THE ABSENT AGRONOMIST AND THE LORD OF POISON: CULTIVATING MODERNITY IN TRANSATLANTIC LITERATURE, 1758-1854

A dissertation presented

by

Patricia Catherine “Kate” Simpkins

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of philosophy in English in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities of Northeastern University
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Abstract

This dissertation contributes to the field of New Southern Studies by reading antebellum American literature in relation to the new forms of labor, knowledge, and racialization developed on the eighteenth-century French Caribbean plantation. Even though we think of modernity as having been produced and dominated by European Enlightenment science, literature’s stories about the plantation show that modernity grew from the seeds of creole African knowledge ways and European agronomy—both of which were created on colonial soil. My readings of literature from St. Domingue (pre-revolutionary Haiti), France, Britain and the U.S. from the 1750s to the 1850s identify two twinned and competing figures of power: that of European colonial knowledge embodied in the absent agronomist and his systems of surveillance, and that of creole African knowledge, embodied in the mytho-historical figure and maroon slave known as François Makandal, the “lord of poison,”¹ whose knowledge of soil and plants enabled revolution “from below.”² I consider the specifically ecological nature of modernity and its counter cultures by showing that in reality and in fiction, there is a co-productive and competing relationship between scientific modernity and an Atlantic African counter-culture of modernity created in the monocultural plantation economies of the South.

¹ Alejo Carpentier and Harriet de Onís, The Kingdom of This World: A Novel (Macmillan, 2006), 30.
² Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (Chapel: UNC Press Books, 2014), 206. My discussion of revolution “from below” builds on Eric Williams’ idea that the slave signifies and is the capital of early industry. Slaves would be liberated by law (from above) or through violence (from below).
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Preface

The story of François Makandal, an enslaved healer, Vodou priest, and fugitive slave, begins in 1758 Saint-Domingue, pre-revolutionary Haiti, on a French colonial plantation where his fetishes are said to have caused the death of more than 6,000 people and made Saint-Domingue tremble at the mere mention of his name. The dissertation ends in 1854, at Lang Syne plantation in South Carolina where my great-great-great grandfather, David James McCord, translated French colonial scientific treatises that were central to Saint-Domingue’s agribusiness. His pamphlet claimed that the African’s home was worn on the body in the form of a fetish. In making such a claim, McCord’s pamphlet uses the concept of the fetish as a means of marking African culture effectively nomadic, rootless, and in excess of history in comparison to Europeans. Still, his interest in refuting the possibility of black territorial sovereignty through this idea of the fetish as a mark of savagery presents us with a means of reading Afro-creole knowledge ways as the basis of a circumatlantic discourse that networks multiple geographies and spaces of cultural production including pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue, pre-revolutionary France, nineteenth-century London theater, scientific literature from Philadelphia, and the American novel, all of which remain interested in African fugitive characters derived from original documentation of François Makandal. Twenty years before, McCord had been one of the authors of the Nullification Papers, through which southern lawmakers conjured up their own radical notion of secession around their attachments to a way of life that ended in “tragedy” for
the planters of “Hayti.”

His pamphlet was written the year after his second wife, Louisa Susannah Cheves McCord, wrote her own vitriolic address to Harriet Beecher Stowe regarding *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), a novel that accused people like the McCords as people of French Huguenot diasporas of ignoring their Christian labor in coming to the aid of the African with agricultural apprenticeship and private Christian education. “Mrs. Stowe,” she wrote, “has a fertile imagination.” McCord held that Stowe’s novel threatened to bring about another “Haytian tragedy” by putting people under a poisonous haze, as she called it, a “mesmeric biologic influence” bent on freedom for slaves.

If the McCords had never participated as proslavery writers in this ongoing literary cultivation of political thought on race, labor, and black sovereignty after the Haitian Revolution, the seeds of the Makandal story would have still been growing all around them. Makandal’s historical owner, Lenormand de Mézy, was known as an absentee planter with great wealth from sugar in Saint-Domingue, but he spent most of his professional years in Louisiana working on cotton seed selection, cotton gin development, and the development of botanical medicines.

Likewise, Louisa inherited Lang Syne plantation from Ann Heatly Reid Lovell, who, in the same period as Lenormand, became known for the earliest successful cotton seed experimentation in

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4 Ibid.

South Carolina.\textsuperscript{6} As Franco-American plantocrats, the McCords’ geographic roots, displacements, and ownership of properties, including many slaves, spans the Global South from places including Saint-Domingue, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Britain, France, and the U.S. but cannot be told without the story of the African healer and poisoner.

These intersections in agricultural and literary production, family and eco-kinship, situate the final chapter of this dissertation’s reading of \textit{Uncle Tom’s Cabin} as a text that participates in a transnational discourse on black sovereignty and agriculture after the Haitian Revolution. Beyond their relationship to Stowe’s novel as critics, Louisa and David’s social, educational, and familial histories show their own relationships to Saint-Domingue and to the beginnings of French agronomy. David’s and my relative, Leonard Turquand, wrote in 1813 that “for posterity,” he had undertaken the work of translating French manuscripts belonging to his father that detailed the Turquand history to French monarchical land development in the 1400s.\textsuperscript{7} Such connections and messages to the future me have produced a curiosity about and awareness of scholarship as an ongoing encounter with present points of circulation on those “grids” of kinship that “channel and code the flow of goods, people” and their relations.\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{6} Ann Heatly Reid Lovell, “Ann Heatly Reid Lovell Papers” n.d.
\textsuperscript{7} Paul Turquand, Susan Symthe Bennett, and David J McCord, \textit{Turquand family papers}, 1786.
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Introduction

My dissertation contributes to the field of New Southern Studies by reading antebellum American literature in relation to the new forms of labor, knowledge, and racialization developed on the eighteenth-century French Caribbean plantation. Even though we think of modernity as having been produced and dominated by European Enlightenment science, literature’s stories about the plantation show that modernity grew from the seeds of creole African knowledge ways and European agronomy—both of which were created on colonial soil. My readings of literature from St. Domingue (pre-revolutionary Haiti), France, Britain and the U.S. from the 1750s to the 1850s identify two twinned and competing figures of power: that of European colonial knowledge embodied in the absent agronomist and his systems of surveillance, and that of

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10 André J. Bourde, *The Influence of England on the French Agronomes, 1750-1789* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). Jowel C. Laguerre and Cecile Accilien, *Haitian Creole Phrasebook: Essential Expressions for Communicating in Haiti* (McGraw Hill Professional, 2010). In a basic Haitian Creole phrasebook (Laguerre and Accilien) published after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the first phrase among vocabulary named “essential” to aid workers is “Agronomist ... Agwonôm” (111). The phrasebook offers no accompanying explanation of the word or the special significance related to anyone calling themselves *agwonôm* in Haitian culture; the text assumes that speakers of English will have some measure of understanding of the term through previous or parallel understandings of the word in English. Despite the “agro” prefix, *Collins Robert* (2007) translates agronomist simply as “cultural engineer,” though any search engine will show that contemporary agronomists might specialize in any practice or form of research related to agriculture and as might be expected in contemporary terms, are specifically concerned with
creole African knowledge, embodied in the mytho-historical figure and maroon slave known as François Makandal, the “lord of poison,” whose knowledge of soil and plants enabled revolution “from below.” Critics such as Paul Gilroy, Sibylle Fischer, and Carolyn Fick have identified a counter-culture of modernity in the Atlantic world that is particularly recognizable in Haitian revolutionary history—one associated with the culture of diasporic Africans forced into slavery. Building on this work, I consider the specifically ecological nature of modernity and its counter cultures by showing that in both non-fiction and fictional representation, there is a co-

political ecology and environmental sustainability. Bourde’s history of France and Britain agricultural philosophical development and later relations between the two begins with a background on French agricultural thought in the 1600s. Despite their differences, the physiocrats and the agronomists (two French schools of thinking and writing on agricultural philosophy) were both interested in “the repartition of land, its mode of tenure, agricultural taxes, consequences of the feudal regime, and the connection of agriculture with the broader problems debated in that century, relating to political economy or statistics” (3-4). Overall, agronomy and economics do not emerge as two separate domains of knowledge or discussion at this time as “both studies were in their infancy” (3). Bourde names Olivier de Serres’ Théâtre d’Agriculture and Charles Estienne’s Maison Rustique as examples of writing on agriculture that are “not only . . . representatives of a certain kind of writing, but also . . . symbols of a certain French craftsmanship” in which aristocratic readers “indulged” themselves (7). Importantly, Bourde’s book on French agronomy focuses more on European development; for more information on that agriculture in the Caribbean, see next note, 46.

12 Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (Chapel: UNC Press Books, 2014), 206. My discussion of revolution “from below” builds on Eric Williams’ idea that the slave signifies and is the capital of early industry. Slaves would be liberated by law (from above) or through violence (from below).
productive and competing relationship between scientific modernity and an Atlantic African counter-culture of modernity created in the monocultural plantation economies of the South.\textsuperscript{14} Though modernity can be historically described as an effectively global project in which nature is thought as a unified, fixed field of meaning created by European science, I show that modernity is also constituted by alternative knowledge forms both deconstructive and essential to the planter’s schema for creating human/environmental relations, and therefore deconstructive to taxonomic ontology associated with our ideas of natural order. As a result, we can also imagine the construction of modernity and its knowledge structures—even the archive itself—as a syncretic arrangement of multiple ways of making meaning. Importantly, tracing these multiple and contingent knowledge ways from Saint-Domingue to the U.S. makes it possible to read American literature about the plantation in terms of a transnational and counter-cultural modern sphere.

I begin with one of the earliest stories about François Makandal and trace his relationship to the plantocracy as it advances through literary figurations sometimes mistaken for Toussaint Louverture, one of the more well-known figures of the Haitian Revolution. My readings build on the example of Srinivas Aravamudan’s recent edition of \textit{Obi or the History of Three-fingered Jack} (1800), written by William Earle, which is an Anglo-Atlantic and Afro-diasporic narrative

\textsuperscript{14} Gilroy, The Black Atlantic, 1-2.
tradition about a Jamaican maroon named Jack Mansong. The tradition of stories about Jack begin with colonial sources such as first-hand accounts from planters and newspapers and move into other genres with more romantic sub-plots such as pantomime. Similarly, François Makandal is a Franco-Atlantic textual tradition disseminated in oral and written modes of communication who signifies a “syncretic legacy of the New World African diaspora.” Obi or Obeah and Vodou are focused on worship of different ancestral divinities, but they are both Afro-diasoric religions that can be described as “a set of practices or beliefs produced by the cultural synthesis of enslaved populations drawn from a number of African locations.”

Makandal is most frequently associated with Vodou, but fiction also associates him with Obi. Aravamudan theorizes that the Obi religion inspires writers to “match the novelty” of Arican religion “with several innovations of form” that “combine romance elements, sentimental poetry, mock-epistolary structure, anthropological footnote, and colonial reportage,” and Makandal stories similarly move across and combine to form an innovative generic syncretism.

My first chapter shows how literature about Makandal moves from judicial documents and letters from the colony into popular literature in France and England. The first document that I discuss is a judicial sentencing notice from Saint-Domingue in 1758 called “Macandale, chef

16 Ibid., 7.
18 Ibid.
des noir révoltés.” From this document and other anonymous letters from planters, Makandal then becomes the subject of a highly-romanticized “true story,” in “Makandal, Histoire Véritable,” published in the Mercure de France literary journal in 1787. Though his story begins to adopt romantic sub-plots, Makandal still signifies as a means of illustrating how we can read a circumatlantic literature moving from the colony to Europe through the centrality of Afro-diasporic knowledge ways.

Chapter Two illustrates how the Makandal story crosses over into pantomime performance and the novel to form a generically and culturally hybrid reflection of modern culture based on stories from the French Caribbean plantation. After the Mercure de France “True History,” a refugee French Creole planter who arrived in Philadelphia, Moreau de Saint-Mery, re-instates Makandal’s place as an historical person working against the French plantocracy in his multi-volume cultural study of the colony, Description Topographique, Physique, Civile, Politique et Historique de La Partie Francaise de L’isle Saint-Domingue, Tome I (1797). I apply Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of rhizomatic language to show that Moreau’s tale of how Makandal’s hand was cut off in a sugar gin accident and his subsequent

turn to poison functions as a critique of absentee planters. The character effects a hybrid
gathering of materials and genres, passing from Moreau’s planter text back into fiction when he
becomes the central character in an English pantomime, “King Caesar, or The Negro Slaves,” by
John Cartwright Cross (1801). Then, the final text of Chapter Two, Victor Hugo’s first novel,
*Bug-Jargal*, (1826) has been previously read as a character aligned with the Haitian
revolutionary hero, Touissant Louverture, but I argue that Bug-Jargal is a Makandal character
who much more closely aligns the culture of bossale (native African) knowledge ways and their
importance to the eventual overturning of the plantocracy in Haiti. By now, he is a central figure
in the broader maroon literature tradition popular in French and English languages from the mid-
eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century.

Chapter Three reads *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in light of the transnational tradition of maroon
literature and the shadow of the Haitian Revolution so frightful to southern planters. Where Anna
Brickhouse’s article, “The Writing of Haiti,” relates that the novel serves as a “textual contact
zone” for writers for and against slavery in Haiti and France, I argue that the novel serves as that
textual contact zone because Stowe’s novel takes place within a circumatlantic discourse on
black sovereignty and African agricultural knowledge already put in place through Makandal
literature.²¹

²¹ Description Topographique, Physique, Civile, Politique et Historique de La Partie Française de
L’île Saint-Domingue, Tome I (1797)
Though my project does not aim to construct a comprehensive one-to-one biographical mapping of Makandal and his “Master,” (the absent agronomist), that man’s name was Sebastien François-Ange Le Normant (Lenormand) de Mézy, and the nuances of his relationship to Makandal represent a mostly unexplored terrain in Makandal studies important to this project. For what seem like logical reasons, they have not been read in concert: Lenormand was usually in Louisiana attempting to reproduce the wealth that he made in St. Domingue—a globetrotter—and Makandal was comparatively a local agitation and source of fear to the island. But in the same way that Paul Gilroy explodes the myth of dyads through which modernity is narrated, e.g., white/black, colony/metropole, I show that their separation (geographically and across the binary of cultural hegemony), are intergrown “cultural assemblages.” Gilroy reminds us that categorizations like hybridity are problematic, but my project promotes his dual assertion that they are “necessary” in marking the “roots” and “routes” of modern diasporan culture and helpful in making visible the embedded relationship between plantation knowledge production and the rise of modern capitalism. As agents of knowledge production, circulation, and disruption on global and local levels, they are competitors and co-producers of colonial economy. The maroon’s war for territorial autonomy and personal liberty is fought against the absent agronomist in the sense that planter literature says the “eyes” of the master are

23 Ibid.
everywhere in his absence in these forms of surveillance, containment, and control. He fights Overseers, dangerous machines, and the “marechausée” or governmental mercenaries, and to his aid, Makandal brings knowledge of plants and a collection of Obi and Vodou priests who are accomplices against a system of colonial power run from and in conflict with the greater power of monarchical sovereignty in the metropole, since Haiti’s pre-revolutionary history shows that white colonial planters on the judicial council that executed Makandal at times been in conflict with the French monarchy over issues related tax rates on production, access to commercial goods, and other governmental expressions of a desire for local (white) sovereignty. An introduction to Makandal’s biographical history in relation to Lenormand’s as well as the industry in which they were agents attests to this connection and continuum of power from sovereignty in Europe to the plantation. The common ground between the agronomist and the healer/poisoner is the way in which colonial soil becomes the material means through which both their forms of political ecology and economy are formed.

Background: The Lord of Poison

Called both “The Lord of Poison” and a “medical revolutionary” in twentieth-century postcolonial scholarship in novels, historical scholarship, and other works of criticism, François

Makandal is thought to have been a real historical figure in 1750s Saint-Domingue. Like all imported and indigenous peoples who suffered erasure under slavery, the survival of the name of a slave known to perform medical miracles is in itself miraculous. There are many details about who he was and what he meant to bossale (native African) culture in pre-revolutionary Haiti, but few details about which scholars have not disagreed; it is most useful to say that his repeated appearance in French, British and American literature draws power from that space of historical unverifiability. Though individual cases of domestic poisoning in which a slave sabotaged the master or his family members had been reported in Martinique, Saint-Domingue and many other colonial agricultural societies, Makandal’s case is different: his were group campaigns against whole plantation populations including animals and slaves with the aim of bringing an end to slavery. Some literature indicates that he was the leader of a large agricultural mountain encampment operating in parasitic relation to the surrounding plantations. His pre-revolutionary activities presage the later, formally recognized period of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804). My belief is that Moreau de Saint-Mery’s Description relates Makandal’s story in the most historical sense in that he was a neighbor to M. Belin de Villeneuve, the planter who

25 Carpentier, Kingdom, 30; Weaver, Medical Revolutionaries...
27 “Relation d’une conspiration tramée par les Negres, : dans l’Isle de S. Domingue; défense que fait le Jésuite Confesseur, aux negres qu’on suplicie, de révéler leur fauteurs & complices (Relation of a conspiracy hatched by the negros; Defense made by the Jesuit Confesser, of the black who revealed it under torment.) (Paris? : s.n.), 1758. http://archive.org/details/relationdunecons00pari.
owned the gin operation where Makandal was most likely injured. In short, after his accident, Makandal went on grand marronage (long-term fugitivity, defined as more than a year) and infiltrated the local economy by training his network of accomplices to make and sell poisons and sell them as pacotilleurs (sellers of small goods such as coffee) in the open market. After a period of marronage ranging from twelve to eighteen years, Makandal was captured, escaped, recaptured, and executed by fire in 1758.

He was an historical figure who has taken on mythic proportions, described as an enslaved healer, a seducer (sexually, socially, and intellectually), a sorcerer, murderer, and teacher of medicine and poison making. He was also known as a veterinarian and physician with medical talents that were inexplicable to European physicians who called on his understandings of “medicinal herbs” when all else failed. He spoke Arabic and may have been a Muslim, and/or a priest of the Rada Lwas, which is a tribal and ancestral spiritual tradition of Africa and in Vodou. Another text claims he knew European poetry, music, painting, oratory arts, and sculpture; however, some of these associations are at least as likely to be the result of his appropriation into pantomime and picaresque novel. Moreau de Saint-Mery says he was a

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featured attraction at Calendas, which were widely-practiced Afro-Creole dances associated with revolt as much as their other purposes as social and ceremonial African fertility rites. Calendas and other African dance cultures were appropriated as much as other kinds of colonial material for entertainment in eighteenth-century theater in Paris and Le Cap Français, Haiti.

As a well-known person to Haitian Revolutionary Studies and to Haitian oral culture, his contemporary revival really began with C.L.R. James’ *The Black Jacobins* (1938), and equally with Alejo Carpentier’s postcolonial historical fiction, *The Kingdom of This World* (1949). But a transatlantic literary genealogy of literatures about him in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century print cultures has remained scattered. His name is dense with meaning related to Afro-Caribbean knowledge production that goes beyond the person known as François Makandal. For example, David Geggus has suggested the word is derived from a “corruption of the Kongo word for amulet” or charm, “makanda.” The reader will note the word “corruption” easily slips into other notions of “poisoning,” both culturally and physically. And Makandalism (*Makandalisme*) is synonymous with the practice of poisoning or witchcraft as much as fetishmaking and

medicine in Haiti then and now.\textsuperscript{34} Overall, he has “symbolized and embodied fears of poison, slave uprising, and the danger of African knowledge about plants, medicine, and religion.”\textsuperscript{35} From these layers of meaning associated with his name, we can draw a deep association between him and Dahomey religious traditions of Africa as well as their diasporic reformulations on the French Caribbean plantation. In this sense, the literature I present here attempts to illustrate how the Makandal person/character/and practice structures a genealogy of literature in terms of Afro Diasporic culture. Second, the dissertation shows that the presence of such a repeated narrative in literature of multiple languages, genres, and publication spaces reproduces his war against the plantocracy as a meta-narrative of counter-cultural modernity that continues to emerge in nineteenth-century U.S. discourses. Last, because his presence continues to emerge in antebellum American literature, we have the opportunity to consider how reading Makandal participates in reorienting a nationally-defined literature to a global economic and cultural modernization process originating with the French-Caribbean plantation; at once, agriculture, botany, medicine, and pharmacology are domains of thinking and practice that both produce and subvert the project of imperialism.

\textsuperscript{34} Évelyne Camara, Isabelle Dion, and Jacques Dion, \textit{Esclaves: regards de blancs 1672-1913} (Archives nationales d’outre-mer, 2008), 84; Émile Durkheim, \textit{L’Année sociologique} (Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), 28.
\textsuperscript{35} Mobley, “The Kongolesse Atlantic,” 287.
Agricultural philosophers Denis Diderot and Abbé Raynal wrote of a “black Spartacus,” in *Histoire des Deux Indes*. Their vision of a dangerous and powerful figure who would liberate the slaves comes years after the story of Makandal’s maroonage was already in circulation, and their revision of the narrative over the years shows he moves from more violent to more democratic associations with social change by the time the work inspired Toussaint Louverture. As a knowledgeable and powerful African leader from the Congo, the “black Spartacus” of the Saint Domingue plantation, the spartacus was said to rise up and by divine means to return the diaspora to Africa or exact apocalypse on home soil. Laurent Dubois’s critical narrative of the Haitian Revolution, *Avengers of the New World* (2004), draws its title from another one of these works that evokes the mytho-historical magnitude of a Makandal and his example: Louis Mercier’s *L’An 2440* (1772), translated as *Memoirs of the Year 2500*, is a work of French futurist science fiction that draws on pantomime’s portrayals of slaves as “persons of merit” rather than villains. Mercier’s sobering, political vision imagines a world without slavery in which a

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37 Reinhardt, *Claims to Memory*, 69.

“divine avenger” born from “nature” (a divinity from below) would claim African sovereignty and futurity. He writes:

nature … produced this wonderful man, this immortal man,
who was to deliver a world from the most outrageous, the most
inveterate and atrocious tyranny. His sagacity, his valour, his
patience, his fortitude, and virtuous vengeance,….. Not the torrent
that breaks the dykes, nor the bursting thunder, (will) have a more
sudden, or more violent effect.\(^{39}\)

In Mercier’s futuristic world and warning, the “divine avenger,” and “his people,” will “occupy the place” Europeans possess; he will “push us so far back into antiquity,” Mercier says, “that there shall not remain of us either footprint or remembrance.”\(^{40}\) With the leadership of this “divine avenger,” he prophesies the “French, Spanish, English, Dutch, and Portuguese” nations

manouvriers” (agricultural laborers), and even though the figure may speak more locally for the French peasants during the partitioning of common land, these are problems increasingly dominated by national and international forces. I have not found an explanation for why William Hooper translated the title with a year change from 2440 to 2500, but the text’s title change may have something to do with its status as a “forbidden best-seller” in the 1770s. It was a scandal when it first appeared in ancien régime Paris for its imagination of a future Paris with radical social change. Mercier first distributed the text himself then sent it to a Huguenot publisher in England and had already become contraband two years before the 1791 revolution in Haiti. Though Makandal is not present at the later revolution, the narrative of a rebellious African who leads through poison but functions as a metaphorical vehicle for French revolutionary thought is already popular and the object of literary censorship.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 141.
who partitioned the world will become “prey to the sword, to fire, and poison.”\(^{41}\) Though Toussaint Louverture, Vincent Ogé, and other later revolutionary figures are more often associated with the black messiah mythology of Mercier’s and Raynal’s visions, I argue that Makandal emerges before these more well-known figures from the space of the literature of the French Caribbean plantation to constitute the “divine avenger,” and “Franco-Africanist shadow” so associated with the fear of another revolution. He is still visible, even in American abolitionist iterations of black futurity such as _Uncle Tom’s Cabin_.\(^{42}\) Unlike Louverture and Ogé, who were born in Saint-Domingue and identified as free black Creole planters, Makandal is thought to have been born in Africa and is much more closely associated with the active practice of botanical warfare, with the state of being fugitive, and with Vodou’s syncretic religious ways of knowing.\(^{43}\) Where both Louverture and Ogé were students of French abolitionist thinking, Makandal’s education is a combination of knowledge about plants brought first-hand from Africa as well European education.\(^{44}\) Perhaps literature about him is associated more often with Louverture because biographies of the nineteenth century link Louverture to African nobility and agricultural knowledge. However, land-based knowledge and nobility are associated with Makandal before Louverture becomes known internationally, and Louverture’s relationship to

\(^{41}\) Ibid.


\(^{43}\) Mobley, “The Kongolese Atlantic.”

\(^{44}\) M. de C, _Mercure de France_ (Mercure de France, 1787).
agriculture is defined by large monoculture. In contrast to Makandal, who is associated with subsistence agriculture, by 1789, Louverture rejected bossale agriculture and was a supporter as well as a “subject” of the “Atlantic world-system of agrarian capitalism.” Reading Makandal as a typology instead of Louverture who persists through these texts emphasizes the interculture and tension between bossale or African political struggle against the colonizer’s methods of marginalization through agronomy in the Old Regime, in which agricultural treatises claimed that African cultures were non-culture, the result of false belief, or literally and spiritually poisonous to Europeans who were, in contrast, embued with futurity through the capacity to claim territorial sovereignty.

Though Makandal (1742-1758) was not present at the later events associated with the 1791 Haitian Revolution, stories told about him after the Revolution are always told in relation to

M. de C., “Makandal, Histoire Véritable,” 103; John Cartwright Cross, King Caesar or The Negro Slaves London, 1801. These texts are two examples of literature about Makandal in which he is described as kingly or noble. The first says he was “rather noble rank in his country” (d’un rang assez illustre dans sa patrie).

46 Nick Nesbitt, “Turning the Tide: The Problem of Popular Insurgency in Haitian Revolutionary Historiography,” Small Axe 12, no. 3 (2008): 15–6, 19; Fick, The Making of Haiti,” Nesbitt notes Louverture’s rejection of mini-fundia farming typical to African cultures168. Both Fick and Nesbitt provide excellent background material on the cultural and agricultural shifts that took place among former slaves and communities following the Haitian Revolution. In short, thought Toussiant Louverture clearly felt that monoculture was the only thing that could restore Haiti’s former “splendor,” and though compulsory agricultural labor and labor codes were introduced in 1793, newly liberated slaves resisted these new forms of enslavement and preferred small subsistence agriculture. Nesbitt quotes a letter from Louverture as cited in Mats Lundahl, Peasants and Poverty: A Study of Haiti (New York: St. Martin’s, 1979), 260.
the conflict in this later period. Because he was a laborer on the same plantation (owned by his absent master, Lenormand de Mézy) at which the later 1791 gathering of slaves took place, his persistent presence signifies a way of reading history in spatial and material terms of the world below the recognizably social—from the soil and the slaves who were equated with it. David Geggus sets this bar by handily redirecting readings of slave resistance formerly understood as somehow outside the arena of the political world. Instead, he reads bossale (African) resistance in pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue in relationship to African contemporary culture rather than French. He notes, “when the bossales revolted” in Saint-Domingue, the “transcultural nature of their ideology was paralleled in an on-going African conflict on the nature of political sovereignty and kingship.” So, beyond the evident import and image of Louverture, Makandal is a knowledge practice and a human/divine figure of resistance emerging from transatlantic

movements for political sovereignty that exceed the French or British or American national framework and who continues to shape articulations of black futurity in Haiti. Though Makandal’s name is sometimes absent or changed in late nineteenth-century literature, we can see that by this time he is present as a diasporized effect of knowledge already reproduced. His memory is seeded and thrown out across multiple laboring and mixed-race bodies with talents for medicine, agriculture, and socio-spiritual leadership who are sometimes valorized, sometimes subjugated, or both, in literature.

A Makandal, though not exclusively, is synonymous, with the word “fetish” by William Pietz’s definition of fetish and is a product of the “cross-cultural spaces of the coast of West Africa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries”; it is both a “word and a historically significant object,” a product, in Pietz’s terms, of a “novel” culture, or, we could say a culture that is modern as it has never been seen in any “prior discrete culture”).\(^50\) Fetish is from the Portuguese, meaning “magical practice,” and Latin *facticius*, meaning “manufactured.”\(^51\) In the nineteenth century, Hegel pronounced what was common thought to planters—that Africans themselves were caught up still in the “stuff of nature” and “Unhistorical,” incapable of participating in history’s making of meaning. Pietz explains that the African and the fetish are in “nineteenth-century economic sociological, anthropological, and psychological discourses …” are both stressed as “material objects” and “loci of fixed structures of the inscription displacement,


\(^{51}\) Ibid., 5–6.
reversal, and overestimation of value." \(^{52}\) It should be apparent, then, that theorizing the fetish as an historical object comes with problems in any approach. By approaching the fetish in the terms dictated to it by European philosophy, as a form or space of excess economic activity that has no agency, then we are in its re-objecification reinscribing the economies of the enslaved as marginal to history and the formation of political economy. But if the fetish is viewed from the counter-modern view of agency—as a phenomenon that is possible with things as well as people, then the fetish is not only a reflection of those fixed structures—a displacement or “lack” in Hegel’s words, but as an agentic node of expression within a sub-economy of culture in development.

A more recent study on African-Atlantic linguistic history says the word “derived from the Yombe word *makanda*, used to refer to objects made from “packets of animal, vegetable or mineral material wrapped in a leaf.” \(^{53}\) So, we have in a fetish or a Makandal as an example of a counter-modern manufacture—a political and economic expression of the belief in the agency and mutability of all things that is particularized by his example and present in the transatlantic literary imaginary. The person/textual object and idea of Makandal presents a decidedly different understanding of human-environmental reality than the planter’s and suggests that literature

\(^{53}\) Mobley, “The Kongolese Atlantic: Central African Slavery & Culture from Mayombe to Haiti,” 308. Mobley says that the “names and practices associated with the packets called macandals and fonda” can be “tied linguistically and ethnographically to the Mayombe region.”
reproduces this tension as a means of articulating alternative formulations of human-environmental relations.

Even today, the word conjures associations with both revolution and more negative connotations with death, black magic, sabotage, and the historic demonization and valorization of Vodou as well as bravery. But my aim is not to validate a particular portrait for an historical Makandal, but to model the way in which his relationship with the planter authority in Saint-Domingue and the reproduction of this story illustrates the production of modernity as a disruption of agency and “(re)distribution of agencies” rather than a nature/culture divide.

Modernity of the Enlightenment insists on this mythic divide while the very production of autonomous systems of material production becomes revealed as co-located as nature-culture.

My reading of works about Makandal in context of the planter’s disciplinary systems, including absenteeist practices informed through the letters and business documents of his owner, Le Normant de Mézy, formalizes Makandal’s story as one about the revolutionary aspects of his knowledge as much as the mythic associations with sorcery—itself a term meant to

54 Angela Naimou, “‘I Need Many Repetitions’: Rehearsing the Haitian Revolution in the Shadows of the Sugar Mill.” *Callaloo* 35, no. 1 (2012): 173–92. doi:10.1353/cal.2012.0005. Angela Naimou’s article discusses the way in which the tradition of Bois Caiman (the Vodou ritual that is historically associated with initiating the Haitian Revolution of 1791) is associated with Satanic culture according to the growing recent voice of evangelical Christianity, which wants to ritually cleanse the nation’s past and future from evil influence. She confirms that Boukman is the Vodou figure correctly associated with this later period of revolution, but Makandal as a person or practice undoubtedly falls within similar negative connotations related to Vodou and Haiti’s history.

mark Afro-creole knowledge ways as non-knowledge. The literature gathered here is a small sample of the existing archive, but it particularizes him as an example within a broader literary production focused on the culture of the Caribbean plantation. Because he can be found in places as diverse as the French colonial naval archives, in planter treatises related to medicine and agriculture, as well as the American novel, the study attempts to suggest ways in which reading counter-modernity can syncretize the archives into new relationships.

Background: The Absent Agronomist

Lenormand de Mézy’s absence from Saint-Domingue was spent in Paris, Louisbourg and New Orleans, and all these places’ archives bear some evidence of his path.56 He was in the colony for a total of four years over the span of a long, successful career as a naval officer. His experiments in agronomy (or agricultural economy in all its applications) was made possible as an administrator in Canada and his professional career in the French Navy through following his

father’s (and the Le Normant family’s position) in service to the French monarchy. Though Lenormand was only in Saint-Domingue for four years, his journey is intimately related to the plantation and the “property” that included Makandal. He is most often footnoted as an absent French bureaucrat with little relationship to the Makandal story, but multiple series of governmental correspondence in the French National, Overseas, and Naval archives show that Makandal and Lenormand were a part of the same political ecology in formation.\textsuperscript{57} Far from being a footnote, Lenormand was an industrious financial commissary. Like Makandal, he had a talent for the production and circulation of colonial and plantation eco-currencies, including everything from botanical medicine to cotton seeds.\textsuperscript{58}

Though Lenormand was not there, his career success seems to be contingent on and at least indirectly related to Makandal’s enslavement and execution. For, while Lenormand cross-cultivated “long staple” cotton, also known as “Saint-Domingue cotton” on Louisiana soil, the King gave him a five-year tax exemption on all the labor of his slaves back in Saint-Domingue. He was known as a shrewd tax collector in the first place, but this five-year tax break on all the wealth produced through the labor of his slaves in Saint-Domingue ranges from September 1754

\textsuperscript{57} Mississippi Dept of Archives and History. \textit{Annual Report of the Director of the Department of Archives and History of the State of Mississippi} . 1907.172. The collection holds letters from Lenormand de Mézy regarding his work with Louis Prat, doctor-botanist and regarding the production of a “wax-bearing shrub.”

\textsuperscript{58} Jacques Nicolas Léger, \textit{Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors} (Neale Publishing Company, 1907), 50.
to 1759, and Makandal was burned at the stake in the span of that exemption.\textsuperscript{59} In other words, Lenormand’s wealth in Saint-Domingue came through tax free labor and the (literal) labor loan/overtaxation of slave bodies. These practices take place in the same period when Makandal became a fugitive after being injured on a sugar gin, and one scholar suggests that he was on loan to a neighboring planter who lived in Saint-Domingue when it happened. \textsuperscript{60} 

Meanwhile, in Louisiana, Lenormand developed a passion for cotton gin design, and he spent more time on Louisiana cotton science than on Saint-Domingue sugar. His 1740s experimentations with Saint-Domingue cotton in Louisiana had produced a cotton seed more easily removed from the lint when ginned. In this sense, the Makandal/Lenormand story bridges resistance to the sugar industry in Saint-Domingue (and Afro-Creole slave resistance from ‘below’) with the birth of the cotton industry in early French America. Lenormand’s innovations in cotton gin design are contemporary with Makandal’s war against the sugar planters in Saint-Domingue, so that, through the business and material flow of French agronomy, the Makandal


\textsuperscript{60} Moreau, \textit{Déscription}, 652. According to Moreau, who was a Creole planter and member of the colonial council and who wrote about Makandal, the maroon was dismembered by a sugar gin. Karol Weaver notes the close proximity between Moreau’s appraisal of new gin technology at M. de Belin’s nearby plantation and the story of Makandal’s accident and correlates the way in which Moreau omits any logic connecting the two stores, and yet, how one story (of the excellence of Belin’s gin) transitions seamlessly into the story of Makandal’s accident). If he were injured on this new roller technology, it provides a logic that links the two stories.
story is present at both the end of the French sugar industry in one colony and the birth of cotton in the next. In other words, Lenormand’s absence situates a twin moment in Makandal, who on the contrary, illustrates the African “presence” that empowers and presages the Haitian Revolution. The widow of the attorney who prosecuted Makandal called him a “fatal seed,” but his story situates a fertile space in which to establish and grow the economic and epistemic effects of early revolutionary thought on the French plantation across geographic spaces divided by Franco or Anglo hegemonic study.

For example, as Makandal crafted plant poison in Saint-Domingue, Lenormand’s correspondence indicates that he was in Louisiana working on the cultivation of wax shrubs, or myrtle trees. These plants, which are now understood to have been used by indigenous and slave populations all over the Caribbean as a medicine for dysentery, were appropriated at a time when there was no known medication for the illness. Though further research is needed, the

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62 Courtin, “Memoire de La Dame Veuve Courtin. Au Cap Francais St. Domingue.,” 120.
64 Samuel Taylor, “On the Mal d’Estomac, or Cachexia Africana, amongst the Negroes of Dominica,” *Provincial Medical Journal and Retrospect of the Medical Sciences* 6, no. 150 (August 12, 1843): 409. Stomach illnesses on plantations were collectively diagnosed as Cachexia Africana, also known as dirt-eating disease or geophagia, and wax shrubs / myrtle trees may have rendered a medicinal treatment. The reference above is to a colonial medical review published in early-1800s London, it relates that a new text on cachexia africana by Dr. John Imray is very promising research (conducted in the colonies) because his findings provide several "exciting" new possibilities for its causes. Imran has theorized that superstitious beliefs (as with Obi or Vodou), weak morality, and sadness over separation from “homeland” cause
absent planter’s interest in medicine presents a new and unexplored commonality between Makandal and Lenormand—the first, a slave acknowledged for his knowledge of medicine when he arrived, in his early teens, from Africa, and a new financial commissary of Saint-Domingue who was working on reproducing the knowledge of enslaved and indigenous people on a large monocultural scale.

My project’s dual alignment between these modes of knowledge and personalities foregrounds the interrelated systems of familial kinship and monarchical landedness that support colonialism in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century transatlantic sphere, but it also foregrounds Afro-Creole knowledge as a system of political ecology contingent and constitutive to the agronomist’s progress. Makandal’s infiltration of Saint-Domingue through a network of poisoners and sellers of contraband materials such as fetishes demonstrates that colonial governmental power “was neither as uniform or as strong as its generic name suggests” inasmuch as his actions invoke their failures of surveillance over the prized fertility of Saint-Domingue soil and may have even caused major shifts in governmental policy and personnel.  

For example, my discussion of a 1758 document in Chapter One illustrates Makandal’s Cachexia Africana. There is no boundary in medical language here between spiritual and physical illness or cause. Neither is there the suggestion of the disease’s relationship to iron deficiency, starvation, or torture as causes. Irmay reasons that the more Africans are replaced by mass death, made collectively generationally lighter-skinned, or regulated through death’s cultural amnesia, the more Cachexia Africana will cease to exist. I would venture that the ongoing knowledge of such herbal remedies made Makandal particularly valuable to Lenormand.  

disruption of colonial authority. It may imply that Makandal’s success cost colonial officers their posts, but more importantly, planters’ writing about Makandal exposes the way in which his campaign participates in and foregrounds the fragile balances of power between metropole and colony, especially since long-term marronnage was an accepted part of the labor structure; Richard Price notes that grand marronage (long-term absence on a fugitive slave’s part) managers and overseers did not “bring up the issue with the owners” in France or elsewhere, perhaps because the “number of maroons could reflect badly on their handling of the slaves” (111). However, he notes that the subject seems to be typically treated with “casualness” on both sides. Given these social negotiations based in local relations between slaves and neighbor planters, Saint-Domingue’s colonial administration was marked by more fragile balances of alliance rather than one-way directions of power “create(s)” complicated “colonial politics, forcing officials into reciprocal bargains and compromises” in ways that “contradict national alliances and foreground local vs metropolitan belonging.” To this point, the next section more

67 Gabriel Debien, “Marronage in the French Caribbean,” in Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the America, ed. Richard Price (Random House LLC, 2013), 111, 118. Debien says that grand marronage was treated with “casualness” by both managers and absentee planters, but then he goes on to describe how local culture adopted very formal social rituals around the return of long-term fugitive slaves called “colonist-advocates” to whom “the fugitive would ask a neighbor to intercede and would be led back to the plantation under his protection.”
68 Pritchard, In Search of Empire, 262.
broadly maps out the development of French agronomy in the Caribbean, and in the process, illustrates a more detailed theoretical map for my use of the term modernity for the project.

*French Agronomy and Subaltern Knowledge in Saint-Domingue*

From the early 1700s, French agricultural development depended on competition as well as knowledge sharing across growing networks of aristocratic planters tasked with seeding monarchical domains.69 Andre J. Bourde’s early study of the development of agronomy in France and Britain relates that it “began as many other specialized sciences did in eighteenth-century France and England—as an interdisciplinary, philosophical, and practical interest among political economists and agricultural scientists in the use of agriculture.”70 Their interest in economics and agriculture as a philosophy derived from the physiocrats, who are historically now read parallel to and distinct from agronomes.71 However, discourses and professional distinctions between physiocrats and agronomes were not drawn at the time and neither were their literatures, but agronomes “derived” interest in economics from the physiocrats and turned to research and development through experimental science in the field.72

The monocultural plantation eventually became the real field for cultivating natural knowledge and the ideological field for the reproduction of European culture at its geographic

71 Ibid., 4.
72 Ibid.
edges. French planter treatises of the Old Regime idealized the plantation in the same utopic scenes of happy cultivators that Denis Diderot had earlier brought back from his travels in the English countryside. When that same notion of agricultural utopia was mapped onto the island of Saint-Domingue (now Haiti), the “pearl of the Antilles” produced what the French thought would eventually sustain an inexhaustible commodity surplus of goods. European agronomy aimed for efficiency in production, high volume, and automated predictable yields through data logs and overseers. Toward this project, many planters were absent because they travelled from one plantation geography to another for months or years at a time. The most wealthy planters also held judicial or administrative positions in government and employed professional refiners (called *rassineurs*) who “represented” the Master while the planter instead dealt with the greater business and law of the colony. Local councils and assemblies of wealthy planters who governed colonies like Louisiana, Saint-Domingue, and Louisbourg (Nova Scotia) were notoriously competitive and marked by conflicted alliances on local and transatlantic scales, since the wealth they secured through land development and fisheries equaled tax breaks and higher governmental assignments. Their shifting posts as administrators doubled as opportunity
to reproduce Saint-Domingue in other places like Louisiana, and in effect, to create an autonomous agriculture as a system that would reproduce, through data and prediction, at a distance.\textsuperscript{78}

By the 1750s, the elaborate roller and cooking technologies increasingly installed on sugar plantations called “the new machines” (\textit{les nouvelles machines}) made Saint-Domingue the chosen geography and material environment for the most modern scientific practice.\textsuperscript{79} It is through the explosion in gin technology that the plantation complex was also able to support the development of other specific scientific knowledge sets such as medicine, veterinary medicine, botany, forestry, and pharmacology. In every sense, the planter’s transient existence and global occupation was made possible through the forced presence and increased importation of Africans.\textsuperscript{80} And it is well known that Africans widely supported human and animal health

\textsuperscript{78} Thomas, “Pre-Whitney Cotton Gins in French Louisiana.”
\textsuperscript{80} Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley, \textit{Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture} (University of Virginia Press, 2005), 7, 10-11. DeLoughery says that with the mass import of Africans for the purpose of forced plantation labor as well as the deathly effects that accompanied slave society, a philosophical divide between culture and cultivation emerged as descriptions of utopia shifted to material and spiritual danger, uncertainty, and death.; Alan McPherson, Encyclopedia of U.S. Military Interventions in Latin America, vols. 1-2. ABC-CLIO, 2013), 268. A statistical list in this historical encyclopedia notes that the French imported 40,000 Africans a year by 1790 as a
because they served as plantation doctors, nurses, surgeons, pharmacists, and more with practices and knowledge unknown to European scientists.

While agronomy in Saint-Domingue increasingly operated through physical absence of the planter from the site of production, his absence did not denote a vacuum of connectedness and attachment to the project of disciplining the African into the planter’s view of natural logic. Even though scientists dismissed alternative knowledge as superstition or non-knowledge, they formed their own linguistic rituals in fetishizing the black body as an economic and ecological object. The work of early French scientist, Hilliard d’Auberteuil, influenced Moreau de Saint-Méry, who recorded the story of Makandal’s injury on a sugar gin, and d’Aubertuil said that “the negro” was “connected to” and would “follow the fate of the earth.” Moreau, who was a French Creole planter in Saint-Domingue, wrote about Makandal in the same volume of agricultural and

**method of dealing with the high mortality rate. The entry adds that they imported “790,000 African slaves before the Haitian Revolution.”**


http://archive.org/details/prcissurlacann00dutr.328-331; Despite d’Aubertueil’s racism, Reinhardt says d’Aubertueil condemned “the excessive death toll” from cruelty on the plantation, but D’Aubertueil says that “with a good master” a “laboring” slave is “happier than the peasant in France.” Dutrône La Couture says that a good master is an “absent” one (341).
social notes on the island that also produced what has been called the Franklin system for racialization—a taxonomy of race identity arranged in a table and created through algebraic formulations that measured hues of skin in fractional parts of Africanness and used terms like octoroon and mulatto to describe them. Dutrône La Couture builds on Moreau’s logic to create a racial algorithm in relation to labor (including the number of slaves unable to work because of illness or pregnancy) to corresponding relationships between average yield in sugar and predictions in future wealth. The same planter comments that all “the eyes” on the plantation are representationally the Master in his absence. To make an economic prediction, he formulates an equation in which a particular number of bodies-of-color are measured in terms of their particular agricultural labor. In doing so, he aligns an autonomous stream of production through data collection according to the desired corresponding yields in sugar and silver. The raw capital of the slave in data logs directly is directly relational to the planter’s ability to predict

\[ \text{Raw Capital} = \text{Total Crop Yields} \times \text{Silver Profits} \]

\[ \text{Total Number of Slaves} = 250 \]

\[ \text{Movement} = \text{Plantation from Sugar in Pounds to Silver in Pounds} \]

\[ \text{Calculations} = \text{Structured through the arrangement of raced bodies to particular labors.} \]

\[ \text{Moreau de Saint-Méry, Médéric Louis Élie. Déscription topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l’île Saint Domingue, 1797.} \]

\[ \text{Dutrône, Précis, 328-331. Dutrône creates a table regulating race and labor in relation to profit. The furthest left columns provide categorized and sub-categorized open tablature for slaves by age and gender, health (hospitalized for illness or childbirth), then according to “conditions, cultures” and “roulaissons” (all concerned with labor divisions and race divisions). The right most columns are for the overseer or planter to record total crop yields and silver profits in pounds. The total number of slaves in this chart are 250 and describe the “movement” of the plantation from sugar in pounds to silver in pounds. These calculations are structured through the arrangement of raced bodies to particular labors.} \]

\[ \text{Ibid., 341.} \]

\[ \text{Moreau, Déscription, 651-3. Building on the work of others such as Hilliard d’Auberteuil, French Creole planter, Moreau de Saint-Méry composed mathematical race tables that were well-known and reproduced in other planter treatises.} \]
his commodity futures, and with it, his inching toward total agricultural occupation.

_How the Plantation Articulates Modernity_  

We can see the building of these complex distances between the world of black bodies and the world of the whitest bodies, but they are connected through a hybrid language pertaining to economics, race, and ecology. We see that a race table that measures blackness in drops of blood (a racial discourse) registers as an agricultural discourse, so that the language of race becomes the language of soil production becomes the language of future wealth. Both the language and the stark math of racism in Dutrone’s table underline the human cruelty of transatlantic race slavery as a producer of matching epistemic objectification. Bruno Latour’s theory is that our understanding of the stuff of nature and culture as separate intellectual and material realities is the result of a sustained (and unmodern) belief in the Enlightenment’s rigid metaphysics of nature still active in our minds today. To this point, Makandal’s intervention through systems of knowing that depend on the agency of things as well as the dislodging of things from non-agentic capacity (teaching slaves how to become un-objectified) shows us that the world of “nature” is not separate from those human politics. This inseparability of nature and culture characteristic of counter-cultural Atlantic modernity is apparent if modernity is read from

“below” the market economy as did Makandal, and therefore, in a way inclusive of the slave’s rejection of his excessive status as capital.\textsuperscript{87}

Because the slave represents a position in the market economy from below as the capital or “excess” meant to be invested in the plantation, his/her resistance in using knowledge to reverse the power structure and make agents of both soil and slaves illustrates the way in which nature, from the perspective of syncretic religious practice such as Vodou, depends on a different ontological reality in which it is possible to observe the agency of things, of landscapes, and not just the human. The way agricultural literature fetishizes the slave body as an object of \textit{prévision}, or prediction for wealth production illustrates this concept because we are able to see the agricultural world as an economic landscape and Makandal’s intervention through countercultural networks of poisoners as an economic response—a volatile event in which capital (slaves / the earth itself) inexplicably moves at its own command to rise up against the human.\textsuperscript{88}

The French Revolution has traditionally been thought the most legible influence on the Haitian Revolution. But scholarship also acknowledges the centrality of maroon (escaped slave)

\textsuperscript{87} Williams, \textit{Capitalism and Slavery}, 206.
\textsuperscript{88} Dutrône, \textit{Précis}, 334. “The wealth of the plantation owner lies in time and the strength of negroes.” Again, this notion of \textit{prévision}, futurity, or prediction in early French agricultural development aligns with present day commodity futures markets. Their instruments and agents differ: for the agronomist, their ‘tools’ were agricultural engineering (machines), bodies (“animated machines”), and non-human environmental material (seeds, soil). For the commodity market investor, we have computer engineering (algorithms and machines), and of course, the network (Internet) of information and input capability that makes investment possible at inhuman speeds of calculation. Both are interested in creating future markets through an intensification of production and instrumental distance.
warfare and resistance within the plantation labor structure in years before 1791. What began as a “strike” against slave labor practices on plantations was fought through counter surveillance, counter-agricultural mountain encampment often invisible and unreachable to colonists, and through active domestic poisoning and provision raids. All these and other forms of disruption were established across lines of maroon and enslaved populations many years before free black planters’ assertions of their rights to a place in the assembly of planters. Therefore, the counter-cultural production of sub-altern knowledge undergirds the “unthinkable” in Saint-Domingue: the overthrow of the master class “from below” and the establishment of a state by former slaves. Importantly, because the seeds of modernity were cultivated, literally and figuratively, on colonial soil through a plurality of cultural influences, modernity describes both the work of European agronomy and the counter-modern botanical and agricultural practices that African and Afro-Creole people employed against the planter’s technologies of oppression.

The knowledge of the planter and slave are constitutive to and in competition with one another. In this sense, Bruno Latour’s definition of modernity applies to plantation society as a site of knowledge production. He suggests that modernity is a process of ever-commoning (or more densely connected and hybrid) political ecology proceeding through the tasks that allow

90 Debien, “Marronage in the French Caribbean.”
that commoning to take place.\textsuperscript{93} However, because Latour suggests that there are any number of commons (or networks of shared human, ideological, and material agency), his definition incorporates the possibility of a pluralization of cultures that is both productive and infinitely plural. Building on this theory, I read the relationship between agronomy and subaltern knowledge in their unequal relational terms in order to show the agronomic culture of early Saint-Domingue is sustained through a relationship with enslavement as a sub-state of activity that includes an illicit economy through the subversive exchange of the plantation’s commodities and the creation of new objects and positions in that system, such as fetishes and maroon Chiefs. In essence, Makandal articulates an eighteenth-century anti-colonial power within this fugitive (maroon) activity working against the larger market economy in which slaves are the raw capital supporting commercial life in the metropole. Further, the French agronomist’s attachment to a futurity produced through material extraction, intensification of surveillance, autonomous production, and data flow evoke a comparison to the financiers of Wall Street today who have intensified production to the point of repeated great risk, size, and collapse, who proceed toward uneven capital structures, and now show more explicit investment energy toward commodity futures such as water. Just as agronomists worked through prediction and absence, the contemporary commodity futures market is a digital trading practice now recognized by human absence, a volatile intensification of data on a global agriculture, and algorithmic warfare and

counter-warfare. Particular to our contemporary agricultural or commodity markets (including anything from iron to sugar), there is a ripening intensification of data exchange and economic instruments of extraction being brought to bear on the planet, market, and human body. Even environmental sustainability economists argue that a “price must be put on nature” just as they hold that water will soon replace oil as the hottest commodity futures opportunity for the twenty-first century. The planter’s first utopian attachment to prediction and complex systems of elite political control, and as Latour says, a rigid “metaphysics of nature” repeats here in the present precipice of economic collapse. These similarities are not incidental, but instead, remind us that modernity is not something that happened, but something that happens through the practice of unsustainable knowledge, human, and material relations.

95 George Kleinman and Carley Garner, “Introduction,” Learn How to Trade Commodities (FT Press, 2013). Kleinman’s introduction to commodity trading through a narrative that focuses on a recent important moment in commodity futures markets that has slipped by us: the switch from real bodies and feelings to data and algorithms in agricultural futures. He points out that the commodity futures market switched in 2012 to a system of algorithmic digitalization (trading through computers rather than bodies on the trading floor) and that this switch has created an enormous intensification of volume and volatility in a business that had been run by bodies on actual trading floors since 1870. But given the eighteenth-century effects of bodies and economic data, which merge in agricultural treatises; the slave was the tool of commodity prediction, so this change seems less shocking, especially in terms of Eric Williams’s assertion that the slave was capital.
Chapter 1. Makandal in Saint-Domingue

This chapter illustrates that agricultural society’s modern industrial project is both constituted through and disrupted by counter-modern cultures of the plantation, and that this real history of modern production between Makandal and the French colonial government comes out of the colony with planters and into popular literature in France and England. Reading the poisoner/planter duality creates a way in which to read a Franco-African atlantic knowledge culture that hybridizes in its production of a literary tradition by moving from judicial documents into political/literary journals and performance culture. A dual sociology of agricultural and literary production during the “golden age” of French commerce shows that this hybridization of literature can be attributed to the fact that many bureaucratic officers and planters important to the commercial administration of Saint-Domingue were also major contributors to the literary, philosophical, and theatrical culture in the metropole. The hybridization of cultures taking

97 P. Mcray, “Guide to the Maruepas Collection.” Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections. Cornell University Library, 2000. http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMM04614.html.; François de Nicolas Neufchâteau, Dictionnaire d’agriculture pratique, 1836. Examples of planters associated with Saint-Domingue and Louisiana who were also producers of literary culture are many, including Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, comte de Maurepas. Eventually Secretary of the Navy and Secretary of State, Maurepas was also the “Secretary of the Royal Household” for Louix XV. As such, “Maurepas corresponded with members of the Comédie Française and Académie Royale de Musique, mostly concerning disputes between performers and directors.” Another case is of François de Neufchâteau, who was a writer, a colleague of Victor Hugo, and an expert on agriculture. For more on the relationship between Neufchâteau and Hugo see Graham Robb, Victor Hugo: A Biography. (W. W. Norton & Company, 1999).
place through the Makandal narrative is characteristic to the modern and the character inhabit a mixed real and figurative landscape for negotiating changing social and economic landscapes.

I begin with a 1758 crime record written in Saint-Domingue, “Macandale… Head of the Revoluted Blacks,” which details the maroon’s disruptive activities and public execution.98 Then, his story is reproduced in a 1787 Parisian true crime story published in the literary journal *Mercure de France* called “Makandal, Histoire Véritable.”99 Although the *Mercure* story claims historical status and seems to draw on both the facts corroborated by the crime record and details from an anonymous planter’s letter, the “true story” nevertheless puts Makandal’s real world plantation revolt into romantic terms as an argument with the overseer or master over a woman they both love. By the time the real-life story of Makandal’s pre-revolutionary resistance has been translated into London news, it is saturated with romance and nearly stripped of political content related to labor and violence, so my reading explores this omission in content by returning to the French piece to ask how the common site of fertility, the female body, represents the planter’s and maroon’s common preoccupation with sovereignty in relation to landedness. And last, the story is reappropriated by a planter and refugee of both the Haitian and French Revolutions who fled to Philadelphia, Moreau de Saint-Méry. His multi-volume planter memoir, *Déscription Topographique de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue*, (1796) explicitly recontextualizes the story of Makandal as a means of critique of absenteeist practice and in order

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98 “Macandale, Head of the Revoluted Blacks.”
to mourn the loss of the plantation complex to the revolution. From his perspective, the revolution of slaves overcame the local revolution of white planters interested in autonomy from French monarchical control and oversight.

“Macandale, head of the revolted blacks ...” (1758) 100

A 1758 manuscript called “Macandale, head of the revolted blacks Court Sentence by the High Council of French Cape in Santo Domingo” is one of the three earliest sources on Makandal. 101 This judicial sentencing notice from the “principal” of the Superior Council in Saint-Domingue is addressed to the Secretariat of the Navy, dated January 20, immediately following Makandal’s execution. 102 The brief document begins with an invocation of sovereign power in the legal language of eighteenth-century bureaucracy and moves to a description of charges against him. We are presented with a spectacular description of his torture and execution

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100 “Macandale, head of the revolted blacks Court sentence by the High Council of French Cape in Santo Domingo (1758),” COL E 295. Archives Nationales d’outre-mer. Aix-en-Provence, France. (ANOM).
102 Ibid., 211. I translate “le doyen” as principal. All translations are mine except where otherwise noted.
before the letter closes with another assertion of the council’s power to act in “substitution” for the “power of the King.”

Though previous critics assert that Macandale is clearly represented here as a criminal, the source also presents the nature and influence of his rebellion in somewhat ambiguous terms. Exactly how large the conspiracy, how widespread, and how many poisonings took place are hard to know. There are disagreements as to whether a broad conspiracy led by one person was possible, and yet, his reputation here seems to be already established before his capture as a “Chief.” While the sentencing document wants to transmit Macandale’s reputation and influence as great, it also dismisses his aims as personal or petty rather than political. Resistance studies scholars such as David Geggus, Orlando Patterson, and Gabriel Debien have vigorously debated the roles, formations, and reasons for resistance, ways in which to categorize Saint-Domingue’s history of resistance in general, as well as Makandal’s activity within those frameworks. We can classify him as in some sense fitting the idea of a maroon politics that operates through “parasitic economy” in relation to the global agricultural market. But, because Makandal reproduces through teaching and destroys through the product of his knowledge, he operates in violent and more subtle registers, across the spectrum established by

103 Ibid., “Macandale,” 211.
105 “Macandale,” 212.
Orlando Patterson’s system for thinking about resistance in polarities of passivity and explosive agency. In related terms, scholars of African spiritual culture from French and English-language studies question whether how can establish him as an Oungan (a Vodou priest) as opposed to a Bokor (“sorcerer” as in this document), especially when these terms are in part the product of colonial perspectives on African cultures as threatening and/or non-knowledge.107

Although we don’t have resolutions to these questions, we can see the conflicted but productive role of Afro-creole knowledge ways to the agro-economic order in Saint-Domingue, for at least, we see that he was most likely also a kind of successful smuggler in Saint-Domingue’s thriving and fluid pharmaceutical exchange. According to the officials who executed him, his marronage fits the assessment of recognizable marronage resistance as being “systematic” and “communal” in its formation.108 Last, we can read his sentencing document as

107 David Patrick Geggus, “Seeds of Revolt,” in Haitian Revolutionary Studies, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 73-74. Geggus questions the “bearing” of marronage on the later Haitian Revolution and doubts that Makandal’s cultural influence involved conspiracy, first calling him a maroon, then questioning whether or not he could have actually been a “leader” of maroons. While he praises Pierre Pluchon’s attention to original documents, he neglects that the 1758 original documents spell out Makandal’s role in a “fatal plot” that killed a “multitude of whites and blacks.” Geggus praises Pierre Pluchon’s attention to this document, which is a judicial record related to Makandal’s arrest rather than planter’s letters with ambiguous origins. Pluchon’s attention to this document satisfies my rational in beginning here as well.

one that expresses an arbitration of territorial sovereignty through the cultural and counter-cultural engagement of natural knowledges. In this sense, modern subjectivity on the individual and collective political levels are always in contact with the subject of ecology for both the agronomist and the maroon agent.

Despite the way in which the “Le Roi,” or the King dominates the authoritative framing of the document, the name “Macandale” must have also loomed large in the minds of officials, because his name on the top of the manuscript crowds out all other visual recognition of content.\textsuperscript{109} His name has an ominous connotation, and at the same time, the word Macandale is productive. First, he is introduced on an otherwise empty title page. Then, the first page repeats his name in a handwritten script so large that it dictates the flow of presentation from the center top like a banner of announcement (ibid., 211). A third time, his name stands out in the margin as “The accused Macandale.” Then, a fourth time, he is named in the scribe’s title (and contrary to its catalog title) as: “The Arrest of the condemned named Macandal (sic) to fire” (211). The bureaucratic underpinning of the cruelty about to be told is noted but almost erased in size by the repetition or reproduction of the name. The letter notes a last time, “This decision was given and Registered by the Superior Council of Le Cap.”\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{109} “Macandale,” 211.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 211.
The council has “rendered sentence on this day,” but also notes that the prisoner has already been held with his “accomplices” … “at the prison of Le Cap” for an unspecified time.\footnote{Macandale, Head of the Revolted Blacks...} As a “Chief of the maroons” who is “known among others,” he has organized “a conspiracy” fought “for his own purposes” (211). He is accused of having “without fear” led a “conspiracy” of “selling poison among the negroes.”\footnote{Ibid.} As a result, he has been “convicted” of the crime of “corruption.” Makandal has “convinced the blacks” through the “secret composition and use of false magic,” to work as “pacotilleurs” (or sellers of goods in small packages).\footnote{Ibid., 212.} According to the document, he “mixed together impious objects and holy things,” and through “profanation,” he “taught”… “those that served him” to both “distribute and sell” people “poisons of all kinds.”\footnote{Ibid., 213.} Makandal’s crime is that he literally disrupts the order of material integrity in the colony by mixing together materials considered contraband individually or in combination—those things used for medicine, for worship, and for war—into a form of meaning unrecognized by the taxonomy of science but meaningful to the practitioner of syncretic (or blended) belief systems such as Vodou or Obeah.\footnote{Diana Paton and Maarit Forde, Obeah and Other Powers: The Politics of Caribbean Religion and Healing (Duke University Press, 2012).} Second, he has integrated slaves to his own purposes.

Was it for personal vendettas against other slaves rather than an intention to overturn authority? By naming him as the source of a “conspiracy” fought for “his own purposes,” the
document describes him according to both—as a threat and as a side-show excessive to the politics of colonial production. Saying he fought for ‘his own purposes,’ in other words, is a means of dismissing the real situation of resistance in the same way that the document later uses the word “sorcerer” as a means of dismissing his knowledge as “false magic” or the result of superstition, both of which are common treatments of slave cultures in planter literature.\textsuperscript{116} This undecidability reflects the way in which even a primary source from the colony performs a mediation of the ‘historical’ moment—both showing the figure to be a threat and to be an easily contained aberration of otherwise happy cultivation.

Beyond these persistent ambiguities, in my view, this second page’s description of him shows Macandale was at least known broadly for what he knew and knew how to do. Clearly, he was at least not just associated with a singular incident or strategy because he “taught” other slaves how to reproduce his presence in material form and was better known than others for his expertise. For, as the document claims, Macandale is one “among” other “Chiefs” of Saint-Domingue.\textsuperscript{117} Among others then, Macandale was the most “dangerous,” and “unawed by fear,”

\textsuperscript{116} James Grainger, “Book IV,” \textit{The Sugar-Cane: A Poem: In Four Books. With Notes} (Place: James Grainger, M.D. &c. R. and J. Dodsley, 1764). See especially lines 370-85 and notes 144-45. Though published around ten years after Makandal’s death, James Grainger’s \textit{The Sugar Cane} is a good example of the way in which the language of non-knowledge surrounds the spiritual and medicinal practices of slaves on Caribbean plantations. His poetry idealizes the plantation while characterizing the Obi, for example, a priest of Obeah, as a “negroe-magician,” whose “spells,” and “magic” can make him “more wicked than the common herd.” (The word maroon (fugitive slave) comes from a Spanish term for stray cattle, and this speaks to his use of the term “herd.”)

\textsuperscript{117} “Macandale,” 211.
and therefore, this piece suggests that his cause was more than minor or related to personal disagreements with others close to him. He effectively poisons culture as much as the objects of its economy and he does so within and counter to a larger economy of circulation.

The question of the reach of Macandale’s activities could be read as global in the way in which his activities invoke an articulation of power from France, and in so doing, reinscribe the superimposition between the worlds of agriculture and culture despite their geographic and social differentiation. For example, we next learn, a slave betrayed Macandale by bringing a “deadly” poison to an apothecary.\textsuperscript{118} In turn, the apothecary tested the sample, found a “variety” of “violent” poisons present, and alerted the authority. In turn, the Superior Council reports to the Secretariat of the Navy who directly advises Louis XIV on all colonial matters. According to the document’s narrative of the investigation, one cannot separate the top tier of agro-economic management from poison school in Saint-Domingue; they are effectively a co-productive and competitive mutual stream of influence. Though geographically separate, the rebellion intensified an already multi-directional surveillance on the part of European power inclusive of and influenced by the counter-surveillance powers of slaves, which are those supposedly non-agentic objects of the economy. The King is never far from this scene of the colony or from the slave and vice versa in the language of naval correspondence. The council names itself the “substitute” for the “right of the King” in “demanding reparation and justice.”\textsuperscript{119} And later, the

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 212.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 212.
Council repeats that they write by “substitute power of the King” for the “general authority” to “execute” the “accused.” In addition, the divine authority of the King is tied up with slave through the common problem of territory and to the common aim of sovereignty because this superior council is not only a judicial body but an agricultural one. Saint-Domingue’s Council was a collection of the wealthiest planters who were traditionally chosen and also removed at the “King’s pleasure,” so speaking of the King puts us in a circuitous relay back to agriculture as the business of building nature and the work of maroons like Makandal poisoning the colony’s animals, crops, and other property, slave or free. The monarch’s presence through text and governing body substitutions (as a collection of planters now focused on Makandal) superimposes the worlds of plantation and palace so that the record of the slave’s successful poisoning campaign and following execution implicates the power of Afro-Creole knowledge to challenge the stability of the economically dominant, yet vulnerable chain of command. The structure of power exemplifies the way in which Latour likens the recognizability of the socially modern through many analogies (as plumbing, as being like hooking up cable, for example, and therefore, dense in the connections that we might not receive or see.) Latour’s paradigm and my reading suggest that we can think of modernity as a growth that is both subterranean as well as flourishing on the surface encounter with the human; his network takes on such characteristics in

120 Ibid.
121 Ibid., 211.
this document because he is both in and out of view of the agronomist’s systems of surveillance, demands an increase in the articulations of judicial, medical, and economic discipline.

After Makandal’s execution, slaves were shortly forbidden to handle or carry apothecary products, fetish-making was outlawed, as were dances such as the Calenda. The banning of Calendas at this time is relevant because Makandal was said to have been the featured attraction at Calendas and to have been arrested at one on Dufresne Plantation. The mention that Makandal used “various” and “violent” poisons also speaks to the place of slaves toward “their own purposes” within the workings of the pharmaceutical market in Saint-Domingue. It also allows us to consider how a noticeable agent emerges from the position of excess through the formation of a subversive eco-economy and illicit exchange. In other words, his challenge to the planter council is not just about the combination of goods in dangerous ways or through the introduction of contraband. The crimes of prophanation and conspiracy to sell untraceable products through unmarked solicitors implies he has systematized a collective uncertainty related to consumption, containment, and circulation of knowledge, bodies, and manufactures.

Pierre de Vassiere’s 1908 study of early Saint-Domingue planter manuscripts suggests that such a fluid environment and centralized figure is possible when drugs were sold in

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122 Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 40-41, 334; Jean Baptiste Labat and John Eaden, *The Memoirs of Père Labat, 1693-1705* (Psychology Press, 1931). See Carolyn Fick’s commentary on African dances such as the calenda and the chica. Citing the memoirs of Pere Labat, she notes that calendas were in some cases “covers” for “Vodou gatherings” (41).

multiples modes and spaces, including “on plantations” by “domestics” and “surgeons.” In addition, apothecaries (and planters doing business with them) early on permitted slaves to carry, transport, and deal in chemicals from urban areas and docks to plantations, but for fear of poisoning after this incident, then produced laws into the 1760s against the making of fetishes or their handling of poisons. Karol Weaver notes through her research of Hilliard d’Auberteuil’s planter writings that laws against slaves’ handling of apothecary products were not generally enforced and that there were such things as “negres pharmaciens” (slave pharmacists) openly recognized and endowed with the use of European apothecary and unknown medicinal products. In any case, colonial apothecary products represent some of the trade, but were only a sliver of a broader contraband exchange moving everything from African fetishes to arsenic. Chemical medicines and foods made bad by the journey from France are noted as having served as sources of poison as much as the arsenic arriving on ships for the purpose of rat killing. Any

124 Pierre de Vaissière, Saint-Domingue: 1629-1789 (Perrin, 1908), 240. Vaissière notes that in 1760, a planter wrote that for a few years, slaves had been using an herbal poison with “incredible secrecy” and by introducing the poison “progressively” over time to victims on plantations. There was no cure known for the herbal poisons, the same planter noted, fearful that “all whites” would be killed if one couldn’t be found before long. It seems that the poisoning did not stop after 1758. Vaissière also notes that arsenic was “abundant” as were the other sources of slaves’ poisons: “venomous plants” (250).
slave caught with arsenic “would be put to death immediately.” So, in effect, the efforts of colonial authority to restrict poison-making in the years after Makandal’s execution functioned to restrict a larger contraband market economy in which maroons, slaves, and Europeans sold and exchanged a variety of manufactured and local products including medicine, hard-to-find foods and cooking oils, and alcohol.129

It is clear in both the colonial response to the incident and in the description of Makandal’s having instructed others “in secret” that the danger of the maroon chief was in his ability to poison the labor and/or domestic culture of many plantations, not just its bodies or its economic trade. He “mixed together impious objects and holy things,” and through “profanation,” … “taught”… “those that served him” to both “distribute and sell” people “poisons of all kinds” and these acts constitute a disruption of the order of European “nature” (an all encompassing Euro-centralized system drawn in human terms). In other words, soil itself is the agent in Makandal’s circulation of collectively and equally related human and non-human agents, and Macandal is both equated with and poisoned the soil and its cultures. Paradoxically, although slave society is understood as the site of abject conditions and slaves’ “attachments to soil”—a space in excess of the representational, and therefore, in excess of the social—Makandal becomes an agent of political ecology and economy. For, on his account, the state has produced a

record about his redirection of labor discipline through teaching (in ritual and exchange of information) and described it as a syncretic (mixed) arrangement of meaning common to indigenous understandings of nature. In the planter’s terms, those syncretic meanings wrought in fetish making are described as wrongly paired (holy/unholy) combinations according to binary, taxonomic, European knowledge structures. In effect, he instantiates a re-networking of objects in Latour’s “unseen” connections characteristic of the modern.  

It is not necessarily that Makandal was an agent on the same level as a planter, but that in Latour’s terms, as a “circulating entity,” he made others collect into counter-cultural associations in a world where slaves were flattened out into the least “commensurable” position to the human. In another more textual or aesthetic sense, he “gathers” in these documents momentary “associations” that are very unlikely on paper—the tiny packets of coffee sold by a slave in a market place and the invocation of the right of kings.  

The last part of “Macandale, Head of the Revolted Blacks” relates Makandal’s torture and execution by fire. The first phase of that torture was the amende honorable, in the front door of the parish church of Le Cap. This traditional public punishment will be familiar to readers of Michel Foucault’s seminal study of the amende honorable in Discipline and Punish, in which Damien the Regicide’s body is destroyed through drawing and quartering in public.  

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131 Ibid., 242-3.  
132 “Macandale,” 212-3.
view and destroyed by fire. Foucault argues that some time in this period, the public punishment of the body is replaced with the body’s institutional discipline, but we can also see, first, that the spectacle of punishment has moved to the colony, and second, that it is reproduced here linguistically for sovereign consumption.\footnote{Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, 
\textit{New World Drama: The Performative Commons in the Atlantic World, 1649–1849}. (Duke University Press, 2014), 3. See Dillon’s reading of Foucauldian discipline as a power relation that moves spatially to the colony and reproduced in Atlantic print culture.} In this sense, Makandal’s physical sacrifice shows discipline displaced to the colony but also distending the shape of the public sphere in terms of new bodies, ways of meaning and political growth.

He wore a plaque around his neck, and written on it, both back and front, were the words “Seducer. Profaner. Poisoner.” Makandal was on his knees, “nude . . . without a shirt” but with “sword drawn at his side” to beg pardon of the King “for what he ha(d) already been convicted.”\footnote{Ibid. “Macandale,” 213.} An enthralled “crowd” of “les negres” (presumably slaves) had to be brought under control in the midst of the spectacle.\footnote{Ibid., 212.} Makandal’s immortality begins with this description of the way in which, after being secured to “a post” with the secure pull of “chains” across his body, Makandal is able to still “pull” the post from the ground and attempt an escape; as a result of the post giving way, the crowd gathered begins to scream “Macandal sauvé!” (Macandal is saved).\footnote{Ibid.} The colonial official testifies to the way in which the crowd surged when
the post gave way with Makandal’s resistance, and when, with one arm, he managed to free himself, only to be returned to a newly secured post and “burned alive.”

The description of the crowd of enslaved bodies crying that Makandal survived presents another ambiguity in relation to the general valence of the presentation of a criminal persona and the purpose of the document. He is not only a “poisoner,” according to the inscription on the plague around his neck, but the “seducer” of slaves. Because slaves were described as “attachments to the ground” it is as if Makandal moves the soil itself with his will and to his purpose. The metaphor aligns Makandal with an agency reserved for Europeans and dangerous to European progress. To this point, as much as a form of counter-sovereignty, his body also represents the ritual object in the amende honorable—the sacrifice to sovereign power and therefore, also functions as an embodiment of the power of the other extreme end of agricultural hierarchy. Overall, this is an execution scene, and just as Makandal’s knowledge reproduction is dismissed, his power to cultivate socially or in other ways must be shown ultimately divorced from the futurity that territorial sovereignty represents. In these blurred terms, then, he is a “Seducer”—an exotic and powerful name that absorbs the document for the reader and burned alive. It is more accurate to say that Makandal’s knowledge was the seductive element, but a slippage between seductive ideas and sex will later emerge in blurred terms as the story is reproduced in romantic plots.

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137 Ibid.
138 d’Auberteuil, Considerations, vol. 1.32.
139 “Makandal,” 211.
Some scholars have asserted that there is no real relationship between maroon culture and the later revolution by citing the gap between 1758 and 1791. But this gap may represent and have been a result of the increased show of colonial power; restrictions after Makandal may have supported a long-term dormancy and reassessment of resistance strategy on the part of maroons and others, and therefore, contributed to the more robust revolutionary activity of the 1780s and 1790s, especially given the possibility of Makandal’s early support from French sympathizers documented in the other 1758 sources. Makandal represents this fluid and dangerous environment. In Celucien Joseph’s words, no matter the size or shape of his rebellion, his was in some way a “therapeutic violence” aimed at “decolonization.”

Associations between his character and the exchange of plants persists in fiction as a threatening signal from a fugitive chief to the planter. Roots and leaves are always mentioned in

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140 Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 74. Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 291. Geggus adopts Pluchon’s distinction as a means of claiming that Makandal was a ‘bokor,’ a practitioner and purveyor of black magic used for personal vengeance rather than ritual spirituality, and he claims that after all, we have no proof that he ever performed such rites common to Vodou. Geggus’s study doesn’t consider the persistent duality of Makandal’s signification across archives (including the field of medical history) which assert that Makandal was a well-known and competent veterinarian and doctor to neighboring plantations. Moreau’s materials says he was called upon when European medicine failed. Fick points out that Geggus agrees that Marronage is important but doubts that marronage had little deep connection to the later revolution. Whatever the truth of Makandal’s role, education, and life, all agree that he had become a “mythic” figure by the mid-19th century. For more on the Jesuits in Saint-Domingue before their expulsion (thought not all left) in 1763, see Madison Smartt Bell, *Toussaint Louverture* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2009), 65. Bell writes that Jesuits employed free blacks as nurses and surgeons in their hospitals. They are also linked to Louverture’s relationship to Catholicism.

relation to the body of Makandal or noted as objects delivered and passed from and to him, even when his name changes. Research on colonial economy and the transactions related to goods and knowledge among slaves in the period lends credence to the idea that perhaps he was, as much as a poisoner, also a doctor, priest, and a successful hub of socio-economic agency—a purveyor of contraband in a partially visible exchange of medicines, poisons, foods, seeds, tradecraft and information. Pierre Pluchon, who is one of the few scholars to have read this document, theorizes that the fears of poison in Saint-Domingue may have been instead the confused product of racist ideology, uncontrolled markets, and the real effects of disease. Makandal is called a “sorcerer,” he argues, but categorizations such as bokor, sorcerer, Obi, Ouanga, all speak more to the colonizer’s language for exacting an overall demonization of subaltern religious practice and scientific knowledge more than it presents a path back to Makandal’s true identity or role. Whatever his purposes, Makandal is noted elsewhere as having sustained a resistance network that lasted for at least three years before the execution and is thought to have poisoned over


143 Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 74; Pluchon, Vaudou, sorciers, empoisonneurs,...

6,000 individuals in the colony through his teaching. According to the council’s report, Makandal infiltrates local culture as much as he poisons fruit, packets of other small goods in the market place, animals, and ultimately slaves and free people. He produces an armamentarium, or, a variety of poison/weapons, but he also successfully redeployed agents from either side of the slave/free divide into a new collective ecological kinship. It is impossible to know whether his poisoning campaign was the result of personal vendettas or a concentrated effort to envision a future culture beyond French colonial sovereignty. But, this document at least suggests that alternate knowledge sources from slave cultures in the colony disrupted and pluralized the structural flow of colonial agricultural business in ways that challenged the integrity of the planter’s knowledge base and intervened on the disciplinary control of labor. His activity requires the sovereign presence to counter-discipline the population. Even though the document oscillates between a presentation of Makandal as a harmless “sorcerer” or a more considerable threat, its version of the conflict shows that modernity and its production is both rooted in the space of the plantation and registers as a challenge to the stability of agronomic administrative power.

And last, there is no evidence from this document that Makandal’s rebellion and poisoning campaigns had anything to do with sexual claim to a woman on his owner’s plantation or with anyone in Lenormand’s family. But in texts after this one, he is a seducer of the planter’s chosen site of cultivation in every way. Makandal consistently is known for attracting women for

\[145 \text{Ibid., Joseph, 59-60.}\]
his sexual pleasure, or for surrender to savage sexual appetites naturalized to his kind, or for jealous attachment to women meant for the planter or the Overseer. His inappropriate desire for women above his station is blamed on his exposure to European knowledge and culture and his incapacity to self-discipline in European terms. Still, his social capacities for intellectual or ideological seduction seem to form hybridized socio-sexual associations in the literatures following that win the sympathy of the women he serenades and the label of “noble rival” to the planter. The force of this upward but deconstructive mobility for Makandal and his ability to become a rival to the European is in the consistent presentation of his power as a collective one. His project to court the most beautiful woman in Saint-Domingue (likened always to the island itself) is everyone’s purpose. He has friends, fellow priests, Obi, “peddlars” of goods, and believers in their power, male and female, free and slave, all willing to help him claim the love interest, even if it means killing for their “energetic teacher.” Tellingly, Makandal always warns his love interest of the storm to come—an environmental crisis on the horizon—and always likens her to the land itself, which will suffer for it.

Lenormand de Mézy, Makandal’s Master, is absent from this 1758 document’s notations as are stories of a sugar gin accident, but Lenormand’s absence and Makandal’s presence foreground the construction and redistribution of agency within the agricultural state.

147 de Vaissière, *Saint-Domingue*, 250.
He may not have been present when Makandal was executed or when this document was written, but their stories are interrelated. By 1750, Lenormand had extracted a great amount of money from planters in Saint-Domingue as a tax collector. In Louisiana, he experienced a great deal of frustration and some success with cotton gin design.\textsuperscript{149} Despite his hot-headed disposition as a royal official with disdain for locals and a bad reputation for harming relationships with Choctaw in Louisiana, he made enough money to receive sovereign favor when he was awarded the coveted position of Intendant of Rochefort.\textsuperscript{150} So, the sacrifice of the slave to sovereign power for crimes against the agricultural state occurs contemporary with his Master’s being given a great honor—of being named the Intendant of Rochefort by the King; Macandale’s reproduction is cut off while Lenormand is awared the opportunity to reproduce success in another colony.\textsuperscript{151} Lenormand’s absence has won him a colonial power that advises the Secretary and King on choosing planters of such councils. However, ironically, by 1793 and the fall of Le Cap to the Haitian Revolution, such absenteeists had become the wealthiest but also the most heavily criticized by planter council members like the ones writing in this case.

With the tax break during this period on labor of the plantation, he was free to rent out labor for the purpose of tapping into a tax free revenue stream, and therefore, loaned out

\textsuperscript{149} Thomas, Daniel. “Pre-Whitney Cotton Gins,” 142–43.
\textsuperscript{150} Pritchard, “Biography: Le Normant de Mézy.”
\textsuperscript{151} Michel Foucault, \textit{Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison} (New York: Vintage, 1977-2013), 3. Makandal’s execution and Lenormand’s professional advancement both occur in 1758, the year after Damiens the Regicide’s execution in 1757; Foucault opens with a narration of Damiens’ execution in \textit{Discipline and Punish}. 
Makandal to a neighboring plantation and master for which he performed his duties but was injured. The resistance movement that followed Makandal’s accident was in a sense precipitated by things that seem unrelated on first glance to slavery such as taxes. However, all relate back to Makandal’s emergence as a local counter-cultural leader and to his death. In comparison, Lenormand died a very successful former colonial administrator in 1789, in Paris, with more than two million French livres in land and other wealth holdings. The combination of their stories emphasizes the way in which Makandal’s mythology is substantiated through information showing him to be just as much an economic “agent” of power as Lenormand.

But Makandal’s rebellion is only one form of dispute among others related to sovereign power and its exercise in Saint-Domingue, which had already been put into question by problems of revolt in the past.¹⁵² For example, in a 1723 dispute, the council declared itself “sovereign” instead of “superior” in a letter to the King, and the Saint-Domingue council had then been replaced with a new group tasked with negotiating a deeply-divided class structure and its previous attempts at revolt, even among middle-class, white women, who attacked the office of the Intendant over access to goods. Makandal’s crimes are also about supplying and poisoning circulation through illegal materials in illegal manners under the nose of plantation economy, and because slaves themselves are ‘goods’ collected illegally by Makandal’s maroon activity, the

¹⁵² Pritchard, In Search of Empire, 262; ---, Louis XV’s Navy, 1748-1762: A Study of Organization and Administration (McGill-Queen’s Press - MQUP, 1987). James Pritchard explains the naval culture’s shaping of colonial business in general and how the French navy was affected by conflicting personal and political interests.
typological event of the slave revolt registers outside strictly spatial limitations of the plantation space and meanings. Rather, this story shows how the business of the plantation implicated all manner of relation seen and unseen, on the plantation and off, for slave or free, and supported activity that irrupted in counter-agronomic sabotage. These matters illustrate the way in which the ability of planters to manage the natural domain and its wealth production are directly affected by their historical management of unrest in Saint-Domingue, as well as, perhaps, their ability to communicate their relative control over the colony. Given the way in which superior councils had in the past been challenged by active revolt as well as the way in which superior councils challenged the king by renaming themselves the “sovereign” councils, the repeated invocation of “le Roy” as well as the history of the document’s double release, all emphasize the way in which Makandal represents and speaks to an already unstable sovereign-colonial relation historically challenged by such purposeful slights and slight differences in speech.

In comparison to Lenormand, who advances through birthright and large scale possession of the environment, the maroon is made kinless and landless through slavery. But Makandal also seems to advance in a more horizontal means through creating an eco-kinship through his practice of Mackandalism and the reconstruction of meaning from the detritus of the plantation and of its deathly environment. A memoir written in 1758 by the judge in Mackandal’s trial, Sebastien Courtin, recorded that his packets were mixtures of all kinds of materials taken and returned to the earth, including “sometimes…teeth, jaws, and packets containing powders, mixes
of (finger or toe) nails, the hairs” of slaves “and some grasses.” 

Others used “crushed roots of trees.” Mackandal achieves an eco-kinship through the material agency of the soil in the same way that the use of fabric in eighteenth-century Jamaica resists the “degraded” status associated with the colony, and instead, achieved the opposite. When women wore them, they created a kinship worn and woven through “radical aesthetic” and “born of the extreme conditions of race slavery.” I’m arguing that Makandal’s use of bio manufacture (fetishes--for health, warfare, and worship) likewise brings into view the “materiality and significance of the colonial relation” through a radical eco-kinship—one in which kinship is crafted materially (unlike the vertical blood relation and landedness of European colonialism). It works as both a representation of “therapeutic violence” toward the aim of “decolonization,” a poison formed in resistance to a dominant economy, as well as the means to life (its opposite) for the slave who uses it. Makandal’s activities, if read as counter-cultural or ‘social’ in nature, then his “network” of poisoners (labeled objects by the plantocratic regime) as well as his use of fetishes exemplifies Latour’s definition of how the social comes into view and fit Carpentier’s notion of marvelous reality; the social is a “momentary association” in this letter which is characterized by the way it

156 Ibid., 182.
gathers” politics “together into new shapes.” The social is not “the whole ‘in which’ everything is embedded, but what travels ‘through’ everything, calibrating, connections and offering every entity it reaches some measure of commensurability.” His counter-chemical economy establishes a radical eco-kinship—one in which sovereignty is crafted locally and materially (unlike the vertical blood inheritance and global production aim of European colonialism).

“Makandal, Histoire Véritable,” (1787)

“Makandal, Histoire Véritable” or “Makandal, True Story” (1787) was written in Paris by the nearly anonymous author, Monsieur de C. (M. de C.) almost thirty years after Makandal’s death. This “histoire,” which translates as both story and history, first appears in Mercure de France—a journal noted as the most significant and well-funded literary publication for bringing about “public debate on a national scale.” His placement in a print space known to shape

157 Latour, Reassembling the Social, 64-5.
158 Ibid.
159 Hortense Spillers, “The Idea of Black Culture,” CR: New Centennial Review 6, no.3 (2006): 25-26 quoted in Dillon, New World Drama, 183. See Dillon’s reading of the commoning of aesthetic culture in Jamaica. Spillers theorizes that black culture became culture on the plantation through being “forced to turn its resources of spirit toward negation and critique.”
metroplitan culture illustrates Catherine Reinhardt’s argument that the maroon character, both valorized and subjugated in his appearances, represents a paradoxical but central place in French Enlightenment politics. The character represents, to Reinhardt’s point, a way of talking about popular sovereignty in 1787 Paris through the project of territorial sovereignty in Saint-Domingue: a fugitive slave shapes a narrative about liberty in relation to land just as the sugar industry enters the heights of wealth and death rates in the colony. My reading suggests that the world of agricultural economy including subaltern knowledge is central to imagining European and colonial political ecology “from below” (from the people or position of the land laborer). Further, I show that even though the romanticized style of the story and surface love plot seem to distract from the more likely narrative of dismemberment in a sugar mill, Makandal’s transformation into more fictional terms actually aligns with the way in which British and French theater have already been noted to use the native or slave body as a means of doing several things: negotiating the “shifting locus of political authority” between monarchical and collective power, naturalizing a colonial relation consisting of European dominance and willing submission on the part of the native (if not treated with violence,) and in drawing a relationship between territorial sovereignty and futurity in a world of increasingly plural expressions made possible through the violence of colonialism. My reading adds to previous study by underlining agricultural philosophy as the baseline for these possibilities, and further,

162 Reinhardt, *Claims to Memory*, 46.
shows that Makandal’s appetite for love’s “pleasures” point to a subtext concerning usufruct (usufruit) or the civil law governing the “pleasurable use of land” that will continue to occupy the formations of the French, Haitian, and American states.  

According to the Histoire, when “the young Makandal” arrives in Saint-Domingue from Africa at the age of twelve, he is already talented with herbal and root medicines, and therefore, individually possessing knowledge in a state of prior enculturation in Africa. But, he is also talented with painting, sculpture, and languages. His obvious and varied skills attract the eye of a nameless planter who disappears altogether from the narrative but for this introductory moment of purchase.

By his teens, he is known as a natural entertainer because he is the feature attraction at all the Calendas. He heals the sick all over the district, but he is better known for the way he attracts a multitude of women from all over the island. His “extreme taste” for “pleasure” of all kinds is legendary, so much so that the author humorously notes that the number of women to whom he was attracted was only rivaled by the overwhelming number of women attracted to him.

165 Ibid., 104.
The Overseer begins “to love a young negress in the same period when Makandal ha(s) also fallen in love with her.”166 Though we don’t know her name, we are moved to sympathize with the female, who is equated with the land, as the object of a dual gaze of scientific and sexual reproduction. At once, we are also encouraged to identify with an attraction to Makandal. As the author intimates, “one can understand how much this young girl became embarrassed by having to choose between a despotic and rigorous Overseer and the most distinguished of all the Negroes.”167 The trouble starts when “her heart” chooses “her equal,” … and “the white man (is) rebuked.”168 In response, the Overseer is more than “ready to find fault in Makandal” and “redoubles his vigilance” out of revenge, even though the powerful African doctor’s work is “always irreproachable” and love for him is universal among all the slaves (105). When the Overseer orders him to the ground to take “fifty lashes,” Makandal is “too proud” and refuses to be beaten. Instead, we are told, he “throws down his tool at the feet of his rival” (105). It is the savage who calls the Overseer’s “order” both a “barbarous” one and a “signal of liberty” (105).

Makandal runs away. After twelve years as a fugitive and local healer living on an “inaccessible” mountain encampment with “well-cultivated plantations” of his own, his power gains “supernatural” fame (105). His “talents” for “medicinal herbs” and “plants” are well-known, but so is his now tyrannical desire for “pleasure.” M. de C says Makandal not only has “momentary” relations with women (which he typifies as natural to slaves) but, (like a European)  

166 Ibid., 105.  
167 Ibid., 105.  
168 Ibid., 104-5.
also takes care of them, cultivates ongoing relationships through gifts of food and medicine, and travels among them.\textsuperscript{169} His intense attraction to and attraction for women and his love of pleasure produces “the crimes” that bring him to ruin, because in the end, Makandal turns to the use of poison “in defense of the empire of his love.”\textsuperscript{170}

He is conquered by the beautiful Samba, whose “elegant shape,” is in ecological terms, “supple like flowers that dance in the breeze” (109). However, Samba loves Makandal’s accomplice, Zami. And after Samba refuses Makandal, he asks Zami to kill her. When Zami cannot bring himself to do it, Makandal kills her himself. In turn, Zami turns Makandal’s poison over to an apothecary for fear of what his large “appetite” might bring next.\textsuperscript{171} In the end, despite the “miracle” of his “near escape,” Makandal is hunted down and executed.\textsuperscript{172} Though he is killed in the same way described as the judicial document, and though the author claims the story’s historical status, its effect overall is that Makandal seems much more a caricature of colonial culture than a story of revolution through botany.

However, the document’s opening paragraphs, which seem much more serious than the majority of the sex-centric plot described, take us into a mixture of issues related to citational and translational history that support the idea of a political sub-text. In my tracing, many of these details are absent from English translations.

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., 108-9.
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 109.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., 112.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 113-14.
For instance, the author compares Makandal to The Prophet, Mohammed in the opening section. C.L.R. James made this comparison ubiquitous to the mention of Makandal with the first real Afro-centric modern history of Haiti, *The Black Jacobins* (1938). Factually speaking, because C.L.R. James repeats it, the story has been influential as a source in shaping Makandal’s persona in contemporary thinking. But, as Ed White shows, this French article already enjoyed a long period of reproduction in French, English, German, American (and Irish) newspapers between 1788 and 1823. According to his tracing of Makandal newspaper stories, long before James, it is a piece of colonial history reprinted at least thirteen times in European popular press. In any case, despite James’ work in bringing him out from under Louverture’s shadow, as White notes, James doesn’t acknowledge his source, so there is in some sense a genealogical dismemberment to Makandal’s story to match the physical injury we now associate with having sparked his rebellion.

Similarly, and importantly, the comparison between Makandal and Mohammed is omitted in earlier English translations. In fact, one of the earliest 1788 English newspaper

173 Faherty, et al., “Account of a Remarkable Conspiracy,” I. Faherty, White, and Jaudon’s introduction and footnotes trace the movement of this story from France in the first year of its reproduction to European newspapers. I can add Ireland to their list of German and English newspaper circulation, since John C. Cross and William Ware’s pantomime, “King Caesar,” is listed among pantomimes in performance in Dublin in 1812. See note 169.
translations largely omits and condenses the contents of the first two paragraphs of this original French story. And of course, these paragraphs act as an important address to the reader in multiple ways, including their use of other explicitly political comparisons besides Mohammed. Only the French version offers these two strongly meta-directional paragraphs. M. de C. begins by declaring that the stories of “villains” like the one he is “going to tell (us) about will be erased from the history of nations.” But, since the “crime logs have already “rendered” these kinds of stories “more odious,” the “writers who dare” to “pen stories of such monsters” might “contribute just as much as portraits of virtue can to the health of mankind” (le bonheur du genre-humain). So, Makandal’s grotesque example is the disciplinary model against which moral and human health is established and at once clearly doesn’t signify on the same level of the European human with capacity for futurity. He continues:

Le Nègre dont je vais raconter la vie, n’a été ni un Mahomet
ni un Cromwel; mais on jugera, par ce qu’il a entrepris, de ce qu’il
aurait pu faire s’il s’était trouvé dans les mêmes circonstances
que ces deux fanatiques ambitieux.

The comparison to Mohammed has obviously drawn the attention of historians such as James, as well as those more recently interested in exploring the idea of Makandal as a Muslim, for the text

175 “Makandal, Histoire, 102.”
176 Ibid., 102.
177 Ibid. The author says, “The negro whose life story I will tell you was neither born a Mahomet nor a Cromwell; but one will see, from what he undertook, what he would have done if he found himself in either of the circumstances of these two ambitious fanatics” (102).
goes on to give us, in that first background sketch about his knowledge with plants, that he also spoke and read Arabic, not “unlike other Africans who had by chance,” he says “fallen into slavery and been brought to the colonies.” Meanwhile, the comparison to Cromwell has eluded the same contemporary attention, but it suggests another way through which we can trace the Makandal character transatlantically as an articulation of counter-cultural modernity in relation to territorial habitation and agriculture. The Makandal/Cromwell connection seems worth further critical consideration if only because C.L.R. James was not the first to see this article in some form: the comparison becomes an important clue in correlating Makandal to Victor Hugo’s Bug-Jargal in the next chapter.

Cromwell’s Declaration is a document that has been described as defining sovereignty in terms of territorial embodiment and the European presence in the New World. Elizabeth Dillon complicates and deepens that explanation by pointing out that Cromwell’s view of sovereignty depends upon the willing submission of the indigenous. Makandal is not a “native” body but certainly situates the native from the perspective of imperialism and is inseparable from the functions of landscape and earth, literally and figuratively. He willingly submits and takes pride in his perfect labor, but firmly rejects torture by the Overseer, who signifies the Master’s power of surveillance on a global scale. In this sense, Makandal exemplifies the same characteristics of the colonial relation Dillon has already identified in

178 Ibid., 103.
179 Dillon, New World Drama, 74, 76-77.
180 Ibid., 74.
British theater in the sense that the tortured native body satisfies the “shifiting locus” of political sovereignty in the metropole through an imperial imaginary convinced of its purpose in taking over an otherwise ‘empty’ space and body. At the same time, he isn’t just another native body that binds the production of empire to sovereignty and to naturalized formations of European dominance because he is also the antithesis of the subaltern’s association with passivity—not Cromwell’s land, but a Cromwell, whose actions, according to Hugo’s anthem of romanticism and Preface to Cromwell, are foremost in shaping the modern. Makandal, like Hugo’s Cromwell, is fully good and evil, one who is suggestive of cultic revolutionary status, religious belief, political upheaval, and territorial sovereignty, a multitude of men in one body. In addition, M. de C. does not ask us to imagine Cromwell (or any European other than the Overseer) in the colony, but instead, asks us to imagine Makandal in the metropole. What would he (Makandal) do, the author wants us to consider, if he were “found in the same circumstances as these two ambitious fanatics? (Mohammed and Cromwell)” Radically, the text reverses the direction of imagined influence from the colony toward the metropole and makes the maroon the faultline of liberty on a global scale. In restored textual alignment with Cromwell’s repeated mention and omission, Makandal becomes a representation of unknown political possibilities as well as an

181 Victor Marie Hugo, Prefaces and Prologues. vol. 39, The Harvard Classics, (New York: P.F. Collier & Son), 1909–14, paragraphs 91-120, lines 124-5. Hugo’s description of Cromwell says he “was a complex, heterogeneous, multiple being, made up of all sorts of contraries—a mixture of much that was evil and much that was good, of genius and pettiness.” For the French, see Victor Hugo, Oeuvres Complètes, vol. 45, (Nabu Press, 2010).
expression of sovereignty that merges the production of nature with the production of culture. These omissions in ecological-political content color the romance as an attempt to talk in highly figurative terms about poisonous and pleasurable effects of a collective sovereignty more than acts of poisoning. Restored, they also more closely bind popular sovereignty to the imagining of territorial sovereignty.

However, and again, as Dillon points out, Cromwell’s articulation of sovereignty depends upon the actual use and habitation of the land and agricultural engagement, not just its occupation. And so restored to this comparison with Cromwell, modernity, again, situates a dual cultivation of liberty and literal cultivation of territory, and as a Cromwell, Makandal puts us in contact with both the effects of Afro-Creole knowledge ways and European agriculture.

As for this Cromwell’s crimes, M. de C. confirms that his “projects” were so “horrible” and “dangerous,” that “for about twenty-five years,” Saint-Domingue “trembled” at “only the name” of Makandal. Frémit (‘trembled’ or ‘shuddered’) communicates a dual ecological and human resonance through associations with bodily fear in response to the quaking of earth. He is a present quaking, or, a movement of the earth known to the memory of real bodies and a name pronounced in real mouths in the colony. In other words, his name obviously takes up its share of real estate in this second text, but in comparison to the sentencing document, in which Makandal is reproduced through repetition, instead Makandal is understood at a spoken and environmental

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Ibid. I believe the emphasis of the translation is on the power of the name and translates well as “Saint-Domingue trembled at the mere mention of the name Makandal for twenty-five years.” “…frémit au nom seul de Makandal.”
reverberation—as an event to come and in the present, as well as something that happened elsewhere in the colony that must be told for our own good before history erases it. The author almost encourages us to read him as a kind of history that exceeds the active silencing common to Western historiography.¹⁸⁴ This blending of the two landscapes of natural crisis and political crisis illustrates the way in which modernity is a “concept” that illustrates the entanglement of / creation of a way of seeing reality as nature-culture, in Latour’s terms, even as “two opposing narratives” of nature and culture continue to occupy our thinking.¹⁸⁵ Restored, these omissions recolor the sexualization of Makandal’s story as a way of figuratively questioning power relations, and the metaphorical vehicle for this discussion is Makandal’s hybridization with the Harlequin or Pierrot character who varies in European performances as a variety of things, sometimes in combination as a slave, a trickster, a singer, a wizard or juggler, smuggler, or even a prince pretending to be a servant. All of the varied but basic elements of the Harlequin traditions become a mashup in Makandal whose character is consistent with “urban,” classical, or its Greek representations of slavery, including a classical education in “painting” and “sculpture.” Because Makandal uses drugs as a means of control, he fits in easily, since instances of the Harlequin or Pierrot character acting as a master of chemical substances are common. For example, the Harlequin of Pierre Marivaux’s “Island of Slaves,” (1725) locates a mysterious elixir on the shore of a utopian island following a shipwreck and uses it to paralyze the master.

¹⁸⁴ Trouillot, Silencing the Past...
¹⁸⁵ Bruno Latour, We Have Never Been Modern (Harvard University Press, 2012), 43.
In “The Savages,” (1792), the slave sings, “I and my master can cure all your ills, with our ointments, potions, our powders, and pills. Like Marivaux’s Harlequin, a typed slave character dating to commedia del arte traditions of Italy, Makandal at times comes across as “randy, disobedient, and sentimental” in his uncontrollable desire for women. But where Marivaux’s Harlequinade takes place on a utopic island, Makandal’s actual location makes him different. As for his African identity, Georges Sand suggests that Africanness is not equal to but nor is it inconsistent with the most ancient iterations of the Harlequin who differentiated or Othered himself by masking/ putting soot on his face. Other modes of costume for Harlequin included colorful rags, bells, and other articles in his performances, and these characterizations follow the African Obi priest characters, Outorou and Habibrah, in the Makandal pantomime, “King Caesar or the Negro Slaves” as well as Hugo’s Bug-Jargal, both texts of the second chapter. Here, a harlequinized Makandal accommodates his original role in the 1758 document who was a figure gathering together a collection of unexpected sources of power through followers and knowledge of plants and was almost “saved” at the last minute by divine power. But here, the narrator reduces the authenticity of his knowledge away from any authentic power

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187 J.-B. Picquenard, Adonis ou Le bon nègre: anecdote colonial (Didot, 1798).
involving “divine revelations.” Instead, Makandal is just “pretending” that he can “prophesy” death and is instead tricking the slaves. He writes:

Il avoit sculpté avec beaucoup d’art au bout de son bâton d’oranger, une petite figure d’homme qui, lorsqu’on la touchoir au peu au dessous de la tête, remuoiit les yeux & les lèvres, Il paroissoit s’animer. It prétendoit que ce fetiche respoindoit a ses questions and se rendoit des oracles et quant il lui faisoit prendre la mord de quelqu’un, il est certain qu’il ne se trompoit jamais.

This moment corresponds, as does Makandal’s “tool” thrown at the foot of the Overseer, to Harlequin/Pierrot’s association with a magic wand, a stick, or sword.

Among all these associations with Harlequin that Makandal assumes, the story’s preoccupation with pleasure is perhaps the most pronounced one. Like the planter, Makandal has his own designs for global reproduction by diasporic means because he has gained a reputation for his fertile relationships with countless women spread out across the Northern district, for dancing at the “parties/feasts,” and at “all the Calendas,” which are described here as a “dance

188 “Makandal, Histoire,” 106.
189 Ibid., 106.
190 Ibid. “He made, with great artistry, at the end of his orange stick, a little figure of a man, and when someone rubbed its head, it would move its eyes and its lips and appear to come to life. He pretended that his fetish responded to his questions and gave him oracles, and when he made it take someone’s life, it is certain that he never deceived.”
191 J. C. Cross and William Ware, Songs, Choruses, &c. in King Caesar: Or, The Negro Slaves: A New Grand Spectacle, in Two Parts, Performed at the New Royal Circus, for the First Time, on Wednesday, September 16, 1801. The Music ... Principally Composed (London: J. Barker, 1801). Makandal’s “root” is used in the same way euphemistically in the songs of “King Caesar.” A female slave sings that Makandal’s “root” cures her because he loves her best.
that all the negroes love with a passion,” but is historically, among other things, known as an African fertility rite.\textsuperscript{192} Meanwhile, the planter is essentially absent from the story and any immediate disciplinary relationship to his slaves except for his purchase of Makandal.\textsuperscript{193} But, even the brief glimpse of the planter brings up the topic of pleasure.

When he is “transported to Saint Domingue and sold to a colonist VéritableUn colon) around Cap François, he “got along pleasantly” with his master through his “great intelligence” and “zeal.”\textsuperscript{194} By a more literal translation, he “made himself a pleasure to the planter.”\textsuperscript{195} He also “became the cherished and revered of all the slaves with the pleasure he brought them at all their celebrations” (104). And the pleasure continues to reproduce uncontrollably, because he healed “their sick after the white doctors had thought them incurable,” and became known “from one end of the island to the other” (103). The author repeats that “the abandoned sick” always “invoked the name of Makandal,” as if ecstatic, and “sent him demands for herbal leaves or roots that almost always brought them health.”\textsuperscript{196} He is known “for his extreme taste for pleasures” (literally, \textit{son goût extrême pour les plaisirs} (104). Though “happily he only ever used his qualities for good,” the same talents “soon became the source of his greatest crimes,” since Makandal himself was unable to manage the natural impulse for all the “pleasure” he got and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[193] “Makandal, Histoire,” 104.
\item[194] Ibid., 103.
\item[195] Ibid., 103-04.
\item[196] Ibid., 104.
\end{footnotes}
Meanwhile, the source of all this pleasure is a kind of aporia at the center of the text because it is never exactly named, but it is implied that the same knowledge of how to give pleasure and health through herbs and roots is the same knowledge that kills him and others for its effect in rendering pleasure. It is not exactly the plants or Makandal that render this cyclic effect, but it seems, his unmediated acts in making meaning in a way that is both evident in its difference or disruption of the rigidity of planter order and as a symbolic landscape for the pleasures solely reserved for imperial representatives of France—territorial sovereignty and consumption of capital.

A 1758 anonymous planter’s letter from the colony, from which I believe this story pulls its material, claims that Makandal indeed fell for the Master’s wife. Now, this letter itself makes all the same moves as the Harlequin plot and in impossible fashion, blames a decades long mass murder campaign on a crush instead of the traumatic physical dismemberment on a sugar gin. In another sense, though, the Harlequin’s typical jilting (a sexual refusal) is a kind of dismemberment aligned with Makandal’s accident in the gin, and dismemberment invokes

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197 Ibid., 103.
198 “Relation d’une conspiration tramée par les Negres, : dans l’Isle de S. Domingue; défense que fait le Jésuite Confesseur, aux negres qu’on suplicie, de révéler leur fauteurs & complices Relation of a conspiracy hatched by the negroes; Defense made by the Jesuit Confesser, of the black who revealed it under torment” ((Paris? : s.n.), 1758), http://archive.org/details/relationdunecons00pari. This source on Makandal is told anonymously. The author explains that the story told was first received from another (female) writer who in turn forwarded a letter she first received from an anonymous planter in the colony. It also claims that Makandal was owned by a planter other than Lenormand de Mézy, and though it is the only source that makes that claim, the document also repeats that Makandal was loaned out to another plantation.
castration and disempowerment. In this sense, the maroon’s lack of self-discipline told in the nuanced, metaphorical mixing of soil and sex and fetish as a sinister castrating effect as much as a phallus for reproductive and pleasurable purposes suggests a more complex cultural anxiety about new forms of knowledge unmediated by the sovereign state in Saint-Domingue and France. Most basically, the way in which the Harlequin tradition argues issues of power and unequal relations through abstract and comedic terms suggests that the surface love triangle is a metaphor for more political and controversial conversation. In this sense, the history and myth of Makandal create a generically and geographically hybrid literature from the beginning because he is a product of colonial documents and European theater, which is itself a politically intense space of literary production built by planter/philosophers.

Though the references to pleasure indicate another means of associating the colony with sexual licentiousness and license for this behavior in some sense, I read the repetition of pleasure in close relationship to the slave as an indirect discussion of the sway and real power that subaltern knowledge held over planters and holds over the narrator of this piece. Because Pietz points out that the earliest writings on the fetish are about “witchcraft and the control of female sexuality,” we can also go beyond the Harlequin romance as a way into reading the presence of “poisonous” African cultures. We can compare the objectification, adoration, and plurality of the “young negress” with the fetish itself. Makandal’s out of control reproduction (of medicine, pleasure, relations) represent a manufacture of novel cultures that speak to a variety of human
and eco-specific needs and expressions.\textsuperscript{199} Pietz quotes Gilles Deleuze’s assessment of the fetish as “the natural object of social consciousness” and a “recognition of value,” and so his relationships to countless women through the power of the pleasure he gives and gets (sexually and with his herbs) speak metaphorically to a kind of ownership of the land, the most valuable thing about Saint-Domingue. Ed White and Duncan Faherty have commented on an English translation of this story and said that, like others of its kind that mention Afro-Creole knowledge, Histoire expresses an interest in the disruptive power of subaltern knowledge despite their demeaning attitudes toward them.

Building on their idea that what we are reading is a description meant to illustrate a new representation of knowledge, we can also say that the text presents a new kind of human-environmental relation that is beyond the planter’s understanding of the human and beyond the mediation of the monarchy in the colony or in France. And interestingly, because one world’s agricultural power structure is used as a kind of literary fetish for a metropolitan audience, it makes sense to suggest that the story’s central figure relates a more basic and contentious concern with usufruct rights or the “pleasurable use” of land (for habitation and enjoyment) in France, St. Domingue, and Louisiana.\textsuperscript{200} I think Makanal is a way of displacing global/local

\textsuperscript{199} Pietz, “The Problem of the Fetish,” 5-6., no. 9 (1985): 5-6.
\textsuperscript{200} Winston W. Riddick, “Economic Development and Private Ownership of Immovable Property: A Comparison of Louisiana and Haiti,” \textit{Electronic Journal of Comparative Law} 12 (2008). Civil law governing immovable property in all three spaces have at times between the 1700s and early 1800s existed under the same laws of France, including “usufruct” or “usufruit” rights, which govern rights related to the fruit of one’s labor.
changes that modernity brought to labor and knowledge in both Europe and the colony. As an example, usufruct rights, or rights that ensure the pleasurable use of land for those who cultivate it but do not own it were by this time in France important to *les engagistes*, literally, the engaged, who had none of the fruit of their labor but worked the land owned by the King. Historians note that “much of the land held by the king was ‘engaged’ by the eighteenth century,” and so the Makandal, who takes his pleasures in the Master’s absence and obviously knows how to do what experts can’t with the fruits of his labor signifies as threat, warning, and present reality. Literally, then, the story of the poisoner is also the story of a man deprived of the fruits of his labor and a story of the dangers of a human/environmental relation unmediated by a disciplinary power.

These issues are pressing ones in 1787 France and Saint-Domingue when the aristocracy owned all the land and cultivated none of it but began to intervene on peasants’ farming methods, and the issues don’t disappear with revolution any more than its effects. The same studies in civil law that show there are long periods of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when when parts of Haiti and the United States lived under the same French civil law (governing land/ usufruct law). Economists make correlations between the space of the colonial plantation and contemporary human poverty and erosion; these correlations reshape the production of modernity in terms of human/environmental relations associated with the plantation but still with us.

Though, moving chronologically, the next text returns Makandal to a planter treatise instead of a romance, the same elements proliferate in fiction. But he also appears in other kinds
of sociological, historical, and scientific texts. The more agriculturally specific resonances stay with Makandal in other spaces even if pantomime qualities take over here and continue to accompany him in later novels. The multigeneric appearances suggest that Makandal has been important to he has been a part of several importantant archives, including French colonial history, and French historical fiction. Later, C.L.R. James, Carpentier and others use him as a means of intervening in the genre of historical fiction to refigure the plantation resistance as the birth of the counter-modern.

Excerpt from Description Topographique, Physique, Civile, Politique et Historique de La Partie Française de L’isle Saint-Domingue, Tome I (1797)

The multi-volume cultural and natural study of Saint-Domingue, Description Topographique, (1797) was written in Philadelphia by a refugee planter of both French and Haitian revolutions named Moreau de Saint-Méry. Moreau was a white Creole originally from Martinique, educated in Paris, who adopted Saint-Domingue as his home and became a member of the Superior Council in 1780. Though written from the position of a displaced planter, Moreau’s recollections relate a long-term environmental intimacy with the island in his former

201 Louis-François L’Héritier, et al., Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire de la révolution française (Librairie centrale, 1830); Alcée Fortier, Louisiana Studies: Literature, Customs and Dialects, History and Education (F. F. Hansell & bro., 1894), 86.
202 Dubois, Avengers, 10. See the French-language introduction to a collection of recent readings of Moreau’s work: Dominique Taffín, ed., Moreau de Saint-Méry, ou, Les ambiguïtés d’un créole des Lumières: actes du colloque organisé par les Archives départementales de la Martinique et la Société des amis des archives et de la recherche sur le patrimoine des Antilles, avec le concours de l’Université des Antilles et de la Guyane, 10-11 septembre 2004 (Fort-de-
life as a colonial administrator. He speaks from the position of a planter who is proslavery and large monoculture, but he is also critical toward monarchical oversight and absenteeism in the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution. Moreau’s greatest aim was to secure an autonomously controlled economy in Saint-Domingue, and because his research concerns the plantation business in the years before the Haitian Revolution, he looks back in an editorial stance to prior research on a place he mourns as a utopia now lost.\textsuperscript{203}

The text was published ten years after the Mercure de France romanticized version of events had been translated into English newspapers.\textsuperscript{204} Overall, actual mention of Makandal is brief, especially in comparison to the abundance of this planter’s writing; his version of the story constitutes less than three pages in nearly a thousand. But Carolyn Fick points out that the Moreau collection, including letters and his collection of local print culture, offers a variety of


\textsuperscript{204} Ibid.
history on poisoning, slave conspiracies, and other forms of resistance to the system. I re-embed the passage in relation to some important points in the pages preceding them in order to emphasize that Moreau uses Makandal and Lenormand to critique absenteeism and construct an ideal relationship between white identity and the exclusive production of large scale agriculture, and therefore futurity. He tells the story of the African doctor and poisoner as well as the absent agronomist in opposition to the preferred white planter’s strategies and economic goals, which are efficiency, high yield, and surveillance. Though they are both representations worthy of his scorn, Moreau’s text suggests and intimate co-presence between European science and counter-modern knowledge ways in the production of Atlantic modernity. I suggest that the text returns the resistance figure story to agricultural history, and at the same time, brings the maroon and planter to the U.S. from Saint-Domingue and France.

Makandal has become more well-known at this point (1796), and Moreau acknowledges the “romantic” version of events in Mercure de France’s “true story” (1787) after he reclaims it as a means of philosophical critique. is version’s most notable claim is that Makandal lost his hand in an accident on a sugar gin and became a “gardien des animaux” or animal herder instead of a jilted and jealous lover. This was a system in which the most powerful skilled laborers were allowed more freedom in personal movement, and so Makandal’s physical loss on the sugar gin

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205 Fick, The Making of Haiti...
206 Moreau, Description, 653.
precipitates a social demotion in the labor hierarchy to a position of inconsequence. His accident is the genesis of his marronage, but the effects of the accident are linked to other effects beyond physical injury. Makandal became a powerful local force, because after his execution, Moreau notes that colonists “locked their doors” for fear of continued killing.

But leading up to that culminating scene in the chapter, the content of Moreau’s descriptions are a combination of broadly drawn and detailed orientations to both human and environmental history of the island—a kind of eco-human history from which Makandal emerges. He notes the colony’s history of settlement and frames it with documentation of landscape in densely topographical passages, including the directions and force of the island’s rivers, the size and depth of salt water bays, and East to West distance from mountain range to plain—he attends to the language of la forme et la nature, or, quality of terrain on the level of soil chemistry, but he also relates broader perspectives on human-environmental relations.

He narrates the founding of the Plaine du Nord parish with European settlements, in one instance, by tracing the beginnings of the parish’s most “primitive” Dominican church in 1631. The details on the early church come counter to his mentions of pre-colonial culture.

208 Moreau, Description, 651; Weaver, Medical Revolutionaries, 42. Weaver notes that skilled labor came with more “freedom of movement” and “prestige.”
209 Moreau, Description, 628. La forme et la nature are terms that come up in nineteenth-century French texts on botanical chemistry and soil chemistry—texts concerned with assessments of actual soil makeup and quality of terrain.; See Ch. Dassonville, Influence des sels minéraux sur la forme et la structure des végétaux (Le Bigot frères, 1898).
210 Moreau, Description, 628.
Moreau describes a large rock in a nearby road in which “les anciens naturels” (indigenous people) have left graphic and linguistic signs of their presence with “rude but deeply engraved human forms.” ²¹¹ In another instance, a plantation he visits is rich in “indian fetiches” all over the ground. ²¹² This point/counterpoint between indigenous culture and the moving of the early European “primitive” church of the parish are at the end of the day orienting human culture in relation to environment: Moreau even makes appraisals of the way mountains and rivers dominate the divisions of human inhabitations in its colonial history. ²¹³

All these landscape and temporal orientations are punctuated with concentrated notes on the sizes, locations, inventories, crop yields, and machine operations belonging to all the major planters in all the parishes, some of which are listed in the volume’s introduction as members of superior councils, Intendants (sub-governors), or career Naval officers. He lists the earliest crops’ histories: indigo, cacao, and after 1700, sugar cane. ²¹⁴ He counts 24 suceries (sugar plantation/mills) in one parish, among other relevant industries such “guildiveries” or rum operations using sugar as a source. ²¹⁵

In other words, Moreau’s environmental history is rooted in an obsession with “habitation” or a human-environmental co-presence and narrates across a plurality of temporal moments focused on the land—including both the pre-colonial and the fertile and violent period of French

²¹¹ Ibid., 628.
²¹² Ibid., 632.
²¹³ Ibid., 629.
²¹⁴ Ibid., 629.
²¹⁵ Ibid., 629.
monoculture. Then, from time to time, he describes the bounty of a plantation that was “incinerated” in the “menaces,” as he calls the Revolution, and in so doing, he catapults us forward to his present authorial space in Philadelphia.216 After all his removals and geographic dislocations, the text moves recursively, like memory, close and far away in its varied historical and phenomenological scales. As a result, this spatial-material history, which is created through total agriculture marks the progress of history. At the same time, his narrative’s focus on material manipulation of the environment is haunted by other representations of previous or para-plantation cultures. The mention of rock art and fetishes bring to mind Vodou’s material practices (such as fetish making) and how they take on the role of “collective memory” for slaves.217 In this sense, Makandal’s resistance story is embedded within a model of history aligned with a spatial-material focus rather than within a stable temporal phenomenon, and in turn, this Enlightenment history seems infused with the logic of othered ways of knowing noted for their rearrangement of human-environmental and animal hierarchical relations through textual, oral, material, and ritual arts.

By the time Moreau’s description reaches Limbé Parish and Makandal’s textual origin, Moreau has made observations on the long-term notable contributions and properties of local

216 Ibid., 645.
planters, and it is here that Moreau mentions Lenormand de Mézy for the first time in the chapter.\textsuperscript{218} Though the island itself is known for its high growing capacity, it’s clearly not the case with less careful planters. “The sun” in this part of the northern parish, he reports, “doesn’t enjoy a great reputation.”\textsuperscript{219} In fact, he says, the ground is “so drowned in sun in some places that the cane never perfectly matures.”\textsuperscript{220} Except for “the Breda plantation ... the canes are dry, the canes are beautiful there, but without juice. Plantation le Normand de Mézy, makes nearly 400,000 (sic) of sugar, but with considerable property.”\textsuperscript{221} Our first image of Lenormand de Mézy is mirrored in his land’s relative infertility—his sapless results. For the amount of property that he has, he should have more and better cane. Inefficiency in labor or land use are not compliments, especially in comparison to the way he offers “praise” for the planters he admires.\textsuperscript{222} The slight seems minor, but the topic of Lenormand comes up again with similar inflection.

The next time, Moreau passes on the opportunity to speak in the glowing terms he reserves for those planters he admires. “It’s on the plantation of Le Normand de Mézy (whom I have praised elsewhere) that we find the first naturalized Campeche trees brought to Saint-

\textsuperscript{218} Moreau, \textit{Déscription}, 629.  
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., 629.  
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid., 629. In other places, “livres” signifies both “pounds” as in weight and in silver. I assume livres is the missing measurement.  
\textsuperscript{222} Moreau, \textit{Déscription}, 650, 653. See Moreau’s “praise” or l’éloge for Paul de Belin Villeneuve.
Domingue.” The comment at first presents the idea that Lenormand has contributed to the landscape with the introduction of notable new trees, but his tone shifts. “Campeche trees” may be “marvelous for defense,” since “the lemon trees only grow with difficulty in the North. But the smell is not sweet.” The cross-reference to see praise elsewhere seems innocent enough, but his earlier description of Lenormand’s dry cane couldn’t possibly be the note of praise he references. Then, the tree he plants in Saint-Domingue are dismissed as a nuisance.

Another possibility is that Moreau offers Lenormand “l’éloge” (praise) in his many other writings about the colony, and in one other brief mention of his name several hundred pages before, he points to those possibilities. In that earlier chapter, Moreau says that Lenormand was “one of the great partisans to Castelveyre’s views.” Yet, he leaves no trace of who Castelveyre was or why the relationship would tell us anything about Lenormand.

But just five years before, Moreau had published an entire tome dedicated to the same planter called Éloges de M. Turc de Castelveyre (Praises for M. Turc de Castelveyre). That text relates that Castelveyre left a lucrative post to dedicate his life to social and medical service to colonials in Saint-Domingue. He established the first two hospitals in the colony for the care of colonials with “ailments” that were “dangerous” to others. Praises for Castelveyre says that Lenormand

223 Moreau, Description, 632.
224 Ibid.
225 Ibid., 401.
helped to finance the purchase of land for this medical operation, and this notation puts
Lenormand and Makandal in the same businesses of medicine and botanical chemistry.\(^{227}\)

And then, in an odd turn, the subject of the Campeche tree comes up again in \textit{Praises for}
\textit{Castelveyre}. Here, ten years earlier, Moreau complains even more forcefully that the Campeche
trees Lenormand introduced have taken over the terrain and “destroyed the fragrance of Saint-
Domingue.”\(^{228}\) In comparison, Moreau describes Castelveyre as a man who wanted more than
anything to simply “be useful,” and who spent his time teaching others (206). With this
repetition of slights, we begin to get the feeling that Lenormand is for Moreau a monarchical
power insensitive and absent to the experience of being in Saint-Domingue and lacking the
native authority of the Creole or local white planter. At best, he financed a hospital while others
made themselves useful, he planted a tree that is now ubiquitous and foul, his cane is dry, his
wealth is enormous, and Lenormand himself is elsewhere.\(^{229}\)

However, as already noted, Lenormand has not been considered previously as an agent of
botanical medical knowledge, and I believe his relationship to Castelveyre reinscribes this
possibility and closes the distance between Makandal’s local agency and Lenormand’s global
agency in colonial agro-medical intervention. As I have pointed out, Naval correspondence
shows that Lenormand wrote to Secretary of the Navy, Maurepas, about wax shrub cultivation

\(^{227}\) Ibid., \textit{Éloges}, 19.
\(^{228}\) Ibid.
“with a good master” a “laboring” slave is “happier than the peasant in France.” At once,
Dutrône La Couture says that a good master is an absent one.
(used for dysentery) and worked closely with Louis Prat, a royal doctor-botanist who was charged with opening a hospital, surgery, royal botanical garden, and “laboratory” for “making medicines” in Louisiana.\textsuperscript{230} And here, in Saint-Domingue, he is “partisan” to the views of the founder of the first formalized hospital of the colony. As its financier, he is reproduced as a person who knew how to enact and route cash flow, and in fact, was in charge of fixing Louisiana’s economy during a period of dangerous inflation just after having brought Saint-Domingue under financial regulation.\textsuperscript{231} James Pritchard notes he was brought to Saint-Domingue because “Maurepas needed an administrator of sufficient ability, experience, and ruthlessness to force several of the colony’s former financial officials to disgorge over two million \textit{livres} in unpaid accounts.”\textsuperscript{232} Pritchard confirms that Lenormand was a financial commissary primarily who advanced after having taken over his father’s notably weak administrative skills in Louisbourg. More, Lenormand was aristocratic, but from a family of “lesser royal servants” who eventually retired, after a career as a “ruthless” administrator with great wealth.\textsuperscript{233} Moreau does not give Lenormand the “praise” “l’éloge” he gives to other planters, perhaps because he confiscated a great deal of money due the crown from his local

\textsuperscript{230} Thomas, “Pre-Whitney Cotton Gins,” 141.
\textsuperscript{232} Pritchard, L Normant...” Pritchard adds that Lenormand’s “four years at Cap-Français were notable for the harmony between him and the district governor and for his smooth relations with the island’s intendant.”
\textsuperscript{233} Ibid., Pritchard. n.p.
fellow planters, but he does garner respect for being a powerful global player in the monarchical and cut-throat system of advancement in a transitional period when the entire colonial operation became more dominated by career naval officers instead of high-ranking nobles.

In comparison to Lenormand, Moreau next presents another planter whose trees smell comparatively much sweeter. Paul Belin de Villeneuve is the subject of more space than either Lenormand or Makandal in the planter’s writing, and in addition, Moreau explicitly introduces Makandal as the “scourge of humanity” in comparison to / following an almost adoring passage on this same ideal white, local, agronomist, Monsieur (M.) Belin.

Ten years earlier, Moreau had collaborated on yet another book with M. de Belin concerning design of the perfect sugar mill, and Belin was the agronomist who perfected the use of “double-pass” horizontal sugar rollers with a “perilous first pass” that “required a human hand.” Belin doubled the amount of sugar that could be produced. And where Lenormand was absent, Belin occupies the site of production with a kind of sinister intimate control. As Moreau notes, a plaque with a verse about the sweetness of labor was posted on the chimney of the sugar mill. It read, “Good comes to the industrious man. The lazy man comes to pain. All work has its

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rewards, and here is the sweetest one for the bitterness of our work.” Belin wrote and had the verse inscribed in the refinery where the slaves would have extracted the most perfected forms of the nectar. The verse, Moreau says, “was inspired by the story” of a young French ensign aboard a navy vessel—a story recounted in a book called The Voyage of the Parouse around the world. The sailor distinguished himself and advanced in rank through bravery to become an officer, but he died at sea. The purpose of the voyage was in claiming the territory of the Pacific for the French where the British and Captain Cook left off, and so the irony is that the words on a plaque above the central chimney of Belin’s sugar gin are inspired by the story of a low-ranking (white) French sailor who gladly became a sacrifice to the project of French territorial sovereignty and is here meant to visually frame and linguistically discipline the slaves in Belin’s mill.

The plaque emphasizes that Moreau’s politics are aligned with Belin’s and that a grave purpose and philosophy support all his knowledge. Belin controls the land and slaves as one material surface for cultivation: he knows how to get rid of insects that kill the indigo, to get rid of all the “nuisance weeds” in the fields, and unlike Lenormand, knows how to make a place that “seems incapable of growing cane become an immense sugar plantation” (through such graphic

236 Moreau, Description, 650. It reads, “L'homme actif a les biens. L'homme oisif a les maux; tout travail a fa recompense, y et la plus douce ici compense l'amertume de nos travaux.”
and physically oppressive forms of surveillance and containment). Toug
gh outbreaks of illness among animals are a repeating theme in the chapter, and he praises Belin for killing off all the mules rather than letting disease spread; the loss on one plantation was listed as “80 mules, not counting the horses and cattle.” In comparison, Makandal is known for having poisoned cattle and other animals. Moreau doesn’t openly draw a comparative connection between Belin’s massacres as antidote for poison and Makandal’s spreading poison, but because the Makandal story comes next, its relative proximity to his praises for Belin is compelling as comparative and co-present relations to environment. More, it reads as if Lenormand’s absence and Makandal’s presence are both drawn in contrast to Belin’s singularly noble reputation as a “colonial cultivate
or.”

Moreau continues his attention to Belin’s contribution through presenting a combination of his ideas and practices in one hybrid sweep, saying that Belin brought “a sure theory” to the once “bad quality” of the area’s “productions” and that when Belin “bought (land) in this area,…he proved that knowledge(s) (les connaissances) were the “only things missing.” The land is covered with different embodiments of poison (insects, weeds, fugitive slaves) without European intervention and ideas, and Belin’s knowledge is the cure for the poison. He adds, “I’m obliged to speak of the character of M. Belin, of his friendship and even more for his penchant for views

\[238\] Moreau, *Déscription*. 647.
\[239\] Ibid., 638.
\[240\] Ibid., 649.
\[241\] Ibid.
that enliven me, his principles, his rules and observations on all the aspects that constitute the colonial cultivator” (649). It is not just isolated forms of know how, but his long-term presence of thirty years in the colony. 242 “People imitate him …and it (has) changed the face of Limbé,” he says. Philosophically, it’s clear that the presence of the white planter was to control and maintain the extraction of capital from slaves as they did the juice from cane. In Moreau’s words, being an agronomist in Saint-Domingue requires actual “habitation and cultivation” – socially, intellectually, and agriculturally, but on relationally unequal terms in ways that are both racialized and eco-cidal in nature.

At this point, Moreau turns from Belin’s beneficial presence directly to Makandal in the same breath. 243 Just as he adds that no sugar cane “equals” that of Belin, he addresses his last task: “It is regrettable, after having cited one to be that which all of life is a series of recommendable acts, to be obliged in naming one whose atrocious presence was a “scourge of humanity. 244 He next narrates Makandal as a shameful topic in comparison to the operation of the successful local planter, and his opening move is to name responsibility. Pointedly, he says, “It’s the Lenormand plantation, in Limbé, that controlled the negro Makandal.” 245

242 Ibid., 648.
243 Ibid., 651.
244 Ibid.
245 Dictionary of the French Academy, 5th Edition (1798). “que dépendait le negre Makandal…” (Alternate meaning for dépendre from dictionary contemporary with the period: to be under the control or authority of / controlled by Lenormand plantation.)
Jill Casid sees a “logic” between Moreau’s following the story of Belin’s mill with the story of Makandal.\textsuperscript{246} The way one story leads to another suggests the possibility that Makandal lost his hand in Belin’s mill. I believe that the combination of Lenormand’s tax break on all the labor of his slaves in Saint-Domingue in this period and the common way in which slaves were put out to work in other spaces adds to the possibility that he was on loan at Belin’s mill, especially since quality labor was highly-sought and valued. The possibility that he lost his hand on Belin’s “new machine” both deepns and complicates my reading, since I view Moreau’s story of Makandal as a critique of Lenormand’s absence. But if Makandal was injured on loan to the best agronomist in the district, then the story underlines the idea that absenteeism itself is only a symptom of the violence inherent to the global agricultural system in practice. It also shows how the world of the plantation operates through extreme forms of extraction and gives logic to the violence of Makandal’s revenge. As we learn, “his hand had been taken by a gin, it had been cut off, and he became an animal herder. He became a fugitive.”\textsuperscript{247} With these stark lines, Moreau closes the chapter with his own version of important notes on what happened. We learn that Makandal became “famous” for his “use of poisons,” and that “the slaves were terrified.”

\begin{quote}
    held open school on his execrable arts, he had agents all over
    the colony, and death flew at the smallest of his signals. Finally
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{246} Casid, \textit{Sowing Empire}, 223.
\textsuperscript{247} Moreau, \textit{Description}, 652. “Sa main ayant été prise au Moulin, il avait fallu la lui couper, et on le fit gardien d’animaux. Il devint fugitive.”
in his vast plan, he had designed an infernal project to wipe out all men who were not black from the face of Saint-Domingue, and his successes ever increasingly spread an effect that assured them (sic). With the magistrates and government’s vigilance, nothing could lead to the means of seizing this scoundrel.248

Clearly, Moreau recognizes that the maroon’s knowledge is an organized system of understandings around botanical chemistry coupled with a knowledge of the terrain that enables him to evade containment. Makandal operates in counter-relation to planter knowledge and spaces in which he is unphased by governmental “vigilance.”249 He tells us next that Makandal had “been long accustomed to impunity” and decided to join in at a Calenda taking place on Dufresne Plantation,” and in this detail supports the idea that Makandal was known to be responsible for disruption for a long period of time before another slave turned him in or anyone could possibly catch him (652). “One young negro, perhaps with the impression that the presence of this monster would produce for him,” goes “to warn” all the planters in the house on the night of the Calenda (652). When Makandal is taken in with “his hands behind his back,” and while “the two white men” leave “to write to Le Cap to inform them of this capture,” the two “domestic blacks” who served as guards “fell asleep.” Moreau tells us they “had two pistols cocked on the table where the light was,” but relates “the guards fell asleep,” and “Makandal

248 Ibid., 652.
249 Ibid.
escaped like a magpie.” 250 Because the magpie is associated with thievery, he draws an association here between Makandal and the culture of maroon “bands” who raided plantations regularly. 251 Then, he also repeats the association between Makandal and animals, which in Vodou, represent manifestations of the lwas (or gods). Those who witnessed the execution by fire say Makandal escaped in the form of a fly. 252 He adds that even still, the slaves believed that he “did not perish in the flames.” 253 More, he says, “the memory of that being (Mackandal) for which the epithets abound, yet awaken ideas so sinister, that the negroes call poisoners and poisons ‘Macandals,’” adding that the name had become the most cruel and powerful of insults among them. 254 Macandal’s notoriety for escape doesn’t glorify him here, but naturalizes him as a criminal, and rumors of his escape do not excite slaves as much as they create a culture of silence and or paranoia around the name. But Moreau capitalizes on the popularity of the contradictory attraction to the sower of death. His ambiguous repulsion and attraction for the figure show Macandal is a political and philosophical vehicle for his own purposes in creating an alluring nostalgia about Saint-Domingue and his figurative ownership of the place through a fetish of Makandal. Moreau capitalizes on his fame by relating that a painter from Paris named Dupont made a portrait of the maroon and his accomplices when they were in prison at Le

250 Ibid., 652.
252 Moreau, Description, 653.
253 Ibid., 653.
254 Ibid., 652-3.
He traces the painting through its possessors, from the painter’s widow to a shop in Paris years later where he bought the portrait of Makandal for himself.\textsuperscript{256}

The closing side-story of the Makandal portrait clearly evokes the character’s association with liberty and pleasure made popular in \textit{Mercure de France}. Moreau’s aesthetic appreciation of the painting (and the way he tracks it down through three separate owners) implies he recognizes the way in which Makandal has become a tool of political discourse already and wants to participate in re-crafting (fetishizing) its significance to his own cause for the restoration of white plantocracy in Saint-Domingue, or, to use the story to sow doubt in the minds of those who envision the success of a free black state of cultivators in Haiti. It also explodes awareness of Makandal beyond the textual or colonial space, in that at least one portrait of him and his accomplices become a communicable object – a poisonous and pleasurable commodity in France during its revolutionary period. Moreau openly references and humorously dismisses the \textit{Mercure de France} piece despite his own fetishization of the maroon: “There will be a voluminous amount written of all that has been said on Macandal,” Moreau says, “but it has been left to an anonymous person to present it in the \textit{Mercure de France} on the 15\textsuperscript{th} of September 1787, as the hero of a tale called real history, or love and jealousy act as two large springs.”\textsuperscript{257}

\textsuperscript{255} Ibid., 653.
\textsuperscript{256} Ibid. Moreau describes how he tracked down and purchased the painting but not how it was lost.
\textsuperscript{257} Ibid., 653.
Moreau’s sub-title, “real history, or love and jealousy act as two large springs,” is a tag that has been repeated as the author’s reference to an actual sub-title to the 1787 Mercure story, and though the addition may reflect a reproduction I have failed to locate, I have not found the term anywhere in the original. 258 My reading of Moreau’s naming is that the author is satirically speaking to the way in which the story of agricultural events have been turned into a romantic drama as well as the way in which the romance has claimed historicity. I read the two springs as mechanical ones, though they may allude to the two briny springs from which Cupid dips his arrows in myth.

However, if we apply Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of rhizomatic language to Moreau’s cutting (almost jealous) tone, instead of a focused binary, we get a multiplicity of them automatically: love and jealousy and two springs. 259 In other words, in a rhizomatic analysis working counter to the hegemony of European ontological structures of knowledge and history, Moreau’s language actively decenters into “other dimensions” and “registers” to align with the syncretic nature of rhizomatic thinking. 260 As they say, “It is always possible to break a language down into internal structural elements,” which is “an undertaking that is not fundamentally different than a search for roots” (8). For example, with “springs” Moreau leaves us with an image of two (mechanical) springs acting in contrasting but productive purpose to one another.

258 Armelle Détang and Claude Lucas, Ô fugitif: anthologie autour de la figure du marron (Centre antillais de recherche et d’édition de textes (CARET), 1999), 79.
260 Ibid., 8.
(they *act*) as well as two streams of water (springs). But the image also conveys a chaotic mix of sub-textual elements like sex, machinery, and hydrography, of all things, forming an example of how language is “never closed upon itself, except as a function of impotence.” (8). Makandal is anything but impotent in character and literary reproduction; in this sense, Moreau’s abstraction instantiates his fertility because it betrays the failure of dualism to explain modernity, i.e., as the narrative of colonial desire for subjective representation upon or against its object (the Other and Other landscape). Moreau effectively frames a story about colonial agriculture on the register of desire and counter-desire, though, not in binary terms, but instead, through an evidentiary image that communicates the radical multiplicity of the cultures Makandal represents and the cultural unreadability of the Haitian Revolution. Even if the sub-title is a reproduction of one Moreau himself read in print, we are left with ongoing image of production and counter-production on multiple registers. Like Cupid’s two streams of love and jealousy, Makandal is known in inseparable terms for the social/chemical power to heal as well as destroy.

At this seemingly odd juncture, his praise for Belin picks up again to close the chapter, but the logic of the turn is clear now given the way in which Makandal the poisoner and Lenormand the absent agronomist are so closely woven as topics against Belin’s successes. He closes:

We see on the plantation of Belin a Bread fruit tree placed on the 7th of August in the proper soil, excellent and very fresh smelling. It was the 28th of December … (when the plant) had produced … leaves 17 inches long. All promise that this
very precious tree will be a complete success and M. Belin’s care will guide it
because his care is continual, and that to want to be useful to the colony is for him
a sweet habit.261

In comparison to the terrible Campeche, in just four months Belin’s breadfruit is “excellent” and
“very fresh” in its smell, but so is Belin’s “habit” of continual cultivation of the ground and the
colony.262 Commentary on Lenormand’s contributions is comparatively less than complimentary,
and the return in this chapter to the fresh Bread fruittree counters the distaste Moreau expresses
for the way in which Lenormand has poisoned the experience of the colony with his trees and
poisoner slaves. Together, the lord of poison and the absent agronomist present a problem that
persists for Moreau even years later on a new shore.

Overall, the topic of Lenormand as an agent of the agro-medical industry’s beginnings
represents a yet unrecognized mode of possible engagement with archival materials that further
delineate modernity as a site of multiple political ecologies in contact and competition, especially
since both Campeche (for dyewood) and wax shrubs or myrtle trees (for dysentery medicine) are
both items that have been noted as products important to indigenous people of the Americas
before Europeans, and, in particular, since Campeche (bloodwood), used for everything from

261 Moreau, Description, 653.
262 Ibid., 653.
antiseptic to treatment for infantile diarrhea by indigenous people, had been a resource stolen by European pirates from Mexico as early as the 1600s.\textsuperscript{263}

We can at least see some basic connections—an historical slave is now understood to relay the presence of African knowledge production as constitutive and competitive to the operations of scientific modernity in the colony, his knowledge was medical in nature and related to botanical cures as well as poisons, and his historical owner seems to be financially and intellectually invested in research and development related to medicine industries in two spaces: Saint-Domingue and Louisiana.\textsuperscript{264} My reading shows that these pages have been so often extracted and reproduced as the story of the “seducer” or “poisoner” and Lenormand the absent agronomist that neither have been read as co-producers of the same political and material economy or linked to the characters interactions in this genealogy of more figurative versions of the story.

Overall, Makandal is remembered as a totalizing human-environmental condition equal to the planter’s—as “the great fear” or “la grande peur” of 1758.\textsuperscript{265} He made the island and its people “tremble,” for decades following, and this is a poignant reminder of contemporary Haiti

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\textsuperscript{263} Ginger M. Allen, Michael D. Bond, and Martin B. Main, “50 Common Native Plants Important In Florida’s Ethnobotanical History,” 15; Umberto Quattrocchi, \textit{CRC World Dictionary of Medicinal and Poisonous Plants: Common Names, Scientific Names, Eponyms, Synonyms, and Etymology (5 Volume Set)} (CRC Press, 2016), 1919. \\
\textsuperscript{264} Banks, \textit{Chasing Empire}...; McClellan, \textit{Colonialism and Science}...; Casid, \textit{Sowing Empire}.... \\
\end{flushleft}
and the recent set of both environmental and human crises in 2010’s earthquake. This ironic linguistic commoning of temporal distances through the metaphor of an earthquake establishes a thread of connection across centuries of critical and spectacular interest evidenced in these texts for dismemberment and disruption in the same space. The nation's environmental crisis reproduced a narrative of Haitian history as both unfinished and unfinishable revolution with no clear future; focus is always on the failures in governance without consideration for Haiti’s historical and continued refused entry into the capitalist economic order of things. Instead, it is a place formulated as being increasingly naturally corrupt in agricultural literatures of the nineteenth-century and brutalized by American agricultural policy of the contemporary period. The metaphor of earth moving in 1758 is on a basic level emerging as a story of environmental crisis as much as cultural crisis, in that it is a story of the plantation and resistance to this oppression. Therefore, Makandal's upending or exceeding the disciplinary regimes of the agricultural sphere cause the exposure of faultlines in both human and environmental disciplinary control.

He may in some sense be one person with whom a narrative of poisoned cultures, landscapes, and bodies originate, fairly or unfairly, but what is perhaps more clear is how he positions us in view of philosophical and social fault-lines that inevitably reveal the ecological and counter-cultural roots of modernity.
Chapter 2. The Strange Empire

The pantomime and novel in this chapter reproduce the poisoner-planter dichotomy and the space of the Saint-Domingue plantation as a means of imagining a progressively hybrid and conflicted world in formation. The Makandal of post-revolutionary, English-language literature shows the same facility with people and the material environment, and the writers employ him as a means of putting readers in intimate contact with Afro-Creole knowledge. By the time Makandal reaches U.S. print culture, his name is erased, he has become a “noble rival” to the planter instead of a poisoner, and the absent agronomist has been replaced with a new generation of thought and blood in the form of his nephew, who is newly arrived to Saint-Domingue as it reaches the verge of revolution.

The tradition illustrates the gradually diasporic and dynamic presence of Makandal culture in print that began with planter’s letters from the colony and has now spread to multiple metropolitan publishing and generic spaces. Both texts reproduce the co-presence of alternative knowledge and science in framing modern culture because they reproduce the perspectives of planters on the knowledge of slaves in terms that are fearful, dismissive, and finally, progressively interested in divining the failure of utopia and monoculture through closer proximity, appropriation, and fetishization of Africans and Africa. Authors John Cartwright Cross, William Ware, and Victor Hugo base their understandings of the colony on the thinking of scientific, agricultural, and medical literature produced in the West Indies and Africa as well as on the already popular translations of the Mercure de France story in British newspapers. As a
result, we are both subject to a hybrid presentation of knowledge production as a sign of modernity as well as the added mediation of these narratives in metropolitan consumption/reproduction.

The pantomime, “King Caesar, or The Negro Slaves,” by J. Cartwright Cross and William Ware materializes the world of the plantation as well as places beyond the master’s surveillance. We follow Makandal within and beyond the boundaries of the plantation, and therefore become subject to a different hierarchy of meaning and meaning-making through experiential submission: we hear the sounds of African songs (sung in broken Mandingo) in one moment, and in the next, the sound of the Overseer’s arcau (or whip). Similarly, the earliest American translation of Victor Hugo’s first novel, *Bug-Jargal*, redeems the Makandal character as a “noble rival” to the planter whose presence so disorders and rearranges his previous understanding of nature and knowledge that the planter can no longer distinguish his own life’s story from the maroon’s. It was retitled *The Slave-King*. From the *Bug-Jargal of Victor Hugo* in 1833 and edited by Letich Richie, and from this entrance into U.S. print, I trace Hugo’s use of souring in planter literature and harlequin literature to Makandal. Hugo makes significant changes to the narrative: the agronomist is murdered and replaced with a new generation (a nephew who is befriended by the maroon though they fight over the same woman), the leaves he carries are a form of communication (and therefore expressly aligned as a mode of political

\[266\] Cross, *King Caesar or The Negro Slaves*, B, B2, 12. Pagination of the document includes letters, numbers, and combinations of them out of order.
agency among slaves rather than literal poison), the agronomist is murdered, and last, Hugo’s Makandal (called Bug-Jargal) is at the moment of the 1791 revolution rather than in 1758. His literary presence across this chronological gap articulates a continually emerging convergence of Afro-diasporic history associated with the space of the plantation, its literature, and their hegemonic functions as representations of European territorial sovereignty.

“King Caesar, or The Negro Slaves” (1801)

The first text, “King Caesar, or The Negro Slaves,” a pantomime written by John Cartwright Cross and scored by William Ware, was first performed in at the New Royal Circus theater in London. Cross seems to have been a prolific writer, having produced over two hundred and fifty libretti in France and England. His most noted work, “The Purse or, benevolent tar: a musical drama, in one act,” opened at the Theatre Royal in London’s Hay-Market in 1794, and though he enjoyed a theatrical license under the scrutiny of the British government, he worked in both licensed and unlicensed settings (including this pantomime’s premiere theater, the New Royal Circus).

The pantomime’s booklet reproduces a more condensed and even further romanticized version of the Mercure de France story, including new slave characters with sub-plot complications in love and jealousy. Cross and Ware put us on much more intimate and embodied terms with Makandal buy recreating the culture of the colony according to information found in

267 Ibid., A2.
medical literature written in Africa with commentary on the West Indies, and this blending of worlds renders their pantomime overblown scenes of botanical medicine use, ritual, and dance.

The scenes of the colony would have come alive in strange reproductions. “King Caesar” premiered when actors had been rendered mute by the crown in plays about revolt and revolution; managers “began to circumvent the dialogue” at times “with scrolls, also known as flags or banners.”268 With inscriptions of speech on them, “the flags were held aloft on stage” for (literate) audience members to read them.269 Cross, and two other managers of this theater, Richard Astley, and his predecessor and founder, Charles Didbin the Elder, were examples of managers who were refused licenses to produce legitimate dramas because of an “unwritten ban on spoken dramas.” 270 Music functioned as the more permissible means of serving and softening content. The complex dynamics and materiality of speech deconstruct and reassemble an order of signs designed to “circumvent” these issues.271 Whether print-literate or not, a spectator witnessed a great machination of “practical material activity” beyond the strictly literary as we would imagine (28). Cross straddled the world of “legal contingency” by producing these ballets d’action’ popular in France and in both patent and illegitimate spaces.272

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270 Moody, Illegitimate Theater, 29.
271 Ibid., 28.
272 Ibid.
The same content was popular to French and Italian comedy. Cross and Ware want to spatially, sonically, and materially reproduce through theater a political reality that registers as transcendent to the reach of the crown and one made metaphorical through a distant geography. They do so through the invocation of alternate formulations of political power on the plantations of Saint-Domingue that were already popular in Paris. Their text triangulates a confluence for literature from and about Saint-Domingue, tested in Paris, and reproduced in London.

French influence is evident in many other ways, as it permeates the world of this production. Cross and Ware worked with French writers and musicians. Ware, who wrote a “New Indian Overture” especially for King Caesar, had already adapted popular productions from the French, when French theatre of the late eighteenth century was a space of political debate, class, and artistic mixing cited as a commons in development—“an exemplar for foreigners.” Jane Moody notes that the fall of the Bastille and the British conflict with Napoleon “provided” theater with a renewed “collection of topical, spectacular narratives” that were “perfectly suited to illegitimate representation.”

\[\text{\textsuperscript{275}}\] Moody, Illegitimate Theatre, 28.
who played Mackendal is included. Jack Helme, who also played Blackbeard, began as a ballet principal dancer in France.276 Like Cross and Ware, this popular actor’s preparations in France were followed by decades of successful productions in London.

The structuring and use of theatrical space attempt to relate a material intimacy with the plantation because Cross reproduces French theater’s tradition for materializing political discourse through interior architectural design and through the use of *les merveilleux* or special, large, and live action effects of all kinds.277 As architectural historian Thomas Downing points out, the opera of the *ancien régime* had already changed the use of space in the theatre by “(moving) to an inclusive, circular space for the audience, bringing the spectator into closer contact with the stage” and therefore “altering the relationship between spectators” and a sense of reality is reproduced.278 One early surviving illustration of the inside of London’s New Royal Circus, where King Caesar premiered, shows evidence that the show’s basic use of space and material staging would have done the same; it depicts a man in a clown costume, standing on


277 Highfill, et al., *A Biographical Dictionary*, 247. The machinist and architect at New Royal Circus in charge of these aspects of the show was Jack Helme’s brother-in-law, and he would have designed the staged atmosphere in which his sister (Helmes’s wife) would dance as a ballerina in shows—a family affair.

horseback, and waving to the crowd as he makes his way around an earthen oval arena.\textsuperscript{279} The purpose of such a space was to include equestrian arts, and in this play, the marechausée (or police on horseback) would have chased Merry Mackendal around this earthen track. It was a mix of horizontal and vertical use of space—both a large-scale show played out on a large oval “parterre” or earthen arena as well as a long series of intimate songs exchanged by white women playing the role of fugitive slaves.\textsuperscript{280} In England, we see the Mackandal action embodying and reproducing what French theater sought to establish in “articulating” mimetic relationships not coordinated elsewhere.\textsuperscript{281}

The effect of the colony doesn’t stop in the recreation of a maroon hunt. The theater of war translates here in material form because, typically, the same soldiers fighting in the colonies came back to run theaters and build life-like theater sets. This trend mirrors what happened with French aristocratic planters who also engaged in the building of a theatrical space that produced discourse on monarchical and colonial politics in Paris.

For example, one of the most successful London theater managers, Richard Astley (with whom many of the same actors and musicians worked), had first-hand knowledge of “military strategy and organization,” from leading troops against the French in the West Indies, and these experiences of military (and often colonial) conflict were put to the industrious production of \textit{les mereilleux} in spectacular “blowups” with use of chemicals, weapons, the destruction of huge

\textsuperscript{279} “Internal View of the Royal Circus, St George’s Fields.” n.a. 1801. Corbis Images, 2016.  
\textsuperscript{280} Ravel, The Contested Parterre, 15.  
\textsuperscript{281} Downing, \textit{Aesthetics}, 266.
especially made structures, and equestrian shows, all done in order to heighten the resolution of the shows’ conflicts. Cross’s work fits into this incredible period of theater in which the line between representation and reality is difficult to mark. At one theater, dock workers (who were formerly sailors in the colony) were commissioned to build “aquatic theater” reproductions, including life-sized ships used to re-enact naval battles for a theater manager who decided to capitalize on their proximity to the New river by using it as a means recreating a new world elsewhere.\textsuperscript{282} The exotic scenes of martial chaos in Circusania/pantomime usually ended in some form of sentimental and often marital or romantic reconciliation as a metatheatrical means of good behavior, and this is the case with Merry Mackendal, despite the seriousness of the underlying content.\textsuperscript{283} The animals and explosions were for entertainment, but what happened in Saint-Domingue introduced a thrilling and frightening reality thought impossible at the time, and in the eighteenth-century, “illegitimate” theater was a performative framework meant to consciously blur the lines between performance and spectator, national and individual body in its production of landscape.\textsuperscript{284} The performance would have operated on such doubling and tense scales—in a combination of intimate dialogues between medicine man and patient, fused with a more broad use of the arena’s entirety. They created a virtual landscaping of the colony active


\textsuperscript{283} Ibid. Cross straddled the world of “legal contingency” by producing these ballets d’action’ popular in France and in both patent and illegitimate spaces (or those unlicensed to include speech in their performances by the monarchy).

\textsuperscript{284} Ibid., 28.
with unruly bodies on a vast scale because it was the nature of “Circusania” to combine, overwhelm, and repeat in its circulation of bodies, sound and scenery, and in this show, the sound of “African drums,” compete with the “arcau” or sound of the Overseer’s whip.285

*The Prospectus*

“King Caesar” is arranged in three parts, two of which include more than thirty songs and a cast of exotically named characters. The first part preceding those two comic acts is a prose piece called “Prospectus of the Action” meant to direct the audience’s understanding of the performed vignettes through a condensation of the *Mercure de France* story. Cross’s character is both Harleqinesque and historical since it adds some entertaining new additions in plot, including a scene where Mackandal rescues Zami’s (his accomplice’s) girlfriend from a castle, but it also redeploy the essentialization between African culture and poison introduced through planter literature.

Cross says, “It is but a short period since that the island of St. Domingo trembled at the single name of Mackandal (or King Caesar).” Here, Cross does not separate the story historically from the more recent and well understood revolution of 1791. In addition, the island “trembled” at his name, therefore the representation relays a political power that emerged from the space designated as non culture—the plantation. Again, Cross says he was “born in Africa” and was “unquestionably of high rank,” for “his education had been attended to with an assiduity not

common among the negroes.” He signifies what Anna Brickhouse has called the “Franco-Africanist shadow” in transatlantic thought, both African, and as we now see royal and educated as well.

As “King Caesar” he reinscribes the same “divine avenger” and “Black Spartacus” characteristics that French reform agronomists already imagined. On the other hand, he is also “Merry Mackandal,” so his naming functions as a diminution of African knowledge and reproduces the slave as a happy cultivator. This presentation is common to the conflicted agronomic fantasy of planter philosophy that naturalized Africans to agricultural / manual labor and then underwent reform from within its ranks to imagine the avenger. It also reinforces the recognized dual role of the maroon in both subjugating and valorizing terms in French (and here English) representations. In any case, the “Prospectus” blends the Makandal of the colony and European formulations of Africanness that already operate through hybrid aesthetic elements.

286 Ibid., A2.
289 J. H. Hindmarsh, The Rhetorical Reader, Preceded by a Copious Outline of Gesture and Walker’s Rules of Elocution, Fourth Edition, (London: Souter and Law, 1845), 91; King Caesar, as an evocation of classical nobility, parallels other similar characters with slaves named for great leaders, such as Scipio Africanus. He was an historical Roman general who conquered North Africa, and historical tragedies about him range from 1637 into the 1700s. In the same way that Makandal rescues Samba for Zami from the Governor’s castle in a side-story of this pantomime, Scipio is known for his “continence and virtue in restoring the fair captive to his lover.” In American antebellum theater, productions called “darky extravaganzas” star Scipio as a slave occupied with the mediocre problems of his wandering Master’s love life instead of
associated with classical literature and sculpture and and the caricature popular to print culture.\textsuperscript{290}

Cross says Makandal is “sold to a Master in the vicinity of St. Domingo” to whom he “only gave satisfaction,” but after the initial introduction, the Governor and Overseer again embody the power of the absent planter. Makandal’s power exceeds their control. He becomes “the soul” of the slaves’ “dancing at parties” and healing the sick who can’t be healed by European medicine—they were “given over…from one end of the island to the other” but healed by his “leaf, herb, and root.”\textsuperscript{291} Caesar’s skills so successfully reproduce his popularity that his system of control approaches the mass production level of the plantocracy. His success is described again in mixed metaphors of excessive sexuality, but they clearly reference the idea that Africans are not meant to permanently (territorially or culturally) produce as do white men or without the colonizer’s regulation. Cross says, “Love likewise displayed its influence in his soul; and, his uncommon attractions rendering him the favourite of various mistresses, with an uncommon fierceness of jealousy he defended the \textit{empire} of his love.”\textsuperscript{292} The women, dotting the landscape of the district, mark his territorial reproductive empire, and the danger of Makandal’s activity is that he represents a rejection of the status he holds as a futureless creature and product of white man’s creation.

\textsuperscript{290} Kay Dian Kriz, \textit{Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies, 1700-1840} (Yale University Press, 2008), 72-3.

\textsuperscript{291} Cross, “King Caesar,” A2. Emphasis mine.

\textsuperscript{292} Ibid., A2.
of the colony without the capacity to effect culture through the deep-rooted control of nature. Instead, he mimics and betters the planter’s success one sick slave at a time, on small scales.

Because The Prospectus names his love interests (his first love is Ada), the relationships and scenes between Makandal and women seem more enduring, and therefore, a dangerously permanent representation of territorial sovereignty.\(^{293}\) The Overseer’s plot to cut off Mackandal’s ability to continually gather women displaces the romance and returns us to the subject of planting because the Overseer’s jealousy moves him to notify the Governor “that Mackandal intends robbing his plantation.” The Overseer “compels” Mackandal “to remove two cotton plants,” and makes sure that the Governor “witness(es) his apparent larceny.”\(^{294}\) Mackandal’s story more closely intimates the truth that cotton is a part of the historical master’s (Lenormand’s) desire, and puts, finally, the soil at the heart of their jealousy and argument. As a result, desire for soil and the desire associated with sex mix together with the repetition of language associated with both the land itself and desire among the men. The “heart” of the Overseer is “hard.” He has “conceal(ed) his share in the action” and is ordered by the “complaining” Governor to give the maroon “three hundred lashes.” Mackandal turns and “stabs” the Overseer “to the heart” (4).

With Zami, Maymobo, and Teysello, Mackandal escapes into the woods while pursued by the Governor and colonial Marechaussée, and again in this instance, Cross reproduces \(^{293}\) Ibid.  
\(^{294}\) Ibid., 4.
information from colonial sources that accentuate the historical Makandal’s identity as a spiritual
and physical healer (4). For example, some of his accomplices in this tale are a mixture of those
named in early judicial documents, but more important, Christina Mobley’s extensive work on
tracing slaves’ names shows the reproduction of his accomplices’ names as ones that actually
have some authentic relationship to African culture. Names like Mayombo have only been
previously noted to possibly reference geographic African origin in this period (as might
Mayombo might be given to or reference a slave from the geography of the African Mayombe
rainforest). But Mobley says these words actually denote particular roles within African spiritual
and medicine traditions. Teysello’s name, for example, “refers to the Yombe word for diviner,”
and is one of the original names in the 1758 documents. Teysello’s and Makandal’s work
together in using their “spiritual technology” is a collective one toward healing.295

Outourou is an another extension within Mackandal’s collection of followers reminiscent
of other documents and a priest on his own terms. He is a “peddler” (sic) character who
circulates unholy goods, and therefore, draws a connection to Mackandal’s network of slaves in
the 1758 judicial document. Cross explains Outouro’s work by saying that “negros in general
have a great propensity to commerce,” that “numbers of them act as peddlars, dispersing
European goods about the country,” and that “it was amongst these,” such as “with the aid of
Mayombo and Teysello,” that Caesar “found the partizans he employed in most of the evils of

which he was author.” In this example, the language around the sharing of knowledge among slaves is the voice of a dismissive planter (and partially translated from Mercure) in which distinctions are not necessarily made among ideas of medicine, poison, spiritual belief, and evil toward non-European culture. Outouro is a spiritual trickster who exemplifies the way in which syncretic religious belief and practice were demonized by the imperial subjugation of culture, but his embodiment in performance, with bells and trinkets on his person, evokes the performance of a priest performing a ritual as he sings as well as evokes the dismissive and anxious perspective toward the industry of people of color in the colonies.

The Prospectus puts an even more important priest in the mix: La Rapinière, also called “The Savage Miller” in the pantomime notation, as well as “captain of the banditti.” Though not noted here, La Rapinière means “the pilferer” in eighteenth-century French productions and I believe dually references the history and reputation of maroon bands who raided plantations; La Rapiniere “induce(s)” Mackendal “to follow” him into his “lurking place,” and though not all of

296 Cross, “King Caesar,” 5.
297 Paul Scarron, Oliver Goldsmith, and Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection (Library of Congress). The Comic Romance of Monsieur Scarron (London: Printed for W. Griffin, 1775). This character is one that repeats in at least one other French comedy (Scarron). La Rapiniere is a sort of king of thieves whose European construction nevertheless maps to the role of the maroon as a provisions raider or robber in popular literature about maroons beyond just Makandal. For another example of La Rapiniere’s appearance in theater, see an authoritative source of information on Anglo-Caribbean traditions in which maroon literature characterizes escaped slaves as robbers, see Earle, ed. Aravamudan, Obi, 2005.
the details of the Prospectus are performed in the pantomime, this is another moment that is recreated. Mackandal medicates a wounded troop, and he is transformed into King Caesar, “leader of the banditti,” who, having seen his talents, then profess “moderate faith” in the power of his fetiche.” The authors footnote the definition of the word fetish here as “a name given to their divinities, one of whom is supposed to preside over a whole province, and over every family,” so despite the fantastic atmosphere of this plantation world, their footnote could be taken straight out of a planter treatise on medicine and illness among slaves.

In the briefer Part II, Caesar returns to the plantation for Ada and the festival of “Mumbo Jumbo,” where he falls into a jealous rage and tries to kill her. This “festival” is taken directly from a British doctor’s travel narrative to Africa and the West Indies. Caesar has developed an affection for Samba, Zami’s beloved, and pursues her at the festival. She is described in the same terms given to Mackandal’s love interest in Mercure de France. The description is important, first, because it repeats the eco-specific terms of the females of interest articulated in Mercure de France, and second, because the same details repeat in the next text, Victor Hugo’s Bug-Jargal. Samba returns here in theatrical form from the tableaux des crimes:

Ah! Would you sister Samba know

Her form be like de pliant reed,

By breezes wafted to and fro,

298 Cross, “King Caesar,” 4.
Yet balanc’d by her graceful tread.
Her eyes are Afric’s brightest jet.
Her even teeth like Zembla’s
snows./Her coral lips are sugar sweet,
And to shade her cassa*
yon palm-tree grows.²⁹⁹

Her beauty synthesizes the landscape of Africa and the taste of Saint-Domingue in a confusion of pleasures reminiscent of the sugar of the plantation and what Moreau de Saint-Méry makes clear about black women and fragrant plants—he naturalizes them both as the irresistible object of the French agronomist.³⁰⁰ Samba is murdered just as Saint-Domingue is has destroyed in images of fire and blood. When Samba rejects Mackandal, Caesar decides to have her killed and asks Zami to do the deed. When Zami refuses, Outouro does the job for him.³⁰¹ Zami finds Samba under “a bloody veil,” and “dedicates his last moments to revenge.”³⁰²

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 16. *cottage
³⁰⁰ Garraway, The Libertine Colony, 273. See Doris Garraway’s discussion of Moreau and race. Moreau explains that white men can’t help their attraction to black women and justifies interracial relations as essentially helping instill intelligence and control into the population. Ironically, he theorizes that without white male intervention, the African race would die out, since they don’t have the capacity for becoming civilized. At the same time, the planter’s “seed” produces a conflicted labor pool since his children are his slaves. In Saint-Domingue, many children of slaves were freed through their volunteer entry into the militia. Moreau advocated laws allowing young men to buy their freedom from their father/master through war.
³⁰¹ Cross, “King Caesar,” 6.
³⁰² Ibid., 6.
The “dreadful power” and reign of Caesar and his “fetiche” ends when Zami undertakes the job of killing him and freeing all the slaves to “the general rejoicings of the whole colony on the occasion.”\(^{303}\) In the end, the pantomime replaces conflict with merriment, pleasure, and its shared consumption in a world where even the Governor is noted for his generosity among the slaves rather than cruelty (6). Order is restored.

*Songs, &c.*

The two musical acts include an overwhelming array of entertainment—over thirty discrete movements with lyrics performed by shifting variations of more than fifty characters. The unfolding of names effects a collective swarm just as the variety of songs do. There are dancing girls, female slaves, and “mulatto dancing youths.”\(^{304}\) The primary accomplices to the poisoner are Almami, Zami, Mayombo and Teysello, who are countered with the “principal dancing girl,” Lilli, Samba, Zami, Orra, and Mackendal’s true love,\(^{305}\) Ada. Their vocal performances are categorized as dialogues, duets, comic duets, sestettos, and airs, as well as recitatives “&c.” This is essentially a libretto without its accompanying score; and though we can’t hear it, Cross’s varied stanzas, which employ an equally varied use of poetic form, suggest that the performance was a radical mix of rhythmic and sonic effects. He offers brief airs in rhyming couplet quatrains followed by a Spenserian sonnet in which Mandingo and English

\(^{303}\) Ibid.
\(^{304}\) Ibid., A-B.
\(^{305}\) Garraway, The Libertine Colony, 273.
mix. The dances range from ballet to the Scottish reel and the fandango in a hybrid mix of Euro-Afro sound and dance, and the final dialogue takes place in a recreation of an African ceremony called Mumbo Jumbo, a term that Henry Louis Gates has called the “received and ethnocentric Western designation for the rituals of black religions as well as for black languages themselves.” Cross’s use of the concept is reproduced from a British surgeon’s eighteenth-century travel narrative to Africa that had already been adapted to performance. In any case, the tradition of Mumbo Jumbo explains Mackandal’s sudden desire to kill Ada and Samba in different terms than jealousy. Overall, we can say that the performance forms a merging of cultural landscapes and attitudes toward the effects of collective power, but that the ceremony’s presence and naming as “Mumbo Jumbo” also ultimately objectifies African religion and culture as non-sensical or savage.

306 Cross, “King Caesar,” 12, 16. Cross translates Mandigo to English in the footnotes.
307 Henry Louis Gates, Jr., The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2014), 237. While the etymological roots and presence of the term is difficult, he notes, speakers of Swahili say “jambo” for hello and “mambo” for plural/general hello, which translate roughly as “What’s happening?” Gates cites a piece of travel writing that is earlier but similar to the the one I believe Cross has drawn from; Gates cites Francis Moore, and Captain Stibb, Travels Into the Inland Parts of Africa: Containing a Description of the Several Nations for the Space of Six Hundred Miles Up the River Gambia ... with a Particulair Account of Job Ben Solomon, a Pholey, Who Was in England in the Year 1733, and Known by the Name of the “African”. To Which Is Added, Capt. Stibb’s Voyage Up the Gambia in the Year 1723, to Make Discoveries ... Also Extracts from the Nubian’s Geography ... Cave, 1738.
308 Cross, “King Caesar,” B, 10, 12, 19, 20; Icaaco Mungo Park and James Rennell, Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa: Performed Under the Direction and Patronage of the African Association, in the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797 (W. Bulmer and Company, 1799), 29, 268.
309 Ibid, 29, 268. “**” appears for some translations as do other symbols, I omit them beyond this first instance.
There is a “Chorus of Negroes” to welcome “Merry Mackendal,” however, their momentary “merriment” in welcoming their doctor underlines the idea that his presence denotes serious illness and the expectation of death. This first scene is one among three that I think particularly illustrate how the texts in this chapter represent a modernity that is ecological in nature because it draws a political force from below (nature, the soil itself, and its chief agent). As we see the interplay of the planter’s perspective on nature and draw close to the slaves, we see a modern world that is equally counter-modern in its resistance to singular cultural or political power.

For example, the first scene puts us among his patients as they anticipate the Calenda nad Mackendal’s arrival; we listen to the women welcome him (and the Calenda) as a holiday on which the sick will be healed by his root and herb. “Welcome joy to Negro breast,” the chorus says, “Welcome to the heart opprest, Live to day, Dance, sing, and play, Moosa,* ding-ding, la ding kea, Dis is Negros holiday!” (B). Aside from the truncated effect of racializing speech, with “Dis,” Cross translates other words at the bottom without noting their origin or language. “Moosa” is mother, “ding” means child, and “la ding kea,” brother in Mandingo. These words for familial relations are listed in “A Vocabulary of the Mandingo Language” compiled by British surgeon, Mungo Park, of his 1799 travelogue expedition to Africa, and they repeat

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310 Ibid., B.
311 Ibid., B-10
312 Ibid., B.
throughout the play.\textsuperscript{313} In fact, the pantomime repeats whole series of conversational phrases and words, the first of which begin here, that also appear in the same order as Mungo Park’s vocabulary list. So, though in comic form, what we hear is Cross’s design to make African meaning-making emerge in theatrical voice and embodiment, and we see that his source for creating this reality is a vocabulary list compiled by a British surgeon that naturally focuses on language related to the communication between patient and doctor, and in this case, for referencing familial or proximal relations (brother, mother, child) in the same table.\textsuperscript{314} More, Dr. Mungo Park’s vocabulary list is one he says is particularly helpful in “the West Indies,” and his travels led him there as well.\textsuperscript{315} So, we are brought back to the history of Makandal being a much needed healer on Saint-Domingue plantations. In addition, the pantomime’s reliance on medical literature, from which a European doctor extracts modes of health care communication in Mandingo, reinscribes Mackandal (the healer/practice) as an example of both the cultural merging and conflict inherent to modernity. Most basically, it shows Cross’s source material include English newspapers about French colonial crisis and English planter literature.

\textsuperscript{313} Park and Rennell, Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa, 366-7.
\textsuperscript{314} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{315} Ibid., 125, 158, 346, and 371. Park spent time in Antigua and other places and speaks at length on the physiognomy of people of color in various colonies. He employs the same racial casting and language used by Saint-Domingue agronomist, Moreau de Saint-Méry, who standardized the “Franklin system” of racial casting and narrates the story of Mackandal in 1796. Mungo Park’s assessments of illness and evil in relation to skin tones of the Moor, the Mulatto, and the albino negro are among medical observations that approximate the writing of Moreau.
The healing begins after Orra and Almami’s dialogue and chorus, “De drum to Calenda dance him call./Where, where be merry merry Mackandal?” Orra seconds Almami’s complaint and combined anticipation, “him so good, when Orra poorly,/Herb him give and root dat cure me.” With four other “females,” the song forms a natural increase, a collection that grows a new reality in which the collective articulates their single desire for Mackandal:

1st Female. Den so loving—

2nd Female. —Kind him be too,

3rd Female. Him love me—

4th Female. —And him love me too!

All Females. —Ees—all love he!—

Alamami. —And him love all

Omnes. Claphands!—here be de merry merry Mackandal.317

To be sure, these are rude composites of personality that operate at a great distance from any idea of local or authentic presentation of African culture, but their firguations suggest that the plantation’s example of revolution from below functions as a counter-narrative—a story about a King who can give his followers pleasure through plants (symbolic of the benefits of their labor). When Mackandal arrives, we get to hear him speak for the first time as he moves close to Ada,

316 Ibid., “King Caesar,” B.
317 Ibid., B.
who is near death. “A mun kindi,” she says “I am ill, —sick to die!— Poor, poor Ada, faint at heart.” 318 Mackandal replies with a gentle bedside manner, “Ning borri ameen (Drink this medicine)—Ada try, —/All kissi, —‘twill health impart.” 319 The word “kissi” is of course reminiscent in English of physical affection, but “All kissi” translates at the bottom as “It will do you good (kissi)” After he heals her, the chorus joins in “Merrily, merrily beat de drum/Jet black beauty na na ree, (Come hither) /Negro, to dance calenda, come.” 320 Despite the way that the language strands effect nonsense and racial violence, Cross requires us to look to the bottom of the page for translations that come from the same medicinal vocabulary passage. 321 Ning borri ameen (or “Drink this medicine” in Mandingo) is listed among other phrases all particular to illness and health. In this 1797 Mandingo table, we find three phrases directly lifted in order from Mungo Park and put into Makandal’s soothing speech to Ada: phrases meaning “Do not be afraid,” “Drink this medicine,” and “It will do you good,” all appear in a row. 322

Makandal comes to heal more than just for physical problems, because despite the Merriment, the Overseer’s Air and Ada’s song depict a space of physical and psychic torture. Cross commits a pun when the Overseer says the “merriment” is “over,” and with “the crack of the arcau and sounding tom-tom (bell),” he sounds “the signals for bustle, hard labor, and

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318 Ibid., B2.
319 Ibid., 11.
320 Ibid., 12.
321 Park, Travels, 365-72.
322 Ibid.
toil.”323 He continues his command,” Slaves, take yonder coffee up to th’ mill:/You sift and boil roucou (*a red dye;/*Weed you tares from the cotton bushes/Haste—away, ye idle crew!” But in finishing out his Air, he grabs Ada: “Hold! … Let me see/You, pretty little Ada, must follow me.”324 The Overseer’s Air ends there, but we pick up with a new scene in which, through song, we see Ada refusing the Overseer’s advances and even laughing at the Overseer for thinking he can order her to do anything given the way in which her experience has long been so disrupted and displaced, and how, on the other hand, Mackandal’s medicine brings her joy.

“Zounds! You a slave, and laugh thus at my love!” the Overseer says indignantly. “Who to compliance need but to compel you? What makes you so curs’d merry?” he asks.325 The Overseer has made advances on Ada for “hospitality” and she has refused. Though what amounts to an imagined scene of sexual assault can only be read in the blank space between the stanzas of his Air and their shared “Rececitative, (sic)” all we are able to actually witness/hear is his total disbelief at her belief in Mackandal, which is exemplified through her continued state of merriment under the yoke of slavery. She explains to him how “gay” life was in “Congo” long ago, and of her journey from Africa, and despite her “dancing the chicka” throughout the performance of this song, it ends on a bleak note. “Grief’s sometimes dumb and sometimes wild,” Ada sings in pain, “Him (Grief) no speak plain, him only stammer.”326 In other words,
her broken speech parallels a grief, which she personifies as a male voice, “Grief,” who is “sometimes dumb” and doesn’t “speak plain” and “only stammer(s).” Because stammers awkwardly parallels the actual use of broken speech, she also points to her song (and bodily utterance) as an emanation of the poison and medicine she has ingested. In hearing Ada, then, we are hearing what to her is medicine as a person who believes in it, and in the Overseer, what to him is a poison because he does not. Ada has consumed his medicine and poison, and so does the listener as they then consume the performance of the actress in song. The world of illegitimate speech in the theater and the world of cultures made illegitimate through spatial displacement and silencing are combined.

We are also privy to the imagined moment of transformation for Mackendal when he becomes King Caesar in a maroon encampment by both giving and taking medicine, and it brings us to the “lurking place,” of other maroons like La Rapiniere. This place is not described through anything but the exchange of plant medicine. It is not until Mackendal himself ingests a “drink” unidentified by the Savage Miller that his power becomes out of control.327

The pantomime’s inclusion of Rapiniere as another medicine man is reminiscent of previous literatures in which Makandal has accomplices and is one among other Chiefs of maroons. Rapiniere is a leader of troops himself with wounded that need care.328 As a welcome, Rapiniere offers Mackendal a drink. “Drink, runaway, drink! It will do thy heart good.” “I’ve

327 Ibid., 15.
328 Ibid.
been long in the trade—vast my fame!” (15). We know immediately that Rapiniere is portrayed as one among a variety of well-known economic and epistemic figures of local culture.

Mackendal replies to his boast with a quip: “Then oft has thy knife been deep crimson’d with blood” (15). But Rapiniere defends his intentions with “Psha! Drink, and inform me thy name” (15). With this assessment of the Captain, his brand of elixir, and this rebuff, the contents of medicines and their effects become the focal point of the scene, so that Mackandal is just one among many agents of unknown or unmediated relations to nature now at work. Mackandal identifies himself, saying, “While I am a “bold prince,” “A black man unaw’d by fear,” he says, after drinking the elixir, that he is also “A Murderer’s equal!—” (310). Rapiniere says, “Where kindred souls like thine agree; No questions ask, but follow me. Follow, follow, follow me.”

He coaches Mackandal to follow him to the bedside of “A bold banditti,” who is “Wounded,” where Mackandal’s “pow’rful healing aid” takes hold. In the exchange of medicines over the body of a dying slave, two killers combine their know-how.

In the end, the Miller sums up his process of sharing knowledge with Mackandal, who after taking the ‘drink,’ and giving his medicine to the troop, is instantly recognizable as “King Caesar” all along. Rapiniere declares the power of his knowledge and new name:

Dy Fetiche sure

Every evil can cure:

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329 Ibid., 17
330 Ibid., 16-7.
We free now from wounds and disease are:

Clap hands, bend de knee,

Thou our chieftain shall be,

We salute thee our sov’reign, King Caesar!  

We have witnessed in the pantomime an imaginary space deep in woods outside the plantation that planters manuals have not yet mapped. Though this scene establishes Mackendal as the healer, King Caesar, his chemical creations seem to be too much for his own (inadequate) control. Empowered by a band of maroons and La Rapineire, in the next scene and our last for the text, Mackendal, seemingly without reason, begins to kill women—Ada and Samba specifically. Mungo Park’s travel narrative of the West Indies and Africa relates his encounter with a “fetiche” called “Mumbo Jumbo” – which he describes as a mask made of bark that is hung from a tree and is picked up and worn by any man of a village who appears in the form of Mumbo Jumbo, a fetiche god, in order to solve domestic quarrels. Mumbo Jumbo is a terrifying creature for women: he comes into your house at night, and if you are one of the problematic females in the village, you will be taken.

The entire village, including its women, gathers together to watch and be entertained as the female victim is beaten with a rod in public by “Mumbo Jumbo” (the husband), wearing the mask.  

This entire situation is reproduced in the Mumbo Jumbo’s “Comic Duet” between

\[\text{Ibid., 17.}  
\text{Park, Travels, 39-40.}\]
Almami and Orra (male and female) who compare the Overseer’s weakness in comparison to an African man in bringing women to order. “Mandingo man,/Chuse a different plan:” they say. In other words, he does something different than the Overseer. Instead, “Him (Mandingo man / Mumbo Jumbo) music a tune, an bang de big drum go,/All terror and fear./Soon him chum chum appear/” to “frighten the bad moosa*(female).”\(^{333}\) Chum chum is not translated, but I read it as the mask or rod. The woman, Orra, laughs and sings in reply, “Let him come, and me laugh at him rod!”\(^{334}\) Orra responds by saying here that she will enjoy the entertainment if Mumbo Jumbo grabs a woman from her bed at night.

Oddly but evocatively, we are to believe that Mackandal / Caesar / Mumbo Jumbo has only carried out too forcefully what is ostensibly an already “savage” practice and practice of ‘savages.’ His turning out to be a murderer, in other words, is a result of a disorderly plantation where the slaves believe that the Overseer can be bested by a Mandingo—a Mandingo could keep better order. In Mercure de France, we have seen Mackandal with an orange branch, at the end of which was a fetish with a moving face that spoke (a kind of rod). This same association persists in Harlequin tales in which the character carries a wand or a sword, and in Hugo’s novel, he carries a spear-like “agricultural instrument.” Cross’s depiction of this act doesn’t soften Mackandal’s image as a murderer, but it does deepen the attachment between the pantomime and its’ reprojection of the planter’s assessments of African medicine, as either superstition or non-

\(^{333}\) Cross, “King Caesar,” C219.

\(^{334}\) Ibid.
knowledge. At the same time, because Ada is killed at the festival of Mumbo Jumbo, which is described as an African tradition in Park’s narrative, we can read the event from below, and in effect, read the Mumbo Jumbo tradition, straight out of West Indies travel narrative, as having been a valid cultural expression, despite its colonial gaze: it makes Mackendal a social leader as much as a murderer. In other words, he is not only Mackendal and King Caesar, but a reproduction of Mumbo Jumbo, which is a fetiche acknowledged to create social order. The Mumbo Jumbo here recreates a means of assigning savagery to African culture and then commodifies savagery as entertainment, but the source of this conflicted site of pleasure and pain is the plantation and Cross’s use of the West Indian travel medical literature.

Mackandal situates the reverberations of this colonial historical moment in a visualization of the scene of colonial soil, suitably, performed in a parterre (earthen) arena of the circus as an aesthetic commodification of the colony meant to invoke a confusion and mixing of realities. Cross’s other productions such as “The Round Tower; or The Chieftains of Ireland” are said in contemporary reviews to be productions that “carefully notate” registers of “human emotion” through “bodily expression”; Characters “shudder” and “tremble” or in groups were said to be “expressive” of the “utmost terror.” So, the pantomime’s repetition of the word “tremble” in relation to Makandal points to Cross’s production as one that would have brought thundering

335 Moody, Illegitimate Theatre, 29.
336 Ibid., 29.
horses and Jack Helme together to produce a tremble in the audience.\textsuperscript{337} The body itself, and indecipherable from it, the environment, surpasses the primacy of the word in this tenuous space of the theater, and in this sense, the pantomime produces an audible and visible embodiment of Makandal (the fetish, person, poison, and medicine) for spectacular consumption. He embodies the contradiction of modernity as both a process of violent cultural erasure and counter-cultural social agency. In a space thought to produce bodies “unsuited” for the building of empire—a Saint Domingue plantation—and in the theater (the site of illegitimate speech) Makandal defends “the empire of his love”—an expression of desire for that counters the colonial claim on the world.

\textit{The Slave-King (1833)}\textsuperscript{338}

\textit{The Slave-King, from the Bug-Jargal of Victor Hugo} (1833) was translated into English by Leitch Ritchie and published in Philadelphia, but it first appeared in 1820 as a short-story in \textit{Le Conservateur litteraire}, the journal Hugo ran with his brother. After he turned it into a novel, the work was published at least four times during the mid- to late nineteenth-century with and without the tag “1791,” the year of the Haitian Revolution’s onset.\textsuperscript{339} Chris Bongie has most recently translated from the 1832 fifth edition, \textit{Bug-Jargal}, and from this standard stable moment

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{337} Ibid. \textsuperscript{338} Victor Marie Hugo, trans. and altered, Leitch Ritchie, \textit{The Slave-King, from the Bug-Jargal of Victor Hugo} (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard, 1833), 38. Hugo writes that in Bug-Jargal's “strange empire” there “wanted only a sign of his finger to make his fellow slaves obey.” \textsuperscript{339} Susan Gillman, and Kirsten Silva Gruesz, “Worlding America: The Hemispheric Text-Network,” \textit{A Companion to American Literary Studies} (Place: Publisher, 2011), 232.}
of the text’s history, works from what is essentially the same version in Victor Hugo’s Complete Works (1969-71).\textsuperscript{340} Though I read the 1833 American translation published a year later, Bongie’s introductory notes on the 1832 novel are relevant to my argument that Bug-Jargal is Makandal. Though the issues I explore are admittedly in Bongie’s words “peripheral” to the text, it is in the peripheral issues—in Hugo’s sources and his mysterious possible relationships to Saint-Domingue—that the topic of Makandal can be related to Bug-Jargal, and it is through aligning the novel with the poisoner/planter relation that we are able to solve some of the inscrutability that Chris Bongie, Kristen Silva Gruesz, and Susan Gillman have noted as being so characteristic to the novel. Importantly, while Bongie points out any number of possible reasons for Hugo’s interest in the topic of the Haitian Revolution, he also points out the generally “unwieldy” nature of these questions by reminding us that Hugo was never actually in the colony, and that his novel ‘s mixture of sources from planters and military memoir ultimately frame the novel’s at best ambiguous attitudes toward race. In my reading, Hugo combines the effects of French theater, the picaresque novel, and planter literature to create a reality in which new formations of cultural belonging are crafted through relationships with nature (created through botanical knowledge) and with a new authority of both knowledge and social sustainability. Counter-cultural belonging through knowledge replaces the agronomist’s

comparatively failed sexual, social and agricultural production. Hugo’s attitudes toward race are problematic because they are ultimately framed from the perspective of race science made popular through French agronomy. However, his story replaces the morally and usually physically absent planter with a new generation (his nephew) whose mind is as virginal as his bride and who is seduced by Bug-Jargal’s noble cause. Hugo also kills the agronomist for the first time, and these together suggest other suggest he is exploring alternate ontology and offers a character open to learning from the maroon about the results of cultural and territorial colonization.

Briefly, Hugo’s novel puts the agronomist and maroon face-to-face on new terms. The planter’s eyes belong to his nephew, Leopold D’Auverney, who is a young planter just arrived from France to learn the business from his Uncle. The uncle is a hard master with vast wealth who is otherwise busy governing the colony and relies on Overseers to keep his vast properties of cotton, sugar, and slaves in order. D’Auverney tells the story about how his new bride and cousin, Maria, daughter to the planter, is stolen by a maroon on his wedding before the relationship can be consummated. But the telling of the story takes place years later when D’Auverney is a Captain, encamped with his troops, and still in Saint-Domingue fighting the British. Over the campfire, he recalls the year 1791, when on his wedding night, a mysterious slave named Pierrot (later revealed as a chief of the maroons, Bug-Jargal) steals his wife before the honeymoon, and from there, his odyssey in the mountains surrounding Le Cap Francais fighting maroons and searching for her takes them all to their deaths.
Once again, two men share an adoration for the same woman—the Master’s daughter, Maria, who is now a white Creole object of affection and also grown on colonial soil, but who also now replaces the African women such as Ada and Samba we began with. Pierrot destroys a landscaped bower that D’Auverney has made for his cousin and serenades her while an Obi accomplice named Habibrah distracts D’Auverney with a song and dance, so traces of pantomime emerge in multiple ways.

When Pierrot is arrested and D’Auverney goes to visit him in prison, we are reminded of both the original 1758 document and Moreau de Saint-Mery’s story which both relate Makandal’s imprisonment at Le Cap, but the captive is now the ally to the newly arrived planter, so that the embodiment of European knowledge and the embodiment of bossale knowledge are intertwined. After Pierrot is arrested for defying an Overseer as Makandal has done before, D’Auverney goes to visit him in prison and Pierrot warns him with clues about the revolution to no avail. The maroon escapes after receiving mysterious leaves from other slaves in prison and kidnaps Maria on the eve of the revolution to D’Auverney’s horror. But the two eventually form an unbreakable bond when D’Auverney finds out that Pierrot, now revealed as the maroon chief, Bug-Jargal, has protected his new wife and cousin from harm. In the end, the men strike an honorary agreement that her protection and preservation should be their shared aim. Yet, it’s too late. Bug-Jargal’s accomplice, a dwarf Obi named Habibrah, has killed the master and left him under “a bloody veil,” repeating Outoro’s murder of Samba in King Caesar with the same image. More, the conclusion relates that Maria dies from the trauma she suffers in the colony, as
does D’Auverney in battle. But, Makandal’s myth is fulfilled in D’Auverney’s oral story when he tells his troops that he believes the maroon was not killed in battle as all have assumed. Instead, he sees Bug-Jargal disappear, leaping over rocks into the impenetrable mountain forest. I will read several scenes in which the new planter and his new rival come into contact as do scientific modernity and Afro-creole spiritual and medicine ways, but first, a look at Hugo’s sources and relationship to the reproduction of this story clarify Bug-Jargal as Makandal.

Bongie argues that Hugo’s revisitation of the story and his title fetish (adding and dropping 1791) are symptomatic of his “exploration of themes related to the historical, to the direction and shape of history, to sovereignty, and to territory that coalesce between 1789-1804”: among these are “…the anxiety about meaning that arises in a world where people are not transparent to one another, where signs are not easily readable or perhaps not readable at all, …it is precisely this … that the novel communicates to the reader from its very first (un)readable word(s).”

Beyond these broad philosophical concerns, Hugo’s intent to participate in this historical narrative on complex and intimate terms are clear: Bug retains the characteristic ‘ug’ of Hugo. Paired with ‘jargal,’ Hugo attaches / distances himself from jargon, which in French, suggests a corruption (poisoning) of language and culture just as it points to the Saint-Domingue revolts as that fissure / alteration of historical trajectory according to Europe. The hyphen’s dual sides invoke the divides of the colony and the metropole, the European and the African, he suggests, and bind them together. The hyphen might also represent the “field of battle” that Hugo

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342 Ibid., 27, 44-5, 36.
says joins and separates the ideological and material interests of Europe and Africa, and in Hugo’s words, that field of battle is colonial or ‘American’ soil.\footnote{Hugo, \textit{Bug-Jargal}, 58.}

The novel’s repetitive reference to the author, in title and character, also point to Hugo’s familial history as a part of his political quandry, since his maternal grandfather was a “displaced planter” of the colony (named Captain Jean-François Trébuchet).\footnote{Jacques de Cauna, “Les Sources Historiques de Bug-Jargal Hugo et La Revolution Haitienne,” \textit{Conjonction} 166 (1985): 1–14.2. Bongie translates de Cauna’s explanation: “It certainly seems possible,” Bongie says, “that Hugo might have some biographical connection with the island—either through one of the many Le Normants (de…) who lived in colonial Saint Domingue, or through stories passed on to him by his mother about her father and debts owed him by some dispossessed planter in Saint Domingue.” He concludes that “any number of scenarios directly linking Hugo and Saint Domingue are remotely possible, but none of them are at present verifiable” quoted and translated in Hugo, \textit{Bug-Jargal}, 32.} Hugo’s planter character, “D’Auverney,” is named after Hugo’s family’s French provincial origin (in Auvergne)—an area that Carolyn Fick notes as having lost over 45 million livres in the revolution. In addition, Hugo sometimes signed his own name D’Auverney. What these naming trends exactly indicate is unclear, but we can at least see that Hugo means to dually inhabit both sides of the master/slave dialectic as B(H)ug(o) and D’Auverney, and to inhabit the historical narrative and space to which he has been made wholly foreign in any number of possible ways.

Perhaps his relationship to Saint-Domingue references a severing from the wealth he associates with his line of kinship and inheritance. Jacques de Cauna suggests that Victor Hugo was related to the wealthy Lenormand de Mézy, Makandal’s owner, and this is an obviously compelling new possibility for tracing this text’s connection to money as well as Makandal.
Cauna says that Lenormand du Buisson, a planter on Hugo’s mother’s side of the family, was one among the Lenormands “so prevalent in Santo-Domingo,” which made for difficulty in ever “obtaining any part of his grandfather’s enterprise.”\textsuperscript{345} He mentions de Mézy as one among the richest who walked away with a fortune despite how the planter became ultimately famous for his slave rather than his sugar. Hugo’s possible familial and financial relationship to Saint-Domingue are undeniable as motivations for exploration, as Bongie hints and de Cauna confirms, but in any case, Bongie notes that Hugo read a great deal about the colony and that the novel is littered with references to the island that come from a number of planter texts, including Moreau de Saint-Méry-Mery’s \textit{Description}, which is a text, as we have already seen, that tells the story of Makandal and Lenormand. Whether he saw this or other versions, whether he was aware of his own familial relationships / financial losses, I think Hugo’s text is at least as deeply influenced by a real-life literary kinship and rupture in that relationship as much as a familial or economic one to the colony.\textsuperscript{346}

\textsuperscript{345} de Cauna, “Les Sources Historiques,” 1–14.3.
\textsuperscript{346} Bongie points out that the young Hugo read a great deal about Saint-Domingue and that his sources on the colony are an indeterminate mix of influences. He cites Hugo’s significant use of two military memoirs in framing the world of the colony, one of which is included in Moreau de Saint-Méry’s volumes (this, in addition to his own recital of the story we have read it in Chapter 1’s \textit{Déscription Topographique}. Bongie argues convincingly, since most basically, Hugo attaches his character to an added dimensional perspective by bestowing him with a military identity when D’Auverney becomes a Captain of the local militia. And de Rouvray’s military memoir, published as a part of Moreau de Saint-Méry’s volumes, included a recounting of the Makandal story. Bongie’s findings, then, support Hugo’s contact with the Makandal story, though that connection isn’t articulated in his reading.
It is through his literary mentor and French agronomist, François de Neufchâteau, that I believe Hugo’s contact with the Makandal story may have taken place and which may also speak to his metaphorical / personal use in recrafting the story. Hugo would have seen the footnote about Makandal in a picaresque novel called *Gil Blas* by René Lesage, previously published as *Gil Blas (or Harelequin’s Peregrinations)*, which had been performed as a pantomime under that title in London a few years earlier.\(^{347}\) Hugo’s mentor, Neufchâteau, was an expert on agriculture and the Attorney General to Saint-Domingue.\(^ {348}\) Hugo all but wooed Neufchâteau into allowing him to sit at his feet as Neufchâteau had at Voltaire’s—(they communicated these requests and counter invitations through Odes and counter odes). When Hugo finally visited Neufchâteau, the master was working on his edition of *Gil Blas* and attempting to argue against Voltaire’s idea that the novel’s author, René Lesage, had plagiarized a Spanish story. Neufchâteau did not speak Spanish, so he used Hugo’s knowledge of the language and put him to work at the library for several days with the research labor of proving his theory, during which Hugo prepared a masterful “refutation” of Voltaire’s claims.\(^ {349}\) Neufchâteau put his own name to it and published it as (his) introduction to his new edition of *Gil Blas*.

Hugo’s piece of criticism was so astute that it earned Neufchâteau instead of Hugo a “reputation” that “survived well into the twentieth century” as “one of the most profound and

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\(^{347}\) Greene, Theatre in Dublin, 86.
\(^{349}\) Robb, *Victor Hugo*, 64.
ingenious critics of Lesage.” While there is evidence to suggest that it was an explicit “agreement” between the two men, there is much more evidence that Hugo deeply resented the agronomist’s taking the “learned dissertation” for himself and that he played out this resentment in satire as he did on other occasions in other texts. So, Hugo knew Makandal well from the novel he wrote an introduction to, and his relationship to Neufchâteau represents a real moment when the Master/Apprentice relationship is betrayed in the same way that it often is in Harlequinade (and in Makandal’s story). But most important, Neufchateau’s version of Makandal appears in a footnote of Gil Blas, and it serves as a way through which Neufchateau illuminated his text with his knowledge of the colony. It is worth repeating as an entry point to Hugo’s reproduction of Makandal in Bug-Jargal.

The young Gil is a formerly rich son of a nobleman from “the levant” who is taken into slavery aboard a ship between Africa and Spain, and so the protagonist’s family’s history already echoes Bug-Jargal’s (and Makandal’s) nobility, education, dispossession, and slavery while embodied as European like Hugo. He is wandering through Europe looking for his fortune, and he takes his encounter with a diviner as a sign he may gain an apprenticeship with a Marquis he has been pursuing. The Sage boasts to Gil that he can tell the future through chiromancy and divination, but Gil laughs at him for his superstitious claims. The old man responds by making

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350 Ibid., 64.
351 Ibid.
terrible wine taste better than in any other wine in Spain that Gil has ever tasted just by adding a drop of an elixir. “I made (it) this morning with juice from certain plants distilled in alembic; …I’ve used them almost my whole life….,” he says.\textsuperscript{352} Gil is mesmerized by his prophecies after this feat, and at the end of the night, Gil tells us that he goes home in an almost sexual bliss reminiscent of Makandal’s medicine’s seductive effect. As he says, “I retired… in a transport of joy that I cannot express. Never did a woman leave a fortune teller with more satisfaction.”\textsuperscript{353} At this point, Neufchâteau writes a footnote to couple the story of the diviner in Lesage’s story:

In Saint-Domingue, I saw blacks from Guinea do even more stunning things.

The famous Makandal, … filled three vases with water. He put three white handkerchiefs in these vases. The first one he removed … came out the color yellow, which represented the reign of the whites, which would pass. The second … little by little turned red, and this represented the Caribs destroyed by the Europeans and of their past reign. The last… came out completely black: and here the reign of the blacks! … Makandal wore the handkerchief at the end of a pole; it was the black flag; and one can imagine the effect it produced on the congregation

\textsuperscript{352} Alain-René Lesage, \textit{Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane} Lefèvre, 1825). “Voici un élixir que j'ai composé ce matin des sucs de certaines plantes distillées à l'alambic; …j'ai employé presque toute ma vie.” Translation mine.

\textsuperscript{353} Alain René Lesage, \textit{Adventures of Gil Blas of Santillane by Le Sage} (F. Warne and Company, 1877).
of the poor slaves. We could not know by what method he created these three handkerchiefs. Guinea's Negroes know such secrets, and they are not all so innocent.\footnote{Lesage, Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane, 286.} Though Makandal is not expressly linked to poison in this passage, his name is mentioned indirectly as a means of commentary on a passage about a plant-based mixture that produces a pleasurable experiential knowledge beyond words. And in fact, what the diviner and Makandal both do is “innocent,” and this sets the stage for a Bug-Jargal who has knowledge Europeans don’t understand and who deserves the young man’s wide-eyed respect. Second, the story Neufchateau tells here is an excerpt from a military memoir by the Marquis de Rouvray that already appears in the collection of Moreau de Saint-Méry-Mery. And though we don’t see Makandal in this passage appear as a harlequin, this is a story about “harlequin’s peregrinations,” and we see these characteristics already fused in prior Makandal literatures as well as in Hugo’s presentation of Bug-Jargal as first named “Pierrot” (another term for Harlequin). Last, the passage aligns with but also challenges the way planters viewed spiritual or epistemic belief in Vodou or Obi as non-knowledge or superstition (as Gil does at first with the Sage), or as poison (as Neufchateau hints at the end of the Makandal story), but for one, the maroon is the more noble figure. Neufchateau’s theft of Hugo’s dissertation prompts Hugo to actually ‘steal back’ – as would a maroon from a planter—and then to revise Neufchateau’s own previous deployment of the Makandal story in this work. Hugo crafts a mashup of Neufchateau’ story and others to
form a ‘Makandal’ of his own—as would an Obi or an Hougan—who poisons the agronomist’s line of influence and blood on metaphorical terms.

There are multiple places in the novel that can be mapped back to a weaving of previous versions of the poisoner/planter dichotomy and that illustrate Hugo’s use of the tension between the two embodiments of knowledge. They take place in a sugarcane field, in a botanical garden especially landscaped by D’Auverney for his new bride, and last, on a meta-spatial level, Ritchie’s footnotes circumscribe all the actual landscapes of the text with a philosophical scaping of the island through the eyes of the planter. Ritchie reproduces the topographical and agricultural focus of Moreau de Saint-Méry-Méry’s Description through either inventing or actually pulling from the travelogue of a planter recently returned from post-revolutionary Saint-Domingue, now Haiti.

D’Auverney’s introduction to the plantation plays out the drama we have seen in previous versions in which the maroon is unjustly punished by an overseer, but these traces of Harlequin are framed by a critique of the planter through the violence of the plantation. D’Auverney expects a harmonious nature but is confronted with the reality that the plantation is a grotesque experiment gone wrong. The Uncle also looks a lot like the owner of Makandal, Lenormand de Mézy. Uncle D’Auverney is known as a “hard master” with immense wealth and both military and landowning status. He is the “proprietor of the greater part of the fertile district,” and a man whose “finer feelings” have been “destroy(ed)” by the “long use and abuse

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355 Hugo, The Slave-King, 23.
of absolute power” over his slaves, “numbering 800.”356 He is also an important colonial administrator who is usually absent with the business of governing the colony.357 The Uncle relies on Overseers at “stated distances” with “whips” to keep order. These echo the sound of the “arcau” (whip) in “King Caesar.” When the slaves relax from labor, the overseers begin to punish them for resting. After this “truly distressing . . . sight,” D’Auverney is taken “with sadness” over the “contrast” between “the harvests of (his) native country” in which “no fiends stood by to torment,” and where instead, “the reapers (sing) songs of war and love.”358 Instead, his Uncle lives in a perverse version of the Frenchman’s expected fantasy—in a “princely” comfort with a private “jester” named Habibrah. The Uncle spends his days being entertained by this “pet devil,” of an Obi, in town on business, or “buried in meridian sleep.”359

Where Pierrot (Bug-Jargal) will represent a kind of nobility “wholly unknown” in nature, Hugo employs another dualism in assigning an ultimately evil essence to Habibrah as a kind of “court buffoon.” Even though grotesque, his real ugliness is in his seeming willingness to be a slave to the agronomist. He redeems Bug-Jargal as some hope for a restored unadulterated nature and he suggests a futurity which centers on Europe’s active redemption of counter-modern

356 Ibid., 18.
357 Ibid., 39-43.
358 Ibid., 37.
359 Ibid., 20, 41.
culture. But, Habibrah is a product of agronomic fantasy, and Habibrah is D’Auverney’s introduction to the fields.

The slave is of little physical utility in this new planter’s estimation but worth his weight in entertainment for the Uncle. Habibrah is a “dwarf” in stature. He is described as a “griffe”—the reproductive result of a mulatto (male) and a negresse (bossale female) according to Moreau’s race tabulations; Hugo’s footnotes replicate these important formulas from a book that also speaks of Makandal, though they had been replicated in different spaces by now, as Bongie confirms. According to Saint-Domingue’s complex caste system (and Ritchie’s corrections to the planter’s remarks) Habibrah is not “negro” and not “mulatto,” but the son of a mulatto and negress, a type cultivated on colonial soil, ultimately, through the planter’s agricultural experiment– in “units” or “twenty-four to thirty-two… parts” black. Though Habibrah could “intercede” on the behalf of his fellow slaves, he never does, and for this reason, D’Auverney recalls that he “hated and despised” Habibrah equally for the way in which “by the basest flattery,” Habibrah instead functioned as an extension of the Master’s social capital—though fully capable of engaging in a discourse of intercession on the part of the enslaved.

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362 Ibid., 37, 11.
363 Ibid., 20.
There is evidence from D'Auverney's perspective that the slaves “did not appear to dislike” Habibrah and that they feared him for his power and performance as “Ouanga.”

At the same time, Habibrah counters the Outuro accomplice of “King Caesar” as a “jester” figure wearing “bells” and “springing round” so much as to enervate the young planter. Reading Habibrah from below or from the imagined ontology of the priest, both those source streams of theater and planter literature imagine a world in which objects and landscapes take on agency as a collective counter-power. Habibrah’s mercurial “humors” move too “frequently for D’Auverney’s overwhelmed senses so that the effects of the Obi’s presence and practice mimics the disorienting sensational and spiritual effects of the “torrid zone” itself. He recalls that this figure “was so deformed that stranger could scarcely look at him without shuddering.” He adds, “his body was short but of amazing bulk, and was supported on limbs that were ... inadequate for their burthen.” And to his head, there were “attached a pair of ears, which an ass, in want of such a commodity might reasonably enough have used.” Hugo has created a half-comic, half-sinister machine—an instrumental body that is no different than the sugar gin and/or a sign of nature’s perversion. He is a part of the agricultural complex though he

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364 Ibid.
365 Ibid., 37
366 Ibid., 23-4.; Amar Wahab, *Colonial Inventions: Landscape, Power and Representation in Nineteenth-Century Trinidad* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 73. See Wahab for more on Columbus’s invention of “tropical landscapes” through notions of paradise as well as a combined ambivalence rooted in disappointment with their encounters.
368 Ibid., 19.
369 Ibid., 22.
does not literally or bodily work as other slaves do, and in some sense, the language of work here works as a critique of slavery as much as it echoes the frustration planters expressed (including Lenormand) in their experiments, their broken machines, and the problems dealing with materials unsuitable for their gin designs. 370

D’Auverney seems to suffer when Habibrah’s “gaiety” becomes “uncontrollable.” 371 This is no longer the “empire of love” related by Mercure de France, but instead, a “strange” empire. 372 He has an almost malleable composition and a “faculty” for “changing at pleasure the aspect of his features.” 373 While others (not seen but noted) are “groaning under labor and cruel usage,” Habibrah’s “single employment” is to fan the Master from “troublesome” insects. 374 The humor and bodily inadequacies seems like a denial of agency for the character and suggests that Habibrah is both a fool and broken tool of cultivation. But in Toni Wall Jaudon’s words, the Obi’s dancing and dress are the “implements of his trade,” and we can expect the same “unsettling lack of commonality” in D’Auverney’s assessment of the Obi as we see in planter texts such as Benjamin Moseley’s planter text. 375 And as Dutrone de la Couture’s Precis on

372 Ibid., 38.
373 Ibid., 19.
374 Ibid., 20.
Sugar Cane relates, slaves are thought of as “animated machines” in the first place. His body, like a collection of ill-fitting parts, was a gift from the Governor of Jamaica to Uncle D’Auverney as a novelty for entertainment, and this notation again qualifies the Uncle as a character drawn against the planters detailed in Moreau’s dossier, including Lenormand, who shared and praised each other over their newest agricultural inventions as well as their thoughts on the nature of Africans and their relationship to labor.

But Habibrah is not without agency, as Dillon’s readings of “distributed” individuality in representations of Obeah observe. He moves among planters and slaves as a hybrid reflection of both a totalizing agriculture but also representative of counter-modern syncretism. He is, as the planter reports, a “species of worship.” In a value system which privileges the “agency of things,” and as does syncretic religion, Habibrah participates in a counter-economy all the while by wearing “hieroglyphics” with… “silver bells,” and “magical symbols” on his clothes that remain for a long while unreadable to D’Auverney. He is at first as an assemblage of indecipherably distant nonsense; and strangely, we realize his corporal adornment is no less agentic than his animated body. In fear, D’Auverney reports at a visual and ontological distance that still transmits a desire for understanding, only second hand at this point, on what “comrades” have reported from the privileged space of the slave “dwellings” where the Ouanga performs

376 Dutrône La Couture, Précis sur la canne, 334.
377 Dillon, “Reassembling the Novel,” 177.
378 Hugo, The Slave-King, 40.
379 Ibid., 37.
rituals. Here, we can make a connection between the effect of Habibrah on the planter’s body as an emanation of distributed power and the way in which Makandal’s invisible infiltration through a network of agents caused the island to “tremble.”

Habibrah’s body takes on both the “merriment” of King Caesar’s Outoruo and the sinister associations with poisonous spirituality or nonsense of planter texts, which present an embodiment of hybrid culture, so that what we have in Habibrah is a new articulation of agency in distribution, or in D’Auverney’s words, a “strange empire.” In time, D’Auverney learns these signs to be a wearable guide, recognizable to those on the plantation, as the costume of the “Ouanga,” feared and revered for his knowledge of medicines, charms, talismans, and poisons in Vodou. D’Auverney is horrified and perplexed by the attraction his uncle has for the pet “devil.” In any case, Habibrah is less an entertainment to D’Auverney than a thing to be “hated” and “despised” for his “influence” over the Uncle to exert further violence and punish some slaves more than others. But Habibrah performs for and teases everyone, and knows his own use. He even uses his own huge ears as a place for his handkerchiefs. He represents a “refiguration” of agency “distributed” in performance and through his self-adornment with the detritus of colonial costume—his tricornered hat. He understands the value of his design, the

380 Ibid., 20.
381 Ibid., 20; Weaver 90-1, 113-125.
382 Hugo, The Slave-King, 68.
383 Ibid., 20.
384 Ibid., 22.
385 Ibid., 19-20; Dillon, “Reassembling,” 267.
possibilities he embodies for meaning making, and the horror and “enchantment” his modes of “creative resistance” inspire through appearance, riddles, and songs. Most important is that Habibrah is not under the Master’s power, but under Pierrot’s (Bug-Jargal’s), and is in effect a part of his network. He is never far from Pierrot in serenade and turns out to be the machine that kills the agronomist in bed, leaving him under the same “bloody veil” that covered Samba’s body after Outour murdered her in “King Caesar.” His performances for Uncle D’Auverney and his teasing of the young planter are “refigurations” of agency in unfamiliar terms. In the ontology of the plantation’s modern counter-culture, the Ouanga is a guide with its own warning signs, and in D’Auverney’s tale, he fails to understand the signs of disruption when Habibrah makes enhancements to his body for the purpose of performing rituals. In Gilroy’s terms, Habibrah instantiates the way “the extreme patterns of communication defined by the institution of plantation slavery dictate that we recognize the anti-discursive and extra-linguistic ramifications of power at work in shaping communicative acts.” In this pre-revolutionary environment of “agitation” in the colony, and Habibrah’s words, gestures, and decoration operate under a different “regime” of relations in which “there is a plasticity between and among objects” so that assembled costumes signal new and “unrealistic relations between medicine, religion and revolution”After he becomes a Captain during the revolution, and speaking from authoritative

386 Ibid., 173, 177.
387 Gilroy, The Black Atlantic, 57.
experience, D’Auverney later tells the other soldiers that slaves would with “awe” and “respect” whisper ‘Hush! There is the Ouanga!’ This word “awe,” has transferred to Habibrah, but it began with “Macandale” in 1758. There is an intermixing in Hugo’s understanding between Obi and Vodou, but with the text’s naming of the traditional medicine practitioner, we can realign D’Auverney’s first experience of the plantation, not as focused on the legibility of future civilization according to the “data” of high yield in sugar cane, but on Habibrah, who is fluent in the botany of the belief systems threatening to the industrial advances of European monoculture.

Pascale Gaitet’s idea that Bug-Jargal is a “highly sedutive hybrid” representation of “political contradiction” for the young author recalls the same language that has followed Makandal. Pierrot, as Bug-Jargal is first called, seems impervious to the disciplinary effects of the Master’s whip, to the chains in the prison, and just like in Moreau’s Description, nothing can really contain him. In comparison to Habibrah, Pierrot is nearly godlike. When Maria defends this “noble” slave and begs for his life as a wedding present for saving her life, she unwittingly defends the maroon chief leader of the insurrection who has no problem in the first place escaping chains when he chooses. In Makandal-like form, he walks through holes in the walls of the prison at Fort Galifet where he is held, and is visited by his dog carrying leaves from slaves


meant as communication with him.\footnote{Hugo, \textit{The Slave-King}, 41-44.} The maroon “examines” the leaves “with much attention” and then destroys them in prison as D’Auverney witnesses, and so there are suggestions of similarity with Makandal already.\footnote{Ibid., 56, 60.} In one instance, his dog, “Hero” (originally named “Rask” in Hugo’s version,) shows up wearing the leaf around his neck. The dog, who belongs to Pierrot (or follows him) ends up with D’Auverney in the end when the maroon dies, and the symbol of nature seems like an obvious shared agency between the men representative of loyalty, submission, and even community, but his presence actually also references Makandal’s historical identity as a veterinarian as much as a healer to people. There is no “poisoner” in this text, but Pierrot is repeatedly brought or transfers large “palm” leaves as a mysterious point of interest for the planter while any sense of poison moves metaphorically to align more closely with slavery itself as a poisonous practice upon nature and humanity.

Clearly the character has taken on the hybrid effects of all previous genres, because his power is as physically spectacular as the pantomime but still associated with revolution on the plantation. Pierrot is a “negro of gigantic stature,” a multi-lingual, singing African with the power to control all other slaves, who turns out to be Bug-Jargal, a former King of Congo, possible “Ouanga” or “Obi,” “King of the Maroons,” and key leader in the “insurrection.” Shockingly, and in sharp contrast to the violence of the plantation, “there wanted only a sign of
his finger” to make other slaves obey him. 392 Pierrot is “singular” and “noble” in comparison to Habibirah, who we have seen, cannot be taxonomized except as syncretic in form. Pierrot’s “jet limbs” draw a sharp contrast to Habibrah’s status as a “miserable . . . fool. 393 Pierrot’s aspect is “stern and commanding” and Habibrah is unreadable, but their bodies exact a tense balance different from the smooth operations of Belin & Moreau’s sugar processing diagrams or Diderot’s cotton processing illustrations, which picture numbered and identical black bodies and machine parts as one harmonious operation. 394 As we have also seen before, the planter describes him in terms of kinlessness, as well as the exotic, the unknown, and the nobility associated with ancient culture; D’Auverney says Pierrot is “wholly unknown both in himself and family” 395 This state of kinlessness is both metaphorically repaired and exploited through Hugo’s arrangement, through which the slaves plan to deprive the planter from intimate relations with his fiancee by performing their own dances, rituals, and serenades, and therefore reassembling kinship among them all as a redistribution of agencies across a collective made visible through shared experience rather than blood. After all, the only one that gets murdered is the agronomist—Bug and Habibrah at least at first are united in saving these two.

Habibrah and Bug-Jargal hide in a botanical “bower” reserved for white courtship. They take pleasure in crossing the plantation’s boundaries to upset a “sylvan retreat” reserved for

392 Ibid., 39.
393 Ibid., 31-2.
394 Ibid., 35.
395 Ibid., 39.
Maria. Instead of working, they are lurking in the master’s special botanical and food gardens. Pierrot destroys Leopold’s landscaping and gets close to Maria while Habibrah teases him with a dance and song. The bower is an installation of the planter’s aesthetic utopia, and by introducing the disordering effects of the two slaves, Hugo contrasts and reverses the uses of space for labor and pleasure, and though the novel is noted for its racial constructions of the slaves, I think in this instance, his use of space transgresses racial lines and differs. The development of royal botanical gardens hit their zenith in the mid- to late 18th century in French Saint-Domingue, Louisiana, and other nations’ outposts, and gardens were spaces enclosed and regulated for sensory pleasure. Agricultural and botanical crops were grown near to one another, sometimes for the developmental benefit of both crops. Neufchateau was particularly obsessed with his gardens. In any case, Habibrah and Pierrot don’t belong there.

Or do they? We have seen that Hugo’s interest in Makandal is related to plant elixirs via *Gil Blas* and Neufchateau’s story of Makandal. Herbal poisons and medicines were commonly sought and found near water sources by slaves, and at the same time, flower gardens were medicine gardens, so we can read this scene in a sociology of knowledge production which privileges the slave’s ontology of meaning-making and access to understandings whether or not Hugo would have ever intended such. At least, all the while, we do see that the Obi priests are in

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396 Ibid., 37.
his garden at night, and it functions as a critique of the planter in that both agriculturalists have been busy at a ritual of reproduction that will be made impotent by the revolution.

For example, in absurd contrast to the torture of the sugarcane field, D’Auverney reports that his “labor” every morning has been to “prepare (Maria’s) bower” with “garlands of the choicest flowers” for her enjoyment. Even the Uncle, a “hard master” but “fond father” has been lately distracted with having “erected on the bank of a beautiful river which meandered through his plantations” a bower so that his daughter can satisfy her fondness for a “sylvan retreat,” “enjoy the varied scenery of the river,” and “inhale the fragrant breezes so grateful to the inhabitants of the torrid zone.” This transgression of the separation between botanical space and agricultural space, pleasure and torture, seems to function as a transitional or liminal moment for D’Auverney in which plantation hierarchies are in danger of rendering the planter’s project impotent.

When D’Auverney attempts to show Maria the bower he has decorated with flowers, he is horrified to report that the ones he had “selected and arranged with so much care lay scattered and destroyed upon the ground, and were replaced by large bouquets of wild marigolds tastefully arranged along the side.” His apprehension of the situation and the origin of the flowers is not all negative in that the “wild” (read uncultivated) marigolds were all the same “tastefully” arranged. Not knowing that Pierrot has pulled off this trick, the next day, with a rifle in hand,

398 Hugo, The Slave-King, 23.
399 Ibid., 23-4.
400 Ibid., 24.
D’Auverney replaces Pierrot’s wildflowers with his own and leads her (as a surprise) to the restored bower, again, only to find that the marigolds have been returned. Embarrassed, D’Auverney says his creation has become instead “the bower of the unknown.”\(^{401}\) In less time “sufficient to shift the scenes in a theatre,” Hugo writes, Pierrot has again placed his “triumphant marigolds” for Maria and again begins to serenade her.\(^{402}\)

Suddenly, this ‘real’ landscape is superimposed with the theater. He hears Pierrot singing a “romantic” Spanish song (written by Hugo and translated back into French footnotes). The song falls to a whisper in her ear (metaphorically to the plant itself). “Tremble” he tells her, “O white daughter of Hispaniola,” redeploying an already familiar metaphor of environmental disaster.\(^{403}\) In his serenade, he we notice his attentions are more conflated with the social sphere reserved for Europeans in that his object of affection is the white daughter of the richest planter in the district. He is no longer in an arena, but instead in a garden calling her the “white daughter of Hispaniola” according to Columbus’s virginal entrance and naming of Haiti. But he repeats the words that described Samba in “King Caesar,” comparing her to “some graceful palm that near the fountain dwells…” This time, “The savage whirlwind” is closer than in King Caesar, meaning that the revolution is a present reality rather than a prophecy. The gently balanced plant in King Caesar is now “a tree (that) falls withered to the ground!”\(^{(29)}\) His serenade treats her in

\(^{401}\) Ibid., 27.
\(^{402}\) Ibid.
\(^{403}\) Ibid., 29.
terms of a plant’s fragility, and though a passive party in the narrative, in his song, she expresses the agency inherent to the Maroon’s desire to save the land from the coming destruction.

He challenges d’Auverney for the right to Maria’s attention through serenade asking why she rejects the “homage” he brings, declaring that he was a “King” in his country. Makandal could have stepped out of the parterre arena into this scene, and his network of followers attends him. As D’Auverney goes to pursue Pierrot in the woods in a frantic state, he is bewildered by the unknown environment and its envelopment of the maroon. D’Auverney comes upon Habibrah instead of Pierrot, who is usually always at the side of the Master and who begins to frustrate the planter with riddles instead of helping him find Pierrot. Still, Habibrah’s meddling distractions in the forest are the focus of the scene more than the fertile effects of their courtship (32). Just as Dillon has claimed that an alternative kinship is at play, he sings a song of his mother’s and father’s racial union in environmental terms of day and night, of his beautiful (enchanting) hybridity as the product of the master and the negress, and the economy of the plantation, to D’Auverney’s frustration and disgust (Gilroy). When D’Auverney offers him a bag of French money to tell him who the serenader is, Habibrah says that “ten purses” are his “fairly” and howls with laughter (32). He knows he is worth much more (in value) to Bug-Jargal (still called Pierrot). Because he has successfully distracted the planter in order for Bug-Jargal to have his time near Maria, his “foolery” has proven more valuable (32). He effects a “union” of night and day, he says, more beautiful than “radiant” day alone (32). His body, Habibrah sings,

404 Ibid., 29-30.
405 Ibid., 33.
is the “bridge” between races, but we see he’s also the bridge between Pierrot and his most desired flower, Maria.

D’Auverney returns to the bower to find none other than Pierrot wrestling an alligator in order to save Maria’s life. Significantly, the presence of an alligator foreshadows the impending revolution because it references Maroons’ mastery and knowledge of the Bois Caiman area, the Alligator Forrest. The slaves’ interruption of their wooing seem like a disruption (and aesthetic/sexual anti-climax) to the reproductive ritual in the bower, especially in light of Gilroy’s claim that plantation inhabitants lived under “conditions” that preserved “cultic function” of aesthetic labor, but that its authenticity “becomes diffuse” in “the subaltern racial collectivity.”

Though Pierrot’s song is written by Hugo, when the maroon and planter meet in prison, he hears him singing a different song, “Yo que Soy Contrabandista.” (I am just a smuggler). The song he sings, which was first sung and made famous by Manuel Garcia, had at that time for “nineteenth-century artists” such as Hugo “come to symbolize a “cry for freedom.” The lyrics of La Contrabandista come from a song originally entitled “El Poeta Calculista,” and suggest that Makandal’s story (Bug-Jargal’s) is another reflection of Hugo’s complex relationship with the agronomist who betrayed him. The lyrics concern an apprentice to a poet whose work has been

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406 Ibid., 33-5.
407 Ibid.
408 Gilroy, The Black Atlantic, 57.
stolen by his Master (the recognized poet), and what we hear is the apprentice’s lonely complaint. In the same year that he wrote Bug-Jargal, Manuel Garcia premiered the song in a Paris opera (1820). Hugo is noted as being “seldom seen in the concert hall.”\(^{410}\) Still, the song premiered in Paris the same year he wrote the short-story, and it features a Spanish ballad by an adventurer/servant tenor. The use of a Spanish-French performance as well as the content both indirectly reference how his knowledge of several languages made him the unknown and deserving “Master” rather than apprentice in comparison to Neufchateau. Hugo seems to identify as both an apprentice and slave whose knowledge and poetry are stolen.

Whether or not he heard “Le Contrabandier” in the theater, Hugo had other sources. Bongie suggest that the title would have been “recognized” by readers of its time as being in “kinship with a long line of exotic-sounding names that had graced the title page(s)” of other French novels in the preceding century as well as stages: “Oronoko, Zimeo, Zoflora, Bythis, Atala, Ourika” are among his list.\(^{411}\) Makandal is not, though these names also find their roots in French theater, and as we have seen, so does Makandal. John Savage’s article, “Slave Poison/Slave Medicine” notes the way Hugo explicitly calls Bug-Jargal an “Obi,” saying “one

\(^{410}\) Frits Noske and Rita Benton, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc: The Origin and Development of the Melodie* (Courier Corporation, 1988), 25,79; Giacomo Meyerbeer, and Robert Ignatius Letellier, *The Diaries of Giacomo Meyerbeer: 1791-1839* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999), 122. Garcia’s songs were the inspiration for all kinds of romantic music in France, including Bizet’s Carmen and Schubert’s romantic melodies. The influence between music and literature is very fluid in this period and produced mutual influence among people like composer Joseph Dessauer, Liszt, Schubert, Chopin, Berlioz, Hugo, and George Sand.

might assume that he simply lifted the word from *English romantic literature,*” since the word was not widely known in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century francophone literature. However, we can see clearly that the word was known in the world of *planter literature* if not popular literature or performance, and Hugo was very familiar with the world of literature produced around agriculture through Neufchâtel. Savage says that the probable explanation (that Hugo lifted his understanding of African knowledge ways from English literature) is unsatisfactory, but what I would emphasize is that the genealogy so far shows a much more blended literary domain between colonial culture and metropolitan reproductions of that world. I think this is more evidence for my idea that his inspirations are in both planter and harlequin literature, but I want to emphasize the way that Harlequin stories are not somehow separate from planter literature, as we have seen, because Makandal’s narrative transgresses those lines of containment in space or discourse along with the co-production of both spaces by planter/philosophers.

Hugo’s relationship to Neufchâtel satisfies a source for what Bongie describes as an essentially conflicted presentation in the novel’s politics that equally oscillates between a sympathy for monarchical sovereignty and a desire for the establishment of a radical new political (and ecological) landscape in which the order of race and nature installed no longer make sense. This is a young author’s first novel and shows him conflicted between a literary support from a friend who was an agronomist and a more radical politics in the year that England freed the slaves in the colonies. In a related direction, the novel may enrich Hugo’s literary relationship to Cromwell. In 1827, he published the play Cromwell, and its influential preface
would serve as a manifesto for French Romanticism.\textsuperscript{412} As Dillon relates, Cromwell invokes “a particularly territorial account of sovereignty: the literal occupation of the land—the settling of the land—is necessary in order to claim control over it.” (75). But she adds, Cromwell’s writing also invokes the “Will of the Inhabitants” as an important aspect of sovereignty—that is, he suggests that land in the New World can be occupied justly only with the consent of native peoples”.\textsuperscript{413} Seeing how Makandal has already been compared to Cromwell in the 1787 Mercure de France story, perhaps it was also among the materials that Hugo read, and this possibility makes the Afro-Creole knowledge ways central to the author’s famous \textit{Preface}.

Last, Ritchie’s attempt at re-historicizing the tale through his own set of geographic, topographic and cultural footnotes from a friend who ‘recently returned’ from the Island reinscribe the novel under the authority and containment of the planter’s gaze. Ritchie’s compilation of footnotes, based on the unsubstantiated authority of a nameless traveller just returned from the island, replicate Moreau’s race logic in footnote summations (Hugo 52-3). But more closely, and knowledgeable and fluent in the language of topography and transnational planter politics, Ritchie’s real life experience and his (fictional?) “traveller’s” experience replicates Euroean scientific and aesthetic authority. My claims contradict criticism of the novel from Susan Gillman and Kirsten Silva Gruesz, whose work aligns the maroon with Toussaint

\textsuperscript{412} Ibid., 49.
\textsuperscript{413} Dillon, \textit{New World Drama}, 75.
Louverture.\textsuperscript{414} However, my reading supports their important observation of the way the text produces a dual positionality: both “essentially abolitionist” and ambiguous in its treatment of race. The poisoner/planter dichotomy is what centralizes this ambiguity, but Leitch Ritchie’s footnotes also reinscribe that ambiguity because he mimics a planter interested in topography and agriculture from a post-colonial, pro-slavery, and pro-monoculture perspective.

Ritchie himself had written extensively on French and British landscapes and was an expert in hydrography. In comparison to Hugo’s footnotes, which define words like “Obi” and “creole” with errors that bespeak book-learning in their distance, Ritchie’s apprehension of the landscape inhabits the authority and intimacy of the planter’s apprehension of the scene: we “descend from the interior” of the island “to the great plain” and we “see beneath” us a “narrow inlet of the sea, so as to have the appearance of a great lake.” These waters he says “lay stretched at the foot of a lofty detached mountain, called at its southern side the Morne Rouge.”\textsuperscript{415} Ritchie counteracts this sweeping landscape with dense footnotes about how each “plain” “includes” certain “districts”. He recounts where the “first revolt of the negroes” took place. He speaks of “well cultivated estates” in the region and notes that “most of the old properties have been subdivided, either by partial sales, or by concessionary grants made by the government to soldiers. The “great proprietorships of the old colony there are now spread through the country knots of little habitations” he says “so disunited as to be now considered

\textsuperscript{414} Gillman and Gruesz, “Worlding America: The Hemispheric Text-Network,” 228–47.  
\textsuperscript{415} Hugo, The Slave-King, 51.
single farms”; the “inhabitants hold their little savannas or grass patches in common for the pasturing of their cattle”; he says, “they till the lands round about being planted in rice, corn, an scitaminous and leguminous vegetables.” This “information” he says about the minifundia farms now there is taken from “unpublished materials of the traveler, to whom we are in debted for much of the information we have been able to superadd to the romance of M. Victor Hugo.”

The narration that Ritchie interjects is multiple and related to planter knowledge regarding both the mapping of landscape and slave bodies into racial categories. He includes his own historical context piece included with the story in the back, but his footnotes also correct Hugo’s new planter, perspective in Leopold d’Auverney, who is disoriented by a new cultural and environmental geography. His traveler, a planter, looks pitifully on the “skills” of the inhabitants now farming in post-Revolutionary Saint-Domingue which “differ” with “the quantity of habitual prudence” (52). He at first seems intent on describing in detail the “goodly cottage” he sees on the roads with “a sort of farm yard” where “cows are assembled for the milking” but resigns to saying “how much there exist the solid evidences of comfort if not of wealth, and how much art is resorted to diminish the rigous of manual labour.” There is too much aesthetic “trimming” of cottages “along the road-side” (52) and too little “manual” labor (52). He is harshly critical of the “Lazy Creole” small-farming practices in the years after the

416 Ibid., 52.
417 Ibid., 53.
418 Ibid., 52.
Revolution. In this sense, Hugo’s story operates across a “geographic and temporal” agricultural “contiguity” because it situates one plantation culture’s failure for 1830s readers of serial literature occupied with abolition and secession. Ritchie’s reproduction of this tale participates in a cultural anxiety around Afro-Caribbean subjectivity and material practice in 1830s U.S. following the example of the Haitian Revolution, the fall of French monoculture slave labor, and of the continually evolving philosophical divorce between cultivation and culture, and with it, a rigid race hierarchy as he obliquely references the sub-status of alternative agricultural strategies in post-Revolutionary Haiti. However, in Leitch Ritchie’s placement of the planter in the footnotes, he completes the reversal that Hugo began in moving the maroon into the center of the planter’s narrative and out of the agronomist’s footnotes.

We sympathize with Hugo’s Makandal but are uncertain (as we are of nature) of what his power or the post-colony signify after revolution, and this tale of territorial war over race slavery told over a campfire by d’Auverney is a haunting prophetic discourse that translates into parallel conversations on abolition and possible revolution in 1833, antebellum U.S. Where my stance shows that the text’s abolitionist stance draws on a transnational conversation about abolition in French-language literature in progress, and therefore, aligns with Gillman and Gruesz’s assessment, my reading diverges where I suggest that Makandal is the textual/historical model for Hugo’s character. Ritchie’s 1833 American translation of The Slave-King, I argue, shows that

419 Ibid., viii, 52-3.
Makandal has created a rhetorical “contact zone” in which expressions of Franco-African-American political power related to territoriality continue to grow their roots in U.S. literary discourse on all sides of the abolition/emancipation argument. Agriculture also continues to occupy and sustain a tension in this story because Ritchie’s footnotes authoritatively dismiss the efforts of Haiti to participate on the global agricultural stage. This novel’s “hybrid” expression of modernity, in other words, is characterized in terms of modernity’s paradox in producing expressions of sovereignty that are underwritten by the reality of violent oppression and cultural erasure.

\[422\] Ibid.
Chapter 3. Uncle Tom’s Cabin and The Cultivation of the African Kingdom from a Fatal Seed

Years after the death of Sebastian Courtin, who was an interregator in François Makandal’s 1758 arrest, his widow wrote a brief memoir of his experience, describing the fugitive slave her husband put to death as a “detestable machinist” and a “fatal seed.” Despite Makandal’s association in this image with the sowing of death, the widow’s language communicates his legacy in terms of agricultural knowledge and counter-cultural threat to the plantation rather than sorcery, which often functioned as colonial nomenclature for marginalizing alternative knowledge ways. True to the widow’s metaphor, Makandal continues to reemerge as a vital force in antebellum U.S. literature in ways that emphasize his place as an agent of political resistance to a global agricultural labor regime instead of a criminal or monster, and this helps us imagine the way that syncretic knowledge of the plantation is an embedded presence in the narrative of modern scientific production in the Global South.

423 Anne Marguerite Barbaroux Courtin, “Memoire de La Dame Veuve Courtin. Au Cap Francois St. Domingue,” 1779, EN ANOM COL E 96, Archives Nationales d’Outre Mer, 120. http://anom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/ark:/61561/up424g3353q.num=20.q=courtin. 118-120; “Mémoire sommaire sur les prétendus pratiques magiques et empoisonnements prouvés au procès instruit et jugé au Cap contre plusieurs nègres et négesses dont le chef nommé François Macandal a été condamné au feu et exécuté le vingt janvier mille sept cents cinquante huit,” 1758, ANOM F/3/88, Collection Moreau de Saint-Méry, p 240+ Sébastien Jacques Courtin. http://anom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/ark:/61561/up424g3353q.num=20.q=courtin. She calls him a “detestable machinist” and a “fatal seed / germe” (both microbe and seed). Courtin’s and his wife’s memoirs are both held in the French Archives, but only his is a part of the Moreau collection, though I believe this text renders a compelling metaphor.

424 Pluchon, Vaudou, sorciers, empoisonneurs, 18.

For example, *Bug-Jargal (The Slave-King)* continued to be translated through the 1860s in the U.S., and though prior criticism aligns the character with the real-life example of Toussaint Louverture, I have suggested that reading *Bug-Jargal* as Makandal instead of Louverture underscores the relationship between the fear of another revolution in the U.S. with modern Afro-diasporic counter-cultures rather than French political thought.\(^{426}\) In order to support that reading, I have shown that Hugo likely lifted the seed of the story from a footnote in a harlequin novel edited by his mentor, François de Neufchateau, Attorney General to Saint-Domingue, and a well-known agronomist. Following the agronomist renders the poisoner and vice versa. Their literary genealogical phenomenon illustrates the inseparable relationship among multiple cultural knowledge structures to the formation of modern cultures in the Global South and the centrality of literary production to tracing this connection across multiple archives.

We can also co-locate Makandal through the spread of “anti-colonial” refugee culture from Saint-Domingue to Louisiana, since he shows up again in Tante Marie’s 1892 novel, *The Macandal. Episode of Uprising of the Blacks at St. Domingo*.\(^{427}\) Tante Marie’s—“Aunt Mary’s” novel introduces a generational saga with the “son of Macandal” and signifies a new means to


trace the story from Haiti to diasporic publishing activity of New Orleans refugee society. Only recently digitized, *The Macandal* represents the growth of the threat of bossale culture (or native African agri/cultural resistance) to the hegemony of state agricultural authority, whether on Haitian, African, or U.S. soil.

My last chapter could continue aligning translations of Hugo’s *Bug-Jargal* and Tante Marie’s *The Macandal* to prior transnational traditions that explore the relationship between the planter’s regime and the poisoner’s resistance/intervention. But instead, my last chapter branches out from those direct textual genealogies to more broadly consider the import of the French Caribbean plantation to formations of both national and sectional cultures in the U.S. through a well-known U.S. novel with embedded “roots” and “routes” leading back to Saint-Domingue. In doing so, my aim is to show the effect of the history of bossale cultural resistance in Haiti is embedded in what is recognized as a more canonical work.

My reading of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly* joins other recent criticism interested in the novel for its relationships to the French, Spanish, and

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428 Deborah Jenson, *Beyond the Slave*, 230.
African Caribbean spheres of literary and material production. Stowe’s sentimental caricatures are more often associated with more nationally defined politics— with her “anguish” over the passing of the Fugitive Slave Act. The law effectively forced the complicity of all citizens with slavery by compelling the return of fugitive slaves into captivity and almost follows the characters as a living “shadow” on their journeys. However, responses from Stowe’s politically diverse stakeholders and interlocutors within the U.S. (including abolitionist, Angelina Grimké, Franco-American planters, Louisa and David James McCord, and colonizationist, Martin Delany) show that the memory of the Haitian Revolution and the possibility of its future repetition in the U.S. shapes the making and reception of this novel.


Ammons, ed., *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, viii.

Ibid., “Preface,” viii.

Louisa Susanna Cheves McCord, “Louisa S. Cheves McCord Papers,” *Louisa S. McCord Family Papers, 1786-1954*, n.d.; David James McCord, *David James McCord Papers, 1844*; Paul Turquand, Susan Symthe Bennett, and David J McCord, *Turquand family papers, 1786*. For more information on Louisa McCord, see footnote 454. David J. McCord is best known as an author of the 1834 doctrine of nullification. Louisa Cheves was his second wife; his first was Emmeline Wagner. He became Intendant (Mayor) of South Carolina in 1828, and in 1830, was in Paris during the July Revolution. He wrote to David Bailie Warren of what he
The Fugitive Slave Act and the novel’s political messaging can be recalibrated through the marronage of Saint-Domingue, and the Fugitive Slave Act becomes a “shadow of law” relevant to the larger “specter” of a complex multi-party revolution earliest fought by fugitives in the

believed would soon be a return to a form of aristocracy-driven territorial and French cultural sovereignty in the U.S., and felt sure of a second revolution on home soil. His wife’s response to Uncle Tom’s Cabin is followed by his pamphlet in the next year, Africans at Home, (1854). McCord’s grandfather was an Irish planter as well as a friend, relative, and neighbor to Louisa's grandfather, William Heatly. When Louisa and David were married, in other words, they were from the same genetic family. More, though Louisa is known as the planter, the land she inherited had already been first owned by the Heatly-Turquand (David McCord) ancestral line. These intertwined blood and soil kinships are ironic in that David's Last Will makes a point of stating that he owned no land, and one scholar notes this as a mark of resentment against his wife, Louisa, the owner of the opulent plantation, Lang Syne, on which they both resided part time. Though Louisa’s place in a well-known, powerful Franco-American family and daughter to Langdon Cheves has been more closely examined in historical writing on southern intellectual culture, David’s family and intellectual relationship to Huguenot diaspora is also useful for framing Louisa's proximitiy to him as a reproducer of French agronomic race science. Her marriage to him strengthens the idea that Louisa was intellectually shaped by her private education with Charles and Marie Picot, who were Saint-Domingue refugees in Philadelphia. David's maternal grandfather was a French Huguenot sugar refiner named Paul Turquand. Leonard Turquand's 1813 memoir translated for “future posterity” his father's account of Turquand history from French manuscripts, which trace the family to Guillaumes Turques, President in the Parliament at Paris, appointed Advocate General to the French King in 1413. McCord’s matrilneal line served as Privy Councillors and other high offices for the next 150 years in Paris, but when Paul Turquand the sixth became Protestant, the family was forced out of France under religious persecution. After establishing a large sugar refinery business in London, they came to Philadelphia and later, South Carolina. He did not apply himself to cotton planting until 1840, and Louisa’s letters complain that he preferred the library to the plantation, while, on the other hand, the envelopes of his letters were filled with seeds he bought and sent home with urgent and detailed instructions on how they should be planted.
form former French colony.\textsuperscript{435} It was, in Elizabeth Ammons’ words, Stowe’s “sense of mission as a Christian” that “led her to write the novel,” but it is her Protestantism that guides her re-imagining of revolution on new soil and led by different spiritual influences than Vodou or Catholicism.\textsuperscript{436} Anthony Bogues has recently asked: “What question did the Haitian Revolution place on the table, and why was it a specter that imperial and colonial power archived as an event of chaos?” Bogues says this move was “in part about the specter of black self-government” (323). But he adds, the Haitian Revolution created “a new ground for thinking and practicing freedom” in an era when “the notion of freedom” had been “narrowly defined as political equality,” and when “rights were distributed accordingly.”\textsuperscript{438} On the contrary, the Haitian Revolution “explode(d) that limitation by generating change at the level of subaltern practices of freedom which conflcted with the plantation system in the Americas.”\textsuperscript{439} Calling on Carolyn Fick, he reminds us that those working for abolition in the North (“women” in particular, she points out) pushed for the development of “different forms of land practices and ownership—not simply, ‘peasant forms of agricultural egalitarianism’; instead, they were in the process of “attempts to work through the matter of labor itself and its meaning in the modern world” (324).

\textsuperscript{436} Stowe, \textit{Uncle Tom’s Cabin}, vii.
\textsuperscript{437} Wilson, “‘Entirely Different from Any Likeness I Ever Saw’ Aesthetics as Counter-Memory Historiography and the Iconography of Toussaint Louverture,” 323.
\textsuperscript{438} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{439} Ibid., 324.
Stowe was a part of this ongoing conversation.

Anna Brickhouse’s article, “The Writing of Haiti,” is an example of transnational approaches to Stowe’s novel that my work engages and furthers. She reads *Uncle Tom* as a “textual contact zone” for later writers in France, Haiti, and elsewhere who used its fertile content as a means to write their own work about race, agriculture, labor, class, and slavery. For example, she examines the way Haitian writer, Pierre Faubert, draws on Stowe’s novel in a play about the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) in order to address issues of race and class in his present-day (1850s) Haiti. Specifically, Brickhouse argues that Faubert reproduces Tom and a lesser character, George Harris, as one combined hybrid figure in a play about the free black planter and revolutionary, Vincent Ogé, who was executed in front of the same church as Makandal in Le Cap about thirty years later. According to Brickhouse, Faubert’s character in this historical-fiction play, Alfred, is a relative to both Tom and George. Faubert’s engagement with Stowe’s novel illustrates the presence of a cultural phenomenon she names the “Franco-Africanist shadow,”—both a figure and culture associated with Haiti that haunts antebellum literary culture.\(^{440}\) I argue that Stowe’s novel was able to provide such fertile ground for fictitious and critical response because she plots the path of fugitives and displaced characters in discursive terrain crossed by this original and often repeated narrative of fugitive life, revolution, and martyrdom that began with the real story of Makandal.\(^{441}\) We can read these moves by

\(^{440}\) Brickhouse, “The Writing of Haiti,” 424.

writers like Stowe and Faubert in the Global South as literary expressions of Latour’s idea of modern “nature-culture,” in which writers re-seed a previous historical landscape as a means of locating a future and formulate politics through the world of the plantation. \(^{442}\) I argue we can read Makandal across two bodies in Tom and George as diasporized expressions of black futurity and spiritual regeneration in the same way that Faubert hybridized and combined them as one.

Ivy G Wilson has recently asserted compelling evidence that Toussaint Louverture is a “latent” apparition to Stowe’s novel, but as we have seen, Louverture’s presence as an “epistemic mechanism”—plays upon and resists prior iconoclastic figures more clearly related to bossale egalitarianism rather than French education. \(^{443}\) Likewise, we can see that Tom, as Makandal, is the righteous spiritual healer who brings health and pleasure to everyone, who is betrayed or abandoned by a string of morally lost planters, and who is denied apprenticeship toward his evolving place in a racialized, civilized order guided by Protestant European culture. Like Makandal, Tom makes fetishes, demonstrates a perfect intelligence and labor, and models the spiritual example of ultimate sacrifice.

George Harris also maps back to Makandal as the rebellious, intelligent fugitive slave with Saint-Domingue roots, “wicked” and potentially violent resentment of his master, and a “genius” ability with machines. \(^{444}\) In Harris, we see a repetition of the “black spartacus” or

\(^{442}\) Latour, The Politics of Nature...
\(^{443}\) Wilson, “‘Entirely Different from Any Likeness I Ever Saw’ Aesthetics as Counter-Memory Historiography and the Iconography of Toussaint Louverture,” 87.
\(^{444}\) Ibid., 85.
“divine avenger,” who returns to Africa just as he did in the French abolitionist works of Louis Mercier, Abbé Raynal, and Denis Diderot; as Laurent Dubois points out, Raynal’s violent avenger became a more democratic and divine figure over time, and these futurist fictions are already products of an historiography of revolutionary thought following the circulation of Makandal stories. My reading shows Stowe’s address through Tom and George continues a conversation already in progress toward further ideations of black territorial sovereignty that continue to be complicated by Stowe’s attachment to European cultural authority. Still, Stowe attempts to map a space for multiple stakeholders around the modern common ground of agricultural politics. Grimke and Delany responded to Stowe or fed the politics that formed her novel through discussion of Haiti’s example and imagining their own solutions for paths to emancipation, including colonization and labor apprenticeship.445 I reason that if we can observe the way that her interlocutors turn to Haiti with questions of emancipation, slavery, and the future of agriculture in response to Stowe and/or in letters to Stowe before her novel was published, then it makes sense that we can also look more closely at how Stowe engaged with that history as well.

Delany believed and admired the idea that her characters could have been based in true stories, and George’s emigration to Africa typifies Delany’s position as a colonizationist in favor

of the establishment of black states in Africa.\textsuperscript{446} Douglass complains in a letter to Delany that Stowe should have envisioned a character who, like the image of the Haitian revolutionary, puts a “hoe” to “the Master’s skull” instead of being beaten to death.\textsuperscript{447} In Delany’s words, Stowe “sneers at Hayti”—most obviously by sourcing her novel in stories she had heard from real situations in the U.S., by showing George prefers Liberia to Haiti as a place to begin again, and by still neglecting to imagine violent resistance on the part of slaves at any moment of the narrative.\textsuperscript{448}

Stowe clearly slights the idea of armed revolution by not having Tom or George seek revenge or violent overthrow despite their torment. She rejects Haiti, or the “Saint-Domingue paradigm,” of revolution in other ways: by continuing to attach black sovereignty to indoctrination into European culture, through her attachment to the French Huguenot diasporas and Protestantism, and in contrast, through an accompanying suspicion for the “passions” of Catholic influence on the slaves of Haiti.\textsuperscript{449} Stowe also assigns people of color, just as planters did, an essentialization with agricultural labor, with unevolved culture, and with a need for

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{446}Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass’ Paper: Martin Delany, “‘Uncle Tom,’” (Rochester: April 29, 1853,) Stephen Railton & the University of Virginia, http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/african/afar03rt.html.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{447}Ibid.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{448}Wilson, “‘Entirely Different from Any Likeness I Ever Saw’ Aesthetics as Counter-Memory Historiography and the Iconography of Toussaint Louverture,” 85.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{449}Elizabeth Fenton, \textit{Religious Liberties: Anti-Catholicism and Liberal Democracy in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture} (Oxford University Press, USA, 2011), 110, 99. Fenton says that the novel views “African American liberty” as what must be shaped through “resistance to “the Saint-Domingue paradigm.”}
\end{footnotes}
(infantilized) apprenticeship and reeducation through guidance. Stowe newly assigns the moral and actual labor involved in “the cultivation” of the “negro mind,” to the Protestant southern plantocracy, and she does so by establishing a parallel between French Huguenot diaspora and African diaspora as a means of compelling these aristocratic planter families to reconsider their responsibility in building God’s kingdom rather than risking the repetition of other influences on U.S. slaves and another violent revolution.450

She chooses Huguenots for their Protestantism and reputations for expertise in agriculture among other industries for “idle hands” such as textile arts.451 French Huguenots (a complex and multi-movement diaspora) were then widely associated with resistance to Catholic state. They were formed at the same moment and site of French agronomy’s first developments before multiple displacements in religious wars forced them mostly into England and North America. Stowe is not adverse to the utopian pastoral ideas that European agriculture brings to mind and holds out Huguenot French in America as agriculture’s and Christianity’s most perfect expression, while at once, Ophelia, her caricature of strict Calvinism, expresses a frustration with the immovable politics of the planter class by reminding them of their roots in diaspora.452 Her caricatures and critical perspective on the characters’ failures to aid Tom in seeking his freedom,  

451 Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, 190.  
452 Fredrickson, The Black Image in the White Mind, 112.
though, transmit Stowe’s criticism and call to responsibility on the part of a French diaspora more closely associated with Canada and the North.

Clearly, the author is highly critical of anything more than moderate farming. Instead of looking for the next space in which to reproduce the mythic fertility of Saint-Domingue, the “opulent” planter must relinquish his perverse attachment to wealth, fulfill the classic role of Master as teacher, and in doing so, fulfill his labor by apprenticing (infantilizing, nurturing) the “feeble in knowledge” through Christian education and agricultural expertise.\(^{453}\) It is important to remember that at this time, advocates of slavery in the U.S wrote of Haiti as now being a “waste” of space held up by small-farming or a mimicry of white culture too immature to succeed. But Stowe turns the reader toward the morally absent planter who has shirked his labor and is possessed by greed. The “negro,” in other words, should be the site of his investment, attention, and presence, not the fear of another Haiti.

Given the connections that her characters create in the text to multiple French diasporic cultures, I pay brief but more marked attention in the course of reading to the writings of David James and Louisa Cheves McCord, planters and writers, whose worlds were shaped by the social plantocracies of both refugee French Creole and French Huguenot diasporas and who both engage the issues of Stowe’s novel.\(^{454}\) Louisa McCord’s scornful critical essay, “Uncle Tom’s


Cabin,” published anonymously by William Gilmore Simms in The Southern Quarterly Review (1853) calls Stowe what Makandal has always been called—a “sorcerer”—a trickster who “threatens” readers with another “Haytien tragedy.” Her “fertile imagination” of a future governed by a “free soil principle” will leave the world in “barbarism,” McCord says, “rather

http://www.scseagrant.org/Content/?cid=411. For more information on David James McCord see note 434. Louisa Cheves McCord was educated in Philadelphia by a married couple who were refugees from Saint-Domingue (Kilbride 68). Langdon Cheves, her father, is best known for his role as a congressman and for his position as President of the Second Bank of the United States. Though a plantation owner, his family’s life, split between South Carolina and Philadelphia, afforded his daughter(s) education at “the school of Madame and Monsieur (Charles and Marie) Picot” who were “Gallic spirits from Saint-Domingue with both feet planted firmly in the ancien régime” (68). She was a fluent Francophile who translated the works of economist, Frederick Bastiat, and was an intellectual sponge for medical knowledge. She ran a hospital in Columbia, South Carolina during the Civil War and associated with professors of medicine at the college; her husband was trustee at The South Carolina College (today’s University of South Carolina), and their house remains across from its campus today. She and the Cheves family came in part from sugar plantation money in Barbados, but when she inherited Lang Syne and Goshen plantations from her aunt, Anne Heatly Reid Lovell, she entered into a position of authority as owner of two large plantations that had been won by Lovell through a declaration of the right of “femme sole,” or single female landowner by law, after Lovell’s husband abandoned her. Lovell was one of the early experimenters with cotton seed selection—including short-staple and long-staple cotton, the same that Makandal’s master, Lenormand de Mézy introduced to Louisiana. Louisa personally managed the property, though for most of their marriage, the McCords split residence between Lang Syne in St. Matthew’s Parish and Columbia. The plantation was later managed by Julia Peterkin, the wife of the late owner, George Peterkin, who wrote about spiritual and Afro-diasporic cultures on the plantation. A biography notes that “Lang Syne was a place where 500 field hands and servants spoke Gullah, believed in conjures and spirits and Christ’s divinity all at once, and labored under conditions that had changed little since the end of the Civil War.

than “civilization.” In addition, Louisa’s husband, David James McCord, translated, synthesized and analyzed a series of French and British reflections on African culture in a scientific exploration history pamphlet called *Africans at Home* (1853). Though concerning Africans rather than the American “negro,” his support for slavery rests on the hypothesis that slavery civilizes rather than oppresses a people that does not assimilate or evolve. The African’s natural home outside of the condition of slavery is not in a cabin, but rather, an African’s home is a “fetish” that is “worn on the body.” McCord recirculates some of the most well-known writings by agronomists, physicians, and other naturalists from France and Britain as a means of forming his negative assessment of Stowe’s idea that people of color are evolving toward a Euro-like civilization and domestication. In contrast, his perspective on Africans as essentially nomadic and cultureless is fed by the imperial eye on the West Indies and Africa relaying scenes of savagery, cannibalism, and the ritual use of “swearing drinks” in worship. Equally important, J. Cartwright Cross used one of the same sources of McCord’s reflections—(Mungo Park’s work) as a means of representing Mandingoe culture in his pantomime about Makandal, “King Caesar, or the Negro Slaves” (1801). The connection puts fictional literature (and its historical roots in sources from Saint-Domingue planter literature) at an embedded textual

position to the scientific history written by a southern plantocrat; Makandal forms an intersection for multiple agricultural philosophies, but that intersection happens in a pantomime rather than a scientific text.

Overall, by reading Stowe’s clearly problematic aims for African identity and freedom in context of these intellectual legacies of the French Caribbean plantation, I illustrate Paul Gilroy’s ideation of the black Atlantic as a diasporic extra-textual phenomenon that exceeds national, racial, or monocultural models of belonging. In addition, my reading codifies agricultural knowledge and its counter-cultures as a modern literary model of cultural engineering propelled and conflicted by resistance, violence, exclusion, and the politics of knowledge production. The novel concerns several fugitive or displaced slaves from a Kentucky plantation: Tom, Eliza, and her son Harry. Eliza’s husband, George Harris, escapes from another nearby plantation after he learns his wife and child are soon to be sold. Every turn of their multiple journeys illustrates the passive, cultivable, and potential “of the negro mind,” a phrase often repeated in the novel, and the failures or misunderstandings of the American planter family concerning the nature of their duty as “dominant” European examples to the submissive race.459

Arthur Shelby is the first among the central planters along the journey who sells his slaves to remedy financial mistakes. Tom’s second owner, a Huguenot planter named Augustine St. Clare, is just as lost as the “wandering” African and takes Tom to Louisiana: the place known to even the blacksmith near Shelby plantation as the place where slaves go to be “fairly ground

At the heart of Tom’s journey, we can easily replay the scene of Makandal’s bodily dismemberment on a sugar gin. Tom is taken on La Belle Riviere steamboat with St. Clare, who is accompanied by his cousin, Ophelia, and young daughter, Evangeline (Little Eva). The planter has expectations that his tidy, religious, and industrious (Huguenot descended) cousin from Vermont will aid him with the repair of a frayed familial state, including the burdens of a sick wife and an unsupervised child; St. Clare made a bad marriage to a planter’s daughter there, and though his plantations are in order, they are governed by a tyrannical brother in his absentia, a relative or extended authority, which is typical to the Makandal narratives.

Ophelia and Augustine personify Huguenot knowledge traditions and cultural associations with textile work and agriculture, but Ophelia’s presence is a move to introduce an industrious order. Stowe is able to fictionally shift the burden of slavery to its most capable shoulders (a prior white diaspora) while creating a cultural hierarchy in which French Huguenot Protestant diaspora is put in binary relation with the greatly Catholic French Saint-Domingue diaspora and all its associations with dangerous forms of spirituality and violent revolution.

Tom is a spiritual healer rather than a physician to Augustine and his fellow slaves, but still models a kind of healer and wandering Christ. Though he is promised his freedom, Marie

\[\text{Ibid., 110.}\]
\[\text{Moreau de Saint-Méry, Description...}\]
sells Tom to his last master, Simon Legree.\textsuperscript{462} Where Marie, the planter’s daughter and heroine of \textit{The Slave-King}, argues for Bug-Jargal’s freedom, Stowe’s French Creole Marie ensures the opposite fate for Tom.\textsuperscript{463} His death at Legree’s hand takes place when he tries to protect other slaves from violence, and this again mirrors previous moments when Makdandal characters protect other slaves.\textsuperscript{464}

In the end, Tom’s death functions as a “spectacular” sacrificial violence and transfiguration of the “soul” of the plantation we have seen before in Makandal’s execution, but since Tom’s sacrifice is Christlike in Stowe’s spiritual revision, his death fulfills a prophecy of universal redemption rather than death.\textsuperscript{465} Ultimately, Tom’s death should motivate the sympathy of an alternate French diaspora at the upper echelons of planter society to reconsider the labor Stowe’s presents to them as the model for forming eco-kinship through spiritual and moral industry.

\textit{Tom as Makandal}

Before Tom is sent “down river,” we see that Mr. Shelby’s “indulgent” treatment of his slaves and his interests in financial ventures elsewhere have put Tom in the role of the real planter at Shelby plantation.\textsuperscript{466} He manages a “whole farm” of moderate size “like a clock” and

\addcontentsline{toc}{section}{References}

\textsuperscript{462} Stowe, \textit{Uncle Tom's Cabin}, ed. Raabe, 309, 361.
\textsuperscript{463} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{464} Victor Hugo, \textit{The Slave-King}., 40.
is “steady, honest, and capable.” Shelby even boasts to the slaver, Haley, that Tom has travelled as far as Cincinnati alone without being tempted by the Canadian border and that his strong belief in God is what keeps him in order. He’s allowed to “go round the country” carrying as much as $500 of Shelby’s money in unquestioning trust. As the most knowledgeable, social force on the land, he mirrors prior literatures in which Makandal is associated with mastery of commerce, with travelling to bring healing arts to others while enslaved, and with the unqualified admiration of all the other slaves.

Tom is “Mr. Shelby’s best hand,” and so “good” in character that he “must” be rendered present, or visually “daguerreotyped” for the reader. This goodness in Tom is also essential to Makandal before his accident or other displacement into marronage. Anna Brickhouse notes that it is this goodness in Tom, as well, through which *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* becomes a “textual contact

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467 Ibid., 2.
468 Ibid., 2. Stowe all but praises the Shelby’s plantation as the ideal size, if only Mr. Shelby had not become greedy and taken unnecessary financial risks. She says, “Perhaps the mildest form of the system of slavery is to be see in the State of Kentucky. The general prevalence of agricultural pursuits of a quiet and gradual nature, not requiring those periodic seasons of hurry and pressure that are called for in the business of more southern districts, makes the task of the negro a more healthful and reasonable one; while the master, content with a more gradual style of acquisition, has not those temptations to hardheartedness which always overcome frail human nature when the prospect of sudden and rapid gain is weighed in the balance, with no heavier counterpoise than the interests of the helpless and unprotected” (7). … We witness “goodhumored indulgence of some masters and mistresses,” and the “affectionate loyalty of some slaves, might be tempted to dream the oft-fabled poetic legend of a patriarchal institution, and all that but over and above the scene there broods a portentous shadow—the shadow of law” (8).
470 Ibid., 113.
471 Ibid., 18.
zone” for further discourse on the nature of Africans. The pro-slavery French novel, “L’Autre Monde” (The Other World) by Mme Manoel de Grandfort (1855) was a work through which Grandfort sought to counteract the power of Stowe’s novel to transnationally “spread ( ) what Grandfort argues (were) seriously misguided beliefs about the goodness of American slaves” (Brickhouse 423). Brickhouse adds that Grandfort “expects her own novel to counteract the transcontinental reverberations of Stowe’s writing” (424). The novel features a young Frenchman who visits the U.S. (the ‘Other World’) having read Uncle Tom’s Cabin. But on arrival, is shocked by what he finds instead. Brickhouse explains:

… Julien arrives in the “Other World” believing Uncle Tom’s Cabin to be “the most eloquent and most moral work of the age” (51), but through his experience with “a desperate band of runaway negroes” is soon converted to understand that those members of the race “in the possession of their liberty (are) subject only to ignoble and repulsive instincts …”

Brickhouse reflects that Grandfort’s work has “implications reaching beyond the North American borders of the novel,” and that it is therefore “not hard to imagine how Haiti might resonate in the imagination” of this “nineteenth-century proslavery French writer describing this “desperate band of runaway negroes ... not hard to imagine” how Stowe’s novel had become a “threatening symbol of international literary transmission.”

Given the connection that

472 Brickhouse, “The Writing of Haiti,” 408.
473 Ibid., 424.
Brickhouse has drawn out between Grandfort’s response to Stowe’s “transmission” of “misguided beliefs,” we can see that the pro-slavery French reader with Haiti in mind reads Stowe as a spiritual and cultural poisoner “spreading” and “transmitting ... misguided beliefs.”

Grandfort’s anti-Tom novel, she notes, goes on to “predict a future ‘Revolution’ in North America,” she says, “a kind of recuperation of France’s loss in Haiti transposed north to the US, during which a “great French population” from Canada would enable the “recomposition” of “this deformed American body-corporate ... to the profit of civilization, morality, and the public peace.” Brickhouse does not mention Makandal as a part of this Franco-Africanist shadow at work, but what I can add to Brickhouse’s reading of Grandfort and her use of Uncle Tom as a contact zone is that Stowe seems to long for the same cultural sea change, though Stowe’s desire is for a blended diasporic presence and cultural transmission on unequal terms rather than a “recomposition” of what is deformed.475

Second, Makandal’s presence gives logic to Grandfort’s choice in replacing this loving character with an “ignoble” band of “runaway” slaves as well as gives currency to the idea that Stowe’s character is written within an awareness of prior oppositional portrayals of dangerous

fugitives in Haiti. In other words, Tom’s narrative opposite is made into a man with a band of ignoble followers—always the mark of Makandal.

Though not a planter, Stowe’s lens on Tom’s character and body broadly replicates the effects of Saint-Domingue planter writing but also preserves a romantic encounter with the native already seen in Hugo’s story of Bug-Jargal. (Later, Stowe explicitly aligns herself with another French romantic, Chateaubriand.) In any case, though we do not witness Tom at actual work on the Shelby plantation, his value and labor responsibilities are reminiscent of Bug-Jargal’s reputation as a “noble rival” to the planter who could do the work of ten men and "wanted only a sign of his finger to make his fellow slaves obey.” Tom is a “creature” of strength—a “large, broad-chested,” ”powerfully-made … man” with “truly African features” that are nevertheless “characterized by … benevolence.” In fact, Tom is so large that Haley stops off at a blacksmith’s shop to refit him for handcuffs bigger than anything he owns, and this moment resembles one in which Hugo’s young planter comes into contact with Bug-Jargal, who is so “gigantic” and “enormous” that he is left stunned by the experience.

Beyond the physical, like the priest and prophet we have already seen, Tom is “a sort of patriarch in religious matters” to whom the plantation “look(s) up … with great respect as a

476 Ibid., 408.
477 Hugo, The Slave-King, 38.
478 Ibid., 18.
minister among them."\textsuperscript{480} Tom has “a greater breadth and cultivation of mind than obtained among his companions.”\textsuperscript{481} Just as Makandal drew spiritual followers by astounding them with what authors have variously framed as trickery, entertainment, magic, and/or fetish making for health and harm, Tom draws people to him with his manufactures. Stowe puts us under Tom’s spell when we watch him “cut cunning little baskets out of cherry-stones,” and “make grotesque faces on hickory-nuts,” or even “odd-jumping figures out of elder-pith.”\textsuperscript{482} According to the “True History” of Makandal, the Saint-Domingue fugitive “made, with great artistry, at the end of his orange stick, a little figure of a man, and when someone rubbed its head, it would move its eyes and its lips and come to life.”\textsuperscript{483} The dolls Tom makes for children aboard the steamboat replace and mollify the threat of stories about the maroon’s fetishes and prophecies of death using handmade carvings of small figures. More, our focus is on the distraction and pleasure the dolls yield for his audience rather than the “turbid waters” of the Mississippi—what Stowe refers to as “the real” and the “headlong tide of business” rather than the fantasy of Chateaubriand’s “splendid” landscapes.\textsuperscript{484} Tom’s dolls (his fetishes) have the capacity to heal the broken spirited with the delights in his pockets as they create “overtures for acquaintance and friendship,” among the boat’s “poor souls” on anything but a beautiful river.\textsuperscript{485} Stowe redeems the

\textsuperscript{480} Ibid., 32.
\textsuperscript{481} Ibid., 26.
\textsuperscript{482} Ibid., 127.
\textsuperscript{483} M. de C, Histoire Véritable, 106.
\textsuperscript{484} Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, 157.
\textsuperscript{485} Ibid.
knowledge potential through Tom’s benign creations and heals the pain of displacement for his audience. Stowe is restoring the earliest stories of Makandal, who astounded French physicians by healing people otherwise left for dead—who only became a “tyrant” after violently being punished or injured (127).  

An early comparison between Tom and Cicero reads as caricature, but even as such, aligns with British and French pantomime and picaresque novel traditions in which Makandal (and maroon characters in general) are aligned with and mimicked through naming with figures of antiquity such as Caesar and Scipio Africanus, the Roman general and conquerer of Africa. Louisa McCord’s tragedy about Scipio’s grandson, Caius (or Gaius) Gracchus, hints that the “great” Scipio may have been killed with poison. This tale that Louisa has reproduced from other literary traditions in French and English is an analogical one to the situation of the U.S. as it concerns the descendants of a great ruler and general who is rumored to have been poisoned and whose grandsons attempt to create a popular revolution through socialist land reform. Louisa is a literary “contact zone” between Stowe and Simms on the subject of the Haitian Revolution and the threat of bossele agricultural activity in the Americas, since Simms, Louisa’s publisher, as he

487 See note 289. These comparisons have already at this time begun to migrate from pantomime and picaresque novel into the writings of pro-slavery writers in the South who use the comparisons in subjugating the cultures of diasporic Africans to the mastery of European culture. Louisa McCord’s publisher, William Gilmore Simms, serially redeploy Scipio Africanus in his novels as a slave by that name; Scipio appears in two novels, Mellichampe and The Wigwam and the Cabin.
reproduces a mimicry of Scipio. The tradition of Makandal continues to diasporize into pro-
slavery literature with Simms’ Scipio—the simple-minded, superstitious slave who says he has
been cursed by a local Obi and seeks assistance from the indulgent master, and a local “Wizard
of the Santee,” who heals Scipio when plantation doctors cannot, but whose talents (and Scipio’s
illness) are as much a source of amusement as they are amazement to the plantation doctors.488

More, the reference to Cicero reshapes Tom as Makandal, who, perhaps above all, has
been represented as an articulate orator, teacher, and communicator in many languages—in form
of song, teaching, and oral prophecy. Tom’s character is placed within this same slippage that
always attends Makandal—of mimicking a classical kind of nobility as a master of himself and
others but being at peril of permanent fugitivity without direction. This essential lack, Stowe’s
concept of a need to be led through a caricatured plot of cultural abandonment, haunts his songs
and prophecies; Bug-Jargal, who is called Pierrot or Harlequin before being revealed as the
Slave-King, sings Manuel Garcia’s operatic lament, “Yo que soy contrabandista,”—the song of
the smuggler, also known as “El Poeta Calculista.”489 In its related form, “Caluclista” is not
about a smuggler, but instead, a poet whose work (his writing, literally, his labor) has been stolen

488 Louisa Susannah Cheves McCord, Caius Gracchus: A Tragedy in Five Acts (H. Kernot,
1851), 29; William Gilmore Simms, The Wigwam and the Cabin, Edition 1. Printing 5., 1856,
489 Guin, The Tonadilla in Performance, 162, 203.
by the master, and meanwhile, his master has also abandoned him without direction or promise.\footnote{John O’Brien, \textit{Harlequin Britain: Pantomime and Entertainment, 1690–1760} (JHU Press, 2004), 139.}

Makandal’s skills and desire for power are always described as having been shaped for evil in the absence of this master and replaced by Jesuit priests or other Vodou priests as teachers. In turn, Makandal becomes a teacher of poison-making in an open air school.\footnote{Moreau de Saint-Méry, \textit{Description}, 652.} Stowe revisits these European agricultural constructions of race related to knowledge, spirituality, and apprenticeship in Tom to show that, because Africans, according to planters, are naturally spiritual and teachable, and because Tom has been exposed to Protestant teaching instead of anything else, his faith is that much more “the genuine article” rather than a source of false belief or danger.\footnote{Stowe, \textit{Uncle Tom’s Cabin}, 3.}

The failure is with the planter, not the abandoned apprentice. For example, in comparison, the planters throughout the novel have not paid enough attention to their spiritual and actual labor. They have become overcome by superstition, emotional distress, and apostasy through the evil influence of wealth, which are typical to Makandal’s masters all along. Master Shelby believes superstitiously that he will get into heaven through his wife’s “superabundance”
of faith,” Stowe tell us. While Mr. Shelby is essentially kind in nature, he has been made greedy, compassionate, and indulgent through the wealth of slave labor. Like Uncle D’Auverney in *The Slave-King* who has been made greedy and hard by slavery, Shelby is “prone to easy indulgence,” has “speculated largely and quite loosely,” and makes “no professions to any particular religious character.” The possibility for opulent wealth has produced a spiritually and financially vulnerable planter in Shelby, and his absence is the source of all the following rifts in family and economy, especially since his greed and overreaching desire for expansion have resulted in the crisis of Tom’s sale and Mrs. Shelby’s strong disapproval. In other words, Stowe emphasizes the abandonment of labor on the part of the Master as well as the Master’s appetites rather than Tom’s as the cause of ruin.

While Mrs. Shelby calls Uncle Tom a “good and faithful servant,” in the same breath, she insinuates that her husband is a “monster” for selling him. And where Makandal was the “monster” in the *Mercure de France* article of 1789, the planter and the enslavement of bodies to the project of wealth accumulation are now explicitly aligned with the transformation of otherwise “good” masters into monsters. Stowe creates a metaphorical relation between the money Mr. Shelby has risked and seeks to gain in comparison to the Mistress’s investing in Tom, and this emphasis on economy is not later lost on her critic, Louisa McCord. Through the marital

493 Ibid., 2.
494 Ibid., 9.
495 Ibid., 26.
strife that results from the sale, Stowe exposes how existing “under the shadow” of the sinister law of slavery produces an environment of “indulgence” that ends in “embarrassment” for the planter and his wife, as if such a crisis signifies a rupture in sexual and social reproduction, even to the level of intimacies between man and wife. The woman of the plantation advocates on the part of the noble African to no effect and too late, as usual. Stowe’s reversal shows it is not the slave that comes between the planter and his wife, but the planter’s moral or physical absence in relation to his social and spiritual labor that produces a socio-environmental earthquake. Shelby is clearly her illustration of an absentee planter, when, ashamed, he explicitly makes plans to excuse himself just as Haley arrives to collect Tom. Instead of a slave running away, we have a Master/monster running away from his punishment.

_The Empire of His Love_

What has been said in planter treatises is that Africans are not capable of these articulations of future cultures or reproduction, they are “tied to the earth” and manual labor rather than capable of the intellectual labor of building civilization according to the early writings of French agronomist, Hilliard d’Auberteuil; slaves are unfixed in nature, in physical and chemical makeup, and therefore vulnerable and dangerous to any influence and in relation to others without the plantation’s disciplinary regime—rootless persons and rootless history.

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497 Stowe, _Uncle Tom’s Cabin_ 10, 12.
498 Stowe, _Uncle Tom_, 2-3, 6.
This territorial desire for sovereign expression (and dis ordering of nature) that Makandal enunciates in political terms has been told in sexual and other metaphors in fiction. The discord that forms between husband and wife at the moment of Tom’s sale speaks to previous ones in which the maroon thieves a woman or otherwise prevents the agency of white cultural/sexual reproduction from the planter, as does Bug-Jargal, when the Haitian Revolution interrupts the young French planter’s wedding night. This metaphorical effect of structural instability or rupture, which metaphorically aligns with domestic and/or environmental apocalypse, has followed the Makandal literature from newspaper stories into fiction and are revisioned in Stowe’s story.

Makandal has in the past built an “empire” of love by attracting all the women of the area; his causing the whole of Saint-Domingue society (metaphorically, the ground and the bodies of the inhabitants) to “tremble” at the sound of his name begins when the Makandal character becomes the subject of a white man’s jealousy and has been punished for sowing fertile spaces that do not belong to him, including the planter’s land, his daughter, his wife, and his female slaves.\textsuperscript{499} Makandal refuses his objective rather than agentic role in the plantation’s paradigm and runs away after being beaten unjustly for having “fine tastes.”\textsuperscript{500} All the landscapes, both human and non, are reliably passive, but at the moment of Makandal’s

\textsuperscript{499} C, \textit{Histoire Véritable}, 109; Cross, \textit{King Caesar or The Negro Slaves.}, A2.  
\textsuperscript{500} C, \textit{Histoire Véritable}, 102.
punishment, women around the maroon ultimately intervene on his behalf as they are swayed by his talent, beauty, desire or knowledge to metaphorically respond to him instead of responding to the European authority figure of the plantation. The female protagonists, equal to the earth, are animated (grow) for Makandal and not the planter.

Something different but equally compelling happens with Uncle Tom and most of the women of the novel. Where Makandal is hypersexual with appetites for what belongs to the planter, Tom is equally and extremely sexless. Hortense Spillers has argued that Little Eva’s impossible relationship with Tom particularly illustrates this phenomenon. In addition, Deborah Jenson notes that the people of Haiti were characterized as “big children” and their culture as terms immature. And it is clear the apprenticeship to knowledge model functions as a form of infantalization and justified labor extraction already common to planter literature. However, Stowe’s robbing Tom of virility through infantilization is also working counter to and in relation to the previous repeated plot about chaos in Haiti, in which Makandal’s great attraction to and from women are a metaphor for agricultural and social crisis brought on by exposure or spread of poisonous African spirituality.

502 Stowe’s racial configurations are consistent with Moreau’s race tables and particular objectification of women of mixed-race. For example, Harry is a “small quadroon boy” and his mother also “quadroon” (4). Eliza is a “yallow gal” (6). Quadroons have a “peculiar air of refinement, that softness of voice and manner” (9). Then, “a particular gift to the quadroon adnd mulatto women are their “natural graces” in the “quadroon are often united with beauty of the most dazzling kind…” (10).
There is a different kind of empire of love growing at Shelby plantation. We see George Shelby, their young son, teaching Tom to read the Bible, but what Spillers describes with Eva and Tom begins with Mrs. Shelby’s having “invested” in Tom the rituals of Protestant belief. Mrs. Shelby’s instruction, and later, Eva’s friendship, are well-suited to training Africans in building God’s “highest form” of “Christian life.” Mrs. Shelby is “a woman of a high class, both intellectually and morally,” Stowe writes, who is characteristic to the Makandal stories, a woman who is unfortunately “ignorant” of the coming rift and to whom Makandal addresses his prophecy through “song.” She is emotionally distraught by the implications of her husband’s decision to sell Tom after having “invested” in him what she calls teaching on “the duties of the family,” or, what Stowe infers as a Christian appreciation for a sense of domestic permanence and futurity on the land he clearly manages. She says,

Why not make a pecuniary sacrifice? I'm willing to bear my part of the inconvenience. ... I have tried ... as a Christian woman ... to do my duty to these poor, simple, dependent creatures. I have ... instructed them ... how can I ever hold up my head again among them, if... we sell ... Tom, and tear from him ... all we have taught him to love and value? ... the duties of the family, of parent and child, and husband and wife; and how can I bear to have this open .. acknowledgment that we care for no tie, no duty, no

503 Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 198.
504 Ibid., 9.
505 Ibid. 29.
relation, however sacred, compared with money?  

The training that saves Tom from becoming a monster of large appetites or striking out in violence is her “instruction.” Though sexless, Tom’s spiritual virility subverts crisis through Protestant moral discipline—even in its most basic form—and betrays an intimacy clearly missing between the husband wife. She reroutes the potential for disorder in emancipation through education. The Christian family’s training subverts violent revolution through other spiritual influences by attending the “cultivation” of the “Afric” (sic). The natural attraction that women have had for Makandal and their interventions on his part are reenacted here through Shelby’s attachment to Tom, and his “appetites” are transformed into a familial and spiritual relation.

Tom’s intensely intimate rituals of prayer attest to the bonds between him and the

506 Ibid., 29.

Stowe’s Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin relates her experiences around slaves, in her words, “servants,” on a trip through Virginia and later South Carolina in order to illustrate the effects of religious “cultivation” and the effects of “permitting” servants “in a private way, how to read God’s word” (38). The “old servants of Virginia,” have a special “intelligence” and “piety” and that “many purposes of convenience and hospitality were subserved by this encouragement of cultivation in some of the servants, on the part of the owners.” In the “absence of the family” and the “absence of the owners,” she was welcomed to a home to rest and care for a friend on the journey by servants as if it were their own home. In other words, Stowe’s forms her argument for “private” religious apprenticeship around metaphors of cultivation and rhetorically should appeal to the planter as a means of emphasizing an enhancement of service.
Master’s wife, and will continue from Mrs. Shelby through his spiritual relationship with Eva. Tom’s reading produces a performance as priest to the other slaves at Shelby plantation that betrays an embodied and pleasurable intimacy for all the purity it is supposed to represent. The scenes of cannibalism and other savagery in David J. McCord’s recordings are replaced with Tom’s consummation of the Bible. His “exhortations” to the slaves are a display of savage desire or appetite that spreads among the bodies present in a reverse healing and holy display. Stowe writes of Tom’s

... sincere style of his exhortations ... the childlike earnestness,

of his prayer, enriched with the language of Scripture, which seemed so entirely to have wrought itself into his being, as to have become a part of himself, and to drop from his lips unconsciously; ... And so much did his prayers always work on the devotional feelings of his audiences, that there seemed often a danger that it would be lost altogether in the abundance of the responses which broke out everywhere around him. 508

The scripture has been so completely ingested by Tom that it is now a “part of himself,” that “drop(s) from his lips.” 509 His prayer works so well on others that they open their mouths, literally, to respond, and when they do, the prayer disappears—is “lost altogether in the abundance” their voices create, as if healing and ingested or as if their responses are so loud to

508 Ibid., 33.
509 Ibid.
suggest an uncivilized effect to their enthusiasm (33). This language of Stowe’s description of this richly productive prayer session evokes consummation in both edible and sexual terms, and this makes sense given the way, from the French verb consumer, we can derive both meanings. Their “feelings” present a “danger,” but I believe Stowe’s gathering of slaves consciously aims to make stories (like those of Makandal leading dangerous fertility dances that turn into revolt) look comparatively tame (33).

In his spiritual desolation and wandering, or the trip down river, temptations and spiritual hunger will be fed through these practices and pleasures. As his life progresses from Kentucky to Louisiana, we can see the stray effects of an unfinished Protestant ritual Tom has embodied through reading, and the seed of futurity is deeply related to his spiritual sustenance. She writes that while Tom’s Bible “lay … before him,” miles from Kentucky, “every passage” was for Tom “breathing of some old home scene, and recalling some past enjoyment.”\(^5\)\(^{10}\) His Bible “seem(s) to him all of this life that remain(s), as well as the promise of a future one” (160). Tom’s hunger Makandal’s appetite is for ‘home’ and permanence, and this translates through both agricultural and spiritual expression in Tom in a way that does not threaten the planter.\(^5\)\(^{11}\)

Kingdom, Cabin, or Fetish: Where is the African’s Home?

Mrs. Shelby is an agent in Stowe’s revision of revolution in which the good white Christian workd toward the fulfillment of the inversion of earthly social and labor hierarchy

\(^5\)\(^{10}\) Ibid., 160. \\
\(^5\)\(^{11}\) The Parterre of Fiction, Poetry, History (&c.), 1836, 188–89.
promised by Jesus’s warning. He speaks to the disciples in the Book of Matthew through a parable that concerns the wages of sin or idleness versus willing labor in the Master’s vineyard, saying in Stowe’s repeated passage, “the first shall be last, and the last first.” The threat to the American planter concerns the continued cultivation of the African’s talents—of sharing the vineyard and taking on the labor. While the implications of such growth for the negro, for Stowe, reads as a sign of prophecy fulfilled, for Louisa McCord, it was a sign of another Haytien tragedy. Read in the context of the reproduction of race science in southern intellectual writing after Stowe, the most threatening thing about Tom is his desire for and capacity for the enjoyment of permanency, stability, and the most obvious fruit of labor: his home, cabin, and capacity in the vineyard.

Tom has a modest but respectable spatial expression that aligns with Ritchie’s infantilization of mixed-race farming life in the footnotes of The Slave-King. Writing in 1833 in the footnotes of Hugo’s novel, Ritchie speaks of Haiti:

Instead of the great proprietorships of the old colony, (Saint-Domingue)…there now spread through the country (of Haiti) knots of little habitations … where the inhabitants hold their little savannas or grass patches … planted in rice, corn and scitaminous and leguminous vegetables.”

512 Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, 198.
513 Hugo, The Slave-King, 56. Already well-known as a hydrography expert, Ritchie’s 1833 edition addends Hugo’s work with social and environmental descriptions of the post-revolutionary landscape of Haiti that mimics the sources of Hugo’s novel, among others, Moreau
He adds that “the systematic industry with which these fields are cultivated, differs with the quantity of habitual prudence and skill …,” adding, “some possess a pleasing though not a very profitable character ….” In calling Haitians unprofitable, Ritchie’s (real or imagined) traveler to the postcolonial landscape naturalizes the black or mixed-race farmer as less industrious than the white man but satisfactorily limited to his nature.

Stowe adopts the same perspective on Tom as an expression of evolving but immature culture. For example, Stowe notes that Tom’s cabin is nestled next to a “neat garden-patch, where, every summer, strawberries, raspberries, and a variety of fruits and vegetables, flourished under careful tending.” His needs are modest and limited and anything but threatening. Because Tom has the Bible instead of the influence of mixed religions and cultures, if only in Stowe’s white fantasy, Tom and his cabin are the representations of a sustainable creole agricultural relation made possible through spiritual reassessment of labor relations. Stowe’s aim is to illustrate that, with the minimal guidance and encouragement he has been given through Protestant reading and prayer, Tom (i.e., the typological African) will never slip from “best hand” to “noble rival” who is capable of violent overthrow and theft of the planter’s property. Where Makandal’s overwhelming “appetites” for sovereignty, as we have seen, are transformed into metaphors of sexual appetite and pleasure, Tom’s natural tendencies toward and

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514 Ibid., 56.
515 Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, 7.
vulnerability to pleasure are clear in his introduction to New Orleans for the first time, but those desires in Stowe’s revision of the character are kept in check through minimal Protestant training. This reversal of Makandal does not necessarily suggest a greatly different typology of the African on Stowe’s part than David McCord’s, but it does reframe mastery as a compassionate Christian kinship that is equally ecological, economic, and spiritual in nature, and in this sense, strains toward identifying a Creole spiritual eco-kinship yet to be sown.

While David James McCord does not name Stowe directly in *Africans at Home*, it is clear that his aim is to argue against the idea that the labor of cultivating the “negro mind” has any purpose according to French and British physicians and planters. McCord’s work was written the year *Uncle Tom* was published in novel form. His pamphlet recounts the travels and observations of François de la Harpe, Mungo Park and others, when he says that Africans are nomadic, a-historical in their cultures, and have no desire for “home” of any kind relevant to European concepts of one, were incapable of the same familial relations observed by whites, and worshipped the devil, he says “with great ambition.” Like Stowe, the McCords, though politically divergent, believe that black culture and people are expressions of the “ancient” … “dim” beginnings of time. Where their logics diverge is that Stowe believes the “last” race is moving toward the European model and McCord believes they never will; his writing is pedantic in its use of race science in the same way that Stowe’s challenges science’s authority.
The pamphlet is designed to suggest what would happen to Africans without slavery in the United States by first promoting the idea of African culture as utter savagery, and in addition, forming a conflation between generationally enslaved people of color in the United States and the apocalypse that whites would face once blacks would (naturally) revert to a completely uncivilized state. Early on, he references Mungo Park and his writings on the “fetische,” (previously a source on the Makandal pantomime), as being among “his followers,” the “first scientists to really know anything of Africa.”\(^{516}\) His description of African belief systems also draws heavily from the descriptions of François de la Harpe’s *Abrege des voyages*, which is in itself an encyclopedic French work by an editor of *Mercure de France* on European colonization. Repeating these past French and British observations, he says that Africans have no sense of relation that is recognizably familial, that they are cannibals and use each other's bones for fetishes, these as a means of illustrating slavery to be the best situation Africans can hope for. As for agriculture, permenancy, or futurity, de la Harpe claims agriculture did not really exist in Africa until the Portugese introduced it, otherwise, Africans are natural “chevaliers d'industrie,”—thieves or tricksters—they “only pick and steal” he sayd “according to the legend.”\(^{517}\) As for religion, McCord recalls prior voyages’ observations, including the story of an African priest and the rituals of the fetish. The people of Loango “do not believe that men ever


\(^{517}\) McCord, David James, “Africans at Home,” 9.
die of a natural death. What a sad moral does that teach. They believe in Mokissos or sorcerers, swearing drinks and exorcising; and many persons are tried for crimes by these absurd devices ... They serve the devil...most ambitiously,” in this “land of the burning sun.” Priests, men of "skillful artifice and imposture” would make other nations "blush" at the idea of the ritual of “making the mokissos (drink)” on “their shore.” Some of these practices have already been noted in “Hayti,” as he reminds us. The gods these drinks serve are “Jangu-man, or the good man,” who “they regard...as the special god of the Europeans,” and the “other black,” he adds, “whom they call after the Portugese, demonio or devil...They tremble at his name.”

Tom has modest beginnings, but his last home, in Stowe’s vision of eternity, will be opulent. Near to both his and Eva’s deaths, Tom sits enraptured with Eva enjoying the pleasures of the garden. Stowe says that “If ever Africa shall show an elevated and cultivated race,—and come it must, some time,” she prophesizes, “her turn to figure in the great drama of human improvement—life, will awake there with a gorgeousness and splendor of which our cold western tribes faintly have conceived.” Stowe’s vision and Mrs. Shelby’s purpose communicate nearly the same admonition of Abbe’ Raynal’s vision of a divine avenger in less violent language. His messiah figure of 1772 imagined an African whose kingdom would bring down the rest through “poison, sword, and fire.” Instead, African paradise will come from the

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518 Ibid., 10, 12.
519 Ibid., 12, 14.
520 Ibid., 26–7.
521 Ibid., 7; de la Harpe Abrege, vol3.155.
522 Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, 198.
assistance of Protestant Christian improvement—both cultural and agro-apprenticeship; but this future African Kingdom “shall be” she says with certainty,” “first” among the others … “when every other kingdom has been tried, and failed” (198). In Tom’s modest beginnings with Mrs. Shelby, Stowe imagines a labor toward the establishment of that promised last best Kingdom—a “far-off mystic land of gold, and gems, and spices, and waving palms, and wondrous flowers, and miraculous fertility” (198). In the last (African) kingdom, she says, “will awake” the truly modern, for she envisions “new forms of art, new styles of splendor; and the negro race, no longer despised and trodden down.” They will be able to “show forth some of the latest and most magnificent revelations of human life” she says (Emphasis mine 198). “Certainly they will in their gentleness, their lowly docility of heart, their aptitude to repose on a superior mind” enjoy “the highest and noblest in that kingdom which He will set up” (198). The African kingdom will not rid the world of others, necessarily, with poison and fire, as French abolitionists have suggested, or end with one too many encounters with wild bands of negroes, as Grandfort later argues. Rather, the pinnacle of civilization, and agriculture as its cultivation practice, will succeed and will be a co-historical moment at which other kingdoms are shown to have failed.

Sewing one Social Fabric, or, Two savages in the desert

Stowe introduces Tom’s journey by steamboat to Louisiana with French-American planter, Augustine St. Clare through allusion to the idealism of Chateaubriand’s novel of an encounter between a Frenchman and a native of Louisiana called, Atala; or the Love and Constantcy of Two Savages in the Desert (1801). This landscape, Stowe writes, is no longer the romantic world
that French writers described.\textsuperscript{523} It has “changed,” she says, “since Chateaubriand wrote his prose-poetic description of it, as a river of mighty, unbroken solitudes, rolling amid undreamed wonders of vegetable and animal existence” (157). Stowe explicitly couches Tom’s journey here in imagery from novels that found the French romantic movement and made living landscapes of the southern region of North America, as in Chateaubriand’s \textit{Atala}, in which a young Frenchman, (as we have already read in stories of \textit{Bug-Jargal},) wrestles and rejects the notion of the noble savage after listening to his rival’s story.\textsuperscript{524} On the contrary, in the present, the world of slavery has left a new “mud” landscape “of the real,”—of the Mississippi’s “turbid waters” carrying “products” like Tom, coming “from the tropics to the poles” to New Orleans.\textsuperscript{525}

Like Tom, his new master, Augustine St. Clare, is lost to the fury of progress: he is a part of a “race more vehement and energetic than any the old world ever saw” whose “opulent” wealth have left them, as we have seen, in a state of uncertainty about where he and his family are going.\textsuperscript{526} Likewise, Stowe makes clear that her underlying expectation for an end to slavery is structured around the Exodus story, or, the Biblical narrative of Jewish liberation that combines matters of racial and spiritual oppression and a long journey home. The concept of diaspora and/or wandering accompanies both philo- and anti-semitic formulations of Jewish cultural history, but the condition for liberation in Stowe’s belief is most clearly fulfilled in

\textsuperscript{523} Chateaubriand’s romantic novel, \textit{Atala} (1801), is about a young Frenchman’s encounter with a native, helped shape the romantic French movement.
\textsuperscript{524} Cite.
\textsuperscript{526} Ibid., 157.
Christ’s example. Jesus also wanders in the desert. More, the ultimate enunciation from Christ was a cry of desolation and desperation after a master who had forsaken him. These combined notions of wandering and diaspora form Stowe’s appeal to the Protestant slave owner as she draws a parallel between French and African diaspora—pairing Tom and his French Huguenot master, Augustine St. Clare, as two souls lost in the Sheol of the South.

The seed of Stowe’s idea may have been planted by Angelina Grimke in an 1833 letter that was written less than a decade after Haiti was recognized as a nation and almost twenty years before Stowe wrote the novel. First, Grimke does not believe that colonization in Africa will satisfy a true freedom for American slaves and argues that Haiti has already proven that people of color can establish nations. She says,

I am told that when a colored republic is built up on the coast of Africa, then we shall respect that republic, and acknowledge that the character of the colored man can be elevated; we will become connected with it in a commercial point of view, and welcome it to the sympathies of our hearts. Miserable sophistry! deceitful apology for present indulgence in sin! What man or woman of common sense now doubts the intellectual capacity of the colored people...Why has not the intelligence of Haytiens convinced them?

Beyond a narrowness of appreciation for colonizationist purposes, Grimke goes on to draw a

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528 Ibid.
direct comparison between Africans and Huguenots (her cultural heritage), by flipping over the fabric of social hypocrisy:

Every true friend of the oppressed American has great cause to rejoice,
that the cloak of benevolence has been torn off from the monster Prejudice,
which could love the colored man after he got to Africa, but seemed to delight
to pour contumely upon him whilst be remained in the land of his birth.
I confess it would be very hard for me to believe that any association of men
and women loved me or my family, if, because we had become obnoxious
to them, they were to meet together, and concentrate their energies and pour out
their money for the purpose of transporting us back to France, whence our Hugenot
(sic) fathers fled to this country to escape the storm of persecutions. ...
No—we must dig up the weed by the roots out of each of our hearts.

She closes her letter to Stowe with the hope that others (Huguenots and more) might be able to change their minds instead of “despising the shame of being identified” with Africans—“these peeled and scattered ones”529

The St. Clares embody the parallel that Grimke proposes in that the family provides a means for Stowe to compliment the southern plantocracy for their knowledge heritage and critique their derelictions of duty as the perfect resilient teachers to Africans, the apprentice culture. In a metaphor related to the textile arts associated with Huguenots, she knits Tom and

Augustine together.

Since the thread of our humble hero's life has now become interwoven with that of higher ones, it is necessary to give some brief introduction to them. Augustine St. Clare was the son of a wealthy planter of Louisiana. This image seems an effort to mend the master and slave relation into one social fabric renewed by compassion and sharing of knowledge while still preserving a difference in hierarchy between European culture and African culture. Diaspora as their commonality becomes more clear when she pointedly adds that Augustine’s mother “was a Huguenot French lady, whose family had emigrated to Louisiana during the days of its early settlement.” In doing so, she emphasizes the duty at hand for Protestant planters whose families have been historically displaced. The St. Clare family “had its origin in Canada” and France as opposed to places further South or through Saint-Domingue, and are protestant rather than Catholic (167). Augustine’s uncle settled on a “flourishing farm in Vermont,” but Augustine’s father “became an opulent planter in Louisiana,” and Stowe implies the choice of climate was too tropical for Augustine’s natural habitat (167). Augustine St. Clare is as much a victim of the economy of slavery as Tom. Early on he had “won the love of a high-minded and beautiful woman, in one of the northern states,” but his engagement ended at the hand of family interference and marriage for wealth. Instead, Augustine quickly marries Marie, the “reigning belle” of New Orleans, who has “a fine figure, a

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530 Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 167.
531 Ibid., 167–8.
pair of bright dark eyes, and a hundred thousand Dollars” (168). It is not made explicit that Marie’s family came from Saint-Domingue, but her “dark eyes” and money work in contrast to the delicacy of Augustine’s constitution and the perfection of the woman he wanted to marry from another “Northern” family.

As for Augustine, he has his mother’s “exceeding delicacy of constitution,” and despite his inheritance of the plantations, he is early on removed from the environment for his health and returned to Vermont for most of his life for the more “cold” and “bracing climate” of the North (167-68). With this slighting of Saint-Domingue refugee French and Louisiana culture, as well as the equal elevation of Huguenot diasporas, she has drawn familiar correlations among concepts such as death, cultural impotence, and the space and wealth associated with large sugar production.

Like Hugo’s Maria, who is described in Bug-Jargal’s song as the “white daughter of Hispaniola,” Augustine’s wife, Marie has “from her infancy, been continually “surrounded with servants, who lived only to study her caprices.” Her father “never denied her anything” (170). As a result, she has no awareness that “servants” (slaves) have “either feelings or rights, … even in distant perspective” (170). Marie St. Clare’s capacity for establishing an economy of affection that shows the value of her “servants” is shameful in comparison to what we have seen in Mrs. Shelby. Marie is a “thoroughly selfish woman” with “no heart,” who “exacts love” to “the uttermost farthing”—she is a “sultana” with Augustine, with a “slave” for a husband in

532 Ibid., 170.
Augustine, paying him no affection in return (170). Her “ceaseless ennui” comes from doing nothing, her weakness and discontent have overtaken “the blooming young belle,” and now, instead of Hugo’s Marie, the coddled Creole girl of the French colony (a “gentle flower”) is now a withered “yellow faded” and “sickly woman” with a “variety of fanciful diseases” that have grown in her place.\footnote{Ibid., 171.} Meanwhile, “all family arrangements” Stowe notes, “have fallen into the hands of servants;” so that St. Clare finds “his menage anything but comfortable” (171).

Cousin Ophelia from Vermont serves as a spiritual kinswoman who follows her cousin to a foreign land only to be bereft at his death. In comparison, Ophelia comes to replace Marie’s “inefficiency” as a mother and mistress to her cousin, the planter, and in preparation she reads missionary travel writing from those brave souls who have entered the hot zone (171). In contrast to the “heathenish, Moorish” home in New Orleans, Ophelia’s natural environment in Vermont is a picture of order that has always eluded the plantations where Makandal characters have been kept and killed. “Whoever has travelled in the New England States will remember, in some cool village, the large farmhouse, with its clean-swept grassy yard, shaded by the dense and massive foliage of the sugar maple; and remember the air of order and stillness, of perpetuity and unchanging repose, that seemed to breathe over the whole place. Nothing lost, or out of order;…” (171). Stowe continues on to detail Ophelia as a reflection of the environment, saying “she was a living impersonation of order, method, and exactness.”\footnote{Ibid., 174.} She borrows from her
earlier comparison for Tom to pair them together beyond the expected racial separation, saying, “In punctuality, she was as inevitable as a clock” (174). In contrast to Marie, Ophelia’s insistence on constant labor is “inexorable as a railroad engine (174).” Ophelia’s life is marked by strict limitations, which Stowe communicates in a mixture of caricature and admiration. Her “theological tenets were all made up, labelled in most positive and distinct forms, and put by, like the bundles in her patch trunk; there were just so many of them, and there were never to be any more. So, also, were her ideas with regard to most matters of practical life” (174). The plantation and slavery have in contrast made Augustine “gay, easy, unpunctual, unpractical, sceptical,--in short,--walking with impudent and nonchalant freedom over every one of her most cherished habits and opinions.” He has selfishly “monopolized a large share” of her “heart … for himself,” and she “forbore his failings” so often that he is able to “easily” persuade her “that the ‘path of duty’ lay in the direction of New Orleans” and the labor of keeping her cousin, “a heathen” and his home “from going to wreck and ruin” (175). Since Marie is “not a whole woman,” she is unable, Stowe says again in a a sewing metaphor, “to mend the broken threads of life, and weave again into a tissue of brightness” as would the Huguenot cousin, Ophelia with her orderly sewing kit and catalog of fabrics. “Miss Ophelia,” has come ready with trunks of fabrics and a wardrobe planned by her entire village. “The public mind” shared among the French Huguenot community in Vermont “was divided,” over what clothes Ophelia should have

535 Ibid., 175.
536 Ibid., 168.
made or take with her as much as the “public mind” was divided over questions of colonization and abolition.\textsuperscript{537} “There were credible rumors,” we hear, “of a hemstitched pocket-handkerchief; and report even went so far as to state that Miss Ophelia had one pocket-handkerchief with lace all around it … worked in the corners; but this latter point was never satisfactorily ascertained, and remains in fact, unsettled to this day” (173). When Ophelia is overcome with anxiety, she draws “out of her pocket about a yard and a quarter of stocking” with which she “knits most energetically … as a specific against … Satan” and “idle hands.”\textsuperscript{538} In comparison, to Marie’s “ennui,” his cousin Ophelia’s presence serves to polarize two French diasporas and the effects of slavery as a cultural poison against moral and actual industry.

One particular conversation between Augustine and his brother, Alfred, who runs the plantations and who grew up in Louisiana and not Vermont, reveals the division of the “public mind” that Stowe sought to unite in this novel as well as her awareness of arguments about the natural savagery of people of color vs. dreams of gradual emancipation for an evolving culture.\textsuperscript{539} One day out on the plantation, Alfred and Augustine discuss Haiti and the possibility of a second revolution in the U.S. as they watch Little Eva (with “glossy curls and glowing neck”) and Alfred’s son, Henrique, playing and riding horses in the distance.\textsuperscript{540} While Eva has embraced Tom, who in Stowe’s rendering is childlike and a child of God, Henrique has begun as

\textsuperscript{537} Ibid., 173.  
\textsuperscript{538} Ibid., 190.  
\textsuperscript{539} Ibid., 173.  
\textsuperscript{540} Ibid., 301.
a child to viciously beat slaves, and Eva has just chided him for his cruelty. Given Haiti’s cultural equation with immaturity, Stowe’s use of the child concept makes reference to Haiti and at once initiates an associative landscape beyond beyond Louisiana as the world of maturity that the U.S. has yet to reach. Alfred sounds like a child fighting over rights, "‘It is the educated, the intelligent, the wealthy, the refined, who ought to have equal rights’... ‘Of course, they must be kept down’... said Alfred, setting his foot hard down as if he were standing on somebody. ‘It makes a terrible slip when they get up,’ said Augustine, in St. Domingo, for instance.”

Building on Augustine’s interjection, Alfred continues, “‘We must set our face against all this educating, elevating talk, that is getting about now; the lower class must not be educated.’”

However, Augustine replies with a more sarcastic turn, saying, “‘Our system is educating them in barbarism and brutality. We are breaking all humanizing ties, and making them brute beasts; and, if they get the upper hand, such we shall find them.’” (298). Augustine’s anxiety and Alfred’s physically demonstrative expression of dominance brings out what Stowe seeks to calm. “Under the allurements of fiction,” her Preface said she sought to “breathe a humanizing and subduing influence, favorable to the development of the great principles of Christian brotherhood.”

She draws out the internal strain of discord between Christianity’s “building” of kingdoms and the memory of prior collapse. In a metaphor of engineering intimately reminiscent of the heat and pressure technologies used on sugar plantations, Alfred says, “‘They

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541 Ibid., 298.
542 Ibid.
shall never get the upper hand!' But Augustin retorts, ‘‘That's right,’ ... ’put on the steam, fasten down the escape-valve, and sit on it, and see where you'll land.’’.\(^544\) Alfred replies defensively and in the voice of a planter used to the machinations of his extended, orderly empire, saying, ‘‘I'm not afraid to sit on the escape-valve, as long as the boilers are strong, and the machinery works well.’’(298).

Augustine goes on to trace the history of French monarchical oppression and violent overthrow beginning with the movement of the peasantry in France to illustrate the inevitability of violent revolution on the part of blacks given the violence inflicted upon them, saying

The nobles in Louis XVI.’s time thought just so; and Austria and Pius IX. think so now; and, some pleasant morning, you may all be caught up to meet each other in the air, when the boilers burst ... they will govern you, when their time comes,’ said Augustine; ‘and they will be just such rulers as you make them ... The people of Hayti—.\(^545\)

With the word “Hayti,” Alfred silences his brother, saying “‘O, come, Augustine! as if we hadn't had enough of that abominable, contemptible Hayti!’”\(^546\) The point at which they acquiesce is in a kind of agreement that, Anglo Saxon blood (as within Alfred’s own mixed-race child, Henrique) will be the dominant force in any revolution. As Augustine puts it, “...If ever the San Domingo hour comes, Anglo Saxon blood will lead on the day. ... As it was in the days of Noah so shall it

\(^{544}\) Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 298.
\(^{545}\) Ibid., 299.
\(^{546}\) Ibid.
be;--they ate, they drank, they planted, they builded, and knew not till the flood came and took them." (299). Though fixated on the possibility of the revolution while his brother adamantly stomps on what Stowe imagined as the apparitional body of a slave, Stowe steers the brothers both toward a conflicted position of infantilization / education, and blended diasporic inevitability, and this functions as Stowe’s appeal and conviction of duty upon the southern planter. Augustine says, “They that cannot govern themselves cannot govern others.”547 Alfred replies “thoughtfully,” Stowe tells us, saying “‘there's no doubt that our system is a difficult one to train children under. It gives too free scope to the passions, altogether, which, in our climate, are hot enough.” (300). Stowe has subtly, in the language of Revelation and in “the blink of an eye,” transformed the conversation from the “children” in the sense of slaves and or people of color to their own children and what Stowe believes are the effects of the present on the plantation where they are. “I find trouble with Henrique. The boy is generous and warm-hearted, but a perfect fire-cracker when excited,” Alfred says (300). Again, the conversation has shifted from the fear of overthrow by cultural children to real overexcited children and de-escalation at once. The man just now pressing his foot to the ground as if keeping down the slave now says instead, “thoughtfully, ...’I believe I shall send him North for his education, where obedience is more fashionable, and where he will associate more with equals, and less with dependents.’” (300) Then, Augustine’s reply, “Since training children is the staple work of the human race,’ ... ‘I should think it something of a consideration that our system does not work well ... .’ (300).

547 Ibid., 300.
This slippage between uncivilized bodies of slaves in Alfred’s imagination and his son’s own “excitement” communicates that exposure to the Louisiana plantation also exposes all involved to the poison of non-white culture. The conversation is not resolved, and so “after going around the old track” they have travelled “five hundred times, more or less,” says Stowe, Alfred turns to Augustine and ask for a game played by kings, “What do you say to a game of backgammon?”548 With a miniature battle between two kingdoms at hand, with a game in which each piece crosses a treacherous terrain and seeks the sovereign “home” position on the board, Stowe closes the only real discussion of Haiti in the novel.

Ophelia arrives too late to mend Augustine’s house and family before death and debt overcome the decadent, “Moorish” and “heathenish” home.549 Ophelia’s dominating influence and obsession with ordering the home to the level of the child’s sewing kit is a means of shaming the aristocratic planter into “mending” the “broken threads of life” through metaphors of domestic knowledge and manufacture.550 Tom is the wandering Christ—a healer rejected by environment, and Ophelia fails to recognize Tom’s homelessness, impoverishment, and utter faith as the marks of messianism or their common condition of diaspora given that her spiritual ideas are numbered, settled, and packed away like the fabric in her trunk. This is an indictment of women on the highest levels of Christian society as much as a loving caricature of the more

548 Ibid., 301.
549 Ibid., 178.
550 Ibid., 170.
“dominant” capable culture. The covenant of law, under which all are enslaved, should be replaced with redemption through spiritual unity, a new covenant of the spirit, in Stowe’s Christian modality. But fitting the plot of the martyr, Tom cannot be saved and is necessarily murdered by his cruel, third and final master, Simon Legree, who has long been tormented by the possibility (the superstition) that his slaves have a mysterious power over him and his thoughts.

With this last intervention through Legree and his depraved state as a planter, Stowe suggests that “supersititon” arises only in people who are “godless,” regardless of class, possession, education, or color. Simon Legree is infected with paranoia and obsession (brought on by Cassy’s curses) and Tom’s spiritual power over him. She writes a reversal when he comes in contact with Tom. Though Tom’s spiritual medicine should heal Legree, and he “had the slumbering moral elements in him roused by his encounters with Tom,” they were “roused, only to be resisted by the determinate force of evil.” Again, Stowe reverses the valence of poison by suggesting the greater power of Christianity to stir the hardest heart. She says, “there was” in Legree, “a thrill and commotion of the dark, inner world, produced by every word, or prayer, or hymn, that reacted in superstitious dread.” Somewhere between indulgence and torture is that perfectly imbalanced evolving relation between master and slave, and only listening to the least of “the lowly” will induce such a “commotion” or trembling effect in Legree’s underworld.

551 Ibid., 174.
552 Ibid., 413.
553 Ibid., 414.
554 Ibid., 347–8.
George as Makandal

The focus of the novel is Tom and his cabin, and with them, Stowe’s aim to promote the idea of a sustainable racial labor and social hierarchy at home. On the other hand, George’s more minor role may reflect Grimke’s rejection of colonization and or Haiti’s example as a free black state seeking a place in the global monoculture industry—a perspective she shared with Stowe in the 1833 letter. While George can clearly be read as a Toussaint Louverture figure with mixed-race features, the knowledge of a European, as well as a desire for equality as an agricultural engineer, he also recalls the tradition of maroon literature. Though my reading is briefer than my attention to Tom, my reading is extended through attention to Louisa McCord’s particular distaste for Stowe’s character.

George Harris is a young “genius” agricultural engineer on the level of “Ely Whitney” who passes for white and whose skills with design have shamed his “jealous” Master into self-doubt regarding his own cultural contribution to society. This jealousy that Stowe articulates repeats the fallout between the Overseer and the maroon in the Mercure de France story and other anonymous planter’s letters. More than “intelligent chattle,” George articulates his intellectual and moral superiority to the master in his labor and character. George resists the “wicked” thoughts he has of confronting and physically attacking the “vulgar, narrow-minded,

555 Ibid. 5-6, 3.
556 Ibid. 10.
and tyrannical” Master Harris.\textsuperscript{557} The description of the poisoner has shifted to describe the authority figure in a reversal of earlier literatures. When he describes his life as a condition that is “bitter as wormwood,” Stowe communicates another reversal, in that wormwood is a poison, and as a result, we come away the idea that George has been poisoned instead of the master. The conditions of the crisis building in George’s life follows the arc of the Makandal story in other ways, despite his mulatto rather than pure African racial categorization. As George becomes a “relative” to new Haitian fictional characters about historical figures, George Harris becomes a relative of Makandal’s.\textsuperscript{558} He is a “bright and talented young mulatto man, who was a slave on a neighboring estate…” to the Shelbys.\textsuperscript{559} This “young man had been hired out by his master to work in a bagging factory, where his adroitness and ingenuity caused him to be considered the first hand in the place,” Stowe reports (13). Astoundingly, he had “invented a machine for the cleaning of the hemp, which,” Stowe reasons, “considering the education and circumstances of the inventor, displayed quite as much mechanical genius as Whitney’s cotton-gin.”\textsuperscript{560} Beyond his talent, he was in general a “handsome person” with “pleasing manners,” and was a “general favorite in the factory.”\textsuperscript{561} But parallel to the “Franco-Africanist shadow” of the


\textsuperscript{558} Ibid., 424.

\textsuperscript{559} Ibid., 13.

\textsuperscript{560} Ibid., 10.

\textsuperscript{561} Ibid., 13.
past in George is the “eye of the law” of racial and spatial surveillance installed in the U.S. under which “a man,” is “but a thing,” and “all these superior qualifications” have become “subject to the control of a vulgar, narrow-minded, tyrannical master.” With curiosity, his owner, “the same gentleman,” hears George’s “fame” and goes to the factory “to see what his intelligent chattel ha(s) been about.” The whole situation enrages Mr. Harris. He is “received with great enthusiasm by the employer,” who “congraeute(s) him on possessing so valuable a slave.” Meanwhile, George “talked so fluently, held himself so erect, looked so handsome and manly, that his master began to feel an uneasy consciousness of inferiority.” The moment of jealousy between Makandal and the Overseer is repeated: “What business had his slave to be marching round the country, inventing machines, and holding up his head among gentlemen?” thinks Mr. Harris (10). After Makandal is injured on the sugar gin, he is put out to pasture, demoted in stature on the plantation, and likewise, thinks Mr. Harris, he will fix George’s pride: “He’d soon put a stop to it. He’d take him back, and put him to hoeing and digging” (10). In fact, George is “put to the meanest drudgery of the farm,” we learn, and though “he had been able to repress every disrespectful word” in that moment, his “flashing eye ... (was) ... part of a natural language that... showed too plainly that the man could not become a thing.”

564 Ibid., 10.
565 Ibid.
566 Ibid., 11.
George’s refusal to be beaten down physically or intellectually as well as his Master’s jealousy instigate his decision to become a fugitive exactly like in the French “True History of Makandal.” His response is reminiscent of Makandal’s rising up, taking the whip from the overseer, throwing it to the ground and running into the mountains. But Stowe writes that George resists, noting that his owner believes he has gotten “notions and expectations” from spending too much time around Tom on Shelby plantation. George is let go at the factory and in this instant, she reports, that he resists a violent outburst. Instead, he “stood like one transfixed, at hearing his doom thus suddenly pronounced by a power that he knew was irresistible. He folded his arms, tightly pressed in his lips, but a whole volcano of bitter feelings burned in his bosom, and sent streams of fire through his veins ... he might have broken out into some dangerous ebullition, had not the kindly manufacturer touched him on the arm.” Eliza’s response to George’s outburst at home is that his thinking is “really wicked” (14). She says, “I know how you feel about losing your place in the factory, and you have a hard master; but pray be patient, and perhaps something—” (14). He cuts her off in a tone that provokes Eliza’s own appeal “O George, you frighten me! George explodes:

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569 Ibid., 14.
570 Ibid., 16.
My master! and who made him my master? ... I'm a man as much as he is. I'm a better man than he is. I know more about business...I am a better manager ... I can read better than he can ... and I've learned it all myself, and no thanks to him,--I've learned it in spite of him; ... he says he'll bring me down and humble me, and he puts me to just the hardest, meanest and dirtiest work, on purpose! ... he sees I've got the devil in me, and he means to bring it out; and one of these days it will come out ...  

George’s anger leaves him with “eyes” that “burned with an expression that made his young wife tremble.” This brilliant engineer is pushed to put “two pistols and a bowie-knife” in his waist and run away. As he explains to Mr. Wilson, his boss at the factory, “I can earn myself at least six feet of free soil,--the first and last I shall ever own in Kentucky!” Stowe tells us that “George stood up like a rock, and put out his hand with the air of a prince” to Mr. Wilson and made his way into the world. There is “nothing wrong with a master,” he has told his wife, but he requires a “just” one.  

George eventually goes to Africa after a perilous journey that includes a gun battle with the slavers who chase them and turns down Hayti as a possibility for a new life. Though both Tom and George are denied the most obvious possibility—to cultivate the land they work at

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571 Ibid., 17. 
572 Ibid., 16. 
573 Ibid., 95. 
574 Ibid., 95–6. 
575 Ibid., 99. 
576 Ibid., 17.
George inherits the metaphorical fruits of the Saint-Domingue plantocracy when his sister, a widow of a West Indian planter, funds his French education and emigration to Africa. George fulfills the path of the “divine avenger” by taking what was the planter’s just a generation before. In the end of this genealogy, he is the embodiment of the “Franco-Africanist shadow” of Haiti and the possibility of further black state establishment. 577

Mrs Stowe has a fertile imagination

Louisa Cheves McCord, wrote about her fear of “another Hayti,” in letters as late as the 1870s, but among the moments of her 1853 response to the novel, Haiti also figures prominently. McCord accuses her of playing with the devil by juggling with the order of nature and/or the labor of the planter, so despite her pro-slavery position, she, like abolitionists, uses labor as a means of arguing her position. She likens her own role to a kind of Lady Sisyphus as opposed to “Mrs. Stowe,” the goose in the barnyard, who lays eggs for a transnational collection of diabolical worshippers. McCord writes:

Over this, their new-laid egg, the abolitionists, of all colours,—black, white, and yellow,—foreign and domestic,—have set up so astounding a cackle, it is very evident, that (labouring, perhaps, under some mesmeric biologic influence) they think the goose has laid its golden egg at last ... (But) 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 impetus, and crush beneath
its unexpected weight, the hand which now directs it, we scarce know whether
in idle wantonness or diabolic malice.\textsuperscript{578}

Having read the globally positive responses for Stowe’s novel, McCord likens the abolitionist
critics to be under the influence of an elixir or a spell—a “mesmeric biologic influence” (82).
Her metaphor brings to mind the danger of proximity to African culture common in planter’s
literatures. More, Makandal’s medicine or poison takes on other related associations as elixir, a
drink of some kind, or herbs. McCord’s image of Stowe as a juggler evokes the well-known
story of Makandal footnoted in Neufchateau’s story and repeated by Hugo, in which Makandal is
a magician, priest, and juggler who foretells the future to a gathered crowd using black, yellow,
white, and red handkerchiefs.\textsuperscript{579} He turns all the originally white handkerchiefs different colors in
a jar, one on top of the other, the last being black, and prophesies through the color’s symbols,
saying black people will someday rule the island of Saint-Domingue, after the red (Caribs), and
the yellow (whites). The prophecy is coming true for McCord in the adoration the public has
shown the novel. The trick that Stowe has played is in suggesting that people of color the
evolving mechanism in God’s design. Instead, in McCord’s words, he is “Nature's outcast, as for

\textsuperscript{578} McCord, \textit{Uncle Tom’s Cabin}, 82.
\textsuperscript{579} Alain-René Lesage, \textit{Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane} (Lefèvre, 1825), 286, footnote 1.
centuries ... even from the dawning of tradition,” he has been “the homeless negro.” McCord cannot stomach the idea that a man like Tom or George now “suddenly assumes a place, suddenly becomes one of the great levers of civilization” (119). Pointedly, she argues, the fate of labor for the “negro,” is to never support civilization in the way that whites do.

Given Stowe’s extensive critique using the language of labor and economics, McCord’s response focuses on satirical swipes using the same. Ophelia disapproves of idle hands, but Stowe’s “hand” is motivated by either “idle wantonness” or “diabolic malice” (82). Second, McCord’s use of the word labor translates as a critique of Stowe in several ways. Her fans are doing the devil’s work “laboring” under the influence of poisonous ideas now spread by this novel; second, the world thinks she’s “laid” an egg, but that labor is no labor at all, rather, a game, and therefore, the work of idle (evil) hands; next, Stowe is undoing / disordering God’s perfect work “rolling back” the labor, or reversing God’s work, rather than doing the work of God; McCord plays with words about playing with words as a means of showing the disorder and fantasy of Stowe’s vision: the “laboring bulk,” (the slaves themselves and the weight of labor in helping them) represents for McCord “the natural order of things perverted.” Explicitly, she accuses Stowe of poisoning us all, “ill must follow. The magnitude of that ill, may heaven protect us from witnessing!” (108). Stowe, she says, “has determined to put her finger in the pot,” again playing on the idea of a witch’s brew or poison (108). She has sent “poor fools

580 Uncle Tom’s Cabin, 119.
581 Ibid., 108.
wandering” in a desert, she says, playing on the Exodus motif, of mannah in the desert, and of Jesus feeding the five thousand, (or Elisha the 1000) to yet “find ( ) no crumb of bread for one hungry stomach.” To leave slaves without masters is an evil “her imagination” has “multiplied an hundred fold,” she says, which will result in such “barbarism” that the “imagination has not yet depicted those” (108). Louisa reverses the miracles of the Old and New Testaments to suggest again that Stowe is a sorcerer of diabolical literary craft in a metaphor of over-production and excess that reflects the traditionally poisonous and chaotic effects of Vodou and Catholicism in ideations of Haitian revolutionary activities.

In fact, she claims, Stowe “threatens” readers “with a second Haytien tragedy. Hayti! She knows not of what she talks” she exclaims in a kind of swoon. Here, McCord not only communicates the way in which Haiti undergirds response to the novel, but also illustrates the exclusion of Haiti as a sovereign concept, place, or people. Her reference to a “second Haytien tragedy” characteristically communicates on sub-textual levels: she references the actual Haitian Revolution as a tragedy for planters, she references the idea of tragedy as a serious generic concept associated with statehood, sovereignty, and European culture and ancient culture (as explored in her own dramatic writing). In other words, a no-place like Haiti is not worthy of the

583 McCord, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, 108.
word *tragedy* on the level of the narratives of European nations, and with this, McCord labels the novel a mimicry in relation to the authority of European history and literature at once. She finishes off the play on words with images of environmental disaster, which have always followed the Makandal narrative and his lament in song. Sarcastically, she says,

> Mrs. Stowe has a fertile imagination, and has got up quite a respectable collection of "tales of wonder," which would rival in horrors those of Monk Lewis; ... As the ocean to the wave—as the rill to the torrent—as the zephyr to the whirlwind—would any such scenes, if possible among us, be to those of Hayti, fearful as they were; and as ocean's gulf to a rain- puddle, would be the ensuing barbarism (108).

McCord goes on to play upon Stowe’s love of reverence for the needle in her lap and teases her anxiety over idle hands by metaphorically unfolding the use of the word fabric into a much larger use, saying “but what are these,” (problems of slavery) compared to the general crash which would follow, should man, with his tinkering, upset the whole fabric.” (110)

Where Stowe has chided the planter for opulence, McCord reminds the public that Stowe is reported to have been paid “Ten thousand dollars (the amount, it is said, of the sales of her work)” and with this and other moments, turns Stowe’s metaphors of wealth, economics, and value to the forefront (82). In defense, she plays on the idea of value, repeating the term “dollars and cents,” as if she were Ophelia herself. The story of George Harris irritates her immensely just as she nears the close of her essay:
We have not room for the story of George Harris, a remarkably intelligent mulatto, perfectly orderly, submissive and obedient, who is, by his ingenuity and talent, making immense profits for his master at a neighbouring factory. The master, without the slightest provocation on the part of his slave, suddenly becomes jealous of his extraordinary capacity, and determines to put him down. Purposely, therefore, to force him to be good-for-nothing, he withdraws him from the only kind of service to which he is adapted, and puts him to the most degrading drudgery, expressly with the intention of destroying the value of his labour (111).

McCord’s recounting of this story is a repetition of the essential plot of Makandal’s maronnage from “True Story of Makandal” (1787). She has exposed the illogic of the turn of events as a means to showing Stowe to be uneducated when it comes to what really happens on a plantation. McCord attempts to resituate people of color to the condition of agricultural intelligence only, the “only kind of service to which” George “is adapted” (112). What she exposes for us in context of this genealogy is the operation of the prior fiction in Stowe’s text, but McCord is interested in teasing her with her own logic, turning things back to matters of money rather than a value for humanity. She writes:

Did ever a man in his senses ruin his property, because he is jealous of it! "Dollars and cents! dollars and cents!" ... What sends men to the California diggings? What sends them to Australia? What sends them to the devil? Dollars and cents; dollars and cents; dollars and cents. We argue nothing for the conscience, the humanity, the charity, the
decency of these abominable slave-owners, given up, as they are, to satan and his devices; but—dollars and cents, Mrs. Stowe; there is no getting around that difficulty. George Harris's master, if he had taken a dislike to George Harris, would have sold him for as many dollars as he could bring, and not by a slow process of torture, have undertaken to ruin and make thoroughly valueless, the animal which he held in such fine saleable order ... we think, her conclusions somewhat illogical. No man will, in cold blood, burn down his house, because he has got out of temper with its manner of construction; no man will torment to death, or uselessness, whether his beast or his slave, simply because he has taken a prejudice against the structure of body, or turn of mind, of the article. (112). The African does not need a house because he is the house of the Master, and without the devil’s labor in digging, there is no kingdom on the horizon. The digging is the slave’s fate, as “The negro alone has, of all races of men, remained entirely without all shadow of civilization. It is a mere quibble to talk of his want of opportunities and instruction ...” (117).

If we are so ruled by money, McCord is suggesting, then why does Stowe’s story show the opposite? Ironically, McCord leaves her critique of the novel with just what Stowe would have suggested, “The white man needed no leading strings. God created him for the leader and the teacher.” (117)
Conclusions – Saint-Domingue Cotton in South Carolina

Nick Nesbitt’s readings of the letters of Haitian revolutionary leaders confirm that the politics of agriculture were inextricably linked to issues of cultural legibility for people of color across national boundaries as much as they were “unthinkable” developments for the white, monocultural, antebellum planter.\textsuperscript{584} He asserts that the fear of a \textit{bossale} state in the antebellum U.S. and elsewhere was what motivated the undermining of Haiti in the Atlantic. He explains:

Even when (Haiti) did defeat the French in 1804, the global political context that so feared the Bossale vision of an anarchist, minifundia-based freedom quickly and systematically undermined (by refusal of diplomatic recognition, embargo, etc.) any incipient autonomy of the Haitian state.\textsuperscript{585}

In other words, despite Haiti’s national then imperial desire and capacity to signify as a monocultural power, and despite the world’s refusal to recognize Haiti on such terms, the new nation was also associated with waves of internal resistance in its return of imperial government and compulsory labor, to a racialization of its nationhood as an example of cultural immaturity, to a space that was considered a waste of wealth potential and synonymized with maroons, African spirituality, and mixed-race peasant culture. At the same time, the word \textit{bossale}

\textsuperscript{584} Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History (Beacon Press, 1995).
emphasizes the threat of a politics linked to Africa rather than France, and therefore, marks the counter-cultural movements against the reinstitution of compulsory labor or slavery in Haiti to be a globally located phenomenon that also reaches into American literary production. Most basically, there were multiple ideas of agriculture with complex racial and class-based exclusionary politics at play coming out of Haiti at the time, and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* fits within such transnational discourse on the uncertain future of “the negro race” in relation to agricultural (and therefore cultural) recognizability. Stowe addresses the problem through the plight of diaspora and fugitivity already in motion with Haiti’s establishment and international recognition. Critically, the novel comes at a time when stakeholders as different as black colonizationists and the American southern plantocracy both regarded agricultural engagement as the mediation of cultural and territorial identity and all looked to Haiti’s example with differing expectations and fears.

Stowe’s racism has already been subject to due critique, but it has been less important to contextualize how Stowe’s racism aligns with and can be explained through the centrality of monoculture to Haiti’s example. I think the novel shows that Stowe shared the belief that Louverture and many others had before already espoused: that agricultural practice and knowledge would define the future of civilization as would the proliferation of African economic sovereignty through environmental knowledge. From the perspective of white cultural hegemony in the early Atlantic, Haiti was viewed as an illegible culture—as the space of agriculture and not culture proper, despite the reality of a vibrant literary and theater culture in late eighteenth and
placeless, and talented agriculturalist African, she asks readers to reconsider the narrowly and racially-constructed stakes of large monoculture and seeks to emphasize agriculture’s potential to reshape black economy and cultural apprenticeship to assimilation.

Because, as Brickhouse notes, “mainstream and marginal” writers like Faubert and Stowe were engaged in “sometimes conflicting” or “disparate . . . attempts to map a hemispheric American literature,” Stowe’s novel participates in a metahistorical literary discourse searching practically and philosophically for a political ecology that expresses both a pluralizing and commoning of cultures characteristic of the modern.

If Louisa McCord had never written about “Hayti,” or responded to Stowe, her environment would have still bee relevant to Makandal. Their literary connection accompanies an agricultural one. As we can recall, in the 1740s, when Makandal lost his arm, became a fugitive, and turned from the use of healing to killing plants, his Master, Lenormand de Mézy, was in Louisiana working on the cultivation and processing of Saint-Domingue cotton. As Makandal poisoned the sugar economy of Saint-Domingue, Lenormand seeded Louisiana with what grew from Saint-Domingue soil. Also called “long-staple cotton,” St. Domingue seeds were small, green, and covered in a fine hair. This characteristic made the seeds naturally resistant to the teeth of the cotton gin designed to separate seeds from the lint. Lenormand began his experiments with ginning technology and saw some success after much experimentation with design. But, he also committed a basic misunderstanding of the seed in the first place; he thought that the seed’s resistance (and its greenness) was a sign of the seed’s immaturity. So, he put the
seeds out in the sun in hopes of drying them into a state of submission to the machine, and this moment of ontological abuse and impediment between the agronomist and seed resonates on several registers. We are reminded of Makandal’s bodily and social resistance to the authority of modern European manufacture. We see the way in which Makandal was called a “fatal” or “poisonous” seed by the widow of the attorney who prosecuted him in 1758. And we can associate the mistaken immaturity of the seed with the way Haitian culture became associated with cultural and intellectual immaturity in post-Revolutionary criticism. But most important, Saint-Domingue cotton did not stop in Louisiana where we find the fictional Tom and the lost St. Clare family. Not long after Lenormand’s experiments, experimentation with cotton seed selection first came successfully to South Carolina soil by a woman named Anne Heatly Reid Lovell at Lang Syne Plantation near Columbia, South Carolina.586 At her death, the plantation passed to a well-known writer and outspoken slave owner from a French-American family, her niece, Louisa Susannah Cheves McCord.

Through following long-staple seeds from Saint-Domingue to South Carolina, we find ourselves at Lang Syne. Louisa’s agri/cultural domain is a fertile space for the specter of poison and Makandal to remerge in the author’s poison-paranoid essay. David James McCord wrote Africans at Home in the same year, which is an essay that draws on British ethnocentric medical philosophy to argue that African cultures are void of territorial impulse, and instead, identify

586 Ann Heatly Reid Lovell, “Ann Heatly Reid Lovell Papers” n.d. From the head note to the collection, “Ann Lovell owned several plantations including property which was later known as Lang Syne Plantation.”
with the fetish itself (an object of ‘excess’ capital or knowledge) as *home*. In this sense, David James McCord commits a synonymy between Afro-creole spiritual/medicine cultures and the soil itself. While this represents a violent cultural engineering interested in the total and righteous objectification of Africanness as placeless in history, it also represents an acknowledgement on the part of the southern French planter, that Afro-Caribbean knowledge ways counter and at once subtend modernity’s agronomic taxonomy.
Conclusions of Dissertation

These examples show the maroon’s reemergence in circum-Atlantic culture follows multiple paths from Saint-Domingue to global points beyond, and therefore engages C.L.R. James’ convictions about him: James believed there is or was no literature written about Makandal in the U.S., but that case is now clearly resolved to the contrary. With the new opportunities presented by digitization technologies and through further research on Makandal, Makandalism, and its meanings in Early Caribbean literature, we might discover a more detailed picture of the import of Caribbean medicine, spirituality, and material cultures to the shaping of Enlightenment science and its philosophy. Because his appearance can also be read as a diasporized discourse on the close relationship between the social and the ecological, further research on Makandal might speak to today’s related dilemmas such as the extraction of materials and labor, territorial identity on individual and cultural levels, food production, and both political and ecological unsustainability in all its forms. In my first chapters, two figures consistently illustrate the inseparable relationship between Enlightenment science and subaltern knowledge ways of the plantation. The planter’s view of nature as a passive landscape for a “total” agriculture meets response of enslaved Africans whose demonstrated attachment to “material agencies” combine with human agency in the manufacture and circulation of botanical

587 Eric Holt-Gimenez and Raj Patel, Food Rebellions: Crisis and the Hunger for Justice (Food First Books, 2012). See Walden Bello’s Foreword on capitalist greed, economic volatility, food prices, and the effects of social unrest in Global South geographies such as Haiti and Venezuela, ix-x.
The two figures are bridged through a rhetorical and material radicalization of human-eco relations despite the polarity of their beliefs, the base brutality of the plantation, and the violence of their sciences. Like “Europeanness” itself, which was not a “fixed attribute” but one “altered by environment,” European knowledge was also subject to the perception of the “transformative” effects of alternate knowledge ways, belief systems, and practices, in the environment of the colony. The interconnectedness of the narratives of a fugitive African healer and a French agronomist illustrates how the processes of modernization on epistemic and economic levels include the knowledge heritages and counter-economies of diasporic Africans. Over time, the modern “Other” in the form of Makandal continues to meta-narrate the transformation of global capitalism through agriculture in terms of death and erasure.

I have called the poisoner/planter expression of modernity a hybrid one. In the same way that Gilroy explodes the myth of dyads through which modernity is narrated, e.g., white/black, colony/metropole, I have suggested that conceptualizing the knowledge systems of the plantation as separate phenomena is another form of reinscribing the myth of such separate and unequal “cultural assemblages” such as race. Gilroy reminds us that categorizations like hybridity are both problematic and necessary in marking the “roots” and “routes” of modern diasporan

We can say that the embodiments of knowledge have become more unified or hybrid in presentation, and at once, understand that the word hybrid represents an ultimately “unsatisfactory way of naming the processes of cultural mutation and restless (dis) continuity that exceed racial discourse and avoid capture by its agents.” Gilroy points out that the same “ideas about nationality, ethnicity, authenticity, and cultural integrity” that I have shown emerging from Makandal texts “are characteristically modern phenomena … crystallised with the revolutionary transformations of the West” and that the narrative of modernity must be told through a variety of “novel typologies and modes of identification.” The poisoner and planter is a novel typology not before seen in European or American literatures before their first appearance in Saint-Domingue plantation literatures. My readings have attempted to show that those crystallizations of individual and community sovereignty are produced as much through the ‘non-knowledge’ and ‘poison,’ of the plantation as the planter’s global networks, and further, to show that agriculture is central to both African and European formulations of sovereignty, despite the brutality of their contact and the institutional violence that agriculture signifies especially in this period. Just because we shift to recognize a postmodern condition, these “modern subjectivities and the movements they articulated” have not “been left behind” (2).
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