examples discussed in the chapter on McCord show us the broad range of her literary output, while it also provides my thesis with an accurate use of classicism in her pro-slavery writings. The following chapter looked at George Frederick Holmes, and specifically his editorial “Ancient Slavery”, in which he responds to criticisms on ancient and modern slavery. Fundamentally, as shown above, his entire thesis argues that slavery would not cause the South to decline or collapse, on the basis that Greco-Roman agricultural practices set a strong positive precedent. Holmes’ contribution to my thesis strengthens the position that white Southerners looked to ancient Greece and Rome as a source of validation for themselves and slavery. This relates more broadly to the permeation of classicism in Southern culture during this period, and the article from

Holmes—a well-respected scholar—further aided the growth of classical ideology throughout the region, in turn reinforcing acceptance of the classical support for modern slavery. The next chapter examined George Fitzhugh and how Aristotle’s philosophy largely contributed to his major pro-slavery work *Cannibals All!* Fitzhugh’s contribution to my thesis emphasises, perhaps more than the other figures studied, the centrality held by classicism within the pro-slavery argument – without Aristotle’s influence on *Cannibals*, the work would look significantly different. We have an example of what this might resemble in Fitzhugh’s *Sociology for the South*, which he published in 1854 (three years before *Cannibals*) and a year before he discovered Aristotle. Some overlap in ideas exist between the two works, whereby Fitzhugh inadvertently flirted with ancient philosophy, but the inclusion of Aristotle in the latter makes it a stronger contribution to the pro-slavery framework. The final chapter looked at James Henry Hammond, the classical themes in his Mudsill Speech, and his fondness for Roman agricultural practices. Hammond provides my thesis with a strong example of how classicism transcended the pro-slavery argument and entered the realm of Southern slaveholding. My argument emphasises that Cato the Elder’s *De Agricultura* helped to inspire Hammond’s plantation manual. As shown above, Hammond did respect Cato’s agricultural practices and he stated this publicly on numerous occasions. This also tells us that Hammond bought into Holmes’ position that ancient Greco-Roman agricultural practices possessed some value to the advancement of Southern slaveholding and agrarianism on the ground. This further shows how deeply classicism permeated white Southern culture during this period – it ranged from its intellectual to more rustic cultural aspects. Overall, each of the five authors used classicism in significant ways and this group of antebellum intellectuals therefore provides modern historians with a new platform to discuss the Classics in relation to American pro-slavery. Cobb, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and Hammond believed in their utilisation of classicism, and from an intellectual viewpoint, thought their arguments would foster the growth of Southern pro-slavery.

If we consider the effects the classical tradition had on the development of the American South, we can see how the ancient world critically inspired these five pro-slavery authors. As historians, we must situate classicism in the broader political

influences of the ancient Greco-Roman world onto the American one. Modern scholars widely acknowledge, classicism played an influential role on the development of the American republic during the antebellum period. The Founding Fathers incorporated Roman political ideologies into the formation of the United States government. More importantly, the ancient context represents the “colonial” transition from empire (monarchy) to republic. Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and so forth decided to partially base their government on the ancient Roman republican model – just as ancient Rome made its republican transition by ousting the Etruscan monarchy.⁴⁵⁴ But, as this thesis has shown, the classical seedbed played a highly influential role on the pro-slavery argument.

As mentioned during the outset of this thesis, the works of notable modern scholars such as Eugene Genovese, Michael O’Brien, Caroline Winterer, Drew Gilpin Faust, among other important historians, all explore different aspects of the American South. Their works highlight the significant intellectual culture that existed there prior to the Civil War, and these authors do acknowledge the connection between classicism and antebellum Southern culture. Winterer explores this in her *Culture of Classicism*; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese similarly make the connection in their *Mind of the Master Class*; Michael O’Brien too in his *Conjectures of Order*; finally, Faust in her *Ideology of Slavery*, which much like my work, looks directly at the literature produced by prominent authors of pro-slavery works. This list of scholars does not represent an exhaustive one, as many others have made the connection that

⁴⁵⁴ The Founding Fathers idealised two integral practices of the early Roman republic: farming and politics. George Washington has often been compared with the Roman politician, Cincinnatus. As the story goes, Cincinnatus, an early Roman agriculturalist (ca. 519-430 BC), was declared dictator twice (in 458 BC and again in 439 BC). During both occasions, he held the position until the completion of his duties (the Roman appointment of dictator usually lasted no longer than six months – until Julius Caesar had the Senate declare him *dictator in perpetuo*). After helping in these political pursuits, Cincinnatus returned to his life as a farmer. On the other hand, after the Revolutionary War, Washington gave up his command of the Continental Army and returned to his estate at Mount Vernon. He did, however, later serve as the first President of the United States (1789-97) and did maintain a senior military position until his death in 1799. Even so, historical evidence from the early period of the Roman republic is lacking, but the parallels between these two historical figures establishes a sort of “Roman” political ideal in early America. More so, the connections made between Washington and Marcus Aurelius, the great Roman emperor, appealed more so to Virginia’s leading men. Overall, the flexibility of Washington as a political enigma seemed to take over after the war, and his image of being part Roman politician and part American politician emerged as a monumental transition between a leading member of the Revolution to leading the young American republic into a new era. For more on this see, Onuf and Cole, *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America*, 128-71.

classicism permeated Southern culture. The connection between pro-slavery and classicism remains well known. Paul Finkelman made this point clear in his 2003 work *Defending Slavery*, by labelling the classical argument as a central component of pro-slavery. Finkelman already acknowledged that certain white Southerners sought to manipulate the Classics to further legitimise their pro-slavery arguments.⁴⁵⁵ My thesis adds to the previous discussions by offering detailed analyses of the literature of prominent pro-slavery figures and examining how they made classicism central to their works. The importance of my argument, and overall contribution lies in showing the range of the classical support and many of its intricacies. In conclusion, my steadfast position puts forth that without classicism, the literature examined throughout this thesis would appear significantly different – in most cases weaker. Had ancient Greece and Rome not successfully practiced slavery for centuries, my argument collapses, but as it stands so too does the pro-slavery literature examined above. White Southerners looked to these societies for validation, and they sought to emulate ancient ideology. Thus, in the broader picture, we can ask what would antebellum Southern history look like without the influence of classicism? A question that requires a separate study, but the fact of the matter remains that if not for classicism, the literature and pro-slavery sentiments expressed by the five authors in my thesis would look entirely different. My research, presented in the chapters above, addresses an important historical crossroad, because it looks at the antebellum South through the lens of pro-slavery, intellectual culture, and classicism. Moreover, these chapters show that by utilising classicism the authors examined here possessed the intellectual ability to demonstrate individual ways of critical thinking. Overall, my thesis also foregrounds that classicism in the antebellum South historically possessed ties with white supremacy, highlighting the future need to further analyse this particular aspect of the American South in unison. By situating my own work at this crossroad, the research undertaken here continues to bridge the gap between the study of pro-slavery, classicism, and white Southern intellectual culture.

⁴⁵⁵ Finkelman, *Defending Slavery*, 29-30.

Classicism after the Civil War

In the broader context, we can link the influence of classicism on American intellectual life during the 19th century and clearly see that in the decades leading up to the Civil War, Americans embraced multiple facets of the ancient world. Specifically, this occurred in the South, where pro-slavery authors used their knowledge of the Greco-Roman world to defend black servile labour. White Southern scholars, politicians, planters, and so forth used this to their advantage, because these ancient slave systems appealed to those protecting an institution under siege from abolitionists. As shown in the chapters above, pro-slavery writers turned to Aristotle, Cato the Elder, Seneca, Juvenal, among many other ancient authors for inspiration. Aristotle appears frequently in the authors examined above because of his writings on natural slavery. In *Politics*, Aristotle theorised that slavery existed to support the idea of a natural hierarchy: lesser human-beings constantly subjected to the state of natural slavery, while the more dominant races ruled over those beneath them. Each individual studied in this thesis used Aristotle's theory on natural slavery in their literature in some capacity. Naturally, white Southerners held Aristotle in high regard, and his writings on natural slavery fit well into the pro-slavery framework. Even though Cobb, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and Hammond applied Aristotle's philosophy differently, it nevertheless shows how some of his classical ideology helped to define pro-slavery. The centrality of this one classically trained author mirrors the centrality of the Classics in pro-slavery. With this established, the time has come for a wider outlook (i.e. a broader question): did the study of ancient Greco-Roman slave societies continue to influence Southern culture after the Civil War?

Naturally, to answer this question fully would require another study entirely. But, sketching a brief outline will help to put the present argument into a wider historical perspective. We also know that, although chattel slavery ended in 1865, the pro-slavery argument did not disappear, but played an important role in the formation of the Lost Cause.⁴⁵⁶ Thus, for this we can turn to Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, because he wrote the

⁴⁵⁶ For more on the Lost Cause see Gaines M. Foster. *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Gary W. Gallagher. *Lee and His Generals in War and Memory* (Baton Rouge, LA.: Louisiana State University Press, 1998); Gary

majority of his literature after the Civil War. Gildersleeve's works generally demonstrate how the academe continued to use ancient literature as a tool for scholarly pursuits (over its integration into the pro-slavery argument) after the war. Even though Gildersleeve remained an unwavering Southern patriot until his death on January 9, 1924, his contributions to the classical college remain difficult to deny.⁴⁵⁷ Gildersleeve started his heroic journey in 1854 when he published an essay in the *Southern Quarterly Review* called "The Necessity for the Classics". In the work, Gildersleeve emphasised that the South needed to emerge as a new centre for classical thought, shown in the following passage:

His great sin is [Charles Anthon], that he knows nothing of the spirit and aims of classical philology – that he offers to act as a medium for thinking men without thinking for himself. But, fortunately, all our philologists are not of this class. Some transfer from their sources with discrimination, elegance and due acknowledgement; and, while those who might have attained to eminence in this department have found it too barren, and have left it for the area of politics or the field of lighter literature, there are some who have given an earnest, and many who are giving promise of original American contributions to philological science. We, of the South, should take this specially to heart. Our Northern brethren have developed greater commercial activity, and, without being more literary, have produced a more comprehensive literature. Here is a harvest untouched by the sickle. The host of school-books published at the North, go for nothing in the philological account. We must wake to higher efforts, for which we are well adapted by the quick conceptions, love of classic form and instinctive rejection of extravagance, which are our birthright... If we make the South, where the materials are abundant, the centre of classical learning, we must hold the balance. To create and perpetuate such a classical school, we must have an enlarged and elevated system of education, and the rising generations must be trained in a domestic institution, of a higher type than the out-door schools, whither so many of youth go, seeking knowledge, and finding a miserable succedaneum.⁴⁵⁸

W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 2000); David W. Blight. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2001); Karen L. Cox. *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville, FL.: University Press of Florida, 2003); Caroline E. Janney. *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill, NC.: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

⁴⁵⁷ For Gildersleeve see Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve in Ward W. Briggs, ed., *Soldier and Scholar: Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve and the Civil War* (Charlottesville, VA.: The University of Virginia Press, 1998); David Luper and Elizabeth Vandiver, "Yankee She-men and Octoroon Electra: Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve on Slavery, Race, and Abolition", in Edith Hall, Richard Alston, and Justine McConnell (eds.), *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 320-51.

⁴⁵⁸ O'Brien, *All Clever Men Who Make Their Way*, 417-18.

After publishing the article, Gildersleeve used the remaining years before the Civil War to set the stage for how the South needed to embrace its status as the modern reincarnation of the Athenian League. He wanted the Classics to have a stronger and more triumphant impact on the Southern academe. His vision would never reach fruition, but during the twilight years of the 19th century, Gildersleeve played a pivotal role in founding the country's first graduate programs in the Classics.⁴⁵⁹ Thus, classicism at the postsecondary level continued to flourish throughout the post-Civil War United States. Gildersleeve possessed a clear vision for classical progression and its influence on the advancement of Southern society. The Civil War actually interrupted Gildersleeve's career plans and his mission to establish a new Athens, a point in his life which he lamented years later:

The circumstances of my life, notably the upsetting of all my plans of authorship by the Civil War, and its dire sequel Reconstruction had kept me in the background until I had passed the age when some of my contemporaries had won recognition and authoritative rank.⁴⁶⁰

On the surface, this passage suggests that Gildersleeve experienced some regret about sacrificing his career plans in defence of the South. In my view, however, this excerpt merely represents an endeavour to lambast the outcome of the Civil War and Reconstruction – throwing an insult at the Union for interrupting his career plans. Gildersleeve remained a patriot of the South until his death, and his post-war literature continued to reflect this.

Importantly, in 1863, Gildersleeve wrote “for my part I will not allow myself to regret the outbreak of the war. I have no scruples with regard to the justice of our cause. We are in the right—and that solves all questions for me as to my personal duty”.⁴⁶¹ When the war began, Gildersleeve worked for the University of Virginia as Professor of Greek, but did not hesitate in offering his services to the Confederacy.⁴⁶² During summer breaks, he served on the staff of Colonel William Gilham (1861), as a private in the First Virginia Cavalry (1863), and finally, until wounded, as a volunteer aide with the rank of captain on Major General John B. Gordon's staff during Lieutenant General Jubal

⁴⁵⁹ Lupher and Vandiver, “Yankee She-men and Octoroon Electra”, 320

⁴⁶⁰ Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, “Brief Mention”, *American Journal of Philology* 28 (1907): 480.

⁴⁶¹ Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve to Socrates Maupin, Sept 13, 1863, in Ward W. Briggs (ed.) *Letters of Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve* (Baltimore, MD.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 39.

⁴⁶² Lupher and Vandiver, “Yankee She-men and Octoroon Electra”, 323.

Early's 1864 campaign in the Shenandoah Valley.⁴⁶³ In 1892 he reflected on his service to the Confederacy by writing this: "I earned the right to teach Southern youths for nine months... by sharing the fortunes of their fathers and brothers for three".⁴⁶⁴ In addition to fighting on the battlefield, Gildersleeve participated in controversies on the home front. Between October 1863 and August 1864, he published numerous unsigned editorials in the *Richmond Examiner*. Among the topics, Gildersleeve expressed his views on Union generals, Abraham Lincoln, Confederate currency, Southern prisoners of war, among others.⁴⁶⁵

Following the war his intense feelings for the South continued undiminished. In 1891, he wrote an essay which reflected upon his early life, where he acknowledged "that being a southerner and thoroughly identified with the South, I have shared the fortunes of the land in which my lot was cast, and in my time have shared its prejudices and its defiant attitude".⁴⁶⁶ In the same year, Gildersleeve received an invitation from Horace Scudder, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, to educate the Northern readership as to his feelings and high sense of duty that sent him into the field. In response to this, Gildersleeve reiterated his devotion to the Confederacy and to (white) Southerners, shown in the following:

They cannot understand the serenity of our confidence in the justice of our cause... The cause was one for which I wrote, prayed, fought, suffered, but in the long agony I was never haunted by a doubt as to the righteousness of the course which we followed and even if there had been a doubt as to the justice of our cause, the command of the State would have sufficed.⁴⁶⁷

Gildersleeve paralleled ancient Greek patriotism with his loyalty to the South. As mentioned in the above chapter on George Frederick Holmes, white Southerners looked to the ancient Greco-Roman world to validate their society, and men like Gildersleeve also continued in this vein after the Civil War. He viewed his wartime experiences as reflections of Greek history, and thus, found meaning in them. For example, Gildersleeve saw in the battles of "Manassas and Chancellorsville reflections of the

⁴⁶³ Lupher and Vandiver, "Yankee She-men and Octoroon Electra", 323.

⁴⁶⁴ Briggs, *Solder and Scholar*, 362.

⁴⁶⁵ For a list of all sixty-four editorials see Briggs, *Solder and Scholar*, 326-27.

⁴⁶⁶ Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, "The Creed of the Old South", *Atlantic Monthly* 69 (January 1892): 75-87.

⁴⁶⁷ Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve to Horace Elisha Scudder, Sept 10, 1863, in Ward W. Briggs (ed.) *Letters of Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve* (Baltimore, MD.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 77.

‘undying heroism’ of the Greeks at Marathon and Salamis”.⁴⁶⁸ In his classical publications after the Civil War, Gildersleeve interpreted ancient Greek culture through his personal experiences as a white Southerner and Confederate – he resided in a sort of modern Hellenistic prism. Gildersleeve saw the conflict as a modern retelling of the Peloponnesian War, and from that period of ancient Greek history, Gildersleeve aligned himself with the Theban poet, Pindar. He commented on his fondness for the poet in the introduction to his book *Pindar*, writing that “the man whose love for his country knows no local root, is a man whose love for his country is a poor abstraction; and is no discredit to Pindar that he went honestly with his state in the struggle”.⁴⁶⁹ He wrote in 1903 that “my Pindar is the only book I made as a labor of love”.⁴⁷⁰

Perhaps with the exception of McCord, Gildersleeve’s passion for classicism transcends anything that we have witnessed in this thesis. This does not suggest that Cobb, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and Hammond did not possess significant individual fondness of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Indeed, this thesis has shown how their pro-slavery arguments developed and evolved because of classicism. Unlike the authors examined above, however, pro-slavery did not directly influence Gildersleeve’s classical publications. This occurred because the Civil War directly affected how he interpreted ancient Greece – he saw Greek heroism through the lens of his experiences as a Confederate soldier and white Southerner. Yet, only after the conflict did Gildersleeve come to this realisation. Out of the five authors examined above, Cobb fought and died during the Civil War. McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and Hammond contributed to the controversies on the home front by publishing numerous editorials and essays, but none fought on the field. This polarising experience contributed to Gildersleeve’s somewhat distinct view of classicism, and it shows us one direction it took after the Civil War. Cobb, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and Hammond dealt with a different situation; they invoked classicism in an attempt to preserve their culture and way of life. Whereas Gildersleeve utilised the Classics to define the Civil War era, believing that “a little

⁴⁶⁸ Diana Lynn Walzel, “Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve: Classical Scholar”, *Virginia Cavalcade* 25 (Winter: 1976): 115.

⁴⁶⁹ Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve. *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1885), 11.

⁴⁷⁰ Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, “Brief Mention”, *American Journal of Philology* 24 (1903): 358.

experience of a losing side might aid historical vision”.⁴⁷¹ More than 30 years after the conflict ended, Gildersleeve maintained his position: the commitment of the South to white supremacy saved America from race mixing and governance by non-whites. Despite his unwavering views on slavery and the Lost Cause of the South, Gildersleeve significantly helped the progression of classicism in post-Civil War America. In the South, he ensured that classicism emerged as a trope for white Southerners to reflect upon the post-war period, and this ensured the Southern belief in ancient validation continued to linger. Ultimately, Gildersleeve failed to alter his core of beliefs, continued to express a romanticised vision of his “Athenian” South, and his views on the outcome of the Civil War often reflect sentiments on the Lost Cause of the Old South. Enthusiasts of the Lost Cause, many of whom served the Confederacy during the Civil War, sought to romanticise the Old South and the war effort; this process tended to distort the actual history of the antebellum and Civil War periods. Fundamentally, the Lost Cause presented the Civil War from the perspective of the Confederates, in the best possible terms. White Southerners who believed in the Lost Cause interpreted the Civil War from the following perspectives: secession, not slavery, caused the Civil War; blacks remained faithful to their masters and the Confederacy, while enjoying their existence as loyal slaves; the Union only militarily defeated the Confederacy because of its advantages in manpower and resources; Confederate soldiers served a heroic cause; Robert E. Lee represented the most heroic man in the Confederacy; Southern women remained loyal to the Confederate cause and sanctified by the sacrifice of their loved ones.⁴⁷² Men like Gildersleeve perpetuated these tenets for decades after the Civil War – in particular, the idea that slavery represented a benign institution. In his *American Negro Slavery* (1918) and *Life and Labor of the Old South* (1929) Ulrich Bonnell Phillips emphasised that black slavery represented an inefficient economic system.⁴⁷³ But, as mentioned in chapter 1, he did argue that masters generally provided their slaves with adequate clothing, food, housing, and medical care. Essentially the core of Phillips’

⁴⁷¹ Gildersleeve. *Pindar*, 11.

⁴⁷² Gallagher. *Lee and His Generals in War and Memory*; Gallagher and Nolan. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*.

⁴⁷³ Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*; Ulrich Bonnell Phillips. *Life and Labour in the Old South* (Boston, MA.: Little, Brown, and Company, 1929).

argument put forth the idea that the masterclass civilised blacks, and slavery, ultimately, benefitted them. Phillips denied having sympathy for pro-slavery, although his benign outlook on the slave experience fits in the framework of the Lost Cause. Fundamentally, without getting entrenched in a lengthy discussion on the Lost Cause here, this brief discourse shows that leading scholars such as Gildersleeve and Phillips had accommodating views on black slavery. Gildersleeve, however, presented a stronger support for the Lost Cause, because he firmly believed in the tenets of the Old South until his death in 1924.

In 1915, Gildersleeve wrote the following passage when commenting on the coming of the Civil War:

True, there was no slavery question in the Peloponnesian War, for antique civilisation without slavery is hardly thinkable; but after all, the slavery question belongs ultimately to the sphere of economics. The humanitarian spirit, set free by the French Revolution, was at work in the Southern States as in the Northern States, but it was hampered by economic considerations. Virginia, as everyone knows, was on the verge of becoming a free State. Colonization flourished in my boyhood. A friend of my father's left him trustee for his "servants" as we called them. They were quartered opposite our house in Charleston, and the pickaninnies were objects of profound interest to the children of the neighborhood. One or two letters came from the emigrants after they reached Liberia. Then silence fell on the African farm... The slavery question kept alive the spirit that manifested itself in the tariff question. State rights were not suffered to slumber. The Southerner resented Northern dictation as Pericles resented the Lacedaemonian dictation, and our Peloponnesian War begun.⁴⁷⁴

This passage shows us that throughout his life Gildersleeve remained a devoted white Southerner and unapologetic Confederate (50 years later). It also informs us that he viewed the Peloponnesian War as a paradigm for the Civil War, which as mentioned, profoundly affected him. Later in the same work Gildersleeve continued by writing "my Greek study has not simply been a marginal note on my American life and *vice versa*... as I turn the furrow, the Greek line cannot be distinguished from the American. As a Southerner, I shared the fortunes of my people in the Civil War, but my thoughts were with those who registered the experiences of the Peloponnesian War – with Thucydides and Aristophanes".⁴⁷⁵ To conclude, Gildersleeve's unwavering devotion to the South

⁴⁷⁴ Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, *The Creed of the Old South and A Southerner in the Peloponnesian War* (Baltimore, MD.: John Hopkins University Press, 1915), 70.

⁴⁷⁵ Gildersleeve, *The Creed of the Old South and A Southerner in the Peloponnesian War*, 82-83.

and profound utilisation of classicism encouraged white Southerners to participate in post-war classical scholarship. In practice, his founding of *The American Journal of Philology* in 1880 demonstrated that American scholarship in the Classics could compete with the likes of Britain and Germany. Finally, the rhetoric he produced spurred him forward as an intellectual warrior which ushered in the “Heroic Age” of American classical studies. With this borne in mind, we can see the upwards direction classicism took after the Civil War. It remained an important component of Southern education systems and retained its overall significance in the region. With the gradual disappearance of pro-slavery literature, Southern classicism continued to flourish, but as evidenced by Gildersleeve, and with all that it stood for, a strong loyalty to the South remained. In many ways, it remains extraordinary that today, during the 21st century, the pro-slavery roots of the Southern love for classicism are widely overlooked. Thus, the brief sketch of Gildersleeve in this conclusion provided some key points about his legacy. What remains striking, however, are the facts remembered by the public today about the men during this period. The current Wikipedia entry on Gildersleeve—a good yardstick for widespread public knowledge—does not mention pro-slavery once (nor indeed slavery). Instead, when not under scrutiny, Gildersleeve is remembered almost entirely for his contributions to classical learning. While Gildersleeve sits outside of the period of relevance for the present thesis, my hope here strives to demonstrate the importance of the topic. Only when we understand the use of classicism in the pro-slavery argument, can we fully understand its legacy, and the contribution of those who “inherited” it. Put most crudely, the work here seeks to address the imbalance in our historical imagination regarding the social location of classicism, more generally, in the American South: slavery, and pro-slavery at that, must play a significant role in this. In the future, literal white washing will not do.

To conclude, scholarly work on 18th, 19th, and 20th century Americans and their use of classicism will continue as an important topic of discussion among modern historians.⁴⁷⁶ As mentioned numerously throughout this work, during the antebellum period and beyond, classicism made up the core of Southern higher education. The

⁴⁷⁶ Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*; Winterer, *The Mirror of Antiquity*; Onuf and Cole, *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America*.

permeation of classicism within their culture helped inspire pro-slavery authors to utilise their knowledge of the Greco-Roman world to defend the existence of black servile labour. Looking towards the ancient slaveholding societies of Greece and Rome for validation the authors examined above successfully imagined a sort of classical self-fashioning. Thus, ancient Greece and Rome began to embody what they sought to achieve for their own society – greatness based on unmitigated slavery. Modern scholars such as Caroline Winterer, Michael O’Brien, Eugene Genovese, and others have already offered important contributions which bridge the gap between the ancient world and antebellum America. By directly exploring individuals associated with this period, and their literary output, this study deepens this connection further. Continuing the discussion on Gildersleeve, my work demonstrates the potential to explore the post-Civil War South from this angle. Gildersleeve represents a good figure to spearhead a larger study that looks at how classicism continued to develop in the post-war American South (specifically after it emerged from the shadow and influences of the pro-slavery argument).

On the other hand, and as mentioned during the introduction, Southern intellectualism did not exclusively apply to the white population. Classicism did too influence the literary output of antebellum blacks. On this topic we possess few examples of black literary genesis before the Civil War, but as discussed classicism did help to inspire American blacks, such as Phillis Wheatley and Jupiter Hammon.⁴⁷⁷ During the post-Civil War period, however, black scholarship in the Classics drastically increased.⁴⁷⁸ Black scholarship in the Classics also exists as an important dimension of the larger picture that we can associate with the potential aforementioned study. This could explore how black Southerners began to define their status through receiving a classical education – which until Emancipation was only available to the white population. Margaret Malamud’s 2016 *African Americans and the Classics* has made a

⁴⁷⁷ Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*. Patrice D. Rankin, *Ulysses in Black: Ralph Ellison, Classicism, and African American Literature* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); Onuf and Cole, *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America*; Maffly-Kipp, *Setting Down the Sacred Past: African American Race Histories*; Cook and Tatum, *African American Writers and the Classical Tradition*; Hairston, *The Ebony Column: Classics, Civilization, and the African American Reclamation of the West*; Barnhard, *Empire of Ruin: Black Classicism and American Imperial Culture*.

⁴⁷⁸ For more on this refer to the introductory chapter of this work (pp. 15-18).

significant step in this direction, because she looks at how American blacks utilised classicism in their struggle for equality and civil rights in the North.⁴⁷⁹ Overall, my point here emphasises that the study of classicism in the American South requires much more research, also taking into full account the unfortunate “slavery” side.

In sum, the present study primarily focused on pro-slavery and the American South during the 1840s and 1850s. The conflict that began in the spring of 1861 represents a much broader culmination of pro-slavery and abolitionist sentiments. A civil war between two societies erupted and led to a great loss of life. In the years leading up to the Civil War, classicism played a major part in defining the antebellum South, specifically in the works of Cobb, McCord, Holmes, Fitzhugh, and Hammond. With the efforts of Gildersleeve and other likeminded intellectuals this trend continued well after the war too. The overarching theme shows us that classicism maintained an important foothold in the South before and after the Civil War. While my research here only probes the literary contributions of five individuals who utilised classicism to defend slavery, it nevertheless shows where it fits into the much larger discussions on the antebellum South. And, despite the Confederacy having fallen over 150 years ago, as modern historians, it remains our responsibility to interpret, analyse, and understand the peculiar institution of the American South. This includes those individuals who strived to defend their society and the role black slavery played in it.

⁴⁷⁹ Margaret Malamud, *African Americans and the Classics: Antiquity, Abolition and Activism* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

Appendix of Tables

**Table 1: Examples of Black Slavery in Judea, Egypt, India, and the Asia Minor
(Thomas Cobb 1858)**

| | | |
|-------------------|---|----------|
| <u>Judea</u> | “That many of them were Africans and of negro extraction, seems to admit but little doubt. Josephus says, ‘King Solomon had many ships that lay upon the Sea of Tarsus. These he commanded to carry out all sorts of merchandise, to the remotest nations, by the sale of which silver and gold were brought to the king, and a great number of ivory, apes, and Ethiopians.’” | p.40 |
| <u>Egypt</u> | “That they had slaves, not only agrestic, but domestic, attached to the person of the master, is abundantly shown by inscriptions upon the numerous monuments of their ancient grandeur. It is, moreover, well agreed from these monuments, that many of these domestic slaves were of pure negro blood. In one of them, a large number of negroes are represented as prisoners of war. Herodotus confirms this conclusion, and informs us that Ethiopia furnished Egypt with gold, ivory, and slaves . . . Upon one of the monuments at Thebes, and Egyptian scribe is represented as registering negroes as slaves, both men, women, and children. Upon another, the victorious Egyptian king is represented as putting to flight a troop of negroes. In still another, they are represented as indulging in their favorite amusement of the day, - the dance. These representations are so perfect, that the most unpracticed eye would recognize them at a glance. A negro skull was exhumed in the Island of Malta, among the ruins of Hadjerkem.” | pp.44-45 |
| <u>Egypt</u> | “Though the negroes in Egypt were generally slaves, ‘prejudice of color’ does not seem to have been so great as at this day, as we find in one of their inscriptions, the representation of the negro queen of one of the emperors receiving equal homage with himself.” | p.46 |
| <u>Egypt</u> | “While the system of castes seems thus to have removed from the Caucasian races the <i>status</i> of personal slavery to the negro, it brought no relief, for the slave-market of the present day, in Cairo, offers still to the purchaser the children of Ethiopia, from whom are supplied the personal domestics of Egypt.” | p.49 |
| <u>India</u> | “The servile class in India are very near the color of the African negro. There are, however, distinguishing characteristics, showing them to be of different races. The negro proper, however, has found his way to India, and is there, as he is everywhere, in a state of slavery. The East India Company early discovered his adaption to the labor of this hot climate, and worked their most extensive plantations of nutmeg and clove by African labor.” | p.54 |
| <u>Asia Minor</u> | “Here, too, we find the negro still a slave. The numbers, in ancient times, we cannot estimate. In later days, a brisk trade has been and even now is carried on with the eastern coast of Africa by Arab dealers, who supply Persia and Arabia with African slaves.” | p.58 |

Table 2: Cato and James Henry Hammond on Overseers

| Cato | Hammond |
|--|--|
| <p>These are the duties of the overseer: He should maintain discipline. He should observe the feast days. He should respect the rights of others and steadfastly uphold his own. He should settle all quarrels among the hands; if any one is at fault he should administer punishment. He should take care that no one on the place is in want, or lacks food or drink; in this respect he can afford to be generous, for he will thus more easily prevent picking and stealing. Unless the overseer is of evil mind, he will himself do no wrong, but if he permits wrong-doing by others the master should not suffer such indulgence to pass with impunity. He should show appreciation of courtesy, to encourage others to practise it. He should not be given to gadding or conviviality, but should always be sober. He should keep the hands busy, and should see that they do what the master has ordered. He should not think that he knows more than the master. The friends of the master should be his friends, and he should give heed to those whom the master has recommended to him. He should confine his religious practices to church on Sunday, or to his own house. He should not lend money to no man unbidden by the master, but what the master has lent he should collect. He should never lend any seed reserved for sowing, feed, corn, wine, or oil, but he should have relations with two or three other farms with which he can exchange things needed in [the case of] emergency. He should state his accounts with the master frequently. He should not keep any hired men or day hands longer than necessary. He should not sell anything without the knowledge of the master, nor should conceal anything from the master. He should not have any hangers-on, nor should he consult any soothsayer, fortune teller, necromancer, or astrologer. He should not spare seed for sowing, for that is bad economy. He should strive to be expert in all kinds of farm work, and, without exhausting himself, often lend a hand. By so doing, he will better understand the point of view of his hands, and they will work more contentedly; moreover, he will have less inclination to gad, his health will be better, and he will sleep more refreshingly. First up in the morning, he should be the last to go to bed at night; and before he does, he should see that the farm gates are closed, and that each of the hands is in his own bed, that the stock have been fed. He should see that the best of care is taken of the oxen, and should pay the highest compliments to the teamsters who keep their cattle in the best of</p> | <p>The overseer will never be expected to work in the field, but he must always be with the hands when not otherwise engaged in the employers business, and will be required to attend on occasion to any pecuniary transaction connected with the plantation. The overseer should never give away, sell or exchange, not buy, order or contract for anything without the full knowledge of the employer and [with] positive order to do so. The overseer must never be absent a single night, nor an entire day, without permission previously obtained. Whenever absent at church, or elsewhere, he must be on the plantation by sundown without fail. He must attend every night and morning at the stables, and see that the mules are watered, cleaned and fed, and the doors are locked. He must keep the stable keys at night, and all the keys, in a safe place, and never allow anyone to unlock a barn, smokehouse, or other depository of plantation stores but himself. He must endeavour, also, to be with the plow hands always at noon. The overseer must see that all the negroes leave their houses promptly after horn-blow in the morning. Once, or more, a week he must visit every house after horn-blow at night to see that all are in. He should not fall into a regular day or hour for his night visit, but should so often and at such times that he may be expected at any time. The overseer will be expected not to degrade himself by charging any negro with carrying any news to the employer. There must be no news to carry. The employer will not encourage tale-bearing, but will question every negro indiscriminately whenever he thinks proper about all matters connected with the plantation, and require him to tell the truth. Whenever he learns anything derogatory to the overseer he will immediately communicate it to him. The overseer must show no favouritism among negroes. The overseer must ride but one horse and must never allow any number of his family or other person, on any occasion, to use a horse without [obtained] permission: And as the employer's business will require his whole attention he is expected to see but little company. He will be expected to obey strictly all instructions of the employer. His opinion is requested on all questions relative to plantation matters as they arise, and will be treated with respect, but when not adopted, he must cheerfully and faithfully carry into effect the views of the employer, and with a sincere desire to produce a successful result... The whole stock is under his charge. He must attend personally at</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>condition. He should see to it that the ploughs and plough shares are kept in good repair. Plan all the work in ample time, for so it is with farm work, if one thing is done late, every thing will be late. When it rains try to find something to do indoors. Clean up, rather than remain idle. Remember that while work may stop, expenses still go on.⁴⁸⁰</p> | <p>feeding the hogs at least four times a week, and count them once a week: And count and salt the cattle twice a month. He must fall into no routine in looking after the stock, but so arrange that the stock-minder will always expect him. The negroes must be made to obey and to work, which may be done by an overseer, who attends regularly to his business with very little whipping. All use of spirituous liquors by the overseer is objected to and should he get drunk he must expect to be instantly discharged.⁴⁸¹</p> |
|---|---|

Table 3: Cato and James Henry Hammond’s Foodstuff Ration for the Slaves

| Cato | Hammond |
|---|--|
| <p>The following are the customary allowances for food: For the hands, four pecks of meal for the winter, and four and one-half for the summer. For the overseer, the housekeeper, the wagoner, the shepherd, three pecks each. For the slaves, four pounds of bread for the winter, but when they begin to cultivate the vines this is increased the five pounds until the figs are ripe, then return to four pounds. The sum of wine allowed for each hand per annum is eight quadrantals, or Amphora, but add in the proportion as they do work. Ten quadrantals [ca.260 litres] per annum is not too much to allow them to drink. Save the wind fall olives as much as possible as relishes for the hands. Later set aside such of the ripe olives as will make the least oil. Be careful to make them go as far as possible. When the olives are all eaten, give them fish pickles and vinegar. One peck of salt per annum is enough per hand.⁴⁸²</p> | <p>Allowances are given out once a week. No distinction is made among work-hands, whether they are full-hands, under field-hands or adjuncts about the yard, stables, etc. Each work-hand gets a peck of meal every Sunday morning – the measure filled and piled as long as it will stand on it, but not packed or shaken. Each work hand gets 3 lbs. of bacon or pickled pork every Monday night. Fresh meat may be substituted at the rates of 3 ½ lbs. of fresh pork, (uncured, but salted) or 4 lbs. of beef or mutton, or 4 ½ of pork offal. When 1 pint of molasses is given the meat is reduced to 2 ½ lbs. of bacon or pickled pork, or 3 lbs. of fresh pork, beef or mutton, or 3 ½ lbs. of pork offal. Mixed allowances of bacon and fresh meat are given in the same proportions. The entire amount of meat is weighted out from the smokehouse and divided satisfactorily in the presence of the overseer. Fresh beef maybe given late in summer and until spring – never in full allowances but in cold weather. Fresh pork and pork offal only at hog killing times... Drams are never given as rewards, but only as medicinal.⁴⁸³</p> |

⁴⁸⁰ Harrison, *Roman Farm Management: Cato and Varro*, 32-35.

⁴⁸¹ Hammond. May 1858, *Plantation Manual*, 15-22.

⁴⁸² Harrison, *Roman Farm Management: Cato and Varro*, 36-37.

⁴⁸³ Hammond. May 1858, *Plantation Manual*, 23-27.

Table 4: Cato and James Henry Hammond’s Clothing Ration for the Slaves

| Cato | Hammond |
|--|---|
| <p>Allow each hand a smock and a cloak every other year. As often as you give out a smock or cloak to any one, take up the old one, so that caps can be made out of it. A pair of heavy wooden shoes should be allowed every other year.⁴⁸⁴</p> | <p>Each man gets in the fall 2 shirts of cotton drilling, a pair of woolen pants and a woolen jacket. In the spring two shirts of cotton shirting and two pairs of cotton pants. Jackets or pants may be substituted for each other whenever the wish is expressed before making them. [Which is] often done. Each woman gets in the fall six yards of woolen cloth, six yards of cotton drilling and a needle, skin of thread and ½ dozen buttons. In the spring six yards of cotton shirting and six yards of cotton cloth similar to that for men’s pants, needle, thread, and buttons. Each worker gets a stout pair of shoes every fall, and a heavy blanket every third year.⁴⁸⁵</p> |

⁴⁸⁴ Harrison, *Roman Farm Management: Cato and Varro*, 36-37.

⁴⁸⁵ Hammond. May 1858, *Plantation Manual*, 28.

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